

WISCONSIN STATE  
LEGISLATURE  
COMMITTEE HEARING  
RECORDS

1997-08

(session year)

Senate

(Assembly, Senate or Joint)

Committee on  
Education  
(SC-Ed)

COMMITTEE NOTICES ...

➤ Committee Hearings ... CH (Public Hearing Announcements)

➤ \*\*

➤ Committee Reports ... CR

➤ \*\*

➤ Executive Sessions ... ES

➤ \*\*

➤ Record of Comm. Proceedings ... RCP

➤ \*\*

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INFORMATION COLLECTED BY COMMITTEE  
CLERK FOR AND AGAINST PROPOSAL

➤ Appointments ... Appt

➤ \*\*

Name:

➤ Clearinghouse Rules ... CRule

➤ \*\*

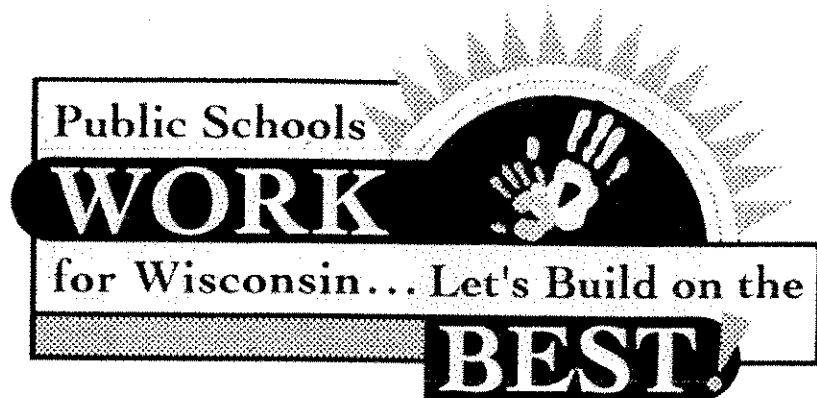
➤ Hearing Records ... HR (bills and resolutions)

➤ \*\*

➤ Miscellaneous ... Misc

➤ **97hr\_SC-Ed\_Misc\_pt50**

Jan 18  
1997



LEGISLATIVE  
AGENDA

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WISCONSIN EDUCATION ASSOCIATION COUNCIL

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GOVERNMENT RELATIONS DIVISION



## WEAC's Framework for Successful Schools

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Each item in the 1997-98 WEAC Legislative Agenda is carefully crafted to accomplish the broad goals laid out in this Framework for Successful Schools. The 97-page Legislative Agenda contains a policy paper, actual draft legislation and a statement of fiscal estimate for 11 specific proposals. WEAC members are working with legislators to develop and pass legislation that supports the goals outlined in this Framework and the Legislative Agenda. To access the policy papers and summaries of bill drafts, [click here](#).

### Preparation

- Schools that teach to high standards and prepare all students for employment, continuing education and productive lives.

### Discipline

- A school environment that is safe, orderly and supportive for all students, teachers and staff members.

### Cooperation

- Schools that are a product of students, teachers, parents and community working together.

### Leadership

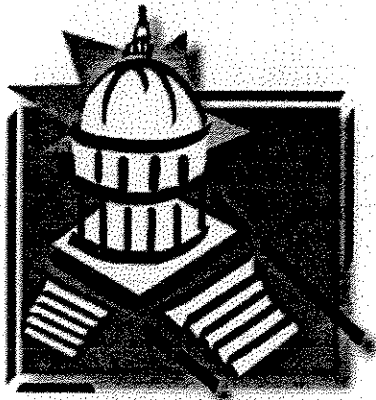
- Teachers and school personnel who are highly trained, experienced, respected professionals who have authority equal to their responsibilities.

### Support

- Fair and adequate levels of funding to provide for new technologies and a quality education for all students.

*Posted September 12, 1996*

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## **AT THE CAPITOL**

# **Issues of the 1997 WEAC Legislative Agenda**

- Developing Parental/Family Involvement
- Improving School Safety, Discipline and Classroom Control
- Creating a Professional Standards Board in Wisconsin
- Improving Access to Educational Telecommunications and Technology
- Reducing Class Size in the Primary Grade Levels
- Adopting a Wisconsin Bill of Rights for Children
- Addressing the Needs of Aging and Inadequate Facilities
- Improving the Collective Bargaining Rights of Education Professionals
- Addressing Compulsory Student Attendance and Alternative Education Opportunities
- Developing Comprehensive Student Performance Assessment Standards
- Certification by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards





## 1997 WEAC Legislative Agenda Item

### Developing Parental and Family Involvement in Public Schools

#### **BACKGROUND:**

The Wisconsin Education Association Council recognizes that all children in Wisconsin have the right to a school environment where parents or guardians are encouraged to participate in partnerships that will increase each child's social, emotional, and academic growth.

Parental and family involvement in a child's education is key to academic success and individual development. In recent years, much debate has focused on parental and family involvement in the public schools. WEAC now is involved with the drafting of legislation that will improve the capability of local schools and local education agencies to establish programs for increasing partnerships that respond to the varying needs of parents and the home.

#### **KEY COMPONENTS OF PARENTAL/FAMILY INVOLVEMENT LEGISLATION:**

##### **CREATE A COUNCIL ON PARENTAL/FAMILY INVOLVEMENT:**

- Establish a nine member advisory council within the Department of Public Instruction that would offer recommendations on parental/family involvement programs; provide training including skill development for appropriate family involvement in school governance; facilitate coordination among school officials, parents, educators and community leaders; coordinate services with other state agencies and create an evaluation instrument to monitor the progress of parental/family involvement programs.

##### **REQUIRE PARENTAL/FAMILY INVOLVEMENT PROGRAMS:**

- Require local school boards, in conjunction with parents, educators, school officials and community leaders, to develop programs aimed at increasing support for education. This program should establish partnerships within the community, design and implement effective two-way communications and build a support system for families.

##### **CREATE A PARENTAL/FAMILY CENTER IN EACH SCHOOL BUILDING:**

- Each program developed by local school boards shall include a suggested structure for a school-based parent/family center that would serve as a base for parents when they come to visit their child's school.

##### **PROVIDE SCHOOL ACTIVITIES LEAVE FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS OF STUDENTS:**

- Provide 8 hours/year of paid leave, allowing parents/guardians time to participate in their child's school activities. This leave time would be reserved for academically related activities and would not apply to athletic events.

##### **EXEMPTION OF PARENTAL/FAMILY EXPENDITURES FROM REVENUE CONTROLS:**

- Any and all appropriations used by a local district to establish parental/family involvement programs would be exempt from the local school district's revenue limit.

**ESTABLISHMENT OF A PARENTAL/FAMILY INVOLVEMENT CATEGORICAL GRANT:**

· Create a new categorical grant exempt from the revenue controls at \$5.00 per student, granted to each public school district to be earmarked for programming defined in this act covering programs from birth through the 12th grade. The grants would be administered through the Department of Public Instruction, and an annual report on how these funds are spent would be submitted to the local school board and made part of their public record. (Fiscal estimate -- \$5.00 x 870,175 students = \$4,350,875.00).

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**Following is a summary of a proposed bill that WEAC will seek to have introduced in 1997**

An Act *to create* 15.377 (5), 115.376, and 118.50 relating to: creating a council on parent and family involvement within the department of public instruction, requiring school boards to develop a parent and family involvement program and to create a parent and family center within school buildings, exempting all spending on parent and family involvement programs from revenue limits, and making an appropriation.

**Analysis**

This bill creates a council on parent and family involvement in the department of public instruction consisting of 9 members appointed by the state superintendent for staggered 3-year terms. One member shall be a representative of a statewide parent-teacher organization, one shall be a parent or guardian of a pupil enrolled in a public school, two shall be public school teachers, one shall be a public school district administrator, one shall be a public school administrator, one shall be a public school board member, one shall be a business community member, and one shall be a department employee who shall serve as chairperson.

The duties of the council are to: (1) develop an instrument or process to evaluate parent and family involvement programs developed by school boards; (2) make recommendations to the department about parent and family involvement programs that are effective; (3) make recommendations to the department about training programs for school boards and school staff; (4) make recommendations to the department about facilitating coordination among school officials, parents, educators and community leaders; and (5) make recommendations to the department about the coordination of department services and services of other state agencies.

This bill also requires school boards to establish, in conjunction with parents, teachers, administrators and community leaders, a parent and family involvement program for each school in the district. The program shall include at least the following components: a) procedures to ensure that parents or guardians participate in the planning, design, implementation, and evaluation of the parent and family involvement program; b) regular and periodic programs throughout the school year that provide for training, instruction, and information on specific subjects; c) an annual statement identifying specific objectives of the program; and d) an annual review and assessment of the program's progress in meeting its objectives.

This bill also requires each school board to designate an area in each existing school as a family center, and to allocate space for a family center in plans for the building of new schools.

This bill also exempts all spending by school districts on parent and family involvement programs, including but not limited to printed materials and staff, from revenue limits. It also creates a new categorical aid of \$5.00 per pupil that is exempt from revenue limits.

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**Following is a summary of a second proposed bill that WEAC will seek to have introduced in 1997**

An Act *to create* 118.55 of the statutes; **relating to:** requiring employers to grant paid leave to parents for the purpose of participating in non-athletic school activities of their children.

**Analysis**

This bill requires all employers in Wisconsin, regardless of size, and including public employers, to provide a total of 8 hours of non-cumulative paid leave in each school year for each of the employee's children for the purpose of attending non-athletic activities of the school that each child attends, that are scheduled during the employee's hours of work.

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Fiscal estimates are available from the WEAC Government Relations Division.

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*Written May 1996; Posted July 18, 1996*





## 1997 WEAC Legislative Agenda Item

### Improving School Safety, Discipline and Classroom Control

#### BACKGROUND:

The Wisconsin Education Association Council is committed to the belief that all children in Wisconsin have a right to learn in a safe and productive classroom. To support that belief, WEAC has developed a legislative proposal which will provide for greater teacher authority in dealing with disruption and inappropriate classroom behavior by students in the public school system. Teachers, students and the general public agree that the presence of disruptive students in the classroom is an infringement on the rights of students who are not disruptive. This legislation will protect the rights of those students who are being deprived of a productive learning environment because of excessive demands made on teacher time, energy and attention by disruptive students.

