

1997-98 SESSION
COMMITTEE HEARING
RECORDS

Committee Name:

Senate Committee on
Education(SC-Ed)

Sample:

Record of Comm. Proceedings ... RCP

- 05hrAC-EdR_RCP_pt01a
- 05hrAC-EdR_RCP_pt01b
- 05hrAC-EdR_RCP_pt02

➤ Appointments ... Appt

➤ **

➤ Clearinghouse Rules ... CRule

➤ **

➤ Committee Hearings ... CH

➤ **

➤ Committee Reports ... CR

➤ **

➤ Executive Sessions ... ES

➤ **

➤ Hearing Records ... HR

➤ **

➤ Miscellaneous ... Misc

➤ 97hr_SC-Ed_Misc_pt29b

➤ Record of Comm. Proceedings ... RCP

➤ **

RIVERDALE SCHOOL DISTRICT

P.O. BOX 66

MUSCODA, WISCONSIN 53573

COPY

Thomas N. Yager
District Administrator
608-739-3832

Paul Kinney
School Board President

April 15, 1997

Representative Stephen Freese
P.O. Box 8952
Madison, WI 53708

Dear Representative Freese:

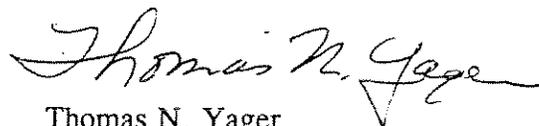
The Riverdale Board of Education, at their regular meeting on Monday, April 14th, discussed the implications of SB90 and AB159, pertaining to an after-September first start for all school districts in the State of Wisconsin.

Following an open discussion on the matter, this Board voted unanimously to oppose both bills. Major factors bringing about that vote include issues on local control, the effects on agricultural community, extra-curricular schedules, and the preference to be out of school near Memorial Day in the spring.

School districts presently have the opportunity to negotiate a calendar that does start after Labor Day, if indeed the tourist industry affects their area. If the negotiations process does not allow that to happen, then it would seem logical that Assemblyman Brandemuehl's bill to make the calendar a permissive subject of bargaining would be more appropriate.

Thank you for your consideration and cooperation in this matter. The Riverdale Board would like you to join them in opposition to this proposed mandated September start of school.

Sincerely yours,



Thomas N. Yager
District Administrator

TNY;md



WAUWATOSA SCHOOL BOARD

12121 W. North Ave. • Wauwatosa, WI 53226 • (414) 259-4495

April 15, 1997

Sen. Peggy Rosenzweig
State Capitol - 136 South
P.O. Box 7882
Madison, WI 53707-7882

Dear Peggy:

In reviewing proposed legislation, the Legislative Committee of the Wauwatosa School Board would like to reiterate the board's positions on certain bills.

Foremost among our concerns continues to be the fiscal issues. We are reviewing the governor's budget bill with interest and hope you will keep us informed about developments in this area. The number of bills being introduced to provide some flexibility and/or relief within the revenue caps, i.e., S.B. 50, A.B. 109, and A.B. 164, clearly reflect the desire by some legislators to provide such relief in limited circumstances; we would certainly support that effort. We are also watching with interest S.B. 6 (A.B. 144) regarding changes in the state aid formula; we assume your joint committee on school finance will be making a recommendation in this regard, and we would be pleased to provide you with any documentation that may be necessary in terms of how various proposals would affect Wauwatosa. As you know, Jim Weise, director of management services, has developed a computer program that allows us to analyze changes rather quickly.

Also of continuing interest to board members is the issue of school choice. Again, we have discussed this with you on many occasions, and you are well aware of our concerns. Both the proposal in the governor's budget and the draft being circulated from the joint legislative committee on open enrollment are problematic.

We have also discussed with you on several occasions our opposition to bills such as S.B. 90 regarding being mandated to start school after Labor Day. While we understand this bill seems to lack momentum in the Senate, where it has been referred to the education committee, we are concerned about the interest it seems to be generating in the Assembly through the tourism committee.

Thanks, as always, Peggy, for your willingness to forward our opinions and concerns and for the effort you and your staff make to keep us well-informed.

