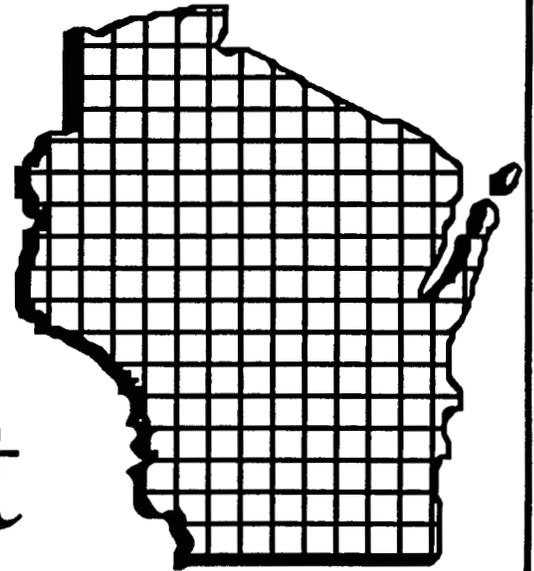


Wisconsin

Policy
Research
Institute

Report



September 1991

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**Restructuring
Wisconsin's
Educational
System**

*How Effective is the Department of
Public Instruction?*

Report from the President:

In this report we decided to take a look at exactly what the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction does and the direction of Wisconsin's educational system compared to neighboring states and the rest of the country.

We find that over the last decade, Wisconsin's educational system has not produced the kind of leadership that has been seen in other states. The best example of this problem is in the Milwaukee public schools. Recently the new superintendent, Dr. Howard Fuller, pointed out the sad state of affairs in which the average grade point index is a D+ and the dropout rates are extremely high. The direction over the past decade clearly has been one of deterioration of the system. Yet at no time has the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) shown any leadership in trying to move Milwaukee in a different direction. While billions of dollars were pumped into the failing system throughout the 1980s, nothing seemed to work. Part of that blame has to be laid at the foot of DPI.

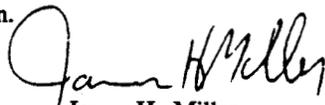
For this study we commissioned Professor James Cibulka, the director of the Office of Doctoral Studies in Urban Education at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. Dr. Cibulka graduated magna cum laude from Harvard and has a Ph.D. from the University of Chicago. He is a nationally known expert in urban education and educational reform. He has published several books and numerous articles. In addition, he has had extensive dealings with the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction.

Dr. Cibulka's findings indicate a serious need to overhaul the Department of Public Instruction. In terms of its general mission, DPI is still wedded to the regulatory kind of mentality rather than looking for innovative ways of changing our educational system. DPI is the quintessential defender of the status quo which believes that only money and new programs can solve our educational problems without basic reform or change. Its management is swollen with bureaucrats who simply pass paper and make judgements on school districts based on the filing of forms rather than the quality of the education. DPI produces very little data on what is happening in Wisconsin. The only time DPI officials seem to appear in public, as with the choice plan in Milwaukee, is when an innovative idea threatens their status quo.

Dr. Cibulka's analysis of the role of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction becomes very important and must be discussed in Wisconsin. It is clear from the percentage of people who vote for the state superintendent that an overwhelming amount of Wisconsin residents have no impact on the leadership of their educational system. This must change.

In Wisconsin, the Superintendent of Public Instruction is a politician first and an educator second. The question thus becomes: do we want our educational system led by a politician who is elected by a small percentage of the public with tremendous support from the educational establishment? Or would Wisconsin be better served in the future by having its educational system run by a qualified and appointed educator, based on credentials rather than political aspirations?

The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction must be modernized to deal with the challenges of the next century rather than being allowed to operate as though nothing has happened in education over the last generation. As Dr. Cibulka points out, recent national testing in various areas indicates that Wisconsin's system is beginning to slip rather than just stagnate. This will continue unless we get better educational leadership out of the Department of Public Instruction.


James H. Miller

THE WISCONSIN POLICY RESEARCH INSTITUTE, INC.

3107 North Shepard Avenue
Milwaukee, WI 53211
(414) 963-0600

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Restructuring Wisconsin's Educational System

*How Effective is
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James G. Cibulka, Ph.D.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report examines the effectiveness of the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) under the direction of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction. It concludes that the organization and management of the DPI, as well as the role of the State Superintendent, need to be restructured dramatically in order to provide more effective leadership. Three significant problems point to this conclusion.

Problem 1: The performance of the state's educational system needs improvement.

Because the DPI maintains a poor database on the state's students and their performance, very limited evidence is available to gauge the quality of the state's public school system. More performance data are needed, as well as better organization of the data already collected. Until the DPI develops a modern performance indicator system, efforts by the public to hold the state's public schools accountable will be impeded. Nor can local school districts use such information for self-improvement.

The performance indicators which are available are a cause for concern:

- The state's ACT scores for college admission have been flat in recent years.
- The state is not improving its graduation rate in accordance with the goals set by the State Superintendent.
- The NAEP Mathematics Proficiency Test results released in June 1991 indicate that too few Wisconsin eighth-graders can reason and solve problems involving fractions, decimals, percents, etc. Further, compared to the national average, fewer Wisconsin eighth-graders were enrolled in pre-algebra or algebra and fewer of their teachers reported placing heavy emphasis on specific mathematics skills and abilities.
- A smaller proportion of Wisconsin high-school students than the national average are enrolled in upper-level mathematics and in review and informal mathematics.
- The state continues to lag behind the national average in percentage of high-school graduates who are Advanced Placement graduates and who score three or above on the AP test. These findings will be released by the National Education Goals Panel in its September 30, 1991 report.
- The findings of the Governor's Commission for a Quality Workforce indicate the need to restructure the state's elementary and secondary school system and to realign it more effectively with postsecondary systems, particularly the vocational-technical system.

Problem 2: State policies for educational restructuring have been minimal.

Across the nation in recent years, educational reform has moved from raising standards and mandates to restructuring of the educational system. It is recognized that until restructuring occurs, dramatic improvements in America's schools are unlikely.

This report assesses state-initiated restructuring efforts in Wisconsin. Six areas were examined:

- (1) teaching;
- (2) curriculum development;
- (3) school organization, management, and governance;
- (4) major program restructuring;
- (5) outcome assessment and accountability;
- (6) reorganization of the State Department of Public Instruction.

In each case, examples are provided of restructuring approaches being tried across the country. Comparable restructuring efforts in Wisconsin are reviewed.

A scorecard on state education restructuring in Wisconsin was developed, based on a four-point rating system ranging from excellent to poor.

The state's restructuring efforts in four of the six areas are rated as "poor": teaching; school organization, management, and governance; outcome assessment and accountability; and reorganization of the DPI.

In curriculum development a rating of "fair" was given. In the area of program restructuring a "fair" to "good" score indicated some specific initiatives, but the gaps within these efforts and the lack of an overall plan for restructuring constrains their impact.

Overall, on the six measures, the state's scorecard is only slightly above poor.

This lack of progress on restructuring, when combined with growing evidence of performance problems in the state's elementary and secondary school system, raises serious questions about state leadership in setting an agenda for change.

Problem 3: Wisconsin's educational policy system is gridlocked. The central leadership role of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction and the Department of Public Instruction need to be improved.

The level of professional staffing at the DPI is higher than the levels in four other midwestern states: Illinois, Indiana, Minnesota, and Ohio. It is second only to Iowa. This raises questions about whether the department's resources are being utilized effectively to provide leadership.

Wisconsin's educational governance system suffers from structural fragmentation because of the autonomy of the State Superintendent, who is elected at large, rather than being accountable to the Governor.

The method of selecting the State Superintendent by election is flawed, based on an analysis of voter turnout dating back to 1964. Elections for the State Superintendent have been plagued by low voter turnout and consistently have had a much smaller percentage of voter participation than elections for Governor.

Because the position of State Superintendent is elected, that individual must govern by maintaining close relationships with educational interest groups, particularly the Wisconsin Education Association Council (WEAC). This leadership by consensus has proven to be a major impediment to educational restructuring efforts, as evidenced by the defeat of many restructuring proposals in the 1991 spring legislative session.

The lack of formal linkages among the state's three educational systems--elementary-secondary, vocational-technical, and university--also is a problem which has not been addressed effectively by task forces, informal arrangements, or by having the State Superintendent sit on the University of Wisconsin Board of Regents.

The work of the Commission on Schools for the 21st Century proved incapable of overcoming the fragmentation in the educational governance system. As a result of the way members were selected, the manner of their deliberations and the large number of their recommendations, the Commission's report has not provided a coherent blueprint for restructuring the state's school system nor has it had a major influence on policy-makers.

In sum, Wisconsin's educational policy system is gridlocked, and this explains why there has not been more restructuring progress.

Conclusion: There is a need to restructure educational governance arrangements at the state level and to restructure the Department of Public Instruction.

Some options for addressing governance problems are:

- Change the State Superintendent's position to one appointed by the Governor.
- Create a Commissioner of Education position responsible for all three educational systems in the state (elementary-secondary, vocational-technical, and university).

Some options for restructuring the Department of Public Instruction include:

- Shift toward an outcome orientation and organize administratively to facilitate this mission.
- Use existing state authority to develop student learning goals for all students as they move through the educational system and link these to a coherent system of curriculum development, student and program assessment, and staff development.
- Formulate a comprehensive strategy for restructuring the state's public school system, with a major upgrading of the role of databased management, research and development, and technical assistance.
- Include in this strategy a plan for improving performance at all levels of the system, not only those schools performing at the bottom.
- Flatten the organizational structure to facilitate a student-outcome orientation.
- Reduce artificial boundaries between regular, vocational, and special education.
- Integrate support functions (e.g., curriculum development with assessment).

Wisconsin has a long tradition of strong support for public education and a reputation for overall quality. Yet recent performance information on the state's school system indicates little progress and a growing number of problem indicators. Meanwhile, other states continue to work on restructuring their school systems, while Wisconsin has made few efforts. Further, the state's competition for excellence must be gauged on international terms, not any longer on state-to-state comparisons.

If Wisconsin's elementary and secondary school system is to become the best that it can be, there must be much stronger state leadership. To accomplish this, it is time to restructure the governance and management of the state's educational policy system.

INTRODUCTION

The current national concern about the quality of the our nation's public schools has brought into sharp focus the role of each level of government in our federal system. This report focuses on the state role, in particular in Wisconsin.

From the beginning of the education reform movement in the early 1980s, state governments played a central role in this reform. The magnitude of the reform task has proven to be a formidable challenge for state governments, because for the most part state educational governance arrangements have not been re-examined for a long time, sometimes not since the state was founded. State departments of education were regarded for many decades as one of the least effective instruments of state policy. Not until the 1960s, with the passage of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act at the national level, were substantial funds made available by Congress to modernize the managerial capacity of state educational agencies in recognition of the growing importance of education as a domestic policy issue.

The modernization of state departments envisioned in the 1960s still was incomplete in the 1980s when the current reform movement thrust them into the limelight. For a variety of reasons chief state school officers, state boards of education, and state departments of education found themselves reacting to reform demands rather than shaping events. Governors of both political parties, responding to public sentiment for reform, led this movement. For the most part, however, their attention focused on policies affecting students and schools, not on the structure of state policy-making itself.

As educational reform in general has shifted gear in recent years and focused on restructuring, this discussion about state policy-making structures and processes has begun. Across the nation a growing number of states are examining whether it will be possible to restructure schools unless state policy-making also is restructured. This process of restructuring already is underway in a number of states.

In Wisconsin the need to re-examine the adequacy of state educational governance is no less urgent, but the awareness of a need has been somewhat slower to crystallize. The strong tradition of local control and, compared with other states, reliance on a small number of indicators of state performance convinced many citizens that strong state activism was unnecessary. As this report suggests, those traditional assumptions are starting to be re-examined. There is a growing awareness that Wisconsin's public schools need to restructure so that they are not only the nation's best but also among the best in the world. Central to that restructuring will be more effective state leadership. The role of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction and the Department of Public Instruction will be central to reshaping our state's public schools so that they can compete effectively in an international arena and help Wisconsin's young people reach their full potential.

This report is organized into four sections. The first section asks whether Wisconsin's public schools are the best they can be. Section Two reviews the state's efforts to restructure its educational system, as is being attempted across the country. Section Three turns to the issue of why Wisconsin's educational policy system is gridlocked and unable to provide effective leadership for restructuring. Finally, in the fourth and concluding section, some options for restructuring educational governance and management at the state level are reviewed.

SECTION ONE
Are Wisconsin Schools The Best They Can Be?

Trend Data on Two Performance Measures

Wisconsin prides itself on having one of the best public school systems in the nation. Two pieces of evidence used by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction and other state officials are Wisconsin's graduation rate compared to the national average and its ranking on ACT college entrance scores (See Table 1).

Table 1
 Wisconsin's High Performance Rankings on ACT and Graduation Rates

	ACT 1989	Rank	Trend	Graduation Rate 1988	Rank	Trend
Wisconsin	20.1	1	Down	84.9	7	Down
Adjoining States:						
Illinois	18.8	16				
Iowa	20.1	1				
Michigan	18.6	18				
Minnesota	19.7	4				
Number of States Ranked:		28			50	
National Average:	18.6		Down	71.1		Down

Source: U. S. Department of Education Wall Chart, 1990.

While Wisconsin performs well compared to the national average, the state has made little progress in improving its own performance from year to year.

ACT scores--Figure 1 indicates that ACT scores have declined slightly since 1986, the earliest year these comparative data were available. In 1986 the average composite score (for all four subject areas) was 22.2, compared with the most recent score of 21.8. By contrast, national scores have been almost flat during this period and lag behind Wisconsin.

Why have Wisconsin's ACT scores not shown any improvement, and even a slight decline? The trend could reflect any combination of factors, such as the number of students taking the test (although according to ACT, Illinois, Iowa, and Michigan have higher percentages of students taking the test than Wisconsin), or technical shortcomings in the concordance tables. This ambiguity points to the danger of placing too much weight on ACT scores alone.

Figure 1

Trends in ACT Scores in Wisconsin, 1986-1990

Composite Score	Sample Years				
	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990
26 and above					
25.5					
25					
24.5					
24					
23.5					
23					
22.5					
22	22.2	22.1			
21.5			21.9	21.9	21.8
21					
20.5					
20					
19.5					
19					
18.5					
18 and below					

Source: American College Testing Service, Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. Note: Scores for years prior to 1990 have been recalculated by ACT to bring them into concordance with the new enhanced ACT test first administered in 1990.

Graduation rate--The same stagnant pattern is apparent with the state's **graduation rate**. As Figure 2 shows, the graduation rate was 84.5 percent in 1985, virtually the same in 1986 (84.6 percent), dropped for several years and recently climbed (84.2 percent), but is still below the 1985 level. The State Superintendent announced a number of years ago a goal of increasing the retention rate to 90 percent by 1990 (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 1988a, p. 5). Clearly, that goal has not been achieved.

The Department of Public Instruction prefers to use dropout rates rather than graduation rates, perhaps because these show a slight downward trend over the last decade. A dropout is defined according to very specific criteria, and habitual truants are not counted as dropouts even though they may be on the rolls and never graduate. This is a major flaw in this measure.

