



Wisconsin School Food Service Association

Testimony
of the
Wisconsin School Food Service Association
before the
Committee on Education
Wisconsin State Senate
Senate Bill 4

May 9, 2001

Mr. Chairman, and members of the Committee, I am Kathy Ehlers, speaking for the Wisconsin School Food Service Association. I am also the Food Service Director for the Rhinelander School District. Thank you for this opportunity to address SB 4 sharing with the committee several issues regarding the benefits of school feeding programs in Wisconsin, mainly school breakfast and lunch.

Recognizing that nutrition is critical to learning, the Wisconsin School Food Service Association is committed to the improvement of the nutritional well being of the youth of Wisconsin. As such, we're alarmed with trends we see in children's eating and related health issues.

A recent USDA analysis of children's eating patterns showed students are flunking healthy eating.

- Only 2% of school-aged children met the Food Guide Pyramid guidelines; 16% didn't meet any of the recommendations.
- Children's diets are high in added sugars, contributing an average of 20% of total calories.
- More than 2/3 of girls, ages 14-18, exceeded recommendations for fat intake.
- There has been a shift in consumption from milk products to soda and fruit drinks.
- About 12% of students are skipping breakfast.

These trends have contributed to some serious diet-related health concerns.

- Childhood overweight and obesity have reached epidemic proportions.
- Type II diabetes has increased from 2% in the early 1990's to 16% in youth today.
- The risk of osteoporosis has increased, particularly in females due to low calcium intake.

Healthy school meals can help with improving children's eating patterns. USDA studies have shown that the fat content of school meals has continued to decrease, while offering a greater variety of fruits & vegetables.

- USDA recently reported that school lunch participants averaged higher intakes of many nutrients, both at lunch and over 24 hours.
- They tended to consume more vegetables, milk and protein-rich foods than nonparticipants do.
- School lunch participants have substantially lower intakes of added sugar.

Studies also show that low-income children depend on the School Lunch Program for one-third to one-half of their nutritional intake each day.

A growing body of research supports what parents and educators have known all along: there is a direct link between good nutrition and the ability to learn, play, grow and develop. The best teachers in the state, with the best standards, cannot teach a hungry child.

Recent research from the University of Minnesota, Tufts University, Harvard and Massachusetts General Hospital demonstrates a direct link between good nutrition and higher test scores in reading and math, better school attendance and fewer behavior problems.

- Researchers in Minnesota found that students who ate breakfasts before starting school had a general increase in math grades and reading scores, increased student attention, reduced nurse visits, and improved student behaviors.
- Researchers at Harvard Medical/Mass General Hospital in Boston found that hungry children are more likely to have behavioral and academic problems than children who get enough to eat are. At school, hungry children had more problems with irritability, anxiety, and aggression, as well as more absences and tardiness.
- The recent Tufts University Statement 1998 on The Link between Nutrition and Cognitive Development in Children cites new findings: "Recent research provides compelling evidence that undernutrition impacts the behavior of children, their school performance, and their overall cognitive development."

School nutrition programs provide the foundation and commitment to strengthen our children's long-term health and wellness. The Wisconsin School Food Service Association recognizes the importance of healthy food for growth and learning in order to produce an educated and productive workforce.



**HUNGER
TASK
FORCE**
of Milwaukee
SINCE 1974

May 8, 2001

State Senator Richard Grobschmidt
Chair, Senate Education Committee
State Capitol
P.O. Box 7882
Madison, WI 53707-7882

Dear Senator Grobschmidt:

I am writing to support Senate Bill 4, legislation that would allow school districts the increased flexibility to offer school lunch and school breakfast programs.

While only 20 school districts in our state do not participate in the School Lunch Program, 225 districts do not participate in the School Breakfast Program. For each of the last five years, Wisconsin has ranked 51st in the nation (behind even the District of Columbia) in school breakfast participation. We rank 51st on two accounts: First, the number of schools that serve both school lunch and school breakfast, and second, the number of low-income children that eat both school lunch and school breakfast. Nationally, about 75% of schools offer both lunch and breakfast; in Wisconsin, only 35% offer both. Nationally, 42 out of every 100 poor children eat both lunch and breakfast at school; in Wisconsin, that ratio is only 23 out of every 100 children.