#### KEY COMPONENTS OF SCHOOL SAFETY/DISCIPLINE CLASSROOM CONTROL LEGISLATION:

- ❑ A teacher may dismiss from his or her classroom an unruly, uncooperative, dangerous or disruptive student, providing that the teacher informs the administration and the parent/guardian. The student shall be sent to a school detention center where it shall be the parents responsibility to pick up the student and take him or her home. A teacher shall have the sole and exclusive authority to impose this suspension. The decision to suspend shall be made after appropriate warnings have been initiated.
- ❑ Employers shall be required to provide no more than one half day of unpaid leave time for a parent to pick up a child who has been removed from a class. Such unpaid leave may be deducted from vacation leave, personal leave or other appropriate leave categories.
- ❑ School boards may adopt policies, programs and procedures for students removed from classes under this section which substitute for sending the student home.
- ❑ A teacher may dismiss a student from any class in which there are 10 or more unexcused absences. A teacher shall have the sole and exclusive authority to impose this suspension.
- ❑ A student may appeal a decision of a teacher to impose any of the above actions to a school student discipline committee composed of teachers that is also created under this law. The student discipline committee shall meet and render a judgment within 48 hours of notification of an appeal. No student may be readmitted to class until such time as the appeal decision is rendered. The decision of the student discipline committee shall be final and binding.
- ❑ No student may be readmitted to a class without the expressed and written consent of the teacher. No student shall be admitted to a class before a mandatory teacher-parent conference. During this conference, a teacher shall review for the parent or guardian and the student the standards of behavior expected in his or her classroom environment.
- ❑ No teacher shall be required to make up work for any student suspended from school, removed from a class for disciplinary action, or expelled from school. A student may secure tutoring, at his or her own expense, to make up work missed for disciplinary infractions.
- ❑ Any student found with any type of weapon, drugs or paraphernalia shall be immediately expelled from school, and the student's parents shall be charged, arrested or fined appropriately. Any student arrested and convicted of weapons or drug charges shall be ineligible to return to school for one calendar year from the date of conviction.
- ❑ Schools are encouraged to involve parents, faculty and administration in developing rules of conduct, dress and behavior appropriate for a school setting.



- Nothing in this proposal shall amend, repeal, abrogate, nullify or alter any provisions which now exist in collective bargaining agreements between school boards and certified representatives of school employees.
- School boards shall make appropriate provisions for students removed from classes whose parents or guardians do not come to pick up their child. These provisions may involve law enforcement agencies, county health and social services agencies and other appropriate entities in the community.
- School boards shall be encouraged to initiate alternative programs for those students who can not function in a normal classroom environment.

### Following is a summary of a proposed bill that WEAC will seek to have introduced in 1997

An Act *to create* 118.16(4)(am), 118.60 and 118.65 *relating to:* enhancing teachers' disciplinary authority over disruptive and absent pupils in the public schools, and expelling pupils from the public schools who possess a weapon, a controlled substance or drug paraphernalia or who are convicted of specific crimes.

#### Analysis

This bill authorizes teachers in public schools to cause to be removed from his or her classroom any pupil who is uncooperative, disruptive or dangerous. The pupil can return to class after the parent meets with the teacher and the teacher consents to the return in writing. The bill also authorizes teachers in public schools to expel from their classroom for the rest of the school year pupils who have had at least 10 cumulative absences from the teacher's class which are not excused under the school board's attendance policy. The teacher's decision can be appealed by the pupil to a pupil disciplinary committee whose decision upholding or overturning the decision shall be final. Employers are required to provide up to 4 hours of unpaid leave time per school year for the purpose of picking up a child from school who has been removed or expelled from class.

The bill also requires school district officials to expel from school for the rest of the school year any pupil who possesses a weapon, a controlled substance or drug paraphernalia while on school property or while at a school-sponsored event, and further requires school officials to notify the appropriate law enforcement officials of the pupil's infraction. Finally, the bill requires school officials to expel from school any pupil who is convicted of a crime pursuant to subchs. IV and VI of ch. 161 and ss. 940.02(2), 940.08, 940.09(1g), 940.24, 941.20 - 941.298, 948.55, 948.60, 948.605, and 948.61, and prohibits the pupil's return to school until no earlier than 12 months from the date of conviction.

Fiscal estimates are available from the WEAC Government Relations Division.

Written May 1996; Posted July 18, 1996





# 1997 WEAC Legislative Agenda Item

## Creation of a Wisconsin Professional Standards Board

### BACKGROUND:

Over the past 25 years, education professionals in the United States have been actively pursuing the achievement of independent teacher professional standards boards. In states where boards have been created, it was agreed that the most productive environment for teaching is one in which education professionals are given direct input into the establishment of standards that govern the preparation and practice of the profession.

Since 1970, 12 states -- California, Oregon, Minnesota, Nevada, Iowa, Kentucky, Georgia, Indiana, Wyoming, West Virginia, North Dakota, and Hawaii -- have created teachers' professional standards boards. Six of the twelve have been created since 1990. The Wisconsin Education Association Council has developed a proposal for the creation of a Professional Standards Board that would be established within the Department of Public Instruction.

### KEY COMPONENTS OF A PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS BOARD:

#### ESTABLISHED FUNCTIONS:

- To provide an on-going assessment of the complexity of teaching and the status of the teaching profession in Wisconsin;
- To establish the standards necessary to ensure the quality of the teaching profession in Wisconsin;
- To determine areas of teaching license and certification necessary to meet the curricular needs of Wisconsin's public schools;
- To advise teachers' preparation institutions in Wisconsin's colleges and universities regarding curriculum and training experiences appropriate to teacher licensure and certification;
- To establish requirements for initial teacher license and certification in Wisconsin;
- To establish requirements for maintenance and renewal of license and certification;
- To approve applications and issue initial license and certification and renewals;
- To hear and decide issues of license revocation, suspension, or other appropriate disciplinary action;
- To recommend peer assistance and peer mentoring models, including the evaluation systems and teacher dismissal alternative procedures, for consideration by school districts and employee unions.
- To coordinate criteria for licensure and certification by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.
- To promulgate administrative Rules.

#### STRUCTURE:

- An eleven member board appointed for staggered three year terms composed of the following individuals:
  - six members appointed by the state superintendent of public instruction who are currently licensed and certified K-12 teachers employed in Wisconsin public schools and who are nominated by labor unions representing certified staff; at least one of whom is certified and employed as an elementary teacher; at least of whom one is certified and employed as a

- secondary teacher; at least one of whom is certified and employed as a special education teacher; and at least one of whom is certified and employed in pupil services, such as a counselor, media specialist, or librarian.
- one member who is the president of the University of Wisconsin system or her or his designee;
  - one member nominated by the Wisconsin Association of School Boards appointed by the governor;
  - one member nominated by the Wisconsin Association of School District Administrators appointed by the governor;
  - one member representing business and industry appointed by the governor;
  - and one member of the public appointed by the governor.
- The board shall employ an executive director to facilitate the functions and responsibilities of the board.
  - The board is attached to the department of public instruction which means that the board will exercise its licensing, regulation and rule-making authority independently of the DPI but its budgetary, program coordination and related management functions will be performed under the direction and supervision of the DPI.
  - Licensure of administrators, nurses and aides will remain with the state superintendent and DPI.
  - Investigations and recommendations regarding the initiation of disciplinary action remains with the state superintendent of public instruction and the DPI.

### Following is a summary of a proposed bill that WEAC will seek to have introduced in 1997

An Act *to repeal* 115.28(7)(c) and (e), 115.28 (17)(a), and 118.192; *to renumber* 115.28(17)(c), and 115.28(17)(d); *to renumber and amend* 115.28(17)(b); *to amend* 15.01(7), 115.28(7)(a), 115.28(7)(b), 115.28(15)(a), 115.31(3)(b), 118.22(1)(b), 121.006(2)(b); and 121.02(1)(a); *to repeal and recreate* 118.19; and *to create* 15.376 and chapter 122 *relating to:* creating a professional standards board attached to the department of public instruction, transferring the licensing function of professional employees of public school district and cooperative educational service agencies from the state superintendent of public instruction to the professional standards board, granting rule-making authority, providing a penalty, and making an appropriation.

#### Analysis

Under current law, the state superintendent of public instruction is responsible for licensing teachers and other professional educators in the K-12 system (including cooperative educational service agencies), as well as approving teacher education programs. This bill transfers those functions from the state superintendent to a professional standards board attached to the department of public instruction pursuant to sec. 15.03. Licensing of administrators, nurses and private school teachers remains with the state superintendent.

The professional standards board is an "examining board" as defined by current law. Sec. 15.01(7) defines "examining board" as a part-time body which sets standards of professional competence and conduct for the professional under its supervision, prepares, conducts and grades the examination of prospective new practitioners, grants licenses, investigates complaints of alleged unprofessional conduct and performs other functions assigned to it by law.

The powers of the professional standards board are already defined by statute. Sec. 15.08 (5) lists the powers of an examining board as follows: (a) may compel the attendance of witnesses, administer oaths, take testimony and receive proof concerning all matters within its jurisdiction; b) shall promulgate rules for its own guidance and for the guidance of the trade or profession to which it pertains, and define and enforce professional conduct and unethical practices not inconsistent with the law relating to the

particular trade or profession; and c) may limit, suspend or revoke, or reprimand the holder of, any license, permit or certificate granted by the examining board. In addition, sec. 15.08(6) states that in addition to any other duties vested in it by law, each examining board shall foster the standards of education or training pertaining to its own trade or profession, not only in relation of the trade or profession to the interest of the individual or to organized business enterprise, but also in relation to government and to the general welfare. Each examining board shall endeavor, both within and outside its own trade or profession, to bring about a better understanding of the relationship of the particular trade or profession to the general welfare of this state.

