



Life in Brief

Born: November 5, 1951

Hometown: Plymouth, WI

Current Residence: Madison, WI

Education:

- PhD, Education, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1986
- MA, Education, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1978
- BA, Education, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1974

Family:

- Wife, Kathy Evers
- Three adult children
- Nine grandchildren

Work History:

- Governor of Wisconsin, 2019-Present
- Superintendent, Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 2009-2018
- Deputy State Superintendent, 2001-2009
- Administrator, Cooperative Education Service Agency, 1992-2001
- Superintendent, Verona Schools, 1988-1992
- Superintendent, Oakfield Schools, 1984-1988
- Principal, Tomah High School, 1980-1984
- Principal, Tomah Elementary School, 1979-1980
- Teacher, Tomah Elementary School, 1976-1979

Electoral Overview

- Defeated incumbent Scott Walker in 2008 with a one-point lead
- Won the state superintendent election in 2017 with a 40-point lead

Quick Summary

A career educator and administrator who challenged incumbent Scott Walker's controversial administration with a platform of bettering the state through infrastructure and education

- Focused his platform on issues he believed had gone unaddressed in Wisconsin like poor education funding, dated infrastructure, and limited health care
- Enacted policies expanding funding, particularly for rural schools and mental health prevention, during his time as superintendent and carried those priorities into his term as governor, vetoing a state budget that lacked substantial support for public education
- As superintendent, promoted a complete overhaul of the school funding formula that was rejected by Scott Walker, sparking Evers' interest in campaigning for his office

Approach and Motivations

Relies on decades of experience in education to inform his decisions and push for equity

- Has served as an educator and administrator for his entire life leading up to his gubernatorial run
- Values the public education system greatly, focusing on expanding funding for mental health and districts struggling with under-enrollment
- Through the public education system has been exposed to a cross-section of society, and proposes equity-focused policy to close divides created by poverty
- Persistent in efforts to obtain state-wide office to advance education policy: started running for superintendent in 1993, but lost then and again in 2001 before finally cinching a victory in 2009

Policy Positions and Areas of Focus

Prioritizes education, health care, and public services for Wisconsin families

Education Policy: *Prioritizes equity*

- Funded expanded student mental health programs, responding to growing suicide rates
- Sponsored Sparsity Aid, a program to boost funding to low population school districts
- Collaborated with tribal nations on expanding educational opportunity for Native Americans
- Created the “Fair Funding for Our Future” plan, an equity-based reform for public school funds; then-Governor Walker rejected the plan
- Wants to continue the freeze on in-state tuition to keep higher education affordable, subsidizing the cost with funding for state higher education
- Vetoed a Republican spending plan due to its lack of investment in education

Health Care: *Focused on protecting patients*

- Supports protections made by the ACA, including preexisting conditions and maintaining the dependent age cap at 26
- Wants to expand health care access in Wisconsin by expanding Medicaid
- Supports medical marijuana

Taxation: *Lowering burdens on the middle class*

- Proposes a 10% income tax rate for Wisconsin families making less than \$150,000
- Plans to fund tax cuts by removing breaks for high-earning farmers and manufacturers
- Proposed a gas tax increase to fund road improvement projects

Immigration: *Opposes Trump’s border policies*

- Withdrew the Wisconsin National Guard from being called to the border and participated in the lawsuit against border wall funding
- Wants to extend drivers licenses to undocumented immigrants

Core Communities

Based in education his whole life, Evers gained the key support of the labor movement with his pro-union platform

Wisconsin Education System: After Scott Walker’s defunding of state education, Evers’ candidacy was called “Teachers’ Revenge”

- Evers’ three-time alma mater, The University of Wisconsin system, was instrumental in the Evers’ campaign after losing \$250 million in funding under the Scott Walker administration
- Evers’ campaigned heavily at Wisconsin public schools, speaking with teachers and professors
- Education lobbies and unions on local, state, and national levels endorsed, campaigned for, and donated hundreds of thousands to Tony Evers

Labor Movement: *Wisconsin’s laborers rallied against Scott Walker’s union busting by backing Evers, forming a key pillar of his campaign*

- Several unions and union leaders endorsed Evers for governor, rallying laborers
- The Wisconsin Laborers District Council was a top campaign contributor to the Evers campaign
- Electrical workers, teamsters, plumbers, transit workers, and other blue-collar groups made up a massive portion of Evers’ campaign finance

State Superintendent’s Office: *Nearly two decades in the state superintendent’s office have brought Evers close to top administrators*

- Elizabeth Burmaster, State Superintendent prior to Evers, defeated him in the 2001 election and appointed him Deputy State Superintendent
- Jeff Pertl, former senior policy advisor to Evers during his tenure as superintendent, was appointed as deputy secretary for the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families
- Michael Thompson, current Deputy State Superintendent, served with Evers in the superintendent’s cabinet for nearly two decades