Sincerely,

Gladys Miller
Chair, Legislative Committee

c: Dr. Slotterback, Board Members, Directors



OAKFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Oakfield, Wisconsin 53065
(414) 583-3146 • Fax (414) 583-4671

JOE HEINZELMAN, District Administrator
PAUL DIX, 7-12 Principal
BRUCE McMUHRY, K-6 Principal

SCHOOL BOARD:

RICHARD KINTZLER, President
MIKE MERK, Vice President
CAROL COLLIFEN, Treasurer
SUSAN BUECHEL, Clerk
ERVIN KRAFT
GENE HOFMAN
JON WALTZ

April 21, 1997

To whom it may concern:

I am writing this letter on behalf of the Oakfield School Board regarding AB159 and its companion bill SB 90. We are in opposition to these bills for a couple of reasons.

First, we believe the setting of the calendar is an educational decision that should be made at the local level. We know legislators understand that each community is unique and has different needs. The setting of days students are in school should reflect those needs. We believe that decision should be made for educational reasons as each community sees fit.

Second, many of our students are involved in fall co-curriculars. At Oakfield we offer football and volleyball and have quite a few students out for these sports. We are also looking at offering soccer in the near future. The starting date for football practice is August 13 and for volleyball is August 18. If the purpose of this bill is to have students available for family vacations or for working, that purpose would not be fulfilled as students will be busy beginning the second week of August.

The Oakfield School Board appreciates all the work and effort legislators put forth in trying to balance the needs of individual districts with those of the whole. In this case, we believe the calendar should be based on the individual needs of each district and accordingly set at the district level.

Thank you for your consideration of our concerns.

Sincerely,

Joseph W. Heinzelman
District Administrator

"Together We Make A Difference"

BELLE REYNOLDS SCHOOL
330 Oak Street
P.O. Box 99
414-583-3146
FAX: 414-583-4671

OAKFIELD MIDDLE SCHOOL
230 South Main Street
P.O. Box 69
414-583-4117

OAKFIELD HIGH SCHOOL
250 Church Street
P.O. Box 39
414-583-3141
FAX: 414-583-4673

Platteville School District

780 N. Second Street
Platteville, WI 53818
Phone: (608) 342-4400
FAX: (608) 342-4412

April 7, 1997

Senator Dale Schultz
Wisconsin Senate
State Capitol
Post Office Box 7882
Madison, Wisconsin 53707

Dear Senator Schultz

It is my understanding that you are a co-author of SB90 and AB159, somewhat identical legislation.

If these bills are indeed approved by both legislative bodies and signed into law by our Governor, it would be a real move in the wrong direction for local Wisconsin school boards in my opinion.

Having served on the Platteville School Board for 10 years, I have witnessed some deterioration of local school board control through state mandates, post-secondary education criteria, and other implementations that take away our right to decide what is proper for our school district and how to budget our funding. In my mind these two bills would further erode the elected school board member's right to establish the school calendar and the school start up time for a given year.

Will you please reconsider your position on SB90 and AB159. When all is said and done, who knows better what time frames are appropriate for a given school district than that school district's governing body.

Thank you so much.

Sincerely



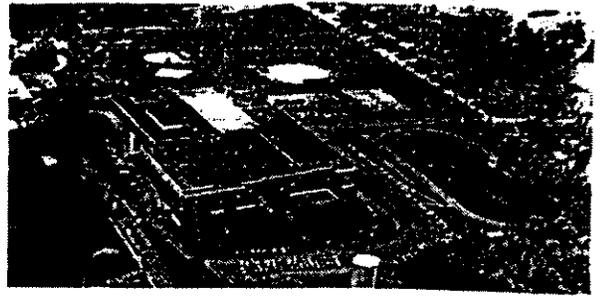
Al Patchin
School Board Member

rb

c: Representative Brandemuehl
Representative Freese
Senn Brown, WASB Director of Legislative Services
Dean Isaacson, Superintendent of Schools
Steve Obershaw, President Platteville School Board

SCHOOL DISTRICT OF *Neillsville*

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE
614 East 5th Street
Neillsville, Wisconsin 54456-2057
Phone 715-743-3323 Fax 715-743-4722



