



October 30, 2003

Contact: Tom Beebe or Kumud Krishna, 414-384-9094

Wisconsin Alliance
for Excellent Schools

MEDIA ALERT

Students, Parents, Educators, and Community Leaders Tell Governor's Task Force the School Finance System Hurts Kids

Students, schools, entire districts, and communities face serious problems and lost opportunities because of Wisconsin's complicated, unequal, and inadequate school-funding system.

That's the message people from throughout the northern part of the state will bring to Wausau for the Governor's Task Force on Educational Excellence on Thursday, November 6. The Task Force meeting begins at 10 a.m. at the Northcentral Technical College Central Campus (Room C106). Testimony is expected to be heard from 3 to 7 p.m.

Task Force members will hear that Wisconsin's schools cannot meet education costs. From the largest schools in southeastern Wisconsin to the smallest districts scattered throughout the north—in cities, rural areas, and suburbs—there is a growing school funding crisis that will not be solved until the current system is replaced by a state aid plan that actually links revenue to the real needs of children.

The federal government has mandated that all students reach proficiency within the next 10 years. State laws require students to meet high performance standards in order to graduate. Most Wisconsin families support these goals, but schools need appropriate tools for the job. Students and schools need quality teachers, up-to-date textbooks and computer technology, parental involvement, and smaller class sizes. Wisconsin needs a funding system that ensures all students have these essential resources to have an equal opportunity for academic success.

Many of the people testifying before the Task Force are members of the Wisconsin Alliance for Excellent Schools (WAES). WAES is a statewide coalition of more than 60 organizations, representing parents, educators, school board members, faith-based organizations, and other civic and community groups committed to reforming the way Wisconsin finances public schools. WAES endorses an Adequacy approach to school funding, which is built on the idea that funding should be linked to educational goals and the resources needed to meet them.

For more information, call Tom Beebe (cell phone is 920-650-0525) or Kumud Krishna at the Institute for Wisconsin's Future, 414-384-9094; e-mail tbeebe@wisconsinsfuture.org or kumud@wisconsinsfuture.org. The Wisconsin Alliance for Excellent Schools website is www.excellentschools.org.