



Southeastern Wisconsin
Schools Alliance
schoolsalliance.com

Fund Schools. Lower Property Taxes.

Schools Need Predictable, Sustainable Funding.

When a student enters kindergarten and continues through 12th grade, we have no idea what state funding will look like, as it changes every two years. How do I plan for a student's K-12 career with such unpredictable funding?

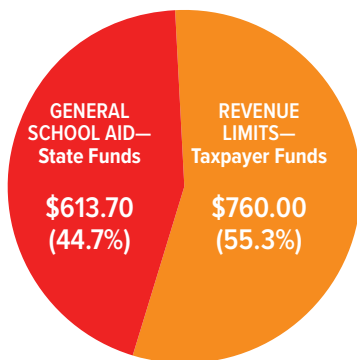
25–27 Budget Shifted Funding to Local Taxpayers

State elected officials have knowingly passed the buck to homeowners in the form of local property tax increases when they chose not to adequately fund the state-controlled school finance formula in the current state budget.

Lawmakers provided \$0 in new general school aid over the biennium, a first in modern Wisconsin history. As a result, the majority of districts received less state support this year, leaving school boards with only two choices: raise local property taxes or make cuts to essential educational programs.

Lawmakers CAN Choose to Fund Schools *and* Lower Property Taxes

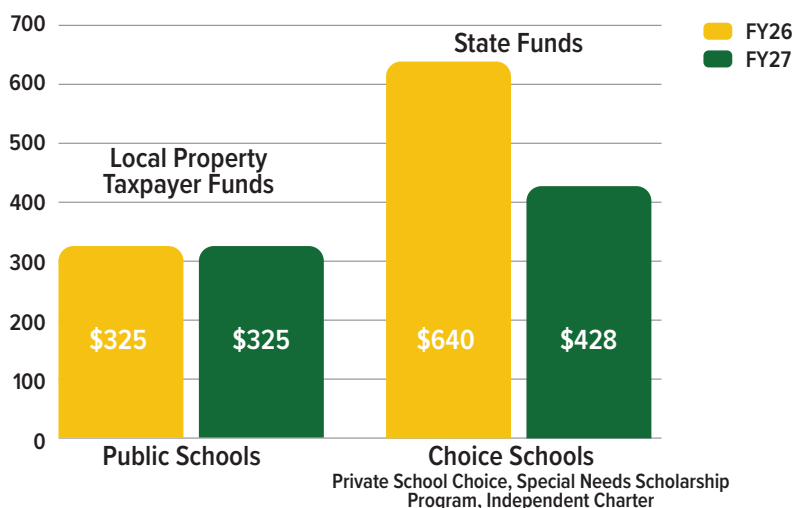
\$1.37 Billion K-12 Education Funding by Source



Source: Legislative Fiscal Bureau Memo K-12 Funding Increases in the 2025-27 Biennium

Not All Schools are Funded the Same Way

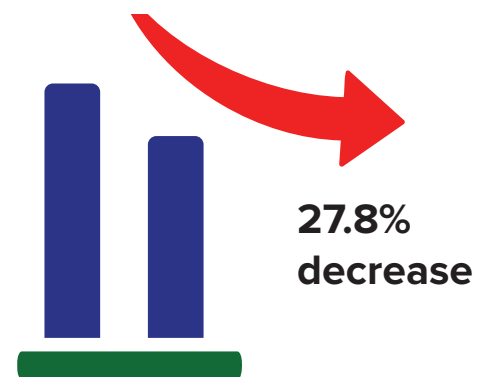
Per Pupil / Total Adjustments in the 2025–2027 Biennial Budget



Public Schools
are for
100%
of Wisconsin Families

82% of families in Wisconsin choose public schools. We want to ***maintain and improve*** these high-quality options that families seek for their children.

Public Education Has Fallen as a State Budget Priority in the last 20 years.



Source: Annual Fiscal Reports:
Fiscal years ended June 30, 2024 and June 30, 2004

Increased Budget Pressures Leave Few Options



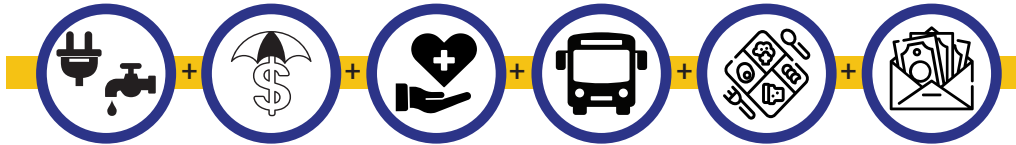
Public schools are not immune to inflation

Educating students simply costs more now with increased expectations that have been implemented over the last three decades including:

- + increased unfunded mandates;
- + heightened accountability;
- + increased legal complexities;
- + more complex human resources management;
- + increased costs for curriculum, technology, school safety, student academic and support needs.

**+
plus**

... rising costs for utilities, insurance, healthcare, transportation, food service, and wages.



UNDERFUNDED STATE SUPPORT FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION = **OPERATING REFERENDUMS**

Operating referendums are driving up property taxes and creating huge inequities across the state, while costs and state mandates continue to increase. The historic pattern of school finance decisions over the last 30 years is working against the intended goal of revenue limits, which was to reduce property taxes and provide predictable funding to communities and their public schools.



A referendum is like a temporary patch on a leaky roof.

It might stop the rain for a while, but it doesn't fix the underlying structural issues causing the leaks. The funding formula is the foundation of the roof. Without repair, it will always need more patches or rebuilding. Over time, these patches become less effective, and the problems get worse. When referendums fail, districts need more patches, often cutting staff and programs, which exacerbates the "haves" and "have nots" in public schools. A strong, well-designed roof (funding formula) would make those patches unnecessary in the first place.



Schools don't have the flexibility to raise prices.



Instead, we have to reduce our costs, meaning a reduced investment in students.



A Bipartisan Solution Exists: The Blue Ribbon Commission Recommendations

In 2018, the bipartisan Blue Ribbon Commission on School Funding held hearings across the state and deliberated the future of public school funding, recognizing the state was at a crossroads. The Commission released a report of which culminated in a list of more than 20 recommendations for the Legislature to consider. **How can we work together to implement these bipartisan recommendations?**