Also, hungry children don't learn. Numerous studies show that children who eat school breakfast do better on standardized tests, visit the school nurse less often, and are less prone to disciplinary problems. Is it any coincidence that many schools in our state without daily breakfast programs serve a nutritious breakfast on days when standardized tests are being administered?

Finally, both the School Breakfast and School Lunch Programs bring in tens of millions of federal dollars into our state. If Wisconsin were to simply double school breakfast participation, we would capture over \$6 million in additional federal money.

As a parent and advocate, I strongly believe that it is a parent's responsibility to feed their children and ensure they are ready to learn in school. However, there are many reasons why a child might not consistently get adequate nutrition at home, and children should not be punished by having to go hungry at school. I believe that it is state government's responsibility to provide basic programs and services, and ensuring that all kids have the opportunity to eat a nutritious breakfast and lunch in the morning is a basic state responsibility. Children who eat a nutritious school

201 S. Hawley Court

Milwaukee, WI 53214-1966

tel: 414 777-0483

fax: 414 777-0480

breakfast and lunch are ready to focus on classwork instead of a rumbling stomach, and this can only benefit their progress toward optimum educational achievement.

Thank you for your consideration of this issue. Please call me at 414-777-0483 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Jon Janowski
Director of Advocacy

Cc: State Senator Robert Jauch
State Senator Kevin Shibilski
State Senator James Baumgart
State Senator Judy Robson
State Senator Jon Erpenbach
State Senator Carol Roessler
State Senator Margaret Farrow
State Senator Alberta Darling
State Senator Mary Lazich
State Senator Sheila Harsdorf

From: randr <randr@lakefield.net>
To: Sen.Grobschmidt@legis.state.wi.us <Sen.Grobschmidt@legis.state.wi.us>
Date: Tuesday, May 08, 2001 3:34 PM
Subject: SB 4

Dear Senator Grobschmidt and Committee Members:

I am writing to ask you to support SB 4. The Legislature has lifted the levy limits in the past for specific needs. There is no greater need than feeding our public school children. Lifting the levy limit to allow this would be key to succeeding with all Wisconsin public school districts providing the National School Lunch Program. And, it is likely to have minimal fiscal impact.

School districts that do not provide a school lunch or breakfast program should be required to report on the nourishment of its pupils. Manitowoc Public School District is the largest (approximately 5,700 students) district without a lunch or breakfast program. Needy children who request it are given a peanut butter sandwich and fruit roll-up from the local food pantry. No child past kindergarten age is likely to ask for such a stigmatized meal. In 1999, five of the seven elementary schools in the MPSD had 20 percent or more of their children receiving (or eligible for) the subsidized milk program. These same children are likely to meet the standards for a free or reduced-fee breakfast or lunch.

Also, in 1999, Manitowoc County experienced a 60 percent decline in food-stamp use. I would ask your committee to check on current subsidized milk use and the decline in food-stamp use in all the Wisconsin school districts without the NSLP or breakfast. We need to know what these needy children are eating.

Please set aside partisan politics and focus on the needs of these children.

Thank you for your consideration.

Maureen O'Brien (1608 Nagle Avenue, Manitowoc, WI 54220).

OPINION

Tuesday, November 16, 1999
GREEN BAY PRESS-GAZETTE A-9

ood foundation

2 hearings scheduled

The state Senate's Education Committee has scheduled two public hearings on proposed new administrative rules for teacher licensing:

■ Wednesday at 10 a.m. in Room 411 South in the State Capitol in Madison.

■ Monday, Nov. 29, at 3 p.m. at State Fair Park in West Allis.

The Assembly's Education Committee will hold three public hearings, probably in December. They have not yet been scheduled.

In a school district the size of Green Bay where a hundred new teachers a year may be hired, training enough mentors could be a daunting task. So could setting up three-member teams of teachers, building administrators and college professors to review the work of each new teacher.

Also, if the money the Department of Public Instruction budgets for the program is inadequate and if mentors and teacher-review teams are not given enough time and resources to properly help and evaluate new teachers, the program could turn into a bureaucratic nightmare.

Those are some of the issues that must be addressed in the upcoming hearings. But we are confident that some fine tuning will result in a program that will help cultivate better teachers and, thus, better students.

