

News Release

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Stanford Taylor submits 2021-23 biennial budget request

Calls for historic support to Wisconsin's students, educators, and schools

MADISON – State Superintendent Carolyn Stanford Taylor today announced the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction submitted its 2021-2023 biennial budget request to fund kindergarten through 12th-grade public education and libraries in Wisconsin.

The DPI's budget request is grounded in equity and is designed to meet the unique funding needs of schools while focusing on supporting the whole student. In constructing the request, the DPI consulted with groups representing educators, school board members, and parents across the state.

"The COVID-19 pandemic has challenged our schools in ways never seen before. It magnified many existing inequities in our state and highlighted essential areas where our students and educators need further support," State Superintendent Carolyn Stanford Taylor said. "The budget, I've submitted, provides the resources, services, and funding to help meet the needs of Wisconsin students, as well as libraries."

Priority areas outlined in the DPI's budget request include: funding two-thirds of school costs, increasing mental health funding and services in schools, boosting the ability for schools to better serve students with the greatest needs, removing GED testing fees and improving access to credentialing, and further supporting the state's public library services. The budget request submitted today completes the DPI's proposal, [with the first piece submitted in September](#).

Stanford Taylor's budget request:

- Restores the state's commitment to funding two-thirds of school costs.
- Increases Wisconsin's special education reimbursement rate from 28 percent to 40 percent by the end of the biennium with a goal of reaching a 60 percent reimbursement rate by the end of the 2023-2025 biennium. This historic investment aids schools in paying for students' required services, allowing money to be used to fund other priority areas.

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- Makes a historic \$371 million increase in special education categorical aid while also providing nearly \$13 million for high cost special education aid to help fully fund all eligible expenses for students with the greatest needs.
- Expands state support to mental health and pupil support categorical aid to nearly \$60 million over the biennium to include expenditures for all pupil support professionals and ensure schools can access aid by reimbursing on the basis of all expenditures at 10 percent of eligible expenses.
- Leverages \$1 million over the biennium to expand mental health training opportunities to include bullying and violence prevention, while also increasing support for trauma-sensitive schools training throughout the state.
- Funds the School-Based Services/Community Collaboration Grant with an additional \$7 million over the biennium to support more school districts and independent charter schools than ever before in connecting youth to essential mental health services.
- Removes barriers standing in the way of Wisconsinites taking GED tests and accessing their credentials, and helps prepare the state's workforce. Funding subsidizes the cost of the GED test fee and creates an automated, online system to process credentials for test takers and verifications for employers and admissions offices. This modernization eliminates an outdated process and expedites the hiring process for employers and job applicants.
- Creates a state aid program with \$5.8 million over the biennium to improve Wisconsin student access to driver education and provide instruction to eligible students at no cost.
- Puts Wisconsin students first by creating state funded out-of-school time programming with a \$20 million over the biennium. Funding focuses primarily on students in middle and high school settings, while furthering the reach of OST programming to elementary programs.
- Supports Wisconsin public libraries with a \$6.5 million funding increase in aid over the biennium to help local libraries innovate and increase their ability to

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respond to emerging community needs. A dedicated appropriation of \$450,000 over the biennium helps local libraries digitize historic materials preserving them for future use by Wisconsin residents.

To view Stanford Taylor's full budget request, visit <https://dpi.wi.gov/policy-budget/2021-23-biennial-budget>.

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NOTE: This news release is available electronically at <https://dpi.wi.gov/news/releases/2020/stanford-taylor-dpi-biennial-budget-request>.

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