



# Tony Evers

Office of the Governor | State of Wisconsin

September 10, 2025

The Honorable Ron Johnson  
328 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin  
141 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Bryan Steil  
1526 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mark Pocan  
1026 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Derrick Van Orden  
1513 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Gwen Moore  
2252 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Scott Fitzgerald  
2444 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Glenn Grothman  
1211 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Tom Tiffany  
451 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Tony Wied  
424 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Duly Elected Members of Congress:

As kids, parents and families, educators, staff, and administrators return back to school in Wisconsin, I spent the last week kicking off my annual statewide back-to-school tour visiting schools across our state. I have seen firsthand already this year how excited students are to be back, educators are already going above and beyond to do what's best for our kids, and communities are pulling together so every kid can succeed, even as the Trump Administration threatens to throw our kids, schools, and the brand-new school year into chaos with its FY26 budget proposal.

The Trump Administration's FY26 budget proposal moves us in the wrong direction by replacing proven K-12 supports with uncertainty, flattening special education funding into an untested funding model, and cutting the teacher preparation, school transportation, and library resources that help support our kids and ensure they are prepared for future success. It also aims to strip away help for adult learners, eliminate campus aid and college-success capacity, and weaken the research and health-workforce training that keep our economy strong.

As it currently stands, the House and Senate Appropriations committees are continuing to work on their versions of the FY26 budget proposal. While the president is already proposing sweeping cuts to education funding, the House has proposed rescinding \$938.3 million in Title I and \$1.68 billion in School Improvement of already approved funding. Let me be clear: the president's budget proposal and the current House proposal are a continuation of the Trump Administration's attacks on our kids, families, educators, schools, and public education at every level.

President Trump is dismantling the U.S. Department of Education, gutting investments our kids and schools depend on every day, creating chaos and uncertainty for parents and families who have kids in school, and, perhaps most unfortunately, abandoning our country's promise we make to our kids to ensure they have a high-quality public education. Make no mistake, I will continue to fight against every effort that will hurt Wisconsin's kids, families, schools, and communities, including every step the Trump Administration and Republicans in Congress take toward destroying the U.S. Department of Education.

As a former science teacher, principal, superintendent, and state superintendent, I write to you today to share exactly what is at stake and at risk in approving this budget proposal, and urge you, as duly elected members of Wisconsin's congressional delegation, to reject these disastrous proposals that will hurt our kids, make it harder to improve outcomes in our classrooms, and affect our state's future success. Now more than ever, we need to provide adequate support for students, support the educators and staff who make schools work, and preserve programs that help ensure every kid has the skills, tools, and resources to be successful.

Wisconsin kids cannot afford for politics to come first. Our kids deserve elected officials in Congress who will put them first and make sure they are prepared for their future success. I write today to urge you to oppose this reckless budget proposal and join me in doing what's best for Wisconsin's kids.

### **Reject Billions of Dollars in Cuts to Wisconsin Schools, Protect Targeted K-12 Investments to Ensure Stability for Kids and Families**

Wisconsin kids cannot afford for the federal government to ask our schools to do more with less, most especially as school districts across our state continue to go to referendum in record numbers, many to help keep their school doors open and lights on.

As families send their kids back to school, President Trump's FY26 budget proposal would replace the consistent, dependable investments our school districts have relied upon for years with a single, one-size-fits-all funding pot—a move almost certainly designed to obfuscate the Trump Administration's catastrophic cuts to our kids and schools. The president's proposed budget imposes a net cut of \$4.535 billion to the eighteen K-12 programs being consolidated compared to the previous year, collapsing eighteen existing K-12 programs into a new single state grant that—by the administration's own description—is designed to minimize the federal government's commitment to supporting public education, renege on the promise our country has made to America's kids and parents for generations. Further, the Trump Administration proposes these billions of dollars in cuts to our public schools while increasing the Charter Schools Program by \$60 million.

