



Editorial

Reforming education

Gov. Scott Walker and state schools superintendent Tony Evers should be inclusive in their efforts.

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Creating a new system of accountability for schools in Wisconsin could be a great help to parents and school districts and, thus, an important educational reform for the state. If the new system is fair and done right, it would provide plenty of clear information on which schools are achieving the right outcomes.

Ideally, it would measure schools not only on whether they have met certain standards but how much students and schools have improved over a certain time period. It also would measure all schools that receive public funding equally - public, charter and voucher - so that families would have the information they need to make good choices. That's all important.

Gov. Scott Walker, state schools superintendent Tony Evers and others have signed on to create a new school accountability system and to seek approval from the U.S. Department of Education to allow the system to replace the decade-old, federally imposed one they say is broken. The feds should give that approval, and the state should move forward with this reform and others.

But to really work, such an effort will need broad support - from parents, certainly, and state agencies - but also from teachers, their unions and, politically, from Republicans and Democrats. That's not happening right now.

While the collaboration between Walker and Evers is a good sign, the governor should make a concerted effort to include Democrats and teachers unions.

In talking about working with Evers, who had union support when he ran for office, Walker said, "I think there's a strong bond we're building with Superintendent Evers, because there is a strong sense of wanting to have good outcomes." Well, teachers, unions and Democrats want those same outcomes. Try building some bonds with them.

Granted, that may be difficult. Teachers unions and Democrats need to be willing partners. Highly skeptical of Walker - understandably so after the spring's budget battles - unions and Democrats should put that skepticism aside and see if they can work with Walker and Evers.

These reforms can be helpful and are worth pursuing - by everyone interested in education.

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