

2018

Evidence-Based Policy Agenda



The Wisconsin School Administrators Alliance is an alliance of:

The Association of Wisconsin School Administrators
The Wisconsin Association of School District Administrators
The Wisconsin Association of School Business Officials
The Wisconsin Council of Administrators of Special Services
The Wisconsin Association of School Personnel Administrators

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INTRODUCTION

There is perhaps no greater priority for Wisconsin than ensuring every student graduates from high school prepared for college, career, and life success. This is particularly crucial when one considers that education is among the most important determinants of success and prosperity in life—from a person’s health and lifetime earning potential to meaningful participation in civic activities. Now, perhaps more than ever, the quality of education we provide our children determines not only their individual futures, but also the collective social and economic well-being of the entire state. To realize our vision of preparing all students to be college, career, and life ready, and to meet our state’s growing need for well-qualified employees, it is imperative that Wisconsin advance an evidence-based agenda for education that raises the academic bar for all children while closing gaps for lower-performing groups.

Wisconsin has large and persistent achievement and graduation gaps that impact the future success of too many of our children—and, by association, our state. Many readers are familiar with Wisconsin’s black-white achievement gaps. The gaps between these student groups have consistently been among the largest in the nation, and they persist independent of poverty. Large gaps have also long existed for other subgroups, such as students with disabilities and those who live in poverty. Despite recent, modest declines in official poverty rates, which correspond to an improving economy, 15.4 percent of Wisconsin children still lived below the federal poverty line in 2015, with substantially higher rates in Milwaukee and some rural areas of the state.¹ Nearly four in 10 students in Wisconsin public schools qualified for free-and reduced-price school lunches in 2017-18, a figure that has declined only slightly in recent years, despite improvements in the economy.² Considering that poverty is one of the major risk factors for adverse childhood impacts related to physical, behavioral/mental health, and developmental delays, and is also tied to structural differences in brain functioning, investing in evidence-informed policies proven to promote equal opportunity, healthy early childhood development, school achievement, and overall economic success is critical.^{3,4}

¹ Wisconsin Poverty Report: The Ninth Annual Report of the Wisconsin Poverty Project. University of Wisconsin-Madison, Institute for Research on Poverty (<https://www.irp.wisc.edu/wp/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/WI-PovertyReport2017>).

² Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, Wisconsin Information System for Education (<http://wisedash.dpi.wi.gov/Dashboard/portalHome.jsp>).

³ Mental Health, Poverty & Development, World Health Organization (http://www.who.int/mental_health/policy/development/en/).

⁴ Association of Child Poverty, Brain Development, and Academic Achievement, American Medical

Wisconsin's public education system can meet these challenges only if policymakers commit to implementing evidence-based policies in an aligned, whole-system manner at the classroom, school, district, community, and state levels. Committing to evidence-based policies is the right way forward for our students, as well as for our civic and economic growth. Conversely, if prioritizing education and evidence-based policy is the right path, the wrong path is to view education primarily as a cost to be minimized, and basing state policy more on ideology or emotion rather than on evidence.

A sensible blueprint for developing a world-class educational system is provided by the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) in its 2016 "No Time to Lose" report, which identifies common elements of the most successful public education systems from the United States and around the world. These include the following:

- Ensuring all students are ready to learn through high-quality early learning opportunities, meeting children's health needs (including mental health), and providing safe and supportive school environments.
- Investing in a well-prepared, well-compensated, and well-supported educator workforce
- Creating an adequate, equitable, and sustainable funding system that allocates additional resources (especially the most effective teachers and leaders) to the neediest students.
- Connecting and aligning individual reforms to produce a comprehensive system that ensures all students meet the same goal of college and career readiness.

The Wisconsin School Administrators Alliance (SAA) believes that the NCSL blueprint for educational excellence provides a policy pathway for ensuring our state's education system is the best in the world, and that our students and citizens deserve no less. Accordingly, the remainder of this document outlines the SAA's biennial policy agenda for the upcoming state budget cycle and legislative session.

The SAA represents administrators in Wisconsin's 421 public school districts and nearly 2,200 schools, including principals (via the Association of Wisconsin School Administrators), superintendents (via the Wisconsin Association of School District Administrators), school business officials (via the Wisconsin Association of School Business Officials), directors of special education (via the Wisconsin Council of Administrators of Special Services), and human resource directors (via the Wisconsin Association of School Personnel Administrators). SAA's policy agenda has been

Association, July 20, 2015 (<https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamapediatrics/fullarticle/2381542>).



formulated by a work group that has met regularly during the summer of 2018 to identify key policy issues, review relevant research, and formulate specific policy recommendations intended to address these issues. We thank the Wisconsin Center for Education Research at the University of Wisconsin-Madison for the research assistance to inform this work.

Following the lead of national and international exemplars as noted above, SAA's 2018 policy recommendations are organized around four key areas:

- Students Ready to Learn
- Supporting Excellence in Teaching and Leadership
- Investment in Education
- Standards, Assessment and Accountability

SAA believes that the state should consider convening a Wisconsin Advisory Commission on Excellence in Education, perhaps with various subgroups, to oversee the design, implementation, and ongoing evaluation of the various components of a world-class education system as outlined in the remainder of this document. Two examples worth considering here, due to their broad, bipartisan support, successful engagement of diverse stakeholders, and commitment to evidence-based decision making, are the Study Group convened by the National Conference of State Legislatures to develop the No Time to Lose report⁵ and the Maryland Commission on Excellence and Innovation in Education.⁶ These commissions have broad representation and focus their work on evidence-based practices.

⁵ National Conference of State Legislatures, "No Time to Lose: How to Build a World-Class Education System State by State" (<http://www.ncsl.org/research/education/no-time-to-lose-how-to-build-a-world-class-education-system-state-by-state.aspx>).

⁶ <http://dls.maryland.gov/policy-areas/commission-on-innovation-and-excellence-in-education>

A. STUDENTS READY TO LEARN

EARLY LEARNING

Wisconsin should build on its strong tradition of supporting early learning by committing to a comprehensive policy that helps prepare children for their school experience and reduces achievement gaps. A substantial body of research indicates that investments in early learning yield an extraordinarily high public return on investment. Nobel Laureate economist James Heckman, for example, estimates that every dollar invested in high-quality early learning education generates a 7 to 10 percent annual rate of return through higher worker productivity, lower education costs, reduced crime and less government assistance.⁷ Research on early learning investments also demonstrates that adults who had access to preschool programming have higher earnings, are more likely to hold a job, commit fewer crimes, and are more likely to graduate from high school than those who did not have access to preschool.

Conversely, numerous studies confirm that children from poor families who do not have access to early learning opportunities are at a significant social and academic deficit by the time they reach their third birthday, and that improving the quality of preschool education can help reduce achievements gaps for children starting kindergarten.⁸

Barriers to providing and accessing quality early learning opportunities include the following:⁹

- **Income:** Quality preschool programs are expensive, costing parents an average of between \$9,000 to more than \$11,000 per year in Wisconsin.
- **Convenience and affordability:** Parents must both work and choose care that is available. For many, this means making preschool choices based on convenience and affordability, but not necessarily on quality. Unfortunately, subsidies to help families afford quality care have dropped over time, and the decline has implications for access to quality care in rural areas.¹⁰
- **Quality:** Early learning providers vary considerably in terms of credentials and the

⁷ James J. Heckman, "The Economics of Inequality: The Value of Early Childhood Education," American Educator, Spring 2011: p.32.

⁸ Reynolds, A. (2000). Success in early intervention: The Chicago Child-Parent Centers. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

⁹ Lipscomb, S.T. (2013). Increasing access to quality child care for children from low income families: Families experiences. Children and Youth Services Review, 36, 411-419. doi: 10.1016/j.childyouth.2012.12.020.

¹⁰ Wisconsin Council on Children and Families (2016). Are we at the crossroads for Wisconsin child care? Policies in conflict. An Early Care and Education Report (<http://kidsforward.net/publication/crossroads-wisconsin-child-care/>).

qualifications of staff members. Recruiting and maintaining quality providers has been a particular challenge; 2015 study indicates the annual turnover rate for child care teachers in Wisconsin was 30 percent, due in large part to low wages.¹¹

- **Funding:** Overall funding levels for school-based early learning programs were reduced during and after the 2008 recession and have not been fully restored. Many states also cut pre-kindergarten expansion efforts and the monitoring of early learning providers.

The good news is that Wisconsin has a strong base from which to build and maintain a comprehensive early learning program. The Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards (WMELS) provides a framework for families, educators, and policymakers to structure and support quality early learning experiences by articulating key developmental milestones for children in their early years. The Badger State's four-year-old kindergarten (4K) program provides dedicated financial support for districts to offer high-quality early learning opportunities through a community-based approach that supports the social-emotional, educational, and physical development of young children as articulated in the WMELS. These efforts have paid off; in 2017, 96 percent of Wisconsin school districts provided 4K programming.¹²

YoungStar provides another key building block in the area of early learning. This program was created by the Department of Children and Families to improve the quality of child care for Wisconsin children. It does this by evaluating and reporting the quality of child care providers, thereby helping parents choose child care for their children, supporting providers with tools and training to deliver high-quality early care, and setting a consistent standard for child care quality. Trends of Wisconsin Shares children participating in YoungStar from 2012-17 are encouraging. During this period, there was a 91.1 percent increase in the number of Wisconsin Shares children in the highest-rated (4-Star and 5-Star) programs, along with a 52.3 percent drop in children enrolled in 2-Star programs.¹³ However, 4- and 5-Star centers are not equitably distributed throughout the state; for example, the Southern YoungStar region (Columbia, Dane, Dodge, Green, Jefferson, Rock, Sauk, and Walworth Counties) serves 75 percent fewer students than the Milwaukee YoungStar region (Milwaukee, Kenosha, Ozaukee, Racine, Washington, and Waukesha

¹¹ COWS, Wisconsin's Child Care Workforce: Wages, Benefits, Education and Turnover of the Professionals Working with Wisconsin's Youngest Children (2016) (<http://wisconsinearlychildhood.org/2016-report/>).