This bill establishes an 11 member professional standards board who shall serve for staggered 3-year terms. The members are as follows: (1) six members who are currently licensed and employed in Wisconsin public schools and who are nominated by labor unions representing certified staff, at least one of whom is certified and employed as an elementary teacher; at least of whom one is certified and employed as a secondary teacher; at least one of whom is certified and employed as a special education teacher; and at least one of whom is certified and employed in pupil services, such as counselor, media specialist, or librarian - all appointed by the state superintendent of public instruction; (2) the president of the university of Wisconsin system or her or his designee; (3) one member nominated by the Wisconsin Association of School Boards and appointed by the governor; (4) one member nominated by the Wisconsin Association of School District Administrators and appointed by the governor; (5) one member representing business and industry appointed by the governor; and (6) one member of the public appointed by the governor.

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Fiscal estimates are available from the WEAC Government Relations Division.

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*Written May 1996; Posted July 18, 1996*





## 1997 WEAC Legislative Agenda Item

### Improving Access to Educational Telecommunications and Technology

#### BACKGROUND:

The Wisconsin Education Association recognizes that learning technologies have an enormous capacity to support and advance teaching and learning. The full potential of technology must be used to improve elementary and secondary education and to provide all learners with the knowledge, skills and experience they need to become successful citizens in this society.

In June of 1994, legislation was passed creating and regulating Wisconsin's Information Superhighway. This legislation was passed to protect consumers, support education and give industry the incentives needed to build a world-class telecommunications infrastructure in Wisconsin. The Wisconsin Education Association Council continues to be actively involved in drafting legislation that will improve technological opportunities for Wisconsin's public schools.

#### KEY COMPONENTS OF SCHOOL TECHNOLOGY LEGISLATION:

##### A REGIONALLY ORGANIZED SYSTEM OF IMPLEMENTING TECHNOLOGY:

- Creation of 12 regional advisory councils that will be congruent with the Cooperative Educational Service Agency districts and whose purpose shall be to provide input on developing needs for the use of technology. The advisory councils will provide information from a local perspective to the statewide Educational Communications Board.

##### NEW BONDING AUTHORITY TO HELP PAY THE COSTS OF NEW TECHNOLOGY:

- Allow local districts to take advantage of new bonding authority to assist with the costs of implementing technologies in the public schools.
  - funding received through the new bonding would be outside the revenue controls
  - 25% of all funds received would be earmarked for staff development and training
  - a total of \$350/student would be made available under the new bonding structure.

##### ESTABLISH A NEW GRANT PROGRAM TO ASSIST WITH THE MOST BASIC TECHNOLOGY NEEDS IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS:

- A new grant program would be established by the state to provide grant monies for school districts in need of the most basic technology, such as phone lines and adequate electrical connections in every classroom.

##### CONSOLIDATE ALL TECHNOLOGY PROGRAMS IN ONE STATE AGENCY:

- Create a study for the purposes of making a single agency responsible for the administration of all new technologies. The new responsibilities would be administered by the Educational Communications Board. In addition, two teachers would be added to the Board's membership to ensure that the education community would be represented in future technology decisions.

**Following is a summary of a proposed bill that WEAC will seek to have introduced in 1997**

**AN ACT to create 15.577(3), 39.117, 39.145(6), 39.146, and 67.05(6e); relating to:** creating regional councils within the educational communications board, defining the term "distance

learning," authorizing grants to school districts to develop telecommunications infrastructures, granting authority to school districts to issue bonds for the development of educational telecommunications and technology; authorizing a legislative council study on the consolidation of public school educational telecommunications and technology programs, and making an appropriation.

**Analysis**

This bill creates 12 regional councils, coterminous with the existing cooperative educational service agencies, to advise the educational communication board on matters relating to public school educational telecommunications and technology programs and services. Members of each regional council, who shall be appointed from recommendations made by each constituent group, shall consist of 3 classroom teachers from different school districts within the boundaries of the regional council, 2 members from the telecommunications industry who serve the schools within the boundaries of the regional council, 2 administrators from different school districts within the boundaries of the regional council, 1 member from a library system within the boundaries of the regional council, 1 member from a community telecommunications network within the boundaries of the regional council, 1 member from each school district telecommunications network within the boundaries of the regional council, 1 member from the local cooperative education service agency, 1 member from the technical college district whose boundaries lie predominantly within the boundaries of the regional council, 1 member from either the university of Wisconsin-Extension, a university of Wisconsin center system campus or a university of Wisconsin four year campus whose main administrative office is located within the boundaries of the regional council, and 2 additional members of either the public or private sector chosen by the regional council. Members shall serve for 2-year staggered terms.

This bill also authorizes the educational communications board to provide grants to school districts to develop telecommunications infrastructures for distance learning. It also defines the term "distance learning" for the purpose of these infrastructure grants and for distance learning project grants.

This bill also grants authority to school districts to issue bonds without holding a public referendum in the amount of \$350 per pupil for the development of educational telecommunications and technology. At least 25% of the amount of the bond shall be used for faculty development and training in the use of educational telecommunications and technology and in their integration into the curriculum and classroom setting. The proceeds of the bond shall be exempt from the school district revenue limits in subch. VII of ch. 121. Repayment, principal and interest are exempt from expenditure limits under subch. VII of ch. 121.

This bill also directs the creation of a legislative council study to examine the feasibility of consolidating all existing educational telecommunications and technology programs for public school districts within the educational communications board.

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**Following is a summary of a second proposed bill that WEAC will seek to have introduced in 1997**

**An Act to amend sec. 15.57(3) relating to:** the composition of the Education Communications Board.

**Analysis**

Under current law, the Educational Communications Board consists of 16 members who are: 1) the secretary of administration, the state superintendent of public instruction, the president of the university of Wisconsin system and the director of the technical college system board, or their designees; 2) two public members appointed for 4-year terms; 3) one representative of public schools and one representative of private schools, appointed for 4-year terms; 4) one majority and one minority party senator and one majority and one minority party representative to the assembly, appointed as are the members of standing committees in their respective houses; 5) one member appointed by the board of regents of the university of Wisconsin system for a 4-year term; 6) the chairpersons of the council on public radio and the council on public television; and 7) one member appointed by the technical college system board for a 4-year term.

This bill amends the statute to increase the total number of members to 18 by increasing the number of public school representatives from one member to three members.

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Fiscal estimates are available from the WEAC Government Relations Division.

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*Written May 1996; Posted July 18, 1996*





# 1997 WEAC Legislative Agenda Item

## Reducing Class Size in the Primary Grade Levels

### BACKGROUND:

The understanding that schools are complex cultural entities and that school quality is dependent on the level of student-teacher interaction has produced a new generation of class size research which explores relationships among a wide range of variables.

The 1995-97 biennial budget funded a pilot project called the Student Achievement Guarantee in Education (SAGE) program. SAGE is a five year, five million dollar project. It requires participating schools to sign a five-year contract that includes provisions to reduce class size, increase collaboration with social services and establish intensive staff development and accountability policies. This is a scaled back version of the "Children's Initiative" which is a program that was offered by the DPI last year. The SAGE is targeted at low income schools and is currently the only statutorily created program in Wisconsin that addresses the issue of class size.

The Wisconsin Education Association Council has monitored various research projects relating to class size and student performance. This research has helped in the development of a legislative proposal establishing a maximum class size act for the primary grade levels in Wisconsin's public schools.

Key rationale for reducing class size in the primary grade levels include the following points:

- The most positive effects of small classes on pupil learning occur in the primary grade levels K-3 in reading and mathematics.
- The most positive effects of small class size on student achievement decrease as grade levels increase.
- Studies examining student attitudes and behavior found the most favorable effects of smaller classes in the primary grades and that the most effective class size is from 15-17 students.
- Smaller classes can positively affect the academic achievement of economically disadvantaged and ethnic minority students.
- Within the range of 20 to 30 pupils, class size has little impact on the academic achievement of most pupils in most subjects above the primary grades.
- A recent WEAC K-12 survey found that teachers overwhelmingly feel that smaller class sizes are an effective way to reduce disruptive behaviors by students.

### KEY COMPONENTS OF CLASS SIZE LEGISLATION:

- Establish that the legislature finds that class size, especially in the primary grades, is a major factor in the capacity for students to learn and teachers to teach.
- Establish a class size standard for the primary grade levels at no more than 15 pupils.
- Provide that the class size standard shall be implemented for kindergarten in the 1997-98 school year; for grade level one in the 1998-99 school year; for grade level two in the 1999-2000 school year; and for grade level three in the 2000-2001 school year.

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Following is a summary of a proposed bill that WEAC will seek to have introduced



**in 1997**

An Act *to create* 118.44 relating to: establishing class size in public school primary grade levels and making an appropriation.

**Analysis**

This bill sets class sizes for public school primary grade levels at no more than 15 pupils. This standard shall be implemented for kindergarten in the 1997-1998 school year; for grade level one in the 1998-1999 school year; for grade level two in the 1999-2000 school year; and for grade level three in the 2000-2001 school year.

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Fiscal estimates are available from the WEAC Government Relations Divison.

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*Written May 1996; Posted July 18, 1996*





## 1997 WEAC Legislative Agenda Item

### Establishment of the Wisconsin Bill of Rights for Children

#### BACKGROUND:

The Wisconsin Education Association Council (WEAC) is committed to the belief that the children of Wisconsin represent the most precious resource for the future. WEAC therefore supports the adoption of a Bill of Rights for Children. The Bill of Rights for Children establishes a set of guiding principles for all who share in the responsibility of nurturing and educating youth so that our state's children receive every opportunity to become successful citizens in this society.

#### KEY COMPONENTS OF A WISCONSIN BILL OF RIGHTS FOR CHILDREN:

**PREAMBLE:** WE, THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF WISCONSIN, IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE A MORE PERFECT SOCIETY, FULFILL OUR MORAL OBLIGATIONS, FURTHER OUR FOUNDING IDEALS AND PRESERVE THE CONTINUED BLESSINGS OF LIBERTY, DO HEREBY PROCLAIM THIS BILL OF RIGHTS FOR CHILDREN.

**ARTICLE I: DECLARATION OF RIGHTS:** ALL CHILDREN ARE RECOGNIZED AS THE MOST PRECIOUS RESOURCE FOR OUR FUTURE AND ARE SUBJECT TO CERTAIN INHERENT RIGHTS THAT WILL ENSURE THAT THEY RECEIVE EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO BECOME SUCCESSFUL CITIZENS IN THIS SOCIETY.

