

Remarks to the Joint Finance Committee
State Legislature
State of Wisconsin

Ladies and Gentlemen:

My name is Jean Butterfield. My seniority date as a permanent Communications Skills teacher at Ethan Allen began on August 28, 1978. During my tenure at Ethan Allen, I have chaired the Curriculum Committee and am currently holding that position on the Educational Advisory Committee. I sponsor a drug education program given by Waukesha County Council and am co-adviser to the Chess Club. Last year I was named teacher of the year for the State of Wisconsin by Educational Correction Association. I felt that that honor called attention to the importance of juvenile corrections in Wisconsin. Less than a year later, I feel as though I've been kicked in the mouth by a mule because of the State of Wisconsin's proposed budget for juveniles corrections and its implications. I am here to speak not only for myself but also on the behalf of the teachers at Ethan Allen. More importantly, I am here to speak for my students because they have few advocates as far as educational programming is concerned.

I will acknowledge that the Legislature and the Joint Finance Committee have been making an attempt to deal with the problems of juvenile criminal behavior in Wisconsin. I will also state that overcrowding at Ethan Allen is a concern that needs a solution. However, some aspects of your proposed policy need to be re-examined.

The first premise that I find faulty with your budget is that premise that you can operate three juvenile institutions for the price of two without doing harm to all three in the process. I do not believe that this is as easily resolved as shifting funds and staff. The events of recent weeks have shown a callous disregard for both teachers and students. The Department of Administration in February, following your mandate, proceeded to decimate the ranks of senior teachers and educational programs at Ethan Allen. Eighteen teachers and four other

Maeghan Killeen 7th
Erlene Killeen Parent
Cindy Curtis - Parent

Ryan Curtiss 6th
Emily Winecke 7th

Good afternoon co-chairs Joe Llean and Ben Brancel and distinguished members of the Joint Finance Committee.

I am here to register my displeasure with AB150, specifically the revenue controls placed on school districts.

The ^{Proposed} ~~Governor's~~ budget does the following:

- 1) Makes the revenue limits permanent and restricts the per member increase to \$194 for all districts and repeals the provision which would annually increase this amount by the CPI.
- 2) Allows low revenue districts to increase revenue up to \$5200 in 1995-96 and \$5500 in following years.
- 3) Allows an inclusion for state aid for school lunch , head start, school libraries, child at risk, staff development, drivers' education, pupil transportation, and handicapped education to the revenue limits which were not included before.

4) Freezes most categorical aid appropriations at 1994-95 levels just to name a few.

When you make revenue controls permanent and then freeze the allowable annual increase in revenue per pupil at \$194 beginning in the 1995-96 school year, you eliminate the option of calculating the allowable increase according to the rate of inflation. This change completely ignores changes in school costs that are rising beyond the rate of inflation. It also further reduces local control and imposes a one size fits all model for revenue control.

I mentioned before the exemption for school districts whose revenues per pupil is less than \$5,200 in the 1995-96 school year and \$5,500 in the following years. While this sounds great on paper, it only helps 20 districts the first year and 10 in the second year.

While I do support property tax relief, I do not support it at the expense of a quality state-wide public education system.

3/27/94

Budget Hearing

Dear Legislators:

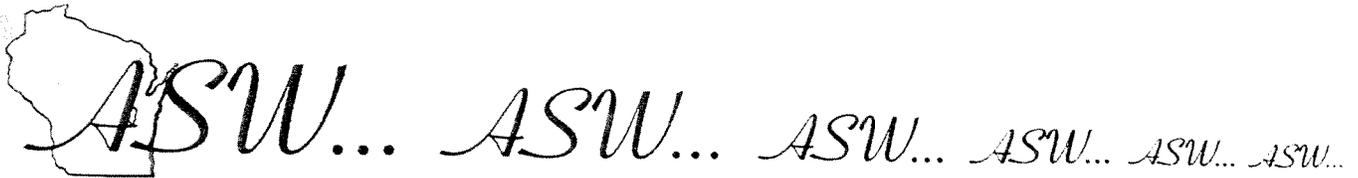
I would like to express my opinion on the proposed school choice plan. I am greatly concerned that this plan, as it currently exists, would hurt the public school system by placing it in unfair competition with private schools that are not subjected to the same mandates.

I do not think that the state should be supporting private schools, especially religious schools, however, if the state insists on doing this, it should place the same requirements on all schools. All schools should have to provide the same counselling, services for the disabled, and accept all takers. The private schools should not be allowed to take the best behaved and the kids with the most motivated parents, and leave the rest behind for the public schools.

Actually, I thought the whole point of the school choice plan was to try an experiment, to see whether private schools could do a better job. As a scientist, I object to what amounts to a very poorly planned experiment at the public's expense. The subjects of the experiment are self-selected, so they are unlikely to be equivalent to those left behind in the public schools. The small trial to date has not been continued long enough to examine its effects, yet the program is being expanded. As this "experiment" currently exists, I do not believe that we will really be able to compare the private and public schools in any meaningful way.

Another concern of mine is the poor salaries paid by many private schools. If the real goal of the school choice program is to drive down teachers wages, it may succeed, but at the cost of driving the best teachers and potential teachers out of the state or out of the profession. My sister-in-law teaches four classes and supervises children at mass at a private school in Wisconsin. Five classes and a study hall is considered full time. Because she is classified as part time, she receives no benefits, and her annual salary is less than \$10,000. She continues only because she hopes to get into the public school system in the near future. Is this what all teachers have to look forward to?


Laura J. Brown, M.D., Ph.D.
607 Piper Dr.
Madison, WI 53711



AUTISM SOCIETY OF WISCONSIN
519 N. Union St.
Appleton, WI 54911-5031
414-731-1448
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Dear Joint Finance Committee Member:

I am the president of the Autism Society of Wisconsin's Madison Area Chapter and the parent of a child with autism. Three years ago when my child was nearly expelled from a private nursery school, I brought him to the Madison School District's Child Find Program. They diagnosed him as mildly autistic and placed him in the Early Childhood Program. Three years later, he is a totally different child, functioning very well in a regular kindergarten class. I am telling you this personal story out of a deep sense of gratitude for the difference that Wisconsin's public schools have made in my son's life, and the lives of many other children with autism. Not so long ago most autistic children were institutionalized; now many are able to live productive lives in their communities because of the education provided by the public schools.

Many of the proposed educational changes contained in the Governor's budget would impact negatively on the education of children with autism. The Department of Public Instruction plays a vital role in enforcing federal and state mandates concerning the right of children with disabilities to a free, appropriate public education. While some school districts are very supportive of the needs of children with autism, others will either segregate the children in self-contained classrooms with children with other disabilities, or "dump" them in regular classrooms without appropriate support. Parents sometimes need the support of DPI to get the services that their child requires. In addition, DPI provides assistance for small school districts that don't have enough students with autism to hire an autism specialist. I am concerned that the proposed restructuring of DPI will hobble its ability to carry out these functions.

The Governor's proposed voucher plan would divert much-needed funds from the public schools to private and parochial schools that undoubtedly would not accept children with autism as students. Educating children with special needs costs more than educating other children, but the stakes are higher. Although there is no cure for autism, with the right educational program and therapies many high-functioning children can be brought to near-normal functioning, as my son was. Education can make the difference between institutionalization, which is extremely expensive, and being able to hold a job and live in the community for people with autism. The proposed cap on special education spending may save some money now, but cost society more in the long run.

A lame-duck governor with national political aspirations wants to conduct a vast experiment with what he himself has called "the number one educational system in the country," with our children as the guinea pigs! Why make wholesale changes in a system that is serving most of our children so well? There is no guarantee that the changes proposed in the budget bill will make education in Wisconsin better than it is now. And if they don't, do you want to take the blame? Please consider this in your deliberations.

Thank you very much for your attention.