¹² National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) – The State of Preschool 2017 (<http://nieer.org/state-preschool-yearbooks/yearbook2017>).

¹³ YoungStar: Key Obstacles Are Blocking Progress (2018) (<http://kidsforward.net/publication/youngstar-key-obstacles-are-blocking-progress/>).

Counties), even though the Southern region has nearly twice as many 4- and 5-Star centers.¹⁴

Although YoungStar has made great progress in moving children into higher-quality programs, the funding base for child care programs remains inadequate and unstable. From 2006 to 2013, there were no increases to the Wisconsin Shares rate to even keep pace with inflation. The 2017-19 budget bill provided a significant increase in spending for Wisconsin Shares child care subsidies (\$8.5 million for 2017-18 and \$29.6 million for 2018-19). However, even with these increases, Wisconsin Shares subsidies continue to be well below market rates for quality child care in nearly every county.¹⁵ This lack of strong support for the child care payment system continues to undermine the YoungStar system and family access to quality child care. The Wisconsin Shares/YoungStar program can have a significant impact on children who have a high probability of not being ready for school and should be adequately funded.

Recruiting, developing, and retaining high-quality teachers and staff presents additional challenges for enhancing the quality of early learning programs in Wisconsin. Perhaps most notably, wages are low by any standard of comparison. For teachers, the median starting wage at early learning centers \$10 per hour—and the median highest wage offered is \$13 per hour. Compared to professions with similar education levels, child care teachers are the lowest paid in the state. Not surprisingly, teacher turnover has been a consistent problem; more than one-third of the state's child care teachers leave their positions each year.¹⁶

Fortunately, promising programs exist in Wisconsin for supporting the early learning workforce, including the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood Scholarship Program¹⁷ and the REWARD Stipend Program. Despite evidence of these programs' ability to help to slow turnover, funding for them has decreased, resulting in waiting lists. These programs should be evaluated and considered for scaling up. SAA also supports the new recommendation of the Governor's Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC) to follow the lead of states like Louisiana and Nebraska in establishing a refundable tax credit for early

¹⁴ Wisconsin Department of Children and Families (2018). How YoungStar has an Impact in Wisconsin (<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/program/impact>).

¹⁵ Wisconsin Budget Project: A Summary of the Final 2017-19 Budget for Early Care and Education (<http://www.wisconsinbudgetproject.org/a-summary-of-the-final-2017-19-budget-for-early-care-and-education>).

¹⁶ COWS, Wisconsin's Child Care Workforce: Wages, Benefits, Education and Turnover of the Professionals Working with Wisconsin's Youngest Children (2016) (<http://wisconsinearlychildhood.org/2016-report/>).

¹⁷ The T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood program provides scholarships to early learning professionals working in school age care and early child care settings. See, e.g., <http://wisconsinearlychildhood.org/programs/teach>

child care workers to incentivize early educators to enter and remain in the profession.

Wisconsin is also home to a successful, evidence-based home visiting program and a public-private partnership network that supports local communities in leveraging resources to support early learning. The Family Foundations Home Visiting (FFHV) Program supports four nationally recognized, evidence-based models that help vulnerable new parents develop sound parenting skills and promote their children's healthy growth and development. The FFHV Program serves more than 1,000 families statewide with intensive, evidence-based home visiting services. The 2017-19 budget bill increased FFHV's budget by \$3.9 million each year of the biennium, which will cover approximately 400 to 550 additional families that can benefit from the program. Studies of high-quality home-visiting programs have demonstrated promising results, including reductions in the numbers of low-birth weight babies, reductions in child abuse and neglect rates, and improvements in academic achievement and graduation rates.¹⁸



The Children's Empowerment Through Education (CETE) network builds on successful models implemented in Arizona and Iowa. The network consists of a state hub that provides tools and support to local coalitions to build capacity to leverage community resources. Both programs have a solid track record and could have an even greater impact on early learning if scaled up.¹⁹

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Policy Recommendations:

1. Key stakeholders involved in early learning programming in Wisconsin—including the Department of Health Services, Department of Children and Families, and the Department of Public Instruction—should convene to focus on two key issues:
 - a. Identification of key indicators for monitoring quality and accountability of early learning systems in Wisconsin. These indicators could be used to establish a baseline for monitoring progress over time with respect to core

¹⁸ Wisconsin Budget Project: A Summary of the Final 2017-19 Budget for Early Care and Education (<http://www.wisconsinbudgetproject.org/a-summary-of-the-final-2017-19-budget-for-early-care-and-education>).

¹⁹ Wisconsin Department of Children and Families. Recommendations to the Governor, Governor's Early Childhood Advisory Council, 2016 (<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/ecac>).

measures of access and quality.

- b. Publication of an annual report detailing Wisconsin's progress toward providing every child the opportunity to participate in a high-quality early learning program (e.g., child care, Head Start, public school programs) and share exemplary models of coordination at the local level.
2. Increase state support in the following areas:²⁰
- a. Continue to reverse previous funding cuts to the Wisconsin Shares program;
 - b. Double the number of Wisconsin children (approximately 11,100 currently) in high-quality child care programs over five years.
 - c. Double the number of families served (approximately 1,000 currently) in the evidence-based Family Foundations Home Visiting Program over five years;
 - d. Expand the Children's Empowerment Through Education (CETE) network to more Wisconsin communities.
 - e. Fund and evaluate pilot programs like the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood Scholarship Program and REWARD Stipend Program to encourage quality teachers to enter and remain in the child care field.
 - f. Establish an Early Education Workforce Tax Credit to help decrease high rates of turnover in the early education workforce.
 - g. Provide professional development opportunities for education administrators to understand developmentally appropriate practices, including expectations for young children's development.
 - h. Provide state support for expanded, voluntary 4K (with students counted as full-day, 1.0 FTE) and 3K (with students counted as half-day 0.5 FTE, or 0.6 FTE if the program includes parent education services) programming, both with community-based options.

CHILDREN'S SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

A growing body of evidence reinforces that children's social and emotional health are inseparable from their academic achievement.²¹ Wisconsin's children and their peers nationwide are unfortunately experiencing many challenges in this area. This leads to significant and long-term repercussions for students themselves, along with their families, schools, and communities. Selected trends in this area include:

- Among our youngest children, preschool expulsions outnumber those for grades

²⁰ Wisconsin Department of Children and Families. Recommendations to the Governor, Governor's Early Childhood Advisory Council, 2016 (<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/ecac>).

²¹ See, for example, Dusenbury & Weissberg, 2018; Belfield et al, 2015; Durlak et al., 2011.

K-12 nationwide, and 10 percent of preschool teachers nationally report expelling at least one child during the past year. Expulsions from preschool programs put children at enhanced risk for dropping out of school and involvement in the juvenile justice system, while contributing to high rates of attrition among child care teachers.²²

- State-level data from the 2017 Wisconsin Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) indicate that depressive symptoms and suicidal thoughts are on the rise; 27 percent of Wisconsin high school students report being depressed, 40 percent report high levels of anxiety, 17 percent report engaging in self-harm, and 16 percent have considered suicide.²³
- Actual rates of suicide, both overall and among school-age children, are on the rise: a recent Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report found that national suicide rates rose 25.4 percent from 1999 to 2016 (and rose 25.8 percent in Wisconsin); among adolescents, the suicide rate rose by 56 percent between 2007 and 2016, with a 70 percent increase in suicide deaths among girls ages 10-19 between 2010 and 2016.²⁴
- Four out of 10 Wisconsin students (41.7 percent) report on the YRBS that bullying (a significant risk factor for suicide) is a problem at their school, with girls more likely to identify it as an issue than boys (52 percent versus 32 percent, respectively). More than one-third of Wisconsin girls (35.7 percent) and nearly one-fourth of boys (24.6 percent) report that they have been bullied, either in person or online.²⁵
- Children who report having strong family and teacher support, along with a sense of belonging at school, are less likely to engage in risk behaviors (fighting, carrying a weapon, alcohol/drug use, sexual behavior, etc.). While 71.6 percent of Wisconsin students report on the YRBS that they have at least one teacher or other adult at school they can talk to, the nearly 30 percent who report *not* having this type of connection at school represents tens of thousands of students at increased risk of adverse and risky behaviors.²⁶

In addition, while multiple instances of violence in and around schools in recent years

²² Wisconsin Office of Children's Mental Health, 2017 Report to the Wisconsin Legislature (<https://children.wi.gov/Pages/Home.aspx>).