Here in Wisconsin, this will mean volatility and disruption for educators, administrators, and local school districts across our state—the folks who do the hard work every day of supporting, educating, and preparing our kids for their future. This would force the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) to reconsider funding allocations, rewrite applications, and redraft compliance procedures while the school year is already underway. As schools are already working to kick off a new school year and get kids settled in, Wisconsin school districts will be forced to scramble as legacy program rules and set-asides that protect rural schools, multilingual learners, and other high-need students could vanish overnight. Wisconsin parents should not have to wonder whether reading specialists, tutoring, assessments, language access, and transportation supports will survive the Trump Administration's decision to put politics before kids and abruptly reverse course on commitments and responsibilities families, educators, and schools have depended upon for years.

I urge you to reject this consolidation, maintain dedicated K-12 programs, and to ensure Wisconsin schools and communities across our state continue to receive the stable, targeted investments they depend upon to support our kids every day.

## **Support Wisconsin's Kids with Disabilities and Special Education to Ensure Opportunity and Predictability for Students and Their Families**

Every American kid deserves access to a high-quality public education, regardless of their ZIP code, background, or whether they need additional support in the classroom. Ensuring kids with disabilities have the same opportunities and access to high-quality education is a fundamental part of the promise of public education in the United States of America. The U.S. Congress should not take steps toward abandoning this important obligation by approving the president's proposed changes to special education funding for schools.

Wisconsin kids with disabilities deserve consistency in their services, and their parents and families deserve straight answers about what support will be there from the first day of the school year to the last. President Trump's budget would collapse seven Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) programs into a catch-all "Special Education Simplified Funding Program," while providing no increased investments above last year's funding levels. In practice, this would force state and local districts to rebuild how special education is planned, staffed, and monitored mid-year, without clear guardrails for how funds reach classrooms and families, causing uncertainty for therapy hours, paraprofessional coverage, specialized transportation, and the statewide technical assistance smaller and rural districts count on. Especially for kids who depend on consistency and predictability, most especially to be successful in the classroom, these consequences are untenable. IEP teams and the educators, staff, and administrators who work every day to support our kids need certainty and stability, not chaos and volatility.

I strongly urge you to reject this consolidation and maintain the existing protections: a transparent distribution formula that doesn't shortchange high-need students; firm maintenance-of-effort and pass-through expectations; and explicit safeguards for parent support, personnel development, and statewide technical assistance so services for our kids are not interrupted.

## **Improving Classroom Outcomes by Supporting Educators, Investing in Resources for Kids Both Within and Beyond Our Classrooms**

Doing what's best for our kids is what's best for our state—and it's what's best for our country, too. Our kids are our future, and we have a responsibility as elected officials to ensure our kids have the support, resources, and skills to be their best selves both within our classrooms and beyond them. Having skilled educators, getting safely to and from school, and having access to information, high-speed internet, and library resources, among other critical supports, all play important roles in ensuring our kids' future success. Yet, President Trump's budget aims to undermine each of these critical supports.

We should be doing everything we can to retain our talented and experienced educators while working to train and recruit new, skilled educators to join our education workforce. This is a key part of working to improve outcomes in our classrooms and increasing educational achievement. Eliminating Teacher Quality Partnerships would threaten the practical pipelines districts run with University of Wisconsin (UW) System campuses and technical colleges to place teacher candidates in year-long residencies, mentor new educators, and grow local talent into hard-to-fill roles like special education and bilingual education. This will only make it even harder for school districts across our state to improve outcomes and achievement by making it harder to ensure our educators are prepared for the classroom.

President Trump's proposal also zeros out Equity Assistance Centers (EACs), the regional teams that provide no-cost civil-rights and desegregation expertise to districts. When schools work to fix disparities in discipline, expand access to rigorous coursework, or meet language-access obligations, EACs help leaders solve problems before they become lawsuits, allowing schools to focus on the job of educating. Ending this support would hit smaller and rural districts hardest and push legal risk and costs back onto local taxpayers.

Day-to-day operations take a hit in President Trump's proposal as well. Eliminating Diesel Emissions Reduction Act school-bus grants means fewer replacements for aging buses and fewer retrofits that keep them reliable and protect student health. In a Wisconsin winter, that means more breakdowns, higher maintenance bills, and more diesel exhaust where kids line up and ride, especially for districts that cannot afford to modernize a fleet on their own.