**SECTION I:** ALL CHILDREN IN WISCONSIN HAVE THE RIGHT TO START SCHOOL READY TO LEARN:

**SECTION II:** ALL CHILDREN IN WISCONSIN HAVE THE RIGHT TO A SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT WHERE PARENTS OR GUARDIANS ARE ENCOURAGED TO PARTICIPATE IN PARTNERSHIPS THAT WILL INCREASE EACH CHILD'S SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL, AND ACADEMIC GROWTH:

**SECTION III:** ALL CHILDREN IN WISCONSIN HAVE A RIGHT TO EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY THAT IMPROVES THEIR ABILITY TO LEARN AND PREPARES THEM FOR EFFECTIVE CITIZENSHIP:

**SECTION IV:** ALL CHILDREN IN WISCONSIN HAVE A RIGHT TO LIVE AND LEARN IN SAFE COMMUNITIES:

**SECTION V:** ALL CHILDREN IN WISCONSIN HAVE THE RIGHT TO COMPREHENSIVE HEALTH CARE:

**SECTION VI:** ALL PARENTS AND FAMILIES HAVE THE RIGHT TO EARN A LIVING WAGE SO THAT CHILDREN IN WISCONSIN ARE NOT RAISED IN POVERTY:

*NOTE: This provision of the WEAC proactive legislative agenda will be drafted and introduced as a Joint Resolution before the legislature.*

**Following is a summary of a proposed joint resolution that WEAC will seek to have introduced in 1997**

**Relating to:** the establishment of the Wisconsin Bill of Rights for Children.

Whereas, the legislature of the state of Wisconsin, in order to achieve a more perfect society, fulfill our moral obligations, further our founding ideals and preserve the continued blessings of liberty, do hereby proclaim this bill of rights for children.

Whereas, all children in Wisconsin have the right to start school ready to learn.

Whereas, all children in Wisconsin have the right to a school environment where parents or guardians are encouraged to participate in partnerships that will increase each child's social, emotional, and academic growth.

Whereas, all children in Wisconsin have a right to equal educational opportunity that improves their ability to learn and prepares them for effective citizenship.

Whereas, all children in Wisconsin have a right to live and learn in safe communities.

Whereas, all children in Wisconsin have the right to comprehensive health care.

Whereas, all parents and families have the right to earn a living wage so that children in Wisconsin are not raised in poverty.

**Resolved by the senate, the Assembly concurring, that the Wisconsin legislature recognizes this bill of rights for children as a set of guiding principals for all who share in the responsibility of nurturing and educating youth so that our state's children receive every opportunity to become successful citizens in this society.**

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Fiscal estimates are available from the WEAC Government Relations Division.

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*Written May 1996; Posted July 18, 1996*





## 1997 WEAC Legislative Agenda Item

### Addressing the Needs of Aging and Inadequate Facilities

#### BACKGROUND:

A primary factor in any child's ability to learn is the nature of the surroundings in which the child is taught. The Wisconsin Education Association Council believes that every child has a right to learn in a safe and productive school. Part of the meaning behind the words safe and productive, however, must include an examination of the condition of school facilities and classrooms in Wisconsin.

There are currently two sections of the Wisconsin State statutes that primarily deal with requirements for facilities in elementary and secondary (K-12) school districts. Section 120.02 (5) & (6) requires school boards to keep school property in good repair and insured and establish an annual building maintenance schedule. Section 121.02(1)(i) requires school districts to provide safe and healthful facilities and provides that such facilities comply with state laws and rules relating to lead exposure and poisoning. Current inspection procedures for facilities are conducted by the Department of Industry, Labor and Human Relations (DILHR) and are primarily focused on incidents of code violations.

The current state statutes establish a safe and healthful standard for every school building in the state of Wisconsin. The Wisconsin Education Association, however, is currently working to improve the standards of inspection for facilities to address the needs of students to attend public schools in an environment that is not only safe and healthful, but is also the most conducive to learning.

#### KEY COMPONENTS FOR ADDRESSING THE NEED OF FACILITIES:

##### REVIEW OF SEVERAL YEAR'S RESEARCH ON FACILITY NEEDS:

- Status report on Wisconsin's pre-1930 Schools (September, 1989)
  - 1988 study conducted by the Buildings Division of the Department of Industry, Labor and Human Relations.
  - Reported on inspections of 418 buildings in Wisconsin built before 1930 and found a total of 1,206 code violations.
- Children In Peril: A Preliminary Report of the Senate Subcommittee on Aging Schools, (June, 1989) -- included in this report were the following statements:
  - "the subcommittee observed some shameful educational conditions in many buildings, particularly in rural areas. We found buildings with only one computer, insufficient library materials, special education programs squeezed into an overcrowded classroom, rooms with noisy radiators, and too many districts where church and bank basements and trailers are standard forms of educational classrooms." (P.12).
- The Characteristics and Conditions of Wisconsin's Public School Buildings (1995):
  - A study conducted by WEAC of school principles throughout the state
  - Slightly more than 10% of Wisconsin's public school buildings are identified by principals as being in poor condition (206 buildings).
  - About one-fourth of all buildings are judged as not meeting student and program needs (552 buildings).
  - About 8.5% of buildings are in poor physical condition **and** inadequate for meeting

program and student needs (172 buildings).

- School Facilities: States' Financial and Technical Support Varies (November 1995)
  - In this report on the nation's schools, it is noted that the construction, renovation, and maintenance of school buildings remains a local responsibility in Wisconsin. In fact, it is pointed out that Wisconsin is one of only ten states identified as having "extremely limited or no information on facilities."
- The impact of the State's Revenue Caps on Wisconsin School Districts (1995)
  - Data collected by the Wisconsin Association of School District Administrators and WEAC showed that during the 1994-95 school year a total of 51.3% of districts report delaying building maintenance or improvement projects.

#### **KEY COMPONENTS OF LEGISLATION TO REVIEW OF THE NEEDS OF WISCONSIN'S PUBLIC SCHOOL FACILITIES:**

- The Wisconsin Education Association Council has developed a legislative proposal that will establish new procedures under the authority of the Superintendent of Public Instruction that assess the needs of Wisconsin's public school facilities. The bill calls for a study of the physical condition and capacity of the public schools and their ability to provide students with an environment that is the most conducive to learning.

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#### **Following is a summary of a proposed bill that WEAC will seek to have introduced in 1997**

An Act *to create* 115.33(4) of the statutes; **relating to:** a periodic study of the public schools.

#### **Analysis**

This bill directs the state superintendent of public instruction, at least once every 5 years, to conduct a study of the physical condition and capacity of the public schools and their suitability for use as public schools. At the conclusion of each study, the state superintendent must report the results to the appropriate standing committees of the legislature. The first report is due in January 1998.

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Fiscal estimates are available from the WEAC Government Relations Division.

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*Written May 1996; Posted July 18, 1996*





## 1997 WEAC Legislative Agenda Item

### Improving the Collective Bargaining Rights of Education Professionals

#### BACKGROUND:

In January 1993, Governor Thompson introduced to the legislature his 1993-94 biennial budget. The budget bill included a cap on total compensation packages for county, municipal and school district employees. During budget deliberations, however, the legislature amended the budget and passed a provision which restricts teachers access to arbitration on economic issues if the school district management submits a qualified economic offer. The law now states that an offer is considered a QEO if it is equivalent to a 2.1% increase overall on the salary schedule and a 1.7% increase (as a percentage of the total compensation package) in the cost of benefits. The QEO policy has drastically effected the morale and financial stability of education professionals in Wisconsin.

The Wisconsin Education Association Council has developed various pieces of legislation that alter the current QEO law. These legislative initiatives are designed to create fairness in the bargaining process and improve the status of education professionals across the state.

#### KEY COMPONENTS OF LEGISLATION TO ALTER THE QEO LAW:

- **Repeal of the QEO:** this bill eliminates the qualified economic offer exception from the compulsory, final, binding arbitration process. This proposal also eliminates the authorization for an arbitrator or arbitration panel to give any weight to economic conditions in the jurisdiction of the employer or to any state law or directive that places expenditure or revenue limitations on an employer. Finally this proposal eliminates the provisions in current law that requires school district professional employees to be placed in a collective bargaining unit that is separate from the units of other school district employees.

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#### Following is a summary of a proposed bill that WEAC will seek to have introduced in 1997

This bill does all of the following:

1. Under current law, in local government employment other than law enforcement and fire fighting employment, if a dispute relating to the terms of a proposed collective bargaining agreement has not been settled after a reasonable period of negotiation and after mediation by the Wisconsin Employment Relations Commission (WERC), either party, or the parties jointly, may petition WERC to initiate compulsory, final, and binding arbitration with respect to any dispute relating to wages, hours, and conditions of employment. If WERC determines, after investigation, that an impasse exists and that arbitration is required, WERC must submit to the parties a list of 7 arbitrators, from which the parties alternately strike names until one arbitrator is left. As an alternative to a single arbitrator, WERC may provide for an arbitration panel that consists of one person selected by each party and one person selected by WERC. As a further alternative, WERC may also provide a process that allows for a random selection of a single arbitrator from a list of 7 names submitted by WERC. Under current law, an arbitrator or arbitration panel must adopt the final offer of one of the parties on all disputed issues, which

is then incorporated into the collective bargaining agreement.

Under current law, however, this process does not apply to a dispute over economic issues involving a collective bargaining unit consisting of school district professional employees if WERC determines, subsequent to an investigation, that the employer has submitted a qualified economic offer. Under current law, a qualified economic offer consists of a proposal to maintain the percentage contribution by the employer to the employees' existing fringe benefit costs and the employees' existing fringe benefits and to generally provide with certain exceptions, for an annual average salary increase having a cost to the employer at least equal to 2.1% of the existing total compensation and fringe benefit costs for the employees in the collective bargaining unit.

This bill eliminates the qualified economic offer exception from the compulsory, final, and binding arbitration process.

2. Current law provides that in reaching a decision, the arbitrator or arbitration panel must give weight to many factors, including the lawful authority of the municipal employer, the stipulations of the parties, the interest and welfare of the public, and the financial ability of the unit of government to meet the costs of the proposed agreement, comparison of wages, hours, and conditions of employment with those of other public and private sector employees, the cost of living, the overall compensation and benefits the employees currently receive, and other similar factors. But, under current law, the arbitrator is required to give greater weight to economic conditions in the jurisdiction of the employer and the greatest weight to any state law or directive that places expenditure or revenue limitations on an employer.

