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Moving From Good to Great in Wisconsin: Funding Schools Adequately And Doubling Student Performance

Executive Summary

**Prepared for
Wisconsin State and Local Policymakers,
Educators and Citizens**

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THE WISCONSIN SCHOOL FINANCE ADEQUACY INITIATIVE

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The following report was developed in cooperation with a Policy Advisory Task Force representing the Governor's Office, the legislature, the education community, the business community and taxpayers.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The greatest danger for most of us is not that we aim too high and we miss, but we aim too low and reach it. -Michelangelo

Wisconsin's education and school finance systems are at a crossroads. Historically, the state has focused on school finance equity and its links to property tax relief. But given the curriculum standards the state has decided all students should be taught, the knowledge needs of the emerging global economy and the performance levels to which all students need to achieve to participate effectively in that economy, however, it is time to focus on school finance adequacy – to identify what it would take programmatically to teach students to those performance levels and to fully fund those programs. These twin goals are the prime objectives of this school finance adequacy study. The resulting cost figure will set a target for what the state should fund for K-12 education – with a combination of state and local funds.

Under this approach, the goal for student performance is that all students, or at least 95 percent of students, need to achieve to at least the proficiency level and a much higher percentage of students need to achieve at the advanced levels. We term these goals “doubling student performance.” And the evidence-based approach to school finance adequacy in Wisconsin has this goal as its driving force. The full report outlines an approach to school finance adequacy that would provide all districts and schools with the resources to “double” student performance in the next 5-10 years, and in the process to dramatically reduce the achievement gap between majority students and students of color and from lower income backgrounds. Accomplishing these goals would move Wisconsin's K-12 education system from a “good” system to a “great” system, and in the process would provide the education base the state needs to grow its economy at rates much faster than the past.

This executive summary provides some information from all seven sections of the report, but collapses the information into six sections by subsuming section three of the full report, adequate resources for central office functions, into this section three, which provides all of these recommendations in table form. Section one briefly describes where Wisconsin currently sits in terms of student performance by both state and national standards. This section also summarizes the results of case studies on Wisconsin districts and schools that have doubled student performance in the past five years, providing a synthesis of how they have accomplished these impressive feats and suggesting other districts and schools can produce similar achievement gains. Section two briefly describes the evidence-based approach to school finance adequacy that is used in the adequacy analysis, and applies the analysis to prototypical elementary, middle and high schools. Section three presents all of the recommendations for adequately resourcing Wisconsin schools and districts in table form. Section four identifies several related issues, including teacher salaries, health benefits, and legacy retiree benefits costs. Section five summarizes the costs of all the proposals, and Section six provides the concluding remarks from the full report.

Section One: Why Wisconsin Needs to Double Student Performance

Wisconsin has good schools. Polls show that in general, Wisconsinites are happy with their schools. The current school finance system also meets most standard equity benchmarks. This was reinforced by the decision in a 2000 school finance court case, *Vincent v. Voight*, a suit that challenged the constitutionality of the school finance system on the basis of equity, in which the Wisconsin Supreme Court upheld the Wisconsin school finance system claiming that it was “as nearly uniform as practicable.” In terms of student test scores, about 85 percent of students score at or above proficiency on state tests.

However, although student test scores look good on state tests and the state’s definition of proficiency, the results are not so sanguine when a national definition of proficiency is used. On the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), only about 35 percent of Wisconsin students meet this more rigorous proficiency benchmark. These results lend support to the goal that Wisconsin needs to “double” student performance if it is to play its role in strengthening the state’s future, both for all citizens and for students currently in the public school system.

To do this, districts and schools need powerful instructional strategies and adequate resources, both of which are specified in this report. And it can be done in Wisconsin -- some districts and schools have already “doubled performance” on either math or reading, or both, some at the proficient level and others at the advanced level. The report provides six case studies that serve as examples from small and large, urban and rural districts around the state that are already using some of the strategies recommended by evidence-based adequacy. Synthesizing the results, we identified ten steps to doubling performance in Wisconsin:

1. Analyzed student data to become deeply knowledgeable about performance issues and the nature of the achievement gap. The test score analysis first included analysis of state test results and then the use over time of formative assessments to help tailor instruction to precise student needs.
2. Set higher goals, many times trying to educate 95 percent to at least proficiency, a significant portion to the advanced achievement levels, and goals to close the achievement gap.
3. Reviewed evidence on good instruction and effective curriculum. All the schools threw out the old curriculum and replaced it with a different and more rigorous curriculum.
4. Invested heavily in teacher training that included intensive summer institutes and longer teacher work years, as well as resources for trainers and most importantly, instructional coaches in all school. Time was provided for teacher collaboration focused on improving instruction.
5. Provided extra help for struggling students and, with a combination of state funds and federal Title 1 funds, provided some combination of tutoring in a 1-1, 1-3, or 1-5 format, and sometimes extended days, summer school, and though not highlighted, English language development for all ELL students.

