



For Immediate Release:

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AEF Calls for Budget Repair Bill Focused on Taxpayer Relief

New Lisbon, WI

January 20, 2026

The Wisconsin Association for Equity in Funding (AEF) called today for a budget repair bill focused on providing property-taxpayer relief.

Reflecting on the 2025-2027 budget, AEF Board Chair John Gaier said, "the \$325/student revenue increases, while helpful, did not meet inflationary needs and there was zero state aid to offset the cost. It's time for the Legislature and Governor to back up their commitment to lowering taxes with an increase in aid to districts to reduce property taxes." Small, incremental increases in per student revenues did little to offset large cost increases (fuel, insurance, maintenance, etc.) and will be inadequate next year, never mind in 400 years!

The news from the Legislative Fiscal Bureau last week was encouraging and gives us hope for a remedy: the state surplus is now projected to be \$1.5 Billion more than projected last summer! This, even after income taxes were cut substantially. There was no equalization aid, the source of funds that allows the state to share school expenses with local school districts to mitigate property tax increases. The entire burden of school funding increases was put on local property taxpayers, many of whom saw major increases in their taxes.

While increased funding was provided for students with disabilities, those funds were distributed without regard to base revenues in districts (their revenue limits). This has led to many frustrating funding scenarios. AEF has documented dozens of wildly unfair situations, here are just two examples:

- The North Lakeland School District will get over \$21,000 for each one of their 133 students next year. Their base budget is about \$3.3M. Not too far to the east, White Lake School District educates 169 students but because they were fiscally conservative in 1993, their base budget is \$1.9M. Under the 2025-27 state budget White Lake is getting \$86,535 in new revenue and special education aid while North Lakeland is getting significantly more: \$108,802.
- The Lac du Flambeau School District will get \$19,407 for each one of their 539 students next year. Their base budget is over \$11.2M. On the state's northern border, Hurley School District educates 530 students but because they were fiscally conservative in 1993, their base budget is \$5.8M. Under the 2025-27 state budget, Lac du Flambeau is getting \$498,386 in new revenue and special education aid while Hurley is getting less than half that amount: \$238,573.

These scenarios are playing out all across the state. Districts that have been highly funded for decades are now getting even more money than they did in the past, while districts at the bottom are left to languish once again as property taxes spiral to even higher levels. AEF believes that because this system so obviously hurts students in low revenue districts, that it is unconstitutional.

What clearly should not take place now is the continued blatant disregard for the plight of low-revenue districts all across the state. Distributing funding equally to all districts, as was the case with the 2025-27 special education funding increases, simply perpetuated the inequalities that harm students in low-revenue districts. Similarly, allocating funds to the School Levy Credit benefits the wealthiest taxpayers rather than equalizing aid to school districts. It does nothing to help schools. The School Levy Credit amount has already been raised substantially, to a whopping \$1.275 billion in 2024-25. This represents [22% of the total school levies in the state](#). In addition, many of those dollars are sent to property owners from Illinois and Minnesota. Let's help Wisconsin taxpayers first.

Gaier made the job clear stating, "Fixing the revenue limit system needs to be the number one priority for the 2027-2029 budget. For now, an increase in general/equalization aid is important and attainable."

The Wisconsin Association for Equity in Funding (WAEF) is a group of Wisconsin school districts that seeks financial equity in the state system of school financing. Members include urban, suburban and rural schools, educating about 83,000 students across Wisconsin. The two issues that brought this group together have been the wide differences in the amount school districts have been able to invest in the education of their children (Revenue Limits) and the even wider differences in the property tax burden to pay for that investment.

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