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**Wisconsin School Finance System Ranks High on Adequacy, Equity  
But Will New State Commission Address Its Increasing Complexity?**

MADISON—Wisconsin ranks high nationally for providing adequate funding in an equitable way to K-12 public schools, according to a new report from the Wisconsin Policy Forum (WPF). However, after years of layering new programs and funding methods on top of one another, Wisconsin’s school finance system has become a challenge to understand. In “School finance: Here vs. Elsewhere,” WPF researchers ask if a new legislative commission created to examine the state’s school funding system will address this important issue.

Highlighting information compiled annually by Education Week, the new WPF study notes that Wisconsin is one of only five states that ranked among the top 16 in composite measures of both adequacy (16th) and equity (9th) during 2014. More commonly, states that are ranked high on adequacy placed low on equity, and vice versa.

The state has regressed somewhat on both measures over five years. In 2009, Wisconsin ranked 12th on adequacy and 5th on equity.

While the report notes the Wisconsin’s system compares favorably to those elsewhere, WPF researchers acknowledge that school finance here has some challenges, most of which are expected to be reviewed by the new blue-ribbon commission. However, one that is not often mentioned is simplification. As the commission undertakes its review of adequacy and equity, members might ask if there are there changes that can be made to make the system more transparent and understandable, while still maintaining the many positive attributes in our system.

The Wisconsin Policy Forum was created on January 1 with the merger of the Madison-based Wisconsin Taxpayers Alliance and the Milwaukee-based Public Policy Forum. With research staffs in both cities, WPF will continue the tradition of independent, nonpartisan government research and education of its predecessors.

The WPF report, “School Finance: Here Vs. Elsewhere,” is available now by visiting [www.wistax.org](http://www.wistax.org); emailing [info@wispolicyforum.org](mailto:info@wispolicyforum.org); calling 608.241.9789; or writing WPF at 401 North Lawn Ave., Madison, WI 53704-5033. □

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*(Editor's Note: An electronic version of this release is available at [www.wistax.org](http://www.wistax.org).)*