



***For Immediate Release***

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**Gap-Widening Budget Fails Wisconsin's Children**

*Joint Statement from **Dr. Julie Underwood**, President, Wisconsin Alliance for Excellent Schools, and **Heather DuBois Bourenane**, Executive Director, Wisconsin Public Education Network in Response to Passage of State Budget Bill and Governor Evers' Veto Message.*

Governor Evers proposed an education budget that offered a road map to closing the gaps for Wisconsin's children. His budget invested in closing the special education funding gap, meeting the needs of rural students, addressing mental health needs, and providing adequate aid statewide. Wisconsinites spoke resoundingly in favor of that plan at each of the state budget hearings. It was a responsible, affordable plan made more so by the state's historic surplus. We applaud the governor for putting forward a strong budget.

Outrageously, the budget passed by the legislature reroutes students to a status quo which underserves them and shifts the state's responsibility to fund public schools onto local taxpayers. We thank every lawmaker who had the courage to vote against that budget. See how your lawmaker voted at <https://www.wisconsinnetwork.org/tracker>.

We thank Governor Evers for doing what he could with this gap-widening budget by committing an additional \$100 million in one-time federal aid to students and using his veto authority to free up \$550 million in budget stabilization funds for public schools.

Legislators now must reconvene to fix the education budget by:

- increasing special education reimbursement rates,
- providing equalization aid which districts can actually spend on educational needs, and
- increasing revenue limits.

We condemn this gap-widening education budget and invite all who share our outrage to join us. Let your legislators know that we expect them to fix the education budget before they adjourn. Join us at [WisconsinNetwork.org](http://WisconsinNetwork.org) to learn about organizing locally to stand up for students. Join us on August 2, 2021 for our 7th Annual Summer Summit and be a part of the growing movement to defend our public schools. Join us at the ballot box to elect leaders better committed to the success of our children and our communities.

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