RICHARD QUAST, ADMINISTRATOR

April 8, 1997

State Senator Dave Zien
Room 139 South, State Capital
P.O. Box 7882
Madison, WI 53707-7882

Dear Senator Zien,

In regards to you co-sponsoring a bill for tourism that would not allow Wisconsin public schools to begin until after Labor Day, I have some grave concerns. First, a school district's right to be locally controlled is put in serious jeopardy. If a local school board no longer has the right to set it's own calendar, how much control do they actually have? Even more important, if we allow ourselves to be stripped of this right, what will be next? As you can see, it won't be long before local school boards have no governing power at all if we continue moving in this direction.

The second issue I must contend with Mr. Zien, is the issue of you being a man of your word. During a meeting in Medford on February 10, 1997, you stressed the importance of local school boards having the sole right to setting it's school districts calendar. Now you are co-sponsoring a bill that takes that right away! What do you stand for, Mr. Zien? Should local school boards have the power to decide what is best for their own children, or should our children be governed by the tourist trade? I think it is quite obvious which answer is in the best interest of our children. Now, what I am asking you to do Mr. Zien, is to support our children and our local rights.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Walter Wetzel".

Walter Wetzel
School Board President

WW:jp

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
504 EAST 5TH STREET

MIDDLE SCHOOL
504 EAST 5TH STREET

HIGH SCHOOL
401 CENTER STREET

March 7, 1997

Senator Richard Grobschmidt
Senate Education Committee
PO Box 7882
Room 404
100 N. Hamilton Street
Madison, Wisconsin 53707-7882

RE: Senate Bill 90

Dear Senator Grobschmidt:

I am writing to ask that you oppose SB 90--the bill which would prohibit schools from starting the fall term before Labor Day. I have a number of reasons for hoping this bill is defeated.

Educational Reasons: This would harm the strength of our education programs. Kids are eager to get back to school and ready to learn by mid-August. They are bored and champing at the bit to get out of school by mid-May. Starting after Labor Day would require that we go into mid-June--a whole month of wasted time. Anyone who points out that Minnesota does this should be reminded that Minnesota requires only 170 days of instruction, not 180 as in Wisconsin. In the course of my work, I have had the opportunity to discuss this with a number of educational leaders in Minnesota, and they feel this late start date is a mistake. Tourism and economic development should not be carried on the backs of our children.

Interference with School Improvement Initiatives: We are constantly being asked to find ways to improve education, to be creative and innovative, with fewer and fewer resources. This removes the flexibility necessary for some of these initiatives.

Scheduling Nightmares: This would create havoc with extracurricular schedules, not to mention coordinating busing with private schools and schedules at the various post-secondary institutions at which we have students involved in post-secondary enrollment options.

Local Control: This is something that should be decided by the local school board and citizens in the local community. Those communities that want to do this, fine. But don't force every district to do something that many feel will weaken the educational program.

Thanks for all of your efforts on behalf of our kids and for considering my views on this bill.

Sincerely,



Jean Barnhill
President
Amery Board of Education
398 95th Street
Clear Lake, Wisconsin 54005

Fennimore Community School District

Fennimore, Wisconsin 53809

*Edgar E. Ryan
Superintendent
1397 - 9th Street
(608) 822-3243
Fax (608) 822-3250*

April 10, 1997

David Brandemuehl
13081 Pine Road
Fennimore, WI 53809

RE: PENDING LEGISLATION - SCHOOL CALENDAR

Dear David:

I support and urge your continued effort for passage of Senate Bill 69 and Assembly Bill 37 clarifying the School Board's authority to set the school calendar. Thank you for your effort in this matter!

Dale Schultz and others have authorized SB90 and AB159 that would prohibit public schools from starting the fall term before Labor Day. Would you consider submitting an amendment to this proposed legislation requiring the school year to end by Memorial Day? This would address the beginning and ending dates that so often polarize this issue.

The legislature has respectably debated the 180 days of school requirement. Currently AB39 proposes the elimination of the inclement weather provision. Current statutes require the district to schedule 180 days of school; however, 5 days may be forgiven for a combination of (2) parent teacher conference days and (3) inclement weather days; therefore, the current statutes requires holding classes for 175 days. Other statutes specify the number of hours of instruction that must be held each year for kindergarten, elementary and high school grades.

