

January 25, 2007

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

Dear Governor Doyle:

The Northern Tier UniServ (NTU) is a partner in the Wisconsin Alliance for Excellent Schools. NTU represents teachers and support staff in twenty-seven public school districts in the northern part of the state. Our members know that the education and the future of the children in our communities and around the state are in great jeopardy because of the way we fund our public schools. Unless we do something now it will continue to get worse. We have appreciated your efforts in this area in the past and expect you to continue to stand up for our children.

NTU schools are in trouble financially. We have too many districts where cutting budgets have become an annual event. This should not be allowed to continue because it is affecting the direct instruction to the students. Districts have had to increase class size, delay repairs of buildings and delay the purchase of equipment. One school – Florence – is close to closing its doors. All schools in NTU need more financial assistance from the state.

Most of NTU schools are in a rural setting, covering many miles. They are increasingly having trouble with meeting transportation needs. Squeezing schools financially does nothing to bring these students closer to school and, in fact, in many instances will increase the distance to the nearest school (Florence being a prime example).

As a partner in WAES, NTU 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.

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

Thank you.

Sincerely,

NORTHERN TIER UNISERV



Teri Hanson, President