Additionally, our obligations to our kids do not end at the classroom door. To the contrary, many factors that negatively affect our kids' learning in our classrooms happen outside of our schools and classrooms. Having stable and affordable housing affects our kids in schools, access to safe and reliable transportation affects our kids in schools, crime and violence, especially gun violence, in our communities affects kids in schools, among many other factors. If we want to improve outcomes and achievement in our classrooms, then we must ensure our kids have the supports and resources they need to bring their full and best selves to school every day.

Eliminating the Institute of Museum and Library Services would undercut statewide school-library services that are coordinated by the Wisconsin DPI and end campus library and museum projects that give students access to primary sources, digitized collections, and work-study jobs. Those shared resources help ensure a fourth grader in Spooner has access to the same high-quality materials as a senior in Milwaukee. Taking away these resources does not create more or greater opportunity or strengthen our state; it only ensures someone in one corner of our state will be worse off than someone in another part of our state—that should not be a tenable outcome for any Wisconsin elected official.

I am asking Congress to reject these cuts, retain Teacher Quality Partnerships and Equity Assistance Centers, continue DERA support for safe and reliable buses, and sustain IMLS so every student in every ZIP code can read, research, and rise. Wisconsin will keep backing the education professionals and the investments and resources that ensure schools thrive—and that our kids are successful and prepared for their future. We need our federal partners to do the same.

### **Preserve Critical Supports for Learners of All Backgrounds**

Back-to-school should be a hopeful time. Instead, President Trump's FY26 budget tells too many Wisconsin families to brace for fewer services and fewer opportunities. It moves to eliminate English Language Acquisition, Migrant Education, and Adult Education and Family Literacy. Those aren't just line items on a spreadsheet; they are the tutors who help kids learn English, the continuity supports migratory students need to stay on grade level, and the evening classes that put a GED or better English within reach for working parents. Districts and Cooperative Educational Service Agencies (CESAs), especially in rural Wisconsin, would be left to stretch fewer dollars across greater need.

The president's proposal also walks away from proven college-access pipelines. Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) and programs under the TRIO umbrella, like Upward Bound and Talent Search, help first-generation and low-income students get to campus and stay there with advising, tutoring, summer bridge, research opportunities, and mentoring. Zeroing both out (\$1.579 billion combined) means fewer first-generation Wisconsin students will make it to a UW campus, a technical college, or a private college on time, and fewer will finish. Campuses would lose support for cohort models and student-success jobs that have moved the needle semester after semester, and Wisconsin employers would feel that loss in tomorrow's workforce. The president's proposal also puts \$49.2 million for education in prisons at risk by consolidating it into other funding.

The bottom line is clear: Wisconsin students, no matter their ZIP code or parents' income, should not pay the price for the Trump Administration's actions. I urge you to reject these eliminations and keep the support that helps adult learners, multilingual students, and first-generation college students succeed.

### **Preserve Access and Affordability in Higher Education**

Wisconsin students work hard, and they deserve campuses that keep aid packages whole, advisors' doors open, and practical supports in place so they can stay enrolled and graduate. Instead, President Trump's FY26 budget plan moves Wisconsin and our country in the wrong direction. It eliminates the Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (SEOG), cuts Federal Work-Study (FWS) by \$980 million, and eliminates Child Care Access Means Parents in School (CCAMPIS), pulling gap-closing grants from low-income students, shrinking campus jobs that tie learning to experience, and removing child care support that keeps student parents on track.

The proposal also weakens the campus capacity that first-generation and working learners rely on. It cuts \$112 million from the Strengthening Institutions Program (SIP), funding that many UW campuses, technical colleges, and private nonprofits use for advising, tutoring, early alerts, and student-success infrastructure. At the same time, it eliminates \$195 million for the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE) and Graduate Assistance in Areas of National Need (GAANN), ending support for practical innovations that raise completion rates and funding for graduate fellows who become the educators, researchers, and professionals Wisconsin communities need.

Cutting and eliminating these critical support programs does not just cancel projects, it drastically reduces our talent pipeline—something Wisconsin simply cannot afford—and makes it harder for students to finish their higher education on time so they are trained and ready to join our workforce. This is a double-whammy for the generational workforce challenges that have plagued Wisconsin for generations, which we have spent years working in earnest to address.

College should be a doorway, not an unattainable aspiration. I am asking you to reject these cuts so that Wisconsin continues building the skilled workforce our economy depends on. Students are doing their part. The federal government needs to do its part and keep higher education within reach for every Wisconsinite willing to put in the work.