If the legislative purpose for setting the number of days is to establish the length of instruction and time on task for students, then legislation that would have the school day simulate the work day (8 hours) would be in order...school attendance between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. each day school is in session between Labor Day and Memorial Day. Inclement weather days could be forgiven, the calendar could have fixed schedules of attendance days, the school year could be limited between Labor Day and Memorial Day, and still lengthen time on task for students.

Amending SB90 and AB159 requiring classes to end by Memorial Day could provide for 179 days of school. Attached is a 1997-98 calendar with the days numbered for your review. Absent such an amendment of SB90 and AB159 they will require school attendance through not less than the first or second week in June. Inclement weather would further exasperate this situation as the days would be added to the end of the school year. There is not a day, except Saturday(s), available within this calendar.

Please note the attached calendar has no provisions for the Wisconsin Education Council's Convention (2 days in October) which they could reschedule between June 1 and August 31; no provision for a spring (Easter) break, a tradition in Wisconsin for two to five days, thus acknowledging the Supreme Court's ruling on 'Good Friday'; and no provision for parent teacher conferences (2 days) currently provided by statutes; however, conferences could be held in the evening as they have been in Fennimore. To include the aforementioned six to nine days would add a like number of days to the attached calendar. Again, absent an amendment to SB90 and AB159 school attendance is certain through the first couple of weeks in June.

Ultimately, would it not be simpler to set a state wide school calendar between Labor Day and Memorial Day? This would provide uniformity across all school districts. The public prefers a fixed beginning and ending date; a calendar that is consistent with what is published; and not modified by parent conferences, weather, and other such variables.

In summary, if the calendar cannot be established per SB69 and AB37 then preference should be given to a state-wide calendar with school attendance limited between Labor Day and Memorial Day.

Thank you for wading through this correspondence.

Sincerely,



Edgar Ryun
Superintendent

jh

enclosure

cc: WASB
WASDA

FENNIMORE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

School Calendar 1997-98

<i>July</i>						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

<i>August</i>						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

<i>September</i>						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	H	1	2	3	4	6
7	5	6	7	8	9	13
14	10	11	12	13	14	20
21	15	16	17	18	19	27
28	20	21				

21 contact
H = Labor Day

<i>October</i>						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			22	23	24	4
5	25	26	27	28	29	11
12	30	31	32	33	34	18
19	35	36	37	38	39	25
26	40	41	42	43	44	

23 contact

<i>November</i>						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	45	46	47	48	49	8
9	50	51	52	53	54	15
16	55	56	57	58	59	22
23	60	61	62	H	V	29
30						

18 contact
H = Thanksgiving Day
V = Vacation Day

<i>December</i>						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
	63	64	65	66	67	6
7	68	69	70	71	72	13
14	73	74	75	76	77	20
21	78	79	V	V	V	27
28	V	V	V			

17 contact
V = Winter Break

<i>January</i>						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				V	V	3
4	80	81	82	83	84	10
11	85	86	87	88	89	17
18	90	91	92	93	94	24
25	95	96	97	98	99	31

20 contact
V = Winter Break

<i>February</i>						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	100	101	102	103	104	7
8	105	106	107	108	109	14
15	110	111	112	113	114	21
22	115	116	117	118	119	28

20 contact

<i>March</i>						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	120	121	122	123	124	7
8	125	126	127	128	129	14
15	130	131	132	133	134	21
22	135	136	137	138	139	28
29	140	141				

22 contact

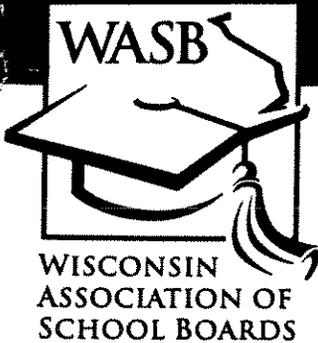
<i>April</i>						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			142	143	144	4
5	145	146	147	148	149	11
12	150	151	152	153	154	18
19	155	156	157	158	159	25
26	160	161	162	163		