²³ Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 2017 Youth Risk Behavior Survey Summary Report (<https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/sspw/pdf/yrbs-2017-final-summary-report.pdf>).

²⁴ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Vital Statistics Reports (<https://www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/suicide/index.html>).

²⁵ Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, Wisconsin Youth Risk Behavior Summary Report, 2017 (<https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/sspw/pdf/yrbs-2017-final-summary-report.pdf>).

²⁶ Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, Wisconsin Youth Risk Behavior Summary Report, 2017 (<https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/sspw/pdf/yrbs-2017-final-summary-report.pdf>).

have focused the attention of policymakers and the general public on the issue of school safety, the National Center for Juvenile Justice reminds us that, especially in the younger grades, school is the safest place children can be. We must maintain a focus on all the issues schools and communities confront in keeping our children safe and successful, including mental health, bullying, suicide prevention, and substance abuse.²⁷

Policy Recommendations:

Children's needs in the areas of social-emotional and mental health go unmet for a variety of reasons, including poor system and service coordination, lack of access to care, high service costs, limited funding, and workforce and service shortages.²⁸ Accordingly, SAA believes it is critical that Wisconsin's continued development of a comprehensive school mental health agenda provides *sustained* (rather than one-time) support for the following policy initiatives:

1. *Adequate ongoing staffing levels to provide targeted screening and intervention services.* All schools need the capacity to screen students and intervene for those afflicted by trauma or mental health conditions. School social workers, school psychologists, and mental health professionals are critical to providing these services.²⁹ Although there have been improving trends in Wisconsin, staffing levels for these positions are still far below nationally recommended levels. For example, in 2018, there was one social worker for every 1,468 students statewide, and one nurse for every 1,871 students, compared to national recommendations of 400:1 and 750:1, respectively.³¹
2. *Universal training for all educators related to students' mental health and trauma-informed care.* The 2017-19 state budget provided \$420,000 for training to Wisconsin educators to conduct mental health screenings and provide intervention services;³⁰ SAA supports the DPI's 2019-21 budget request to increase this amount

²⁷ Goldstein, D. (2018, May 22). Why Campus Shootings are So Shocking: School is the Safest Place for a Child. New York Times (retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/05/22/us/safe-school-shootings.html>).

²⁸ Johnson Foundation (2012). Top of Mind: Children's Mental Health in Racine (https://www.johnsonfdn.org/sites/default/files/reports_publications/TopofMindChildrens.pdf).

²⁹ Sanchez, A. L., Cornacchio, D., Poznanski, B., Golik, A. M., Chou, T., & Comer, J. S. (2018). The Effectiveness of School-Based Mental Health Services for Elementary-Aged Children: A Meta-Analysis. *Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry*, 57(3).

³⁰ Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. Condensed Summary of 2017 Act 59 Final 2017-19 Biennial Budget with Vetoes (<https://dpi.wi.gov/policy-budget/biennial-budget/current>).

to meet demand for expanded training opportunities.³¹

3. *Mental health categorical aid programs.* The 2017-19 state budget provided \$3 million to reimburse school districts for expenditures on social worker services for mental health. This amount should be increased at a level consistent with DPI's 2019-21 biennial budget request to meet additional needs, with districts able to hire other pupil services staff (counselors, nurses, school psychologists, etc.).
4. *School-based mental health collaborative grant program.* \$3.25 million was provided in the 2017-19 state budget for school districts to collaborate with community health agencies in providing expanded mental health services to students. While this support is greatly appreciated by Wisconsin districts, SAA supports DPI's 2019-21 budget request of more than \$10 million annually; additionally, SAA believes the ability to have five-year (as opposed to two-year) grants would provide districts with greater stability and sustainability.
5. *Expansion of Medicaid funding to cover critical services currently not covered.* Medicaid reimbursement rates are much lower than the cost to provide mental health therapy.³² Therefore, the SAA recommends the state increase Medicaid payment rates for individual and group therapy.
6. *Additional supports:* As part of a comprehensive approach to supporting safe schools and communities, state investments and policies should.
 - a. Promote positive school environments that are welcoming for students, staff, parents, and communities;
 - b. Provide for prudent physical security equipment and evidence-based safety practices;
 - c. Promote collaboration among educators, law enforcement, and social service agencies at the local and state levels;
 - d. Provide sustained resources (rather than one-time investments and guidance), including reinstatement of the revenue cap exemption for expenses related to school safety.

³¹ Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction: 2019-21 Biennial Budget Request ([https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/policy-budget/pdf/2019-21 Biennial Budget Request Sept 17 2018 FINAL tech corrections.pdf](https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/policy-budget/pdf/2019-21%20Biennial%20Budget%20Request%20Sept%2017%202018%20FINAL%20tech%20corrections.pdf)).

³² Wisconsin Coalition for Expanding School-Based Mental Health, Proposal for Expanded School Mental Health Services ([https://www.wafca.org/assets/docs/School-based percent20Mental percent20Health percent20Proposal percent2011.1.16.pdf](https://www.wafca.org/assets/docs/School-based%20Mental%20Health%20Proposal%2011.1.16.pdf)).

B. SUPPORTING EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING & LEADERSHIP

EDUCATOR DEVELOPMENT, GROWTH, AND SUPPORT

The most important school-based factors determining whether students achieve academically are (in order) the knowledge and skills of the classroom teacher and the quality of school leadership.³³ It is critical, therefore, that Wisconsin develop comprehensive and aligned strategies at the state and local levels to build educator capacity and improve quality, from pre-service training through in-service professional development and evaluation efforts.



Efforts to improve educator quality involve three important components: (a) targeted candidate recruitment and selection on the part of educator preparation programs (EPPs); (b) high-quality pre-service development of future educators by EPPs, emphasizing the knowledge, skills, and experiences needed to be a successful teacher or principal; and (c) ongoing support and development once educators

begin their careers. Given our state's persistent achievement gaps, pre-service programs must emphasize culturally relevant pedagogy, as well as teaching and leading for equity at the classroom, school, and district levels. Additionally, pre-service preparation must prepare future educators and leaders for success by establishing deep knowledge of major state initiatives, such as the Educator Effectiveness process, Wisconsin academic content standards, and the student Academic and Career Planning (ACP) process.

Key research findings and trends related to pre-service training, educator retention, and the overall supply and demand for educators include the following:

- Well-documented declines in EPP enrollment, both in Wisconsin and nationwide,

³³ Chetty, R., Friedman, J. & Rockoff, J. (December, 2011). The long-term impacts of teachers: Teacher value-added and student outcomes in adulthood. NBER Working Paper Series (<http://www.nber.org/papers/w17699>)

Marzano, R.J., Waters, T., & McNulty, B.A., (2005). *School leadership that works: From research to results*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

Louis, K.S., Leithwood, K., Wahlstrom, K.L., & Anderson, S.T. (2010). Learning from leadership: Investigating the links to improved student learning (<https://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/pages/investigating-the-links-to-improved-student-learning.aspx>)

Hallinger, P., & Heck, Ronald H. (1996). Reassessing the Principal's Role in School Effectiveness: A Review of Empirical Research, 1980-1995. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 32(1), 5-44 (<http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0013161X96032001002>).

have led to widespread and legitimate concern about educator shortages, particularly in certain licensure areas and in urban and rural parts of the state.³⁴

- Ongoing educator staffing challenges are significantly exacerbated by attrition rates, which are higher for teachers in schools with higher proportions of lower-income students and students of color.³⁵
- Studies show that EPPs struggle to attract the highest-performing students to teacher training programs, as these students tend to have a greater array of career choices that come with higher salaries and prestige. Evidence also shows that teachers with higher measured abilities have a greater probability of leaving the teaching profession.³⁶
- Efforts to improve the quality of candidates entering and graduating from EPPs may conflict with concurrent efforts to diversify the supply of educators. Pass rates on both the Praxis II (required for all licensure candidates except World Languages) and the Foundations of Reading Test (required for all initial candidates for Elementary, Special Education, Reading, and Reading Specialist licensure) are substantially lower for licensure candidates of color than for white candidates, at a time when nearly 96 percent of full-time public school teachers are white (compared to just 71.2 percent of students).³⁷
- Educators with higher levels of academic credentialing have higher turnover rates when factors such as salary, working conditions, and overall prestige are not addressed.³⁸
- “True” real wages of teachers have declined in comparison with wages for other college graduates, and studies repeatedly show that higher salaries, among other factors, are associated with higher teacher retention rates.³⁹ At the same time, compensation is by no means the only factor influencing decisions to enter and remain in education. New educators, for example, often report they were not adequately prepared to meet challenges in the classroom, and educators of all experience levels report that long hours, lack of understanding and appreciation

³⁴ Goff, P., Carl, B., and Yang, M. (2018). Supply and Demand for Public School Teachers in Wisconsin. WCER Working Paper No. 2018-2. (<https://wcer.wisc.edu/publications/abstract/wcer-working-paper-no.-2018-2>).

³⁵ Carver-Thomas, D. and Darling-Hammond, L. (2017). Teacher Turnover: Why it Matters and What We Can Do About It. Learning Policy Institute. (<https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/product/teacher-turnover-report>).