Sincerely,

Donna Rosinski

Donna Rosinski, president
ASW Madison Area Chapter

My name is Maeghan Killeen. I am 12 years old and live in Stoughton. I attend Stoughton Middle School and am in the seventh grade. I want to share with you some of the programs I have been in and how they have given me a better education.

Some of these programs were:

-the gifted program in 4th grade. I did not have a happy year in the regular classroom, but the time I spent in this program kept me interested and active in school. The hands-on projects my TAG teacher provided kept me liking school that year.

- my fifth grade chorus which was a volunteer group that performed in our community. I learned to not be afraid in front of a group of people and to act while singing. I also learned that it is okay if people laugh at you if you are entertaining and want them to laugh. A lot of kids my age don't understand that and are self-conscience. I gained self-confidence.

- in 5th grade I also participated in a Mini-museum project that combined kids from all three elementary schools in Stoughton and helped us learn how museums work. We learned about art from many countries and responsibility for valuable objects. We taught lessons to younger students in our schools. I learned that teaching is hard work because you have to repeat things. All kids don't understand directions the first time you say them. I found out I don't have much patience for that.

- During sixth grade I participated in the Odyssey of the Mind program. This program teaches you to solve problems with a group and work creatively. We placed fourth at the contest. I learned to think through problems and work well with others, using their strengths. All of us have different abilities.

-My Middle School sponsors Day Away Programs. They are opportunities to study in a variety of places. Some places I have been are the Elvium Art Museum, the University of WI, Madison, and work with local drama groups. It's better to learn by doing than just from books.

- For the past three years, I have attended Stoughton's Summer EXCEL program. I have taken a performing arts course each year as well as pottery, computers, and science. I have been able to do hands-on activities that could not be done in a class with 25 - 30 students during the regular school year.

These programs and many others may be eliminated for kids like me if funding for the schools continues to be reduced. For someone who gets straight A's easily, these kinds of programs provide challenges to keep me learning and active. I would like you to know that gifted programs are really important to kids. Thank you for listening.

Maeghan Killeen
517 Greig Trail
Stoughton, WI 53589

My name is
Cindy Curtis -

First of all, I am here as a concerned parent. I am not here supporting one party or the other. I have a 12 year old son with special needs that requires a program that offers challenges above the normal curriculum on a regular basis. If his needs are not met, then he loses interest and becomes a greater burden on the system.

My background has exposed me to numerous districts in several states and I have found they each have had some type of program to attend to those students with special needs requiring additional challenges. Therefore, Wisconsin is not unique by providing additional opportunities to those who can excel, ~~and~~ but we have found Wisconsin to be providing the most opportunities for our son.

As parents we expect children with needs for higher levels of learning to be attended to in a similar manner as those children with other types of special needs.

Have we not learned anything from the 1983 landmark study "**A Nation At Risk**"? An educational system isn't worth a great deal if it fails to teach our children the necessary skills and techniques to enable them to develop to their full potential and become productive members of society.

If we want our kids to graduate from school able to compete in today's society and be productive contributing members then they need the best education possible.

In closing I feel all kids' have different skills, learning abilities and needs. The hard task for the state government is to somehow provide for the needs of all. As normal programs meet the needs of the majority, I encourage you to continue your efforts in recognizing and providing for the needs of those kids who can go beyond the majority so they can fully develop their talents which will make society better for all.

Thank-you
Cindy Curtis

My name is Ryan Curtiss. I am in the 6th grade at Stoughton Middle School. My favorite school subjects are Math and Science. I have lived in 5 states. I am here today to share with you my special educational needs. I need more challenging activities so I do not get bored and loose interest in school

The teachers have recognized my need for more activities than what is being offered in the normal classroom and have let me do higher level assignments. The activities I am talking about are things like learning how to run a small business, sharing information with a 7th grader from a Russian school by using the Internet, trouble shooting a prototype math program, computer club, jazz band, and a member of the local swimming team. Many times my classmates ask me what the special activities are and what I do in them. Other classmates often ask me for help since I usually know the material.

I have heard that Governor Thompson wants to use technology so the state can do great things. I want to be one of those people to develop new technologies that can help the people of Wisconsin. But it will take an investment to educate us kids so we can do what he is talking about.

In closing, I hope you will do something so the school can continue to provide for my special need of activities above what the normal class has to offer.

Thank-You

Ryan Curtiss

Hello,

I am Emily Winecke. I'm thirteen years old and attend Stoughton Middle School. I want to tell you about my losses if you pass this budget. Many people will suffer. One is my Grandma Winecke who is 88. She will have to go into a nursing home, because the programs that helped her clean her apartment and provided her and her friends with food services will be shut down. The independence she has left will be taken because she's elderly. That's not right!

I will suffer, too, because things like TAG, Driver's Ed, the performing arts, Special Education and possibly even sports will no longer exist, because the money will be gone. TAG and Special Ed are of vital importance because they help kids that would normally fall beneath the cracks, reach their full potential and you wonder why there's juvenile crime. You people don't invest any money into us. Our money is cut and cut until the technology is bad and their roofs leak but we can't repair them. All the investments made for the future are gone. And we keep hearing over and over again that the school can't afford this and that and maybe we should pay for it with our own money. We can't even get simple things that every school should have. And you want to take more money away from us? I think you should look at our worn-down, overcrowded public schools and then tell us that you wouldn't mind sending your kids there instead of a private school. You can't take away what little funding there is for people like my grandma and me. You really should open your eyes and be on the citizen's side!

Emily A. Winecke

3/27/94

Budget Hearing

Dear Legislators:

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Laura J. Brown, M.D., Ph.D.
607 Piper Dr.
Madison, WI 53711


Mark N. Shahan
607 Piper Dr.
Madison, WI 53711

March 27, 1995

To: Members of the Joint Finance Committee:

From: Judith Topitzes, MSSW, CICSW
Professional Support Person for Social Work
Madison Metropolitan School District

RE: GOVERNOR'S BUDGET PROPOSAL

I testify today as a social work professional in the field of education. I represent the Wisconsin School Social Workers Association.

We support in the Governor's budget:

1. Maintenance of funding for children at risk.
Children are resilient. However, the living conditions they are often being required to endure are beyond the scope of the time you have today and the imaginations of most of us. The reports from the Wisconsin Council on Children and Families regarding the children growing up in Wisconsin provide dramatic evidence. Almost all of these children come to our public schools each day for an education. Schools need the special financial support to minimize and counteract these barriers to at risk students' learning.

2. AODA Grants.

The prevention efforts which are funded by AODA grants are working.

- a. Deaths related to drinking and driving are significantly lower.
- b. The onset of alcohol and drugs by many of our children has been delayed.
- c. The quantity of alcohol consumed by teens who drink has decreased significantly.
- d. The population of children who choose not to use is increasing.

What we oppose or have concerns about:

1. Inclusion of handicapped aids in revenue limits. This inclusion would put Regular Education funding in competition with the Federally mandated programs for Exceptional Education. Regular education funding would be decreased, putting it in even greater jeopardy due to the 3.8% cap on school district budgets.
2. Freezing of handicapped education aids. The state is currently meeting only 43% of its stated commitment to fund handicapped education. Freezing handicapped education aids would worsen this breach of commitment to local school districts.

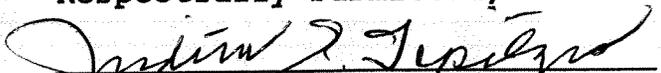
3. Elimination of the Department of Public Instruction and Elected State Superintendent

If it's not broken, why fix it? Wisconsin rates very high nationally in all educational testing. Schools need ongoing encouragement to improve the excellent results they are already obtaining--not destruction of a functioning system. This issue is obviously a policy issue and should be separated from the fiscal budget for careful consideration.

