



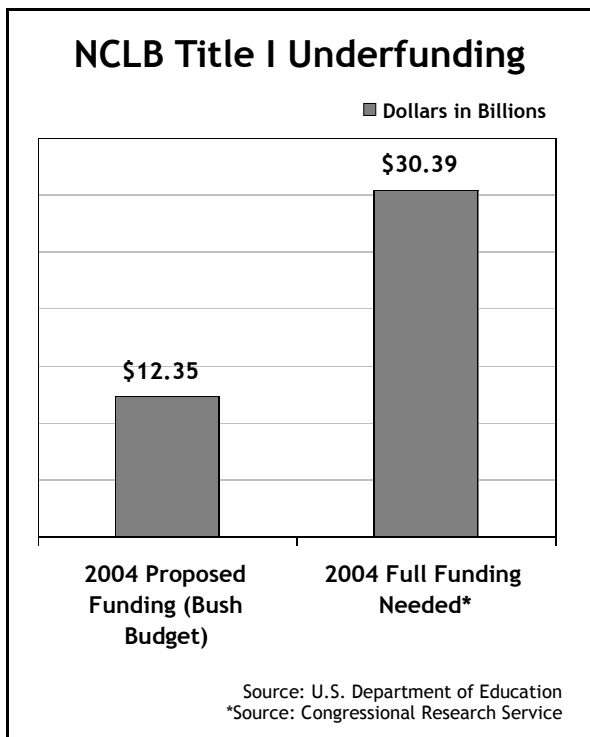
School Funding Brief #1

Federal “No Child Left Behind” Act Needs Adequate Funding to Succeed

Every parent, educator, and advocate wants the same things for their students: access to quality schools; proficiency in math, reading, science, and other areas; and qualified teachers.

Those are the goals of the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) for every child in America. Despite these goals, however, NCLB falls short of meeting its promise.

NCLB is a massive unfunded mandate. It requires billions of dollars in spending while providing very little federal aid.



NCLB’s Costly Mandates

Testing is a major and costly part of NCLB. It requires that:

- ◆ Wisconsin, by 2005-2006, annually test students in grades 3-8, and once in high school, in reading and math.
- ◆ Wisconsin, by 2007-2008, annually test once in elementary, middle, and high school in science.
- ◆ Wisconsin test English language learners (ELL) annually in language.
- ◆ Test scores be reported by poverty level, race/ethnicity, ELL status, and disability group.

Based on these results, the federal government sets up an expensive, new accountability model that:

- ◆ Requires all students to make “adequate yearly progress” so that 100% are proficient (according to state standards) by 2014.
- ◆ Requires schools that receive Title I funds to make progress or be subject to “corrective actions” (ranging from paying to transfer children to paying for tutoring to school closings).
- ◆ Requires all teachers of core subjects to be certified, licensed, hold a bachelor’s degree, and pass a state test by 2005-2006.

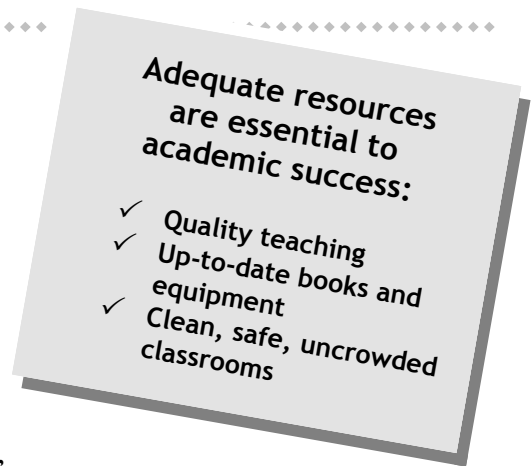
The Act’s testing and accountability demands put an enormous financial burden on school districts. NCLB’s Title I, the largest federal program to assist schools, contains the meat of the mandates. The Congressional Research Service estimated that full funding needed for Title I is \$30.39 billion. The proposed 2004 funding for Title I is a mere \$12.35 billion.

How can Wisconsin meet every child's needs?

Wisconsin's accountability plan has been approved, but our students are a long way from meeting the NCLB goal of having 100% of students proficient by 2014. Only 37% are proficient in math and 61% in reading. When broken down by subgroup, the distance to the goals is even further.

NCLB can't reach its goal—and Wisconsin its goals—if schools don't have adequate resources. Quality teaching; up-to-date books and equipment; and clean, safe, uncrowded classrooms and schools are essential if children are to succeed academically. All

of these common-sense essentials are costly, however, and the percentage of state aid to our schools is dropping.



In other words, Wisconsin must hold children and educators to the standards it has set. We must also set **resource standards**—and provide the necessary funding—to guarantee excellent educational opportunities for every young person in the state.

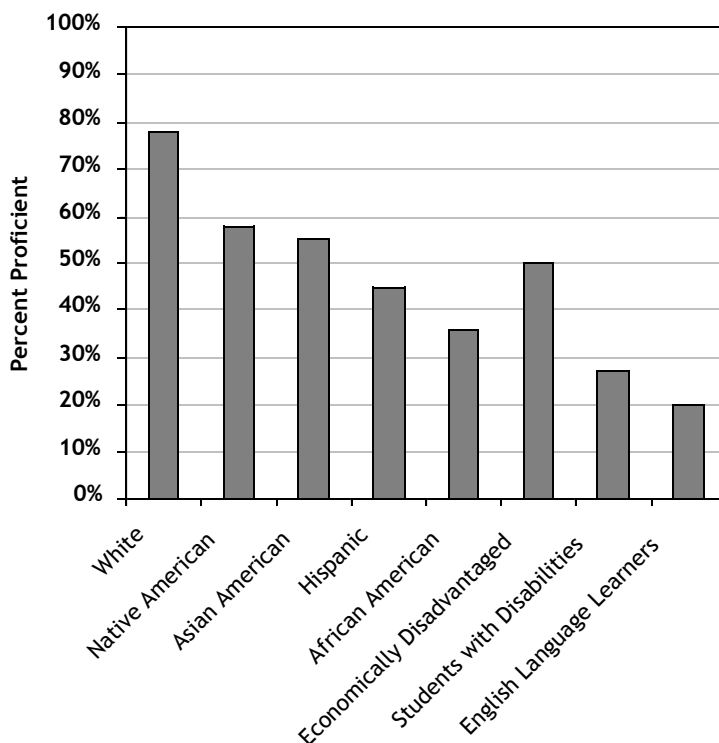
Right now, that isn't the case. Wisconsin children are losing opportunities because our school-finance system is broken and needs to be replaced. Adding the costly mandates of NCLB would make it much worse.

The National Conference of State Legislatures has warned states of impending lawsuits if they don't provide adequate resources to meet the demands of NCLB.

For Wisconsin, the adequacy model of school funding is the best answer. If resources are tied to the needs of children and to academic goals and standards, all children will have a chance to succeed.

10th Grade Reading Proficiency: A Long Way to the NCLB Goal

Results from the 2002-03 Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts Examination show we are far from having 100% of students proficient by 2014.



Source: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

The Wisconsin Alliance for Excellent Schools (WAES) is a statewide coalition of school districts, and teacher, parent, civic, and faith-based organizations, whose goal is comprehensive school funding reform using "adequacy" principles.

The WAES Wisconsin Adequacy Model ensures that resources are sufficient to guarantee that all children—regardless of where they live or their special circumstances—have the opportunity to meet Wisconsin's rigorous academic standards.