6. Created smaller classes in early elementary years often lowering class sizes in grades K-3 to 15 citing research from randomized trials.
7. Restructured the school day to provide more effective ways to deliver instruction, including multi-age classrooms in elementary schools, as well as block schedules and double periods of mathematics and reading in secondary schools. Schools also “protected” instructional time for core subjects, especially reading and mathematics.
8. Supported by strong leadership around data-based decision making and improving the instructional program, by the superintendent, the principal and teacher leaders.
9. In the process created professional school cultures characterized by ongoing discussion of good instruction and by teachers taking responsibility for the student performance results of their actions.
10. Brought external professional knowledge into the school, e.g., hiring experts to provide training, adopting research-based new curricula, discussing research on good instruction.

Note that all of these examples were of schools that boosted student performance in one or two content areas, and at one or maybe two education levels, through a combination of new grants and reallocating extant resources. This is a good start, but now districts have no more resources to reallocate and need resources to produce similar results in all five core content areas and in all elementary, middle and high schools. For this reason, the evidence-based report is focused on identifying the resources needed by all schools to double student performance in the medium future.

Section Two: The Evidence-Based Approach to Adequacy in Wisconsin

Since 1990, the school finance community has developed a number of methods for determining school finance adequacy. These are summarized in Odden (2003), an article that identifies strengths and weaknesses of each approach. We believe that the most substantively sound methodology is the Evidence-Based approach.

The Evidence-Based approach identifies a set of school-level components that are required to deliver a comprehensive and high-quality instructional program within a school and the evidence on their effectiveness, and then determines an adequate expenditure level by placing a price (e.g. an appropriate salary level for personnel) on each component and aggregating the components to a total cost. More explicitly, this approach is based on evidence from three sources:

1. Research with randomized assignment to the treatment (the “gold standard” of evidence)
2. Research with other types of controls or statistical procedures that can help separate the impact of a treatment
3. Best practices either as codified in a comprehensive school design (e.g., Stringfield, Ross & Smith, 1996) or from studies of impact at the local district or school level.

The Evidence-Based approach to determining school finance adequacy defers to evidence on the level of resources needed to meet pre-determined performance goals much more strongly than on the professional judgment of educators, though professional educator input is solicited.

The full report summarizes all the evidence culled to produce the evidence-based recommendations for Wisconsin, as well as providing information about current Wisconsin Policy. These recommendations are included in the executive summary in the form of Table 1, found in the next section.

Section Three: Adequate Resources for Wisconsin schools and districts

The following table gives the evidence-based recommendations for adequate resources in Wisconsin.

Table 1
Recommendations for Adequate Resources for
Prototypical Wisconsin Elementary, Middle and High Schools

School Element	Elementary Schools	Middle Schools	High Schools
School Characteristics			
School configuration	K-5	6-8	9-12
Prototypic school size	432	450	600
Class size	K-3: 15 4-5: 25	6-8: 25	9-12: 25
Full-day kindergarten	Yes	NA	NA
Number of teacher work days	190 teacher work days, so an increase of 5 days.	190 teacher work days, so an increase of 5 days.	190 teacher work days, so an increase of 5 days.
% Disabled	14.5 %	14.5 %	14.5 %
% Poverty (free & reduced lunch)	30 %	30 %	30 %
% ELL	~10 %	~10 %	~10 %
% Minority	21.2 %	21.2 %	21.2 %
Personnel Resources			
1. Core teachers	24	18	24
2. Specialist teachers	20% more: 4.8	20% more: 3.6	33% more: 8.0

Table 1 (Continued)
Recommendations for Adequate Resources for
Prototypical Wisconsin Elementary, Middle and High Schools

