



**MILWAUKEE
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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A Historic Vote for the Children of Wisconsin

A Statement from President Larry Miller and Vice President Tony Báez of the Milwaukee Board of School Directors

MILWAUKEE (May 21, 2019) -- On Thursday, May 23, a vote on education funding will be taken by the Wisconsin Legislature's Joint Committee on Finance that will determine the trajectory of Wisconsin and will greatly influence the futures of the state's children. The vote will determine whether politicians in Madison will join with the people of Wisconsin, who want solutions to address the disparities faced by our students, or if the powers that be will revert to policies that mire Wisconsin as a state increasingly defined by its economic and racial inequality.

These inequalities are not an accident of happenstance — they are the product of man-made state laws and failures in basic support for students that are damaging what was once the greatness of Wisconsin schools.

Because of a lack of leadership in Madison, Wisconsin is now worst in the nation in the way in which we support students with disabilities in public schools. Despite massive differences in economic security in the lives of our students, Wisconsin, unlike other states, does not have a comprehensive plan to assist rural, suburban, or urban students challenged by poverty. And, despite the fact that our state welcomes families from nations around the world, Wisconsin retains the lowest ranking in the country for funding support for students learning English.

This history of failures from elected officials in the State Capitol sits on top of an educational funding system that discriminates against students based on where they live. It is an unjust state law that decrees that the children of Elmbrook, Fox Point, and Whitefish Bay are worth hundreds and, in some instances, thousands of dollars more than the children of Milwaukee.

The achievement gaps in this state, the economic security gaps in this state, and the racial inequities in this state are tied directly to the state's laws and policies that value some Wisconsin children over others.

Thursday's vote offers a clear opportunity to change course and to define Wisconsin in a new light.

Members of the Joint Committee on Finance will have the opportunity either to stand with students with disabilities and to support the Governor's historic funding increase for special education or to turn their backs on those students. They will have the opportunity to stand with students challenged by poverty, to stand with students who need extra support in our classrooms, and to stand with students struggling with mental health needs, or to turn their backs on them.

Thursday's is a historic vote, and the people of Wisconsin, in forum after forum, have been clear in their call to fund a better future for our children. We join them in calling on the Joint Committee on Finance and the Wisconsin State Legislature to vote for the people's budget and to set a new future for our state.

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About Milwaukee Public Schools

Milwaukee Public Schools is committed to accelerating student achievement, building positive relationships between youth and adults and cultivating leadership at all levels. The district's commitment to improvement continues to show results:

- More MPS students are taking college-level Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate courses;
- The MPS Class of 2018 earned \$86.2 million in scholarships; and
- MPS is home to three of the state and nation's top high schools according to U.S. News and World Report.

Learn more about MPS by [visiting our website](#). More news is available at mpsmke.com/news.