

WI Association for Equity in Funding: Releases maps showing funding disparities

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The Wisconsin Association for Equity in Funding (AEF) today released two maps highlighting the unfair revenue limits that many districts have lived under for decades, as well as the burden experienced by non-disabled students when funds are transferred from regular education budgets to special education budgets to cover shortfalls in state funding.

In 1994, the State Legislature set a benchmark based on what school districts spent in 1993. No one knew it was coming, and the inequities that were in place then have been sustained for decades. AEF member districts simply want a level playing field. The first map shows the current system of revenue limits where the majority of districts are stuck at the bottom of revenues. A handful of districts continue to get massive government subsidies at the expense of the majority of students in the state!

The second map relates to special education funding. AEF members are committed to educating students with disabilities. State funding covers a very low proportion of those costs (just 28% in 2020), leaving districts to cover the balance by taking money from regular education programs. AEF calls on the state to improve special education funding closer to the original promise of 80% of costs.

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 85,000 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.