Even if one uses dropout rates as an indicator, however, they do not support DPI's assertion that its Children at Risk legislation, passed in 1985 and revised in 1989, can be credited with having reduced the dropout rate. The rate dropped from 4.06 percent to 3.65 percent from 1981 to 1985 **before the legislation was passed**. Between 1985 and 1990 rates again dropped half a percentage point, to 3.15 percent (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 1990a). Therefore, since the drop preceded the 1985 policy intervention, to the extent that progress has been made, it may have nothing to do with state policy. Furthermore, it is entirely possible that the improvements since 1988 are an artifact of a change in compulsory attendance laws which now require that school boards keep students in school until they graduate or reach age eighteen. Previously, these students could be exempted and were counted as dropouts. These students may be habitual or chronic truants and still not be counted as dropouts.

As was the case with the graduation rate, the State Superintendent announced a goal to reduce the dropout rate to 2.0 percent by 1992. There is no indication by the trends in recent years that this goal can be met.

Thus, whether one uses graduation rates (which show a slight deterioration in performance) or dropout rates (which show slight improvement), state performance has fallen short of earlier goals set by the Department of Public Instruction itself.

Figure 2
Trends in Graduation Rates in Wisconsin, 1985-1990

Graduation Rate	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990
90% or above						
89.5						
89						
88.5						
88						
87.5						
87						
86.5						
86						
85.5						
85						
84.5	84.5	84.6				
84						84.2
83.5			83.7			
83				83.3		
82.5						
82						
81.5					81.8	
81						
80.5						
80 or below						

Source: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, "High School Graduation Rates, Historical," March 18, 1991.

Some Troublesome Performance Indicators

Two recently released performance reports also indicate that Wisconsin's public schools are not the best that they need to be.

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Mathematics Proficiency Test--
The results of this test, which were released in June 1991, reveal some alarming findings. As Table 2 shows,

Table 2

Wisconsin Eighth-Graders' Performance on the NAEP Math Test

Level 200 Simple Addition and Problem Solving	Achievement Levels Percent of Students Mastering:		
	250 Simple Multiplication; Two-step Problem Solving	300 Ability to reason and solve problems involving fractions, decimals, percents, simple geometry and simple algebra	350 Understanding of geometry, algebraic equations, beginning statistics
Wisconsin Average: 99%	80	20	0
National Average: 98%	67	14	0

Source: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement (1991).

while nearly all (99 percent) eighth graders could do addition and simple problem solving, and 80 percent could do simple multiplication and two-step problem solving, only 20 percent could reason and solve problems involving fractions, decimals, percents, simple geometry, or simple algebra. Virtually none demonstrated any understanding of geometry, algebraic equations, or beginning statistics. Overall, Wisconsin ranked sixth in the nation (behind some midwestern states such as North Dakota (rank 1), Iowa (rank 3), Nebraska (rank 4), and Minnesota (rank 5)). Perhaps most disturbing, however, is that so few students in the state were able to perform well at the level of fractions, decimals, and percents, let alone at the more advanced level involving geometry or algebra.

This same report gave indications as to why student performance falls short. Students were asked to report on their current mathematics class. Only 17 percent of Wisconsin students were enrolled in pre-algebra and 13 percent in algebra. This was worse than the poor national statistics of 19 percent for pre-algebra and 15 percent for algebra (U.S. Department of Education, 1991, Table 7, p. 27). When these students' teachers were asked to report on heavy instructional emphasis in five specific content areas, Wisconsin trailed the national average in numbers and operations, measurement, geometry, and data analysis/statistics/probability. It was slightly above average in reported heavy emphasis on algebra and functions (Table 8, p. 28). Again, when teachers reported on specific mathematics skills and abilities receiving heavy emphasis, Wisconsin trailed national averages in all four skill areas (Table 10, p. 31).

The NAEP findings will be included in the Profile of Indicators published by the National Education Goals Panel in its September 30, 1991 report. The data reported in June and summarized in this report will be compared with new national standards which students should

have accomplished by the eighth grade. These new national standards, which will be absolute rather than comparative, will dramatize the need for Wisconsin to measure its inadequate performance in this area not against what other states have accomplished, but according to what it should be doing to meet the national standards set by the National Assessment Goals Board.

The State Superintendent has appointed a committee to offer advice on what should be done. While this is a recognition that the problem can and should be addressed by the DPI, Section Two of this report will indicate that the DPI has no restructuring strategy in math or any other area.

Enrollment in advanced math and science classes--Another disturbing finding was the state's low ranking on **enrollment in advanced math and science classes**. As Table 3 shows, Wisconsin ranked below the national average on enrollment in algebra and algebra 2 and is at the national average for calculus, where only 9 percent of students enroll in this course.

Table 3

Enrollment of Wisconsin High-School Students in Math Courses

Course:	Wisconsin	National Average
Algebra	79%	81%
Algebra 2	36	49
Calculus	9	9

Source: Council of Chief State School Officers, State Education Assessment Center, Washington, D.C., 1990.
 Note: Comparisons are based on 35 states and the District of Columbia.

According to the above report prepared by the State Education Assessment Center of the Council of Chief State School Officers, states which require more courses for graduation have higher percentages of students taking mathematics classes, including upper-level ones. Table 4 indicates that among the eleven states which require 2.3 to 3 Carnegie credits for graduation, on average 91 percent of students are enrolled in math classes, 35 percent in upper-level mathematics, and 34 percent in review and informal mathematics (general math, applied math, or pre-algebra). Among the 20 states requiring 2 credits, the percent of students enrolled in these respective kinds of classes is on average lower. Wisconsin is in this middle group requiring two Carnegie units of math. **Wisconsin performed below this peer group of states in the percent of students taking upper-level mathematics, and it lagged behind the median for thirty-five states being compared.** Only 29 percent of Wisconsin young people were enrolled in upper-level mathematics classes compared with 34 percent for the entire group of 35 states.

The state performed at or above average in high-school science course enrollments, although even here only 25 percent enrolled in an advanced science course such as physics and only 51 percent in chemistry.

Table 4
State Graduation Requirements by Percent of Students in Grades 9-12
Taking Mathematics Classes

Carnegie Units of Mathematics	Mathematics	Total Percent Taking Upper-level courses	Review and informal mathematics
2.5-3 (11 states)	91%	35%	34%
2.0 (20 states)	81	33	26
Wisconsin	84	29	34
No requirements (4 states)	74	36	17
Median for 35 states being compared	84	34	27

Source: Council of Chief State School Officers, State Education Assessment Center (1990), Table 7.

Advanced Placement Courses

Wisconsin continues to lag behind the national average in percentage of high-school graduates who are Advanced Placement candidates and who score three and above on this test. For example, Table 5 indicates that in both 1982 and 1989, Wisconsin lagged behind the nation in the percent of schools with Advanced Placement programs. The State also lagged behind the nation in the percent of students scoring three or above, a score which is widely regarded as acceptable by colleges and universities for credit recognition. A previous study documenting these findings through the 1987 year (Durden, 1988) was criticized by the State Superintendent. Subsequently, he reversed himself and acknowledged that this is a problem. In DPI's 1991 budget proposal to the Governor, Superintendent Grover proposed approximately a million dollars over the next biennium for teacher training for AP classes and for the cost of taking the exams. The State Legislature reduced this amount to \$250,000 in its recommendations to the Governor. Accordingly, in August 1991 the DPI announced a modest initiative to begin attacking this problem.

Wisconsin's very poor performance in this area is likely to receive greater attention in the fall of 1991 when the National Education Goals Panel releases 1991 Advanced Placement data. This report will focus on each state's progress over time and against national standards.

Table 5

Advanced Placement Candidates and Acceptable Scores
Among Wisconsin High-School Students: 1982, 1988, and 1989

Percent of total schools with Advanced Placement programs:	<u>1982</u>	<u>1989</u>
Wisconsin	10.5	25.7
U.S. Average	23.5	39.7

Percent of students scoring 3 or above:	<u>1988</u>	<u>1989</u>
Wisconsin	2.4	2.2
U. S. Average	8.8	8.6

Source: State Education Performance Chart (Wall Chart), U. S. Department of Education (1989, 1990).

The Quality Workforce Report

In addition to the aforementioned data on how Wisconsin pupils perform, recent reports also point to a major policy problem. In January 1990 Governor Tommy Thompson appointed the Governor's Commission for a Quality Workforce to examine this issue in relation to the Wisconsin Technical College System. The Commission surveyed the heads of 1,850 companies throughout the state in November 1990.

The results of this survey indicated that:

One in four employers rate the overall basic skills of their front-line workers as poor. More point to problems with writing, reading, and using fractions. Deficits in math skills, particularly in algebra, are hampering employer efforts to adopt new technology or implement quality improvement programs. (A World Class Work Force for Wisconsin, 1991. Executive Summary, p.3).

Not all of these problems were created in the state's elementary and secondary schools, and not all can be solved there. In its recommendations, the Task Force did point to actions which should be taken by employers, by the technical colleges, and by Wisconsin's system of public education. The Task Force recommended that "Wisconsin's system of public education must adopt outcome-oriented, competency-based educational objectives throughout the primary and secondary grades." They believe that the state's schools must be evaluated by how well they impart to students what they need to know to be "effective members of our society." The current "standards alone are not enough."

Do We Have Enough Data?

It is easy to point to the shortcomings of any one of the above indicators of Wisconsin's public school performance. No one indicator is a perfect or complete measure of how Wisconsin students are performing or where our educational system needs to improve.

The development of a more comprehensive set of performance measures is limited because the DPI has a poor database on which to judge its public schools. At present the only test which permits district and school comparisons is the third-grade reading test, administered only since 1989 as one of the 20 standards (Standard (r)). According to DPI:

Districts and schools will use the Third-Grade Reading Test to determine how well their elementary curriculum is meeting stated goals in student reading performance. They can compare results for individual students, classes, schools, and the entire district to statewide scores and state performance standards set by the DPI. If the test is appropriate for their curriculum and instruction, districts can use the Third-Grade Reading Test as part of their CBT program or to meet Standard (s). Educational Reform in Wisconsin, 1983-88, p.3.

It should be noted, however, that districts are not required to publish any comparative data in their Performance Disclosure Report (another one of the twenty state standards, (O)). Further, since DPI does not require school districts to file their Performance Disclosure Report with DPI, the State Superintendent has no systematic information on the public reporting practices of school districts as it pertains to this test. According to one DPI official, DPI chose not to antagonize local school districts.

Further, Wisconsin has no report card at this time which might provide such information. While DPI supports a report card of some kind, and the 1991 budget bill which passed the Legislature contained provisions for one, DPI's plans for publication of a report card are not likely to emphasize district-by-district or school-by-school comparisons of performance on the Third-Grade Reading Test. (According to DPI officials, publication of school-level comparisons already has been ruled out in the Department's planning.) A fuller discussion of the state's testing program is found in a later section of this report.

Nor are data on inputs collected in a manner which is useful for accountability or for diagnosis by school districts and schools themselves. According to one DPI source, DPI distributes 111 reports which local school districts complete each year, but because the data are not systematically collected or maintained, they are duplicative and provide limited information on school district performance. As a result, Wisconsin citizens have little outcome data or process information to judge the performance of their public schools.

A major function of the Department of Public Instruction is to monitor and improve educational quality throughout the state, but this agency's antiquated and disjointed information system makes it impossible for DPI to fulfill its responsibility to Wisconsin citizens.

In sum, available information on the performance of Wisconsin pupils is limited, but the data which are available point to little recent progress on some measures such as ACT scores and graduation/dropout rates. Further, there are a growing number of indications that the state's school system has some serious performance problems which should be addressed through dramatic state leadership. Wisconsin's public schools are not the best that they can be.

SECTION TWO

State Leadership for Education Restructuring

In view of these performance gaps in the state's educational system, this section of the report focuses on how the Department of Public Instruction is addressing these problems under the leadership of the State Superintendent.

Wisconsin is not alone in confronting a gap between actual performance and what our nation's educational system should be. Since the early 1980s American schools have been undergoing efforts at major reform. The publication of A Nation at Risk in 1983 galvanized public opinion about the need to rescue our schools from "a rising tide of mediocrity."

The first stage of these reforms emphasized raising standards. Some examples of this were increased graduation requirements and more mandates to improve programs, curricula, testing, teaching time, and a host of other educational "inputs." This thrust included raising teacher education standards.

Wisconsin initiated some reforms of this type such as:

- new graduation standards,
- additional program standards,
- new teacher education standards,
- specific program initiatives.

However, since 1986--particularly with the publication of Time for Results by the National Governors Association--most education reforms have been focused on restructuring. Restructuring, in contrast to earlier school improvement strategies, focuses on systemic changes rather than incremental program enhancements. Some major strategies to foster structural change will be examined in this section:

- teaching;
- curriculum development;
- school organization, management, and governance;
- program restructuring;
- outcome assessment & accountability;
- reorganization of the State Department of Public Instruction.

Restructuring policies are being pursued aggressively in many states, even those with traditions of strong student performance. The following section examines Wisconsin's track record on education restructuring.

Teaching

An important theme in restructuring is the need to improve teaching as a profession. The rationale for this strategy is that the strengthening of professional standards and opportunities for teachers will draw the most qualified college graduates into teaching and retain some of our most talented teachers now working in schools. Teaching traditionally has lacked many of the commonly accepted traits of a full-fledged profession, such as determination of entry standards and control over standards of performance for incumbents. Instead, state legislatures have traditionally set entry standards and those for continued good-standing. School boards and administrators often set policies on a wide range of issues affecting teaching and learning, as well as working conditions, which limit opportunities for teachers to act as full professionals.

One of the limitations of the "first wave" of reforms passed by states which focused on teachers is that they did little to restructure professional conditions in the schools. Wisconsin, for instance, passed new requirements for teacher education programs and required students entering a teacher education program to pass a Pre-Professional Skills Test. However, Wisconsin, unlike 37 other states, has no test for initial certification (Doyle, Cooper, and Trachtman, 1991, Table 1). The administrative rules which govern teacher education programs (P.I. 4) give the State Superintendent authority to require and develop tests. Other states have either developed their own test or use one developed by the Educational Testing Service. DPI officials are studying a new ETS test being piloted in other states. However, they have taken no steps toward adoption despite having the authority to do so. P.I. 4 has been in effect since 1986.

Unfortunately, the DPI has not experimented broadly with restructuring strategies to professionalize teaching. Table 6 indicates four options being tried in other states. Darling-Hammond and Berry (1988) refer to these as performance-based compensation systems. Because of the great controversy surrounding merit pay, that strategy mentioned by Darling-Hammond and Berry has had little success and is not included among the options reviewed in Table 6. Nor do we include staff development funds under this restructuring strategy. To be sure, staff development can lead to improvement in teacher performance. Yet these efforts have been underway for decades and did not prevent the problems currently besetting the nation's and state's public schools. To be fully effective, staff development efforts must move from a school improvement paradigm to a restructuring paradigm. Folded into a more ambitious strategy to refocus and re-energize our schools, they can be a powerful tool. Thus, we would expect staff development to be part of the strategies mentioned in Table 6, as well as those mentioned later in this report.

Table 6
Restructuring Strategies for Teaching: State-Initiated Programs

Strategy	Other States	Wisconsin
Career Ladders and Master/Mentor Teacher	11 13	pilot terminated
Teacher Incentives	24	pilot terminated
Career Development (e.g., teacher induction)	5	voluntary program
Teachers in Private Practice	1	none

Source: Adapted from Southern Regional Conference Board (1991); Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction documents; interview data; documentary records. Note: These are either fully established state efforts or under development. They may be pilots affecting some or all districts in a state.