PEOPLE'S FORUM

Legislature should mandate school lunch program

MANITOWOC — During National Hunger and Homelessness Week Nov. 14-20, we ought to take a few minutes to think about the public school children in Wisconsin without the National School Lunch Program.

The Manitowoc Public School District, with 5,708 children, is the largest of these districts. Five of the seven elementary schools in this district have 20 percent or more of their children receiving (or eligible for) the subsidized milk program. Madison Elementary School has the highest rate at 36.46 percent.

At the same time, Manitowoc County has experienced a 60 percent decline in food-stamp use. Since the Manitowoc district has the largest student population in the county, it is likely this decline in food-stamp use affects the children who would be eligible for free or reduced-fee lunches.

The Legislature needs to require the National School Lunch Program in all Wisconsin schools. As a start, the Legislature could require school districts without the National School Lunch Program to report on the food program they offer to poor children.

The Manitowoc Public School District's program of a peanut butter sandwich and fruit cup, provided by the local food pantry, is not a nutritional substitute for the National School Lunch Program.

Maureen R. O'Brien

which it exists.

In Brown County, our government has chosen not to maintain our roads, but at the same time is conducting a brick sale to fund the shortfall for a new arena. This is a sorry example of progressive government! Those bricks could be better used to fill in the potholes on our county roads, rather than to help finance an already expensive and tax-draining arena deal.

Bill Hotaling

Millennium is an example of never-ending media hype

GREEN BAY — As we approach Jan. 1, 2000, I am amazed by the awesome amount of promotion being attached to the fallacy that both the century and millennium will end on that date. It seems every media outlet in the country is unaware that there are 100 years in a century.

What actually has occurred is that the marketing divisions within media organizations have convinced their news divisions to go along with this little white millennium-busting lie. This way, all of their hype-hungry clients remain happy and they can continue to pump out their endless "top 100" lists.

The reason I am making a fuss about all of this is because it is symptomatic of a problem in our country. In America today there is one value held above all others and that is the right to promote, hype and sell. Whether it is life insurance to 80 year olds, beer and gambling to teen-agers (oops I mean young adults) or sugar-coated fat saturated yum-yums to 5 year olds, we hype it, we sell it. It makes no difference if the product is healthy, useful, affordable or reliable so long as the electronically super-charged media-based hype engines can convince us that we can't live without it.

The freedom of speech, now metamorphosed as the freedom of hype, is more important than our

Brown County has chosen not to repair county roads

DE PERE — Early in October, a letter appeared in the People's Forum regarding the deplorable condition of our county roads and the seeming lack of interest by county government to do something about it.

I applaud the author of that letter, Timothy Englebrecht, for rais-



Testimony on Senate Bill 4
Senate Committee on Education
Senator Richard Grobschmidt, Chair

May 9, 2001

The Wisconsin Community Action Program Association (WISCAP) supports passage of Senate Bill 4 to encourage more schools to offer School Lunch and Breakfast programs. These programs play a vital role in helping Wisconsin school children at all income levels receive the nutrition they need to learn. School meal programs have repeatedly been shown to improve children's academic performance, health and readiness to learn. Unfortunately, more than 60% of Wisconsin's schools don't offer School Breakfast - a fact that places our state last in the nation on this measure. And while the School Lunch Program is widely available, there remain about 20 school districts that still don't offer their students this basic nutritional guarantee.

These two programs together provide low-income households with \$500-\$600 in nutritional assistance per student during the school year. As more and more working families are forced to turn to food pantries and even soup kitchens to get sufficient food for their children, it is incumbent that Wisconsin reduce barriers that discourage schools from making these nutritional resources available.

One of these barriers is cost. Federal and state reimbursements do not cover the entire cost of operating school meal programs, forcing schools to make impossible choices between providing basic nutrition for their students and offering other programs. SB 4 will enable more schools to offer meal programs by eliminating the fiscal constraints imposed by spending caps.

The bill also requires schools that offer neither program to conduct an annual evaluation of their students' nutritional health. WISCAP encourages the Committee to include language that requires DPI to develop a standardized survey tool so schools collect uniform information. The survey should provide information about the nutritional quality of meals students eat, how many children miss meals, and how low-income children compare with non-poor students. The results can then inform local school boards and communities and assist them in setting future priorities.

