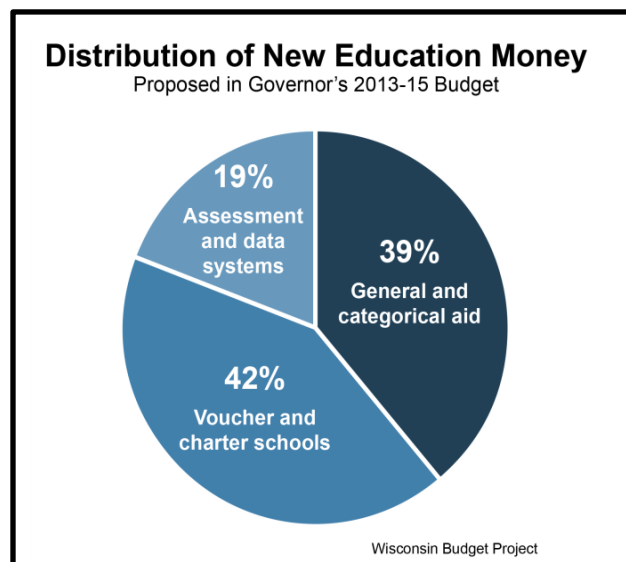


Invest in our Future: Support Strong Public Schools WCCF's recommendations for K-12 education in the 2013-15 Budget

Governor Walker has proposed a two-year budget that significantly expands resources for voucher and charter schools, and provides a large increase in spending for assessment of pupils and schools. At first glance, it appears to also give Wisconsin's public schools a raise in general funding, but a closer look reveals that this is largely an illusion.

The pie chart shows how the net growth in spending of \$278 million is allocated in the budget. It illustrates that the largest share of the increase, 42%, is for voucher and charter schools, compared to 39% for general and categorical aid. The latter categories of aid would not increase in 2013-14, but would grow by 2.2% in 2014-15.



But the increase for general aid is more likely to wind up in the pockets of property taxpayers than in the classroom. That's because the budget does not lift the revenue limit for school districts, which caps the amount of money that districts may raise through a combination of property taxes and general education aid from the state. So with the total capped, an increase in education aid results in a decrease in property taxes and no new money for schools.

WCCF urges lawmakers to make the following changes:

- Increase the total funding available for general aid for schools. (Options for achieving that include scaling back the proposed income tax cut and the proposed transfer from the General Fund for transportation spending, and use more of the increase in the DPI budget for general aid for schools.)
- Raise the school revenue cap by \$150 per student, as proposed by Senators Olsen and Ellis.
- Consider the proposed voucher expansion and vouchers for special needs students as separate legislation, and limit the increases in voucher and charter schools to the same percentage growth as the increase in general aid.
- Support local control: if vouchers and charter schools are to be expanded, allow local communities to decide if that option is right for them.