

BUSTED AGAIN! School Superintendent Tony Evers Repeatedly Plagiarized Over 6 Years

State and national media [reported Friday](#) on Tony Evers plagiarizing large sections of his recent 2019-2021 budget.

Evers' team tried to explain it away as a one-time mistake. "***In this case, proper citation use was missed in certain places,***" Evers aide Thomas McCarthy told the Journal Sentinel.

But that wasn't the first time Evers passed off others' work as his own. Evers' 2013-2015 Budget Request, released September 17, 2012, just before his first re-election, plagiarized a policy analysis done two years earlier by a national education think tank. Additionally, a plagiarized passage that ignited the controversy has appeared in two other budgets dating back to 2014. This undercuts the Evers team's assertion about plagiarism in the 2019-2021 budget -- that the plagiarism issue was confined to "this case."

NOTE: The below sections are the examples of plagiarism by Evers from past budgets. The **highlighted** sections represent the language Evers lifted verbatim from sources without citation.

The new examples of plagiarism are as follows:

In the background and analysis section of 2013-2015 Biennial Budget Request Decision Item 6004 (improving graduation rates), the Department of Public Instruction Budget Request plagiarized a policy analysis done by the Alliance for Excellent Education. The section in the DPI Budget Request is drawn nearly verbatim from the Alliance for Education report, with the only difference being the use of the word "pupil(s)" in place of the original "student(s)" as noted below by italics and underlined. The highlighted sections of the Alliance for Excellent Education are the exact text used in Evers' budget.

It is important to note, that while the Alliance for Excellent Education cites other sources throughout its analysis, the Evers budget use of the analysis does not include citations of any kind.

[Department of Public Instruction, 2013-15 Biennial Budget Request, September 17, 2012 \(Page 279\)](#)

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[Original: Alliance for Excellent Education, High School Dropouts in America, September 2010](#)

While there is no single reason for why students drop out, research indicates that difficult transitions to high school,

skills, and a lack of engagement all serve as prominent barriers to graduation.

- Low attendance or a failing grade can identify future dropouts, and in some cases as early as sixth grade. Most dropouts are already on the path to failure in the middle grades and engage in behaviors that strongly correlate to dropping out in high school.
- Ninth grade serves as a bottleneck for many *pupils* who begin their first year of high school only to find that their academic skills are insufficient for high school level work. Academic success in ninth grade coursework is highly predictive of eventual graduation. Unfortunately, many *pupils* are not given the extra support they need to make a successful transition to high school and are lost in ninth grade.
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- Low attendance or a failing grade can identify future dropouts, and in some cases as early as sixth grade.⁵ Most dropouts are already on the path to failure in the middle grades and engage in behaviors that strongly correlate to dropping out in high school. Various researchers have identified low attendance or a failing grade as specific risk factors.
- Up to 40 percent of ninth-grade students in cities with the highest dropout rates repeat ninth grade; only 10 to 15 percent of those repeaters go on to graduate.⁶ Ninth grade serves as a bottleneck for many *students* who begin their first year only to find that their academic skills are insufficient for high school-level work.
- Over one third of all dropouts are lost in ninth grade.⁷ Academic success in ninth-grade coursework is highly predictive of eventual graduation; this is even more so than demographic characteristics or prior academic achievement.⁸ Unfortunately, many *students* are not given the extra support they need to make a successful transition to high school and are lost in ninth grade.
- The six million secondary students who comprise the lowest 25 percent of achievement are twenty times more likely to drop out of high school than students in the top-performing quartile.⁹ Among high school students whose test scores were in the top quartile of their senior class, less than one percent dropped out. Among the high school students whose test scores were in the bottom quartile of their senior class, twenty percent dropped out.
- Research shows that a lack of student engagement is predictive of dropping out even after controlling for academic achievement and student background.¹⁰ Both academic and social engagement are integral components of successfully navigating the education pipeline.

One of the most egregious examples of plagiarism in the 2019-2021 Budget came from the National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability. But the evidence shows this was not a one time or accidental oversight. In fact, DPI has plagiarized the same information for the last three budget requests. They have moved the information around under different types of proposals but have kept word for word, without attribution, the analysis originally published by the National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability. This is not an oversight but a purposeful action. Evers' 2017-19 budget request copies NCWD information and analysis without credit in the background of Decision Item 6035 Transition Readiness Investment Grant.

Department of Public Instruction, 2017-19 Biennial Budget Request, November 10, 2016 (Page 72)

Work experiences are a critical component of preparing youth for transition to adulthood. Potential benefits for youth who participate in work experiences include:

- 1) gaining career readiness skills, including the “soft skills” that employers look for in entry-level workers;
- 2) increasing one’s knowledge of specific occupational skills and workplace settings;
- 3) establishing a work history and connections with employers that can aid in future job searches; and
- 4) developing an understanding of different occupations in order to make informed career choices.

Additionally, research studies suggest that workbased learning may increase school attendance, decrease dropout rates, reduce school suspensions, and increase school engagement (Medrich, Calderon, & Hoachlander, 2002). Pupils who participate in

Original: National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability, Engaging Youth in Work Experiences, Issue 2, September 2011

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work-based learning are more likely than their peers to attend college or obtain employment (Jobs for the Future, 2007).

While work experiences are beneficial to all youth, they are particularly valuable to youth with disabilities. Research shows that work experiences during high school for youth with disabilities help them acquire jobs at higher wages after they graduate (Colley & Jamison, 1998). Also, *pupils* who participate in occupational education and special education in integrated settings are more likely to be competitively employed than *pupils* who have not participated in such activities (Blackorby & Wagner, 1996; Colley & Jamison, 1998; Luecking & Fabian, 2000; Rogan, 1997).

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While work experiences are beneficial to all youth, they are particularly valuable for youth with disabilities. One of the most important findings from the research shows that work experiences for youth with disabilities during high school (paid or unpaid) help them acquire jobs at higher wages after they graduate (Colley & Jamison, 1998). Also, *students* who participate in occupational education and special education in integrated settings are more likely to be competitively employed than *students* who have not participated in such activities (Blackorby & Wagner, 1996; Colley & Jamison, 1998; Luecking & Fabian, 2000; Rogan, 1997).

While the same information is plagiarized in the 2015-17 budget, it is presented in a slightly different way than in the 2017-2019 budget, undercutting any possible explanation of a simple oversight error. This time the National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability study is plagiarized under Decision Item 6009 - Aid for Special Education Job Development.

Department of Public Instruction, [2015-17 Biennial Budget Request](#), November 10, 2014 (Page 54)

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