



JIM STEINEKE

MAJORITY LEADER

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 5th ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

(608) 266-2401
Toll-Free: (888) 534-0005
Rep.Steineke@legis.wi.gov

P.O. Box 8953
Madison, WI 53708-8953

Guest Column from Rep. Jim Steineke A Pro-Kid Budget We All Can Get Behind Word Count: 487

A top priority for all of us are our students and our schools. Whether it's a big city like Milwaukee, a rural town like Viroqua, or my own home of Kaukauna, most folks would agree that creating successful students today leads to a successful Wisconsin tomorrow. As a father of three kids enrolled in public schools, the husband of a public school teacher, and an elected leader, it's safe to say that education is a personal priority of mine.

Earlier this week, I joined together with my Republican colleagues to unveil an education spending plan that would provide predictable, sustainable, and supportive funding for schools in every corner of the state. In our Pro-Kid Budget, the education budget rises to a historic level of over \$12 billion – the single largest program in Wisconsin's general fund. With dollars being funneled directly into classrooms, an estimated 22% increase in special education funding, and renewed commitment of two thirds funding of schools, there's no doubt that our Pro-Kid Budget is, in fact, good for our student and our schools.

Having spoken with district administrators in my area, I'm not surprised to have heard positive comments about our proposal. The Wisconsin Association of School Boards (WASB) indicated they wanted to see a similar increase to our last budget; the Pro-Kid Budget mirrors the budget we approved in 2017. WASB said they wanted a \$200 increase per student annually; the Pro-Kid Budget increases funding by \$200 per pupil in the first year, and an additional \$204 per pupil in the second. Our Pro-Kid Budget checks all the boxes for providing meaningful, sustainable funding for our schools.

Unfortunately, much of the coverage regarding our responsible and maintainable Pro-Kid Budget revolves around comparing it to Governor Evers' exorbitant proposal of a \$1.4 billion increase. [As a WASB official said best, "Is what the governor provided realistic?"](#) My Republican colleagues and I answer that with a resounding "No." Not only is it unrealistic, it could actually end up damaging our school districts.

Imagine we fulfill Governor Evers' wish list and increase education spending by \$1.4 billion, knowing that this is an unsustainable jump. School administrators would now be tasked with ballooning funding for programs, knowing that not far down the line, they could be faced with cutting the exact programs they just expanded if Wisconsin's economy slows or our budget tightens. Yo-yoing education funding is simply bad for students and schools, and something we Assembly Republicans are unwilling to do.

What our schools want and need is funding that is predictable and sustainable. Our spending plan does just that. The Pro-Kid Budget provides realistic funding that builds off our historic investments from the previous budget. It prioritizes our students in need, while also allowing us to live within our



JIM STEINEKE

MAJORITY LEADER

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 5th ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

(608) 266-2401
Toll-Free: (888) 534-0005
Rep.Steineke@legis.wi.gov

P.O. Box 8953
Madison, WI 53708-8953

means without raising sales or income taxes. At the end of the day, our plan is good for students, good for schools, and good for Wisconsin.

###