

Sample Letter to Lawmakers on Budget-Writing Committee's 2021-23 K-12 Budget Proposal

Dear State Senator/Representative:

The new Legislative Fiscal Bureau projections provide an excellent opportunity to revisit the K-12 education budget approved by the Joint Finance Committee. The committee's plan did not meet basic inflationary benchmarks for state support for K-12 education and put vital federal relief funding at risk in the process.

Investing in the post-pandemic recovery of our school children needs to be a top priority. With almost \$6 Billion to invest in the budget, we can fund schools and cut taxes. If our students are truly a top priority for lawmakers, we can do more than the bare minimum necessary to qualify for federal funds.

These new revenues would allow investments in:

- Revenue limits/general aid and/or per pupil aid to meet the inflationary needs and maintain the operating budgets of school districts as well as ensuring adequate facilities for students.
- Special Education aid to better address learning needs of our most vulnerable students and provide opportunities for all students by minimizing how much of school district general funds need to be transferred to fund special education services.
- Broadband to close the Homework Gap and ensure that every student in the state has an equal opportunity to access online resources.
- Mental health aid and grants to address the social and emotional impacts of the pandemic on school-age children, which is widely acknowledged. It is unknown how long students will need additional resources to recover from the disruptions of the pandemic.
- Pupil count mitigation to address the unprecedented impact of the pandemic on student enrollment and in turn, the resources and opportunities available to schools.

The state of Wisconsin has sufficient money available to provide reasonable and sustainable increases to school districts for these ongoing expenses. Making additional investments in these areas will also allow the state to capture vital federal relief funding that will go to schools in other states if Wisconsin fails to qualify.

Please work with your colleagues to rework the JFC education funding plan and pass a state budget bill that provides the necessary funding for K-12 schools to meet their essential ongoing operational expenses and qualify to receive their rightful share of federal COVID relief.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

[School Board Member or Other Title]

[School District Name]