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Tour highlights $90 million investment into K-12 education and new proposal to increase K-12 schools funding by nearly $2 billion while holding line on property taxes.

MADISON — Gov. Tony Evers this week concluded a statewide tour welcoming kids, parents, educators, staff, and administrators back to school for the 2022-23 school year. A video highlighting stops along the governor's back-to-school tour can be found here .



"I've always said that what's best for our kids is what's best for our state, and it's why the back-to-school season is one of my favorite times of the year," said Gov. Evers. "Over the last two weeks, I've been visiting schools all across the state to welcome kids, parents and families, and educators and staff back to classrooms in every corner of Wisconsin. From reading books to classes to listening to choir practice to answering the tough questions from students of all ages, I've been so grateful to see firsthand how bright our state's future is because of our kids, and I look forward to continuing to talk about the important investments we're making—and need to make—to continue doing what's best for them."

To kick off the tour, on Tues., Aug. 30, the governor announced a $90 million investment into K-12 education, which included $15 million to double his investment in the "Get Kids Ahead" initiative to provide mental health services in K-12 schools across Wisconsin, as well as $75 million designed to give districts flexibility to meet staffing needs, keep classroom sizes small, and provide other direct classroom support. The $90 million investment is funded by the state's allocation of federal American Rescue Plan Act dollars and will be distributed to schools in the coming weeks. A list of school districts and the allocated amount of funding through the first and second rounds of the Get Kids Ahead initiative is available here. A list of school districts and their allocated amount of additional per-pupil funding is available here.

The governor made the announcement at Aldo Leopold Elementary School in Madison with a press conference. He was joined for the announcement by several local leaders, including Madison Metropolitan School District (MMSD) Superintendent Dr. Carlton Jenkins, Leopold Elementary Principal Larry Love, Leopold Elementary educator and Dane County Board Supervisor Michelle Ritt, State Reps. Shelia Stubbs (D-Madison) and Francesca Hong (D-Madison), State Sen. Kelda Roys (D-Madison), former State Superintendent of Public Instruction Carolyn Sanford Taylor, and MMSD Board of Education President Ali Janae Muldrow and members, Maia Pearson, Nicki Vander Meulen, and Nichelle Nichols. During his visit, the governor dropped by an in-service training day for kindergarten teachers to thank them for their important work educating young learners. Photos of the governor's visit are available here and here. Following this, the governor visited Roosevelt Elementary School in Oshkosh, where he met with district, school, and local leaders, including State Rep. Gordon Hintz (D-Oshkosh), to tour the elementary school and greet educators as they put the finishing touches on their classrooms for the first day of school. Photos of the governor's visit to Oshkosh are available here, here, and here. Finally, the governor visited Northside Elementary School in La Crosse with State Rep. Jill Billings (D-La Crosse) where they joined teachers in dismissing students for the day and sat down for a discussion with school staff and teachers about how the governor's $90 million investment will help the district address challenges. Photos of the governor's visit are available here and here.

On Wed., Aug. 31, the governor and State Superintendent of Public Instruction Dr. Jill Underly helped welcome students to their first day of school at Rothschild Elementary School in Rothschild. During their visit, the governor and State Superintendent Underly joined district

leaders on a tour through the school, stopping along the way to visit with a new 3K class, help students construct paper chains, and answer hard-hitting questions from some fourth graders. The governor and State Superintendent Underly then stopped by the cafeteria to chat with the food service staff and kids eating lunch before going out to recess to meet Freddy the Raptor and join kids on the playground. Photos of the governor's visit are available here , here , here , and here .

