



Walker visits New Berlin West

By Lauren Anderson

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NEW BERLIN — Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker touted what he said is a historic investment in the state's education system under his proposed biennial budget during a visit to New Berlin West Middle/High School on Thursday.

Addressing a crowd that included students, school staff and board members, Walker highlighted his proposed spending plan, which includes \$649 million in new state aids for the state's schools and lifts total K-12 investment to \$11.5 billion over two years, which makes for an all-time high in Wisconsin, he said.

"In this budget we're putting more into K-12 education than we ever have put in the state's history," he said.

Walker said a priority in this budget is programs that allow high school students to earn early college credit and provide them work-based experiences to guide their post-secondary paths.

He praised the New Berlin School District's Future Teachers Program, which provides high school students with exposure to a career in teaching through coursework, fieldwork and mentorship.

"We know, just like there is in health care and IT and manufacturing, there are tremendous needs to recruit more quality teachers," Walker said.

Walker also highlighted that the proposed budget will include an increase in funding to technical colleges and \$100 million more to the University of Wisconsin System. He said the UW funding increase has to come with more accountability, including tracking how many students graduate from the campuses and how many students gain employment in high-demand careers.

The budget includes a freeze on tuition for UW System in-state undergraduate students in the first year and a 5 percent tuition cut in the second year.

"We want to make it affordable for students to go to college, we want to make it affordable for you to get a degree, we want to make it affordable for many of the working families in the state to help their sons and daughters go off to college," he said.

Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker discusses his 2017-19 budget proposal during a visit to New Berlin West Middle/High School on Thursday.

Prior to Walker's stop at New Berlin West High School, he spoke to the New Berlin Chamber of Commerce and Visitors Bureau annual legislative meeting, during which he touted \$592 million worth of tax relief included in his budget plan. According to a release from the governor's office, the proposed tax relief included in his budget, combined with the tax relief enacted since he took office, would bring the total amount of tax relief provided to more than \$8 billion.

Overall, income taxes on a typical family will decrease by \$139 in Walker's proposed budget, according to the release.

Amid speculation around Walker potentially taking a position in President Donald Trump's administration — particularly labor secretary — Walker on Thursday also reiterated his commitment to staying on as governor.

"I am governor 100 percent," he said. Walker said he will formally announce whether he intends to run for a third term after the budget is completed.

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