

VISION STATEMENT

WASCD envisions an interconnected system of quality curriculum, effective instructional practices, ongoing professional development, and meaningful accountability measures for the benefit of all learners.

INFLUENCE PURPOSES

- Sustain a visible, proactive voice on educational issues with key stakeholder groups within the state.
- Advocate for the development of policies, practices and procedures that align with best practice, sustain evidence of success, and improve teaching and learning for all children within the state.
- Provide information for all WASCD members, clarifying critical issues, determining potential impact on the quality of teaching and learning, and sharing key contacts.
- Link critical issues to the provision of staff development programs that enhance the full implementation of best practice within the state and improve student learning.
- Sustain critical links with other educational organizations and key stakeholders to remain current on emerging issues.



Fall, 2000

To: Wisconsin Educators, Public Information Coordinators, and Parent Groups
From: Wisconsin Association for Supervision & Curriculum Development (WASCD)
RE: Educational Funding within Wisconsin

Unless modifications are made within the next biennial budget, the ability of schools to meet student needs and the opportunity for students to learn will be compromised.

WASCD supports your district personnel, school board, parents, and students in understanding the issues surrounding educational funding in Wisconsin. WASCD's purpose is one of providing information and assisting all of these stakeholders with a vehicle to share their suggestions to legislators prior to the creation of the next biennial budget. The WASCD Board recognizes that the impact of the current legislation varies among districts. Therefore, we believe strongly that all stakeholders need to have a voice in the process of modifying current legislation.

WASCD recognizes the compounding impact of the current revenue limits and the QEO formula on

- sustaining a balance of educational programming to meet all students' needs,
- reaching the high standards set for the students across the state,
- developing a teaching force to deliver the quality education we expect for children.

With the stakes for student performance and the teacher licensure changes, districts will need to ensure a full range of opportunities for children and build the capacity to reach these expectations.

Because of the varied impact among districts, WASCD has completed a folder of information to assist you in your communication efforts. The WASCD Board is not prescribing a "solution," but rather, is clarifying the situation to legislators and ultimately, the voters, so that they can make informed decisions. Within this folder you will find:

1. A Community Action Alert
2. An Infobrief
3. The WASCD Position statement regarding Educational Funding for Wisconsin Schools
4. A sample letter and a set of mailing labels for the Governor, key Senate and Assembly contacts, as well as a label to mail a copy to WASCD. (Important: Before you use the labels, make a copy so you can print more labels to share with anyone else.)

Every voice is important. Make copies of these materials and share them with groups or individuals concerned about the impact of the current legislation on the students of Wisconsin.

The level of program cuts is increasing across the state of Wisconsin. Students and parents are addressing local school boards with concerns regarding the elimination of opportunities for children. We need to work together to provide quality opportunities for children and to reach the performance expectations established by the Legislature.

Contact WASCD at any time with questions, ideas or contacts. Together, we can make a difference for the children of Wisconsin.

Patricia Herdrich, Ph.D.
WASCD Influence Committee Chair
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Position Statement

State and District Funding for Educational Improvement

Wisconsin legislators have set the clear expectations for high student performance, the accountability system for Wisconsin's students and schools, continuous improvement for schools, and the establishment of standards for Wisconsin teachers and administrators. WASCD believes that the legislators have set a positive direction for all Wisconsin schools. The vision has clearly been defined, the focus has been set for student learning, and a common language has been established in the standards.

In order to achieve the opportunity for all students to learn and perform to these high standards, legislators, the Department of Public Instruction and local educational leaders must ensure the capacity of districts to establish and sustain the following:

- high quality adult learning regarding how to instruct the standards, align the curricula, and assess student performance.
- capacity of districts to use data to examine program effectiveness, monitor student progress, and adjust school level implementation based on the performance expectation set.
- effective instructional programs aligned to the standards that differentiate to meet the needs of the varied learners.
- data-driven remediation and acceleration programs to meet individual needs.
- extended time for teachers to focus on learning and assessment practices.
- leadership skills and positions to ensure quality implementation of the model academic standards, teacher standards, and administrative standards.
- use of technology to accomplish the expectations outlined by the legislature.

WASCD honors the commitment of the legislators to property tax relief. However, we recognize that modifications in state funding methods are essential. Current school funding practices are resulting in the reduction of key district resources dedicated to achieve the expectations set by the legislature. Districts throughout Wisconsin implemented budget reductions that included but were not limited to the following areas:

- 56% are delaying or reducing purchase of textbooks and curricular materials
- 52% are offering fewer staff development opportunities for teachers
- 59% are delaying or reducing the purchase of computers and other technology
- 42% are limiting programs for students who are at-risk
- 47% are limiting programs for gifted and talented students
- 41% are limiting summer school programs
- 48% are increasing class sizes
- 52% are delaying or reducing the hiring of new staff

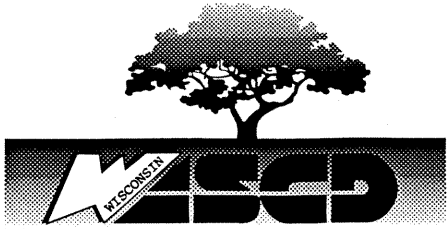
(The Sixth Year Study by the Wisconsin Association of School District Administrators and the Wisconsin Education Association Council, 1998-99 data).