At present Wisconsin has only one state-initiated teacher improvement effort, the Beginning Teacher Assistance program. Its purpose is to encourage such improvement efforts by local school districts or consortia of districts. The program focuses on providing support for beginning teachers via an experienced mentor teacher and additional education. DPI provides guidelines, a resource handbook, and technical assistance. While large numbers of school districts have participated to varying degrees and at various points in time, it is estimated that in the state the total number of teachers who have participated since the program began in 1984 is 2,500-3,000, a relatively small number of new teacher hires in this period. On the other hand, the DPI has made three unsuccessful attempts to get legislative appropriations supporting the program. Some legislators have been unconvinced that a program stressing skill enhancement is needed, especially if it is not tied to a certification decision or performance assessment.

The DPI discontinued two pilot programs, one with career ladders and merit pay and the other an awards and recognition program. Eight proposals, involving 35 to 40 districts, were funded between 1985 and 1988. These pilots (including the Beginning Teacher Assistance program) were

evaluated (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 1988b) and judged not to fall within the state's role. The evaluation report did point to a number of implementation problems in these projects. Given the novel nature of the concepts, this might be expected. However, DPI did not evaluate how its own role might be made more effective in assisting these restructuring efforts. It concluded instead that such innovations as career ladders and recognition efforts should be initiated by local school districts. It must be asked how DPI could justify altogether abandoning its initiatives in these areas on the basis of such a short-lived three-year experiment, carried out in so few districts (only one district implemented the career ladder), and with so little state leadership applied to help make the fledgling efforts a success. While DPI's initiative was commendable, its lack of follow-through in devising new restructuring strategies in this area is very disturbing.

This posture reflects the longstanding view of DPI's leadership that local restructuring is not really necessary; only improvements which might be pursued voluntarily by local school districts at their discretion are desirable. Once the pilots were established, DPI's posture was largely laissez faire, and it received little encouragement from the State Legislature, which has appeared not to understand or accept what the programs were trying to accomplish.

In the 1991 session of the State Legislature, the Governor proposed to allow school districts to contract for private practice teachers, particularly to help small school districts which cannot offer a diverse curriculum due to inflexible hiring requirements. Minnesota already has such a program. However, this proposal was strongly opposed by the Wisconsin Education Association Council and the Department of Public Instruction. Despite its support by the Wisconsin Association of School Boards, it was killed by the State Legislature.

In its biennial budget proposal, the DPI offered a number of policies under the label staff development: expansion of existing program for staff recruitment, retention, and renewal (DPI referred to this as the "3-Rs"); staff development centers in each of the state's cooperative education service agencies (CESAs); and a number of small new initiatives such as minority student scholarships, women and minority administrative internships, and the like.

DPI has had difficulty convincing the State Legislature to support many staff development initiatives. Part of the problem, once again, is that DPI's proposals do not hang together to form a coherent strategy for change. They are discrete programs strung together loosely by slogans like "Recruitment, Retention, Renewal." DPI says next to nothing about teacher professionalization because it is wedded to an older concept of staff development. Without any vision at the state level about how schools might be restructured as workplaces to increase professional autonomy and discretion, it is unclear that the proposed staff development centers would bring about the dramatic changes which are necessary. DPI has not articulated how the various pieces of reform fit together because it continues to see school improvement as its goal rather than systemic restructuring.

It is important to emphasize that no one strategy for teacher professionalization and staff development is a proven way to restructure schools to prepare them for the requirements of the next century. Some combination of strategies may be needed, perhaps new ones not yet invented. It is troublesome that Wisconsin policy-makers have done so little to foster teacher professionalization through experimentation with career ladders, master-mentor programs, teacher incentives, teachers in private practice, or other teacher restructuring efforts.

Curriculum Development

A second area of restructuring which has received attention by educators across the nation is the need to improve school curricula and align them with staff development, assessment, and other policy areas.

Beginning in 1983 Wisconsin's current State Superintendent launched an initiative to develop curriculum guides, of which there are now a total of 25 in various subjects. Some of the guides (e.g., those in mathematics, communications, and technology) have received national attention. One in biology and chemistry is being developed. The DPI also has been working on an applied mathematics course guide.

Unfortunately, many of these guides have not been revised for some time and do not consistently represent the latest thinking in their fields. According to data provided by DPI officials, the core subjects' guides--those in English/language arts, mathematics, science, and reading--have not been revised since their initial publication in 1986.

The guides place heavy emphasis on documenting best practices. In general, the approach in developing the guides was to involve practitioners and experts from around the state. Because of the age of some of these guides, however, they do not necessarily focus on problem-solving skills and higher-order thinking.

Moreover, the continued separation of vocational and academic guides contradicts the current policy paradigm DPI has been advocating since the mid-1980s. "Education for Employment" is intended to **integrate** previously separate vocational and academic curricula. Guides need to be developed in the three new proposed occupational cluster areas (business enterprise, health and human services, and technology) and in applied academic areas. While DPI has received funds to accomplish this, its failure to restructure internally may doom the effort.

It is probably fair to characterize the vast majority of DPI's curriculum guides as representing the best thinking of an **earlier** generation of curriculum development. A pacesetter contrast is California, where the guides do focus on problem-solving and higher-order thinking (Council of Chief State School Officers, 1989).

More troublesome is the fact that the guides themselves are not integrated to create a coherent or comprehensive list of what Wisconsin students should be expected to know as they move through school. Wisconsin does have a reasonably clear and complete list of educational goals in its statutes, Chapter 118.01. These are an amalgam of subject-matter expectations and learning principles. These might be improved upon and used as the basis for clearly articulating what students are expected to know.

DPI proposed in its recent biennial budget request that the state statutes be revised to establish state goals and a common purpose for education. It then linked this to defining student outcomes, and establishing standards and assessments (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 1990b, p. 2). What is missing is a link to an overall curricular framework. This does not mean that the DPI would establish a state curriculum but that it would help local school districts translate state goals into curricula by providing state-initiated curricular frameworks which would still leave wide latitude for local determination of coursework. Unless curriculum guides clearly follow from a state goal framework, we are in danger of perpetuating the "shopping mall" approach to learning--a proliferation of subjects which distract us from stressing core learning outcomes (Powell, Farrar, and Cohen, 1985).

National concern about the reform of our schools has shifted the course of public debate since most of the curriculum guides in core subject areas were first developed. Their piecemeal creation may have been appropriate to a period as recent as a decade ago when no urgency to retool American schools was perceived. That period has passed, but DPI policy has not caught up with the national dialogue.

Nor are the DPI curriculum guides tied to a state assessment system or a state strategy for teacher training or development. This is because it is assumed that such decisions should be locally driven.

Such a perspective ignores the reality that between the extremes of local control (largely a myth in any case) and state control there are many places for a state leadership role. A state policy system beginning from a clear curricular framework could be integrated without the heavy hand of state control.

Thus, while DPI's curriculum guides, taken one by one, are competent and may be helpful to individual teachers, they fail in the larger mission they must serve--to move the state's educational system forward.

School Organization, Management and Governance

A third major theme in restructuring discussions is the need to realign the organization, management, and control of public schools so that they focus more directly on improved performance. There are a variety of ways to accomplish this, but they fall into two basically different conceptual strategies--decision making and choice. (In practice, a particular program may combine elements of both.)

The first approach focuses on changing the decision-making climate in schools and the roles of those who work in them. These are not traditional school improvement programs. Indeed, DPI distinguishes its school improvement efforts from restructuring, which it regards as a strategy designed to accomplish more extreme changes. As a general philosophy, restructuring focuses on school wide change of a systemic nature, not marginal or incremental changes to one aspect of a school. In practice, it is this difference in focus and ambition which distinguishes school improvement from restructuring. Following that, school restructuring can pursue many paths. For example, some decision-making strategies are strictly managerial; while they delegate more discretion to the local school, they do not involve a transfer of authority. Other restructuring approaches, such as Chicago's school reform, involve not merely administrative decentralization but political decentralization.

A variety of these decision-making reforms are listed in Table 7. They are not mutually exclusive but may appear together (e.g., state regulatory waivers and state grants for restructured schools).

Wisconsin has no significant initiatives in the first area of decision-making strategies. A proposal for School Performance Grants by the Governor was deleted by the State Legislature, under opposition by the DPI and education interest groups. This would have permitted grant awards to schools determined to have demonstrated superior performance over the previous two years. Nine states already are developing or implementing school performance incentives.

Table 7

State Policies to Restructure School Organization, Management, and Governance

Strategy	Other States	Wisconsin
Decision-Making e.g., restructuring schools learning networks educational creativity grants demonstration school system school-based management	30 plus 5 under review	none

Table 7 (continued)

Strategy	Other States	Wisconsin
lead teacher restructuring		
restructuring school boundaries		
teacher empowerment		
waivers		
school performance incentives		
state-sponsored school recognition program		
School Choice		
interdistrict regional transfer plan	19	none
intradistrict transfer plan	15	Milwaukee Chapter 220
statewide residential schools	8	none
second-chance schools for at-risk students	6	none
postsecondary options	10	proposed

Sources: Education Commission of the States (1989); Doyle, Cooper, and Trachtman (1991); National Governors' Association (1990).

The State Superintendent and the Governor also tendered similar proposals which would allow school districts to apply to the State Superintendent for a waiver of statutory provisions relating to specified programs and any of the 20 school district standards. Eventually the legislature sent to the Governor a proposal that DPI study this matter and return with a recommendation.

Nor does DPI have a systematic data base to determine what locally initiated decision-making restructuring is occurring, either for its own planning or to assist other schools and districts wishing to experiment with restructuring.

The second set of strategies relating to organization, management, and governance focuses on giving the family a choice over the school it wishes to attend. A variety of choice initiatives is being tried in 29 states.

As Table 7 shows, Wisconsin has a state initiative in this area--the Milwaukee parental choice program permitting a small number of schoolchildren from a low-income area of Milwaukee to transfer to nonsectarian private schools. This law enjoyed bipartisan support in the State Legislature and was supported by the Governor.

The State Superintendent, on the other hand, has been a vocal critic of the program and was unsuccessful in proposing that the legislature eliminate it. In fact, he has opposed proposals for an interdistrict transfer program such as Iowa and Minnesota have, which permit families to transfer their children out of one district into neighboring systems to improve the quality of learning opportunities available to their children. (Wisconsin's Chapter 220 Program is a form of interdistrict transfer arrangement established by the State Legislature in the 1970s to improve racial balance in the Milwaukee metropolitan area.) Wisconsin has not established other kinds of choice policies such as state-sponsored/operated residential schools or second-chance (at-risk) schools.

The State Legislature in its first 1991 session passed a provision for a limited postsecondary option program which was approved by the Governor. The bill prevents any use of the option unless the student's resident school district does not offer a comparable course. Also, the state would reimburse school districts for the tuition costs associated with the option, thus removing any financial incentive for districts to try to design new programs in order to retain these pupils rather than have them opt for a postsecondary course. While DPI officials opposed a similar proposal in the last legislative session, they did lend their support to the 1991 proposal with the modifications provided above as well as transportation provisions.

As passed, the legislation was greatly watered down due to opposition from the Wisconsin Education Association Council (WEAC), which insisted on the limitation that an 11th- or 12th-grader can go to a postsecondary institution if the youngster's resident school district does not already offer a comparable course. The Senate Democratic Caucus also added another protection for WEAC: if a school district determines that a sufficient number of students are enrolled at a postsecondary institution that is equal or greater than the number normally required for the school district to offer that course, the course must be offered by the school board in the following school year, unless waived by the State Superintendent. The Governor's proposal, fashioned after Minnesota's plan, did not have this limitation. WEAC expressed a concern about the job security of teachers, and because of its influence with legislators, it won.

Major Program Restructuring

A fourth area of potential restructuring is major program initiatives. Educators traditionally have favored program enhancements to broad systemic change. In recent years, however, a number of program areas have been targeted by the reform movement as having a high potential for creating strongly improved performance. Four of these are highlighted in Table 8--early-childhood programs; those for students at-risk of failure; programs to improve the school-to-work transition; and finally, family involvement programs.

Wisconsin has made some steps in each of these areas, but it has a long way to go before it can assert that it has developed an exemplary and comprehensive set of policies to favor restructuring. In the following paragraphs, each area is reviewed briefly.

Table 8
State Policies to Encourage Major Program Restructuring

Program Area	Other States	Wisconsin
Early Childhood		
State-funded pre-kindergarten programs	26	half-day
State contribution to Head Start	13	yes
State grants or categoricals	NA	P-5 program (3 districts)

Table 8 (continued)

Program Area	Other States	Wisconsin
At-Risk Students	14	state mandate
School-to-Work Transition Postsecondary options (see Table 7)	NA	state standard
Family Involvement e.g., Parents as Teachers concept	NA 30	none
Learnfare concept	3	yes
Employer cooperation	3	proposal failed
State clearinghouse/center	NA	small program; proposal pending

Sources: Doyle, Cooper, and Trachtman, 1991; National Governors' Association (1987, 1988, 1989, 1990); interview data and review of documents. Note: NA indicates "Not available" where no overall reliable estimate could be obtained.

Early childhood programs--In early childhood the state does provide state aid for half-day four-year-old kindergarten. The Governor deleted a proposal by the State Superintendent to provide state aid for all-day programs for four-year-olds. Wisconsin also provides Preschool to Grade 5 (P-5) grants for low-income pupils in three school districts (a fourth was proposed by the DPI and approved by the State Legislature, pending approval by the Governor).

Thirteen states now make contributions to the federal Head Start Program. In 1990 at the initiative of the Wisconsin Legislature rather than DPI or the Governor, Wisconsin appropriated \$2 million, which permitted an additional 750 children to be served statewide. DPI retained this in its 1991 base budget proposals and proposed serving an additional 700 children in Milwaukee who are on waiting lists. While this is a step in the right direction, it is still the case that only 30-40 percent of eligible children in the state are served. By contrast, Minnesota and Ohio have made investments of \$12 and \$20 million, respectively, to underscore the importance of early childhood education.

Despite the fact that the State Superintendent convened a Task Force on Early Education, Child Care, and Family Involvement, which delivered its recommendations in October 1989, its key recommendations have not been acted upon. A three-agency State Coordinating Commission was to be created to bring together the efforts of Public Instruction, Health and Social Services, and the Executive Office; this has not been funded. Consequently, a state/local comprehensive, coordinated program plan for providing early education, child care, and family service programs has yet to be developed.

In its biennial budget request, the DPI proposed to require school districts to develop a plan for making available to children district readiness programs, to take effect beginning in 1992-93 and be fully implemented by 1994-95. Districts also would begin receiving funding for learning readiness programs in 1992-93. Program grants would be based on a weighting for low-income children in the school aid formula. As sketched out in "A Background Paper on Learning Readiness (1990)," it was unclear how school districts would qualify (automatically? on a competitive basis?), or how the program grants fit into a larger state strategy for restructuring.

The DPI did frame its proposals within the context of the first of six national education goals: "By the year 2000, all children in America will start school ready to learn." Yet the "learning readiness initiative" it proposed was really a collection of disparate specific program initiatives. The idea that local school districts will design their own approaches has unquestionable merit. What is missing is some state direction on how school districts and local community actors could begin to address this issue. How would sufficient technical assistance be rendered through the small Family Center at DPI? How would local planning activity and policies be evaluated, and how would DPI take a leadership role in sharing evaluation data on the most exemplary programs statewide? (In the 1989-91 biennial budget, funds were made available for 27 projects to coordinate educational, health and social services to children and to integrate early education and child care activities. What has been learned thus far from these projects, and how do they inform the 1991-93 biennial budget proposal?)

Despite the positive direction that DPI's proposal represented, there were many unanswered questions in this proposal, indicative of the reality that DPI is just beginning to formulate a coherent policy direction on learning readiness.