22 contact

<i>May</i>						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					164	2
3	165	166	167	168	169	9
10	170	171	172	173	174	16
17	175	176	177	178	179	23
24	H	26	27	28	29	30
31						

16 contact
H = Memorial Day

<i>June</i>						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				



122 W. WASHINGTON AVENUE, MADISON, WI 53703
PHONE: 608-257-2622 • FAX: 608-257-8386

KEN COLE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

SB 90 - POST LABOR DAY K-12 START DATE

DESCRIPTION

SB 90 requires that beginning in 1998, no public school may commence its school term until after Labor Day.

WASB POSITION

The WASB strongly opposes SB 90:

- * Setting the school calendar is a matter of educational policy and is the purview of local school boards, not the tourism industry. This mandate clearly violates local control. Allowing school boards to set the school calendar allows schools to consider the different needs of local communities.
- * Local tourism leaders can now approach school boards and work to have local schools begin after Labor Day in areas where this is important to the local economy. Boards can take that request into consideration when bargaining the calendar with local unions.
- * The WASB supports legislation that would remove requirements to bargain the school calendar. Boards would still be required to bargain the impact of their calendar decisions.
- * SB 90 would interfere with a variety of school improvement initiatives, including year-round schools and distance education.
- * Requiring schools to start after Labor Day may interfere with extracurricular sports schedules. A post Labor Day start date may cause overlap problems between fall tournament plans and initial practice schedules for the winter season.

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2726 Maple Road
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EDITORIAL PAGE

MILWAUKEE JOURNAL SENTINEL

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 2, 1937

Start school later? Pupils might suffer

The Legislature is again being asked to bar local school districts from starting classes before Labor Day. To what educational end? Does an earlier start somehow hurt students academically?

Well, no. In fact, many reformers argue that American kids don't do as well academically as many of their European and Asian counterparts in part because the school year here is too short. They say the year should be extended — a goal that would be inhibited by the proposal before the Legislature.

The truth is that education is about the furthest thing from the minds of the proponents of a post-Labor Day start for the school year. They are thinking only in mercantile terms.

The practice of starting classes before Labor Day hurts the state's tourism industry in late summer, these advocates argue, by (1) keeping families and their money at home and (2) leaving the industry's work force depleted as teen employees return to school.

Because they feel squeezed, industry leaders want *all* schools in the state to refrain from beginning classes until after Labor Day. But they are asking way too much.



Surely such tourist areas as Door County and Wisconsin Dells would resent as undue interference in local affairs a state mandate that schools start in, say, mid-August. Can't they likewise understand the resentment local school districts elsewhere would feel toward a post-Labor Day mandate?

The Legislature must *practice* local control, not just preach it. Local school board members are better positioned than Madison politicians to determine when the academic year should start.

What's more, an academic change should flow from an academic rationale. Business convenience is nowhere near a good enough reason for change.

Delaying the start of classes could actually hurt academics by making it harder to lengthen the school year. Even worse, the delay could lead to a shortening of the school year, as school boards might be loath to tack on the lost days at the other end of the calendar, in June.

The tourist industry must find other ways to combat the late-summer doldrums.



I'M ALL FOR KIDS
GETTING BACK TO
THE THREE 'R'S!

-Resorts
-Restaurants
-Recreation

PUSH TO START
SCHOOL AFTER
LABOR DAY

TOURIST
INDUSTRY

LEGISLATOR

Joe Keller
1977

WIAA explains: Why start early?

This being the midpoint between July 4 and Labor Day, it might appear inappropriate to talk about school starting. Staffing needs, budget approvals and the completion of summer maintenance projects are probably of more concern to school board members at this time. However, most schools will start before the end of August and preparation for interscholastic athletic competition begins as early as the 11th.

Many people question our imposed early practice provisions because of vacation schedules and student employment interruption. Football and tennis will start on August 11; volleyball, cross country, swimming and diving, and soccer will begin on August 18. Golf will begin on the later date this year but will advance to the same starting date as football and tennis in 1987.