State and local funding decisions should be targeted at the expectations set for the students and educators of Wisconsin. The Legislature must establish and sustain the state funding mechanisms to fully accomplish improved student performance and implement the teacher and administrator standards. The Department of Public Instruction should connect all available resources to increase the capacity for adult learning, ensure implementation of best practice, and build the infrastructure for the state to successfully implement the student and educator standards. The Wisconsin School Districts must keep improved instruction, best practice programming aligned to the standards, and student achievement as the focal points for all budget priorities. "Making a difference in the lives of the students we serve is the fundamental moral purpose of educational reform" (Fullan, 1999).

The legislative vision for school improvement cannot become a reality within the State of Wisconsin without the resources and infrastructure to improve achievement.

Fullan, M. (1999). *Change forces: The sequel*. Levittown, PA: Falmer Press.

Sue Alberti, President, WASCD April 12, 2000



InfoBrief

Fall 2000

Spending limits...Accountability...Student Achievement Where will the revenue limits and spending caps take us? What path will we take...

When you hear the word "data" most educators, parents, legislators, and home buyers within the state of Wisconsin immediately think of student assessment, the academic standards, and improved student performance. At the same time, however, budget reductions are on the front burner in many districts across the state. Let's look at the data of the critical issues facing Wisconsin communities.

Wisconsin Educational Priorities	Wisconsin Educational Realities
☆ Instructional programs must align to the academic standards to ensure all students the "opportunity to learn" the challenging content standards.	Of the districts facing budget reductions: ⌘ 56% are delaying or reducing purchase of textbooks and other curricular materials.
☆ Each school must ensure that students are making sufficient progress, that instruction is differentiated to meet student needs, and that student performance data is monitored closely to design the instruction students need to accomplish the proficiency standards.	Of the districts facing budget reductions: ⌘ 52% are offering fewer staff development opportunities for teachers. ⌘ 42% are limiting programs for students who are at-risk. ⌘ 41% are limiting summer school programs. ⌘ 48% are increasing class sizes.
☆ Instructional programs must account for best practice and educational research. Teacher licensure changes, SAGE, class size reduction act, the READS initiative are a few examples of the state attempting to address what the research has indicated makes a difference in schools.	Of districts facing budget reductions: ⌘ 52% are offering fewer staff development opportunities for teachers. ⌘ 48% are increasing class sizes.

It is the responsibility of the leaders across this state to make the critical connections between our priorities for improvement and the realities within Wisconsin schools.

Michael Fullan stated in his 1999 Fall Conference address, "Making a difference in the lives of the students we serve is the fundamental moral purpose of educational reform." If we believe this, we must...

- Lead our schools to ensure that all children have access to exemplary learning opportunities with strong educators.
- Articulate the priorities and ensure the resources (state and local) are prioritized to ensure we sustain the key target of student improvement.
- Remove the disconnection between what we say we value within the improvement efforts and how we are moving forward with instructional decision making and educational funding.

A wise person once told me, "You can't get lost when you don't know where you are going." Do we really value student and instructional improvement? If we do, we need to connect our knowledge of best practice with our human and financial resources, and sustain the political will to get there.

By Patricia Herdrich, Ph.D., WASCD Influence Committee Chair
Reprinted from April 2000 Highlighter

Feeling the Pinch of a Fixed Income

Living on a "fixed income" can force senior citizens to make difficult, and even life-threatening, quality-of-life decisions. Our Wisconsin public schools are faced with a similar dilemma which is impacting the quality of education for our children. School districts are faced with a "fixed income" while costs continue to rise.

Spending Caps

Wisconsin Act 16 was enacted in 1993 to increase state financial support of public schools and generate property tax relief for local taxpayers. In 1995 the State Legislature permanently extended the revenue limits while funding two-thirds of the state's public school costs. The addition of state aid did not increase the ability of a district to spend money. The revenue limits constrain the district's annual increase in expenditures to the previous year's number of students and an annual inflationary increase. In this school year (2000-2001), Districts can increase revenue by \$220.49 per student over last year. The amount of increase means that districts must reduce their operational budgets by a minimum of 1.7% per year.

