



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**STATEWIDE COALITION OF MORE THAN 100,000 MEMBERS
ANNOUNCES SUPPORT FOR CHANGES TO PUBLIC SCHOOL FUNDING**

**CURRENT PROGRAM CUTS, LARGER CLASS SIZES, AND MORE
WEAKEN WISCONSIN'S TRADITION OF PUBLIC EDUCATION**

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Coalition includes parent groups, school boards, local business people, teachers and others

GREEN BAY, Wis. – The School Finance Network (SFN), a new and growing statewide coalition of parents, school boards, teachers, support professionals and others, today announced support for a comprehensive plan to help change how Wisconsin public schools are funded in order to continue the state's longstanding tradition of providing a quality education to all students.

Parents, teachers, local school board members, business people and others from around Wisconsin unveiled the plan inside Green Bay's West High School library and planned to do so at nine other locations around the state over the next two days to help build awareness and support for the effort. SFN spokespeople said the plan is a "starting point" to correct a flawed funding system that is not serving children fairly and needs to be changed. Surrounded by student yearbooks, academic honor plaques and trophies, SFN supporters stressed the immediate need for change after 15 years of capped funding.

"Wisconsin public schools have a strong tradition of serving local communities, and as parents, teachers and concerned community leaders, we recognize the importance to our state's long term health by providing a quality education to our young people," said Greg Sawyer, a physics teacher at Green Bay West High School. "Times are challenging for public schools throughout the state and here in Green Bay, everyone is facing tough budgetary decisions that can result in classes being eliminated, programs being cut, and class sizes being increased. The School Finance Network shares the common view that flaws in the state's current funding system need to be changed, so the Wisconsin tradition of quality education can continue.

Our coalition has a plan that is a starting point to change the current funding system into one that is more financially accountable, significantly more effective and puts the funding where it is needed most – with children and their educational needs."

(more)

COALITION PARTNERS

AFT – Wisconsin
www.aft-wisconsin.org

Fair Aid Coalition

School Administrators
Alliance
www.wsaa.org

Southeastern Wisconsin
Schools Alliance
www.schoolsalliance.com

Wisconsin Alliance for
Excellent Schools
www.excellentschools.org

Wisconsin Association
of School Boards
www.wasb.org

Wisconsin Association
of School District
Administrators
www.wasda.org

Wisconsin Education
Association Council
www.weac.org

Wisconsin Parent Teacher
Association (PTA)
www.wisconsinpta.org

**SFN CONTACT
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SFN WEBSITE:

www.sfnwisconsin.org





The SFN plan details how public school districts statewide would benefit through changes that help children with special needs, disabilities and from low-income families. It also includes updates to the funding formula for rural districts and those with declining enrollment. SFN leaders said the goal is to enact overall change so funding protects educational programs and services that benefit children. The plan also helps maintain classes that help young people to learn skills that can benefit their communities statewide.

“Our economy is dependent on an educated workforce and the jobs of tomorrow will depend on a higher level of skills that will be gained in public school classrooms,” said Paul Linzmeyer, a Green Bay-Appleton area business leader. “The School Finance Network plan recognizes that a quality education is a valued tradition in our state and a permanent asset to our economy. This plan also insists on strong financial accountability and makes the system better and more effective.”

SFN spokespeople indicated their plan needs to be implemented now to get the tradition of education back on course in Wisconsin before it is too late.

“The public schools in Wisconsin are working hard to provide a great education for children and their families. We see it every day here in Green Bay,” said Denise Gaumer-Hutchison, parent and co-president of Green Bay Wequiock Elementary’s Parent Teacher Organization. “The children of today and tomorrow should have access to the same great education I received. By supporting a plan that ensures future generations’ success, we are fulfilling the commitment our parents and grandparents made to us – educating our children well and with great care.”

The School Finance Network plan will help control property taxes and no school district will lose funding, according to the plan.

The School Finance Network believes state legislators and the Governor can help determine the appropriate funding for the plan by reviewing potential funding mechanisms that might include eliminating existing tax loopholes and tax breaks, or exploring possible federal funding.

The School Finance Network also launched a multi-media and interactive online effort to provide information to supporters statewide through the launch of a Web site at www.sfnwisconsin.org and additional Facebook, MySpace and Twitter pages that will keep members updated through video, podcasts and more on the grassroots coalition’s activities. Currently, the more than 100,000-member coalition consists of groups which include: Wisconsin Parent Teacher Association (PTA), Wisconsin Association for School Boards, Wisconsin Alliance for Excellent Schools, Fair Aid Coalition, School Administrators Alliance, Southeastern Wisconsin Schools Alliance, Wisconsin Association of School District Administrators, AFT-Wisconsin and Wisconsin Education Association Council (WEAC).

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