

STATE OF WISCONSIN

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JOINT COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

December 9, 2021

Ms. Jill Underly
Superintendent of Public Instruction
Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction
125 South Webster Street
Madison, WI 53707

Dear Superintendent Underly:

The federal Department of Education (DOE) acknowledges that children were harmed by virtual learning and stresses the importance of in-person instruction. But, we understand that the Biden and Evers administrations and the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) have put politics over what is best for our kids in denying our plan for the American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ARP ESSER III) funds for Wisconsin.

The Joint Committee on Finance (JFC) and Republicans in the legislature designed our plan for the ARP ESSER III funds to **put kids first by rewarding the school districts that worked very hard to keep kids in the classroom for in-person instruction** during the pandemic. Governor Tony Evers even signed this plan!

Rather than reward the school districts that worked hard to return kids to the classroom, the DOE and DPI are intent on sending these dollars to school districts that kept kids out of the classroom. Our legislative intent for this funding is to reward the districts that spent the time and resources to put our kids first and get them back in the classroom.

We are very disappointed that this politically-motivated denial is holding up \$77 million for our schools and sending a strong, negative message that politics is more important than supporting the districts that spent considerable time, money, effort and resources to get kids back into our local schools. **Direct your staff to immediately propose an alternative plan that addresses our legislative intent.**

Our offices expect to discuss your proposed path forward as soon as possible. **Our schools and our kids deserve this funding.**

Do not delay. Do not collude with the DOE to further obstruct these funds. Our local school leaders, teachers, school boards, legislators and parents have been working very hard to do what is best for our kids, while government bureaucrats have been playing games with the funds that

should be available to educate our kids, especially after a lost year of learning. It's time to do the right thing.

Sincerely,



Howard Marklein
Senate Chair



Mark Born
Assembly Chair