CICERO INSTITUTE

Putting More Money Into the Classroom

A vital first step towards fixing Wisconsin's public schools

Today, it only takes four Wisconsin students to pay a classroom teacher's salary.

In 1970, it took about 10 students.[1]

So, where does the money go?

In Wisconsin, K-12 school spending has increased 128% since 1970, even when controlling for inflation, but **student learning and teacher pay remain at troublingly low levels**.[2]

Nationally, only about 40% of the 4.6 million NEW adults added to school districts since 1960 have been teachers. Today in Wisconsin, **only 52% of schools staff OVERALL are classroom teachers**.[3]

Teachers' paychecks went further nearly 40 years ago than they do today due to rising inflation and flat pay.

Fourth-grade **reading scores remain below the national average** in Wisconsin.[4]

THE SOLUTION

K-12 Spending Transparency

Education spending transparency allows parents, school boards, and taxpayers to stand up to unaccountable bureaucracies that waste money and fail to educate children.

By creating a window into each purchase that a school makes, states empower parents to advocate for wasting less and putting more money into higher teacher pay and other research-backed solutions that are proven to improve student learning outcomes.[5-6]

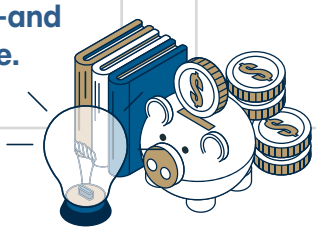
Publishing school-by-school information will help ensure that taxpayers know how their money is being spent—and can hold schools accountable.

HOW IT WORKS

Wisconsin would set up a public checkbook portal for local schools to **publish detailed information about every dollar they spend**.

Local officials, parents, and members of the public would have **immediate access to information** on how every dollar is spent, whether an administrator's salary, office supplies, or new curricula.

This policy can be even more effective when paired with **mandatory training for superintendents, principals, and school board members** so that they understand the information and what actions they can take when they find something concerning.



Nationally, the increased number of administrators (172%), support staff (246%), and instructional aides (1438%) **has not improved student learning outcomes**—and has made it nearly impossible to increase pay that would attract and retain more high-quality teachers.[7]

THE BOTTOM LINE:

When communities come together, armed with facts about how public-school dollars are spent, parents can hold schools accountable and advocate for proven strategies that improve student outcomes and compensate teachers fairly.

SOURCES:

1. https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d23/tables/dt23_236.55.asp
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