



For Immediate Release

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Wisconsin Association for Equity in Funding (AEF) releases school funding and student outcome study to inform policymakers, public during budget debate

On Wednesday, April 10 in the Wisconsin State Assembly Parlor, AEF released the final of three research studies conducted over the course of five years, which examined Wisconsin's school funding system and its impact on student outcomes. This more recent study demonstrates the urgency and need for changes to the current funding system. Our research provides independent, data-based evidence that many of the recommendations, presented by the Blue Ribbon Commission on School Funding and proposed in Governor Tony Evers' budget, will have a positive impact on student outcome and opportunity across the state, in every school district.

"Our new analyses underscore the increasing need to address funding disparity. Previous factors that protected certain district types against declining student outcomes due to poverty and truancy have disappeared. Specifically, the effects of poverty and truancy have become too strong to be overcome by the previous resiliency of rural and suburban districts. We are also now observing that increased funding disparity has a greater negative effect within low poverty districts, such that Report Cards scores of low poverty districts with high funding disparity no longer differ from Report Card scores of their counterpart median and high poverty districts with high funding disparity. These factors all point to a greater urgency to address the root causes of disparity, as well as the disparities we now know to be caused by inadequate funding of our Wisconsin public schools."

The policy changes supported by our analysis of a large, twelve-year dataset include:

1. Increases in per pupil aid independent of a district's property wealth, holding districts blameless for socio-economic factors they have no control over.
2. Removing the levy credit as part of the education funding calculation.
3. Positive adjustments in the revenue limit to provide relief for factors outside of the control of school districts, based on local need to support community public schools.
4. Per pupil funding to be indexed to inflation.

5. Indexing per pupil aid in each district for the three higher needs students identified under Vincent v. Voigt – Special Needs, English Language Learners, and Low-income pupils.
6. Restoration of the mandated two-thirds state commitment to public education investment to alleviate the need for local referendum, which leaves lower property wealth districts behind their higher wealth counterparts in terms of education funding.

"This study provides the first step by addressing the most important consideration when developing an education funding system: the need to provide equitable educational opportunity to prepare students for their roles as citizens, and to succeed economically and personally."

Read the full study at www.waef.net

Study and Data download available at www.frame4future.com