³⁶ Guarino, C. M., Santibanez, L., & Daley, G. A. (2006). Teacher Recruitment and Retention: A Review of the Recent Empirical Literature. *Review of Educational Research*, 76(2), 173–208.

³⁷ Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (2017). 2016 Annual Report on Educator Preparation Programs. (<https://dpi.wi.gov/tepd/epp/annual-reports>).

³⁸ Geiger, T., & Pivovarova, M. (2018). The effects of working conditions on teacher retention. *Teachers and Teaching*, 1–22.

³⁹ National Council on Teacher Quality (2018). States, Strikes, and Teacher Salaries. (<https://www.nctq.org/publications/States,-Strikes,-and-Teacher-Salaries>).

for the work they do, and low levels of prestige associated with education are also important factors in their decision to remain in (or leave) education.⁴⁰

Although the research on leadership preparation is less established, many of the above factors also apply to principal pre-service training.^{41,42} Further, while demands and expectations on principal performance continue to increase, particularly for instructional leadership, the role is isolated and on-the-job support can be sporadic or unavailable, contributing to burnout and turnover. In addition to the disruption of school culture, principal turnover results in substantial costs to school districts for the recruitment, selection, and onboarding of new principals; one recent study estimated these costs as exceeding \$75,000 for each new principal hire.⁴³

In recognition of the fact that teaching effectiveness increases most rapidly in the first five years in the profession,⁴⁴ Wisconsin has invested wisely in several initiatives in recent years to ensure educators are well-positioned for continuous professional growth. PI 34 was established to help guide educators and encourage districts to support them through mentoring, as well as to advance professionally through license renewal. Act 166 led to the development and implementation of the statewide Educator Effectiveness (EE) System, which established, for the first time, a definition of effective teaching and school leadership accompanied by a process for providing all educators with improvement-oriented feedback. These systems depend on the commitment and preparation of administrators and educators to be implemented with integrity; they also rely on sufficient state support to create positive working conditions that promote trust, collaboration, and collective capacity building. Research has shown that relying solely on accountability-driven policies will not lead to excellence in teaching and school leadership.⁴⁵

Key research findings and recent trends related to educator evaluation, growth, and

⁴⁰ Gorard, S. (2017). How prepared do newly-qualified teachers feel? Differences between routes and settings. *Journal of Education for Teaching*, 43(1), 3–19.

⁴¹ George Bush Institute (2016). Developing Leaders: The Importance – and the Challenges – of Evaluating Principal Preparation Programs. (<https://www.air.org/resource/developing-leaders-importance-and-challenges-evaluating-principal-preparation-programs>).

⁴² Hess, F.M., & Kelly, A.P. (2007). Learning to Lead: What Gets Taught in Principal-Preparation Programs. *Teachers College Record*, 109, 244-274.

⁴³ School Leaders Network (2014). CHURN: The High Cost of Principal Turnover. Retrieved October, 2016 from (https://connectleadsucceed.org/sites/default/files/principal_turnover_cost.pdf).

⁴⁴ Clotfelter, C.T., Ladd, H.F. & Vigdor, J.L., (2007). Teacher Credentials and Student Achievement: Longitudinal Analysis with Student Fixed Effects," *Economics of Education Review*, Elsevier, vol. 26(6), p. 673-682.

⁴⁵ Fullan, M. (2011). Choosing the Wrong Drivers for Whole System Reform (<http://michaelfullan.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/13396088160.pdf>).

development include the following:

- Educator growth and development are enhanced by teacher and leader evaluation systems built around the following five principles:⁴⁶
 - A context of trust that encourages risk-taking and learning from mistakes.
 - A common model of effective professional practice (i.e., the Framework for Teaching, the Stronge/CESA 6 teacher performance evaluation system, the Wisconsin Framework for Principal Leadership) that centers conversations about teaching/leadership and informs professional learning;
 - Educator-developed goals frame the evaluation process and are regularly referenced.
 - Cycles of continuous improvement guided by specific and timely feedback to drive practice.
 - Evaluation practices integrated with other school and district improvement efforts.
- Changes to educator evaluation systems based on the principles above have created higher expectations for principals and other district and school leaders. These include implementing evaluation practices with fidelity, providing timely instructional feedback, and completing more observations and assessing more areas of practice and teacher impact on student growth (i.e., through Student Learning Objectives). Principals and district leaders will be required, over time, to learn and refine strategies to address the time demands of the new systems and continue to need additional support to manage these new roles.⁴⁷

Policy Recommendations:

1. Provide continued support to implement and evaluate key state initiatives related to educator preparation and quality, including the work of existing groups and commissions (such as the Professional Standards Council, the State Superintendent's Working Group on School Staffing Issues, and the Wisconsin Association of Colleges of Teacher Education), as well as adequate and sustainable financial support for engaging CESAs, professional associations,

⁴⁶ See, e.g., Research Informing the Teacher Evaluation Process and the Framework for Teaching, included in the Wisconsin Educator Effectiveness System User Guide for: Teachers, Teacher Supervisors, Coaches, available at: <https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/ee/pdf/teacherprocessmanual.pdf>

⁴⁷ Cosner, Kimball, Barkowski, Carl and Jones (2014). Principal roles, work demands, and supports needed to implement new teacher evaluation. UIC Research on Urban Education Policy Initiative Policy Brief, vol. 3, book 3. Available at: <http://cpre.org/principal-roles-work-demands-and-supports-needed-implement-new-teacher-evaluation>

and school districts to fully participate in initiatives such as the Educator Effectiveness Exchange and the Working on the Work series.

2. Continue to sponsor recently resumed efforts to collect and publicize data on the educator pipeline in Wisconsin; this includes efforts such as DPI's annual reports on educator preparation programs⁴⁸ and WCER's Educator Supply and Demand reports.⁴⁹
3. Review policies and initiatives that propose short, medium, and long-range plans for addressing issues within the educator workforce, including:
 - a. Create a statewide strategy to identify and recruit talented candidates into teacher and administrator preparation programs, with an emphasis on diversity (including equity training for administrators other than principals).
 - b. Develop and evaluate pilot loan forgiveness and "grow your own" efforts at a local level.
 - c. Eliminate current restrictions on rehiring retired educators.
 - d. Conduct a review of Wisconsin teacher and administrator preparation programs and make recommendations on how best to prepare and support educators (e.g., through formal residencies as done in Finland and other high achieving countries).
 - e. Consider how to pilot or expand longer-term changes to teaching as articulated in the No Time to Lose report, such as establishing career ladder/lattice systems, providing more time for professional collaboration, and higher compensation.
 - f. Study the effects (both intended and unintended) of recent changes to examinations required for licensure (such as the Foundations of Reading Test) and the role of educator preparation programs in preparing licensure candidates to pass these exams.
 - g. Increase flexibility and reduce restrictions on student teaching requirements. Wisconsin statutes currently require "full days for a full semester" and do not allow for alternative, flexible options, such as including paid experiences for career changers and those supporting a family who cannot take a full semester unpaid while student teaching.

⁴⁸ Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. Wisconsin Educator Preparation Program Annual Reports (<https://dpi.wi.gov/tepd/epp/annual-reports>).

⁴⁹ Goff, Carl, and Yang. Wisconsin Center for Education Research. Supply and Demand for Public School Teachers in Wisconsin, Working Paper (<https://wcer.wisc.edu/publications/abstract/wcer-working-paper-no.-2018-2>).

- h. Create greater flexibility to allow earlier entry into classroom experiences, such as student teaching, and earlier admittance into schools of education (which do not occur on many campuses until junior year).
- i. Ease the financial burden of entry into education. In addition to high student debt and low starting salaries, the costs of licensure exams and fees create burdens that deter potential students from entering the profession.
- j. Focus on community engagement, marketing, and communication strategies to elevate the profession. Increase awareness and respect for public education through targeted campaigns.

C. INVESTMENT IN EDUCATION

SCHOOL FINANCE TRENDS IN WISCONSIN

The quality of Wisconsin's school finance system has been regressing for at least the past decade. Education Week, in its annual *Quality Counts* state-by-state comparisons, assigned Wisconsin's school finance system an overall grade of "B+" for the 2004-05 school year, grading only three states higher than Wisconsin. By the 2014-15 school year (the most recent available) Wisconsin's grade had declined to a "C+," and 16 states had higher-rated systems.

This decline is evident across numerous dimensions of the state's school finance system. In 2004-05, per-pupil expenditures, adjusted for differences in the cost of living across states, exceeded the national average by \$1,226. By 2014-15, Wisconsin's per-pupil amount was \$84 *less* than the national average.⁵⁰

The *Quality Counts* data also indicate that school funding effort—the portion of total state taxable resources dedicated to supporting PK-12 education—has decreased from 4.1 percent in 2004-05 to 3.5 percent in 2014-15. And, although historically Wisconsin has ranked relatively well on school finance equity measures, the state's share of total education revenues has declined from 51 percent in 2004-05 to 47 percent in 2014-15. Additionally, Wisconsin school districts suffer from the systemic gap between allowable revenue growth under revenue limits and inflationary increases in school district costs.

