

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

Dear Governor Doyle,

The Wisconsin PTA represents parents and teachers all over the state who want the best education for our children. In this quest, the Wisconsin PTA is partnering with the Wisconsin Alliance for Excellent Schools (WAES). The public schools in Wisconsin are in crisis due to way that they are funded and our children's education is being compromised. Unless we do something now it will continue to get worse. We expect you to stand up for our children as you have in the past and have promised to do in the future.

The Wisconsin PTA is very concerned about our schools after more than a decade of strangling revenue caps. Schools that did not already have 4 year old kindergarten or after-school programs are finding it difficult to start these important programs now. Class sizes are increasing and some schools have even opted out of the SAGE program because they could not afford the staff. Schools are cutting any program that is not required for graduation and putting forth a referendum to increase funds is divisive to communities.

The Wisconsin PTA, as a partner with WAES, would like to see the following increases in the biennial budget:

Transportation--\$97.7 million

Bilingual Programs-- \$54.6 million

Special Education-- \$898.7 million

SAGE PLUS-- \$380.3 million (This would fund the same as the DPI budget with an additional \$300 per year per lunch-subsidized student.)

Sparsity-- \$26.5 million

While these increases are desperately needed to stop the bleeding in public schools, it is only a bandage. A total reform of the school funding formula is needed soon to help schools fully recover from the fiscal problems that are causing this educational crisis.

The amount of money needed is large but can be obtained by removing some of the non-food or medicine sales tax exemptions. There are also many loopholes in the corporate tax structure that could be closed to shift the tax burden off of individuals.

As a partner in WAES, the Wisconsin PTA 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, with other education stakeholders, and with the Legislature to begin comprehensive reform of the school-funding system in 2007.

Sincerely,