The Study

Since 1994, the Wisconsin Association of School District Administrators (WASDA) and the Wisconsin Education Association Council (WEAC) have surveyed school superintendents to learn the effects of the budget constraints on programs and services offered by school districts. Superintendents were given a list of 24 cost-saving actions and asked to indicate which actions had been taken in their districts during the previous school year. Superintendents who indicated

that there had been a cut in a program or service area were asked to rate the "effects" of each cut on the district's programs and services, using a five-point scale ranging from "Very Negative" to "Very Positive." The results of the 1998-99 study, with 75% of the 321 school districts in the state reporting indicate that student programs are increasing as budget cut targets. The sixth Study of the Effects of the Revenue Caps on District's Programs and Services indicated that more than 50% of the cuts have negative effects on the district's infrastructure.

Key Program Concerns

The decisions that districts have been forced to take in order to keep budgets balanced are affecting students more each year. State and local funding decisions should be focused on meeting the expectations established by the state's Model Academic Standards. Instead, the target for improved student learning moves farther away.

- With world class learning expectations, students need up-to-date information and textbooks.
- With increased accountability to meet these expectations, teachers require and deserve the training and tools to make these expectations a reality in their classrooms.
- With rigorous academic standards established for all students, more support for struggling students is needed, not reductions in existing programs.

*By Ros Kiefer Ph.D.,
Director of Curriculum and Instruction
Fox Point Joint #2 School District*



WASCD Influence Committee Key Contacts

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COMMUNITY ACTION ALERT

Diminishing Funding for Educational Improvement

A positive direction has been established for Wisconsin's schools through the establishment of high standards for all students. The ability of districts to meet the improvement targets is diminishing as fiscal resources tighten. Wisconsin parents should be aware of the conflicting expectations of "doing more with less" that are facing our public schools.

→ The Legislation

In 1993, the Wisconsin State legislature created revenue limits for schools (Wisconsin Act 16) which set revenue limits on public schools receiving state funds. The amount of general aid and property tax dollars districts could spend was limited by this legislation and provided much needed property tax relief to citizens. This legislation set an upper limit on the amount of money a school district can raise and spend from local property tax and state aids based upon the spending levels in 1992-93. In 1997, the state established rigorous educational standards for what all children in the state should know and be able to do. The evidence that students are meeting these expectations is measured through the state testing system for grades 4, 8, and 10 as well as the impending high school graduation test.

→ The Problem

Districts are allowed an annual increase in spending of only \$211 per pupil over the base amount established in 1991-92. General operating funds are increasing at a slower rate than educational costs. Since educational expenses exceed this annual increase, districts experience an annual shortfall between revenues and expenses. This increasing expectation "gap" must be addressed. **Without modifications to the current system, districts are forced to reduce programs while state expectations in standards and assessment are increasing.** At a time when teachers need training on how to best instruct students to meet or exceed the standards and assess student performance, 52% of the state's districts are offering fewer training opportunities. At a time when instructional programs to support students are clearly needed, 42% of the districts are limiting programs for at-risk students and 41% are limiting summer school programs. (1998-99, WASDA/WEAC, Sixth Year Study)

→ What You Can Do

Many educators, parents and others believe that current school funding methods need modification so that expectations set for the students and educators of Wisconsin can be achieved. The legislative vision for school improvement cannot become a reality within Wisconsin without the resources and infrastructure to improve achievement. **Educational improvement should be a budget priority. The educational funding system should be modified to accommodate improvement efforts. Public opinion can change the laws...if you are willing to help.**

Today:

- Write your state senator and assembly representative urging a change in the laws
- Share this alert with as many interested people as possible, particularly around the state

For further information, contact:

- Your local school district superintendent
- Wisconsin Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development

How the Financial Squeeze on Wisconsin's Public Schools Increases Each Year

WISCONSIN LEGISLATION:

1993

Property tax relief provided by reducing local school spending

WISCONSIN LEGISLATION:

1995

Revenue limits permanently extended.

Revenue Limits:

taxes, equalization aid and integration aid: cannot exceed formula percentage/yr.

Qualified Economic Offer:

districts avoid mediation/arbitration on economic packages of at least + 3.8 %/yr.*

New Formula:

State to fund 2/3 of public school costs

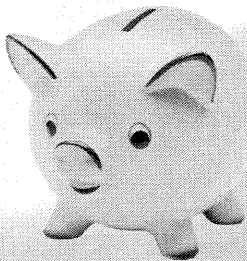
Note:

If a district gets more state aid, legislation does not allow it to spend more money.

Creates systemic annual shortfall in district monies for educational programs.

*Now costs could be 4.2%-4.5%

REVENUE LIMITS:



- Control two main revenue sources
- **Local Property Taxes**
 - **State Aid**

Revenue Limit Calculation determined by:

Three-year average number of resident students

Previous year's Revenue Limit

Districts can increase revenue by \$220.49 per student over 99/00 and by an inflationary factor in the future.

Situation worse in declining enrollment districts or where property values are above the state average (state support reduced).



THE FINANCIAL SQUEEZE ON WISCONSIN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Rising
expectations
for
students

Need for
property
tax relief





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