



## **WisPolitics: Evers defends school finance plan as 'fairness issue'**

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State schools Superintendent Tony Evers (*left*) says his proposed funding plan is a matter of fairness and transparency.

“Every child in the state of Wisconsin should be supported by some level of general aid,” Evers said on Sunday's “UpFront with Mike Gousha,” a statewide TV newsmagazine produced in conjunction with WisPolitics.com. “That's not the case now. It's a pure fairness issue.”

His plan calls for a \$420 million funding boost over two years that would allow the state to pitch in at least \$3,000 for every student in each district.

Evers said the increase would represent the smallest bump in terms of dollars or percent that the department has asked for in the past decade. He disputed accounts that the plan was “dead on arrival” in next year's Republican-run Legislature and said he's gotten good response to at least talking about the concept.

He said the major concerns so far have been the price tag, but there has been support for the overall policy.

Evers said his goal with the plan is to reduce the complexity in the school funding formula, increase transparency in the way schools are funded and “nudge the system” away from using property values as the basis for funding schools.

Also on the show, UW System Board of Regents President Charles Pruitt, a Doyle appointee, said he anticipates a tough budget, but that he hopes to convince the Legislature and incoming administration that the university should be a priority because it “can contribute an awful lot to the economic future of this state.”

“I don't think it's a necessary assumption that you need to cut everything equally or everything dramatically,” said Pruitt. “I think it becomes ... a conversation about what's important and what may be a little less important given the challenges that the state faces.”

He noted the state has seen declining support for the university as a percentage of state spending and a greater reliance on tuition -- things he said could reduce access for low and middle-income families.

He said he was encouraged by Gov.-elect Scott Walker's willingness to allow the system more flexibility in hiring and compensation to attract and retain top talent, building construction and other areas.

“We think that if we can provide that kind of flexibility to our campuses they would act in more entrepreneurial way, a more effective way,” Pruitt said.

Watch the program [here](#).

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