While it is not easy to pinpoint who is responsible for this inertia, a leadership breakdown has occurred, and Wisconsin citizens are the losers.

At-risk programs--In 1985 Wisconsin adopted legislation requiring every school district to annually identify children at risk and, in the case of school districts with a high dropout rate, to file a plan with DPI for its approval along with annual reports. Wisconsin has since broadened its at-risk definition and adjusted its compulsory education and attendance laws. The state operates a small grant program available to 4 percent of the state's school districts with high dropout rates.

While DPI argues that this at-risk program is a national model, the state failed, as was mentioned previously, to meet the goal set by the State Superintendent of 90 percent retention by 1990. In view of the fact that the state's 1990 graduation rate was 84.2 percent and its dropout rate 3.15 percent, this state policy needs to be reexamined.

It is the case, of course, that a variety of initiatives are needed, such as those to improve the transition to work, a fact that the State Superintendent has pointed out. What is lacking, however, is a comprehensive state strategy, rather than many piecemeal approaches, for attacking this problem.

School to work transition--Wisconsin's efforts to align school programs more closely with the workplace date to the Parker Project, a joint effort of DPI and the state's business and industrial leaders, which determined that the state's vocational education and regular academic programs had to be recast in order to provide each student with necessary skills for entry into the workforce as well as academic knowledge for further education and training. In 1985 this led to one of the new state standards (m), which required that a school district provide access to an Education-for-Employment program. The administrative rule for this standard was not passed for some years, and full implementation of the required locally developed plans does not take effect until the fall of 1991, six years after the passage of the standard.

One of the requirements of standard (m) is the creation of an Education-for-Employment Council in each school district to develop a plan for implementing an Education-for-Employment program. According to state business leaders, most councils have not done anything yet, apart from getting organized. The task of integrating academic and vocational goals which is at the heart of the Education-for-Employment standard has not been addressed effectively in many school districts thus far, according to several informed sources. What is in place so far in most districts are paper plans.

The School-to-Work Initiative, as passed by the State Legislature in July 1991 and announced in August by the DPI, included a tenth-grade gateway test, youth apprenticeships, creation of "tech-prep" programs in each high school, tightening of child labor laws, strengthening standard (m) so that school districts would be required to include in their Education-for-Employment program various routes to occupational success (such as specific job preparation, technical preparation and college preparation), postsecondary options, and expansion of Advanced Placement courses (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 1991).

A number of the components proposed by the DPI were not incorporated in the Governor's proposal but were later restored by the State Legislature. For example, DPI proposed unsuccessfully to the Governor that it be given new funds for curriculum development in three occupational cluster areas: business enterprise, health and human services, and technology. These would represent an "applied academic approach" rather than traditional vocational education. Unfortunately, there is very little collaboration within DPI between vocational education officials and those concerned with academic programs.

DPI also proposed to amend VTAE, school board and state superintendent statutes to require cooperation in the development of "tech-prep" and youth apprenticeship programs. DPI has complained that the Vocational, Technical, and Adult Education (VTAE) system's mission and VTAE district boards' missions do not require them to collaborate with DPI and local school districts. VTAE has provided some funds to improve "articulation" with the elementary-secondary system, but this has not satisfied the State Superintendent. Three new pilot projects may emerge from these articulation efforts, largely at the initiative of public school districts who are pushing DPI and the VTAE system for help in this area.

While this initiative shows much promise, and is far ahead of other DPI policies in its attempt to address a complex problem, the initiative has yet to articulate how these components relate to one another and form a coherent restructuring strategy. This is a potentially major shortcoming, if the initiative is to avoid becoming just another segmented program. For example, how does an Advanced Placement initiative fit within the School-to-Work Initiative, except as a public relations slogan? AP tests are taken by the college bound while the School-to-Work Initiative is designed for the non-college bound. If the initiative is intended to address the needs of the college bound, then that initiative should include other efforts to strengthen academic programs.

Policies in the school-to-work area have been plagued by coordination problems between state executive agencies and the task forces or advisory groups they appoint. The State Superintendent appointed the Occupational Options Task Force in August 1990 to coordinate school-to-work policies between the public schools and the vocational-technical system. This group issued its report in March 1991. The Governor's Commission for a Quality Workforce was appointed in January 1990 by Governor Tommy Thompson and delivered its recommendations in April 1991. These groups disagreed on whether more money is needed to fund initiatives. Still other groups deliberating during this period were the Governor's Commission on Minority Participation in Vocational-Technical Education and the Commission on Schools for the 21st Century. The coordination problems have been so severe that the Secretary of the Department of Administration initiated an effort during the summer of 1991 to see how this problem can be addressed.

Despite talk of collaboration between DPI and the state's key business group, the Wisconsin Association of Manufacturers and Commerce, relationships sometimes have been strained. For instance, the State Superintendent created the Task Force on Youth Employment in March 1990. The group proposed that state laws be amended related to hours of employment by youth, among other things. However, according to business leaders, the State Superintendent's harsh criticism of their efforts in a press release sharply curtailed cooperative efforts. Eventually, partly as a result of a set of parallel recommendations from an advisory group to the Department of Industry and Human Relations (DILHR), the legislature did pass two provisions related to child labor laws.

A clear definition of what occupational options means has not yet emerged. DPI has been preparing a "white paper" on meaningful occupational options. Reportedly two "tech-prep" models have been developed in technology and business as a result of cooperative work between DPI and VTAE program consultants. DPI urged the new requirement that school districts establish "tech-prep" programs (a sequence of courses designed, among other things, to allow high-school pupils to gain advanced standing in VTAE associate degree programs upon graduation) in each high school. Yet internally the DPI has not organized its resources and staffing to provide the proper leadership for this ambitious requirement.

Another ambiguous area is the significant difference of opinion about what apprenticeship means and a reluctance by the AFL-CIO to endorse this concept when it impinges on the existing apprenticeship structures. While the DPI announced plans in August 1991 to initiate apprenticeships for 16-year-olds, the first round is planned for the printing industry, which is large and expanding. How the new apprenticeship system will work in other industries with less favorable conditions is not clear. The State Legislature placed jurisdiction for this component in the Department of Industry, Labor, and Human Relations (DILHR) rather than DPI, although a twelve-member council in DILHR must coordinate the development of a youth apprenticeship program. Its complex method of representation and appointments of some members by the Governor, some by the state VTAE board, others by DILHR, and still others by DPI is a political nightmare. Compounding the confusion is the State Legislature's requirement that the youth apprenticeship programs will have no effect on existing apprenticeship programs.

One more example of the confusion is the proposal sent to the Governor from the legislature for a tenth-grade gateway assessment in four subject areas. Neither the State Superintendent nor the Governor's original proposals to the legislature clarified whether this is to be a "high stakes" test with consequences for counseling students into different tracks (e.g., academic, vocational, etc.). In his biennial budget request, the State Superintendent simply stated that the test "may" be used "in conjunction with other measures" (which?) "to suggest the most appropriate program direction for the individual student in the final 2 years of secondary school, i.e., postsecondary options, apprenticeship, coordinated work experience." (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 1990, p. 3). Different personnel at the DPI offered various opinions as to whether this will be a "high stakes" test and what consequences will be attached to it when it begins in the 1995-96 year.

The Governor's Commission for a Quality Workforce has recommended a "tech-prep" track for non-college bound students, as an alternative to current general education or vocational tracks. The Commission favored granting a Certificate of Initial Mastery to students who passed a test by the end of tenth grade at about age sixteen. A variety of related proposals have been advocated by one or another group, and there is no clear leadership for how to redesign the high-school curriculum. It is unrealistic to expect the legislature, without guidance, to provide clear direction on this complex matter. This guidance should come from the executive branch, particularly the designated expert in this area, the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

It must be asked whether DPI's organization is capable of accomplishing the School-to-Work Initiative. DPI has proposed that it restructure its Vocational Education Bureau by reallocating three positions which focus on this restructuring. However, these consultants still would work within the old organizational division between vocational education and academic education. DPI's failure to propose a more dramatic internal restructuring indicates the misfit between program initiatives and the actual philosophy and organizational resources which have yet to be realigned to make this initiative succeed.

What has emerged so far, in other words, is a loose collection of separate program initiatives destined to become just another program or series of discrete programs, in the same way that the Education-for-Employment Initiative launched dramatically by DPI some years ago has failed to

mature into a broad restructuring strategy. DPI's organizational apparatus is not designed to deliver a restructuring of this magnitude, nor have the resources been earmarked or redeployed to achieve it. Hopefully these shortcomings will not be fatal, because the School-to-Work Initiative is the closest the DPI has come to seriously engaging a restructuring strategy.

Family involvement--A fourth program area with great potential for restructuring schools is family involvement. A broad set of research findings converging from various fields confirms that parent involvement is one of the most effective and least expensive ways to raise student achievement. Unfortunately, the policy initiatives of the Department of Public Instruction lag significantly behind the magnitude of efforts required to restructure school-home relations. As mentioned earlier, the Task Force on Early Education, Child Care, and Family Involvement, which dealt with this area and which was created by the Superintendent to advise him, has never had its recommendations acted upon.

The Department of Public Instruction has a very timid record in this area. For some years, it has used federal Chapter 2 discretionary money to hire one staff member who operates a Families in Education Program. The program's limited resources only permit it to provide resource materials and workshops, and some years ago, a small number of competitive awards. In 1991 the State Superintendent decided to request permanent budgetary support for this program, titled a Center for Family Involvement. At the initiative of the legislature, the recent budget bill expanded funding to provide competitive grants in this area, thereby expanding the scope of DPI initiatives beyond what the agency itself had proposed.

In sum, Wisconsin has made some progress in addressing reforms in specific program areas. Yet in each area state policies so far have failed to provide the dramatic restructuring which Wisconsin's educational system needs. Task forces and local planning requirements are not substitutes for strong state leadership. That leadership should come from the State Superintendent and the Department of Public Instruction.

Outcome Assessment and Accountability

A fifth theme in the national restructuring movement has been improved assessment and accountability. An important theme in this aspect of the restructuring movement has been the need to shift state regulation from inputs to outputs. The nation's governors stated the tradeoff very directly in Time for Results. Reducing traditional regulation of schools can occur if schools become more accountable for improved results.

This does require good assessment data, of course. In recent years there has been widespread disenchantment with the quality of much traditional testing. Paper-and-pencil tests usually fail to tap all that students know and do not measure higher-order learning. In many cases there is little relation between the curriculum a child is exposed to and what the test actually measures; thus, the tests lack content validity. Also, there is the nagging perception that many of these tests, either in their design, administration, or both, suffer from cultural biases. Finally, many educators join business leaders in concluding that these tests measure academic knowledge without sufficient linkage to workplace requirements.

Accordingly, a variety of efforts are underway to redesign assessment, both for diagnostic purposes at the classroom and school levels and for accountability at all levels. The instruments appropriate at one level and for one purpose may not be suited for another purpose.

Where does Wisconsin stand in the midst of this international revolution in testing and assessment? An examination of Table 9 will show that it is at the sidelines. Most states have much stronger and more comprehensive systems of statewide assessment. While reliable national data are hard to

obtain, a growing number of states (eight in 1988) have been experimenting with innovative assessment methods rather than traditional paper-and-pencil tests.

For its assessment efforts, Wisconsin can only point to the third-grade reading test and a planned tenth-grade gateway test (without a destination), the latter carrying a small legislative appropriation of \$75,000 over two years for development. Wisconsin also is participating in a study group of a new test being developed by American College Testing Service (ACT) which may parallel the tenth-grade gateway effort.

Table 9
State Policies on Outcome Assessment

Policy	Other States	Wisconsin
Statewide testing	42	3rd grade only 10th-grade gateway planned
Experimental assessment	8 (e.g., Georgia, Maryland, Maine, South Carolina)	no
Outcome-based education	NA (Minnesota)	no
Accountability reporting		
comprehensive performance indicator system	32	no
comparisons among schools or districts	38	no
policy linkages	27	no

Sources: Council of Chief State School Officers (1988, 1989); Doyle, Cooper, and Trachtman, (1991); U.S. Department of Education (1988).

The state does have a competency-based testing (CBT) program, which was established in 1982 and began in 1985-86. According to testing experts who are familiar with the tests and DPI officials who were interviewed, because participation in the program is voluntary and because each participating district sets its own passing standards, the CBT program is now outdated and does not represent the latest thinking in curriculum and assessment. The language arts test, for example, has been strongly criticized by subject-area experts. DPI points out that its hands are tied from improving the test because state law requires that the tests be machine readable. Yet the State Superintendent did not go to the legislature to request authority to revise or abandon these tests, reportedly because he did not want to reopen an issue which was hotly debated nearly a decade ago in the State Legislature.

Both the State Superintendent and the Governor proposed alternative versions of an expanded assessment system. The Governor proposed uniform statewide testing at grades 3 (reading), 5 (science), 7 (mathematics), 9 (language arts), and 10 (multidisciplinary). These tests would assess not only facts but problem-solving skills, based on the work of an Educational Goals Board, which would have been appointed by the Governor and attached to DPI. The Governor in turn proposed to eliminate the competency-based testing program.

The State Superintendent proposed the development of model assessments in fifth-grade science, eighth-grade mathematics, and language arts at the ninth grade. An important difference from the Governor's proposal is that **DPI would have left the decision to adopt the tests to local school districts**. Thus, the tests would not provide a systematic statewide assessment database on each youngster, nor one from which school or district comparisons can be made. This would be a step backward, given that the third-grade reading test does allow such comparisons, if DPI were to decide to publish them.

Both the Governor and State Superintendent agreed on the need for a tenth-grade performance-based "gateway" assessment. However, the philosophical and political differences between the Governor and the State Superintendent led the State Superintendent to fight the entire educational package of the Governor and derisively dismiss it as the worst set of education proposals he had seen from a governor. The State Superintendent, angered that the Governor favored an Educational Goals Board (EGB) to oversee planning for tests, favored a task force he would appoint which would develop outcome statements. The State Superintendent reputedly feared that the EGB would be a prelude to a state school board and an appointed state superintendent. These polemics, combined with the adamant opposition of WEAC and other interest groups, doomed the assessment package to near-total failure. WEAC argued that the Governor's failure to provide more money for schools justified its opposition. According to one informant, they really fear having parents make comparisons on school performance, for the next step would be to allow parents to choose a school.

The State Legislature did pass a provision, approved by the Governor, to plan for a tenth-grade assessment, which would be multidisciplinary and performance-based, and which would allow for comparison of pupil performance among school districts and measure pupil performance in relation to state and local outcomes and goals.

All the other proposals for outcome assessment were defeated. While the State Superintendent had originally endorsed some additional proposals discussed above, he threw his weight behind defeating the Governor's proposals. Only a tenth-grade assessment survived this donnybrook.

Of course, it is possible that once a tenth-grade gateway test is required, many local school districts could be induced by DPI to adopt other preparatory tests on a voluntary basis. Yet since voluntary adoption by all school districts would be unlikely, at least in the foreseeable future, the state would continue to lack systematic assessment data without employing some other assessment strategy such as matrix sampling within each district. None of this has been proposed by DPI, nor is there any indication that plans are being developed within the agency to this end.

The expansion of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) in coming years will provide more data on how Wisconsin fares compared with the rest of the nation. The recent eighth-grade math assessment discussed earlier in the report is some of the only data we have, and disturbing data it is. But because NAEP relies on a small sample to make its comparisons, it is no substitute for a strong statewide assessment program. The recent work of the National Education Goals Panel (which is setting national standards) and the proposal by President Bush for national examinations are indications of further efforts at the national level. How state and national assessment systems will be tiered or dovetailed is not yet worked out. In the meantime, however, a strategy of doing nothing at the state level is intolerable.