Factors influencing the starting dates are Wisconsin's climate and amateur athletic competitions offered by other agencies, as well as a concern for seasons similar in length to those offered during the winter and the spring. The football starting date has traditionally been determined by the anticipation of cooler weather in late October. In addition, the contact nature of the sport requires two-plus weeks of conditioning and practice for the physical well-being of the par-



*by Douglas E. Chickering
WIAA Executive Director*

ticipants. The earliest the first game can be played is the end of the third week of practice. With nine-game schedules as a recognized standard, a mid- to early August starting date is required.

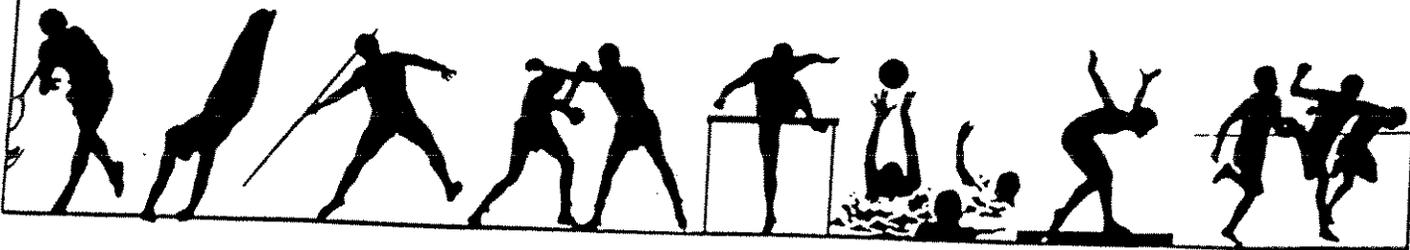
Contrary to a frequently voiced complaint, the football playoff series has not lengthened the regular season for non-playoff schools. Ten years ago, when we started playoffs, the regular season had the same 12-week parameter it now has. Two weeks have been added to the end

of the season to accommodate the championship format.

Tennis' beginning date has been advanced in recent years. While weather was a factor in the change, conflicts with Jewish holidays during tournament play and the desire to equalize fall and spring seasons also played a role. Volleyball, cross country, swimming and diving, and soccer start a week after football and tennis. School calendars, the number of contests, available facilities, and weather conditions make this arrangement agreeable to member schools.

Requests to make starting dates earlier are discouraged and diligently studied by the WIAA Board of Control. Family vacation schedules, student employment opportunities, summer program completions and teacher/coach summer options are recognized and respected by the Board. Later starting dates would add to problems already existing because of the overlap of the fall tournament plans with the initial practice schedules for the winter season.

We think Wisconsin schools recognize the value of athletic programs and do a good job of keeping these opportunities within the educational structure. I appreciate the opportunity to share this rationale with you. Have a great 1986-87 academic year!



Washington Post
April 16, 1994

An Anti-Education Law

TO BENEFIT Virginia's tourist industry, especially its amusement parks, state law forbids the schools to open before Labor Day. It's a cuckoo law, giving roller coaster rides and cotton candy a higher priority than education. In the coming school year, because of the way the dates fall in the calendar, it would put an unusually severe squeeze on the schools. Fairfax County's superintendent, Robert R. Spillane, has asked the State Board of Education for a waiver to open on Aug. 29.

Does the state board think that an extra late-summer week at the beach or in the pool is more important than school? If not, it can make its judgment clear by granting that waiver to Fairfax County and all the other school systems that want to open in August.

Labor Day falls late this year, and the Fairfax County schools will also be closed for Rosh Hashanah, which immediately follows it. But the state requires at least 180 school days a year. If Fairfax County runs the school year beyond June 20, it collides with the summer school schedules. In the absence of a waiver and an early start, the schools' calendar will allow only one snow day.

While this year's 10 snow days were unusual, even a normal winter brings several. If the weather closes the schools more than once next winter, one solution (never popular) would be to cut into vacations.

When Virginia's tourist industry lobbied this misguided legislation through the General Assembly eight years ago, it was known informally as the Kings Dominion Relief Bill, after the amusement park of that name. Depending on teenagers both as customers and as low-wage employees, like many other tourist enterprises, it sought to extend its season as long as possible.