⁵⁰ Education Week (2008). *Quality Counts 2008*. Education Week (2018). *Quality Counts 2018*. <https://www.edweek.org/ew/qc/index.html>



In such an unstable environment, school districts across Wisconsin must stretch limited resources. The impacts are not equal across districts. They are more serious in districts with a large share of higher-needs students (including those in poverty, students with disabilities and English Learners) and those with declining enrollment. They also represent a major challenge for

Wisconsin's many small rural districts, where the loss of just a few students, coupled with increases in transportation costs, can have significant budgetary impacts. Increasingly, Wisconsin school leaders struggle with a funding system failing to keep pace with the growing and ever-changing educational needs of the students they serve.

The following data highlight some of the immediate problems with Wisconsin's school finance system and illustrate the state's shrinking commitment to its children:

- Wisconsin's national ranking in K-12 per-pupil spending has plummeted from 13th highest in 2003-04 to 24th in 2015-16.⁵¹
- In 2004-05, Wisconsin spent \$10,199 per pupil—13.7 percent more than the U.S. average (\$8,973). In 2014-15, Wisconsin spent \$12,442, or 0.7 percent less than the U.S. average (\$12,526).⁵²
- Wisconsin school aid as a percentage of the state's general-purpose budget has declined from 43.1 percent in 2003-04 to 33.0 percent in 2018-19.⁵³
- Wisconsin's percentage of all school districts experiencing declining enrollment has hovered around 60 percent for a decade, with 56.9 percent of districts facing declining enrollment in 2017-18. Just 29.8 percent of districts were facing declining enrollment in 1997-98.⁵⁴

⁵¹ U. S. Census Bureau (2018). States Ranked According to Per Pupil Public Elementary-Secondary School System Finance Amounts: Fiscal Year 2016. <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/2016/econ/school-finance/secondary-education-finance.html>

⁵² Education Week (2008). *Quality Counts 2008*. Education Week (2018). *Quality Counts 2018* (<https://www.edweek.org/ew/collections/quality-counts-2018-state-grades/index.html>).

⁵³ Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. K-12 School Aids as percent of State General Fund Appropriations, September 19, 2018. https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/policy-budget/pdf/2019-21_Biennial_BudgetRequest_Sept17_2018_FINAL311.pdf

⁵⁴ Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. School District Declining Enrollment, September 19, 2018.

Guiding Principles

Developing and implementing the “perfect” school finance system has proven to be an elusive endeavor, and we do not proclaim to have a “magic bullet” to fix the problem. We do believe the following non-negotiable, student-centered principles should guide our efforts at school finance reform in Wisconsin. A high-quality, effective school finance system, designed to foster improvements in student achievement for all Wisconsin school children, must:

- Base funding amounts on an adequacy standard; that is, the best available evidence of the resources needed for students to meet state and local learning standards.
- Be sustainable in affording all children continued access to high-quality instructional programming.
- Recognize and address the unique and extraordinary needs of students in poverty, English Learner (EL) students and students with disabilities.
- Recognize and address the unique needs of students in different regions of the state. We simply cannot tolerate disparities in instructional resources and programming based on ZIP codes.
- Provide equitable access to instructional technology, 21st century curriculum, and well-prepared, high-quality teachers and leaders.

Key Research Findings

- Research on funding fairness historically centers on two main components: 1) factors associated with student needs, including poverty, special education, and English Learner status, and 2) factors related to regional differences in costs due to economies of scale, teacher costs and other issues. Although there is a general understanding that school funding ought to “strive to improve equity and adequacy of student outcomes,”⁵⁵ many state funding formulas fail to accomplish this—often due to an over-reliance on local property taxes.
- Many low-income schools are challenged by inequitable access to teaching quality and financial resources. According to a 2011 U.S. Department of Education report, more than 40 percent of Title I schools “spent less state and local money on teachers and other personnel than schools that don’t receive Title I money at the

⁵⁵ Baker, B., & Corcoran, S. (2012). *The Stealth Inequities of School Funding: How State and Local School Finance Systems Perpetuate Inequitable Student Spending*. Washington, DC: Center for American Progress (<https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/education-k-12/reports/2012/09/19/38189/the-stealth-inequities-of-school-funding/>).

same grade level in the same district.”

- School finance adequacy is one prominent area of focus in school finance policy. Odden et al.,⁵⁶ in their work on school finance, define adequacy “as providing a level of resources to schools that will enable them to make substantial improvements in student performance [...] as progression toward ensuring that all, or almost all, students meet their state’s performance standards in the long term.” To arrive at such an adequacy number, they use an evidence-based method to determine the funding needed to cover effective school strategies and related staffing. Staffing and resource costs are then aggregated for teachers, administrators, student support, general resources, materials, technology, and other inputs.
- Several recent studies have shown that money does matter. Studies by Candelaria et al., Jackson et al. and Lafortune et al.,⁵⁷ have found that states that have significantly increased education funding as a result of adequacy-based legislation or litigation have experienced significant improvement in student outcomes, particularly for those in high-poverty schools. These states have experienced reductions in the achievement gaps between low-income and higher-income students that exceed those achieved via smaller class sizes, along with significant increases in high school graduation rates and, over the longer term, higher earnings and lower poverty rates among graduates.
- A study of how to adequately fund Wisconsin’s schools by Odden et al.⁵⁸ provides a guide to adequacy for Wisconsin policymakers. The report makes numerous recommendations with related cost estimates, concluding that total K-12 spending would need to increase by 9.2 percent to achieve an adequate level of resources. Recommendations from the Wisconsin adequacy study included additional per-

⁵⁶ Odden, A., Picus, L., & Goetz, M. (2010). A 50-state strategy to achieve school finance adequacy. *Education Policy*, 24, 628-654. doi: 10.1177/0895904809335107

⁵⁷ Candelaria, C., & Shores, K. (2016). The Sensitivity of Causal Estimates from Court-Ordered Finance Reform on Spending and Graduation Rates (CEPA Working Paper No.16-05). Retrieved from Stanford Center for Education Policy Analysis: <http://cepa.stanford.edu/wp16-05>

Jackson, K. C., Johnson, R. & Persico C. (2014). The Effect of School Finance Reforms on the Distribution of Spending, Academic Achievement, and Adult Outcomes (Working Paper 20118). Cambridge, MA: National Bureau of Economic Research

Lafortune, J., Rothstein, J. & Whitmore Schanzenbach, D. (2016). School Finance Reform and the Distribution of Student Achievement. Cambridge, MA: National Bureau of Economic Research.

⁵⁸ Odden, A. R., Picus, L. O., Archibald, S., Goetz, M., Mangan, M. T., & Aportela, A. (2007). Moving from good to great in Wisconsin: Funding schools adequately and doubling student performance. Madison: University of Wisconsin, Wisconsin Center for Education Research, Consortium for Policy Research in Education.

pupil support for high-needs students, as well as resources to support tutoring, extended day programming, additional instructional planning time, and summer school. Odden et al.⁵⁹ summarize 10 strategies for improving performance, including analyzing and becoming more familiar with student data, setting higher goals, reviewing effective curricula and instruction, investing in teacher training and development, providing extra help for struggling students, creating smaller classrooms, restructuring school days and instructional time, providing strong leadership that fosters professional school cultures, and bringing external professional knowledge into schools.

Implications:

More spending does not, by itself, result in higher student achievement, as resources must also be used effectively. However, funding inequities hinder the ability of high-poverty districts to provide an adequate education, resulting in greater societal inequalities. Based on the trends described above, it is clear that school finance in Wisconsin is moving in the wrong direction. Over the long term, minor tweaks to the state's current funding formula will not lead to the outcomes expected of a 21st century educational system. A major overhaul of the system, one that is adequacy-based and informed by the best available research, is ultimately required. This should be the long-term goal for the state. In the interim, until such reform becomes possible, there are numerous enhancements to the current funding formula that will help make school finance in Wisconsin more equitable and responsive to students' needs.

WHY SEEK ADDITIONAL INVESTMENT?

Recommendations for additional investment in public schools and public school children appear in this and in other sections of this report. Why is that the case?

First, although past research into the relationship between resource levels and school and student performance has been mixed, recent studies of states that have significantly increased education funding as a result of adequacy-based legislation or litigation have found a significant relationship between higher spending and better student outcomes, particularly for high-poverty schools.⁶⁰ Money does matter, especially for low-income and

⁵⁹ Odden, A. R., Picus, L. O., Archibald, S., Goetz, M., Mangan, M. T., & Aportela, A. (2007). Moving from good to great in Wisconsin: Funding schools adequately and doubling student performance. Madison: University of Wisconsin, Wisconsin Center for Education Research, Consortium for Policy Research in Education.

⁶⁰ Candelaria, et al. (2016); Jackson, et al. (2014); Lafortune, et al. (2016).

at-risk students—an area in which the current formula comes up short.

Second, the argument could be made that since 2011, allowable revenue growth under revenue limits and per-pupil categorical aid combined have not kept pace with the rate of inflation or school districts' fixed cost increases (i.e., health insurance, utilities, transportation, and infrastructure). This is highlighted by evidence that Wisconsin is lagging behind the rest of the country in restoring school



funding levels to pre-recession levels.⁶¹ Rather than investing in efforts to meet and exceed higher standards and increased expectations for our educational system, Wisconsin's school funding has instead been losing ground. That is a significant concern, but it is not the primary reason for seeking increased resources from the state. Simply put, we need to place our public school finance system on a more sustainable path to improve academic achievement for all children and close achievement gaps. The economic vitality of every Wisconsin community depends on it.