4. Private Contracting

Allowing school districts to hire resources from outside the district is no guarantee for hiring quality. The existing Cooperative Educational Services Agreements (CESA) within the state allow access to districts of a range of part time services which they might not be able to hire on a full time basis.

Respectfully submitted,


Judith E. Topitzes, MSSW, CICSW
1750 Camelot Drive
Madison, Wisconsin 53705

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Thank-You

Ryan Curtiss

My name is Erlene Bishop Killeen and I live in Stoughton. I am divorced and the parent of two children, Maeghan, a 12 year old seventh grader here with me today, and Robert, an 8 year old third grader. My children have varied needs which the public school is meeting successfully. Maeghan is in the gifted and talented program, which you just heard about from her. Robert, on the other hand, is learning disabled with minor motor disabilities and an above average IQ. He is the example I would like to talk about.

Robert attended Martin Luther Christian Day School for kindergarten and first grade. I appreciated the tender care he received there and economically, the full-day kindergarten program tuition was less expensive than public kindergarten and day care. He was in a first grade classroom of only 14 children so the attention and education he received was excellent. I was happy to have the choice of private schooling for my son. I could probably afford to have kept Robert there, but I knew he would not receive the help he needed in his personal development. In the private school he did not have the following opportunities:

^{who} There was no library. There were few computers, something essential to a child ~~how~~ has small motor skill difficulties and has trouble using pencils, pens, and even silverware. There was no physical education teacher, no art teacher, no learning disabilities teacher, no reading teacher, no librarian, no school psychologist or counselor, and no assistants to help students beyond kindergarten.

I am not saying that the private school is a bad school. There are wonderful teachers there and we had only good experiences. But, I am saying that a little boy with learning difficulties and few family supports does not fit the mold of the private church school student.

There were constant fund-raisers. This is not something a single parent wants to spend time on or has the money to support on a regular basis. Most parents contributed time to the school during the day. Again, Robert's mother could not. Night meetings were not attractive due to child care responsibilities. Weekend and family events were painful because my children had only one parent and it was very obvious in this small school setting that we were different. These are basic events at church-run schools. I felt like we were the odd family out.

At the public school, Robert has received care, attention, and a variety of instruction for his needs. Please do not take these things away from the public school. Parents do have a choice, they may send their children to any school - public, private, or home -- but they do not have the right to take money away from the public school which serves all kinds of children equitably. Private schools are not equipped or required to handle all types of children. Don't cheat the Roberts just to please some taxpayers. Money does make schools better. It provides materials, teachers, and facilities. The public schools cannot do with less. Please don't put us in the fund-raising business so that private school children can have tax dollars. Thank you for listening. Robert, Maeghan and I are counting on you.

Erlene Bishop Killeen
517 Greig Trail
Stoughton, VT 53589

Governor Tommy Thompson
115 E. State Capitol
Madison, Wisc. 53702

Mr. & Mrs. Michael Miller
W12732 Cty Trk AS
Brandon, Wisc. 53919
(414) 346-2573

March 24, 1995

Dear Sir,

My family have only been residents of the state of Wisconsin since May 1994. My husband is employed as a Chief Estimator for Westra Construction in Waupun, Wisconsin. My background is volunteer involvement with educational reform on the legislative level. I am very familiar with the problems that plague this country's school systems. I studied all of the material made available to me, including the studies done by now House Speaker, Newt Gingrich, and Wisconsin's own state representative, Chairman of Urban Education, Polly Williams.

One of the reasons that we chose to move to Wisconsin when my husband was recruited by the local construction company from my home state of Ohio, was because I have followed, extensively, the history and evolution of Wisconsin, and specifically, Milwaukee Public schools.

I had very much hoped that this state was different from the other areas where we have had children in public school systems. Between my husband and myself we have had seven children in public school systems, and now number eight, Daniel, who is thirteen, and nine, Andrew, who is eleven.

Andrew attends Alto Elementary School, in Alto, where we live. It is part of the Waupun Public School System. Daniel is a seventh grader at Waupun Middle School in Waupun. Both of the boys have been found to have attention deficit, although they are both above average intelligence, and involved in honors or gifted programs at their respective schools. They are receiving additional testing to determine if there are additional minor learning disabilities. Their respective school experiences in this particular school system have been very different.

Andrew's school is extremely wonderful. All schools could take a lesson from this school. Especially, from Vern Wanish, who is the principal at this elementary school, and one other. The L.D. representative at Jefferson Elementary School, also in the Waupun system has been very good, and extremely helpful and accommodating, especially during the interim time period during which he is still being tested.

Daniel's experience is horrifying, to say the least. The first day that I entered the building to register Daniel for school, I witnessed a conversation taking place between a female teacher, and the principal, in front of a group of students who were listening. The teacher was protesting having to mainstream a specific student, even though, the principal said this particular child had only a minor reading disability. For that reason, I made a specific point of speaking to the principal concerning having the school test for suspected attention deficit. Since that time, there has been no compliance. We proceeded with having the extensive testing done privately.

Since I recognized a distinct problem with compliance, I educated myself on everything connected with the school and the disorder. I became aware early on that the school district was under no obligation to accept a privately obtained, independent assessment from us, unless it was one that reached beyond the scope of what the school could provide. I made certain that it was. I am making certain that the remaining testing is also more than the school can provide so that my son not only receives the best possible care and treatment, but that the school will have to accept the conclusions of what we had to pay for, because they failed completely to provide upon request.

The school has proven to be ignorant concerning this disorder, and has failed to comply with my repeated requests to educate themselves. Several very underhanded things have been done to my son, as result of my filing a complaint with the school, and with the Federal Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights. We regard these things to be harrassment as result of filing the complaint, and also to be discriminatory in light of his disorder. Despite documentation informing the school of the above this behavior continues. The investigation process was an absolute joke.

The principal was named by me as the first violator of the request to test, and yet, the district administrator, William Bobbe, turned the first step of the investigation process over to the principal, until I vehemently protested, in writing, and notified the local school board that this matter called for the disqualification of the principal. And so on, and so on.

My son is being repeatedly punished for what he cannot accomplish, and for nonexistent incidents, relying on the word of two teachers who have at least, what can be documented to be, a six or seven year history of abusive treatment of students that has been addressed by both the principal, Richard Steinbach, and the assistant principal, Mr. Docter. Both of whom would prefer that we did not have this information. I was treated beligerently and unreasonably by Mr. Docter, who has taken the opportunity to use the telephone system, under the guise of his position with the school to badger me continually, despite the fact that I have clarified repeatedly with him the fact that I do not want him to call me. As my conversations with him have proved to be fruitless, to say the least, I asked him to put everything in writing, which he does, but in doing so, he fails to address the specific points that I wish to have exact answers for. In other words, he is entirely evasive. He is disreputable, misleading, and lacks professionalism. All of these matters have been passed down to him, although some of them were specifically addressed to the principal, which is the principal's way of avoiding responsibility.

I have never been contacted by the EEN or learning disability representative of the school, despite the fact that I have made several attempts to contact them. There has been no sharing of the information that we obtained privately that will facilitate the school "helping" Daniel. I was informed, as of March 13, 1995 by someone within the school system that, until that date, no one in EEN or L.D. ever heard of Daniel's case. And it continues on.

Despite the fact that the level of participation by the community is extremely high, and the level of interest in the school is very high, very many of the people complain, and rightfully so, of being disregarded, disrespected, and treated badly when they ask valid questions about their children's education. I have experienced this firsthand. I have asked repeatedly if the two abusive teachers' use of the disciplinary system (abuse) for such things as having only one of two pencils results in having to serve a detention (contrary to other teachers use of the system) affects Daniel's grade. I know that this school is involved in outcome based education, and they will never give a parent a straight answer.