WISCAP congratulates Senator Baumgart for reintroducing this legislation and for continuing to press for a solution that improves the nutritional health of thousands of Wisconsin school children. We also want to thank the members of the Education Committee for their valuable time to discuss this important matter, and urge them to support passage of SB 4.

Jonathan Bader
Food Security Director



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Jon Janowski
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Jonathan Bader
Food Security Director

Senate Committee on Human Services and Aging
Chair: Senator Judy Robson



INSTITUTE FOR WISCONSIN'S FUTURE

policy research in the public interest

May 9, 2001

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Testimony before Senate Education Committee

Chairman Grobschmidt and members of the Senate Education Committee—thank you so much for the opportunity to speak with you today.

My name is Tom Beebe and I am a school funding outreach specialist with the Institute for Wisconsin's Future.

For months you have been hearing from your constituents—from teachers, administrators, students, parents, and taxpayers—about the problems caused by Wisconsin's school funding system, specifically revenue limits.

You've heard about:

- Building maintenance and repairs that have been delayed;
- Teachers who have been laid off;
- Programs that have been eliminated;
- Technology that is lagging;
- Spiraling educational costs in the face of severely limited revenue;
- Declining enrollment;
- Underfunded programs for special-needs students; and
- Futures that have been diminished for many of Wisconsin's public school students.

Other than this list, I don't want to discuss the problems because now you have moved to consideration of the solutions. That's the "good news." The "bad news" is that all of the legislation you are considering today merely puts Band-Aids on a badly bleeding wound.

In the long run, you must start talking about reforming the system. The Institute for Wisconsin's Future, however, realizes that isn't going to happen soon. Therefore, it is imperative that we provide relief this budget cycle to our public schools.

The Institute for Wisconsin's Future favors increased funding and flexibility under revenue limits for all school districts. For that reason, we would support five of the bills you are considering—unless there is a better option ... an option that is better for districts and, more importantly, for children.

- IWF supports Senate Bill 4 to increase caps for school breakfast and lunch programs, but we realize it won't help all districts.
- IWF supports Senate Bill 120 to increase caps for school security measures, but we realize it won't help all districts.

- IWF supports Senate Bill 124 to increase caps for increases in health insurance costs, but we realize it won't help all districts.
- IWF supports Senate Bill 149 to exclude certain debt-service costs from the formula, but we also realize that bill won't help all districts.
- IWF supports Senate Bill 73 to eliminate revenue limits, but we realize its political outlook is rather dim.

IWF can't, however, support Senate Bill 153 to increase the revenue limit by 1% of the statewide average spending per pupil because it is unaided and relies strictly on local property taxes. That reliance on property taxes makes this bill extremely disequalizing under the school aid formula. We feel that only property wealthy districts will be able to afford the additional taxation, while the tax effort of property poor districts will be so prohibitive that it is likely many would not even take advantage of the new revenue generating authority.

For all of those reasons, IWF—along with other groups vitally interested about our public school children—supports that “better solution” I talked about earlier. This coalition—which consists of the Wisconsin PTA; the School Administrators' Alliance; WEAC; the Wisconsin Federation of Teachers; the Wisconsin Coalition for Advocacy; and the school districts of Janesville, Madison, and Milwaukee—supports:

- Full funding of the state's commitment to SAGE;
- Increased funding for programs for special-needs students; and
- A 1-% solution that is funded as part of the general equalization aids formula.

The 1%-plan we favor gives school boards the authority to exceed revenue caps by up to 1% of the state per-pupil allowable spending average that was, in FY02, about \$75 per pupil.

At the option of the district, the additional revenue would be considered partial school revenue. The effect of counting it as partial school revenue would be to increase the state's general equalization aid pool by two-thirds of the additional amount of spending. Districts that use this option would then receive additional state aid on their extra revenue.

It is estimated that an additional \$42 million in general purpose revenue would be required in the first year of the biennium if all 426 districts took advantage of the plan.

IWF thinks the aided alternative is important because of its effect on the state's poorest school districts. For example, in the poorest quarter of districts—as measured by property value per member (below \$215,000)—the effect of a 1%-unaided increase would result in an average levy increase of 4.1% or an additional half a mil.