DPI can point to standard (s), which requires school districts to use achievement tests that are aligned with the school district's curriculum, and that test all the pupils enrolled in the district in reading, language arts, and mathematics at least twice in grades kindergarten to 5, at least once in grades 6 to 8, and at least once in grades 9 to 11. Note that there is no requirement for testing in science. Further, there is no requirement that districts report this information to DPI. (Instead, DPI relies on audits, to be discussed later.) Districts are required to include this information in their

annual Performance Disclosure Report (standard o). However, DPI does not require submission of this report either. Consequently, Wisconsin has neither comparable assessment data nor adequate assurance that locally administered and controlled assessment systems are being conducted properly. As it stands, the accountability process for assessment is something of a shell game.

It is important to emphasize that moving to an outcome-based system can be quite compatible with attempts to redesign educational programs so that they meet the needs of individual learners. Further, they can be compatible with local autonomy and initiative. Minnesota provides a striking example as it attempts to shift its entire system of elementary-secondary education toward an outcome-based approach with individual learner plans and locally developed assessment systems.

A critical adjunct to outcome-based approaches is a system of accountability reporting. The State Superintendent has expressed his support for upgrading the current requirement for a performance disclosure report to that of a state report card. The current requirement includes no state-generated data. The report must be published, but the means of distribution is left to each district.

DPI has been studying this matter for approximately two years with little clear direction, other than a public commitment to the concept by the State Superintendent. At first the focus was exclusively on reporting input data but later shifted to outcome data (a problem because of its paucity in Wisconsin). Thus, it was the Governor who stepped into the vacuum and proposed to the legislature in 1991 that a uniform school report card be developed and distributed to all parents. It would include performance on statewide testing programs, dropout and suspension rates and attendance of graduates at postsecondary institutions. This proposal was deleted by the State Legislature, which did retain a provision for a little planning money for DPI.

DPI has come to the conclusion that it needs a new student database as part of its efforts toward a report card. While the Governor supported this request, the legislature disagreed. In short, Wisconsin citizens cannot look forward to a state report card in the foreseeable future. Wisconsin is far behind accountability reporting trends throughout the country. According to a 1988 accountability study group at the U. S. Department of Education, and a 1989 survey conducted by the Council of Chief State School Officers, 32 states have comprehensive performance indicator systems as part of their accountability reporting system. Comparisons among districts or schools are possible in 38 states, and half the states attach policy links to their system. Most of Wisconsin's neighboring midwestern states have performance accountability systems.

Reorganization of the State Department of Public Instruction

The report turns now to the sixth and last area of potential restructuring. One of the most important elements in a plan to restructure a state's educational policy system is the way in which the Department of Public Instruction is organized. Apart from this, there are larger questions which might be addressed about the overall governance of public education, a matter taken up in the next section.

Several key components of such a reorganization are:

- a conceptual shift from compliance monitoring to maximizing performance;
- improved data collection on student, school, and district performance;
- flattening of the organizational structure to improve goal responsiveness;
- consolidation of units to provide targeted assistance to schools and school districts.

A conceptual shift--The most important first step in reorganizing DPI is a redefinition of its mission. Simply stated, this involves a shift from regulatory compliance to performance improvement. That shift would require greater use of information and research, more sophisticated technical assistance and services to schools, and a management climate which encourages and

rewards creativity and open expression rather than bureaucratic obedience. It requires shifting attention to goal-setting.

Moreover, the trend in virtually all state education agencies since the early 1980s, according to Gordon M. Almbach, Executive Director of the Council of Chief State School Officers, has been for departments to shift their emphasis from having individual specialists monitor school districts to having teams of specialists work with individual schools (Schmidt, 1990). Unfortunately, this development has not occurred to any large extent at the DPI.

In the emerging role for state departments of education, the shift to a productivity orientation will require "system-changing" strategies (McDonnell and Elmore, 1987). A variety of efforts to foster systemic change within the state and systemic change within school districts and schools will be necessary. It is important to emphasize, therefore, that what is required is not simply **reorganization** but **restructuring**. Restructuring does not require abandoning some essential regulatory functions in the areas of civil rights, safety, and services for special populations. What restructuring should do is help create and sustain broad-scale and fundamental change from the classroom up, focused on improved performance and learning opportunities for each child. In some cases this will require more regulation than at present and in some cases less. DPI's resources need to be targeted discriminately on different schools and districts, depending on their performance as well as their restructuring needs and preferences. Also, this new role will require much more sophisticated research and development and more effective evaluation and dissemination strategies. All this is very different from the old assumption that local control is working effectively, a mistaken view which has prompted the State Superintendent not to take a more activist stance on restructuring until now.

A good example of the need for a shift in philosophy is the present regulatory posture of DPI concerning the 20 standards. All districts are audited on a rotating basis by a team of DPI staff. Because of the limited resources of the department, these are largely "paper audits" conducted over several days. While the ratings of various auditors are reliable, they are not standardized against any benchmarks. There is no required follow-up by districts on DPI's recommendations.

Improved data collection--The DPI has a duplicative and incomplete database. Its student record system has aggregate rather than student-level data. DPI has requested assistance to redesign this "non-system." As yet, it has no strategy for this redesign, and instead offers a general statement that "the eventual result would provide a method to produce comprehensive, compatible, comparable data on pupil characteristics, behavior, educational programs, and performance." (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 1990b, p.4). The DPI proposal mentioned nothing about developing databases on schools and school districts, either for accountability or diagnostic purposes.

The DPI should clarify whether the database would be designed to be "on-line" for use by local school officials wanting to do planning or evaluation. (DPI already has much of its accounting system set up for electronic transfer). What would be in the student database, and to what general purposes would the data be put in order to answer what questions or address what problems? What contextual information would be part of this system? How would the staff-reporting database already in place be integrated into a new student-centered database? Some general directions for an indicator system need to be provided by the State Superintendent.

Flattening the organizational structure--Figures 3 (a)-(f) provide an overview of DPI's organization. The organization is structured as a traditional bureaucracy with several layers. Such an approach may be suitable for an agency whose primary purpose is minimal compliance management. But as private industry and much of the public sector are learning, when the orientation is productivity and a satisfied consumer, layers of organizational red tape interfere with effective performance. DPI has five divisions and 26 bureaus. In its most recent reorganization in

Figure 3 (a) Organization Chart of the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

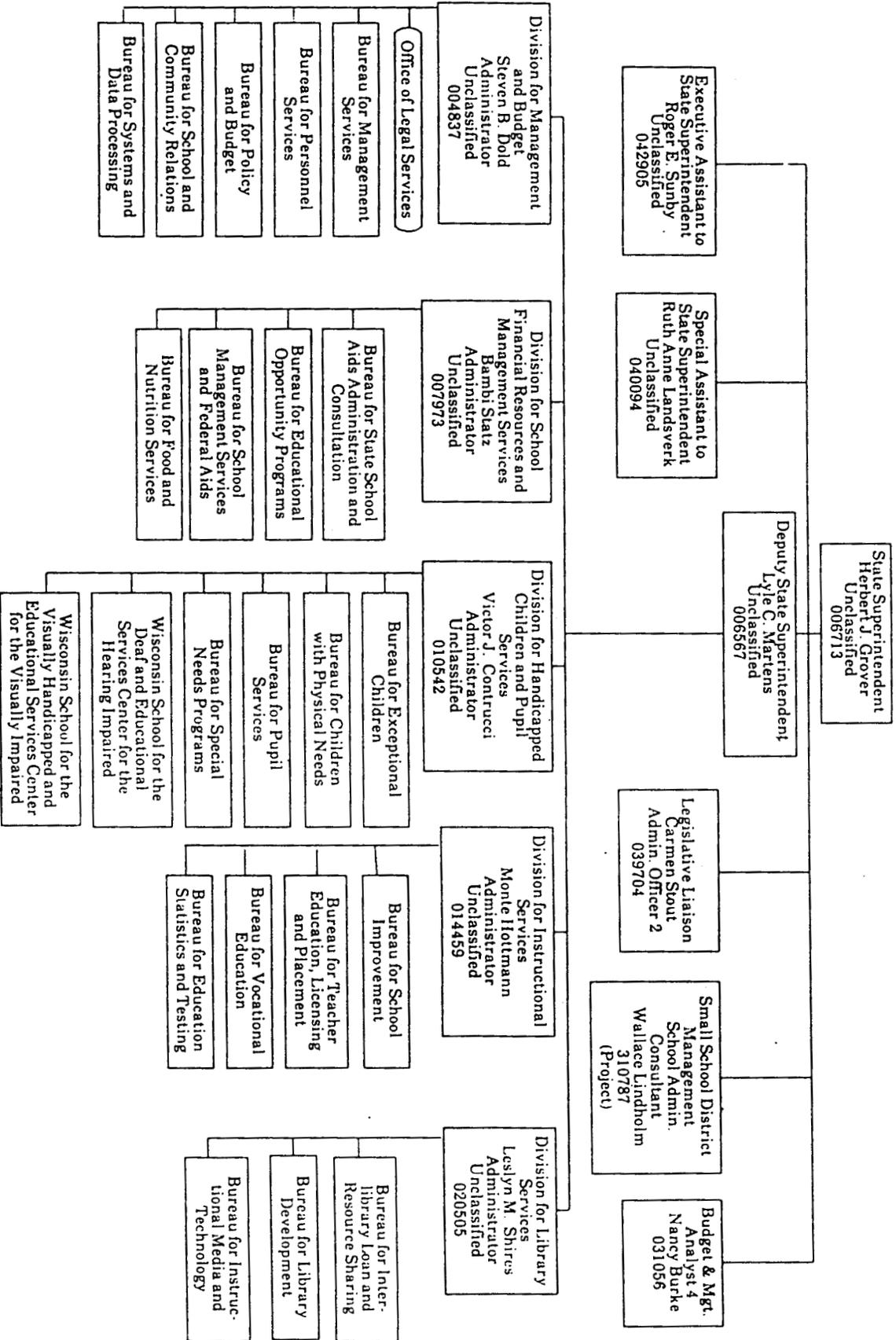


Chart No. 1/17.

Figure 3 (b) Organization Chart
 Division for Management and Budget

Chart No. 218

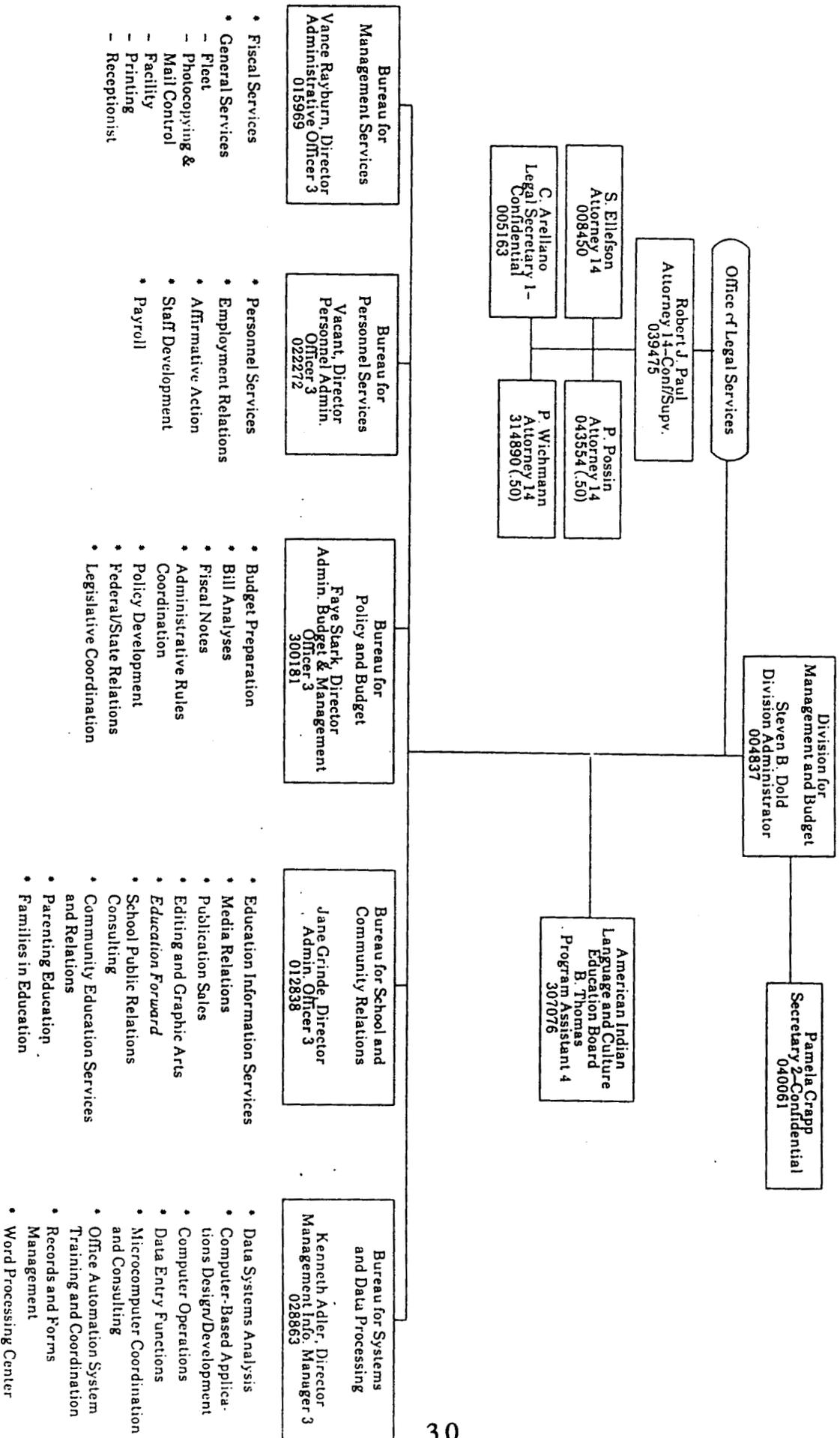


Figure 3 (c) Organization Chart
 Division for School Financial Resources and Management Services

