



Wisconsin Alliance
for Excellent Schools

School-funding update for the week of September 8, 2008

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The Wisconsin Alliance for Excellent Schools (WAES) is a statewide, independent, membership-based organization of educators, school board members, students, parents, community leaders, researchers, citizens, and community activists whose lone goal is the comprehensive reform of Wisconsin's school-funding system. If you would like more information about the organization -- or on becoming part of WAES -- contact Tom Beebe at 920-650-0525 or tbeebe@excellentschools.org.

Five of eight referenda OK'd during Tuesday's election

In addition to important Assembly and Senate primaries held around Wisconsin on Tuesday, Sept. 9, eight school referenda were held to exceed the state-mandated funding cap revenue system:

- **Deerfield** -- Non-recurring; \$1.87 million over five years; passed 422-265;
<http://www.madison.com/wsj/mad/top/304204>
- **Mineral Point** -- Non-recurring; \$3.29 million over five years; failed 328-599;
<http://www.madison.com/wsj/mad/top/304204>
- **Montello** -- Non-recurring; \$1.9 million over two years; passed 959-866;
<http://portagedailyregister.com/news/local/d00885f4-7ef4-11dd-aeec-001cc4c002e0.html>
- **Neillsville** -- Non-recurring; \$1.5 million over five years; passed 557-481;
<http://www.marshfieldnews herald.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=2008809100578>
- **Rhineland** -- Recurring; \$225,000 a year; failed 3,178-3,204;
<http://www.waow.com/Global/story.asp?S=8987361>
- **Rubicon** -- Non-recurring; \$450,000 over three years; passed 132-91;
<http://www.wbevradio.com/>
- **Salem** -- Recurring; \$1.16 million a year; failed 386-677;
http://www.kenoshanews.com/article_comments/view_comments.php?articleNum=3517229
- **Weston** -- Non-recurring; \$995,000 over three years; passed 482-308;
<http://www.madison.com/wsj/mad/top/304204>

For more detailed results of Tuesday's referenda, go to <http://www.excellentschools.org>.

Schools drive economy, *State Journal* editorial says

In an editorial on Sept. 2, the *Wisconsin State Journal* proclaimed the first day of the school year as "one of the most important days of the year for Wisconsin's economy." The point, the writer said, was to remind people of the link between education and economic success (<http://www.madison.com/wsj/home/opinion/303070>).

Because of the increasing importance of the global economy, the editorial says the link is even tighter. It points out that people with a high school diploma earn an average of \$31,000 a year -- much more than a high school drop-out -- and rises to \$54,000 with a bachelor's degree. The *State Journal* also talks about education as the driver of Wisconsin's economy.

The message to take away is twofold, the paper says. First, even if you have no children in school, "understand that your future depends on the next generation. And that generation had better be well-educated." Second, "the message to policymakers is equally clear: Wisconsin's schools, colleges, and universities have a vital role to play in the state's economic success."

WAES working to make school-funding reform topic of campaigns

It is important that candidates for the Wisconsin Legislature -- as they prepare for the November 2008 election -- understand how important school-funding reform is to their constituents and possible constituents. WAES members and others interested in school-funding reform are working to make that happen.

WAES is mailing out to all candidates for the Assembly and Senate a series of six reports talking about the negative impact of the present finance scheme, the flaws in the formula, how to change it, and how to fund reform. In this way, candidates will know there is an answer to a serious problem that threatens the security and opportunities of children and communities all over Wisconsin. As they are mailed, the reports will be posted on the WAES website at <http://www.excellentschools.org>. Republican or Democrat or Independent, it doesn't matter -- the upcoming election season is critical to any chances for school-funding reform. Every seat in the Assembly and half of those in the Senate are up for grabs, and every candidate must know he or she will be held responsible for fixing the crisis surrounding the funding of Wisconsin's public schools.