Most Americans firmly believe, and are happy to tell you, that education comes first, that youngsters have to be prepared for a fiercely competitive world and that 180 days a year is hardly enough to pack into them everything that they'll need to know in the 21st century. There have been innumerable reports on that subject by eminent commissions. Those good intentions keep stumbling over silly but damaging impediments such as this one—a Virginia law that stands as an example to the world of sensible public policy turned upside down.



United Council

of University of Wisconsin Students, Inc.

122 State Street, Suite 500, Madison, WI 53703 Phone: (608) 263-3422 Fax: (608) 265-4070

April 24, 1997

To: The Honorable Members of the Senate Education Committee

From: Timothy Casper, President 
Steve Perala, Legislative Affairs Director 

Re: Post Labor Day Start Bill (AB 159/SB 90)

United Council is opposed to the Post Labor Day Start Bill (AB 159/SB 90). This bill would require K-12 school districts to start the academic year no earlier than after Labor Day. By mandating when school districts may begin the academic year, the Wisconsin Legislature would be taking away the right of locally elected school boards to make important decisions for the communities they represent.

Mandating the start of the academic year has no real impact on improving the quality of education that students receive. Furthermore, it erodes the opportunity of partnerships now starting to form between the UW System and local school districts. For example, UWC-Richland is currently working cooperatively with Ithaca High School in an effort to create a "3+2" program. This program would allow qualified high school juniors to begin their university career at the same time they are completing their high school degree. Innovative programs such as these would be more difficult to implement if every K-12 district was mandated to start after Labor Day.

Additionally, the UW System has often been included in this bill in past legislative sessions and the students of the UW System have continuously opposed a Post Labor Day start because it will push fall semester final exams past Christmas, forcing students to come back from their families to complete finals. If this bill passes, students are concerned that the Legislature will next attempt to mandate that the UW System not start fall semester until after Labor Day.

We urge you to support local decision-making and oppose the Post Labor Day Start Bill (AB 159/SB 90).

WANS MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS



Christian Schools International
District IV

Archdiocese of Milwaukee

Diocese of Green Bay

Diocese of LaCrosse

Diocese of Madison

Diocese of Superior

Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod
Northern Wisconsin District

Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod
Southern Wisconsin District

Wisconsin Conference of
Seventh Day Adventists

Wisconsin Association of
Independent Schools

Wisconsin Evangelical
Lutheran Synod

TO: Members, Senate Education Committee

FROM: Sharon L. Schmeling, Executive Secretary

DATE: April 23, 1997

RE: Fall Start Date for School (Senate Bill 90)

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Wisconsin Association of Nonpublic Schools, which represents 75 percent of the state's nonpublic schools, I urge you to oppose Senate Bill 90.

Our Association, which represents 127,000 of the state's 149,000 nonpublic school students believes this Bill is an unnecessary intrusion by state government into local educational affairs.

As you know, state law requires public school districts to transport nonpublic school students. Unfortunately, many public school districts are not as helpful as they could be in coordinating transportation for nonpublic school students. The difficulties in public and nonpublic school calendars often arise from differing vacation days around holidays. Because of religious considerations, nonpublic schools sometimes must schedule holidays at different times than the public schools.

However, our Association encourages nonpublic schools to work in a spirit of cooperation and compromise with public school districts to resolve these different transportation needs.

Often, public and nonpublic schools can resolve their conflicting schedules by adjusting the school year start date or end date.

This flexibility will be lost if Senate Bill 90 is passed. SB 90 will lock public school districts into a start date that may not facilitate already-existing arrangements between public and nonpublic schools.

To accommodate their calendars some nonpublic schools may have to insist on starting earlier than the public schools, thus requiring public school districts to provide transportation. It would not seem to be in the best interests of public-private school relations to allow such a situation to exist. Nor would it seem economically sensible, given the spending caps on public school districts.

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In addition, our Association believes that the bill interferes with a variety of needed educational reforms like charter schools and year-around schools.

This policy obstructs local control and collaboration between public and nonpublic schools -- the very people who are best able to determine the needs of a given community.

We urge you to keep Senate Bill 90 in committee.