

# **WISCONSIN CHAPTER**

## **OF**

### **NATIONAL AT-RISK EDUCATION NETWORK**

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# **NEWSLETTER**

*November 2007*

*When you were born, you cried and the world rejoiced. Live your life so that when you die, the world cries and you rejoice. Cherokee Expression*

#### **From the President:**

I have heard and read some wonderful letters to local newspaper editors regarding your views and experiences which reflect on the need for educational finance reform. Sounds like there have been a number of letters to our legislatures also. Good For Us!!

#### **Wisconsin School-Funding Update**

##### **Courtesy of :**

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## **School-funding update**

### **More details released for Nov. 15 funding reform hearing**

School-funding reform will finally get a hearing in the Legislature at 11 a.m. on Thursday, Nov. 15, in Room 201 Southeast at the State Capitol.

The hearing will be held in front of the Senate Education Committee

(<http://www.legis.state.wi.us/w3asp/compages/IndividualCommittee.aspx?COMMITTEE=Education&HOUSE=Senate>), chaired by Sen. John Lehman

(<http://www.legis.state.wi.us/w3asp/contact/legislatorpages.aspx?house=Senate&district=21>), of Racine, to consider Senate Joint Resolution 27

(<http://www.excellentschools.org/events/ReformResolution/AJR-35.pdf>).

with Rep. Sondy Pope-Roberts, Middleton

(<http://www.legis.wisconsin.gov/w3asp/contact/legislatorpages.aspx?house=Assembly&district=79>), and Sen. Roger Breske, Eland

(<http://www.legis.wisconsin.gov/w3asp/contact/legislatorpages.aspx?house=Senate&district=12>)

, to get the joint resolutions into the process. The coalition will present testimony to the Senate Education Committee about problems with the present school-funding system and how all children can be helped with adequate funding (<http://www.excellentschools.org/adequacy.htm>).

Prior to the hearing, a press conference will be held at 10 a.m. in the Assembly Parlor.

## **Green Bay gets double whammy -- no state budget, large shortfall**

Meeting Sept. 25, the Green Bay School Board decided it could no longer wait for state legislators to quit posturing and arguing and approved a \$219.4 million 2007-08 district budget.

As it has done and continues to do throughout Wisconsin, the stand-off in the budget conference committee in Madison continues to put the state's 426 school districts in an increasing tight vice grip. Most are like Green Bay, where district officials hoped to present the budget to the public in August, well before its final adoption. To meet its own needs, the district went ahead assuming 63.9 percent of its funding will come from the state, 7.9 percent from the federal government, 1.4 percent from other sources, and 26.8 percent from the local property tax -- all of which could change depending on what version of the state budget is adopted.

Green Bay faces a double hit in that the district had to make up a \$10 million shortfall caused by Wisconsin's school-funding system. The shortfall was covered through a combination of revenue enhancements and expenditure reductions, including the loss of 24.5 full-time equivalent teaching positions.

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## **Worse may yet be to come for Wisconsin school districts**

According to a recent article in *Education Week*, a long-projected revenue chill is beginning to bite in a number of states, putting pressure on education policymakers to defend existing programs -- and, in some cases, forcing them to prepare for the worst if budget cuts become a reality (go to <http://www.edweek.org> and click "free trial"; got to Sept. 19, 2007 issue and click on "State's fiscal woes raise anxiety level on school budgets").

Those sentiments are nothing new in Wisconsin. Since the present school-funding system was put into law in 1993, school districts have been laying off staff, increasing class sizes, and cutting programs and services. Our state's funding woes are compounded because we are also experiencing the problems in other states, including slack tax receipts and a chronically sluggish economy.

Worst of all, it may be too late. One school administrator in Florida sent out a message that should leave his counterparts in Wisconsin in fear of the near future: "Prudent school districts are preparing for a couple of lean years. Districts are already cutting discretionary spending. Travel has been limited. We're seeing reductions of staff development." All of these things and many more have long gone by the wayside in many Wisconsin school districts.

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## **Madison front and center in funding reform headlines**

After years of distance from the school-funding headlines, the Madison Metropolitan School District (MMSD) has burst onto the scene in a big way. Children are visiting their legislators, the *Wisconsin State Journal* is talking about ever larger and larger class sizes, and the district has proposed using a one-time windfall to patch up next year's budget rather than go to referendum.

Understanding that the root of MMSD's financial problems ... as well as those statewide ... is under the Capitol Dome, a contingent of parents and children went to visit their legislative delegation, Sept. 18. According to a report from the scene ([http://www.madisonamps.org/component/option.com\\_id-wp/Itemid,31/p,282](http://www.madisonamps.org/component/option.com_id-wp/Itemid,31/p,282)), "the kids were great" and did a good job delivering the message for statewide, comprehensive school-funding reform.

