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## State superintendent budget proposal invests nearly \$60M to recruit, retain Wisconsin educators

*Dr. Jill Underly's budget request seeks to meet state's education workforce needs*

MADISON – State Superintendent Dr. Jill Underly today proposed \$59.5 million in new investments aimed at recruiting and retaining Wisconsin educators. The announcement, part of Dr. Underly's 2025-27 Biennial Budget, was made during a roundtable on the education workforce that Dr. Underly led at La Follette High School.

Under Dr. Underly's education workforce proposal, stipends would be provided to eligible student teachers to help cover expenses and reduce debt, a new state-funded grow-your-own grant program would help grow the workforce, a support program for new educators would expand, and barriers to licensure would be carefully examined and reformed as necessary.

Data from the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction's 2022 Education Preparation Program and Workforce Analysis Report, [released earlier this year](#), found that about four out of every 10 first-year educators (39.4 percent) either leave the state or the profession altogether within their first six years teaching.

"We have heard for so long about the challenges many districts face when trying to hire teachers and keep them in the classroom, and the upcoming biennial budget presents an opportunity to take action," Dr. Underly said. "Investing in our education workforce is not just a necessity – it is a commitment to our future. That is why my budget proposes initiatives that support the development of new educators, eliminate barriers to licensure, and encourage innovative ways to grow the workforce.

"When we prioritize retaining and supporting our educators, we create thriving learning environments that empower both educators and students."

Analysis of the EPP and Workforce Analysis Report found Wisconsin's education workforce challenges are largely driven by teacher retention in two key areas: when an aspiring teacher completes their program and during the first few years in the profession.

(more)

Under Dr. Underly's budget proposal, the DPI will:

- Support future educators by providing a \$10,000 stipend for all student teachers (plus \$3,000 for cooperating teachers), reducing debt and helping with expenses while they spend valuable time learning and developing in the classroom (\$46.9 million over the biennium).
- Create a stronger grow-your-own-educator program that supports school districts with grant funding for use in activities that grow the educator workforce. This includes, but is not limited to, supporting student organizations and covering the cost for existing paraprofessional staff to take coursework leading to licensure (\$5 million over the biennium).
- Expand the [Peer Review and Mentoring Grant Program](#), providing support for the development of educators during their first three years in the profession. This expansion will allow more school districts to participate so Wisconsin can keep more teachers in the classroom (\$7.4 million over the biennium).
- Eliminate barriers to educator licensing by reviewing requirements for licensure, such as the much-criticized Foundations of Reading Test. Passage rates of this test have declined precipitously since 2014 – just 48 percent of test takers passed on the first attempt in the most recent data, although it's not clear that the test effectively measures the ability of a teacher to teach.

The DPI's budget request, to be released in full in November, will propose additional significant investments in K-12 public education. Last week, Dr. Underly announced a \$311 million proposal for school nutrition and a \$304 million proposal to support Wisconsin youth mental health. For more information on the DPI's education workforce initiatives, [visit its website](#).

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