

Report from the Statewide School Funding Solutions Committee

Presented to:
Wisconsin Senate Education Committee
January 24, 2001

Financial Problems for School Districts

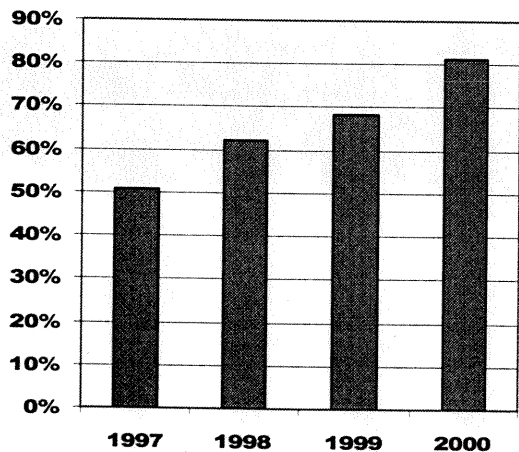
- Revenue Caps**
- Costs for Special-Needs Students**
- Declining Enrollment**

Financial Problems for School Districts

- Revenue Caps
- Costs for Special-Needs Students
- Declining Enrollment

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Percentage of school districts whose allowable annual revenue growth is lower than the federal education inflation index



Revenue caps create a growing gap between school funding and the cost of school needs

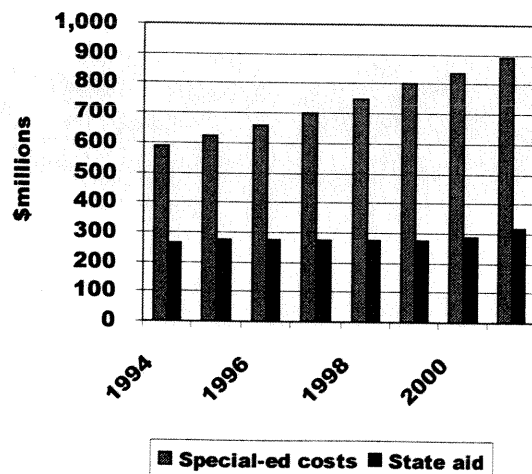
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Financial Problems for School Districts

- Revenue Caps
- Costs for Special-Needs Students
- Declining Enrollment

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Costs for special education keep growing,
but state aid barely budges



Costs for
special-needs
students grow
much faster
than does state
aid

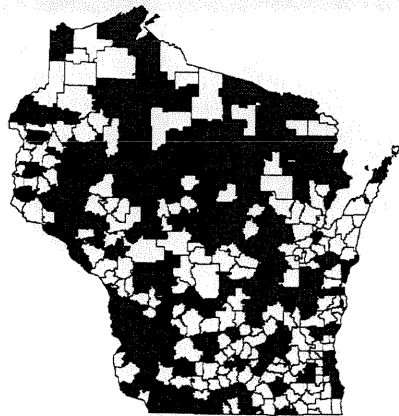
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Financial Problems for School Districts

- Revenue Caps
- Costs for Special-Needs Students
- Declining Enrollment

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Half the state's school districts
had falling membership in 2000



■ Membership dropped in 2000
□ Membership steady or rising

**Declining
enrollment
worsens fiscal
problems.**

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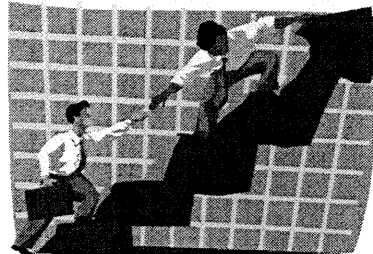
What Can Be Done?

- Increase Revenue-Limit Flexibility

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- **Allow school boards to raise revenue caps, with a two-thirds vote, by up to 1% of state per pupil spending average.**

- If school districts so choose, the new revenue is aidable by the state, at the same rate as the prior year. This becomes part of the base for future years.



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- **Allow school boards the authority to raise revenue caps, with a two-thirds vote, for limited borrowing.**

Up to \$350 per pupil (or a minimum of \$250,000 per district) for building repairs/ remodeling, new buildings, technology and safety needs.

If districts so choose, the annual debt payments can be aidable by the state, at the same rate as the prior year.



What Can Be Done?

- Increase Revenue Limit Flexibility
- Increase State Reimbursement for Special-Needs Students

Increase aid for students with disabilities



- State pays 90% of expenses for high-cost, low-incidence students over annual costs which exceed three times the state average.
- Increase State categorical reimbursement for special education from 35% to 50%.

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Increase aid for students with Limited English Proficiency



- State reimburses for all students (not just those where the current threshold -- 10 to 20 students in a single language group -- is met).
- State reimburses at two-thirds of prior year's cost per student.

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Increase aid for students from low-income families



- New categorical fund to increase funding by 10% for low-income students.
- Funds can be used for smaller classes, early kindergarten programs, for support programming, and other purposes as determined by school boards.

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What Can Be Done?

- Increase Revenue Limit Flexibility
- Increase State Reimbursement for Special-Needs Students
- Provide Assistance to Districts with Declining Enrollment

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Assist districts with declining enrollments.