School Element	Elementary Schools	Middle Schools	High Schools
3. Instructional Facilitators/Mentors	2.2	2.25	3.0
4. Tutors for struggling students	one for every 100 poverty students: 1.30	one for every 100 poverty students: 1.35	one for every 100 poverty students: 1.8
5. Teachers for ELL students	An additional 1.0 teachers for every 100 ELL students who 0.43	An additional 1.0 teachers for every 100 ELL students 0.45	An additional 1.0 teachers for every 100 ELL students 0.60
6. Extended Day	1.1	1.125	1.5
7. Summer School	1.1	1.125	1.5
8. Alternative Schools	NA	NA	1 AP plus 1 teacher for every 7 alternative school students
9a. Learning and mild disabled students	Additional 3 professional teacher positions and 1.5 aide positions	Additional 3 professional teacher positions and 1.5 aide positions	Additional 4 professional teacher positions and 2 aide positions
9b. Severely disabled students	100% state reimbursement minus federal funds.	100% state reimbursement minus federal funds.	100% state reimbursement minus federal funds.
10. Teachers for gifted students	\$25/student	\$25/student	\$25/student
11. Vocational Education	NA	NA	No additional aide
12. Substitutes	10 days per teacher	10 days per teacher	10 days per teacher
13. Pupil support staff	1 for every 100 poverty students: 1.3	1 for every 100 poverty students plus 1.0 guidance/250 students 3.15 total	1 for every 100 poverty students plus 1.0 guidance/250 students 4.2 total
14. Non-Instructional Aides	2.0	2.0	3.0
15. Librarians/media specialists	1.0	1.0	1.0 librarian plus technician for larger HS
16. Principal	1	1	1
17. School Site Secretary	1.0 Secretary and 1.0 Clerical	1.0 Secretary and 1.0 Clerical	1.0 Secretary and 3.0 Clerical

Table 1 (Continued)
Recommendations for Adequate Resources for
Prototypical Wisconsin Elementary, Middle and High Schools

School Element	Elementary Schools	Middle Schools	High Schools
Dollar per Pupil Resources			
18. Professional development	Included above: Instructional facilitators Planning & prep time 10 summer days Additional: \$100/pupil for other PD expenses – trainers, conferences, travel, etc.	Included above: Instructional facilitators Planning & prep time 10 summer days Additional: \$100/pupil for other PD expenses – trainers, conferences, travel, etc.	Included above: Instructional facilitators Planning & prep time 10 summer days Additional: \$50/pupil for other PD expenses – trainers, conferences, travel, etc.
19. Technology	\$250/pupil	\$250/pupil	\$250/pupil
20. Instructional materials, equipment, student activities, including textbooks, and formative assessments	\$140/pupil \$25/pupil	\$140/pupil \$25/pupil	\$175/pupil \$25/pupil
21. Student Activities	\$200/pupil	\$200/pupil	\$250/pupil
22. Security and Safety	NA	NA	NA
Central Office Expenditures			
23. Central Administration	\$658 per pupil	\$658 per pupil	\$658 per pupil
24. Operations and Maintenance	2004-05 expenditures: \$938 per pupil	2004-05 expenditures: \$938 per pupil	2004-05 expenditures: \$938 per pupil
25. Transportation	No specific recommendation	No specific recommendation	No specific recommendation
26. Food Services	Should be self supporting.	Should be self supporting.	Should be self supporting.
27. Legacy Health Benefits	Bonded out by each district	Bonded out by each district	Bonded out by each district
28. Debt Service	New percentage equalizing formula, or current Tier 3 for districts with property wealth per pupil below state average	New percentage equalizing formula, or current Tier 3 for districts with property wealth per pupil below state average	New percentage equalizing formula, or current Tier 3 for districts with property wealth per pupil below state average

Section Four: Teacher Salaries, Health Benefits, Legacy Retiree Benefits Costs

Three additional issues are relevant to both the methods used to identify the costs in this report and its successful implementation: teacher salaries, health benefits, and legacy retiree benefits costs.

Salaries

To cost out the proposed models, we wanted to conduct a labor market analysis of teacher salaries, as well as a study specifically focused on salary levels that would help Milwaukee recruit and retain quality teachers. We will have a labor market analysis for Milwaukee, and the results should be available sometime in 2007. In the meantime, our cost figures are based on actual average salaries in 2004-05, as we are estimating additional costs and aid for 2005-06.