### **Sustain Wisconsin's Innovation and Workforce**

From the lab bench to the hospital bedside to the jobsite, Wisconsin's strength is our people, whose talent, skills, and hard work our economic success depends on. President Trump's FY26 budget proposal puts that strength at risk. It would cut and reorganize the National Institutes of Health (NIH) by nearly \$18 billion while folding institutes into broad buckets, creating months of uncertainty for active awards and training. It eliminates grants and contracts at the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality altogether, removing the practical research that helps hospitals improve safety and quality. It also shrinks and consolidates Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) programs in ways that land hardest on health-workforce training, which means fewer scholarships, fewer clinical slots, and less capacity to grow the nurses, dentists, behavioral-health providers, and health professionals our communities need.

The damage does not stop at healthcare. The plan slashes core National Science Foundation (NSF) research and education funding and zeros out the Broadening Participation portfolios. Those programs help campuses statewide bring more students into STEM through bridge programs, mentoring, and paid research. Taking these programs away will see fewer Wisconsin undergraduates in labs, fewer technical college to university pathways, and fewer K-12 outreach efforts that spark the next generation of engineers and data scientists our state needs as we continue to build a 21st-century economy in Wisconsin.

This is not a hypothetical concern. When NIH reviews stall or RFAs cease, labs pause hiring, graduate and post-doc offers get pulled, and clinical trials slow down. When HRSA workforce grants disappear, small hospitals and clinics lose teaching partnerships and rural rotations, and nursing programs cut sections because there are not enough clinical instructors or placements. When NSF lines dry up, a first-generation sophomore loses the paid research job that kept them on campus, and a faculty-industry project that could spin up a Wisconsin startup never gets off the ground. Wisconsin students deserve to discover big ideas here at home and build their careers here, not watch opportunities dry up because the Trump Administration decided to shrink the pipeline for our students.

Congress should reject these cuts, keep NIH and NSF funding dependable, protect HRSA's health-workforce programs so clinics and hospitals can train where they serve, and support Broadening Participation work that opens doors into STEM. That is how we grow Wisconsin's innovation economy and meet our workforce needs with homegrown talent.

### **Maintain Birth-to-Five Coordination and Quality**

Any parent or teacher will tell you that the most important learning happens long before kindergarten, and Wisconsin kids deserve the best possible start. That is why we have worked to knit together four-year-old kindergarten, child care, Head Start, early intervention, and family supports into one Birth-to-Five system that is easy to navigate and focused on quality. President Trump's FY26 budget proposes eliminating Preschool Development Grants Birth-to-Five (PDG-B5), which would be disastrous for our youngest learners. The PDG-B5 grant funds state and local planning for building capacity, creating infrastructure, and providing direct services to ensure that other state investments can be used more efficiently and effectively.

If PDG-B5 is zeroed out, Wisconsin would lose the connective tissue that keeps early learning coherent. Districts and community partners would have fewer tools to align 4K with child care and Head Start, fewer resources for smooth kindergarten transitions, and less capacity for developmental screening and family navigation. Rural districts that rely on shared services would be hit the hardest. Our universities and technical colleges would see promising early-literacy and workforce pathways stall, and more kids would slip through cracks that we have worked hard to close.

Earlier this year, I announced 2025 as the Year of the Kid here in Wisconsin. I am asking you to reject the Trump Administration's elimination of PDG-B5 and preserve these critical funds so we can keep what works: coordinated services for families, quality improvement in classrooms, and a strong start for every child in every ZIP code. Wisconsin families are counting on it.

Last week, I saw again what makes Wisconsin special: kids eager to learn, educators showing up with heart and skill, and communities pitching in so every kid gets a fair shot. President Trump's proposed budget would pull away the tools those classrooms rely on. We measure our work by whether it helps kids, and this budget does not. It would make classrooms less stable, special education less predictable, higher education less affordable, and the pipeline of researchers and health professionals thinner. As Congress considers funding for FY26, I urge you to stand up for our students and schools, reject President Trump's reckless proposal, and ensure these critical programs are funded so every child in every ZIP code across Wisconsin can learn, graduate, and thrive.

Yours in service,



Tony Evers  
Governor