Chart No. 3/17

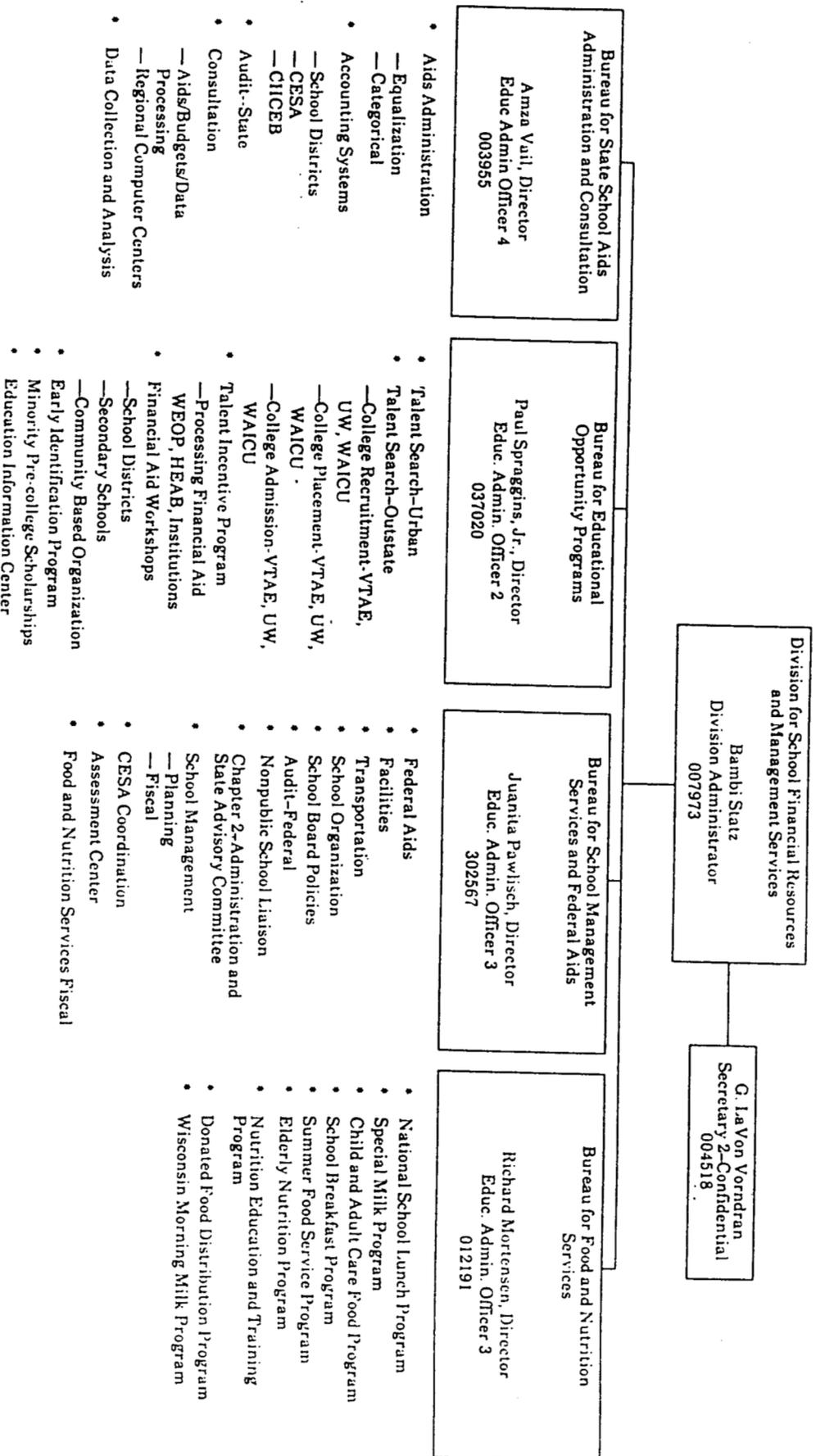
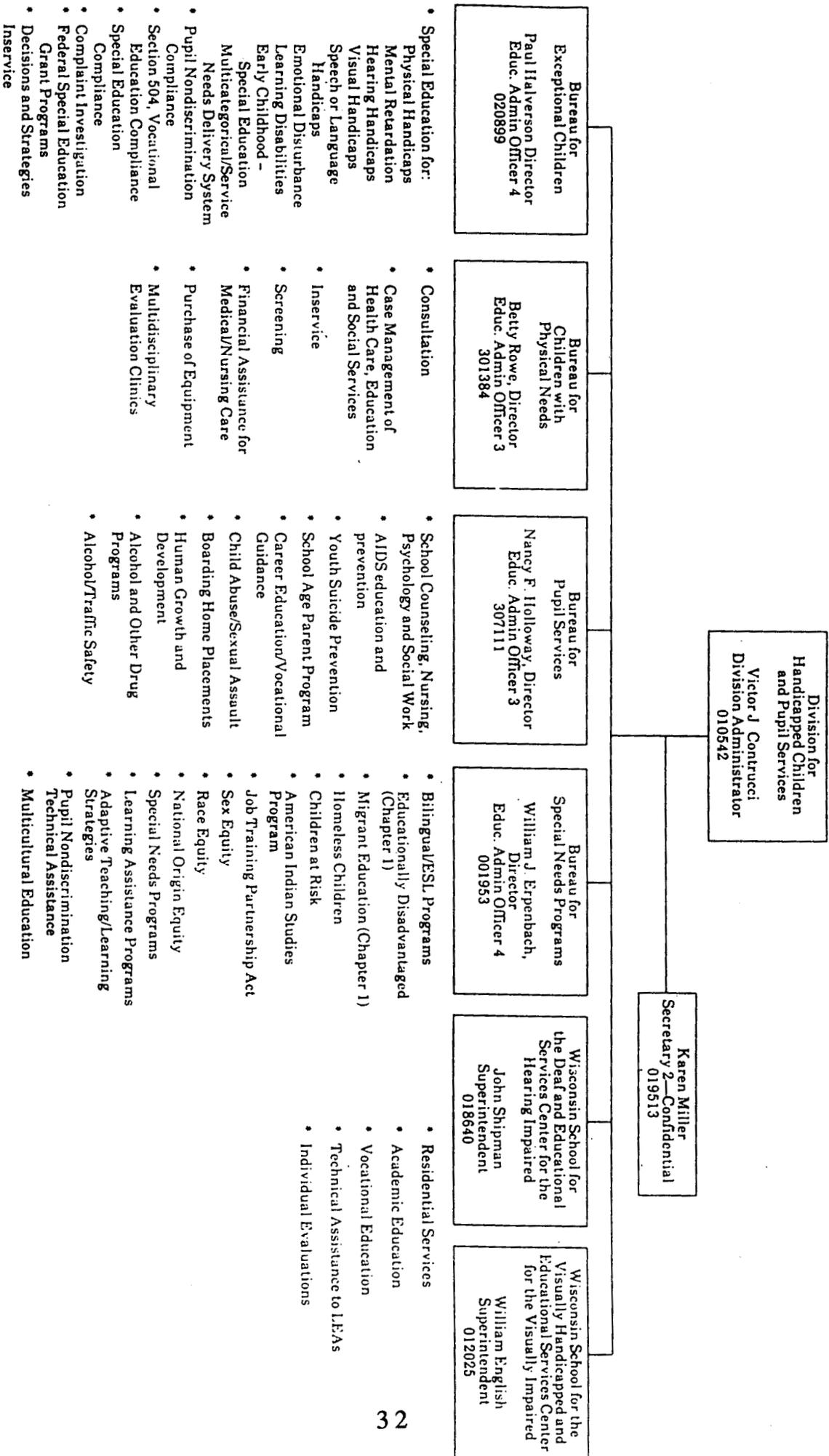
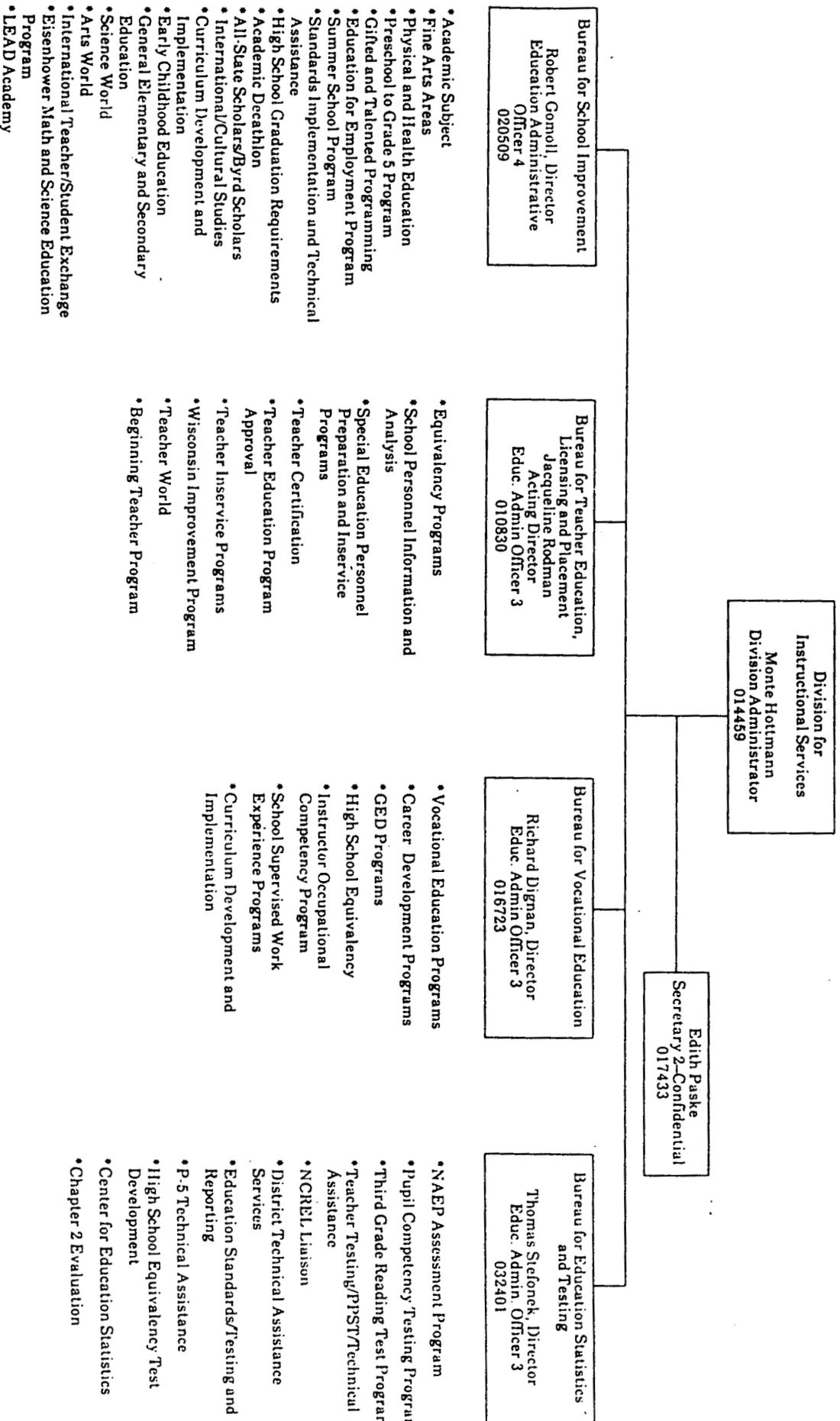


Figure 3 (d) Organization Chart
 Division for Handicapped Children and Pupil Services

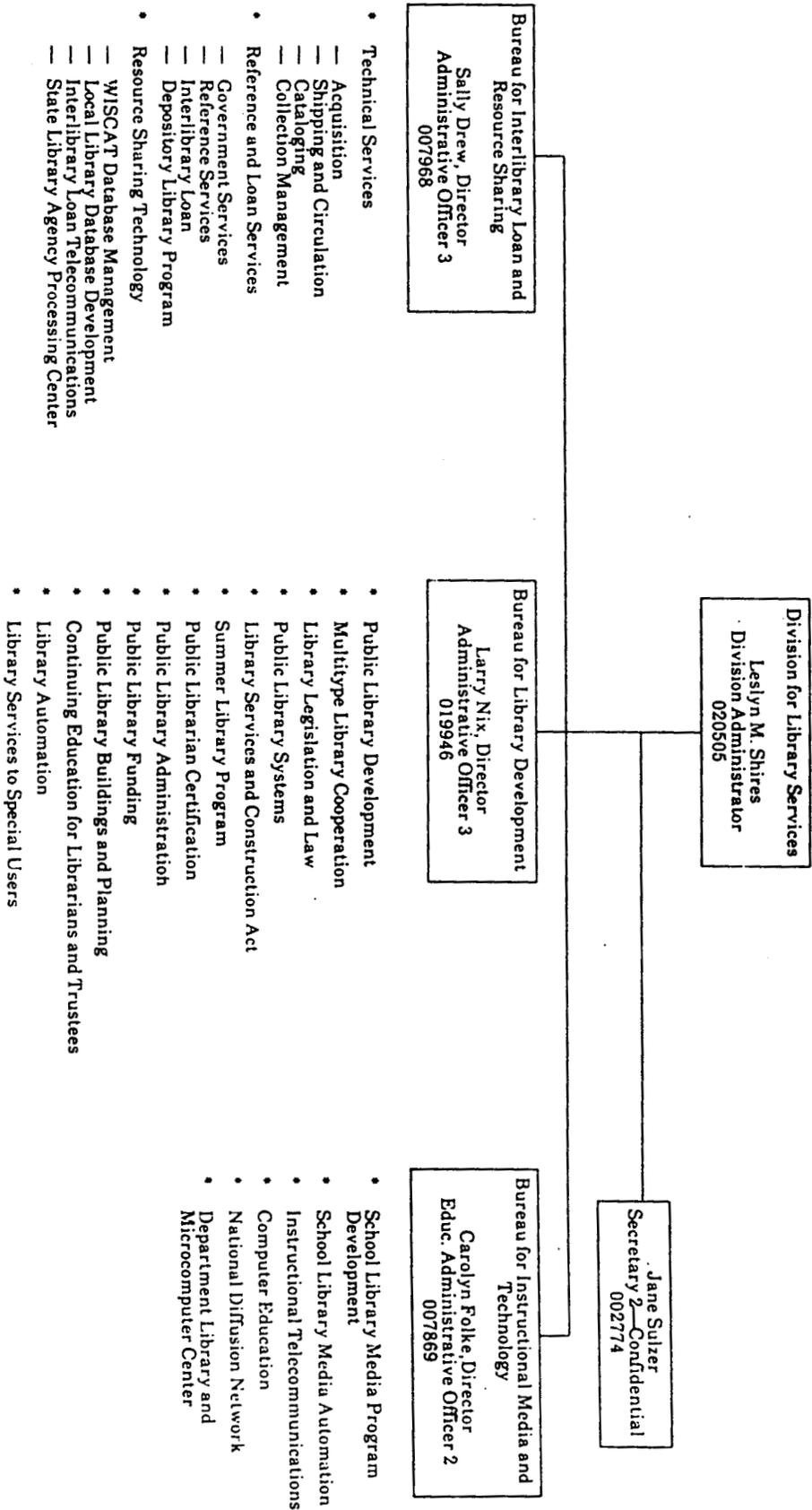


**Figure 3 (e) Organization Chart
Division for Instructional Services**



**Figure 3 (f) Organization Chart
Division for Library Services**

Chart No 6/13



1990, DPI made only marginal adjustments to its structure and showed no awareness of the need for a radical shift in approach.

Consolidation of units--Many of the divisions, bureaus, and staff roles within these bureaus represent archaic and dysfunctional organizational boundaries which interfere with the redesign of the state's educational system. As long as the State Superintendent's prevailing assumption is that no major change in philosophy is needed, this organizational structure is unlikely to change. For example, there is a Bureau of School Improvement, but it does not see its mission as fostering educational restructuring in local school districts. Accordingly, there is no perceived need at DPI to link this bureau with a variety of other functions within DPI which would be critical to restructuring, such as curriculum development, data management, family involvement, and assessment.

Some examples of fragmentation which need to be reexamined are:

- maintenance of sharp organizational divisions between vocational education and regular academic programs;
- separation of curriculum development and assessment;
- separation of standards implementation auditors in the Bureau for School Improvement from the Bureau of Statistics and Testing;
- location of early childhood specialists in different divisions for handicapped and regular education;
- location of the Bureau for School Improvement and the Bureau for Statistics and Testing in a separate division from the Bureau for Systems and Data Processing;
- location of the Bureau for School and Community Relations in a separate division from the Bureau for School Improvement.

