



## The 2021-2023 Wisconsin State Budget: Summary

On July 8, 2021 Governor Evers released his final version of the state budget. The Republican state legislature passed a budget that removed most [items from his original proposal](#), and preemptively guarded against his ability to veto specific language in the budget. Nevertheless, Governor Evers secured a number of victories. Here's a summary of how the budget will affect AFT-Wisconsin members and the communities we serve.

### PK-12 Public Education

- General aid:
  - Invests \$408 million in general school aids, building upon a \$330 million increase in the last budget.
  - Provides two-thirds state funding to schools for the first time in two decades. However, the legislature did not lift revenue caps that limit what school districts can spend, so most of this money will go toward property tax cuts.
  - Governor Evers vetoed targeted grants for a charter school in Minocqua, objecting to such funding when the legislature provided only very limited new spending to Wisconsin's public school system as a whole.
- Rural school support:
  - Increases the number of small, rural school districts eligible for sparsity aid.
  - Governor Evers vetoed an eligibility change for high-cost transportation aid for schools, which would have blocked some rural schools who currently get the aid from receiving the funds in the future. This fully funds high cost transportation aid and increases the number of districts eligible to receive it.
- Other funding:
  - \$89 million to increase reimbursement for students with disabilities in fiscal year 2022-23.
  - \$19 million in school mental health programs.
  - Doubles state resources for gifted and talented students.
- In addition to budget money, Governor Evers has allocated **\$100 million in federal funds for PK-12 education**.
  - This is made possible by the administration's careful management of federal COVID funding from the Coronavirus, Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act and the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA).
  - Districts across the state will be able to use the funds for any purpose, including hiring educators and staff, providing classroom supplies, and mental health supports.

## University of Wisconsin System

- Total increase of \$8.25 million in UW System funding.
- Eliminates the tuition freeze. (The UW Board of Regents has recently voted against any increases for the next academic year, however.)
- Addresses the shortage of professors in nursing disciplines by providing \$5 million for a new nurse educator fellowship and financial aid program.
- \$5 million to support the University of Wisconsin System's Freshwater Collaborative, which trains water managers and scientists to address clean water and climate change challenges through a multidisciplinary approach.
- Boosts the University of Wisconsin-Madison's Division of Extension's ability to conduct outreach and education by providing \$2 million over the biennium.

## Wisconsin Technical College System

- Provides \$2.25 million in each year to the Wisconsin Technical College System in general aid, plus \$2.25 million in each year for grants to district boards.

## State Employees and UW Employees

- 2% salary increase in both 2021-2022 and 2022-2023.
- \$2 million over the biennium for targeted market and parity wage adjustments.
- Governor Evers vetoed language directing that a series of Department of Natural Resources projects had to be funded through the agency's environmental fund appropriation. This move instead sends the funding to the DNR's conservation fund, where it "will preserve funds in the environmental fund to be used for much-needed environmental initiatives."

## Other Support for Families and Communities

- Governor Evers vetoed the transfer of \$550 million to the state's rainy day fund, instead keeping this money in the general fund. This move brings the general fund available balance to \$1 billion. Evers argues that this money could be applied to "investments in our kids, small businesses, and our state's continued economic recovery." He called on the legislature to work with him to "invest these funds to address the immediate needs of Wisconsinites."
- \$129 million in funding to support the expansion of the Broadband Expansion Grant program. However, the Republican legislature funded this via bonding rather than direct payments, which will cost more over the long run.

