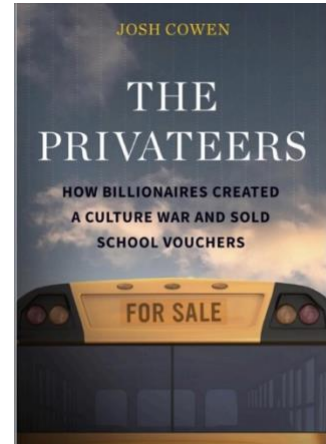


## Education Committee Report – March 2025

Denise Gaumer Hutchison, Chair

Our next meeting will be on **Thursday, March 20**, from 3:30-5, via Zoom. All members are welcome to attend. [Email me here](#) for the Zoom link.

The Education Committee met February 13, and we received an amazing presentation by Lynn Gerlach, Green Bay Area School Board member and a member of our League. She delved into the book *The Privateers* by Josh Cowen and provided an extensive summary to the committee members. The presentation was recorded and is being edited to be placed in our YouTube channel for everyone to see. Editing might still take a couple more weeks; we will send out a notification when it is ready.



With that video forthcoming, today I'd like to highlight information that was presented at *Lively Issues* regarding the current status of public education in Wisconsin and what we need to watch for in the near future. Please [email me with questions](#) about any of this.

The Education Committee is made up of League Members interested in advocating for great public education for children in Wisconsin but also committed to ensuring that democracy is being served in our public schools. Wisconsin has 421 public school districts that serve over 800,000 children and their families. Our public schools have not received a cost of living increase for 16 years, even though our state is sitting on a \$4 billion surplus! And yet our school districts must go to referendum over and over to address their financial needs. The major factors undermining the needs of our public school children are the issues that the Education Committee works to address in our monthly meetings:

**1. Inadequate reimbursement for special education needs/services.** The Green Bay School District alone transfers more than \$30 million dollars out of its general fund each year to pay for special education needs. For those services, the state of Wisconsin reimburses public schools for less than 30% of its expenditures. However, *private* schools receive a 90% reimbursement for special education services. The Governor is proposing an increase in reimbursement for special education for public schools, which brings us to the second issue...

**2. Private School Vouchers** - Private School Vouchers are costing Wisconsin school districts and tax payers a huge amount of money. Although funding for public schools is mandated in the state constitution, the state isn't meeting its requirement to fully fund public schools before funding private schools. Instead, private schools received more money per child in the last budget than our public schools received! The Education Committee is working to address a number of issues related to this situation. We would like to have a voucher expert make a presentation sometime in the spring. The League is

also working with the GBEA School Board, the mayor and the city council to create transparency on the tax bill regarding the cost of vouchers. Stay tuned to attend a city council meeting in support of tax bill transparency.

**3. A variety of threats:** Lack of free and reduced-price meals for children; needed funding for English Language Learners; rural school supports; protections for children in our schools from immigration threats

**4. Will the U.S. Department of Education close?** We're watching what is coming from the federal government about that as well as reduction in federal funding to our schools, the termination of Medicaid funding for children with special needs, and numerous other concerns.

**5. Our Wisconsin state budget:** The Joint Finance hearings will be starting around the state for the 2025-2027 state budget. The Education Committee will discuss how we get involved in those hearings along with the League statewide.

**6. Wisconsin Public Education Network is hosting its summer summit in Green Bay** in July. It would be great to hear what League members would like to do to get engaged in the Summer Summit at Preble High School on July 24, 2025.

**Please let us know if there are topics you'd like to see the Education Committee address.**