Parents frequently complain their valid concerns or complaints are deadended. They are made to feel that they are the only one complaining, they are bad parents with bad children, etc. All of this I recognize to be tactics of the National Education Association to throw parents off-track and usurp the parent's authority over the child. Requests for testing have been met with everything from the absurd to the sublime. I have heard such excuses as; the testing would be too expensive, so the school doesn't do it. There is a two year waiting list, it would be better if you had it done yourself. The problem is not that serious. Overall, the parent's observations concerning the student are thrown aside in favor of what the teacher or administration wants.

What some of the teachers want is not to have to accommodate a child who is highly educable, such as my son. For this reason there are other tactics such as implied threats and intimidation brought into play.

Let me give you a wider perspective of this problem, as I know that you are already working on welfare reform. These students are pushed through the system without the learning difficulties being addressed properly and treated. If, by the senior year of high school, in Ohio at least, they were giving these students a Learning Disabilities Certificate because they were unable to graduate the student, because of their inability to pass the competency tests, even though they were given nine times. The state department of education filed suit against the schools where this was found to be the practice, but in many areas it still continues. I am aware that 41% of the women on welfare roles are functionally illiterate. I can tell you that this does not come close to addressing the issue of men who fill our shelters, and are jobless and homeless. If these are are main bread winners and they are ill equipped to do so, who will provide? We will. The remediation for bad school systems is being payed out phenomenally on a daily basis in welfare, crime, etc. My husband's company employs two hundred workers for large ticket (multi-million dollar) construction jobs. This includes prisons, of which there are plenty to go around these days, and schools, hospitals, etc. They are restricted in the size of the projects they are able to even bid, because of the limited resource of employees who are functionally literate to work at construction. These jobs pay well, and the company provides good benefits for them. Of all the companies I am acquainted with, this one, Westra Construction, treats it's employees better than anyone. They are a highly reputable business producing a quality product.

I have been monitoring the Education Subcommittee Hearings recently with great interest. They have just come to the conclusion, that all of us relying on common sense have always known. Education must focus on academic achievement, not social adjustment. It is important to include in the educational process the observations and information from parents (who know the children best) and businesses, who know what it takes to keep this country running. We have failed, as a country to address these issues of a failing education system, that were brought to the federal government's attention in 1983 by the states who were suffering, and just now getting around to having a meaningful dialogue on the subject.

I have followed your suggestions to do away with the state superintendent's position, along with the D.P.I., and to replace it with an appointed secretary of education and a department of education. To this I say, Bravo! I know that you are looking to hold the education system accountable by this action, and I can tell you that it almost too little too late. I am in favor of continuing the public education system. I had a great education from the fifties, through the seventies. Although I am the product of a physically abusive, alcoholic father, and a prescription drug addicted middle class dysfunctional family, and despite the fact that I have dyslexia, and attention deficit, for which there was no diagnosis or treatment at that time, I am a success story simply because I had caring teachers, who held themselves accountable. I hear a lot of dialogue from teachers who complain that they can't help with what is happening in the homes these days, to which I adamantly say BUNK! I credit the fact that I could read, write, and do arithmetic, and the fact that my teachers looked favorably on me, with the fact that I was able to read my way out of the hell that I was born into.

Children don't need the kind of feel good social activity, void of academic achievement, they need a real sense of accomplishment in their lives, that makes them feel a sense of empowerment.

I am all for the changes that you are attempting to make. I would make this suggestion also. I think you need to become more familiar with just how widespread this kind of pitiful public school operation is. I also know that, if you are really going to address the welfare problem, address the teacher's welfare system that they have built, that enables abusive and alcoholic, and deficient teachers to maintain tenure at the expense of our children's education and all of our futures. It has been my experience that if the voucher system is an option for citizens, or at least tax breaks for those who homeschool, or privately educate their children, the schools seem to come immediately to attention. The schools do not empty out, as some would think, but there is immediate accountability because of the competitiveness that is restored. Thank you for lending me your ear. Good Luck. We parents support your efforts.

Sincerely,

Judith Miller

Waupun High ordered to forfeit hockey game, title

District will appeal

By KEVIN PASSON
Editor

Waupun High School's hockey team has been ordered by WIAA officials to forfeit its Feb. 9 victory over Beaver Dam, and in turn, forfeit its share of the Badgerland Conference first place title.

According to William Bobbe, administrator for the Waupun School District, the order was issued after WIAA officials learned a Waupun student, who had served a half-day in-school suspension the day of the game, played in the game. Waupun High School rules prohibit a student from playing in a game the day he or she serves the suspension.

Waupun will appeal the WIAA decision.

BOBBEMET with WHS principal Jim LaValley, WHS assistant principal Tom Wonderling, athletic director John Forsythe, hockey coach Steve Lenz and hockey assistant coach Wally Klug Thursday to discuss the issue. The group decided unanimously to appeal the WIAA ruling.

"We will appeal under the standard that the player who participated did not affect the outcome of the game enough to change the outcome," said Bobbe, referring to Waupun's 10-2 victory. "This is a case of misinterpretation of the rules and communication problems by adults. The students had nothing to do with it and shouldn't suffer because of it."

Bobbe said Lenz' decision to play the student was not intentional; rather, it was a misinterpretation of the rules. He said Lenz interpreted the rules as saying the student could play as long as he did not serve a full day of in-school suspension.

"I'm not going to comment on anything," said Lenz. "I don't think this is an appropriate time to release anything."

Bobbe said the last two similar appeals to the WIAA were won by the appealing schools. Those two appeals dealt with football players participating in the last few minutes of a game.

WIAA were won by the appealing schools. Those two appeals dealt with football players participating in the last few minutes of a game.

Waupun's appeal will be heard at the April 7 meeting of the WIAA Board of Control.

Officials from the WIAA could not be reached for comment.

OFFICIALS at Beaver Dam were notified of the ineligible player through an anonymous letter sent a few days after the game.

Included in the information sent to Chris Nelson, athletic director at Beaver Dam High School, was a copy of the high school handbook showing the student was ineligible to play and a copy of the in-school suspension list showing the student's name.

Nelson, who sits on the WIAA Board of Control, contacted LaValley. After their discussion, LaValley called the WIAA to get a clarification of whether a local school policy could force the forfeit of a game.

"Whether this information was sent by teachers or other staff has not been proven, although we think it may have been someone on the staff because of the school records that were sent," said Bobbe. "We are willing to receive any information on who may have done this and will investigate any information given to us."

Bobbe said the staff member would not be sought out because he or she "snitched" on the school, team or player; instead, the person is being sought for releasing the records of the student, which are not open to the public.

How the staff member would be punished would be dealt with after a conference with him or her, and it would depend on whether there have been any other infractions in the past.

THANK YOU for your support in the School Board Primary Election.

I would appreciate your **continued support** at the April 4 Spring Election.

Deanne Goodlaxson-Vossekuil

Paid for by Goodlaxson-Vossekuil for School Board.
Margaret Bille, Treasurer

site at the intersection of Fond du Lac Street and Watertown Street, would like it stated for the record that he does not intend to change environmental firms. While your quote of me was accurate, I agree that a clarification is warranted.

Thank you for your time and understanding in this matter.
Ed Emerson
Economic Development

To the Editor:

You've got to be kidding! Is the school administration really going to go on a witchhunt to find and punish the staff member who revealed that they willfully violated student eligibility rules for a recent hockey match? Since when does a justice system punish the person who reports the

crime?

Furthermore, it is inconceivable that they now want to absolve themselves of blame by demeaning the student's contribution to the game! Who's in charge and responsible at the high school? Anyone?

Name withheld

To the Editor:

We would like to publicly thank the sponsor Westra Construction for supplying the money to make Counteract possible.

displays and officer Jean Frost for bringing Jake the dog who had so many wonderful tricks. All of the students at Washington School appreciate your efforts. We learned a lot.