On the other hand, the richest quarter of districts—again, as measured by property value per member (above \$360,000)—the effect of a 1%-unaided increase in property taxes would result in an average levy increase of only 1.5% or an additional one-sixth of a mil.

The net effect is to widen the disparity between Wisconsin's richest and poorest school districts, and most importantly, it widens the learning gap between the children who live in them. The richest districts currently have mil rates about one-half mil lower than the poorest—a discrepancy an unaided 1% solution would increase to three-quarters of a mil.

The impact would be especially hard on Milwaukee, which already faces a structural deficit of between \$4 and \$14 million. MPS would have to increase its levy by 4.5% to use an unaided 1% solution.

As I said, if there were no alternatives, the Institute for Wisconsin's Future could support five of the bills you are considering today. There is, however, a better solution—a 1%-solution that helps all school districts regardless of their property wealth or lack of it.

Again, thank you so much for your time today. The work you are doing is critically important to the public school children of Wisconsin, and I applaud your efforts.

Thomas S. Beebe
Outreach Specialist, School Funding Project
Institute for Wisconsin's Future
315 Maple Street
Fort Atkinson, WI 53538

WISCONSIN EDUCATION ASSOCIATION COUNCIL

Affiliated with the National Education Association

*Every kid
deserves a
Great School!*

**Testimony to Senate Education Committee
By Terry Craney, President
Wisconsin Education Association Council
May 9, 2001**

Thank you chairperson Grobschmidt and members of the Senate Education Committee for this opportunity to speak today. My name is Terry Craney. I am the President of the Wisconsin Education Association Council. I would like to begin by stating that WEAC and the Wisconsin Federation of Teachers support many of the bills selected for public hearing today.

- SB 4 relating to school breakfast or lunch programs and SB 120 relating to school security measures are both part of the WEAC 2001-2002 Legislative Agenda.
- SB 124 as amended would help districts endure recent increases in health insurance costs.
- Two of the other bills, SB 149 and SB 153, attempt to provide flexibility to local school districts under certain circumstances.
- SB 73 represents an outright repeal of revenue caps and a new way to fund 2/3 of school operation costs.

WEAC would like to thank all the legislators who have authored and co-sponsored the bills before you today. While our organization generally supports nearly every bill that seeks additional flexibility to revenue caps, we are committed to the eventual full repeal of this law.

Every year since 1993 the Wisconsin Education Association Council (WEAC) and the Wisconsin Association of School District Administrators (WASDA) have jointly surveyed the state's school superintendents to assess the impact state-imposed revenue controls are having on our children's education. I find the hard numbers in the survey hard to swallow. But they confirm everything I have been hearing from teachers, parents and school administrators all over the state about the difficulty of maintaining our excellence under the state regulations.

Terry Craney, President
Michael A. Butera, Executive Director



State-imposed revenue controls are inflicting serious harm upon children, schools and the quality of education in school districts throughout Wisconsin. The WEAC/Wisconsin Association of School District Administrators annual survey of school superintendents found that revenue controls are forcing districts to make choices that decrease the quality of education.

“We are doing our leaders of tomorrow a disservice,” said one administrator. According to the statewide survey, 62% of school administrators believe the consequences of state-imposed revenue controls on the quality of education have been negative or very negative. Nearly 70% predict the quality of education in their districts will decline by 2005.

Educators have been warning for years that revenue controls will force districts to make cuts that harm the quality of education children receive. This survey is absolute proof: administrators themselves say children are being hurt. It is time to end this destructive law.

The seventh annual survey found that revenue controls are forcing districts to:

- Continue to delay or spend less on maintenance of their buildings and grounds (65.9%)
- Delay or reduce the purchase of computers and other technology (67.3%)
- Increase class sizes (49.8%)
- Increase student fees (55.7%)
- Use their fund balance to support the budget (53.1%).
- Districts with declining enrollments report more serious problems than districts with increasing numbers of students.

Enough is enough. The facts are in and the evidence is irrefutable: revenue controls are harming children and the high quality of education in Wisconsin. Every child deserves to be in a classroom that works with a trained and qualified teacher. Great schools benefit our entire state, and every state resident should join the call to end revenue controls.

