



Madison Teachers Inc.

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John A. Matthews, Executive Director

January 23, 2007

Honorable James Doyle
Governor, State of Wisconsin
P.O. Box 7863
Madison, WI 53707

Re: Wisconsin Alliance For Excellent Schools

Dear Jim:

As you are aware, MTI is a labor organization which represents approximately 5,500 teachers, substitute teachers, educational assistants, clerical and technical employees, and school security assistants employed by the Madison Metropolitan School District and the teachers employed by Middleton/Cross Plains School District. MTI participates in the Wisconsin Alliance For Excellent Schools (WAES), and has been so since its inception. MTI is also among the founding members of the Institute for Wisconsin's Future.

Also, as you are aware, Wisconsin's failure to adequately fund education is causing children and educators incredible stress. This is primarily caused by your predecessor forcing revenue controls on local school boards, actually usurping one of the foundations upon which local school districts were created, i.e., local control which enabled the populace of each school district to determine the quality of education to be available to the children of that specific district, but also because you and the Legislature have yet to correct this horrible legislation.

As a result of revenue controls, students have to make-do with fewer resources, and teachers struggle with a multitude of additional duties and responsibilities. Superintendents annually talk about the impact of under-funding: overcrowded classrooms, elective courses cut, buildings in need of repair, dirty classrooms, teachers resigning due to overstress, and early retirement. Teachers are overburdened with a massive amount of testing. The increased access to educational opportunities for students with special needs has run square into a climate of dwindling resources to accommodate their needs, and the needs of the student population as a whole. Teachers continue to spend their own funds to keep the system afloat. Tax deductions, specific to teachers, that allow for the deduction of this educational material, codify this contradiction.

Because of the above-referenced, teachers face increasing stress as they know they must teach all students broad-based knowledge, but are forced to limit the breadth and scope of their teaching to achieve tangible, *quantitative* statistics. Burdensome federal and state testing requirements impose significant pressure on a teacher and limit what s/he can do to meet students needs. While teachers continue to pull off this herculean task, it takes its toll - day to day, month to month, and year to year, with burnout resulting for many.



MTI representing Madison Teachers, Substitutes, Educational Assistants, Supportive Educational Employees, School Security Assistants

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When this country was founded, the very idea of "public education" was met with ridicule and attack. This was based on a rigid class system that recognized the inherent danger of an educated populace. While attacks on public schools, teachers and the underperforming students have become couched in euphemism, the antagonism towards equal opportunity remain. The way public schools were legislated as noted above corrected this. The present revenue controls have effectively removed this.

When Wisconsin Manufacturers & Commerce (WMC) publicly lauds the elimination of student resources, when legislators actively seek to starve the public sector and the public trust, when finite resources meet a burgeoning student need - those who truly believe in public schools are forced to speak up for the children.

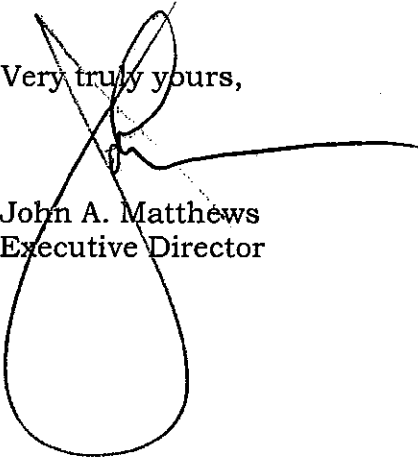
The pleas and demands you have heard, and will continue to hear, from the public are *real*. They demand that you show courage to *adequately* fund education for all students.

MTI believes that your budget must include substantial increases in categorical aids (special education, bilingual programs, transportation, SAGE, and small, rural schools), as well as help for declining enrollment districts. The state must maintain two-thirds state funding just to keep school districts from closing.

These emergency funding increases are necessary this year, but do not solve the fundamental fiscal problems of school districts that are causing educational crises. It is incumbent upon you to initiate comprehensive reform of the school-funding system during the early days of the 2007-09 legislative session.

If Wisconsin cannot adequately invest in its children, what kind of future can we expect for our state?

Very truly yours,



John A. Matthews
Executive Director

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c: Tom Beebe, WAES
David Medearis, MTI President