To meet this objective, research suggests Wisconsin must make key investments in its schools to ensure a world-class teacher workforce, make sure every child enters school ready to learn through high-quality early learning education programs, extended learning time and other supports for students who have fallen behind, and the modernization of school facilities to promote cutting-edge instruction. Finally, equity and fairness dictate that we invest to provide high-quality educational opportunities for all our students, no matter their ZIP code or educational needs.

A MORE SUSTAINABLE SCHOOL FINANCE SYSTEM

One of the most significant issues with Wisconsin's system of school finance is the systemic gap between allowable revenue growth under revenue caps and school districts' fixed cost increases, as driven by state and federal requirements and community expectations. Wisconsin's school finance formula was created in an era when funding equity was the principal school funding concern of education policymakers. At the time,

⁶¹ Education Week (2018). *Quality Counts 2018* (<https://www.edweek.org/ew/collections/quality-counts-2018-state-grades/index.html>).

this concern was warranted. An overreliance on local property taxes to fund schools led to large inequities based on differences in the local wealth of school districts. However, with the advent of standards-based instruction and high-stakes accountability, the adequacy of education funding has become paramount. Every student in every classroom deserves access to the resources necessary to meet local, state, and national performance expectations.

Wisconsin's school funding formula falls short in a number of ways. First, it has no basis in adequacy. Revenue limits and shared cost levels are based on available funding rather than an accounting of what schools and students need to succeed. Second, funding for programs for students with special needs—low income, special education or English Learners—is inadequate for meeting the needs of these students across all districts. Odden and Picus' study of the equality of funding across the state's districts found that the system was significantly less equitable when student need was taken into consideration.⁶² Third, even though the funding formula was designed primarily to address equity issues in school funding, Odden and Picus also found that poorer districts systematically spent less per student than wealthier districts.

Given the limitations of Wisconsin's current funding formula, it is apparent that if the educational system is to meet the needs of a 21st century workforce, the state must implement a 21st century school finance system. A modern finance system uses methods based on research and educators' experience and expertise to estimate the amount of resources needed for all (or nearly all) students to meet state and school district learning expectations. The characteristics of such a system include:

- Adequate per-pupil funding amounts—including a per-pupil amount applied to all students and any adjustments for students with special needs, such as at-risk, EL or special education—that are adequate for supporting the strategies and programs all students need to be successful in school.
- Adjustments for compensating for cost factors beyond the control of local districts, such as enrollment size, geographical sparsity, and regional cost of living.
- Funding equalization so that the resources available to local communities is not dependent on local wealth.
- A process for reassessing funding adequacy periodically, preferably every three to five years, and an annual cost-of-living adjustment to ensure resources keep up

⁶² Odden, A. R., Picus, L. O., Archibald, S., Goetz, M., Mangan, M. T., & Aportela, A. (2007). *Moving from good to great in Wisconsin: Funding schools adequately and doubling student performance*. Madison: University of Wisconsin, Wisconsin Center for Education Research, Consortium for Policy Research in Education.

with inflation between formal adequacy reassessments.

The state of Wyoming adopted a school finance system encompassing these characteristics in 1997-98 as a result of a state Supreme Court ruling finding the school finance system unconstitutional. Since 2005, Wyoming has used Picus and Odden's evidence-based adequacy model in a cost study every five years to ensure the continuing adequacy of its funding formula.⁶³ Its school finance system has been ranked number one in the nation by Education Week for nine of the past 10 years. In fiscal year 2015, the state spent \$17,700 per pupil. Services provided by this level of spending include small class sizes, certified teacher tutors, an extended school day and year, English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers, student support staff, and the highest teacher salaries in the region. The state covers 100 percent of special education costs.

Since Wyoming implemented its adequacy-based funding formula, it has experienced significant growth in its National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) scores. The state has been significantly higher than the national average in fourth-grade reading scores since 1998 and fourth-grade math scores since 2000. Similarly, it has been significantly higher in eighth-grade reading since 2002 and in eighth-grade math since 2000.⁶⁴

The state of Maryland also overhauled its school finance formula in 2001-02 based on the findings of an adequacy costing out study.⁶⁵ Its school finance system is also consistently ranked among the top 10 in the nation by Education Week. In fiscal year 2018, Maryland's school finance formula provided a foundation funding amount of \$7,012 per student, along with weights for students with special needs that raised an additional \$6,802 for every low-income student, \$6,942 for every EL student, and \$5,189 for every special education student. The state completed a costing out study in 2016 to reassess the formula's adequacy.⁶⁶

⁶³ Odden, A., Picus, L. O., Goetz, M., Fermanich, M., Seder, R. C., Glenn, W., & Nelli, R. (2005). *An Evidence-Based Approach to Recalibrating Wyoming's Block Grant School Funding Formula*. North Hollywood, CA: Lawrence O. Picus and Associates.

⁶⁴ National Assessment of Educational Progress, The Nation's Report Card (https://www.nationsreportcard.gov/profiles/stateprofile/overview/WY?cti=PgTab_OT&chort=1&sub=MA&T&sj=WY&fs=Grade&st=MN&year=2017R3&sg=Genderpercent3A+Male+vs.+Female&sgv=Difference&ts=Single+Year&tss=2015R3-2017R3&sfj=NP).

⁶⁵ Augenblick & Myers, Inc. (2001). *Calculation of the Cost of an Adequate Education in Maryland in 1999-2000 Using Two Different Analytic Approaches*. Denver, CO.

⁶⁶ Augenblick, Palaich & Associates. (2016). *Final Report of the Study of Adequacy of Funding for Education in Maryland*. Denver, CO

Maryland's NAEP scores also typically significantly exceed the national average. Its reading scores in both fourth and eighth grades significantly exceeded the national average in five of the past six years. Fourth-grade math scores have significantly exceeded the national average in three of the past five years, while eighth-grade math scores have exceeded the national average in four of the past six years.⁶⁷

However, even if resources are provided at an adequate level, they will have little impact on results for students if they are not implemented effectively. Regardless of what type of funding formula is used, there should be few strings attached to how resources are used. Instead, school districts must have the flexibility to leverage resources in a manner that will lead to the best results for their students. Research-based comprehensive school reform models, such as Core Knowledge, Expeditionary Learning and Success for All, have been around for more than two decades. A new approach based on the education systems of the world's highest-performing countries has begun to emerge over the past several years. The common education system elements found in these countries have been described recently by the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL)⁶⁸ and the National Center on Education and the Economy (NCEE).⁶⁹ Among the key features shared by these high-performing countries include:

- Universal, high-quality preschool that includes educational services for parents.
- Rigorous and coherent instructional systems, including world-class standards, curricula, and assessments.
- Highly qualified teachers who work collaboratively to continuously improve their craft and whose pay is commensurate with high-status professions.
- Additional resources for students with special needs to help them meet high academic standards.
- Multiple pathways through the secondary grades, including rigorous career and

(<http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/Documents/adequacystudy/AdequacyStudyReportFinal112016.pdf>).

⁶⁷ National Assessment of Educational Progress, The Nation's Report Card

(https://www.nationsreportcard.gov/profiles/stateprofile/overview/MD?cti=PgTab_OT&chort=1&sub=MA&T&sj=MD&fs=Grade&st=MN&year=2017R3&sg=Genderpercent3A+Male+vs.+Female&sgv=Difference&ts=Single+Year&tss=2015R3-2017R3&sfj=NP&selectedJurisdiction=MD)

⁶⁸ National Conference of State Legislatures (2016). *No Time to Lose: How to Build a World-Class Education System State by State*. Denver, CO (<http://www.ncsl.org/research/education/no-time-to-lose-how-to-build-a-world-class-education-system-state-by-state.aspx>).

⁶⁹ National Center on Education and the Economy, Center on International Education Benchmarking (<http://ncee.org/what-we-do/center-on-international-education-benchmarking/>).

technical education programs.

Maryland is in the process of redesigning its educational system to incorporate these key elements, using a collaborative planning process that includes state, school district, and higher education stakeholders.

While the previous section outlines a vision for a new school funding system that supports adequate educational opportunity for all students and a globally competitive education system, there are steps the state of Wisconsin can take in the interim to make school funding both fairer and more responsive to current educational goals and expectations.

Policy Recommendations:

1. Index school revenue growth to the annual percentage increase in the consumer price index (CPI) to align allowable revenue growth with school cost increases and the investments necessary to meet student needs.
2. Place increases to the low revenue ceiling on a more permanent footing by setting the low revenue ceiling in statute at 95 percent of the statewide average revenue limit per pupil.
3. Create a school improvement innovation grant program to support school districts interested in adopting research-based, world-class school improvement models.
4. Contract with nationally recognized school finance experts for an adequacy study designed to determine the funding necessary for all Wisconsin school children to meet the state's education performance objectives and expectations.
5. Convene an inclusive team of stakeholders and other experts to study and make recommendations for implementing a 21st century school finance system for Wisconsin that embraces the principles described above. This group could be convened as a part of the Wisconsin Advisory Commission on Excellence in Education.