Thank you for this opportunity to speak today.



4797 Hayes Road, Suite 102, Madison WI 53704
608-244-1455 fax 608-244-4785 wl_office@pta.org

DATE: May 8, 2001
TO: Honorable Members of the Senate Education Committee
FROM: Winnie Doxsie, Wisconsin PTA President
RE: Education Funding Proposals

I regret that Wisconsin PTA will not be represented at the hearing in person, but our pool of volunteers were all unavailable today. Please accept this written testimony.

Wisconsin PTA believes that the current school funding under the revenue limits is inadequate. We don't see any of the proposals offered to this point as anything but short-term fixes or band-aids. We would encourage you to consider a global review of education funding in Wisconsin looking to create a funding system that adequately funds schools for all children.

With the above statement in mind we would support:

SB - 4 *To increase school district revenue limit by amounts spent to initiate a school breakfast or lunch program.* Many of our children come to school hungry; a meal is as critical a learning resource as any of the educational opportunities they won't notice if hungry.

SB - 120 *To increase district revenue limit by amount spent for school security measures.* School districts shouldn't have to choose between a school safety office or practice and an opportunity to learn.

SB - 124 *Increases revenue limits for increases in health insurance costs.* We are already seeing staff positions cut because of insurance and / or energy costs that are increasing dramatically. Again I encourage you to help districts with some flexibility to keep programs while you look for a long-term solution.

We would oppose SB - 73, not because we like revenue limits - but rather because this type of "solution" will still leave many funding problems. We encourage a thoughtful process where the balance of taxpayer needs and the responsibility to provide an adequate education to all children are considered and addressed.

Wisconsin has a tradition of sound education for our children. After hearing 14 hours of testimony around the state last fall I am convinced that we have the obligation to help all the children get an education that will enable them to compete nationally and globally - we aren't doing that right now.

I am also attaching my testimony before the Joint Finance Committee on April 11, 2001 for your information.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Winnie Doxsie".



4797 Hayes Road, Suite 102, Madison WI 53704
 608-244-1455 fax 608-244-4785 wi_office@pta.org

DATE: April 11, 2001
 TO: Honorable Members of the Joint Finance Committee
 FROM: Winnie Doxsie, Wisconsin PTA President
 RE: Education proposals in the 2001-2003 Budget

On behalf of the over 45,000 members of Wisconsin PTA I am expressing our deep concern about several issues in the current 2001-2003 budget proposal. I will group our concerns into 5 areas;

1. Revenue Limits and associated funding problems
2. Appropriate funding for programs such as SAGE and Special Education.
3. Diversion of public funds from public schools for the expansion vouchers
4. Support for quality teacher licensure
5. The Board of Education and Accountability

Revenue Limits

Wisconsin PTA believes that the current funding under the revenue limits is inadequate and finds the current budget proposal that further limit revenue for schools districts by eliminating the annual inflationary adjustment unacceptable.

In September and October I was a member of six panels that heard testimony around the state about the negative impacts of revenue limits on our school districts. On January 24, the capitol smelled like brownies as over 600 parents and community members representing over 50 groups and school districts came to share our concerns. We brought over 200 dozen brownies to the capitol demonstrating our concern and the futility of using fundraisers to make up budget deficits. Revenue limits are hurting our children – not “the district” OUR CHILDREN and selling brownies won’t touch the problem. We need to increase money for schools not further limit it!

Problems that need addressed in the short term:

- Give school districts relief under revenue limits.
- Provide help for districts with declining enrollment.
- Provide help for districts with fixed costs that are rising so dramatically. How can a district provide a quality educational program when they are limited to less than 4% increase and fuel cost triple or insurance costs go up thirty percent?

I encourage you to look at the real cost of educating a child – not a state average number. One example of what I mean is this; school districts in the northern part of our state spend a lot of money transporting children to and from school, a much greater percentage of the education dollar than a relatively compact district in the southeast part of the state. Assuming all other factors were equal, which they are not, the southeastern children have more money available per pupil for direct instruction than those up north who spend hours each week on the bus.

Our school districts need and our children deserve immediate relief and I encourage you to find ways to provide some.

