

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

Dear Governor Doyle,

As a concerned student representing the future of our state, I am writing to urge you to increase funding for education in your proposed budget.

My name is Tom Mitchell, the school board representative to the SPASH Student Senate in Stevens Point, Wisconsin as well as the statewide student captain for the Wisconsin Alliance for Excellent Schools (WAES). I have experienced the pain of the state's educational funding system as a student, a brother, a voice for my peers, and a caring citizen. I have worked on various referendum campaigns, school district finance committees, and I have seen the impact of budgetary restraints in our schools. I am personally dismayed by education being swept under the rug when it comes to Wisconsin's budget.

It seems as though students around the state feel the same way as I do. Here in Stevens Point, the SPASH Student Senate voted unanimously to support the WAES in any possible form so we can experience school funding change at the state level. Their support is extended in the form of this letter. This letter represents beyond my own personal opinion, but into the hearts of my colleagues- direct representatives of the approximate 1,800 students at SPASH. Mr. Doyle, the students are sick and tired of hearing threats from the school board like "We are going to cut athletics unless we pass a referendum," or "We have to cut 4<sup>th</sup> grade orchestra because there just is no funding." It disheartens me as a Student Representative to the school board that I cannot think of any meeting where the board talked about improving our curriculum, only what needs to be cut.

The Wisconsin Alliance for Excellent Schools (WAES) is a broad-based, statewide, diverse coalition of school districts, teachers unions, parent groups, civic and faith-based organizations, and the SPASH Student Senate. WAES members are committed to working for increased spending for transportation, special education, bilingual programs, SAGE, and small, rural districts. Our schools need this help immediately and we ask you to find the money to increase aid for these urgent needs.

Most importantly, I am asking that you take the lead in changing the school-funding system so that all schools have adequate funding to meet student needs. The committees, task forces, and studies show there is a pressing need for comprehensive school finance reform. There are clear solutions to this problem, and it is time for our state government to take action. The teachers, administration, and students in the Stevens Point Area School District have been doing their part by studying from twenty year old textbooks, lowering the temperature in schools, and even closing schools while cramming students into classrooms. Mr. Governor, our state educational system is bleeding and all we have seen so far are bandages... it is time for a full school funding reform.

If we can't adequately invest in our children, what kind of future can we expect for our state and ourselves?

Thank you, I hope to hear back either by actions or by contact.

Sincerely,

Thomas Mitchell  
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