

WEAC Legislative Agenda

REINVEST IN PUBLIC EDUCATION



Our neighborhood public schools are the hearts of our communities. They provide opportunity for all and hold the hope for our state's future prosperity. Let's chart a course for a **sustainable, long-term investment in them that meets the needs of our children** by adopting the Fair Funding for Our Future plan. The plan does the following:

- Guarantees state funding for every student;
- Moves the state toward funding two-thirds of school costs;
- Accounts for family income, not just property wealth;
- Provides additional revenue limit authority; and
- Redirects school levy credit dollars to support schools

The \$400 million needed to get the ball rolling should be prioritized in the 2015 -17 state budget. Then, let's pair the new school funding system with a "whole child" approach to learning.

PURSUE EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION



Let's do what it takes to guarantee a well-prepared, highly skilled and effective teaching force. Begin by strengthening and maintaining high standards for teacher preparation. Keep students on the path to becoming educators and staying in the profession by funding scholarships and student loan forgiveness.

Include educators in decision-making. Engage educators in the implementation of the new Educator Effectiveness evaluation system they helped create to inform and improve teacher practice, not to punish. Rethink Act 10 which benched some of education's most valuable players. Welcome the voice of educators in decisions about their profession and students by restoring collective bargaining rights and the just cause standard for disciplinary action. Provide resources for programs designed for educators to teach and learn from peers.

Learn from experience. Remove barriers to retired educators returning to teaching by repealing the new law withholding annuity payments and requiring a 75-day separation period. Lift the heavy financial burden of entering the golden years without a pension so our seniors can devote more time, energy and resources to nurture and mentor youth. Retirement security for all is possible. We need only look to our successful Wisconsin Retirement System as a model for creating a parallel system for the private sector.

SAY NO TO VOUCHERS & PRIVATELY RUN CHARTERS



Privatizers have placed their bets and won a statewide expansion of the taxpayer-funded private school voucher program. They pushed hard for privately run charter schools unaccountable to a locally elected school board to proliferate and drain resources away from neighborhood public schools. For years we have known that students in the voucher program do not perform better than their peers in neighborhood public schools, yet each legislative session there is a move to lift caps and raise income eligibility limits. Some want to create a new voucher program to use taxpayer dollars to fund the education of children with disabilities at private schools with no requirements to employ qualified staff or provide necessary therapies. Let's reclaim Wisconsin's proud tradition of local control and valuing public education. **Say no to the further expansion of the unaccountable private school voucher program and privately run charters.** And hold all schools receiving taxpayer funding – whether traditional, charter or voucher schools – to the same high quality standards.

SUPPORT RESEARCH-BASED EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS



Wisconsin's education system is the target of unproven 'reform' movements that are replacing research-based solutions with the latest trends and fads. Innovations funded with taxpayer dollars should, at a minimum, **be grounded in evidence and peer-reviewed research informed by developmentally appropriate education policy.** Our state has also embraced a testing culture that relies on student performance on the state test to calculate a school's performance, along with other outputs such as graduation and attendance rates. When parents opt their children out of the state test, schools are penalized. This testing culture and reliance solely on outputs needs to change. To give a more complete picture of our schools, state report cards should also include inputs such as licensed teachers, innovative programs, and extracurricular activities. Of course data collection alone does not move our children or our state forward. Policymakers must take the next step and provide the resources necessary to create and sustain programs rooted in research that will improve student outcomes.



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