To recap, a major restructuring of DPI is needed, including its philosophy and mission, its organizational framework, and its managerial capacity.

Summary: A Scorecard on State-Initiated Restructuring Efforts

In this section the overall performance of the state and in particular the Department of Public Instruction in the six restructuring areas is reviewed. In Table 10, a summary rating is given for each of the six dimensions as well as a total rating for state-initiated restructuring efforts.

It should be noted that this scorecard necessarily reflects the performance of state government generally, since the Governor and State Legislature (as well as other agencies) have a role in creating or impeding educational restructuring. In some cases the State Superintendent has proposed initiatives which were not approved by the Governor or State Legislature, and vice versa. Yet the central leadership role remains with DPI.

After reviewing state policies, one of the following scores was assigned to each restructuring area:

Excellent (4 points)--If the State Superintendent has announced an overall plan for restructuring the educational system which includes this particular restructuring area, and if there are major policies in place to implement this plan, then excellent progress is being made toward restructuring.

There are many ways to develop an overall plan with a comprehensive approach to reform, but the key concept in restructuring is that it involves systemic change involving not just one piece of the educational system (e.g., teaching improvement, curriculum, outcome assessment, etc.) but the interrelated elements of the educational system.

In this rating system, to receive a score of excellent, it is not necessary to demonstrate that restructuring leads to demonstrable improvement in student performance or that the stated goals of particular restructuring policies have been achieved. Over the long term, of course, this evaluative criterion must be applied. In the short term, however, and for our purposes here, a simpler and more lenient criterion of excellence is used: what **degree of effort** does state policy represent? At the same time, this approach which focuses on "degree of effort" does address outcomes indirectly. Two of the six restructuring areas speak to improving performance measures of the educational system (outcome assessment and DPI reorganization). It should be noted that "degree of effort" requires that state policy-makers alter their policies when they have outcome data that the existing policies may not be succeeding.

Good (3 points)--Good progress toward restructuring is indicated where there is extensive experimentation in a particular area, represented by state policies, even if an overall state plan for restructuring cutting across different restructuring areas does not exist. For example, broad experimentation with redesigning the curriculum or major efforts to experiment with new organization, management, and governance arrangements would qualify as good progress toward restructuring in those two areas.

Fair (2 points)--Fair progress is indicated where some state initiatives are in place in a particular area and the state is clearly committed to expanding restructuring efforts in this area. For example, in the area of teaching improvement, we might expect state policy-makers to move beyond maintaining or expanding an existing program and also be developing new proposals for further restructuring.

Poor (1 point)--Poor progress toward restructuring is evident where little or no innovation or experimentation currently is underway. The degree of experimentation which may be evident is so narrow that it constitutes only marginal changes to existing policy.

In four of the six areas Wisconsin gets a "poor" rating:

- teaching (Table 6);
- school organization, management, and governance (Table 7);
- outcome assessment (Table 9);
- DPI reorganization.

In each of these areas the amount of restructuring activity has been negligible, much less fitting an overall state strategy for restructuring. Readers are referred back to Tables 6, 7, 9, and the pertinent discussions in preceding subsections, which have documented the minimal amount of restructuring activity which is occurring.

A parenthetical comment is in order on the "poor" rating for outcome assessment. Some might argue that the tenth-grade gateway assessment will represent a major restructuring. This interpretation is faulty for several reasons. First, no agreement has been reached on what the assessment will cover and what stakes will be attached to it. It is not clear yet how it will relate to the School-to-Work Initiative, except in a very general way. Few resources have been appropriated to DPI for the development of this ambitious assessment. Thus, the restructuring potential of this new test remains hypothetical and speculative. This one new assessment does not address the overall poor quality of statewide data at earlier grades.

In the area of curriculum development, a "fair" rating is given because of Wisconsin's curriculum guides. However, their deficiencies as devices for restructuring were noted in the earlier discussion. Moreover, these curriculum guides do not fit into a larger state-initiated plan for goal-setting, articulation to new state outcome assessments, to a program of staff development and professionalization, or to other policy areas which would be mutually reinforcing.

Some initiatives were evident in the area of program restructuring (see Table 8 on early childhood, at-risk programs, school-to-work transition, and family involvement). Among these program areas, the strongest potential for restructuring exists with the school-to-work transition, although we have noted the many unanswered questions which still must be addressed and some potential pitfalls. The weakest program area is family involvement, where little activity is underway. Consequently, a composite rating was given which extends between "fair" and "good." The important issue to be addressed with these program-driven reforms is how they relate to an overall restructuring strategy. Some obvious linkages exist among these discrete areas, such as the value of improving school-to-work transition for at-risk youth. However, a comprehensive articulation of how program reforms relate to one another never has been provided by DPI. Family involvement, for example, should be a major component of the early childhood initiative, but the program linkages are not there at the DPI. This raises the problem of how systemic change can be induced to occur in Wisconsin schools. It is unlikely that continuing to launch a loose collection of initiatives or plans lacking a coherent vision by the DPI will provide a critical mass for restructuring efforts.

When the six areas are totaled, Wisconsin's state government receives a summary score of only 8.5 points out of a maximum potential score of 24. This scorecard places it only slightly above "poor."

This failure on the part of the DPI and state government to make more efforts to restructure Wisconsin's elementary and secondary school system raises a serious question: Why isn't more being done? We address this problem in Section Three.

Table 10
A Scorecard on State Education Restructuring in Wisconsin

Area	Points	Rating			
		Excellent (4)	Good (3)	Fair (2)	Poor (1)
Teaching					x
Curriculum development				x	
School organization, management, governance					x
Program restructuring			IxxxxxxxxxxxxxI		
Outcome assessment					x
Reorganization of the DPI					x
TOTAL SCORE			2.5	2	4 = 8.5
Maximum Score					Minimum Score
Excellent	24	Good	Fair		Poor
		18	12		6
				*	
				Wisconsin	
				DPI	

Note: Rating criteria are explained in the text.

SECTION THREE

Why Is Wisconsin's Educational Policy System Gridlocked?

Who Has Key Leadership Responsibility?

The key player in shaping educational policy for the state should be the State Superintendent of Public Instruction. That official is a constitutional officer of the state, elected by the voters. The State Superintendent does not have plenary powers, of course. General duties and general powers are enumerated in Chapter 115.28 and 115.29 of the Wisconsin Statutes, and specific authority and responsibilities are enumerated elsewhere in the statutes. In some areas, the State Superintendent has a great deal more authority than has been exercised. For example, the Superintendent has had strong statutory authority for many years in the key area of educational assessment:

(10) EDUCATIONAL ASSESSMENT. (a) Develop an educational assessment program to measure objectively the adequacy and efficiency of educational programs offered by public schools in this state. The program shall include methods by which pupil achievement in reading, mathematics, writing, science, social science and other areas of instruction commonly offered in public schools will be objectively measured each year. Assessment shall be undertaken at several grade levels on a uniform, state-wide basis. (Wis. Statutes, p. 2322)

The above statutory language makes it evident that if the State Superintendent chose to interpret his statutory authority differently, Wisconsin could have a stronger statewide assessment system. The heavily "locally driven" nature of the assessment system is a policy preference shaped by the State Superintendent, the Governor (although the current Governor favors much stronger state assessment), and the State Legislature, to the extent that the latter must provide additional funding for DPI to administer or supervise such a system. Indeed, it may be asked whether Wisconsin's current system of assessment meets the current statutory requirement, since there is no science testing requirement for local school districts. Moreover, it is debatable how uniform a local assessment system can be when left to the discretion of 429 different school districts.

This example illustrates that there is a great deal of discretion in some aspects of the State Superintendent's role which might provide the basis for restructuring. Similarly, under section (12) pertaining to educational program review, the auditing authority of the State Superintendent allows him to "identify a number of districts to be reviewed **based on the need for school district program and operational improvements**" (p. 2322, emphasis added). This has not been the approach taken by DPI, which audits all school districts on a rotating basis rather than on a **targeted** basis. A better management information system would permit DPI to work with school districts **strategically**, not only for auditing purposes, but also for other kinds of technical assistance. A version of this was proposed by the Governor, who would have eliminated the current standards compliance function of DPI in favor of consultation and technical assistance to the lowest-performing 20 percent of school districts. This proposal was scuttled by the State Assembly.

In some instances the State Superintendent has chosen to use the discretionary authority of his office to be highly regulatory. The passage of new rules for teacher licensing (P.I. 3) and those regulating teacher education programs at institutions of higher education (P.I. 4) in 1986 are good examples. These rules run on for page after page prescribing such details as what specific courses must be included as well as what will be taught in these courses. Teacher education institutions complain about the inflexibility of many regulations and the micro-management approach taken by DPI officials, in both interpretation of rules and imposition of new requirements, without any consultation as to their cost or impact on students' programs. When it comes to regulating schools of education, as distinct from local school districts, the State Superintendent of Public Instruction favors a strong regulatory role.

Moreover, the political process by which the State Superintendent won approval for his heavily regulatory scheme indicates a severe flaw in our state's governance arrangement. According to key leaders in the legislature who recall the deliberations on this matter, the State Superintendent was able to ignore opposition from schools of education because he used his influence as a member of the University of Wisconsin Board of Regents to win the approval of the University's top administrators. They had other reasons to fear opposing the State Superintendent, independent of the merits or demerits of this proposal.

The ostensible purpose of having the State Superintendent sit on the Board of Regents is to strengthen coordination between the two institutions. The result, however, can be a conflict of interest for the State Superintendent, who should not be able to use his role on the Board of Regents to advance policies of his own regime.

The selective use of the discretionary authority of the Office of State Superintendent indicates that there is much more room for leadership in this position than the incumbent State Superintendent sometimes acknowledges. To be sure, the fact that the State Superintendent must submit his budgetary proposals to the Governor and State Legislature means that there is shared authority in our state's educational policy system. Moreover, the Governor and State Legislature have the authority to initiate proposals on their own for improving public education in the state. Yet the key constitutional responsibility resides with the State Superintendent of Public Instruction to provide leadership for education in our state. In fact, since Wisconsin is the only state in the nation without a state school board, the State Superintendent has much greater autonomy to set an agenda for elementary and secondary education than elsewhere. Yet this autonomy to speak out on behalf of educational needs is hampered by an ineffective governance system, the cumulative effect of which is to weaken the leadership which the State Superintendent provides.

Is DPI Understaffed?

A key consideration in the leadership issue is whether staffing levels at the Department of Public Instruction are adequate. DPI argues that it is hard to restructure its operations when it is losing personnel positions and base budget funding due to actions of the Governor and State Legislature. DPI claims that it is losing approximately 22 positions and \$500,000 in salary cuts, some due to federal funding losses in vocational education. Officials in the State Budget Office of the Department of Administration estimate the actual net reduction to be six.

In Table 11 the level of professional staffing at DPI, excluding technical, blue collar, and clerical positions, is compared with other midwestern states. On the basis of these figures it is hard to argue that **comparatively speaking** DPI is understaffed. Next to Iowa, it has the most favorable professional staff/student enrollment ratio of the six states for which data could be obtained. Iowa is the smallest of the six states in its enrollment and thus might be expected to experience some diseconomies of small scale which drive down its ratio. (Wisconsin's size is fourth in rank among the six.)

When nonprofessional staff are added, DPI's total personnel count is 486, excluding vacant positions. DPI's 1990-91 budget for program operations, excluding state residential schools for the deaf and blind and excluding federal revenues, was \$13,054,500.

It may be that a restructured state role will require some additional staff for state departments of education. However, the case of Minnesota offers an instructive comparison. They have a slightly smaller state enrollment, a larger (less ample) staff/student ratio, and have made far more efforts to restructure their state's school system than has Wisconsin. The task, therefore, is partly one of leadership to realign existing resources before requesting additional dollars.

Table 11

Comparative Data on Professional Personnel, State Education Agencies

State	Professional Personnel	State Enrollment	Ratio of Professional Staff to Students
	(a)	(b)	(c)= (b)/(a)
Illinois	543	1,797,355	1: 3,310
Indiana	200	954,165	1: 4,771
Iowa	238	478,486	1: 2,010
Michigan	NA	--	--
Minnesota	245	739,553	1: 3,019
Ohio	281	1,767,159	1: 6,289
Wisconsin	340	782,905	1: 2,303

Source: Survey of state departments of education, Spring 1991. Wisconsin data are based on a printout provided by the Wisconsin Department of Administration, Budget Office, June 29, 1991. Note: Enrollment figures in column (b) are based on latest available data released by the U.S. Department of Education for the 1989-90 school year. In Michigan a means of separating professional and nonprofessional positions was not readily available. Wisconsin totals exclude blue collar, technical, and clerical positions, as well as all unfilled positions. These figures do not reflect pending adjustments in Assembly Bill 91. However, using DPI's estimates that it will lose 22 positions would still leave the agency in the second position among its peers on staffing ratios (1: 2,462).

An Ineffective Governance System

Structural fragmentation-Wisconsin's system of governing education--elementary and secondary schools, vocational-technical schools, and higher education--is structurally fragmented by design.

First, the State Superintendent of Public Instruction is selected by Wisconsin's electorate rather than being appointed by a state school board or by the Governor. This model diffuses responsibility by making this position accountable to the electorate rather than to other public officials such as the Governor.

Second, there is little linkage among the elementary-secondary system, the vocational-technical college system, and the university system. School superintendents have a role in selecting members of vocational-technical boards, and the State Superintendent sits on the University of Wisconsin Board of Regents. However, there is no overall commissioner of education, no overall board, nor even a coordinating council to plan and evaluate how effectively these three systems are integrated.

Yet Wisconsin taxpayers do make a major investment in public education at these three levels. As Table 12 shows, Wisconsin citizens devote over 22 percent, or nearly a quarter, of the state's budget to public education at the three levels. In the 1990-91 fiscal year, total investment from state and local sources was \$5.3 billion.

Despite the magnitude of this investment, there is no ongoing mechanism in our state's educational governance arrangement to assure that these three systems are aligned effectively and efficiently. The findings of the Governor's Commission for a Quality Workforce, among others, has

documented the need for better alignment of these systems. Yet as one key legislative leader described it, the separate systems are like three skyscrapers. Consequently, it is hard to integrate or coordinate their efforts. The legislature is not equipped to do this because of the fragmentation of the legislative process itself, with numerous committees in both chambers carrying jurisdiction over separate pieces of the educational system.

Problems of fragmentation also extend to other state agencies whose roles interface with one or another of the three educational systems, such as the Department of Health and Social Services and the Department of Industry, Labor, and Human Relations (DILHR).

Within this fragmented governance structure, there are limited steps which can be taken to attempt better coordination. One is to create task forces such as the one on occupational options, representing the joint efforts of the State Superintendent and the State Director of the Vocational-Technical system. Another example is the College Readiness Reporting Project in which the university and public school system share information. Still another is a Joint Administrative Committee for Educational Cooperation appointed by the State Superintendent and the State Director of the WBVTAE. These, however, are quite limited efforts. Other devices such as the new twelve-member council in DILHR, created to address the prickly apprenticeship problem, is likely to prove unwieldy because of its complex appointment methods and membership, accountable in the end to no one.

Table 12

State and Local Revenues for Public Education in Wisconsin, 1990-91 (in millions)

System	State Revenues	Local Revenues	Total
Elementary-secondary	2,036	2,179	4,215
Vocational-technical	106	235	341
University	750		750
Total	2,892	2,414	5,306
Total GPR appropriations for state agencies	12,750		
Education share of state budget	22.7%		

Source: Legislative Fiscal Bureau. Note: State and local revenues only approximate budgeted expenditures because local levies may understate or overstate actual local revenues applied to the budget. For elementary-secondary schools state aids reflect property tax credits apportioned to school district levies while local revenues are net figures, reflecting the deductions of these credits from gross levies. This method of apportionment is not customary for the vocational-technical system; therefore, the state aids do not reflect addition of property tax credits, and gross levies are reported. Total state appropriations exclude federal revenues, segregated fees, and program revenues.

