

April 5, 2011

With the adoption of the Common Core State Standards, Wisconsin's involvement in the Smarter, Balanced Assessment Consortium, and focus on teacher evaluation and effectiveness, now is the time for state legislators to consider proactive measures that build capacity within the state to transform education. Specifically, we request the following policy changes:

- **Allow greater flexibility on the structure of the learning environment in order to effectively and efficiently meet student needs.** A review of current statutes reflects a number of constraints that minimize districts' ability to innovate and efficiently meet student needs.
- **Provide time, training, and technology to help Wisconsin's children be successful under the new assessment system.** Accountability in education is important. This requires determining effective curriculum and instruction by examining the overall growth of students during a school year.
- **Think transformatively.** Build capacity for improvement by developing coalitions of support for struggling schools. Doing better requires unlearning long-held assumptions about education, including the way educators are recruited, trained, mentored, and professionally developed. High performing schools owe success to how they may marshal existing resources in targeted and strategic ways. Allow for greater flexibility for how state and federal funds may be used at the local level.
- **Shift from a punishment to a support model and let the research do the talking.** Move away from sole administrator's evaluations or a process that focuses on single or limited data indicators to measure teacher effectiveness. Consider allowing identified talented educator peers and National Board Certified teachers to become involved in assessing and supporting the performance of novice and struggling teachers. Let the experts in the field identify the essential elements of educator effectiveness based on research.
- **Support education finance reform to promote equity and access.** The state needs to ensure quality education for ALL children by changing the current funding formula and replacing it with a system that promotes greater equity. The state can then hold schools and districts accountable with the authorization of a growth model accountability system for each child.

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