Katy Wheeler
Nick Teachout
Washington 5th grade

We would also like to thank Sgt. Mindy Kendricks, our counteract officer, Officer Brian O'Donovan for making the interesting

Reminders

Four- and Five-Year-Old Story Hour
— Waupun Public Library upstairs conference room, Tuesday, March 14, 10:30 to 11 a.m. Parents welcome.
Daughters of Isabella — Chili supper at

by Tony Recheck Band; admission by donation.
Klompfest Queen Candidates — Must be nominated in writing by Saturday, March 18, to Catherine De Jager, N2602

Waupun continuing appeal of forfeited hockey game

By Vanessa Glewen
Reporter Waupun Bureau

WAUPUN — In a show of support for school administrators, the Waupun Board of Education defeated a move Wednesday night that would have halted the appeal of a forfeited high school hockey game.

A district resident asked the board to consider stopping the appeal, arguing that since a school rule was admittedly broken, Waupun should accept the consequences handed down by the Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Association.

Sue Schueler, president of the Alto Elementary PTO, referred to a Feb. 9 hockey game in which an ineligible Waupun player participated, resulting in a forfeiture of the game (a 10-2 victory) along with the team's share of the conference title.

Schueler said that school administrators were notified of the player's ineligibility before the game, and suggested that everyone involved should have been familiar with the school rule precluding a suspended student's participation in extracurricular activities.

"On page 32 of the student handbook, there is a statement in bold print. 'Ignorance of the rules does not excuse violation,' so the 'I did not know' or 'was not sure' does not really excuse this infraction," Schueler told the board.

"These adults all really messed up in their roles as leaders for this student, not to mention what kind of message they're sending to the rest of the high school students," she said. "If you goof up, it's OK. We'll work around it if you're needed for your team to win."

"I am asking you to have the concerned parties

drop the appeal on the grounds that their actions were unquestionably and willingly in violation of (school and WIAA rules)," Schueler continued. "These people were wrong in their decisions and they should admit it without qualifications, take their lumps and learn a lesson from it."

"I'm not making excuses for the people who made the error, but the errors were made. There was not an intent to defraud anyone," said high school Principal Jim LaValley.

He said the appeal is based solely on the significance of the ineligible player's contribution to the game and is not an attempt to escape responsibility for violation of rules.

Board member Chuck Schranz moved that the school district withdraw its appeal to change the WIAA ruling. After discussion, the board voted 4-2 to defeat the motion and allow the appeal to continue, with Schranz and Lowell Prill in the minority.

School Board candidates in the April election expressed opinions about the decision after the vote.

"By allowing the appeal to go on, (the board is) condoning unethical behavior," said candidate Kirk Ennenga. "I guarantee you that if I had been on this board tonight, with the information provided, I would have definitely said no, we do not continue with that appeal."

"The action of the board asks us to trust other actions that were taken under the cloak of confidentiality, when there isn't a lot of trust in the district," said Catherine Ann Carlson, another candidate. "This situation presented us with an opportunity to teach young people.

In a league of his own

FRONT



Brian Fairbanks/ The Reporter
...a, 4, of North Fond du Lac, swings at a ball
in a friend's yard Wednesday.

100 Waupun citizens: Don't appeal hockey game forfeit

By Vanessa Glewen
Of The Reporter Staff

WAUPUN — More than one hundred Waupun School District residents say they don't want the district to appeal a forfeited hockey game victory.

The citizens have signed a petition concerning the Feb. 9 hockey game against Beaver Dam, which Waupun won 10-2.

An ineligible player was allowed to participate, so the Wisconsin Interscholastic Athletic Association ruled that Waupun must forfeit. The School Board last week rejected a motion to halt the appeal.

The petition states:
"We the taxpayers and parents of the Waupun School District oppose the appeal, by the administration, of the Waupun vs. Beaver Dam hockey game. Our children need to learn when one makes a mistake in life, one must take responsibility for one's actions, accept the penalty imposed and learn from it."

"We have to teach kids that they have to be accountable for their actions."

—Debbie Streekstra

"We want the School Board and the WIAA to know that there is a group of people in this district that is in favor of dropping this appeal," said Debbie Streekstra, one of the parents involved. "It's not a hockey issue — it's not a vendetta against anyone. It's a black-and-white, right-and-wrong issue."

"There have to be rules, and nobody should be exempt from those rules. We want the School Board to listen to what we have to say."

Administrators have said the appeal is based on the claim that the contribution of the player didn't have a large impact on the game.

WIAA official Frank McCormick said Wednesday he had received "a few phone calls and a few letters from individuals indicating concern that there was a policy in place, the policy was ignored and the forfeiture should stand." He said the WIAA Board of Control, which will consider the appeal April 7, will be made aware of the letters and calls.

er News

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Letters to the Editor

To the Editor:

Most parents are not informed of the complaint process they should use in resolving problems with schools. If your questions, concerning your child's education, go unanswered, or you are treated with disregard, disrespect, and impunity, by the school, you should file a complaint. If problems go unresolved, you are dissatisfied with the outcome, and/or have been cut out of the process altogether, you need to file a complaint.

Before you do, here are some guidelines to follow. Put everything in writing, make it clear (readable) and to the point. In your letter also ask that the response be put in writing, letters are proof. Keep copies of everything you write. Keep your copies, and everything related to the issue in a file. Get a receipt for each letter, and attach it to your copy of the letter. Receipts may be obtained by sending the letter by registered or certified mail, or by taking the letter to school and asking for a receipt. It must be dated, and list the name of the person to whom it is addressed.

Expect to hear from the person to whom your letter is addressed. If you are contacted by phone, state that you wish to "have it in writing." Letters are proof. Don't be surprised if you don't receive any response. If you are contacted by anyone from the school, write it down, and keep a running record, complete with the person(s) name, position in the school, and the date and time. You are not under any obligation to take part in any meetings in response to your letter, you are entitled to a written response. If you do attend meetings, take a credible witness, someone not connected to your issue, as a witness, and still insist on a written response. Keep a file of every notice pertaining to your child, that you receive from the school during this time. Don't be surprised if your child "mysteriously" becomes a behavior problem during this time, it is a common tactic. Don't be moved by implied threats and intimidation, but write it down, and document everything. Stay on track, and know that they will have to answer for it somewhere down the line.

Remember that you are the ultimate authority over your child, not the school. You have the right to refuse anything the school wants to do to your child. Know what your rights are. The school must provide you with a book of rights, titled, "The Support Triangle", upon request. (Put

it in writing.) Although intended for parents of learning disabled, or handicapped children, it contains a wealth of information for every parent. It is good to be informed of your rights, as the school will not usually not inform you. If you know of other parents, who have similar complaints, encourage them to write also, this establishes a pattern, like a picture, for the authorities to examine. Take a lesson from the last election, one person with one voice, joined with others, can make a very loud sound. And we all know that the squeaky wheel gets the grease.

Write letters of complaint in this order; Principal, Superintendent, School Board, State Superintendent. The school must provide you with their names and addresses. If you don't get results, or are dissatisfied with the outcome, write to your congressman, governor, senator, and the U.S. Secretary of Education, Richard Riley. If you question that you, or your child, have been deprived of due process, or your civil rights, that include being provided to a free, and appropriate education, contact the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights. The addresses for these are available through any public library, just ask for the resource librarian. If you feel so led, write to President Clinton, and give him your overview of the educational process, a brief summary of your problem, and what you believe to be the solution. These people are interested in hearing you views. They compile the information demographically, and search for ways to comply with parents (voters).

If the funds were available, would you send your child to a private school? Do you think there should be tax breaks for people who send, or wish to send, their children to private school, or for home schooling? Do you think that teachers, who do not teach adequately, should continue to teach? Do you know of teachers who are emotionally, verbally, or physically abusive to children, yet continue to remain in the school's employ? If you have nay suggestions or questions, or would like information about education, contact the Wisconsin State Representative, Chuck Coleman, who is also the Chairman of the Education Committee., 310 N. State Capitol, Madison, Wisconsin, 53708. He will gladly take these concerns to Governor Tommy Thompson.

