

## News Release

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### Evers makes unwavering commitment to public education

MADISON—State Superintendent Tony Evers made an unwavering commitment to public education during his inaugural address today in Milwaukee. He pledged to work with parents, educators, legislators, and policymakers to make sure every child in Wisconsin is a graduate, no matter where they live in the state.

Evers took the oath of office before an audience of students, teachers, school administrators, and other guests at Hi-Mount Community School. Wisconsin Supreme Court Justice Ann Walsh Bradley administered the oath, which charges Evers to serve the people of Wisconsin as the state superintendent of public instruction. Evers expressed gratitude to the students and teachers of Hi-Mount for extending their summer school time to be part of the event. He thanked outgoing State Superintendent Libby Burmaster for her eight years of dedicated service and welcomed former State Superintendent Barbara Thompson, his family, and other civic officials and guests to the inaugural ceremony.

In his address, Evers acknowledged the struggles of the past year and the challenges and accomplishments of previous generations. He noted that every generation leaves work to be done; ongoing work to establish a legacy of excellence and to build a strong foundation for the future. With accolades for the many successes of Wisconsin's public system of schools, Evers stressed that the status quo is neither sustainable nor acceptable. "Our commitment must be to meet the present-day needs of a global society," he said.

"We must get better. Our democracy is made stronger by our constant effort to change and renew, to strive for the common good. Ensuring strong public schools and libraries delivers the opportunity for our next generation of leaders to be our greatest," he said.

Evers lamented the tragedy of federal education policy over the past decade that has cared about only that which is tested. "We must strive to do better for our students and our public schools," he said. "We must fix what is broken, and build upon what works. In Wisconsin we must: recruit and retain quality educators, invest in innovation, ensure safe and respectful schools, advance common sense and transparent accountability, and work toward fair and sustainable school funding."

(more)

In announcing a Wisconsin Graduation Summit in December, Evers cited that around 65,000 public school students graduate each year and almost 7,000 drop out. “This is wrong,” he said emphasizing large disparities by race, ethnicity, disability, and socio-economic status. “Dropping out of school plays out over a lifetime for the student and our society with decreased lifetime earnings and lower quality of life for all.” The Graduation Summit will be a beginning of collective work to ensure that every child graduates.

Evers pledged to work with state and community leaders to aggressively transform Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS). He put aside controversies surrounding MPS governance and change to focus on the people of Milwaukee, who care, along with him, that children learn in all of Milwaukee’s public schools. Evers will appoint a Federal Funds Trustee for MPS to provide guidance and information to his department and the MPS Innovation and Improvement Advisory Council. He also will reinvigorate and expand the Department of Public Instruction’s Urban Education Office in Milwaukee, announcing his plan to hold office hours at that location.

In announcing expanded work for the Rural Advisory Council, Evers said that “All schools in our state must be able to provide educational opportunities needed in this competitive global economy. We must bring meaningful change to struggling schools. We must deliver hope through the power of public education.”

Evers urged parents, educators, and all adults across the state to join the effort to make our students’ lives better through public education. “We need every child to graduate. Support your public schools, libraries, and their students. I’ll be there, but we all need to step forward,” he said.

Evers is the first state superintendent in recent times to take the oath of office in Milwaukee. As state superintendent of public instruction, Evers will lead the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. The agency oversees the state’s 425 public school districts and 385 public libraries.

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**NOTES:** A high-resolution photo of the state superintendent is available on the Department of Public Instruction “Media Contacts and Resources” webpage at <http://dpi.wi.gov/eis/vm-media.html>. This news release and the complete text of the state superintendent’s inaugural address are available electronically at <http://dpi.wi.gov/eis/newsroom.html>.