This bill eliminates the authorization for the arbitrator or arbitration panel to give any weight to economic conditions in the jurisdiction of the employer or to any state law or directive that places expenditure or revenue limitations on an employer.

3. Under current law, every collective bargaining agreement covering school district professional employees must expire on June 30 of the odd-numbered years. For all other local government employees, the term of a collective bargaining agreement must be 2 years, except for an initial agreement, and except as the parties otherwise agree, and in no case may exceed 3 years. This bill treats the terms of collective bargaining agreements for school district professional employees the same as those of other local government employees.

4. Finally, under current law, school district professional employees are required to be placed in a collective bargaining unit that is separate from the units of other school district employees. This bill eliminates this requirement.

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Fiscal estimates are available from the WEAC Government Relations Division.

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*Written May 1996; Posted July 18, 1996*





## 1997 WEAC Legislative Agenda Item

### Addressing Compulsory School Attendance and Alternative Education Opportunities

#### BACKGROUND:

Over recent years, there has been much discussion regarding the age of compulsory school attendance. A proposal offered by Governor Thompson as part of the 1995-97 biennial budget would have changed the age of compulsory school attendance in Wisconsin to the age of 17 years old. The Joint Finance Committee amended that provision to age 16 with certain restrictions. In the end, the Governor vetoed all provisions on this issue from the budget and agreed to establish a task force to study the issue.

As an organization of education professionals, WEAC also recognizes that more and more of today's students want to complete their high school education but have extraordinary needs which can be addressed through alternative education programs. WEAC strongly believes that public school educators, based on their professional experience and expertise, are the best sources for developing and maintaining effective programs for needy students.

Chapter 115.28 (7) (e) of the state statutes defines an alternative education program to mean an instructional program approved by the school board, that utilizes successful alternative or adaptive school structures and teaching techniques and that is incorporated into existing, traditional classrooms or regularly scheduled curricular programs or that is offered in place of regularly scheduled curricular programs. "Alternative educational program" does not include a private school or a home-based private educational program.

The state superintendent of public instruction is charged with the development of administrative rules establishing requirements for licensure of alternative education program teachers and for the approval of teacher education programs leading to licensure as an alternative education program teacher. Funding of alternative education programs is currently the responsibility of the local school district in which a program is established.

Education professionals realize, however, that local school districts do not have the financial resources necessary to support alternatives for the students who are most at-risk. WEAC therefore supports the establishment of a sum sufficient categorical grant program funded through state general purpose revenue to support locally established alternative education programs. This program will help districts to serve many students with the most severe needs and provide them with the educational opportunities they need and deserve.

#### KEY COMPONENTS OF LEGISLATION RELATING TO COMPULSORY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AND ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMS:

- Governor Thompson has vowed to convene a task force to address the issue of compulsory school attendance in Wisconsin. At the request of the Governor's office, the Wisconsin Education Association Council has provided a list of members that are recommended to serve on the task force when it begins its work. The WEAC Board of Directors has also adopted a motion in support of the current compulsory school attendance age of 18 years old.
- The Wisconsin Education Association Council has developed a proposal to create a categorical aid



administered by the department of public instruction to provide grants to public school districts to develop alternative education programs. The sum sufficient grants would be used for nonrecurring costs, including the costs of staff to develop a program, the costs of site improvement, the costs of purchasing equipment and materials, and the costs of training staff. A grant awarded under this program shall not be used for recurring costs, including the costs of supplies or staff positions, or to reimburse for costs that have already been incurred by a school district.

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**Following is a summary of a proposed bill that WEAC will seek to have introduced in 1997**

**AN ACT to create 20.255 (2) (ad) and 115.367 relating to:** creating alternative education programs and making an appropriation.

**Analysis**

This bill creates a categorical aid administered by the department of public instruction to provide grants to public school districts to develop alternative education programs. A grant may only be used for nonrecurring costs, including the costs of staff to develop a program, the costs of site improvement, the costs of purchasing equipment and materials, and the costs of training staff. A grant awarded under this section shall not be used for recurring costs, including the costs of supplies or staff positions, or to reimburse for costs that have already been incurred.

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Fiscal estimates are available from the WEAC Government Relations Division.

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*Written May 1996; Posted July 18, 1996*





## 1997 WEAC Legislative Agenda Item

### Student Performance and Assessment Testing

#### BACKGROUND:

The public demands both high standards and accountability in public education. WEAC supports the public on these issues. For many years, standardized achievement tests--typically in multiple choice format-- have been used to measure what students know. These standardized tests, however, focus primarily on knowledge and low level skills. Performance assessments measure what students can do. Performance assessments are used to apply what students know to solve problems, to give performances, or to develop products.

In recent years, Governor Thompson and the education community have agreed to support the development of performance assessment testing for children as a way to determine the success of education programs in the public schools. A bipartisan education reform package was adopted as part of the 1993 biennial budget to develop performance assessments in English/language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. The package was supported by Governor Thompson, Former Superintendent of Public Instruction Bert Grover, the WI Association of School District Administrators, Association of WI School Administrators, the WI Association of School Boards, Wisconsin Education Association Council and the Wisconsin Federation of Teachers.

Although funding for the development of performance-based pupil assessments in the 4th, 8th, and 10th grades was appropriated as part of the biennial budget in 1993, the performance-based tests were not set to begin until the 1996 school year when additional funding would be needed. During deliberations over the 1995-97 budget, however, funding for the final administration of the performance assessment tests was eliminated.

#### KEY COMPONENTS FOR PUPIL ASSESSMENT TESTING LEGISLATION:

The Wisconsin Education Association Council supports a legislative initiative to restore funding for performance assessment testing in the 4th, 8th, and 10th grades as part of the 1997-99 biennial budget.

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#### Following is a summary of a proposed bill that WEAC will seek to have introduced in 1997

AN ACT *to repeal* 118.30(4), *to amend* 118.30(1m) and 118.30(2), and *to appeal and recreate* 118.30(1)(a); *relating to:* requiring school boards to administer performance based pupil assessments for pupils in the 4th, 8th and 10th grades, and making an appropriation.

#### Analysis

This bill requires school boards to administer performance based pupil assessments for pupils in the 4th, 8th and 10th grades beginning in the 1997-1998 school year.

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Fiscal estimates are available from the WEAC Government Relations Division.

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*Written May 1996; Posted July 18, 1996*





## 1997 WEAC Legislative Agenda Item

### Certification by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards

#### BACKGROUND:

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) is an organization of teachers and other education stakeholders working to advance the teaching profession and to improve student learning. The Board is governed by a 63-member board of directors, the majority of whom are classroom teachers. The NBPTS board is dedicated to defining, identifying and recognizing accomplished teaching in America.

In 1987, the National Board was created as a nonprofit, nonpartisan, nongovernmental organization whose mission is to establish high and rigorous standards for what accomplished teachers should know and be able to do, to develop and operate a national voluntary system to assess and certify teachers who meet these standards, and to advance related education reforms for the purpose of improving student learning in American schools. The NBPTS is designed to complement, not replace, existing state licensure procedures for novice teachers.

During the 1995-96 school year, the NBPTS offered certification in two fields, Early childhood/Generalist and Middle Childhood/Generalist. The Board will expand certification to a total of six fields in the 1996-97 school year. The 1996-97 certification will include early adolescence/generalist (students ages 11-15), early adolescence/English language arts (11-15), early childhood/generalist (3-8), middle childhood/generalist (7-12), adolescence and young adulthood/mathematics (14-18+), and early adolescence through young adulthood/art (11-18+).

The NBPTS has received support from organizations such as the American Association of School Administrators, the National School Boards Association, the Association of Colleges and Schools of Education in State Universities and Land Grant Colleges, the American Federation of Teachers and the National Education Association. In February, 1996, forty-one states were reported in the process of developing activity in support of the NBPTS certification program; sixteen were pursuing legislative action.

#### KEY COMPONENTS OF LEGISLATION SUPPORTING NBPTS CERTIFICATION:

- The Wisconsin Education Association Council has developed legislation to explore the experience of NBPTS certification for education professionals in Wisconsin. The bill directs the state superintendent of public instruction to award grants to up to 20 teachers in the 1997-98 school year and 20 teachers in the 1998-99 school year who obtain certification by the national board for professional teaching standards, and creates a categorical aid administered by the department of public instruction for this purpose. In addition the bill directs that the amount of the grant be \$2,000 in the year the teacher successfully completes the national board's assessment phase plus \$2,500 a year thereafter for 8 years. Finally, the state superintendent shall promulgate rules to implement and administer the pilot program.

**Following is a summary of a proposed bill that WEAC will seek to have introduced in 1997**

AN ACT *to create* 20.255 (2) (bg) and 115.369 *relating to:* directing the state superintendent of public instruction to award grants to teachers obtaining certification by the national board for professional teaching standards, granting rule-making authority, and making an appropriation.

**Analysis**

This bill directs the state superintendent of public instruction to award grants to up to 20 teachers in the 1997-1998 school year and 20 teachers in the 1998-1999 school year who obtain certification by the national board for professional teaching standards, and creates a categorical aid administered by the department of public instruction for this purpose. It also encourages school districts to contribute to the teacher's additional costs of obtaining such certification.

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Fiscal estimates are available from the WEAC Government Relations Division.

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*Written May 1996; Posted July 18, 1996*



# RESEARCH PAPER

Third Year Study by the  
Wisconsin Association of School  
District Administrators and the  
Wisconsin Education Association  
Council

## Wisconsin's School Districts: Revenue Caps, Referenda, and Computer Technology

Report written by Russ Allen

### Introduction

For the past three years, the Wisconsin Association of School District Administrators and the Wisconsin Education Association Council have surveyed public school superintendents to determine the specific effects of the state revenue caps on district programs and services. In 1994, 79% of districts participated in the study. In 1995, that figure was slightly lower, 77%. This year responses were received from 299 superintendents (70%). The lower response rate in 1996 might be attributed in part to the use of a much longer and more complex questionnaire. This year's questionnaire was nearly twice as long as the previous ones, and included some complicated questions about computer technology and the status of school referenda.

