



# Wisconsin Association of School Nurses

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January 30, 2007

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

Dear Governor Doyle,

I am Rita Simon, a district nurse with Shawano-Gresham School District and President of Wisconsin Association of School Nurses. I am writing to you as a partner in Wisconsin Alliance for Excellent Schools (WAES) because I am passionate about special education students and how they are educated. Having worked in public schools for 28 years I understand the need of educating and taking care of our students with special needs. I would hope Governor Doyle, that you would feel the same compassion for educating these young people by allocating money in the budget.

The mission of Wisconsin Association of School Nurses (WASN) is “to strengthen and support professional school nurses as leaders in building healthy school communities that promote success in learning.” Students with special needs can also feel success if they are provided the necessary tools to take with them in their community. The membership of WASN knows that the education and the future of kids 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 get even worse. We expect you to stand up for our children as you have in the past.

We have many schools in rural areas that are unable to afford the necessary services for students with special needs. For many schools there is the unavailability of services or the inability to transport students to areas where services are provided. Over 65% of the students from my specific area qualify for free or reduced lunch. All of our elementary schools qualify for SAGE; this I believe is an indicator of the financial need of rural schools in Northeast Wisconsin. WASN members are seeing a substantial increase in students with special education needs. This could be due to several things such as premature infants surviving and having needs and increase use of Alcohol and other Drug Abuse. In my specific CESA 8 area, students start drinking at a younger age and drink more than any other area in the nation. WASN is involved to be advocates for our children with special needs. We serve as one resource for the student and their family; we look to

find them more resources when possible. As advocates we wish to see all children have an opportunity to be successful.

Governor Doyle, we feel more money is urgently needed to help our students in Wisconsin's public schools. Many families are struggling and need the help and support from public schools.

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.

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

Thank You.

Sincerely,

Rita Simon  
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RS/kmw