Also, WAES members and others throughout the state are hosting candidate forums on school-funding reform. You can view the list at the WAES website (<http://www.excellentschools.org>) or at the bottom of this update. If your organization is holding a forum, let me know. If you are aware of a forum, let me know that, too. WAES will make sure your event is listed. Whether the event is just about school-funding reform or whether it is covering a full range of public policy, it needs to be publicized.

If your group or organization would like to get involved in the school-funding reform effort by hosting a candidate forum, contact Tom Beebe, WAES (<http://www.excellentschools.org>) executive director, at 920-650-0525 or tbeebe@excellentschools.org for more information.

School-funding reform discussed on Gateway Tech public radio

WGTD, owned and operated by Gateway Technical College in Kenosha, hosted a discussion of school-funding reform earlier this month. You can link to the discussion at http://www.wgtd.org/Education_Matters.asp# and going to the Sept. 6 edition of Education Matters.

WGTD Education Matters host Dr. Steve Brown interviewed WAES outreach director Tom Beebe. They talked about the effect of the present funding system on young people and their communities, the roots of the problem, how the system can be fixed, and how tax reform can ensure both sufficient funding for schools and fairness for taxpayers.

WGTD is a member of the NPR News and Classical Music Network. It can be accessed at <http://www.wgtd.org>.

Four new members join WAES effort to change funding system

WAES now includes 117 school districts, parent groups, non-profits, faith-based organizations, and individuals. With the 2008 election approaching, it would be a great time for you and your group to get involved in this important effort to change the way Wisconsin funds its public schools.

Those joining since the last e-mail update were Milwaukee Public Schools, Cindy Weborg, the West Allis-West Milwaukee PTA Council, and the West Suburban Council (WEAC). Members of WAES are listed at <http://www.excellentschools.org/about/partners.htm>.

If you haven't joined already, now is the time ... and it is easier than ever to become a member of WAES. Just go to <http://www.excellentschools.org/about/join.htm>, fill out the membership statement, send it in, and pay your dues online. To get the dues structure for your school district or teachers organization -- or for more information -- contact Tom Beebe at 920-650-0525 or tbeebe@excellentschools.org.

Help WAES correct e-mail update glitch

Some of you receiving this e-mail update are frustrated by the way it arrives -- endlessly long lines that are patience-trying to read. Hopefully we can help each other out.

As of now, only a handful of subscribers are suffering with this glitch. If you receive these endless lines, let me know and I will send you a text version that seems to take care of the problem.

Also, if you know how to fix it, let me know at tbeebe@excellentschools.org. Thanks.

Help us better serve you by letting us know when you change your e-mail address. In that way we can stop sending the update to the old one and switch over to the new address as soon as possible.

School-funding reform calendar

- October 1 -- School-funding reform presentation and booth as part of WCEA Oktoberfest candidate and member event sponsored by the West Central Education Association (WCEA) in Menomonie
- October 2 -- School-funding reform presentation as part of the annual conference of the Wisconsin Association of Talented and Gifted (<http://www.watg.org/>), 1:15 to 2:30 p.m. in the Island Room at the Blue Harbor Resort (<http://www.blueharborresort.com/>), Sheboygan (<http://ci.sheboygan.wi.us/>)
- October 8 -- School-funding reform candidate forum, 7 p.m., at Nathan Hale High School (http://www.wawm.k12.wi.us/Our%20Schools/Hale_Folder/Hale.htm) in the West Allis-West Milwaukee School District; (<http://www.wawm.k12.wi.us/>), sponsored by the West Allis-West Milwaukee PTA Council; more details as they become available
- October 9 -- School-funding forum for candidates in the 34th Assembly District and 12th Senate District (<http://www.legis.state.wi.us/lrb/pubs/almanac/sd12.pdf>), 7 p.m. in the