I have one final comment on revenue limits. Anything that will be passed in this budget will be appreciated but Wisconsin PTA believes that this problem will not go away without some serious change in the way we currently fund schools and I ask you to commit to looking for a long term solution.

(Attached to this testimony is a report I gave to the Wisconsin PTA Board of Directors in October 2000 after I completed listening to the 6 hearings on the impact of revenue limits that were held around the state. I am including it so that you will have the opportunity to see the reactions of a volunteer mom, who is lucky enough to be the President of Wisconsin PTA. Listening to the problems our schools are having was difficult, troubling and the very real to me.)

Appropriate funding for programs.

SAGE is a program that should be expanded not cut back. We know that SAGE helps children achieve, I encourage you to find money to fund SAGE. We need to *invest* in the future of our children – an investment now to help a young child succeed will more than pay for itself when that young person is reading and able to succeed in school rather than becoming frustrated and dropping out with a limited future.

Birth – 3 Program is another service that helps catch problems early and gets our youngest children with special needs the attention they need to grow and meet their full potential. This program has not seen a funding cut, rather the criteria for service has been raised, leaving “marginal” (that really aren’t) children without services that they would greatly benefit from. Again, we are cutting off our noses to spite our faces; a relatively small investment now will reap great benefits later. Please look at this policy change and *restore* eligibility to the current level.

Special Education WI PTA *recommends* that the state budget proposal be amended to include sufficient funds to reimburse school districts for 50% of special education costs. In addition, WI PTA *recommends* that local school districts be reimbursed at a higher rate when they have children whose special education costs are extraordinary. For these “high-cost” students the reimbursement should be 90% of the costs of services that exceeds three times the state average cost per student.

Diversion of public funds from public schools for the expansion vouchers

Wisconsin PTA is steadfast in our opposition to any public funds being diverted from public schools. The Milwaukee School Choice Program does nothing to address the needs of all children in Milwaukee; instead it drains money away from every school district in this state to give money to private ventures that are not even held accountable or to the same standards as our public school system.

We would *support* legislation mandating that ALL schools receiving public tax dollars are held to the same standards, assessments hiring practices and data reporting.

We *oppose* any increase in the voucher program.

We *propose* using the \$36.3 million slated for increasing the voucher program be used to fully fund the proven SAGE program, expanding it to 2nd and 3rd grades, which would cost \$36.9 million.

Support for quality Teacher Licensure

Wisconsin PTA advocates for the maintenance of high quality teacher education and certification requirements that include; subject matter preparation, design of instruction, the art of teaching and teacher training in Parent Involvement Skills. The current budget proposals do not appear to meet these criteria. Any teacher receiving a temporary license must be required to complete the necessary training to acquire the skills that will enable them to deliver a standard of teaching quality expected of regularly licensed teachers. We *oppose* the budget proposal that weakens the standard for licensing our children's educators.

The Board of Education and Accountability

Wisconsin PTA *opposes* moving oversight for educational programs from the Department of Public Instruction. A politically appointed "Board" is not the best interest of our children; we need to work to keep political appointments out of education. The Department of Public Instruction, headed by an independently elected superintendent of Public Instruction, has the resources and skilled individuals to support education in Wisconsin. We need to keep all services and resources related to education in Wisconsin in one department, the Department of Public Instruction.

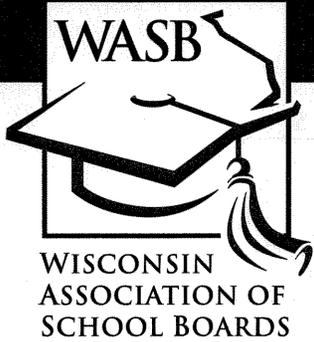
Fund the Department of Public Instruction

The Department of Public Instruction functions as a resource and leader for many programs that help our children. There are many services I am personally experienced with but I would point out one - the importance of DPI in working for increased parent involvement. Research proves that schools with meaningful parent involvement show increase student achievement. Please keep DPI funded so it will continue to be educational lead organization we need in Wisconsin.

Policy in the Budget

In general we find the practice of "hiding" policy changes in the budget document offensive and disrespectful. Proposals such as when a school district may hold a referendum or if school will be held on a certain date have no place in a budget bill. We urge removal of policy items from the budget document so they may be considered on their own merit.

