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Wisconsin Alliance  
for Excellent Schools

## **MEDIA ALERT**

### **Governor's Task Force Can Link School Finance with Student Needs**

The creation of the Governor's Task Force on Educational Excellence is a potentially landmark event for public education in Wisconsin.

It is an opportunity to fundamentally reform the state's school-finance system – a system that is complex, unfair, and inadequate – and guarantee that all students really have adequate educational resources and the opportunity to reach academic proficiency.

The Wisconsin Alliance for Excellent Schools (WAES) is a statewide coalition of more than 60 organizations, representing parents, educators, school board members, faith-based organizations, and other community groups. It is the only statewide proponent of the Adequacy model for school funding, in which school revenue is actually linked to educational needs, goals, and standards.

WAES urges the new Task Force to endorse broad, fundamental reform of Wisconsin's school-finance system, with the educational needs of children as the focus. In an Adequacy approach, a school finance system is built around an understanding of what resources are needed in order for schools to be able to meet federal and state standards for student proficiency.

In particular, WAES urges the Task Force to acknowledge these priorities:

- Evaluating what resources public schools need to meet federal, state, and local proficiency standards for the coming decade. This is especially important in light of the federal No Child Left Behind goal of achieving 100% proficiency and eliminating all achievement gaps among student subgroups by 2014.
- Serving students whose special needs require additional resources. As the Wisconsin Supreme Court and many others have recognized, students with disabilities, students in poverty, and students with limited English all are entitled to an equal opportunity for a sound, basic education.
- Providing special support for districts with unusual infrastructure needs, such as those with high transportation costs and those serving a limited number of students over extended geographical areas.

The Adequacy model recognizes these priorities and is the preferred approach to school-finance reform across the United States. This is because it is the model that demands that school finance be linked directly to educational outcomes and the needs of children.

For more information, go to the website of the Wisconsin Alliance for Excellent Schools at <http://www.excellentschools.org>, or contact Tom Beebe or Jack Norman, Institute for Wisconsin's Future, at 414-384-9094.