Table 2: Salaries Used in the Cost Model

Position	Salary (\$)
Principal	77,932
Vice-Principal	67,358
Teacher	45,362
Library Media Tech	32,681
School Secretary	30,000
School Clerical	25,000
Supervisory Aide	20,000
Superintendent	99,955
Asst. Superintendent	79,964
Business Manager	80,751
Central Office Secretary	30,000
Substitute Teachers	125/day

Health Benefits

To put a cost on all the staff recommendations, it is necessary to have a benefits figure as well as a salary figure. In most state adequacy studies, the state determines an adequate benefits package, and, in that process, the adequate state support for health benefits. Through research and deliberations with the Task Force, we recognized that the provision and the costs of health benefits in Wisconsin are highly variable by county. Vanessa Allen, a University of Wisconsin-Madison graduate student at the La Follette School of Public Affairs and an intern at the Wisconsin State Budget Office, conducted a study comparing current school district health premiums to those of the lowest-cost state package associated with the county in which the district resides. Because this analysis inherently takes into consideration the regional cost differences of health care, our recommended health care package included in the cost figures will use her estimates of costs.

However, a number of Task Force members argued that under the QEO teachers have accepted higher health benefits costs and lower salary increases, and that if districts were to move to a lower cost health care plan, the savings should then be used to raise teacher salary levels. The argument is that total compensation costs should remain at least the same. This is a reasonable argument and we would recommend that any significant teacher salary increase be linked to the development of a knowledge- and skill-based salary schedule. So we have estimated all costs of our recommendations using actual average salaries as indicated above and a benefit rate that includes Vanessa Allen's estimates of the county-by-county state health care plan.

Legacy Benefits

Another volatile issue in Wisconsin is what to do about the resources needed to fund health care benefits that have been promised to individuals who have retired from the school system. Some state role in funding these benefits is possible, but there is a fairness issue because some districts have paid off or not incurred these debts and others have accrued millions of dollars in liabilities. Also, at the current time, there is no statewide data base to identify the range of retiree benefits costs as a background for determining if some state role could be created.

With this in mind, we recommend that the state address this problem in several ways:

1. Require each district to identify the full, current, discounted value cost of all future retiree health benefits
2. Require each district to begin funding these costs however they can, including a somewhat higher operating tax rate for schools, with the dollars being deposited in Fund 73
3. Monitor in the short to medium term the strategies districts use to cover these legacy health care costs, identifying issues that might call for a state role
4. Require that districts "bond out" these costs, and to set an additional incremental tax rate to pay off the bonds over a multiple-year time period, letting districts choose the time period over which they would pay off the bonds
5. Either prohibit any further use of retiree health benefits, or if districts continue to provide retirees with benefits, health or otherwise, then require the district to identify a full, current year discounted cost of those benefits, and enact a tax rate that could completely pay for those benefits over time.

Section Five: A Summary of the Costs of these Proposals

To estimate the costs of all of the evidence-based recommendations, we built a school-based computer model using Microsoft Office Excel. We applied all the programmatic recommendations to the demographics of every school in Wisconsin, and then aggregated all school costs up to each district, and added the resources for district resources: central office, transportation, and operations and maintenance. We also included several small district adjustments, as indicated in the full report. We used the salary and benefit figures listed in section four of this summary for all staff recommendations.

To determine the costs, We ran a modified, foundation version of the current formula, with:

- Tier 1 at \$1,000 per pupil, with a tax rate of 0.52, so a primary guarantee of \$1,930,000
- Tier 2 set at the adequacy level from the model PLUS a district's actual transportation expenditures per pupil in 2004-2005
- A Tier 2 tax rate of 7 mills (to keep state/local costs at current proportion for shared costs)
 - Seven mills is a required tax rate (this tax rate could be higher or lower and would then shift the state local share of funding)
 - For each district, the levied tax rate is the 7 mills required tax rate, or the mill rate that yields the adequacy amount, whichever is lower
- Special education, the three poverty programs (tutors, extended day, and pupil support) and ELL categorical programs are then added
- Debt service is added via a percentage equalizing formula: 20 percent for districts of average property wealth per pupil, which produces a higher percentage for lower-wealth districts and a lower percentage for higher-wealth districts
- A hold harmless provision so no districts receive less aid per pupil than they currently do
- A local add-on is provided for districts with actual tax rates above Tier 1 + Tier 2 + debt service tax rates.