In the previous two years, the purpose of each study was to determine the effects of the revenue caps on district programs and services. This year's study is broader in scope and included questions about referenda and computer technology.

### Legislative Background of the Revenue Caps

In 1993, Wisconsin Act 16 became law. The purpose of Act 16 was to place limits on school budgets so that Wisconsin's home and business owners would experience "property tax relief."<sup>1</sup> The legislation imposed limits on the total amount of money that public school districts were allowed to raise through a combination of state aids and the local property tax. From 1993 to 1998, the annual increase in a district's revenue per pupil was

to be limited to a specific dollar amount (\$190 in 1993-94) or the rate of inflation times the per pupil cost. Beginning with the 1994-95 school year, the per pupil dollar amount was to be adjusted for inflation.

The original legislation was changed in 1995. The revenue controls were made permanent, and the per pupil increases were set at a fixed dollar amount (\$200 per pupil in 1995-96 and \$206 per pupil in 1996-97). This meant that districts could no longer choose between a fixed dollar amount and the Consumer Price Index.

The goal of property tax relief will be achieved, at least temporarily, for it is estimated that for the average homeowner in Wisconsin property tax bills in December, 1996 will decrease an average of 11.5% (\$245) from December, 1995.<sup>2</sup> However, it is important to recognize that because there are no revenue limits on municipal or county governments, these reductions will be temporary. The superintendents who participated in this study report that on average municipal and county taxes, which represent approximately 40% of all local property taxes, increased 5% each this past year.<sup>3</sup> (Note: The Legislative Fiscal Bureau estimates that municipal tax levies will increase 5.5% from 1995 to 1996. For counties, the figure is 6.0%).<sup>4</sup> This means that within a year or so, property taxes will return to their December, 1995 levels.

### Significant Findings From 1994 and 1995

Although there is a core set of questions which has been asked during each of the three years, some questions have been used only once. Brief summaries of the responses to these questions follow:



# WISCONSIN EDUCATION ASSOCIATION COUNCIL

1. In 1994, superintendents were asked to indicate what they feel would be the long-term implications of program cuts which already had been, or were likely to be made. More than 90% of superintendents thought the long-term consequences would be negative.

2. In 1994, superintendents were asked to describe the reaction of community members to the budget restraints. Only a few superintendents reported that there was much concern. In 1995, a similar question asked about the reaction of community leaders. Nearly one-half of superintendents (47%) reported that their community leaders tended to support the revenue caps. Only 11% of superintendents said community leaders were opposed to the revenue caps. The remainder, 41%, were said to be "uncertain."

3. In 1995, 78% of superintendents disagreed with the statement, "In the long run, the caps may have a positive effect on my district's programs and services." Conversely, 75% agreed with the statement, "In the long

run, the caps will have a negative effect on my district's programs and services."

4. In 1995, 58% of superintendents disagreed with the statement, "It's too early to say how the revenue caps will affect my district's programs and services."

5. There are no significant differences among rural/small town, suburban, and urban school districts as to the number of cost-cutting actions taken. Further, the number of cuts is unrelated to per pupil spending amounts (1994).

## Actions Taken by Districts in Response to the Revenue Caps, 1994 - 1996

During each of the past three years, superintendents have been given a list of cost-cutting actions which might have been taken in their district to comply with the state's revenue caps. The table below shows the percent of superintendents who report taking each of these actions.

## Responses of School Districts to the Revenue Caps

	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96
1. Delaying building maintenance or improvement projects	NA	51.3	49.3
2. Spending less for maintenance of buildings and grounds	44.3	44.0	41.2
3. Spending less for improvements of buildings and grounds	44.2	50.0	47.1
4. Delaying/reducing purchase of textbooks, curricular materials	30.6	25.3	30.0
5. Limiting purchase of consumable supplies, such as paper	28.8	23.2	25.2
6. Delaying/reducing purchase of computers, other technology	43.9	43.7	57.7
7. Offering fewer staff development opportunities for teachers	30.9	22.9	22.5
8. Teacher layoffs	22.8	9.1	8.9
9. Layoffs of teacher aides or other support staff	24.6	10.7	12.1
10. Administrator/supervisor layoffs	10.1	4.0	5.3
11. Reducing counseling or similar services	5.0	3.4	6.0
12. Delaying/reducing hiring of new staff	34.4	28.7	35.2
13. Reducing extracurricular programs	9.2	5.8	5.0
14. Limiting programs for students who are at risk	13.4	11.9	18.5
15. Limiting programs for gifted and talented students	19.0	15.6	22.3
16. Offering fewer courses	15.4	9.4	13.0
17. Reducing transportation services for students	11.6	5.8	8.8
18. Limiting summer school programs	21.7	15.9	20.2
19. Offering fewer field trips for students	27.6	12.8	17.4
20. Increased class sizes	32.0	26.6	29.8
21. Increased teacher workload	21.7	18.3	23.1
22. Increased administrator workload	NA	33.9	39.6
23. Increased student fees	35.6	23.9	25.3
24. Using fund balance to support budget	20.8	21.7	26.6
25. Other	3.9	.3	.7

Of the 24 specific program and service areas to choose from, between forty and fifty percent of districts have selected four areas in which to make "cuts:" (1) delaying building maintenance or improvement projects, (2) spending less for maintenance of buildings and grounds, (3) spending less for improvements of buildings and grounds, and (4) delaying/reducing purchase of computers and other technology.

In the short run, cuts or delays in the areas of building maintenance and improvements are unlikely to have an immediate effect on the quality of existing programs or services. However, the long-term consequences of delaying maintenance or improvement projects may be even more costly. As for computer technology, the cuts, reductions, or delays have direct consequences for the quality of the instructional program.

In addition to these four areas, approximately 20% to 40% of districts report taking steps this past school year to control spending in the following eleven areas:

- Increasing administrator workload (39.6%)
- Delaying/reducing hiring of new staff (35.2%)
- Delaying/reducing purchase of textbooks and curricular materials (30.0%)
- Increasing class sizes (29.8%)
- Using the fund balance to support the budget (26.6%)
- Increasing student fees (25.3%)
- Limiting purchase of consumable supplies, such as paper (25.2%)
- Increasing teacher workload (23.1%)
- Offering fewer staff development opportunities for teachers (22.5%)
- Limiting programs for gifted and talented students (22.3%)
- Limiting summer school programs (20.2%)

### Interpreting the Data

As the list of district actions is reviewed, three points should be kept in mind:

(1). This study does not speak to the magnitude of cuts or increases. For example, increases in class sizes may

be very modest in one school district, while in another the increases may be significant. This study is not designed to differentiate between the two examples just described; each is treated as a case of "increased class size."

(2). The actions listed in the table are occurring during a period in which the population of students in the public schools continues to grow.

In this study, 280 of 299 superintendents reported their student populations for January, 1995 (500,058) and January, 1997 (estimated at 517,085). For these districts there is an increase in the student population of more than 17,000 (3.4%) between January, 1995 and January, 1997.

(3). Although comparisons over time can be valuable, there are risks. In this case, districts participating in the 1993-94, 1994-95, and 1995-96 studies are not necessarily the same. Because responses always have been confidential, it is not possible to identify the districts which have participated during each of the three years.

There is an additional problem with time-based comparisons relating to the interpretation of data. For example, in 1993-94, 22.8% of districts reported that they had laid off teachers. During the past two years, the figures are considerably lower, about 9% each year. Because the percent values have dropped, one might conclude that teacher layoffs are no longer a serious problem in most districts. Conversely, a far different conclusion can be reached. It can be argued that if teachers were laid off in 1993-94, it may not have been necessary for a district to lay off teachers in subsequent years. However, the problem still remains; there are fewer teachers employed in the district (which may result in increased class sizes).

Likewise, if a program was eliminated (or extensively cut) in 1994 or 1995, it is not possible to cut the program in 1996 or in subsequent years. In this second example, a district would no longer report a cut in the program area, simply because the program has been discontinued or extensively curtailed.



### Cost-Cutting Measures: Mean and Median Values

During the first two years of the revenue caps, the typical district reported that it had taken four cost-cutting actions (median value). For the 1995-96 school year, the median number of cost-cutting actions per district increased to five.

This pattern of increased cost-cutting measures is consistent with the written comments made previously by many superintendents. That is, many districts have adjusted to the revenue caps by postponing expenditures or by using their fund balance. However, as indicated by the superintendents in 1994 and 1995, many expected to make additional cuts in programs and services in future years.

It is interesting to note that the number of cuts is unrelated to district "wealth" (as measured by per pupil expen-

ditures). This does not mean that the effects of cuts are the same for poor and resource-rich districts. This absence of a relationship between the number of cuts and district spending was first reported in 1994.<sup>6</sup>

### Effects of Changes in Student Population

In their written comments over the past three years, superintendents from districts with stable or decreasing student populations have reported that they are being hit especially hard by the revenue caps. In contrast, superintendents from districts in which the student population is increasing have tended to report fewer cuts in programs or services. A closer look at the data supports the superintendents' comments. In the table below, districts are grouped into four categories, based on the changes in the student population from January, 1995 to January, 1997 (projected). The mean and median number of cuts for each category also are shown.

### Number of Cost-Cutting Actions Related to the Changes in Student Population (January, 1995 to January, 1997)

Change in Student Population	Number of Districts	No. of Cost-Cutting Measures	
		Mean*	Median*
All Districts	280**	5.6	5
Decrease in Population	64	6.9	6
Up to 1.99% increase	71	5.7	5
2.0% - 4.99% increase	71	5.0	4
5.0% or greater increase	49	4.8	4

\*The mean values tend to be higher than the median values because there are some districts which report a very large number of cost-cutting measures. Because the median is less sensitive to extreme cases, it is a more representative statistic in this study.

\*\*Not all superintendents reported their student population figures; only 280 did. Furthermore, only 255 (64 + 71 + 71 + 49) of 280 answered questions about cuts and changes in student population.

The 64 districts with a declining student population report a median number of six cost-cutting measures at the end of the 1995-96 school year (mean = 6.9). Districts showing an increase in the student population report fewer cuts. The fewest number of cuts is found among the districts with the greatest growth in student population (5% or more over the two year period).<sup>7</sup> These districts report between four and five cost-cutting measures (mean = 4.8, median = 4).

