

Governor Jim Doyle
P.O. Box 7863
Madison, WI 53707

January 10, 2007

Dear Governor Doyle,

I serve as President of the Eau Claire Association of Educators, representing over 800 educators in our Eau Claire public schools. I'm writing to reinforce our plea that you make school funding a priority in the next months of planning.

The Eau Claire Association of Educators is a partner in the Wisconsin Alliance for Excellent Schools. Teachers recognize first-hand that the quality of our schools is threatened greatly because of the way they are funded. Unless we do something now, it will soon be impossible to stop the trend toward mediocrity, indeed ruin, in our great schools. We urge you to stand up for our children as you have in the past.

Our school board has cut millions of dollars in the 13 years since revenue controls and the QEO have been in affect. We are currently struggling with a \$7 million deficit. Our teachers have professionally done more with less, classrooms have reduced equipment, we have forgone facility improvements, and our technology will deteriorate as we try to prioritize and keep cuts from directly affecting kids. Although our community greatly values education, and our schools have maintained the excellence we expect, there is no doubt that our chances to pass a referendum this spring are minimal.

As a state, we will be challenged further as we try to attract and retain the quality of teachers who have been instrumental to our success. With little incentive to go into education, and salaries that have not kept up with inflation for over a decade, we are losing the best and brightest to professions with better wages, hours and working conditions.

As a partner in WAES, the Eau Claire Association of Educators is committed to fighting for increased categorical aid to address the critical short-term needs in all school districts. At the same time, we urge you to work with us, other education stakeholders, and the Legislature to begin comprehensive reform of the school-funding system in 2007.

You have been a true ally for public education, and we have great faith in your ability to deal with this crisis head-on. Statewide, we will work in any way to support your efforts to bring this priority to the legislature and do the hard work required to make positive chance for the kids of Wisconsin.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Jo Burke, President
Eau Claire Association of Educators
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