

GOVERNOR WALKER SIGNS BILL INCREASING SPARSITY AID

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Governor Walker Signs Sparsity Aid Legislation into Law
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GOVERNOR WALKER LEADING ON K-12 EDUCATION

FACTS & FIGURES

OVERVIEW

Eight years ago, according to the nonpartisan [Legislative Fiscal Bureau](#), the previous governor and legislature cut funding for schools.

In September, Governor Walker signed the 2017-19 state budget, making [the largest investment of actual dollars into K-12 education in history - an increase of \\$200 for every student in every school across the state this year and a \\$204 increase on top of that next year](#). Plus, the budget provides schools extra resources to cover transportation costs, add mental health services, and put new technology in the classroom.

Today, March 12, 2018, Governor Walker goes one step further by signing Assembly Bill 835, which increases Sparsity Aid for Wisconsin's rural schools to help address the unique challenges faced by low-population school districts.

ASSEMBLY BILL 835

[Assembly Bill 835](#) helps low-population school districts by modifying the sparsity categorical aid program and the revenue limit ceiling for school districts.

The bill increases the per pupil sparsity aid amount from \$300 to \$400 beginning in fiscal year 2018-19 and appropriates \$6.45 million GPR to fund this increase. This increase will benefit an estimated 144 school districts across Wisconsin.

It also increases the low revenue ceiling from \$9,100 to \$9,400 in 2018-19; \$9,500 in 2019-20; \$9,600 in 2020-21; \$9,700 in 2021-22 and \$9,800 in 2022-23. Currently, 107 school districts have per pupil revenue base amounts of less than \$9,400, and therefore may benefit from the low revenue ceiling adjustment in 2018-19.

Assembly Bill 835 was authored by Senator Howard Marklein (R-Spring Green), Representative John Nygren (R-Marinette) and Representative Jeff Mursau (R-Crivitz). It passed the Assembly on a bipartisan vote of 90-3 and was concurred in the Senate on a vote of 31-1.

2017-19 WISCONSIN STATE BUDGET: EDUCATION INVESTMENTS

The 2017-19 Wisconsin State Budget appropriates the [largest amount of state dollars into K-12 education in state history](#)— an \$11.5 billion total investment. Schools will receive [a \\$636 million increase in general and categorical aids](#), which is the largest in a decade. Additionally, state aid per pupil will rise to the highest level in a decade.

The budget [increases High-Cost Transportation Aid by \\$10.4 million](#), to help offset the costs of transportation in more rural districts.

The budget [provides \\$6.65 million to address student mental health needs](#):

- \$3.25 million in mental health expansion grants;
- \$3 million to support the hiring of more school social workers; and
- \$600,000 to fund additional training for school staff in mental health diagnostic tools.

The budget [provides \\$9.2 million to provide grants to schools for the purchase of educational technology](#).

The budget increases investment in broadband services by [\\$35.5 million over the biennium](#). The investments will benefit rural schools, public library systems, and underserved areas of the state.

The budget [creates and funds a teacher development grant program](#) under which school districts may partner with an educator preparation program to prepare certain nonteacher school district employees to become teachers.

EDUCATION QUALITY IN WISCONSIN

Students in Wisconsin schools have some of the [highest ACT scores](#) and some of the [best graduation rates](#) in the country.