## Unique Budgetary Circumstances

As in previous years, superintendents were asked to describe any unique circumstances which exist in their district which are affected by the revenue caps. One hundred and fifty-four of the 299 superintendents (52%) wrote a response to this question. Their written responses can be found at the end of this paper.

## Exceeding the Revenue Caps with a Referendum

State law (SS 121.91 (3)) allows school districts to exceed the revenue limits by passing a special referendum. Nearly one-half of the superintendents (143 of 288 superintendents who answered the questions about referenda) report there has been at least one attempt to pass a referendum in their district which would allow them to increase revenues beyond the caps.

Further analysis of those 143 responses showed that 31% of all superintendents (90 of 288) report one referendum, while 18% (53 of 288) report two or more referenda (eight superintendents indicated three).

## A Single Referendum:

As noted, nearly one-third of the superintendents (N = 90) who participated in this study report that since the 1993-94 school year there has been one referendum in their district which would allow them to exceed the revenue caps. Of this group of 90, 70 referenda (nearly 80%) have passed; 17 (20%) have failed.<sup>8</sup>

Superintendents indicated that the primary purpose of their referendum was for new construction (70 cases).

followed by major renovations or improvements (50 cases), and improvements in technology (34 cases). Nineteen superintendents marked the category, "other purposes."<sup>9</sup> The typical district requested \$4.5 million (median value).<sup>10</sup>

## Two or More Referenda:

Fifty-three superintendents (18%) indicated that they have attempted to pass two or more referenda (eight superintendents indicated three).<sup>11</sup> In 24 cases, the referendum was passed on a second try, while in 26 cases the referendum failed to win approval. One respondent indicated a decision had not yet been made, while two superintendents did not specify the fate of the second referendum.

## The Status of Computer Technology

There has been little information about the status of computer technology and the use of computers in Wisconsin's public schools. In order to address this problem, superintendents were asked several questions about the number of computers, their characteristics, and their uses. As these findings are reviewed, keep in mind that 58% of superintendents said they are delaying or reducing purchases in computer technology. This means that advances in this area are likely to be very limited during the 1996-97 school year.

## Numbers of Computers

The typical district participating in this study reports a student population of 1,053 (median value) and 125 computers (median value) for these students to use. This means that there is approximately one computer for every eight students. The highest ratio is one computer for every 67 students; the lowest ratio is one computer for every two students (found in three districts).

The table on the next page shows five categories of student-computer ratios, ranging from fewer than five students per computer to twenty or more students for each

computer. The percent of districts within each category also is shown.

### Student-Computer Ratios in Wisconsin's Public School Districts, End of the 1995-96 School Year

Ratio	Percent of Districts
Fewer than five students per computer	16.2%
5 - 9.9 students per computer	56.7%
10 - 14.9 students per computer	18.6%
15 - 19.9 students per computer	6.0%
20 or more students per computer	2.5%

In general, "wealthier" school districts have a lower ratio of students to computers. For example, the districts which participated in this study and which spent less than \$7,000 per student during the 1995-96 school year have approximately one computer for every nine students (mean = 9.3 students per computer, median = 8.2 students per computer). In contrast, districts which spent \$7,000 or more per student have approximately one computer for every seven students (mean = 7.6, median = 6.9).

### Characteristics of Computers

One-fourth of all computers used by students are multi-media equipped, meaning they have such features as a sound board, speakers, and a CD-ROM drive. As might be expected, there is considerable variation among districts. For example, in 41% of the districts fewer than one in ten computers is multi-media equipped. At the other end of the spectrum, in nine percent of the districts 70% or more of the computers have these latest features.<sup>12</sup>

In 81% of the districts students can use a computer to access the Internet. Even though this appears to be a very high figure, it is important to recognize that only four to five percent of all student computers in Wisconsin's public schools actually are connected to the Internet. Further, it is significant to note that in 31% of the districts access requires payment of a long distance charge.

### Networks

In an ideal situation nearly all of the computers within a school would be connected to a Local Area Network (LAN). Further, all LANs would be connected to form a Wide Area Network, or WAN (e.g., the WAN could connect all schools in the district). Networking of this kind enhances communication among users. It also can be cost efficient because maintenance of a network tends to be less expensive than maintenance of dozens or even hundreds of stand-alone computers. There also may be some savings in software purchases.

The reality is that only one-half of student computers are on a LAN. Furthermore, only 28% of LANs are part of a Wide Area Network.

### Instructional Use of Computers

Superintendents report that approximately 60% of elementary, middle/junior high, and secondary level teachers "use computers as part of their classroom instruction." This figure tells us that the majority of teachers are attempting to use computer technology in their teaching. However, it is difficult to interpret the full meaning of this figure for it does not allow one to differentiate among teachers whose students use computers primarily as word processors on an occasional basis and teachers whose students use computers in sophisticated ways in nearly all subject areas.

### Administrators and the Internet

An additional set of questions was asked to determine the percent of superintendents, principals, business managers, and other administrators who have access to the Internet. Analysis of the responses shows that approximately one-third of superintendents (36%), 16% of business managers, and 15% of administrators classified as "other" have this capability.

Among principals, the situation is somewhat more complex. In 29% of the districts there is at least one principal who has access to this service. A closer look at the data shows that approximately one-half of the principals within the group of 29% have access to the Internet.

## Significant Challenges

A final question asked superintendents to indicate the most important challenges they expect to face during the next several years related to the acquisition and use of computer technology. There were 275 written comments; only 24 questionnaires were left blank. Almost every superintendent addressed the issue of funding. Many simply wrote about the high costs, the need for additional money, or the constraints of the revenue caps. Others also made reference to costs; however, their comments about money tended to be specifically directed to such issues as purchasing, installing, maintaining, upgrading, and networking computer equipment. The remaining comments typically addressed the need for staff development, particularly to help teachers make effective use of computers in their instruction.

## Written Comments Regarding Unique Budgetary Circumstances

As noted earlier in this paper, 154 of 299 superintendents wrote an answer to the question, "Describe any unique budgetary circumstances in your district, such as a new building that must be staffed, deteriorating facilities in need of renovation or replacement, increasing enrollment or declining enrollment, which will be compromised by the revenue caps." One superintendent included a five page response to the question, which included 62 specific budget cuts totaling \$3.4 million. The complete list of all the other responses follow. (Note: with few exceptions (such as deleting references to district names) the comments have not been edited.)

"Redid . . . gym roof — others under warranty — no compromises due to 'CAP' at this time."

"Two of the existing buildings have drastic need for improvement due to deferred maintenance. We passed an \$11.2 million referendum to help with this — covered new high school."

"In a time of declining enrollments a family moves in with quadruplets — all EEN — birthday September 29 — can't be on third Friday count and we must add staff to serve them."

"Approximately 80,000 square of new construction will have no new custodial staff — major reluctance to go to referendum for staff."

"Roofs must be replaced and we have a declining enrollment."

"Increasing enrollment, building of new middle school and an additional elementary school."

"Additional staffing needed for recreation center that is owned and operated by school district."

"Greenhouse collapse during winter storm. Roof membrane failure."

"Track that has deteriorated and in need of repair — tennis courts shut because of needed repair — technology updates postponed."

"Declining enrollments! Regular education at the expense of special education (increasingly mandated)."

"Estimated \$1,000,000 in roofing to be done; failing septic system at elementary school."

"Deteriorating 1929 middle school building. Are planning to go to referendum in 1996 - October."

"Asbestos problem in gymnasium which resulted in unexpected abatement costs exceeding revenue caps and requiring use of fund balance."

"Roofs leak and we can't fix. Starting to decline in enrollment, maintain new bus facility."

"Long term teacher salaries at 3.8% will negatively affect money available under revenue caps. We have new high school going into service September 1996. Additional custodial staff will be absorbed into regular budget."

"High school plant is inadequate. Important facility needs in Science, Physical Education, and middle school crowding is extreme. Performing Arts technology infrastructure and hardware needs are desperate."

"The district needs to replace the 1926 section of the high school. We also need another gymnasium and library at the elementary school."

"Great increases in number of Special Ed students."

"Declining enrollment."

"New addition to be staffed (14 rooms). Uncertain about funding two to three years down the road."

"Increasing maintenance needs — needs generally not unique from other districts — budget trends point to serious problems next two to three years."

"ADA building needs estimated at \$250,000."

"Two years from now, significant problems."

"High school is 20 years old — heating system and roof must be up-dated — \$300,000 minimum. Our middle school has a 1919 section which is not up to code. Can not put infrastructure for LAN computers in any of our buildings — \$100,000."

"Energy initiatives/improvements not allowed to proceed as needed."

"We will need to squeeze for 1997-98 to open another middle school."

"Six and a half million dollar upgrade needed in high school systems (HVAC)."

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"Declining enrollment has placed us in the situation where we must reduce projected expenditures by \$2,000,000."

"District referendum was held for capital, facility/maintenance issues. Referendum passed 74% in favor."

"New 5-8 middle school will open in fall of 1996 without adequate furniture and equipment."

"Several facility projects postponed until ability to borrow restored."

"We are going to referendum to replace a 1913 section of our 7-12 building. If this does not pass, I have no idea how we will improve the present structure to meet AILNR identified problems."

"New building must be staffed in 1997-98 — concern about funding for staff."

"Handicapped access at district office."

"Enrollment is increasing so funds are growing at a fair rate."

"Have some major roofing repairs to complete/forced to do it piece meal."

"We are hoping for a levy override in October as part of costs associated with building a new elementary school."

"Revenue base per member increased only \$7.30 from 1994-95 to 1995-96 because the district did not use \$149,921 to reach a maximum revenue limit."

"Several major additions to schools that will result in increased operating costs, declining enrollment in elementary, building renovation and remodeling, program changes compromised i.e., SOTA, Montessori, etc."

"The borrowing provisions of the aging schools legislation has been effectively eliminated. This was a viable resource for maintaining deteriorating facilities."

"ATIF district has been proposed, which, if successful, will accelerate growth beyond ability of cap growth to match."