- Lakeland Union High School (<http://www.luhs.k12.wi.us/>) auditorium, Minocqua (<http://minocqua.org/>), sponsored by the Northwoods Alliance for School Funding Reform
- October 14 -- School-funding reform listening session with the candidates and citizens of the 89th Assembly District and the 30th Senate District (<http://www.legis.state.wi.us/lrb/pubs/almanac/sd30.pdf>), 6 to 8 p.m. at the Good Shepherd Lutheran Church (<http://www.rchurch.com/view/Wisconsin/Peshtigo/Good-Shepherd-Lutheran-Church>), 331 Pine Street, Peshtigo (<http://www.peshtigochamber.com/>)
 - October 15 -- School-funding forum for candidates in the 51st Assembly District (<http://www.legis.state.wi.us/lrb/pubs/almanac/sd17.pdf>), 7 p.m. in the Pecatonica High School Library (<http://www.pecatonica.k12.wi.us/midhigh/index.html>), 704 Cross Street, Blanchardville (<http://www.blanchardville.com/>) sponsored by the Pecatonica School District (<http://www.pecatonica.k12.wi.us/>) PTA
 - October 15 -- School-funding reform presentation, 7 p.m., at the Neshkoro Elementary School (<http://www.westfield.k12.wi.us/nes/default.htm>), Westfield School District (<http://www.westfield.k12.wi.us/>), 114 East Park Street, Neshkoro, sponsored by the Neshkoro Elementary School PTO (<http://www.westfield.k12.wi.us/nes/pto/default.htm>) and the Westfield School District Vision Committee
 - October 20 -- School-funding reform discussions with the Wisconsin Association of School Councils (<http://www.wasc.org>), Fall Leadership Institute at the Kalahari Resort (<http://www.kalahariresort.com/>), Wisconsin Dells (<http://wisdells.com/>), 9:50 to 10:25 a.m., middle level students, and 10:30 to 11:05 a.m., senior high level students
 - October 22 -- 1st Assembly District "School Funding Public Listening Session" sponsored by The League of Women Voters of Door County (more details as they become available)
 - October 23 -- 8th Senate District (<http://www.legis.state.wi.us/lrb/pubs/almanac/sd8.pdf>) candidate forum, co-sponsored by the Whitefish Bay Advocates for Education (<http://www.advocatesforeducation.org/>) and the Alliance for Strong Mequon-Thiensville Schools (<http://www.mtalliance.org/>), 7 p.m., at the Schlitz Audobon Nature Center (<http://www.schlitzauduboncenter.com/>), 1111 East Brown Deer Road, Bayside
 - October 29 -- 22nd Senate and 66th Assembly districts (<http://www.legis.state.wi.us/lrb/pubs/almanac/sd22.pdf>) candidate forum, 7:45 to 9 p.m., Somers Town Hall, 7512 12th Street, Somers, sponsored by Somers Informed Voters
 - October 30 -- School-funding reform presentation as part of the annual AFT-Wisconsin (<http://www.aft-wisconsin.org/>) Convention, Wyndham Milwaukee Airport Hotel and Convention center (<http://www.wyndham.com/hotels/MKEAP/main.wnt>), 4747 South Howell Avenue, Milwaukee
 - November 7 -- IWF's Jack Norman will discuss tax policy, school funding, and the next Legislature at 10 a.m. with CESA 9 (<http://www.cesa9.k12.wi.us/>) school administrators in Tomahawk (<http://www.gototomahawk.com/>)
 - November 14 -- School-funding reform presentation at the Wisconsin School Social Workers Association Fall Conference (<http://www.wsswa.org>) at the Heidel House near Green Lake (<http://www.heidelhouse.com/>)
 - November 20 -- School-funding reform discussion at the German Immersion School (<http://mpsportal.milwaukee.k12.wi.us/portal/server.pt?open=512&objID=324&PageID=38356&cached=true&mode=2>), of Milwaukee Public Schools (<http://www.milwaukee.k12.wi.us/>), more details as they are available