Two recent headlines also pointed out the activism going on in the state's Capital City. Oct. 7, State Journal reporter Andy Hall interviewed several MMSD "special" teachers and wrote a story

about the ballooning growth in class sizes in physical education, music, and other courses (<http://www.madison.com/wsj/home/local/index.php?ntid=249877>). Oct. 9, *madison.com* (<http://www.madison.com/tct/news/250115>) reported that Superintendent Art Rainwater and board president Arlene Silveira are recommending that, instead of going to referendum to fill a \$4 million gap for the 2008-09 school year, the district use a one-time windfall of \$5.5 million due to the closing of two tax incremental funding districts to fill the gap.

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## **Budget problems, budget problems ... everywhere budget problems**

Lori Zahorodny, the Wauwatosa PTA legislative liaison, told community members, Oct. 2, that the "district finds itself stuck with a gap (between revenue and spending) that keeps increasing each year (<http://www.wauwatosanow.com/story/index.aspx?id=670549>)." Explaining the school funding system, she said the gap leads to staff lay-offs, larger class sizes, and cuts in programs and services. Calling for changes to the present funding system, Zahorodny called on community members to get the information they need and use it to contact their legislators.

In the Janesville School District, a longtime academic competition for fourth- and fifth-grades may be gone for good (<http://www.gazetteextra.com/battleofbooks092507.asp>). Citing budget cuts, the district has decided to end its sponsorship of Battle of the Books that, for 20 years, has promoted reading in the public and private Janesville schools.

WAES brought the school-funding reform message to the Manitowoc area, Sept. 21, when a presentation was given at a forum sponsored by the League of Women Voters of Manitowoc County (<http://www.htrnews.com>; articles from the *Manitowoc Herald Times Reporter* are only available for a fee ... sorry). In addition to WAES outreach specialist Tom Beebe, there were speakers from the school districts of Manitowoc, Two Rivers, Mishicot, and Valders.

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## **School-funding reform calendar**

- Oct. 23 -- School-funding reform presentation for the Janesville Retired Educators Association
- Nov. 8 -- School-funding presentations in Door County: 1 p.m., Paul J. Bertschinger Community Center, Egg Harbor, 7860 Highway 42 (map of Egg Harbor at <http://www.villageofegg Harbor.org>) and 7 p.m. at the Crossroads at Big Creek in Sturgeon Bay, 2041 Michigan Street (intersection of Highways 42/57 and CTH TT) (<http://www.crossroadsatbigcreek.org/>)

*Anyone interested in school-finance reform.* Contact Tom Beebe ([tbeebe@wisconsinsfuture.org](mailto:tbeebe@wisconsinsfuture.org)) at 414-384-9094 for details.

## **952 License**

From: [Beth.Lewis@dpi.state.wi.us](mailto:Beth.Lewis@dpi.state.wi.us)

Each education prep program proposes their specific plan for certifying for the 952 license and the DPI approves that program. DPI does not identify specific program criteria. Currently approved programs are: UW-River Falls (on-line), UW-Milwaukee (on-line), UW-Whitewater, Alverno, Carroll, Concordia, Marian and Northland.

## **2008 NARENWICH Board Elections**

We are currently looking for individuals from the following regions to consider throwing their name in the ring to be and candidates for our 2008 board elections. If you are interested in serving your region, please contact Randy Hughes at [hughesr@kaukauna.k12.wi.us](mailto:hughesr@kaukauna.k12.wi.us)

Region 3 (CESA's 7 & 8 / Conference Committee)

Region 5 (CESA's 5 & 6 / Membership Committee)

Region 6 (CESA's 1 & 2 / Political Action Committee)

## **NARENWICH BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2007-2009**

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## **2008 NARENWICH Conference Information**

March 6 & 7 2008

The Paper Valley Hotel (Radisson) 333 W. College Avenue, Appleton, WI 54911 (920) 733-8000 or (888) 201-1718 [info@radissonpapervalley.com](mailto:info@radissonpapervalley.com).

People who choose to stay there will be able to get rooms for \$89 per night.

Think about being a presenter for the 2008 Conference. Call for presenters will be forthcoming.

### Themes

- Differentiating in the Classroom
- Brain-Based Learning;
- Mental Health Resources for Students;
- Middle School Programs
- Professional Development
- Staff Wellness

Keynote Speaker is Jerry Conrath

## **2008 NAREN Conference Information**

February 19-21, 2008

Edgewater Beach Resort, Panama City, Florida

The theme for the 2008 conference will be "Successful Programs & Practices." The conference will be colleagues sharing their success in a highly-charged, powerful atmosphere where there will be over 20 inspiring field-tested models, programs and teaching methods that work well with at-risk youth.

**Note:** We are still looking for good presenters!

Pre-Conference Seminar: *The Angel/Warrior Educator & Quality Standards of At-Risk Education*

**Note:** College credit(1) is available through NCATE accredited Marian College for an extra \$195, bringing total cost for the Seminar with credit to \$300 (before applicable discounts).

<http://www.atriskeducation.net/index.html>

## **More News from NAREN**

- The call for the National Conference presentations has been extended to October 30
- NAREN is working on an online program for at-risk high school youth in Information Technology and in Business Management. One fee, unlimited courses for the year for over 200 courses. Stay tuned.
- Marian College now has an online Master's in Differentiated Instruction for At-Risk Learners. The DIAL Program.