



SENATOR LENA TAYLOR

a Champion for...

www.LenaTaylor.org

Education

Lena is an award winning fighter for education

2007 Milwaukee Teachers Education Association
Friend of Public Education Award

2011 National Education Association
Friend of Education Award

More Funding for Milwaukee Schools

\$64.5 million for MPS by fixing the funding formula flaw

In the 2009 budget, Lena introduced a [motion](#) to fix the funding formula. The state picks up more of the cost of the school choice program and MPS receives a greater share of state aid.

As a result, MPS received additional \$4.4 million in state aid in the 2009-10 school year, and received more than \$64 million in total since Lena made this change.

\$68 million for MPS by creating High Poverty Aid

In the 2007-09 budget, Lena created a [new category](#) of school aid for school districts where a majority of students qualify for free or reduced lunch.

Since it took effect, this law brought an additional \$68 million in aid to MPS.

\$6.8 million for MPS by changing the formula for calculating enrollment

In the 2009 budget, Lena introduced a motion to change the way enrollment is calculated for MPS. Instead of taking the average of two dates in September and January, the motion called for taking the highest of three dates in September, January, and May.

This change brought in an extra \$6.8 million since the 2009-10 school year.

“At the end of the day, it doesn’t matter what school a kid goes to. Whether our children are learning is much more important than where they are learning. Our schools need to be well funded and accountable in order to be successful. If we want to break the cycle of violence and poverty, our kids need a great education. If you can’t read, you can’t learn and if you can’t learn, you can’t succeed. That’s why I put such a high priority on reading to kids.”

--- Senator Lena C. Taylor



Lena participates in the Senate Scholars program as a way to help a deserving high school student interested in politics get a hands-on experience at the State Capitol.

\$637,000 for area schools through increased revenue limits

In the 2009-2011 budget, Lena [increased the revenue limits](#) for school district expenditures on school safety, school nurses, and transportation costs.

This budget also increased revenue limits for energy efficiency, which brought \$137,000 to Glendale Public Schools and \$500,000 to Shorewood Public Schools.

\$1.125 million Milwaukee Summer Reading Project funding bill

Lena authored [AB-338](#), bipartisan legislation to provide more than \$1 million to fund the Milwaukee Summer Reading Improvement Project.

The program focuses on kids in grades 1-3 who tested below their respected grade in reading. Lena believes that getting to these kids when they are young will have a tremendous opportunity to increase their ability to succeed at not only reading, but other subjects in the future.

More Accountability for ALL Milwaukee Schools:

Negotiated a Compromise to the Doyle/Barrett MPS Plan:

In 2009, as part of their application for funding from President Obama's Race to the Top Program, Gov. Jim Doyle and Mayor Tom Barrett proposed legislation that would have given the Milwaukee Mayor the power to appoint the MPS Superintendent and Board of Directors.

Lena sat down with Gov. Doyle and worked out a version of this bill that would protect Milwaukee citizens' ability to elect their own school board.

Lena then sat down with Gov. Doyle, State Superintendent Tony Evers, and representatives from MPS and the teachers unions to work out a compromise that would protect the MPS board's autonomy while also ensuring that we were making the kinds of real reforms that would allow Wisconsin to be eligible for Race to the Top funding.

The result of these negotiations was [2009 Act 215](#), which gives the State Superintendent of Public Instruction the power to identify school districts with struggling schools and work with their elected school boards to make a comprehensive plan for corrective action.

- Across the state, schools and districts in this program have significantly improved at closing achievement gaps, and are now closing achievement gaps as fast as schools not in the program.



With more than [84% of Milwaukee school students](#) reading below grade level, Lena takes every chance she can to reinforce literacy to all school kids. That's also why she authored a bill to bring in more than \$1 million to the Milwaukee Summer Reading Project.

- In rural and suburban areas, schools in the program are now closing math and reading gaps even faster.

Since this plan became law, MPS and Superintendent Evers have worked together to implement a number of successful reforms, including [Positive Behavioral Intervention System](#), which reduced the suspension rate in MPS by twelve percentage points.

School Choice Accountability

As part of the 2009 budget, Lena passed a series of sweeping reforms to the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program.

- Required choice schools to give their students the same test used to evaluate public school students
- Created a position in the state Department of Public Instruction to review choice schools' financial statements.
- Require choice schools to adopt academic standards in math, science, reading, writing, geography, and history.
- Require choice schools to receive accreditation from an independent agency before participating in the program.

- Require teachers at choice schools to have a bachelor's degree.
- Require choice schools to provide at least 1,050 hours of teaching to elementary students and at least 1,137 to students in middle and high school.

Lena authored [2011 SB 163](#), a bill that would require schools receiving money from the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program to perform the same background checks required for public school teachers.

Fought Republican Takeover of MPS

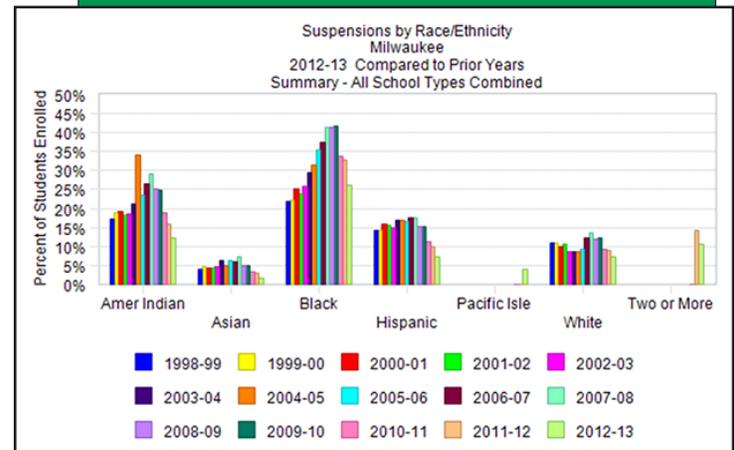
Lena fought to stop the Republican takeover of MPS in the 2015-17 budget. The Opportunity Schools and Partnership Program (OSPP), which was authored by two suburban legislators, takes struggling MPS schools away from the democratically-elected school board and gives them to the oversight of an unelected commissioner, who has the power to privatize schools and fire teachers. During the debate in the Joint Finance Committee, Lena introduced several motions to lessen the impact of this harmful legislation, including:

- Replacing the OSPP Commissioner with the Superintendent of MPS.
- Applying the same standards for hiring the OSPP Commissioner that MPS uses when hiring its Superintendent.
- Counting students in the Milwaukee school choice program as MPS students for general aid purposes.
- Expanding the plan so that choice schools, independent charters, and public schools statewide would be included.

Unfortunately, all of these amendments were rejected by the Republicans on the Joint Finance Committee on a party-line vote. You can watch the debate on Wisconsin Eye [here](#).



Lena regularly meets with visiting school groups at the State Capitol to help them learn about the state's history and how they can make a difference in their community. Here, Lena is pictured laying on the floor of the center of the Capitol teaching students about the painting on the ceiling of the Capitol Dome.



Our kids can't learn if they aren't in the classroom. In 2009, Lena authored a law that required school districts with struggling schools to work with the State Superintendent to make their own comprehensive plan for corrective action. After the law passed, MPS changed their suspension policy, which reduced school suspensions.

Experienced Leader who fights for education.

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