Judith Miller

To the Editor:

quired if strict controls on the type of con

Don't quit until you get results,
 it's worth a few letters.
 Having a receipt obligates the
 recipient to reply

**Testimony Prepared for
the Joint Committee on Finance
on Assembly Bill 150**

**Presented by
Cheryl H. Wilhoyte, Ph.D
Superintendent of Schools
Madison Metropolitan School District**

Monday, March 27, 1995

Ever since I came to Wisconsin nearly two and a half years ago to become the superintendent of our state's second largest school district, I have been following developments in the areas of education reform and school finance with much interest. After reviewing Governor Thompson's proposed 1995-97 state budget, I would like to share several observations with you.

First, let me say that since coming to Madison I have been working day in and day out to move decisionmaking in our district closer to the children we serve. One size does not fit all. We are empowering school teams made up of parents and staff members to develop improvement plans that are tailor-made for their schools. The new role of a smaller, more streamlined central administration is to support these school-based efforts, not direct them.

We welcome proposals to give schools additional flexibility in how they go about providing educational services. We welcome the opportunity to explore alternative ways to comply with state standards. As one of the original 10 charter school districts in Wisconsin, we welcome increased opportunities to experiment with creative new approaches to teaching and learning.

At the same time, we understand and accept the need for accountability. All we ask is that the state hold us accountable for the results we produce, not for the methods we use to deliver those results. Tell us what you expect students to know and what you expect them to be able to do with that knowledge, but don't tell us how many hours those students must sit in their seats, which subjects we must cover, or which books they must read. We have a charter school operating today in which there are no textbooks. There are no science classes, no math classes

and no English classes. Yet students learn to read and write, and they learn science, and they learn math. And they are excited about doing it. One size does not fit all.

We welcome the historic changes in the way schools are funded in this state. I recognize how difficult it will be to make good on the commitment to fund two-thirds of local school costs statewide, but for too long schools have been forced to rely far too heavily on the local property tax. For too long, the interests of children have been pitted against the interests of property taxpayers.

As you seek to solve the billion-dollar property tax challenge, I want to bring several concerns to your attention.

The proposal to change the school aid appropriation from a sum sufficient to a sum certain raises major concerns about the willingness of the state to maintain the commitment to fund two-thirds of local school costs in the future. I strongly urge you to **keep the sum sufficient appropriation for general school aids.**

The recommended modifications to the revenue limit on school budgets also are deeply troubling. We are committed to living within our means. Even before the state imposed a cap, I had already cut the percentage increases in our budget almost in half. The current cap has been effective in holding down spending, and we've done our job at the local level in making the tough decisions required to live within the cap.

When the revenue cap was enacted, however, it was designed to limit growth of per pupil spending to the inflation rate. Governor Thompson's proposal departs significantly from the original intent of the law. Under the governor's recommendation to cap per pupil revenue increases at \$194, more than 230 of the 427 school districts in the state would be allowed increases of *less than the anticipated rate of inflation*. And, because there would be no adjustment to the \$194 per pupil limit in future years to account for inflation, the revenue cap would be further *tightened every year for all school districts*.

In Madison, the \$194 limit would amount to a 2.54% allowable increase for the upcoming 1995-96 school year, while inflation is currently projected to be 3.2%. Regardless of the inflation rate in future years, allowable per pupil revenue increases would fall to 2.47% in 1996-97, 2.41% for 1997-98 and 2.36% in 1998-99.

The revenue cap would be ratcheted down at the same time that the cost of providing

mandated services such as those required for special education students continue to increase at several times the rate of inflation, and at the same time that the salary cap for school district employees is set at 3.8%.

In Madison, 85% of our budget goes for personnel costs. The cost of providing a Qualified Economic Offer (QEO) as defined in state law -- a 3.8% increase in salaries and benefits -- would exceed the amount of revenue we would be allowed to raise under the revenue cap by more than \$2 million. Deeper cuts in programs and classroom services will be necessary if we are to meet the state's expectation to provide a 3.8% increase for our employees, while still living within a 2.5% overall budget cap.

It is essential that you **maintain the adjustments for inflation that are made under the current revenue cap law.**

We also oppose the proposal to place categorical aids under the revenue cap. By essentially turning categorical aids into general aids, this recommendation would aggravate the extent to which special needs students are already pitted against other students. An example of this is state tuition, one of the categorical aids that would be subject to the revenue cap.

The Madison school district is required to provide educational services to severely disabled children from the Central Wisconsin Center for the Developmentally Disabled (CWC) at an annual cost of more than \$44,000 per student. By placing tuition payments under the revenue cap, our schools would be allowed an increase of \$194 per student in the future. If the cost of providing these mandated services were to increase by more than \$194 per student or if additional students from CWC required services, the schools would have to reduce services to other students to cover these added costs. The extra tuition we would receive for providing these additional services would go to reduce the district's property tax levy.

I am deeply concerned about the negative impact this change could have on our regular education services, and I urge you to **oppose the proposed modifications to the revenue limit on school budgets, including the placement of categorical aids under the cap.**

Our final concern relating to the revenue cap is one that I am sure is shared not only by my colleagues in other school districts, but also by any reputable bond counsel. Our own bond counsel recently shared her concerns with us about the current provisions of the revenue cap.

Specifically, Section 121.92(2)(c) of the statutes empowers a court to order property

taxes to be reduced when a school district exceeds its revenue limit. As it is currently constructed, the revenue limit creates a situation where the taxes levied under the cap to pay debt service are not "irrepealable" as required by the Wisconsin Constitution. This seriously calls into question the legal validity of school district borrowing for capital projects, and understandably makes bond counsels squirm.

We feel it is imperative that the current law be amended to **clearly exempt long-term debt service from the revenue limit and to remove any question about the "irrepealability" of taxes levied for debt service.**

Finally, I want to say that while I enthusiastically support school finance reforms that will substantially reduce the reliance on local property taxes to fund schools, I believe *school finance reform should be good not only for taxpayers, but also for children*. We welcome the infusion of state dollars into the general state school aid formula to provide much-needed property tax relief. At the same time, however, we find it frustrating that the governor's budget proposal does not include even a small amount of funding to help school districts better meet the growing needs of our state's most vulnerable children.

In just the last five years, the number of children in Madison who come from families receiving AFDC has increased by a third. This dramatic growth in the number of poor children in Wisconsin's Capital City is sure to continue. More than 40% of the children on AFDC in Madison have not yet reached school age. Because of the rapidly escalating numbers of low-income students in our schools, Madison is now eligible to receive funds under the state Preschool to Grade Five (P-5) program. However, because the appropriation for this grant program is frozen, we are unable to participate.

Not only is the P-5 appropriation not sufficient to accommodate all eligible districts, but other methods of helping schools serve the growing number of children living in poverty in Wisconsin are conspicuously missing from the governor's proposed budget. There is no weighting for low-income students in the equalization aid formula. There is no Urban Initiative, which would reduce class sizes in schools with large numbers of poor children. There is no Achievement Goals Program, which would provide a fixed amount of additional funding for each low-income child and would hold schools accountable for demonstrating progress in the achievement of these students.

As you review the budget, I hope you will remedy this shortcoming and support some mechanism to **help schools deal with growing child poverty**. In Wisconsin, it costs \$6,000 or \$7,000 a year to educate a child. This state spends \$30,000 to \$40,000 to imprison a criminal for a year. Either we can make wise investments in the success of young people, or we will continue to be forced to write a blank check for the failure of adults.

As it stands today, this budget contains a great deal of good news for taxpayers. The governor and members of both parties in the legislature should be applauded for their support of the sweeping school finance reforms that can finally make the elusive goal of property tax relief obtainable.

