



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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State Superintendent's Proposal a Step in the Right Direction

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Wisconsin PTA

For nearly 20 years, the state of Wisconsin has been challenged by an ineffective, inflexible and ultimately unsustainable school funding system. By failing to account for the unique characteristics of our rural schools and ignoring the needs of districts with higher levels of poverty, the system has shown that it simply does not work.

To make things worse, the most recently passed state budget moves away from the state's long-held commitment to paying for two-thirds of the costs of Wisconsin schools, resulting in a situation in which local taxpayers are being forced to pay for a larger percentage of school costs through increases in taxes.

The School Finance Network, a coalition of education groups that is committed to improving how Wisconsin schools are funded, is calling for the immediate implementation of essential changes that address costs for transportation in rural districts and funding for districts that are combating high concentrations of poverty.

On November 15, State Superintendent Tony Evers introduced his new budget for Wisconsin schools, called the Fair Funding for Our Future plan. In it, the state superintendent makes some thoughtful recommendations that would have a significant and positive impact on both schools and taxpayers. The Evers plan would provide more transparency for taxpayers and hold the line on property taxes, while at the same time offer the financial support needed to ensure that Wisconsin's fine tradition of quality education is not lost.

While the plan does not address everything that should be changed about school funding, it is a significant step in the right direction and one that has been embraced by Republicans and Democrats alike.

The Fair Funding for Our Future plan will help ensure that districts have the funding they need, providing them with a base level of support and better, more clear information on how much money they can expect to receive on a year-to-year basis. It redirects the school levy tax credit, which, despite its name, has never actually been used to fund schools or to pay for the education of a single student. This adjustment alone will

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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

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provide greater truth in budgeting and more transparency into how taxpayer dollars are being spent.

As state leaders look to chip away at public education funding in the hope of shoring up the state's budget deficit, it is important that as citizens we remember that education is one of the key drivers behind the success of our future economy. Now is not the time to take educational opportunities away from our students, and the Fair Funding for Our Future plan helps to ensure that this will not happen.

In an era of political wrangling, Evers' plan is something that everyone can embrace. For the sake of our schools, our communities and most importantly, our students, let's begin with this proposal's common ground approach and take the first step in the right direction toward real school funding reform.

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The School Finance Network, a coalition of individuals and organizations dedicated to improving the method of funding Wisconsin's public schools, is made up of the following groups: AFT–Wisconsin, the Fair Aid Coalition, the School Administrators Alliance, the Southeastern Wisconsin Schools Alliance, the Wisconsin Alliance for Excellent Schools, the Wisconsin Association of School Boards, the Wisconsin Association of School District Administrators, the Wisconsin Education Association Council, and the Wisconsin PTA.

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