"We are a K-8 district with about 65% of our homes owned by out-of-district residents. Therefore, we look like we are property wealthy, but our income level for parents is not high."

"Growing student populations are stretching faculty needs — not sure how community will react to second referendum in less than four years."

"Removal of asbestos floor tile — abatement and replacement exceeds \$60,000 and must be done."

"Two new buildings — elementary and middle school. Real difficulties with staffing."

"We passed a referendum in October 1995 for a 59,000 square foot — \$5.3 million primary school (K-3)."

"Lack of further student growth will cause sever problems under revenue caps just to maintain program."

"One hundred forty three thousand square foot addition to open in 1996-97. Estimate cost for heat, lights, and custodial — \$220,000 annually."

"Aging building that we must replace. Loads of asbestos and ADA problems. We must go to referendum to fix."

"Passed \$250,000 yearly exemption referendum — \$2,000,000 maintenance referendum."

"We are a very small school with declining enrollments. We cannot save money because someone thinks if enrollment is down cost is down."

"We will need to raise our tax levy - we are growing and will need to build unit — do not currently have an operating budget that can hire the additional staff needed."

"Increase in insurance costs for 1995-96 is 42%."

"We will have to house our CD programs in house rather than at a neighboring school at greater expense. The home school enrollment went up and eliminated us."

"Roof replacement."

"Increase in enrollment and growth in value is keeping us afloat."

"Biggest problem for us under revenue cap is special education concerns."

"Building repairs (roofs, heating), increased growth of district."

"We must replace a deteriorating K-3 modular building that is structurally unsound. Our fund balance has decreased from \$1,200,000 to \$400,000."

"New K-8 due to open August 1997 — will strain budget under current projections."

"Overall enrollment dropped 8% over the summer of 95."

"Big concern with recent referendum that we could support ongoing costs of facilities additions under revenue cap."

"We needed no plan for staffing a new building with custodians. Other staff in place."

"New \$4,000,000 remodeling/addition — more dollars to light, heat, clean, equipment; therefore, less dollars for supplies, and personnel."

"Planning facility referendum for fall. If it passes, dollars for staffing and operation will be a problem."

"Declining enrollment will have a major impact in 1997-98."

"Delayed maintenance is a major concern. As well — staff compensation limitations."

"We are still unsure of actual costs — once we open the new high school in 1997."

"Repair of deteriorating facilities has been postponed."

"We are in need of new facilities and renovation of others — looking presently at our fifth attempt at passing a good issue."

"Declining enrollment will result in even more stringent cost saving measures."

"Replacement of high school roof — \$400,000."

"Our roof must be replaced, we do only \$20,000 a year. Class size is increasing teacher load and curriculum writing is not being done. Bleachers need replacement and are not done."

"Need space to accommodate change from shop to technical education."

"We had a referendum to exceed revenue cap for staffing a new elementary building. Referendum for new building and

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exceeding revenue cap failed."

"Deteriorating facilities in need of renovation or replacement and lack of facilities needed."

"Carpeting replacement delayed (30,000 square feet). Roof repair delayed. Many other minor delays."

"We are in a serious overcrowded situation at our Junior/Senior high building."

"Steady to slowly falling enrollment will hurt next year."

"Enrollment has been steadily increasing, replacing current middle school — new high school — remodel current high school to a middle school."

"Increasing student enrollment due to new housing projects. Need to hire more teachers which will decrease building maintenance funds."

"Middle/high school roof must be replaced (soon)."

"Opening a new elementary school and 2 new charter schools that cause significant stress due to budget reallocation."

"The need to replace buses and a roof."

"Elementary school was completed spring of 1992, but was never adequately outfitted. Impossible to do under revenue caps."

"In 1996-97 the budget with the revenue caps will be okay. In 1997-98 in order to operate new schools, less money will be spent on maintenance."

"Considering replacing middle school — \$13,000,000 — deteriorating of old school while waiting."

"Declining enrollment has severely restricted our revenue raising ability over the last three years."

"New building to be staffed."

"Building maintenance delayed at higher future costs."

"We have been okay because enrollment has increased; we expect to see that trend change downward soon."

"We have a slight decline in our enrollment this year."

"Repairing of a leaking roof."

"Our situation may be unique because we are a union high school with a growing enrollment and we have recently passed a referendum after several attempts. The revenue cap concept, however, has been good for us. We have always limited the amounts for supplies. As the amounts were frozen, people became more resourceful in their buying. Rather than order an item from a catalog at \$2.50, they bought it at K-Mart or Office Depot for about one-third the price. We became better business people ..."

"Trying to keep up with technology is really taxing our budget."

"Commitment to capital improvements has been reduced."

"Rapidly growing district. Opening new elementary school in August. Good planning long term prevented any serious problem with staffing, utilities, materials etc."

"Deteriorating facilities (middle school) — technology requisition delayed. ADA project delayed."

"Utility costs have outstripped the amount of revenue caps."

Have had to absorb new operating costs with two additions. Could not staff new middle school programs."

"We are still trying to properly equip a new K-12 facility three years after construction."

"We have reduced a planned addition due to budget and a reluctance to go to referendum."

"Referendum for new high school will require a separate question to exceed revenue cap for staffing and operation."

"We are moving into a new elementary building (K-5) July 1996."

"We will have to address increasing enrollment soon."

"Facility maintenance is the district's biggest concern. We have no money to replace roofs, boilers and other large dollar items."

"New Junior/Senior high school opened in August 1996 — general fund budget cut to bare bones (no new equipment or text adoptions) to help cover new operating costs even though our enrollment is increasing."

"A building addition to our high school is needed. The district has lost three referendums."

"Our high school track is long overdue for resurfacing."

"Strategic planning recommendations such as grade realignment may be slowed because of revenue caps."

"We have a new elementary school that needs to be staffed."

"New high school being considered."

"New building, switch to all-day kindergarten, restoration of buildings."

"Concerned about staffing (support ex custodians) for proposed building additions."

"We have buildings that need to be replaced and are working on a referendum proposal presently."

"Declining enrollment — will continue to drop for the next three years."

"Basically we are trying to get our buildings in compliance. Asbestos — new roof — technology — we have been avoiding referendum by funding this through the general fund."

"Opened a new middle school with constraints on their initial budget."

"We have had a steady increasing enrollment (80 to 150 a year). Because of the three average it takes several years to get credit for the student. This causes students to be supported by others who are already here."

"Decline in three year enrollment, yet facilities at capacity and new development (residential) will impact."

"Serious deterioration of facilities, especially outdoor athletic/physical education facilities. e.g. track that needs resurfacing."

"Roofing project, custodial/maintenance equipment, instructional technology, paving, municipal sewer hook-up and costs."

"Declining enrollment — may consolidate with another small district."

"We have just passed a referendum for a new elementary school. Operational costs will be beyond the caps."

"Increasing enrollment putting larger numbers of students in physical education, art, music. Overcrowding in middle school grades 6-8, not enough library staff to meet new demands."

"Deteriorating facilities in need of renovation or replacement. Increasing enrollment. ADA concerns, energy conservation projects."

"Deteriorating facilities in need of renovation or replacement. Increasing enrollment."

"We will be occupying a new elementary school. Limited funds will restrict what we can do to stock the new library."

"Need to replace portables in near future. Short one classroom in 1997-98. Enrollment is key."

"Significant enrollment decline. Facility committee now meeting to replace K-4 building."

"With increasing enrollment, a new addition was built using fund balance."

"Enrollment declining — equipping new building."

"We are currently looking at a full building referendum."

"Anticipate building referendum — accompanying referendum to exceed caps must be done."

"Increasing enrollment, new building to be staffed in 1997-98."

"Many projects such as roofing have gone undone, DILHR and other mandates impossible to complete."

"We are looking to increase staff for additional first through fourth grade classrooms."

"Increasing enrollment. New addition."

"Increased secondary enrollment (staff added); \$7,000,000 facility addition (add support staff); alternative high school (funding)."

"Dramatic increase in exceptional education students that have moved into the district, increasing district costs."

"Enrollment has been increasing and expansion of revenue cap to \$5,300 per student for our district has delayed negative effects of revenue caps."

"New building addition increasing enrollments — more staff and equipment (technology)."

"Track parking lot, roof and drainage problems."

"Increasing enrollment and two building additions — (heat, lights, extra custodial supplies and time)."

"We have negative fund balance. Three years ago we began plan to budget \$20,000 less than levied to correct problem — plan compromised."

## Footnotes

<sup>1</sup> In Act 27, which was passed in 1995, state support for elementary and secondary education increased from \$3.03 billion in 1995-96 to \$4.02 billion in 1996-97).

<sup>2</sup> "Estimated Impact of Act 27 Property Tax Relief Measures on School Districts and Property Taxpayers." Paper written by the Legislative Fiscal Bureau for the Wisconsin State Legislature, May 13, 1996, p. 7.

<sup>3</sup> The Legislative Fiscal Bureau estimates that county and municipal taxes represented 39% of the average property tax bill in 1995. In 1996, the figure climbs to 43.3%.

<sup>4</sup> See Legislative Fiscal Paper cited above, p. 11.

<sup>5</sup> Essentially the same question was asked in two different ways to minimize the possibility that the wording of the question biased the results.

<sup>6</sup> The correlation between per pupil expenditures and the mean number of cost-cutting actions is .006 (Pearson's  $r$ ,  $p = .92$ )

<sup>7</sup> The mean number of cuts for 201 districts with a stable or increasing population during the period, January, 1995-1997, is 5.2. For the 64 districts with a decreasing population the mean is 6.9. This difference is significant at the .005 level.

<sup>8</sup> Two superintendents did not indicate the fate of the referenda; in one district a vote has yet to be taken.

<sup>9</sup> Note that a referendum can have multiple purposes. Hence, the total of the four purposes is 173., not 90.

<sup>10</sup> The mean referendum amount was for 5.8 million.

<sup>11</sup> Districts which have had two or more attempts to pass a referendum did so for the following purposes: new construction (38 cases), major improvements (27 cases), improvements in technology (18 cases), and "other" purposes (6 cases). The typical district requested \$4.9 million (median value).

<sup>12</sup> There is no significant relationship between the percent of computers in the district which are multi-media equipped and per pupil expenditures (Pearson's  $r = -.04$ ).