STUDENTS WITH HIGH NEEDS

Funding for students with high needs played a significant role in the debate over the constitutionality of the Wisconsin school finance system. In *Vincent v. Voight (2000)*, the state Supreme Court found the Wisconsin school finance system constitutional, so long as the legislature provided sufficient resources to ensure all students are offered an equal opportunity for a sound, basic education. The court specifically enumerated three classes of students to which the state has a special obligation for ensuring equitable opportunities: economically disadvantaged students, students with disabilities, and

English Learners.

Today, maintaining flat high-needs funding while costs are rising to serve each of these enumerated classes of students challenges the abilities of local school districts to meet the court's standard.

STUDENTS IN POVERTY

The student poverty rate has leveled off in Wisconsin after climbing significantly since 2003. For the 2017-18 school year, nearly 40 percent of students were eligible for free or reduced-price school meals—up from 29.5 percent in the 2003-04 school year.⁷⁰

The Achievement Gap Reduction (AGR) Program is one of the only state programs that targets funding for economically disadvantaged students.⁷¹ AGR was established in the 2015-16 school year and fully replaced the Student Achievement Guarantee in Education (SAGE) Program in the 2017-18 school year. The objective of AGR is to reduce participating schools' achievement gap for low-income students in math and reading. The program allows a school to meet its contract obligations by using one of three strategies: 1) one-to-one tutoring for students at risk of difficulty in math or reading, 2) instructional coaching for teachers, and 3) small class sizes of 18:1 or 30:2 and professional development on small-group discussion.⁷²

Under the program, schools receive a per-pupil allocation for each eligible low-income student in a participating grade (K-3). However, AGR does not target any funding for low-income students in grades 4-12. Therefore, Wisconsin has no comprehensive program that targets additional resources to raise achievement among economically disadvantaged students. Given the latest research on the impact increased funding has on reducing achievement gaps, it is imperative that the state provide the resources necessary to adequately serve its most vulnerable students.

⁷⁰ Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. Enrollment and Participation Data, October 2017.

⁷¹ Schmidt, W., Tatto, M., Bankov, K., Blomeke, S., Cedillo, T., Cogan, L., Han, S., Houang, R., Hsieh, F., Paine, L., Santillan, M., & Schwille, J., (2007). *The Preparation Gap: Teacher Education for Middle School Mathematics in Six Countries* (MT21 Report). Michigan State University Center for Research in Mathematics and Science Education.

Wang, A., Coleman, A., Coley, R., & Phelps, R. (2003). *Preparing teachers around the world*. Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service.

⁷² Wisconsin Legislative Council. Act Memo. 2015 Wisconsin Act 53 (<https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/2015/related/lcactmemo/act053>).

Policy Recommendations:

1. Provide additional formula “weighting” in the equalization aid formula for students eligible for free and reduced-price meals. This option would require per-pupil revenue limit increases and increases in general aid to offset the effects of aid redistribution and provide districts with real spending authority.
2. Allow school districts to count summer school students in academic summer school programs at 1.0 FTE for revenue limit and state general aid purposes, including virtual summer programs.
3. Provide state support for expanded, voluntary 4K (with students counted as full-day 1.0 FTE) and 3K (with students counted as half-day 0.5 FTE—or 0.6 FTE if the program includes parent education services) programming, both with community-based options.
4. Ensure that any changes to Wisconsin’s school finance system provide adequate resources for supporting research-based interventions for meeting the needs of all economically disadvantaged students.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Federal and state categorical aids for special education have not kept pace with rising costs. Categorical aid is the state’s primary source for recognizing the additional costs of educating students with disabilities. The state level of reimbursement fell below 30 percent in 2004-05, and then below 26 percent in 2017-18. As recently as 1993-94, the level of reimbursement was 44.6 percent.

The special education categorical aid appropriation of \$368,939,100 has been flat since 2008-09 and will continue at this level through at least 2019. Maintaining flat categorical aid funding while special education costs continue to rise effectively forces school districts to take more money from general aids and property taxes to pay for special education programs.⁷³

Meeting the needs of pupils with low-incidence and high-cost special education requirements can be costly for school districts. To assist school districts in meeting these needs, the state created an additional appropriation for funding certain high-cost special education services. The appropriation consists of approximately \$2.3 million annually of federal IDEA state discretionary funding and \$9.239 million of state general purpose revenue (GPR). All costs (except administration) related to educating students with high-cost special education needs are “aidable” under the program. Costs reimbursed by IDEA

⁷³ Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. 2019-21 State Budget Request, September 2018.

flow-through dollars, Medicaid, and state special education categorical aids are deducted. Reimbursement is then calculated at 90 percent of the amount (in excess of \$30,000) that it costs to provide services to an individual pupil in the previous year.

Policy Recommendations:

1. Increase state special education categorical aid funding to at least 33 percent of prior year aidable costs.
2. Increase the portion of a high-cost special education student's costs above \$30,000 that is eligible for reimbursement from 90 percent to 100 percent. Fully fund the prior year's aidable costs.
3. Make the special education categorical aid and high-cost special education categorical aid "sum sufficient" appropriations.
4. Develop a funding approach for fully funding the costs of serving special education students while allowing for the flexibility necessary for providing early intervention services consistent with RTI.

ENGLISH LEARNER STUDENTS

The state of Wisconsin requires school districts to establish a bilingual-bicultural (BLBC) program if they meet the following thresholds of English Learner (EL) students from the same language group within a given school:

- 10 or more pupils in grades K-3
- 20 or more pupils in grades 4-8
- 20 or more pupils in grades 9-12

The state reimbursement rate for these BLBC programs has fallen from 32.2 percent of approved prior year costs in 1994-95 to 8.1 percent of approved prior year cost in 2017-18. Between ELs attending districts that do not meet the above thresholds and ELs not covered by their district's BLBC program, nearly half of ELs in Wisconsin do not have any targeted BLBC resources to assist with English proficiency. It is also reasonable to assume that, absent sufficient BLBC categorical aid, most district BLBC expenditures are funded from general aids and property taxes.⁷⁴

⁷⁴ Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. 2019-21 State Budget Request (<https://dpi.wi.gov/budget>).

Policy Recommendations:

1. The legislature should start by at least doubling the current \$8.59 million annual appropriation for BLBC Programs. It should also create a new categorical aid appropriation to award up to \$100 per EL pupil to districts that have EL populations that do not currently qualify for BLBC categorical aid.
2. DPI should convene a study group to restructure BLBC program requirements and Wisconsin's approach to educating EL students in general. The study group should also make recommendations to the Commission on Excellence in Education described above for restructuring Wisconsin's BLBC categorical aid program to support the additional education costs of every EL student.

PUPIL TRANSPORTATION

Geographically large, sparsely populated rural school districts that transport students significant distances have been hardest hit by increasing transportation costs. These costs vary widely among school districts, from slightly less than \$100 per pupil in some districts to more than \$1,800 per pupil in others.⁷⁵

Under current law, school districts must provide transportation services to public and private school students enrolled in regular education programs, if those students reside more than two miles from the nearest public school they are entitled to attend. State pupil transportation categorical aid is based on a flat annual amount per transported pupil. In the last three state budgets, the reimbursement rate for the farthest travel distance was increased from \$220 to \$365 per pupil, without increasing categorical aid funding. Payments are based on the distance a pupil travels to school from home.⁷⁶

Total school district transportation costs for transporting students to and from school are approximately \$354 million annually. Thus, the state pupil transportation aid appropriation (\$24 million annually) reimburses only about 6.8 percent of actual transportation costs. Even with the infusion of \$12.7 million annually for high-cost transportation funding in 2017-18, state reimbursement



⁷⁵ Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. 2017-19 State Budget Request (<https://dpi.wi.gov/budget/previous-budgets/2017-19>).

⁷⁶ Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. 2019-21 State Budget Request.

is still only about 10.4 percent of actual school transportation costs.⁷⁷

In 2017-18, the DPI distributed \$12.7 million to 126 school districts for high-cost transportation categorical aid. Districts are eligible for this aid if their transportation costs exceed 145 percent of the statewide average cost per member, and if their student membership is 50 students or fewer per square mile. During the 2015-16 school year, Wisconsin districts submitted \$14.7 million in eligible costs, resulting in the new categorical aid funding being prorated at about 85 percent. The obvious policy implication is that while this new infusion of funding for student transportation was extremely helpful, it remained inadequate toward covering the actual costs districts incur each year.⁷⁸

Policy Recommendations:

1. Increase funding for the pupil transportation aid appropriation by 10 percent annually until the state level of reimbursement reaches 33 percent of prior year aidable costs.
2. Increase funding for the high-cost transportation categorical aid to cover 100 percent of the prior year's aidable costs. Create a second tier of support under this appropriation for districts with per-pupil transportation costs between 125 percent and 145 percent of the state average.
3. Increase funding for summer school transportation.
4. Make the pupil transportation aid and high-cost transportation aid appropriations "sum sufficient."
5. The Commission on Excellence in Education (described above) should explore overhauling the state's current transportation funding formula to: 1) incorporate state-of-the-art data systems that enable the formula to account for key cost drivers such as population density, land area, geographical barriers, and student safety; and 2) provide incentives for districts to reduce school transportation costs.

DECLINING ENROLLMENT

The number of Wisconsin's school districts experiencing declining enrollment more than doubled between 1997-98 (29.8 percent) and 2015-16 (63.4 percent) before moderating somewhat.⁷⁹ In 2017-18, 56.9 percent of districts (240) faced declining enrollment.