We have replaced the following categorical programs totaling \$499.7 million because the purposes of these categorical programs were subsumed in the programmatic recommendations: Special education, SAGE, transportation, school library, bilingual, Preschool to Grade 5, Children at Risk, Peer Review Mentoring, Supplemental Large Area, English for SE Asian Students and Charter Schools.

Our simulation had no QEO, no revenue limit and all districts were allowed to spend above the Tier 2 adequate level, if they had a tax rate above the sum of Tier 1, Tier 2 and debt service. In other words, districts already with an incremental tax rate above that required for the simulated Tier 1, Tier 2 and the debt rate retained that incremental tax rate and the local add-on expenditures.

With these parameters, total costs increased by \$786.1 million, with \$701.9 million of increased state dollars, and \$84.2 million of increased local dollars. The simulation required 147 low spending districts to raise their local tax rate to the 7 mill level for Tier 2 to spend at the adequate level. The average tax rate increase for these 147 districts was just 0.6 mills. This tax increase could be waived if districts were producing acceptable student performance levels at their current spending levels.

The combined increased dollars equals a 9.2 percent total revenue increase, one of the lowest increased cost estimates for funding school finance adequacy in any state. We would argue that the state could phase-in any increased costs over a 2-3 biennium time period. The model showed that there were 421 districts that would receive increases in state aid from this new formula, thus making the program quite politically viable on a "winners" basis (compared to just 263 districts that received increases in state aid for the 2006-07 school year). In our simulation, 17 districts received hold harmless aid at a cost of \$9.2 million, versus the \$13.3 million hold harmless cost for the current aid formula for 2007.

Altogether, more than 75 percent of the money would be spent at the school level, assuming the appropriate pro rata for operations and maintenance funds.

All equity statistics for this simulated program show that the Wisconsin school finance system would still be equitable:

- The coefficient of variation drops a bit
- The McLoone Index rises
- The wealth elasticity drops dramatically to essentially zero

The new formula would provide equitable and adequate funding so all schools could deploy educational strategies that could double student performance.

The following table compares actual funds for 2005-06 with funds from this simulated program:

	Estimated Actual 2005-06 Per Pupil	Recommend Model Per Pupil
Shared cost minus debt	\$8,420	\$8,050
Local add-on and Chapter 220	Included above	470
State Categorical Programs Replaced/ Augmented	\$581	\$1,300
Total	\$9,001	\$9,820
Debt	About \$700	About \$700

A Simpler Approach

We conducted additional analyses about how the recommendations could be incorporated into the current Wisconsin school finance system. First, our recommendations for the base program which exclude tutors, extra pupil support, extended day, ELL and special education programs, costs about \$8,050 for 2005-06. Assuming an inflation factor of \$350 per pupil, that would be about \$8,400 for the 2006-07 school year.

Under the revenue limit for the 2006-07 school year, districts can spend up to \$8,400 by board action (i.e. without a referendum). What that means is that the \$8,400 per pupil figure is an adequate expenditure level, based on the study which includes all of the above recommendations and the estimate of their costs.

So we would suggest that with this number, \$8,400, the adequate base spending figure and the number up to which districts can spend by school board action without a referendum, should be the focus for redesigning the school funding system.

We also suggest that this number, \$8,400 for 2006-07, be the secondary cost ceiling in Tier 2 of the funding formula. This would mean that state aid would be provided for spending up to the adequate base level. Before proceeding, we need to make some technical comments. The actual number for Tier 2 for 2006-07 aid is about \$8,250. Technically, the Tier 2 cost ceiling is 90 percent of state average shared costs, which was about \$9,169. But shared costs

also include debt service spending, which was about \$714 per pupil for 2006-07. So the Tier 2 ceiling without debt would be only about \$7,550, which is below our \$8,400 adequate amount.

Nevertheless, we would suggest that the revenue limit for spending by school board action and Tier 2 in the formula should be the same and should be the adequate base spending level. In subsequent years, that number would then need to be market adjusted. It would not need to be linked to actual shared costs, or be 90 percent of shared costs. It would be a fixed number, \$8,400 in 2006-07 and then market adjusted each subsequent year. If the Tier 2 spending level and the revenue limit were aligned, then all districts would be allowed to spend an adequate amount, and the aid formula would be structured to provide aid up to that level of spending. In this way, the state would get control over what it would aid in terms of local district spending.