I would be happy to expand on any of these remarks and or assist in any way. Our children are 10% of our present and 100% of our future. I encourage you to invest in them now.



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KEN COLE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**Senate Committee on Education
May 09 2001
Patrick Sherman, Genoa City J2 school board,
WASB President**

Good morning, I would like to thank this committee for the opportunity to address you this morning. I am Patrick Sherman a School Board member for 10 years at Genoa City JT. 2. This year I serve as President of the Wisconsin Association of School Boards.

As a School Board member I could support all the legislative proposals that you are hearing testimony on today. School safety which is a concern for all citizens in Wisconsin is addressed in SB 120. There are very few districts that have the resources to start a school breakfast program and SB 4 would help more districts start a breakfast program. A major concern for school districts though out Wisconsin is the rapid increases in the cost of health insurance. SB 124 will help districts that have seen premium increases of up to 40%. In my own district we have had a 29% increase this year. When you factor this increase into a 3.8% QEO it leaves a \$45.00 increase in teacher salaries. We can negotiate this increase in premiums in the first year of our contract but if we have another substantial increase next year we will have to cut programs to make up the difference. Today insurance costs are now 37% of the base salary cost. Since 1984 health insurance costs have increased

on an average of 10% per year. If we look into the future at a 10% increase in premiums per year and a 3% increase in base salaries by 2018 insurance costs will exceed the base salary of \$45,731. And twelve years later in 2030 insurance costs will be double of the \$63,300 dollar base at an unbelievable cost of \$136,549 per person for family coverage. The last bill that I would like to address today is SB153. This would give school boards the authority to exceed revenue caps by 1% of the average per pupil statewide cost. School districts have been under revenue caps for eight years now. Our average revenue increase has been 2.5% but our increase in the cost of salaries alone has been 3.8%. The last biennium budget placed lane movement outside the QEO and this year average salary increases will be 4.3%. This past winter we saw our cost for fuel to heat our buildings more than double, and by this fall fuel to run our busses will have doubled. The only place left for many districts to meet these increased cost is by cutting educational programs.

As President of WASB I represent all the School districts of Wisconsin from districts with thousands of students to districts with 87. As spoke person for the 426 school districts and the children that attend them, the proposal in SB153 will provide relief to some districts but not to all. The WASB has put forward a proposal that would allow school districts to exceed revenue caps by up to 2% of the average statewide per pupil cost. This 2% would be outside 2/3 funding and would be paid by a mill rate increase on the local property tax bill. The 2% solution would help to address all 426 districts unique and individual needs.

During the past several months I have talked to many of your colleagues on educational issues. The one common thread that has always been expressed is that they admire the work that school boards members do. That they believe that government closest to the people governs best. On behalf of all the locally elected school boards members in Wisconsin I ask you to consider the 2%

solution for kids. Return to us the authority to perform the task we were elected to do, raise student achievement and make sure every child in Wisconsin is successful.

For the past seven years I have been an advocate for better public education on a state and national level. What I have learned is Wisconsin is a leader in public education. We year in and year out lead the country in ACT scores. To continue and build upon this success we must have a concerted effort by state government, school boards members and taxpayers. Thank you.

Patrick Sherman

President Wisconsin Association of School Boards

Vote Record

Senate - Committee on Education

Date: 5-23-01
 Moved by: Baumgart Seconded by: Shibilski
 Clearinghouse Rule: _____
 AB: _____ SB: 4 Appointment: _____
 AJR: _____ SJR: _____ Other: _____
 AR: _____ SR: _____

A/S Amdt: _____
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- Be recommended for:
- Passage
 - Introduction
 - Adoption
 - Rejection

- Indefinite Postponement
- Tabling
- Concurrence
- Nonconcurrence
- Confirmation

Committee Member

Sen. Richard Grobschmidt, Chair
 Sen. Robert Jauch
 Sen. Kevin Shibilski
 Sen. Jim Baumgart
 Sen. Judith Robson
 Sen. Jon Erpenbach
 Sen. Carol Roessler
 Sen. Alberta Darling
 Sen. Mary Lazich
 Sen. Sheila Harsdorf

<u>Aye</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Absent</u>	<u>Not Voting</u>
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Totals: _____