Electoral accountability--We turn now to an examination of how well one piece of this fragmented governance system has worked, namely the maintenance of legal autonomy for the state superintendent, freeing this position from supervision by the Governor's office or by a state school board. Instead, the theory is that the State Superintendent of Public Instruction should be directly accountable to the electorate.

An historical examination of the electoral process for the State Superintendent indicates that this electoral model of democratic accountability has not worked very well. Table 13 reports on voter turnout for State Superintendents of Public Instruction from 1964 to the present and compares these elections with the corresponding election for Governor. In every election the turnout for Governor has exceeded that for State Superintendent. The average voter turnout for State Superintendent over the last 2 1/2 decades has been about half (27 percent) of the turnout for gubernatorial races (52 percent).

Given the low level of voter interest in elections for State Superintendent of Public Instruction, as evidenced by light electoral turnout, it may be asked to whom the State Superintendent is truly accountable. It will not suffice to say that "voters are happy with the incumbent" because virtually every election has been plagued with this low-turnout problem, even when the incumbent was not standing for re-election.

The reality is that the electoral process does not work equally well in all situations. It does not work in the absence of credible opposition, when issues are not clearly drawn during elections to give voters a meaningful choice, or when powerful interest groups shape the agenda and the campaign contributions.

Table 13

Voter Turnout for Superintendents of Public Instruction and Governors
State of Wisconsin, 1964-1990

Year	Superintendent of Public Instruction Victor	Voter Turnout	Year	Gubernatorial Victor	Voter Turnout
			1990	Tommy G. Thompson	38%*
1989	Herbert J. Grover	23%	1986	Tommy G. Thompson	43%
1985	Herbert J. Grover	16%	1982	Anthony S. Earl	47%
1981	Herbert J. Grover	23%	1978	Lee S. Dreyfus	53%
1977	Barbara Thompson	28%	1974	Patrick J. Lucey	42%
1973	Barbara Thompson	36%**	1970	Patrick J. Lucey	52%
1969	William C. Kahl	30%	1968	Warren P. Knowles	72%
1965	Angus B. Rothwell	30%	1966	Warren P. Knowles	50%
			1964	Warren P. Knowles	72%

Table 13 (continued)

Voter Turnout for Superintendents of Public Instruction and Governors
State of Wisconsin, 1964-1990

Voter Turnout	Average	27%	52%
	Median	28	50

Sources: Wisconsin Blue Books; * Legislative Reference Bureau data; ** Wisconsin Election Commission data.

Note: In each case the State Superintendent's election is compared with the preceding election for Governor; hence, the comparisons work backward from the most recent election of Governor in 1990. Prior to 1970, gubernatorial elections occurred every two years. For Governor, when voter turnout percentages were published in the Blue Book, they are reported in the table. For other years and for all calculations pertaining to State Superintendent, the percentages were calculated using the most recent prior estimate of the voting population published in the Blue Book. In calculating voter turnout, the total number of votes were derived by adding votes reported in the Blue Book for each candidate.

Interest Groups: A Power Imbalance--While the electorate does not exercise a high degree of oversight in these matters, this vacuum is filled by organized interest groups. In particular the Wisconsin Education Association Council (WEAC), with its statewide organization of teachers and capacity to endorse legislators with whom it sees eye to eye, is the most powerful educational lobby in the state, and one of the state's most powerful interest groups. WEAC enjoys close access to top DPI officials. Its former president, Carmen Stout, is Legislative Liaison for DPI. WEAC has been a strong supporter of Herbert Grover in each of his campaigns and has helped him with contributions and organization. In turn, the State Superintendent has not advocated major reforms which might displease WEAC's Executive Director, Morris Andrews, or its membership.

Fanning out from WEAC at the apex, there is a collection of other educational interest groups--the Wisconsin Association of School Boards (WASB), the Wisconsin Association of School District Administrators (WASDA), and others, not all of whom have identical interests on all issues. However, the State Superintendent works hard to have these groups reach a consensus position and meets regularly with them to hammer out a position. Deviant views might lead to one's ejection from this "club" for a time, as was the case in the 1991 legislative session when WASB expressed sympathy for the teachers-in-private-practice proposal, an idea which is anathema to WEAC.

The politics of consensus is a means of building and maintaining political support for a State Superintendent who must stand for election and who is dependent on these organized interests. Hence, numerous advisory groups and task forces are created. This leadership style lessens the danger of alienating one or another powerful constituency with an unpopular position, which might occur if a State Superintendent took strong leadership.

This kind of politics is characterized by pluralist bargaining or interest-group liberalism. The shared interests of the interlocking organized groups are stressed in such a system. Their interests may deviate substantially from those of the electorate or even of the membership of their organizations. Yet because many voters are relatively uninformed and/or unmotivated to participate in the election of the State Superintendent, these organized interests are able to work out accommodations which serve their mutual advantage. This is a producer-dominated politics in which consumers play only a limited role.

As a method of governance the politics of consensus has a number of serious problems, however, as the facts of this report have illustrated. It generally is characterized by executive leadership

which, while it may be good at forging compromise and managing conflict, is unlikely to create bold policy initiatives. Rather, executive leadership tends to emerge out of the preferences of these groups rather than to shape the agenda. Since it is in the nature of most producer groups to protect the status quo in view of their authority in the present governance and administrative arrangements and the distribution of policy benefits, public policy can easily begin to drift, to become stuck in marginal accommodations around the status quo.

Such a state of affairs characterizes the politics of education at the state level in Wisconsin. The political turbulence which has occurred in other states, creating great turnover in the seats of chief state school officers in recent years, has had less force in Wisconsin. This is because the elected post of State Superintendent has insulated that position from the forces of reform, which generally have been pressed by governors and, to a lesser extent, by state legislatures. From one point of view, Wisconsin's unique arrangement leaves the State Superintendent free to advocate on behalf of education. Yet it is also a recipe for inertia and gridlock. Even within the constraints of the electoral system, the degree of leadership exercised by the State Superintendent could result in change.

At first glance, one might be inclined to attribute the current gridlock in Wisconsin to the clash between a Republican Governor and an elected State Superintendent who is a Democrat, whose own party controls the State Legislature. (It is the pattern of divided party government which also characterizes the clash between the Presidency and the Congress at the federal level.) Partisan differences aside, the clash may also stem from rumors that the State Superintendent would like to run for Governor.

Yet it is also the case that the present gridlock reflects the limits of a governance arrangement which was suited to a bygone era when strong centralized leadership was not required to advance the quality of the state's public education system. The last major challenge of this magnitude was the consolidation movement of the late 1940s and 1950s which Wisconsin's legislature chose to address by creating county school committees rather than a strong state role.

No governance arrangement by itself will produce leadership, of course. This is a product of the political traditions of a state and the character of its political culture.

No better example of the current shortcomings of the Wisconsin system of governance exists than the work of the Commission on Schools for the 21st Century.

The Commission on Schools for the 21st Century--This Commission was jointly appointed by Superintendent Grover and Governor Thompson in January 1990. While it was created to offer clear advice on the redesign of the state's elementary and secondary school system, its recommendations were too extensive to be coherent or affordable. Because the Commission had an extensive membership (76 members), virtually all interests represented on the Commission were able to include one or another proposal, but in the end the report delivered in December 1990 reflected no "weeding-out" process. Rather, in attempting to include provisions which would please both the Governor and the State Superintendent, the Commission's leadership had no easy alternative other than to produce 125 recommendations. Moreover, the fact that the Commission was deliberating during a gubernatorial campaign impeded the possibility that the Commission would address important issues such as the governance of the system. If the Governor were to raise such issues, he might be subjected to criticism for injecting partisan politics into the Commission's deliberations.

This is not the only commission which suffers from such shortcomings. Paul Peterson (1985) has argued that lack of accountability plagues commissions generally, since they work under tight time constraints, limited resources, and do not have to be responsible for the actual adoption and implementation of their proposals.

This does not diminish the fact that the Commission on Schools for the 21st Century has had an important symbolic impact on public-policy discussions about educational reform in Wisconsin. Some of the Commission's recommendations were adopted by the Governor and State Superintendent in their budgetary initiatives for the next biennium, although these were **selective** ideas which fall short of a comprehensive set of proposals for restructuring the state's school system.

It is also true that the Commission pushed the policy dialogue forward from the old assertions that all is well and that little but marginal change in Wisconsin's public schools is necessary for the state to prosper in the future. Yet with the disbanding of the Commission, this symbolic push forward may be short-lived. The modest achievements of the spring 1991 State Legislative session, as they pertain to educational restructuring, illustrate this problem: it is easy to return to "business as usual."

Unfortunately the work of the Commission, far from compensating for the fragmentation of the educational governance system in Wisconsin, pointed starkly to its inadequacies. Neither efforts to keep the work of the Commission alive by convening an advisory group of former governors, nor even the possibility of a special legislative session to address the myriad recommendations of the Commission, will remedy the shortcomings of this archaic governance structure.

SECTION FOUR **Conclusion: Some Options for a Change**

This report has documented the limited information Wisconsin citizens have about the performance of the state's public school system. While such traditional indicators as the state's graduation rate and its ACT scores, and more recently third-grade reading scores, have been used by the Department of Public Instruction to defend the quality of this system, this limited information is not convincing. There is little evidence on the basis of these few indicators that the system is progressing substantially. Further, recently released data on eighth-grade math scores, the state's performance with regard to Advanced Placement courses, and other indicators point to problems in the system.

Given the emergence of an international economy, the relevant base of comparison must be how well Wisconsin's school system shapes up compared to the rest of the world, not merely how it compares with other states.

Even in this limited domain of interstate competition, however, it is important to bear in mind that other states are taking dramatic steps to restructure their school systems. While many may begin behind Wisconsin, their current investment in reform may leave Wisconsin behind other states which once had inferior educational systems.

This report has analyzed the Department of Public Instruction as the chief instrument for assuring the quality of the state's public school system. The failure of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction and the Department of Public Instruction to advocate or achieve significant educational restructuring is a major indication of the shortcomings of this policy system.

While it is beyond the scope of this paper to formulate specific solutions--this task would require another extensive report--some major options are laid out in this final section.

Some Governance Options

This report has pointed to the following major governance problems:

- structural fragmentation through an arrangement which makes the State Superintendent accountable to the electorate;
- structural fragmentation between the elementary-secondary, vocational-technical, and university systems;
- structural separation between DPI and other state executive agencies which also may become involved in delivering education-related programs;
- dominance of state educational policy by a small number of producer interest groups paired with an ineffectual electoral process for the State Superintendent.

Because of the limitations of an electoral model for selecting a state superintendent, the trend across the country in recent decades has been to move away from this method of selection. Only fifteen states continue to use this method. In the remaining states the chief state school officer is selected in some manner.

Two options for addressing these governance problems are:

- make the State Superintendent's position appointed by the Governor.
- create a Commissioner of Education position responsible for all three educational systems (elementary-secondary, VTAE, and university).

Some Options for the State Department of Public Instruction

At the administrative level a number of serious problems impede the potential restructuring of the state's system of elementary and secondary schools:

- a mission at DPI which continues to focus on compliance monitoring rather than maximizing performance;
- a poor database, particularly concerning student needs and performance;
- an inappropriate organizational structure that is hierarchical and needlessly fragmented.

Accordingly, the Department of Public Instruction needs to be reorganized in the following manner:

- shift toward an outcome orientation and organize administratively to facilitate this mission;
- develop clear learner goals for all students and link these to a coherent system of curriculum development, student and program assessment, and staff development/teacher professionalization;
- formulate a comprehensive strategy for restructuring the state's public school system, with a major upgrading of the role of databased management, research and development, and technical assistance;
- include in this strategy a plan for improving performance at all levels of the system, not only those schools performing at the bottom;
- flatten the organizational structure to facilitate a student-outcome orientation;
- reduce artificial boundaries between regular, vocational, and special education;
- integrate support functions (e.g., curriculum development with assessment).

An Afterword on State Activism and Local Control

In redesigning the state's educational policy system, it is important to emphasize that greater state activism need not result in a loss of local initiative or significant local autonomy (Fuhrman and Elmore, 1990). It is possible to set clear learner goals, better curriculum frameworks, and more and improved assessment without resorting to state control. In the area of assessment, for example, some assessments might be designed to permit school-by-school comparisons while

other assessments might be based on matrix sampling to give an overall picture of state performance. One option might be a variant of Minnesota's focus on outcome-based education (where a learner plan is developed for each student and a portfolio kept on the student as the student progresses through the educational system). Further, the state should give serious consideration to the development of a performance indicator system which follows the national trend of comparing states against their own progress over time and against high standards set nationally. The state could track each district's and school's progress over time and against state-recommended benchmarks.

There are a variety of ways to rebuild the state educational policy systems so that they are performance oriented. Figure 4 lists the many elements of a policy system, distinguishing between regulatory tools and local capacity-building tools. Any state policy system must combine some elements of each, but restructuring will require shifting emphasis to a coherent set of policy instruments which have a heavy emphasis on capacity building.

A restructuring of the state's policy role, by shifting away from routine compliance with mandates in favor of a local capacity-building strategy, can widen opportunities for initiative and discretion at the local level.

Figure 4

Elements of a State Policy System

Regulatory Tools

standards/rules
mandates
monitoring/auditing
sanctions:
 intervention
 takeovers
 fund withdrawal

Local Capacity-Building Tools

praise/awards
monetary rewards
training; support; technical assistance
R & D:
 demonstration materials & projects
 seed money
 dissemination networks

Entry points for State-Initiated Restructuring

goal setting and planning
school improvement efforts
 accountability reporting
student assessment requirements
school/district accreditation
 curricular frameworks
 expected student outcomes
 licensing/certification
 choice arrangements
 school-to-work transition
postsecondary professional training programs
 professional development
deregulation through waivers or other means
policy analysis and management information

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ABOUT THE INSTITUTE

The Wisconsin Policy Research Institute is a not-for-profit institute established to study public policy issues affecting the state of Wisconsin.

Under the new federalism, government policy increasingly is made at the state and local level. These public policy decisions affect the lives of every citizen in the state of Wisconsin. Our goal is to provide nonpartisan research on key issues that affect citizens living in Wisconsin so that their elected representatives are able to make informed decisions to improve the quality of life and future of the State.

Our major priority is to improve the accountability of Wisconsin's government. State and local government must be responsive to the citizens of Wisconsin in terms of the programs they devise and the tax money they spend. Accountability should be made available in every major area to which Wisconsin devotes the public's funds.

The agenda for the Institute's activities will direct attention and resources to study the following issues: education; welfare and social services; criminal justice; taxes and spending; and economic development.

We believe that the views of the citizens of Wisconsin should guide the decisions of government officials. To help accomplish this, we will conduct semi-annual public opinion polls that are structured to enable the citizens of Wisconsin to inform government officials about how they view major statewide issues. These polls will be disseminated through the media and be made available to the general public and to the legislative and executive branches of State government. It is essential that elected officials remember that all the programs established and all the money spent comes from the citizens of the State of Wisconsin and is made available through their taxes. Public policy should reflect the real needs and concerns of all the citizens of Wisconsin and not those of specific special interest groups.