

Gov. Evers Calls Special Session on Education, Reducing Property Taxes

Written by GOV Press Wisconsin
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<http://newiproggressive.com/images/stories/S5/school-bus-kids-s5.jpg>



Gov. Evers' plan announced Thursday recommitts to two-thirds funding for K-12 education, including \$130 million in property tax relief through equalization aid.

MADISON - Gov. Tony Evers today signed Executive Order #69 calling the Legislature to meet in a special session on Tues., Feb. 11, 2020 at 1 p.m. to use \$250 million in projected revenue surplus to recommit to two-thirds state funding for K-12 education including investments in school-based mental health services and special education aid, \$10 million in sparsity aid, and \$130 million in property tax relief through equalization aid.

"I've always said that what's best for our kids is what's best for our state, and every kid deserves access to high-quality, public education regardless of their age, identity, background, economic status, or zip code," said Gov. Evers. "We don't have to choose between investing in our kids and reducing property taxes—we can do both. My plan recommitts to our promise of two-thirds state funding for our schools and will provide \$130 million in property tax relief through equalization aid. This is a no-brainer, folks. We know the bipartisan support is there, we just need elected officials to put people before politics."

Since 2011, nearly one million Wisconsinites have voted to raise their own property taxes for local schools and in 2018 alone, voters approved more than \$2 billion in debt and revenue increases for local schools. Additionally, the proposal to renew the state's commitment to two-thirds funding was recommended by Republicans' own Blue Ribbon Commission on School Funding, and was supported by every Assembly Republican member in [session](#)

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[priorities outlined last year](#)

[Executive Order #69](#) calls the Legislature to act on [LRB-5625](#) . This legislation:

- Provides \$79.1 million GPR in fiscal year 2021 to increase the estimated reimbursement rate for school district special education costs from 30 percent to 34 percent;
- Increases the funding for high cost special education aid by an amount necessary to reimburse school districts for 100 percent of certain costs over \$30,000 incurred to support a student with disabilities;
- Converts the relevant high cost special education aid appropriation from a sum certain to a sum sufficient appropriation;
- Increases funding for special education transition readiness grants by 100 percent, or \$1.5 million GPR;
- Increases the allowable per pupil award from \$1,000 to \$1,5000 for Special Education Transition Incentive grants;
- Provides \$19 million GPR in additional school-based mental health services;
- Expands the types of costs that are eligible for aid under the program to include school counselors, psychologists, or nurses;
- Provides an additional \$3.75 million for the School-Based Mental Health Collaborations grant program;
- Provides \$10.1 million to invest more in sparsity aid payments, including establishing a second tier of sparsity aid for school districts that would otherwise be eligible but have an enrollment of more than 745 pupils;
- Modifies "stopgap" payments to include a district that no longer has fewer than ten members per square mile to also receive a payment of 50 percent of its prior year sparsity aid payment for one year;
- Provides an additional \$3.6 million for the expansion of summer school programming in Milwaukee, Madison, Green Bay, Kenosha, and Racine as eligible districts;
- Permits school districts to hire newly retired employees within 30 days rather than the current 75 days;
- Creates a program for young tribal language learners by providing an additional \$262,200 PR for the current tribal language revitalization grant program;
- Provides \$100,000 PR for the Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council to support the young learners portion of the program in partnership with the Department of Public Instruction; and
- Provides an additional \$130 million in equalization aid.

An estimated district by district breakdown of the additional \$79.1 million for special education funding can be found [here](#) .

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An estimated district by district breakdown of the 83 eligible districts for the Tier Two of Sparsity Aid can be found [here](#) .