



Task force proposals to fight for

The Governor's Task Force on Educational Excellence did not solve all the education funding problems in Wisconsin.

Its proposals, however, if made law, would help schools while we keep fighting for enough resources so all children get a quality education.

Urge state leaders to include the following in 2005-07 state budget:

- **Cost-out: \$100,000**

The Task Force recommends a 'cost-out' study to define what staff, classes, facilities and materials are needed for a sound, basic education and how much these will cost. The study would include citizen input and account for extra costs for students in poverty, students with disabilities, students who need to learn English, and students in rural areas.

- **Aid for school transportation: \$60 million**

Especially to help rural school districts where transportation is a major cost, the Task Force recommends more state aid for busing children, with the money coming from the state's transportation fund.

- **Aid for students with disabilities: \$56 million**

Additional state support for special education means more resources are available for all other students as well. The Task Force recommends new funding for students with severe disabilities and increased state aid for special education.

- **Aid for early education and students in poverty: \$41 million**

To make sure children get a good start at school, the Task Force recommends smaller classes in early grades, expanded four-year-old kindergarten, more before - and after-school programs, and better day care.

- **Aid for English-language learners: \$24 million**

Because the state's immigrant population has grown rapidly, the Task Force recommends more state aid to cover the cost of educating all students with limited English.

You can make a difference

This fall, the governor will prepare his budget proposal for 2005-07, guided in part by recommendations from the Department of Public Instruction (DPI). The Task Force recommendations detailed above need to be in the budget. Send that message to Gov. Jim Doyle.

Governor Jim Doyle
115E State Capitol, Madison WI 53702
608-266-1212 jim.doyle@doa.state.wi.us

Governor's Task Force on Educational Excellence

Recommendations (see full report at http://edexcellence.wisconsin.gov/final_report.asp)

School Funding

- Maintain spending caps and the system used to distribute state funds to school districts.
- Do an education “cost-out” to define the staff, materials, equipment and facilities needed for children to get a sound, basic education and to determine how much that would cost.
- Increase state aid for students with disabilities, students who need to learn English, and students in schools where many children are from low-income families.
- Increase state aid for student transportation, especially for rural schools with high busing costs.
- Expand four-year-old kindergarten and improve child care teaching.



Teacher Quality

- Change the state QEO law which restricts teacher contract bargaining and holds down salary increases.
- Increase opportunities for teacher training.
- Reward teachers who are effective, especially in schools with hard-to-teach students.
- Find and keep more minority teachers and teachers for rural schools.

Property Tax Reduction

- Increase sales tax by one penny per dollar and place a sales tax on services such as public relations, health clubs and lawyers (but not medical services or groceries) to raise \$1.5 billion.
- Cut school property taxes by an average of 40% (using money from increased sales taxes).

Strengths and weaknesses of Task Force recommendations

Strengths:

Increased funding for public education.
More state aid for students with special needs and for early education.
Increased support for teacher training and recruitment.
Using state tax dollars to cut local property taxes.

Weaknesses:

Keeping the current funding system which is unfair and inadequate.
Too little state aid to prevent further staff and program cuts in most schools.
Not enough help for small rural schools.
New state sales-tax revenue used only for property tax cuts, not to improve education.