



Editorial: School funding plan deserves discussion

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State school Supt. Tony Evers deserves **credit** for coming up with an outline on how to reform the school funding formula — how much a particular school district gets out of the big pot of K-12 state funding.

Changes are needed and, while there have been other proposals before, there's never been the political will — or the right amount of **funding** — to put any plan into action.

More often, the issue has been viewed as too complex to push toward actual solutions.

So, it's good that Evers is bringing the issue back into a spotlight through his outline and has been getting feedback on it.

But his proposal points out one of the trickiest problems with the issue. A new formula will change how the money in the pot is divided. That means some **school** districts will get more money per pupil than they had before, and some will get less.

But no **school district** will say it can afford to get less money. And no legislator will support a new formula in which one or more of his school districts will lose money.

That means, realistically, the only way to pass a new formula in the Legislature is to increase the amount of money in the pot. Some districts will get more money, but none will lose money.

Evers' proposal calls for the same thing — an extra \$420 million in the next two-year budget.

With the state facing a \$2.7 billion deficit over those two years, it's just not the right time economically to **fund** the changes.

That doesn't mean Evers' plan should be dead on arrival, as state Sen. Alberta Darling, R-River Hills put it. At the very least, it should be a framework for discussion.

The discussion is needed, even if a change isn't imminent. The problems with the school funding formula aren't going away.

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(We do.)

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