

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### Transforming education

*An American Education Week guest editorial by State Superintendent Tony Evers*

Each year, we observe American Education Week as an opportunity to show support and appreciation for public education. This year's Nov. 15-21 event is certainly a time to celebrate the vision we have for educating our nation's young people. No other country has our tradition of striving to educate all its children.

Educating every child is our mission. In Wisconsin, we have the highest high school graduation rates in the nation, our students score among the top states on college entrance exams, and more and more of our high school students are taking rigorous college-level courses. These results show we are on a good path, and we should celebrate. And though it is important to recognize our achievements, we must remember there is much more to do.

I had the privilege of hearing President Obama speak about his goals for education earlier this month. He rightly calls knowledge the currency of today's economy and stresses that our nation's prosperity rests on how well we educate our children. I couldn't agree more. We need every child to graduate prepared for the workforce and further education.

Wisconsin is making significant changes to education in our state, changes that will make our educational system better and ensure it serves every child. We are raising academic standards in reading and mathematics so they will be rigorous, clear, and aligned for college and career readiness. We are phasing out the Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts Examinations in favor of assessments that provide information to educators, students, and their parents so intervention is targeted and timely. We want common sense accountability. And, recently signed education bills will strengthen our state's efforts and complement federal goals for education.

But federal competitive grants are not the only reason to focus on educational policy and to make changes in our educational system. We must pursue change because it is the right thing to do for our children.

Across our state, not just in Milwaukee, we see significant achievement gaps among students. This is not acceptable. Our children have a right to a public education that puts them on a path to success. They deserve to have

(more)

the very best teachers in their classrooms. They need schools that are safe and orderly, led by principals who know how to inspire school staff and focus their energies always on student learning. And, our students deserve a school funding system that doesn't result in program cuts year after year. The cost of education should not pit young families against elders, home owners against business interests. We will all benefit from an educational funding system that is stable, fair, and sustainable.

While we take time to celebrate American Education Week, we must remember there is much to do to improve education for Wisconsin's children. Let's make transforming our educational system our top mission. Educating our children so they are ready for their future requires us to work together. It is work that will bring lasting benefits.

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*Tony Evers is the elected state superintendent of public instruction.*

**NOTES:** A high-resolution photo of the state superintendent is available on the Department of Public Instruction "Media Contacts and Resources" webpage at <http://dpi.wi.gov/eis/vm-media.html>. This editorial and an American Education Week Proclamation from the state superintendent are available electronically at <http://dpi.wi.gov/eis/newsroom.html>.