⁷⁷ Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. 2019-21 State Budget Request.

⁷⁸ Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. 2019-21 State Budget Request, September 2018.

⁷⁹ Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. 2018-19 Wisconsin School Finance Overview, September 2018.

Declining enrollment creates significant budget challenges for school districts, as fewer students result in lower funding. However, the enrollment reductions rarely occur in such a way as to permit districts to make corresponding reductions in spending for instructional staff and materials.

Recognizing this dilemma, 29 states provide some sort of relief for districts experiencing declining enrollment. The most common method is to delay or reduce the impact of falling enrollment for one or more years by permitting districts to use the greater of current or prior year enrollment, or the average of two to five years of enrollment counts for funding purposes. Seventeen states use some form of this approach. Other states address declining enrollment by limiting the amount enrollment may fall in any one year to a specific percentage, such as 3 percent.

Currently, Wisconsin attempts to address the issue of declining enrollment in three ways. First, a three-year rolling average enrollment count is used for calculating a district's revenue limit. This serves to lessen the fiscal impact by distributing funding reductions due to declining enrollment over three years. Second, districts with declining enrollment receive a nonrecurring revenue limit adjustment if its current three-year rolling average enrollment count is less than its prior three-year rolling average. This adjustment is equal to 100 percent of the revenue limit decrease caused by the lower enrollment count.

Third, districts with declining enrollment are eligible for a second nonrecurring revenue limit adjustment (the Prior Year Base Revenue Hold Harmless) if its revenue limit, after certain adjustments, is less than its prior year base revenue. Even with this adjustment, districts with particularly large enrollment decreases may receive less funding than they did in the prior year. Districts with large or persistent enrollment decreases are facing ever greater fiscal pressures.

Policy Recommendations:

1. A number of options for addressing declining enrollment have been discussed in recent years, without reaching consensus. The legislature should consider one or more new strategies for limiting or delaying the impact of declining enrollment on school districts to give them more time to rationally address the associated decreases in district revenues. These include:
 - a. Extending the time non-recurring revenue limits adjustments related to declining enrollment are in effect to at least two to three years.
 - b. Ensuring the Prior Year Base Revenue Hold Harmless compensates for the entire decrease in revenue limits due to declining enrollment in all cases.
 - c. Examining a three to five-year phase-in of revenue limit decreases; for

example, zero percent of a decrease would be recognized in year one and an equal proportion of a decrease would be recognized annually over the next two to four years.

D. ACADEMIC STANDARDS, ASSESSMENT & ACCOUNTABILITY

ACADEMIC STANDARDS

Over the past 20 years, Wisconsin has developed, adopted, and, in some cases, modified academic content standards in more than 25 areas, including the four core areas of English, mathematics, science, and social studies. Content standards have also been developed to cover career and technical education, world languages, fine arts, and health and physical education, among other content areas. Content standards are developed as a guide (but not a requirement) for Wisconsin districts to use in adopting curriculum, instructional materials, and professional development aligned to clear, concise, and rigorous expectations for what students are expected to know and be able to do. In content areas covered by large-scale standardized assessments, such as mathematics and reading, the content standards the DPI adopts also provide a roadmap for districts in terms of the specific content the assessments address.

Although the DPI adopts model content standards, Wisconsin districts have (and have always had) local control to either adopt state standards or create their own. They also retain control over how to best design a curriculum aligned to state content standards. SAA continues to believe that final decisions around content standards, curriculum, textbook selection, instructional materials, and professional development should be made at the local level, and that Wisconsin students, parents, and teachers are best served by having a transparent, thoughtful, and timely state process for standards adoption and revision.

ASSESSMENT

High-quality assessments of student learning, which provide a means to measure student understanding in relation to established content standards, serve an important purpose in education. They provide feedback to the learner, diagnostic information to the educator, and actionable information to parents, employers, and the general public about student performance. Because no single assessment can fulfill all these goals, it is necessary for Wisconsin school districts to adopt a strategic assessment portfolio that limits redundancies and time spent on assessment while providing key pieces of information to monitor student progress.

The DPI's Strategic Assessment Systems (SAS) framework⁸⁰ provides a sound basis for reaching this goal, built on the following assessment types:

- *Formative assessments* that provide specific, actionable, and immediate feedback that is student-centered and helps teachers identify short-term adjustments to instruction.
- *Interim assessments* that provide an important periodic check on student performance that is grade level or school centered.
- *Summative assessments*, which are useful for providing the public with annual information on learning in schools and identifying achievement gaps.

Although assessment serves an important purpose, it is subsidiary to the paramount goal of providing high-quality learning for all students. Assessment practices need to be balanced, evidence based, and properly aligned to the fundamental purposes of teaching and learning. In short, a strategic system of assessments should:

- Include a balance of formative, interim, and summative assessments that provide valid, timely, and relevant information on the progress of all students while eliminating redundancy.
- Include principles of universal design for the full inclusion of all learners.
- Minimize the loss of instructional time.
- Include professional development for educators to develop, interpret, and use information from high-quality assessments for valid and intended purposes.
- Provide support for teacher collaborative practices involving assessment.

ACCOUNTABILITY

In the same way that assessment systems used in high-performing states and countries vary widely (from an almost complete lack of standardized exams in Finland to a focus on high-stakes assessments in Massachusetts and other U.S. states), a related gap exists across accountability systems. Schools in Massachusetts and Ontario link test scores and other student and school-level performance metrics to a school for decision making and public information purposes, while Finnish schools (which are largely controlled at a local level) do not distinguish and rate schools on standardized metrics.

With state and national policy having coalesced in recent years around the goal of having

⁸⁰ Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, Wisconsin's Strategic Assessment Systems (<https://dpi.wi.gov/strategic-assessment>).

students graduate from high school college and career ready, SAA strongly supports the formation of a standing Accountability Advisory Commission charged with reviewing the state's accountability system and considering ways to incorporate a broader range of measures—beyond test scores and graduation rates—to measure school performance.

Fortunately, a useful model already exists in the form of the "Redefining Ready" initiative launched by the American Association of School Administrators (AASA). In brief, Redefining Ready provides a new multi-metric, research-based approach to determining what it means to be college ready, career ready, and life ready, featuring a variety of measures much broader than test scores, including advanced course taking, attendance, and participation in community service, workplace learning, dual credit, and co-curricular activities.

SAA recognizes that opportunity gaps exist across Wisconsin schools for some of these measures. For example, rural schools are not always able to offer the same array of advanced courses. Additionally, not all of these indicators would be suitable measures to include in school accountability systems, some would be more suitable to encourage schools to work toward rather than using them as accountability measures.

Policy Recommendations:

1. The State Superintendent's Standards Review Council should continue meeting on a regular basis to establish an ongoing process for reviewing the adoption and adaptation of state content standards, along with the assessments aligned to them. The work of this group should align with advisory groups addressing assessment and accountability (see below), as assessments should align to content standards.
2. State legislators should resist the urge to pass legislation requiring students to complete individual courses and pass individual assessments in isolation from a long-term and comprehensive review of academic content standards.
3. Following numerous changes in recent years to state assessments, SAA believes that it is time for a period of stability (to allow for valid comparisons of performance over time), as well as the formation of a standing Assessment Advisory Commission to provide guidance and help formulate policy on the following topics:
 - a. Reviewing the current portfolio of mandated assessments for alignment, relevance, time, reporting, and usefulness of results, along with the frequency with which districts choose to augment state-mandated assessments with optional testing of their own (using products such as MAP and STAR).
 - b. Reviewing intended and unintended consequences of using assessment for high stakes, including asking the question: *Are current policies and practices*

driving or inhibiting improved teaching and learning?

- c. Examining opportunities for promoting innovative and authentic assessment practices across the curriculum to facilitate personalized learning and the demonstration of creativity, problem solving, and other higher-order skills.
 - d. Recommending professional development for current and pre-service educators in assessment development and literacy, evidence-based assessment practices, and evidence-based grading practices.
 - e. Reviewing the resources and structures schools and educators need to effectively administer the mandated assessment program and use the results.
 - f. Developing ethical guidance to educators around assessment practices.
 - g. Considering whether—and under which specific circumstances—a sampling approach (rather than assessing all students) could be used. For accountability purposes in districts and schools of sufficient size, for example, it could make sense to consider whether all students need to be assessed or if sufficient information could be derived from a sample of students to minimize lost instructional time.
 - h. Considering the utility of WorkKeys, an assessment currently mandated for all students in 11th grade and intended to measure workplace skills and help students build career pathways. The state should consider making WorkKeys an optional—rather than required—state assessment, given the additional time it takes to administer and uncertainty over whether employers consider it a useful measure of students' workforce readiness. Any dollars saved could be redirected toward the state's Academic and Career Planning (ACP) process and/or Career and Technical Education (CTE) incentive grants to districts.
 - i. Promoting full student participation in state assessments: While it is likely not practical in the short term to remove from state statutes the language that allows parents to opt out their children from state assessments, we should recognize the logical inconsistency of allowing opt-outs at the same time we develop and release state accountability results (Report Cards) that rely on full participation of all students.
4. Convene a commission to regularly review Wisconsin's accountability system and consider ways to broaden its current indicators in a manner that better reflects what it means to be college, career, and life ready.