On Thurs., Sept. 1, Gov. Evers and State Superintendent Underly visited Electa Quinney Elementary School in Kaukauna, where district and school leaders took them around to various classrooms to greet students, educators, and staff on their first day back to school. While there, the governor and State Superintendent Underly checked out some fourth graders' newly organized desks, listened to a choir class's rendition of the "Quinney School Song," and joined kids at recess. Photos of the governor's visit to Kaukauna are available here , here , and here . Following this, they visited Melrose-Mindoro High School in Melrose where they were joined by alumnus of the school, State Sen. Brad Pfaff (D-Onalaska). There, district and school leaders guided the governor, state superintendent, and Sen. Pfaff through multiple classroom visits in their newly constructed elementary and middle school. From there, they continued on to the high school and meet with students in a computer-aided design and drafting (CADD) class and students on their academic decathlon team. Photos of the governor's visit are available here , here , and here . Finally, they visited Gilmore Fine Arts School in Racine where they were joined by local leaders, including Racine Mayor Cory Mason and State Rep. Tip McGuire (D-Kenosha), to meet with teachers and students on their first day, sit in on classroom lessons, and listen to another choir class perform a song. Photos of their visits are available here , here , and here .

To kick off the second back-to-school week, on Tues., Sept. 6, the governor, together with State Superintendent Underly, announced their shared priorities for the 2023-25 K-12 education budget, including investments to improve reading and literacy outcomes, expand access to student mental health services and school nutrition, invest in financial literacy and out-of-school programming, address the staffing shortages to help keep class sizes small, and increase per pupil and special education aids while holding the line on property taxes. They made the announcement at the Academy of Accelerated Learning in Milwaukee as they joined Milwaukee Public Schools' (MPS) for their first day of school kickoff event. They were joined for the announcement by MPS Superintendent Dr. Keith Posley, MPS Board President Bob

Peterson, MPS Director Henry Leonard, State Sen. LaTonya Johnson (D-Milwaukee), and State Reps. Kalan Haywood (D-Milwaukee), Robyn Vining (D-Wauwatosa), and Deb Andraca (D-Whitefish Bay). Photos of the governor's visit are available here , here , here , and here . Following this, the governor and State Superintendent Underly visited Edison Middle School in Green Bay where they visited classrooms and spoke to students, and they concluded the day with a visit to Caddie Woodlawn Elementary School in Durand. While at Caddie Woodlawn Elementary School, they celebrated National Read a Book Day by reading the book "I Love Wisconsin: An ABC Adventure" with second graders and played a game of Wisconsin trivia with State Sen. Jeff Smith (D-Brunswick), which the governor proudly won. Photos of the governor's visit to Green Bay are available here and here . Photos of the governor's visit to Durand are available here , here , and her e .

On Wed., Sept 7, the governor and First Lady Kathy Evers visited Verona Area High School in Verona where they were joined by district and school leaders, as well as Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development Secretary-designee Amy Pechacek and State Rep. Sondy Pope (D-Mt. Horeb), for a tour of their new building, which finished construction in 2020. During the visit, they visited an AP Language Arts class where the governor answered questions about his career from the students, and they toured the extensive Career and Tech Ed wing of the school. Photos of the governor's visit to Verona are available here , here , here , and here .

On the last day of their statewide tour, the governor and State Superintendent Underly visited Tomah to meet with students, educators, and staff at Tomah Middle School and Miller Elementary School, where Gov. Evers was formerly the principal. Photos of the governor's visit to Tomah Middle School are available here , here , and here . Photos of the governor's visit to Miller Elementary School are available here

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. Following this, the governor and State Superintendent Underly visited Northern Lights Elementary School in Superior where they read the book, “Creepy Crayon!” to fourth graders and then helped serve lunch with Superior Mayor Jim Paine and State Rep. Nick Milroy (D-South Range). Photos of the governor’s visit are available
here
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here
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here
. Finally, Gov. Evers and State Superintendent Underly concluded their tour with a visit to Rhinelander High School in Rhinelander where they met with juniors and seniors in their Career and Tech Ed class and learned about the district’s “Inspire Rhinelander Program,” a new initiative that offers students information and opportunities to learn about possible careers while they are in school. Photos of the governor’s visit are available
here
and
here
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