

## PARIS YES COMMITTEE TO HOST SCHOOL-FUNDING REFORM INFORMATION & ACTION EVENT

There is a school-funding crisis in Wisconsin. A growing history of inequitable and inadequate school-funding policy is crippling our local school districts, shortchanging our children, and overburdening taxpayers.

Wisconsin's public education system, once the envy of the country, is quickly losing ground because its needs are being ignored. As our state continues to decrease its investment in education, an unprecedented number of school districts—both locally and statewide—are being forced to slash budgets, cut teacher and staff positions, increase class sizes, and eliminate vital education programming—just to survive. Ultimately, our children pay the price.

This crisis is reversible and there is a solution. The Paris YES Committee is sponsoring a communitywide information and action event on school-funding reform Tuesday, December 1 at 6:30 p.m. at Paris School, 1901-176th Avenue, Kenosha, WI.

Tom Beebe, executive director of the Wisconsin Alliance for Excellent Schools (WAES), will present his program entitled “Solving Wisconsin’s School-Funding Problem” to participants. The presentation is open to the public and is being promoted to school districts throughout Kenosha County. Citizens, parents, school administrators, school board members, school parent association members, teachers, staff, and students are all encouraged to attend.

Mr. Beebe will discuss current Wisconsin school-funding policy and what needs to change. He will also discuss techniques for effectively communicating the need for school-funding policy change to our local legislators and how to make sure that our legislators and decision-makers in Madison do the right thing.

The WAES is a not-for-profit, bi-partisan coalition of school board members, educators, parents, students, taxpayers, business owners, and voters who came together for one reason, and one reason only—to change the way Wisconsin funds its public schools.

According to Beebe, the way Wisconsin funds our schools is eroding the quality and quantity of education our children receive and dimming their hopes for the future. For example, an astonishing 63 percent of the school districts in the state have eliminated academic courses because they don’t have enough revenue (according to *The Effects of Revenue Controls on the Programs and Services Offered by Wisconsin’s Public Schools, 2007-2008 School Year*, conducted by the Wisconsin Education Association Council and Wisconsin Association of School District Administrators).

At the same time, the state has reduced the percentage of the cost of quality education that it funds. “In other words, says Beebe, “local school boards have to increase property taxes and cut programs and services in order to keep their doors open. It’s unfair to kids, it’s unfair to communities, and it’s unfair to property taxpayers.”

Beebe will also discuss a WAES plan to redirect funds back into our classrooms. “Pennies for Kids” aims to increase the sales tax one cent and ensure the revenue goes directly to education.

For further information, please contact Beth LaBell, Paris YES Committee at (262) 515-3175 or Tom Beebe at (920) 650-0525 or tbeebe@excellentschools.org