

## **Wisconsin parents can lead the effort to stop billion-dollar cut in school aid**

Some parents, students, and community members around Wisconsin were 100-percent behind teachers who left their classrooms last week to make a statement about their rights and about the future of public education.

Others are understandably confused and upset. “How,” they ask, “can good teachers abandon their children for their union rights?”

What gets lost in all of this is the common denominator that should bring us all together: Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker has signaled up to a billion dollars in cuts to public school aid—a brutal move that will decimate programs and services that all of our children need for successful futures.

That is something that should bring us all together to send a loud and clear message from every community in the state.

WAES has a unique position in this discussion, and our partners—whether they are educators, parents, students, or taxpayers—are the key to safeguarding quality public education into the future.

We need to talk about what’s really going on and, in the final accounting, why teachers went to Madison. As a critical component of your community, WAES members and others should work hard to make sure that communication is held—the sooner the better.

Teachers who came to The Capitol are fighting for their rights as workers and as professionals. They have already agreed to work with the Governor to correct the state’s fiscal problems, and you need to give them the opportunity to tell that story back home.

More importantly, teachers left their classrooms—and were joined by tens of thousands of other Wisconsin citizens—to fight for the future of public education and the opportunity for your children to succeed. For 18 years, the state’s school-funding system has slashed programs and services, snatching opportunities from the hands of students all over the state, and decreasing the state’s commitment to our children.

Now, it has been widely reported, Governor Walker will propose in his 2011-13 budget address, set for early March, to devastate public schools by cutting up to a billion dollars from school aid. The consequences of this brutal action will be far-reaching and tragic.

Whether you agreed or disagreed with your teachers’ decisions last week, you must all stand together this week to protect our students and fight against budget proposals that



Wisconsin Alliance  
for Excellent Schools

will hurt our schools, our children, and our communities. You are in the position to start the discussions about what you can do together tomorrow.

Please let's work together and take advantage of this opportunity.