What we ask is that some balance be struck between the need for property tax relief and the needs of our state's most precious resource -- our children. What we're asking for is a *few ounces of educational prevention while taxpayers are getting pounds of property tax cure*.

Thank you for your attention to our concerns. I wish you well as you tackle the challenge of putting together the state budget for Wisconsin -- her taxpayers and her children. We are confident you can position us all for success.

March 27, 1995

Testimony: Joint Finance Committee
by Linda L. McIsaac, Ph.D. CEO, Expct (608) 231-4499

I was born and raised in Wisconsin and have been an active citizen for the past 45 years. I am founder and Chairman of Expct, a Madison-based computer training and consulting company. I am also the Chairman of the Dane County Public Affairs Council; a group dedicated to providing a forum for discussions between business and government officials.

I am here to speak in support of the Thompson administration's efforts to provide leadership by proposing innovative and responsible recommendations for cuts in state spending. I agree that it will take some unpopular moves to find the money to pay for the governor's \$1 billion property tax relief plan.

As an entrepreneur and a former superintendent of schools, I have experienced making the hard choices in establishing budgets. When I chaired the monthly meeting of the Dane County Public Affairs Council last week, I asked the audience for a show of hands on three questions: First, how many support the governor's efforts to cut the budget, second, how many would support even further cuts, and third, how many thought the legislature would make those cuts. The results of my informal poll? Overwhelming support for the proposed cuts; support for further cuts, and very little confidence that the legislature would make the cuts.

That's why I am here today, to encourage you to make the hard choices and cut spending as proposed. I realize there will be compromised and changes. But, please keep I mind as you

deliberate the choices, every program has its supporters. But there are citizens out there who will support your efforts, if in the long run, the result is lower taxes due to lower spending.

There can't be any sacred cows in our state budget. I know that one of the largest costs is education. Over twenty-five years ago, as an educator I found that there was a better way to educate children that is accountable and that staffing doesn't have to be 85 percent of the public school's budget. I know that today, technology can reduce the cost of training by 50% in the private sector, why not our schools? There are those of us that know of better solutions to providing quality education with spending cuts.

It has been demonstrated that any citizen, when looking at the details of governments budgets can make cuts. The majority has spoken in electing you to do that job.

I'd like to end by summarizing from: The Story of Taxation by Charles Adams. When governments tax too much, there are bad things that can happen, rebellion, flight to avoid tax, and evasion; hence the title Fight, Flight, and Fraud. Mr. Adams' book shows us that tax evasion has been a way of life for man since civilization began. "The history of human liberty is intertwined with the history of taxation. Tax laws have taken away liberty more often than foreign invaders." To me, human liberty is the strength of our nation and our state. "Many great empires taxed themselves to death; conversely, many nations became great because of the right kind of taxation - taxation that stimulated growth and enterprise." I hope that we can learn the lessons of history, for those who ignore history are destined to repeat it.

N 9525 Hustad Valley Rd.
Mount Horeb, WI 53572
608/527-2733
March 27, 1995

Dear Legislator,

My name is Erin Dyer. I am a Speech/Language Pathologist and I live in New Glarus. I am the Vice President of School Services for the Wisconsin Speech-Language-Hearing Association.

My purpose in speaking with you today is to represent the children of Wisconsin who have Communication Disorders: children who stutter, children who have difficulty speaking due to a motor impairment which affects their ability to pronounce different sounds. I am representing the interests of children who can't put words together correctly in sentences because they have a language disorder. A disorder which may also affect how well they can understand directions or even the events of a simple story. Some of these children have difficulty listening in class because they have had frequent middle ear infections and as a result, their ability to listen for long periods of time never had a chance to develop. There are children in our schools who do not understand how to even converse with others much less an employer. The Speech/Language Pathologists who work in the schools show these children how to be better communicators and successful students!

Over the years, the Department of Public Instruction has provided grants, facilitated and encouraged various projects which have enabled communicatively-impaired children to experience success in the classroom environment as well as at home. Our state has received national and international attention for the following projects:

1. The Language Sampling Analysis is a more efficient diagnostic tool which identifies students who really need therapy.
2. The Linguistically-Culturally Diverse Assessment Guide is a project which identifies which children have a language disorder and not just a language difference.
3. The "Words to Grow By" videotape series was designed to teach parents about communication development as well as show them fun ways to encourage their child's speech. Here we try to prevent communica-

tion delays through parent education.

4. A statewide Assistive Technology Initiative is serving districts around the state by providing them with services and inservices regarding the use of technology for children with speech and motor problems. In fact, two low cost augmentative communication devices have been designed as a result of this initiative. The "Voice in a Box" and "Microvoice" are assembled by volunteers in prison!

The employees of the Department of Public Instruction are very aware of children and their needs. For this reason, they provide teachers and special educators with numerous seminars and workshops which enhance their skills and allows them to work towards helping children have successful educational experiences.

The Department of Public Instruction monitors school districts to insure that children who are handicapped are receiving appropriate services. If the federal government should decide to give the states block grants, who then would be responsible for monitoring the educational needs of handicapped children if DPI no longer exists?

On a personal note, let me add that I have represented the state of Wisconsin as a Legislative Councilor for the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. One thing I have learned is to never approach a resolution with a closed mind. By keeping an open mind, I am able to better listen to the needs and concerns of my constituents prior to the Legislative Council Meetings and during debates.

I trust that you, as legislators, will keep an open mind during these hearings and make the needed changes in the budget and that you will oppose any proposal to dismantle DPI. Wisconsin ranks high in education nationally and the DPI is one of the major reasons.

I do not support the Governor's Budget nor his proposal to dismantle the Department of Public Instruction. I do not support the Governor's proposal to create a cabinet level Department of Education.

I thank you for the opportunity to share my concerns for the children of Wisconsin who have Communication Disorders.

Sincerely,


Erin C. Dyer, M.A., CCC
Speech/Language Pathologist



March 27, 1995

My name is Andy Friesch, I am a Director and acting Treasurer of PRESS (Parents Raising Educational Standards in Schools). We are a grass roots organization that is less than one year old, yet in that short period of time we have expanded membership to over 80 school districts throughout the state. I am also a parent of three schoolage children and the owner of a manufacturing firm. I wish to share our organization's view on the proposed changes to our educational system.

First let me tell you that PRESS believes in parental involvement, local control and objective measurements of academic achievement. We have no paid lobbyists and no religious affiliations. Our membership includes parents, grandparents, teachers, professors and just plain old concerned citizens. Our organization is completely volunteer with a common concern for our children. In contrast, many that testify are paid to protect the status quo, regardless of the merits of a new position.

The Governor, as author, and you, as an elected body, have been inundated with reasons to either maintain the status quo or continue the reform movement. Valid issues have been raised on both sides of the equation, but the larger issues of control and the proper role of government in education as we move into the 21st century have not been adequately addressed.

While our organization may not have a position on each and every education reform in the Governor's budget, we are very supportive of the general direction. The reason for our support is simple. Parental involvement, regardless of political persuasion, can only be enhanced in a system that drives more decisions down to a district level.

The strongest arguments we have heard opposing the Governor's budget have come from the teacher's unions and other organizations that are strongly influenced by the union. They contend, 'if it isn't broken, don't fix it', or 'this is just a power grab by the Governor', or 'why does the Governor want to bash teachers?'. These catchy sound bites run counter to the fundamental truths of many of the initiatives.

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First of all, the 'if it isn't broke' cliché defies how successful businesses operate. Businesses of the 21st century understand that continuous improvement, and customer/market focus are the only ways to be the best. The Governor's budget addresses both these key points. Besides, why would anyone want to argue against moving decisions closer to the customer (parents)? The fear that the less advantaged will be lost is merely a tactic to scare the public. The fact is that the well run school districts have nothing to fear.