If these changes were made to the current revenue limit and the current formula, then categorical programs for extra help and debt service could be addressed separately. The categorical programs could be structured as follows and phased in on a schedule the state could afford:

- a. Tutors would cost about \$700 for each student eligible for free and reduced-price lunch. At about 260,000 such students, the cost would be about \$182 million. We would make funding this the first priority.
- b. Set a goal of increasing special education to about double what it now is; this could fund the census recommendations for special education teacher and instructional aid positions.
- c. As discussed in the above special education section, set a goal of creating a fund of \$100 million for all the high cost special education kids, where the state would fully fund all the costs for children with severe and profound disabilities. Funding this and the previous recommendations would represent full funding of the special education recommendations in the report.
- d. Set goals for phasing in the additional poverty triggered programs:
 - a. \$700 per student eligible for free and reduced-price lunch for the additional pupil support
 - b. \$600 per student eligible free and reduced-price lunch for the extended day programs, and
 - c. \$700 for each ELL student.

The issue of debt service and Tier 3 can be addressed in tandem. There are several issues here. In the current formula structure, most debt service is aided in Tier 3. Tier 3 provides positive aid for districts with property wealth per pupil at or below the state average, so these districts receive positive aid for all their debt service.

Districts with above average property wealth per pupil have negative Tier 3 aid. We do not think that this negative aid element was ever intended for debt service. So we would recommend eliminating this negative Tier 3 for debt service for districts with property wealth per pupil above the state average and allow them to raise funds for debt service from the local property tax base. This will require them to raise less money than today, as they are all hit with the negative aid aspect of Tier 3 and now have to raise more than a dollar for every dollar they spend on school construction.

We would suggest retaining Tier 3 for just the above debt service role: modest assistance, as is the case today, for districts with average or below average property wealth, but no aid and no negative aid for districts with above average wealth.

Some argue that the state needs a Tier 3 for operating aid to ensure the constitutional equity of the system. The argument is that if the state adopted all of the above recommendations and thus supported adequate spending in all districts, without a Tier 3 for local add-on spending, such additional expenditures could spin out of control and possibly produce a constitutional equity problem in the future. We would recommend that the state wait until an equity problem emerged before it retained Tier 3 for add-on spending above the adequacy amount. But a possible straightforward way to address a potential future equity issue would be to limit local add-on spending to 25-30 percent or so above the base; this would limit few if any districts today; it would allow for some local fiscal control and it would ensure that local add-on spending would not become excessive.

Section Six: Concluding Remarks

As Wisconsin policy makers know very well, school finance issues and structures are changing, largely in response to the more rigorous demands of the emerging, knowledge-based global economy and adequacy-oriented school finance court mandates. In this policy context, a new Wisconsin education and school finance system must provide districts and sites with adequate education dollars so education leaders can deploy resources to more powerful education strategies that produce higher levels of student academic performance, with the goal to double student performance in the next 5-10 years. The key role for the state is to determine an adequate level of education spending for each of its school districts. Districts must then allocate these dollars to schools via a needs-based per-pupil formula that ensures that each school has adequate dollars for the needs of each of its students. Schools need to use these adequate resources for the most effective education strategies, which generally will require substantial program restructuring and resource reallocation. Each school should be held accountable for educating students to the state's student performance standards and for using its adequate resource levels in effective and efficient ways.

Again, one cannot overstate the importance of the need for schools to transform these recommended adequate resources into powerful and effective instructional strategies that boost student achievement. As Cohen, Raudenbush and Ball (2002) so eloquently argue, school resources are "inert" unless and until they are transformed into high quality instructional practices. So for the above resources to have more than just marginal impacts on student learning, schools need to use the dollars to purchase and implement effective curriculum programs in all content areas. Principals need to organize schools so they implement the instructional leadership that research shows is so important (Hallinger & Heck, 1996, 1998). This leadership should help teachers create a professional school culture that focuses on continuously improving the instructional program and take responsibility for the impacts of their instructional practice (Louis, Kruse & Marks, 1996; Louis, Marks & Kruse, 1996; Louis & Marks, 1998; Newmann, 1996). Finally, an intensive and effective professional development program needs to operate in ways to continually improve the instructional program. The above resources are necessary for these actions to take place.

The result will be an even more impressive Wisconsin education system. In the process, we will have doubled student performance *and* moved our “good” education system to the ranks of a “great” education (Collins, 2001). This challenge should be invigorating and taking it on is well within the means of Wisconsinites. We have led the nation in many progressive movements in the past; there is no reason we cannot continue this leadership in the 21st century.