



Tony Evers

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

March 27, 2026

To the Honorable Members of the Assembly:

I am vetoing Assembly Bill 518 in its entirety.

This bill allows private schools participating in a parental choice program to hire an individual with a short-term substitute teaching permit issued by the Department of Public Instruction even if the individual does not hold at least a bachelor's degree, as required of all other teachers employed at a private choice school. A short-term substitute teacher permit is valid for three years and may be issued to an individual who passes a background check and meets one of two criteria: (a) the applicant holds at least an associate degree in any field and has successfully completed an approved eight-hour substitute teacher training program, or (b) the applicant is at least 20 years old, earned enough college credits to have junior status, is enrolled in an approved Wisconsin educator preparatory program, and has completed 15 hours of classroom observation. This bill would function as an exception to the requirement that teachers employed by private choice schools have a minimum of a bachelor's degree.

I am vetoing this bill in its entirety because I object to further lowering educator credential requirements, especially in private choice schools, where professional requirements for the individuals charged with educating our kids are already much lower than their public school district counterparts.

Educators in public school districts in Wisconsin must have a license or permit from the Department of Public Instruction. In order to be eligible to receive a license or permit, the educator must hold a bachelor's degree and must also have completed an approved educator preparation program or alternative pathway with educator training and examinations. We have high standards for the people we entrust with our kids at school—and we should.

Unfortunately, however, these standards are not the same across all schools in Wisconsin. Individuals who are employed to provide instruction at private choice schools do not have to complete any specific training or programs for educators, nor do they need any specific degree relating to education or child development. Private choice school employees need only have a bachelor's degree in any field—whether accounting or marketing or otherwise—in order to be hired to teach kids.

On multiple occasions, I have proposed phasing in a requirement that all individuals teaching kids in private schools and participating in the state's various voucher programs would need to have a teaching license or permit from the department, with limited exception. Unfortunately, the Wisconsin State Legislature has repeatedly refused to adopt these basic, common-sense provisions.



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Our state's challenges recruiting, training, and retaining talented educators cannot be solved by lowering state standards for the individuals entrusted with educating, empowering, and inspiring our kids.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Tony Evers".

Tony Evers
Governor