Relevant Financial Information

Brought major education and blue-collar support to his campaign

Biggest Industry Donors (career)

- Trade Unions: \$1 million
- Public Sector Unions: \$1 million
- Education: \$600,000
- Lawyers and Lobbyists: \$500,000
- Transportation Unions: \$250,000

Biggest Corporate Donors (career)

- Wisconsin Education Association Council (Madison, WI): \$150,000
- Wisconsin Laborers District Council (DeForest, WI): \$100,000
- Operating Engineers Local 139 (Pequaukee, WI): \$100,000
- Wisconsin Pipe Trades Association (Milwaukee, WI): \$100,000
- International Union of Operating Engineers (Washington, DC): \$112,000

Biggest Individual Donors (career)

- Tom & Katherine Ann Steyer, Philanthropists: \$80,000
- Laurene Powell Jobs, Founder of the Emerson Collective (Palo Alto, CA): \$40,000
- Lynde Uihlein, Philanthropist (Milwaukee Wisconsin): \$40,000
- Adam J Lewis, Philanthropist: \$40,000
- Chris Abele, Milwaukee County Executive, \$40,000
- Stephen Silberstein, Innovative Interfaces (Emeryville, California): \$40,000

Publications, Media, and Speaking

Carries his core issues into speeches and presentations, often focusing on bipartisan progress and state education reform

Media: Often uses video announcements through social media to focus on policy and address the public

- Preferred Outlets: WISN and other Wisconsin state networks, direct to social media announcements
- Favorite Subjects: Education, public health, health care, infrastructure, gerrymandering
- Social Media Habits: Incredibly active on Facebook and Twitter

Speaking: Focuses on political change for Wisconsin when making addresses

- Favorite Subjects: Education, public health, health care, infrastructure
- Preferred Audience: Wisconsin residents, education groups

Family and Personal Background

Evers' entire life has centered around the public education system, from meeting his wife to launching his campaign

- Met his wife, Kathy, in kindergarten; they went to junior prom together and began dating afterwards
- Grew up, went to college, and worked in Wisconsin his entire life, giving him a strong dedication to the state
- Has spent his entire career in education, starting as a teacher; he and his entire family have attended public schools

Criticisms and Controversies

Has won two lawsuits against conservative interest groups reacting to his policies

Blocking buses to a religious school

- Superintendent Evers allowed Washington County, WI to not provide buses to a private Catholic school
- Conservative groups filed a lawsuit alleging Evers was violating the first amendment by discriminating against the school's religious values; federal judges found in favor of Evers
- As per Wisconsin law, attendance areas only need to provide buses to one religious school per denomination, and since there was already a Catholic school being bussed to in the area, Evers was found to be fully compliant with the law

Banned a conservative think tank from press briefings due to harsh criticism

- The McIver Institute for Public Policy was excluded from Evers' press briefings from the beginning of his term, and sued for a first amendment violation in August 2019
- In March 2020, the court decided in favor of Evers, allowing him to exclude the institute from his briefings

COVID-19 Response

A fast-acting and progressive governor, closed schools and issued stay at home orders quickly while also offering employee and business protections

Relevant Positions

- Governor of Wisconsin

Actions: Acted quickly with progressive policies, prioritizing public health over maintaining the economy

- Has focused his policies on maintaining public health first, shutting down businesses and schools early and declaring one of the first states of emergency
- Since directing closures, has turned efforts toward relieving economic burdens on individuals by halting evictions and foreclosures
- Loosened requirements for unemployment eligibility and offered back pay for those hurt by the one week waiting period
- Is collaborating with private sector health groups to increase testing and production of PPE
- Announced a comprehensive legislative proposal for economic recovery, which included expanding medical cost relief through copay reduction, banning utility cancellations, offering unemployment insurance back payments, increasing the EITC, supporting struggling childcare providers, provide small business funding, offering refinancing opportunities, and providing flexibility on property tax payments
- Tried to postpone the Wisconsin primary a second time and expand absentee voting, but was ultimately unsuccessful
- Brought in healthcare groups like Exact Sciences, Marshfield Clinic Health System, Promega, and UW health to help combat the COVID-19 outbreak

COVID-19 Response (Continued)

Statements: Issues calm but direct sentiments for residents to prioritize their own safety

- Conducts a weekly radio addresses and makes frequent press releases to reassure Wisconsin citizens and issue guidance
- Advocates strongly for federal support for his state; numerous requests to the federal government and FEMA, for disaster aid, personal protective equipment, and small business loans and has received limited assistance from the national stockpile
- Issued guidance early relative to other governors