The second sound bite that plays well in the press is the 'power grab' argument. The real power shift is from the centralized bureaucracy and the union control to the diffuse power of the districts. As far as the Governor is concerned, he is ultimately held accountable for the education system now. So the argument that he is merely trying to grab power doesn't hold.

The last notable quote is the 'teacher bashing' argument. We find it difficult to understand how empowering local boards, parents and teachers to make more decisions at a district level can be viewed as teacher bashing. Enabling local districts to offer choices will empower both teachers and parents. If done correctly, parents can make more voluntary decisions that effect their children, which can only serve to motivate the parents to support the teaching effort.

On the more practical side, PRESS has witnessed a continued top-down effort on the part of DPI to influence local school decisions. Whether it is intended or unintended, the centralized system promotes this top-down control. Local superintendents and curriculum directors are either willing or unwitting accomplices in this seamless continuum of control. If anything, this seamless continuum must shift to the local school board-superintendent relationship. The only way this has a chance is through the Governor and legislature taking a leadership position.

In closing, PRESS supports the Governor's initiatives towards more local control and accountability. After all, local control and accountability are the only true reforms that will formally include parents and local boards in the key decisions that effect our children.

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From: IN%"PALLNELL@macc.wisc.edu" "Paul Nelson"
To: LIBSYS@badger.state.wi.us
Subj: Friends of Public Education

Ed Garvey, representing Friends of Public Education, spoke at yesterday's Wisconsin Library Association Legislative Day debriefing session. As promised, here's some information about this group that I promised to post.

Friends of Public Education is a coalition of groups and individuals working to keep schools in the hands of communities and out of the hands of politicians. It advocates preserving the following democratic traditions on which Wisconsin's education system is based:

- *a strong popular commitment to public education for all
- *local control of public schools through community-oriented school boards
- *a popularly elected state superintendent supervising public who is directly accountable to citizens, not politicians
- *support for local public schools from a politically independent government agency.

The following organizations are represented within this coalition: Parent Teacher Association, Milwaukee NAACP Branch, Wisconsin AFL-CIO, Wisconsin Women's Network Educational Equity Task Force, Wisconsin Education Association Council, Wisconsin Federation of Teachers, LACASA de Esperanza, Wisconsin Association of Education Opportunity Program Personnel, Wisconsin State Employees Union, Hmong Mutual Association, Autism Society of Southeastern Wisconsin, Learning Disabilities Association of Wisconsin, Parent Education Project of Wisconsin Inc., Autism Society of Wisconsin, Quality Education Coalition of Wisconsin, Menomonee Tribal School, Wisconsin Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators, Wisconsin School Counselors Association, Wisconsin Retired Educators Association, Wisconsin School Public Relations Association, Milwaukee County AFL-CIO, South Central Federation of Labor, United Auto Workers Region 4, and Wisconsin Council for the Social Studies.

Friends of Public Education's position paper is entitled "Why demolish the best?: How Gov. Thompson's plan would harm public education.

1. It guts the best educational system in the country. Wisconsin has "best educational system in the country," as Gov. Tommy Thompson himself stated Jan. 3, 1995. With a small staff of some 200* Wisconsin taxpayer-funded employees, DPI has efficiently fostered an extremely high level of achievement. A variety of statistics--like Wisconsin high-school students consistently ranking first in ACT test scores--confirm the strengths of the system.
2. A defeat for democracy. Citizens will lose the opportunity to elect a school superintendent to serve Wisconsin's children, a tradition established in the State Constitution in 1848. Wisconsin's citizens have long cherished this important right. But Gov. Thompson proposes to strip the superintendent of 99% of current staff and of all authority, without seeking a constitutional amendment.
3. It politicizes education. For 9 decades, the election of the superintendent of schools has provided a non-partisan focus for public debate on education. Debate has always centered on the well-being of the state's children, not the political advantage of one party or another. Under Gov. Thompson's plan, the state's chief education officer -- the new education secretary -- will be a political appointee. Education will become a partisan battlefield, with intricate maneuvers crowding out concern for the state's children.
4. It downgrades education's importance. In 1848, state founders believed that education was important enough to establish a constitutional office of superintendent of public schools. Education is now recognized as a crucial economic asset. By replacing the elected superintendent with a political appointee, and placing schools within the governor's cabinet, the state will downgrade the importance of education. Education will be one more responsibility facing the governor, as opposed to the only priority of the elected superintendent.
5. It erodes accountability. The elected superintendent of schools is directly accountable to the people of Wisconsin. A political appointee is only accountable to the politician at whose pleasure he or she serves. The proposed dispersion of DPI services to other agencies will further undermine accountability.

6. It is a bureaucratic nightmare. Functions now consolidated in one agency would be scattered across a bewildering array of large, politically-run state agencies, like the 998-employee Department of Administration or the 7623-employee Department of Health and Social Services, and the Department of Revenue. Others would be parceled out to for-profit vendors. Parents, teachers, and administrators will have to search through four or five state bureaucracies to find the help they need.

At present, DPI offers one-stop shopping for a vast array of services from school finances to curriculum to suicide prevention. While the governor touts "one-stop shopping" in other government functions, such as financial regulation, he seeks to dismantle the educational agency which already provides this feature.

*DPI has a total employment of 705.8 FTE positions as of Nov. 1994. As noted above, 200.5 Wisconsin tax-funded positions were allocated to general functions; 252.7 for service to the Wisconsin School for the Deaf and School for the Visually Handicapped; of the remaining 252.6 positions, 144.9 were federally funded; 88.9 were program-revenue funded; 4.1 were Wisconsin general revenue-funded to secure federal funding for school lunches; and another 14.7 to obtain federal vocational-education funds.

Letter written by Kathy Haller, President, Wisconsin Parent Teacher Association.

February 14, 1995

Dear Legislator,

I am president of Wisconsin PTA, but I write this letter as an individual concerned about the education of our children. I am also a member of the Advisory Board of Friends of Public Education, a coalition formed to explain education policy choices to the people of Wisconsin.

The proposed elimination of the non-partisan, independent education agency and elected Superintendent of Public Instruction rightly arouses the ire of Wisconsin's thoughtful citizenry. Wisconsin's educational system is the nation's finest, based on a wide variety of test scores. Why tear out the coordinating center of that system?

Crucial to the successes of Wisconsin education has been the independence of the superintendent of schools. For some 147 years, the parents of this state could feel assured that the education of their children was free from partisan tinkering.

Administration Secretary James Klauser now complains that the "DPI is isolated". What he actually means is that the DPI is insulated from partisan politics. Friends of Public Education believe that most Wisconsin citizens agree with us of the PTA that such insulation has been a very good thing for education.

Up until now, the issue of public education's independence has been portrayed as a squabble between Gov. Thompson and Supt. Benson. That depiction is unfair to both gentlemen, and leaves the public out of the picture. The parents of Wisconsin have a vital interest in how educational policy is set, and whether decision-making will remain accessible to them.

The 50,000 member Wisconsin PTA supports and speaks on behalf of children and youth in the schools, in the community, and before governmental agencies and other organizations that make decisions affecting children. Wisconsin PTA assists parents in developing the skills they need to raise and protect their children, and encourages parental and public involvement in the public schools of this nation.

Wisconsin PTA has found that a non-partisan Department of Public Instruction, run by an independent elected state superintendent, has listened to and worked with parents and local communities to make Wisconsin's school system the finest in the nation.

The fundamental issue here is the future of public education: will our educational system continue to provide high-quality education under an independent superintendent directly accountable to the parents of Wisconsin? Or will it face a clouded future under some political appointee?

The stakes in this debate are very high. The linkage between well-educated students and the economic well-being of our state could not be more obvious. Is now really the time to dismantle the effective and independent coordinating center of the system?

Instead of dismantling DPI, we should be focusing on our educational system's real challenges: developing stronger school-to-work programs;