Public Schools:
An investment in ourselves, our families and our future

All children, from small town rural Wisconsin to our state’s great cities, need a guaranteed promise that we will provide them with the opportunities they need to succeed. As more and more money is diverted from our public schools to other causes, this guarantee is very much in jeopardy.

Today, the Wisconsin State Legislature is considering actions that will devastate public education within the next few years. What can you do? Get members of your community to contact your legislators.

We need your legislators to do three things:

❖ Remove all privatization proposals from the state budget.
  - As private charter schools and voucher schools expand, more and more funding is pulled directly away from your community and your local schools.
  - Your property taxes go up so private schools and companies can profit.

❖ Provide all children with an equal increase in per pupil funding.
  - Funding should not be taken from one child to benefit another.
  - The state budget proposes up to a $1,400 increase for private school kids and a zero dollar increase—no increase at all—for public school kids.
  - That’s just not fair.

❖ Provide an increase in aid that supports the state's constitutional obligation to fund public education.
  - Every parent deserves a choice to send their child to a great public school.
  - Strong public schools are critical to our children’s future and are key to economic recovery.
Resources and Facts

**Remove all privatization proposals from the state budget**
Wisconsin’s 43 [largest school districts](#) are targeted for voucher school expansion (LFB, [Budget Analysis](#), p. 372).

Vouchers cost Milwaukee Public Schools $54 million last year—and the figure is growing (LFB, [Informational Paper 26](#), p. 16).

The state budget proposes a takeover of more than 200 public schools by turning them into private charter schools (LFB, [Budget Analysis](#), p. 385).

The state budget creates a state board that can authorize new private charter schools anywhere in Wisconsin even if democratically elected school boards do not want them (LFB, [Budget Analysis](#), p. 381).

Private (independent) charter schools take aid directly away from public schools ([DPI](#), [district losses from charters](#)).

On average, Wisconsin already spends less per pupil to support public school students than it does to support private voucher school students (LFB, [Informational Paper 28, Charter Schools](#)).

Wisconsin public schools outperform voucher and charter schools serving the same low income populations: [voucher school performance](#) / [summary data](#) / [WI charter school performance](#) / [Forward Institute charter school study](#).

Special education vouchers take money away from public schools, which still are required to pay for the special services. Voucher students also lose their federal rights and protections ([DPI](#), [press release](#)).

**Provide all children with an equal increase in per pupil funding**
We have the opportunity to invest: Wisconsin has $1.4 billion in new revenue ([DPI](#), [press release](#)).

Funding for public school students was dramatically cut and will not keep pace with inflation in the years ahead ([DPI](#), [Budget Overview](#), p. 5).

Funding for private school kids is up but public kids get nothing ([DPI](#), [chart](#)).

**Support the State Constitution and protect public education**
Defunding public schools to create a system of privatized education is most likely unconstitutional:

“The legislature shall provide by law for the establishment of district schools, which shall be as nearly uniform as practicable; and such schools shall be free and without charge for tuition to all children between the ages of 4 and 20 years” (Article X, Wisconsin Constitution).

Education is the best investment we can make to help the economy grow ([research and studies](#)).