- Let school districts use the highest enrollment from any year since 1993-94 for revenue-limit calculations.
- Any additional revenue would come from the local levy.

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Cost of new proposals



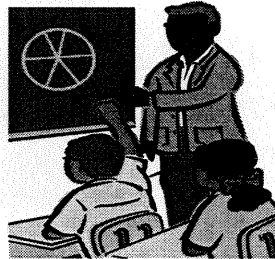
1% increase:	\$43 million (maximum)
Capital-cost exemption:	\$27 million (maximum)
Special Education:	\$178 million
Limited-English proficiency:	\$39 million
Low-income:	\$120 million
<u>Declining enrollment:</u>	<u>00</u>
Total possible maximum:	\$407 million

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Source of funds? - No NEW Spending

School levy tax credit: \$469,305,000

- Appropriated annually as part of school aid package.
- The levy credit is already in state budget, requires no new state spending.
- Levy credit counts toward two-thirds funds for education, therefore, it should go to the schools.





A report from the statewide forums on the impact of revenue limits on Wisconsin public schools

Institute for Wisconsin's Future – January 2001

Are School Revenue Limits Limiting Learning?

Across Wisconsin last year, hundreds of people waited up to three hours to talk about the financial problems in their schools. Parents, teachers, students, recent graduates, school board members, school superintendents, grandmothers, and college officials described crowded classrooms, outdated textbooks, shrinking access to programs and services for children, poorly maintained buildings and budgets stretched to the breaking point. Six hearings were held across the state to collect information on the educational impact of revenue limits. It was not good news.

Background

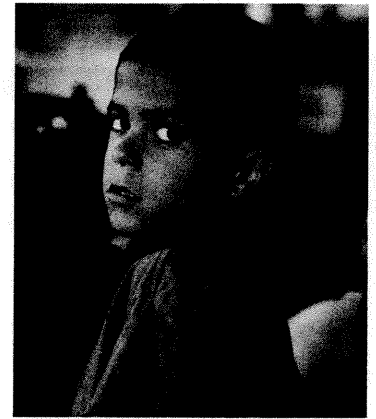
Revenue limits (also known as “spending caps”) were passed by the Wisconsin legislature in the 1993-’95 budget to hold down school property taxes, which had grown largely due to mandates for special education, stringent performance standards, and an expanded need for computer technology.

During the 1980s, corporate property-tax cuts increased the property-tax burden for homeowners during the same period that wages were dropping. This was especially difficult for property-poor districts. In 1993, the Legislature froze revenue and spending in all school districts, and in 1995 increased the state share of local education expenses. While this lightened the property tax, the revenue limits led to serious unintended consequences for school districts.

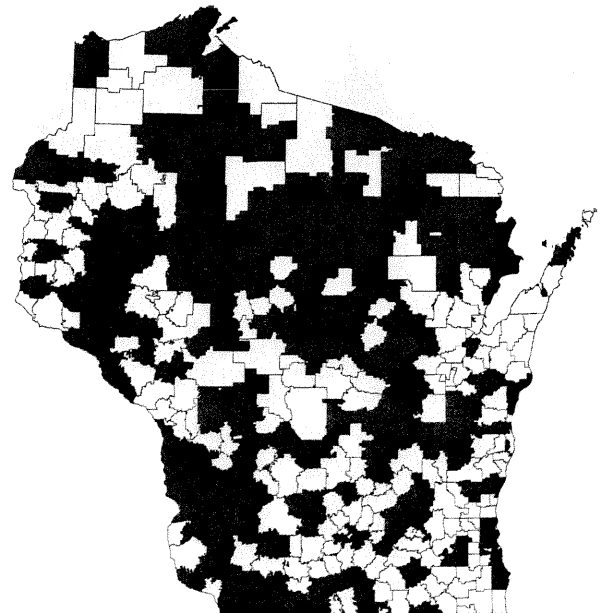
The annual revenue increases allowed have been too low to cover rising costs for staff salaries and insurance, textbooks, technology, and utilities and fuel. Revenue limits are based on district enrollment (calculated on the basis of enrollment in the school year and summer). But over half of the state’s districts have declining enrollment

scattered across grades and schools, which prohibits reductions in operating costs. Revenues fall faster than expenses.

Both federal and state governments have failed to live up to their promises to reimburse districts for the majority of expenses for serving students with disabilities. As costs rose while



Wisconsin school districts with declining enrollment in 2000



■ Enrollment dropped in 2000 □ Enrollment steady or rising

Source: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction



reimbursements didn't, school districts took on increasing proportions of the costs, forcing them to take funds from their budgets for regular programming.

State law does allow a district to raise more than its revenue limit, as long as voters in a district-wide referendum authorize increased taxes for designated school expenses. Ironically, since the inception of revenue limits, other local property taxes – especially for municipal and county governments – have risen so fast that overall property taxes continue to grow.

There had been scattered efforts to challenge revenue limits. In late 1999, a number of groups around the state met to organize a series of forums to compile information on the effects of revenue limits on schools across Wisconsin. The forums were held in the fall of 2000, in Appleton, Janesville, Rhinelander, Stevens Point, Superior, and West Allis.

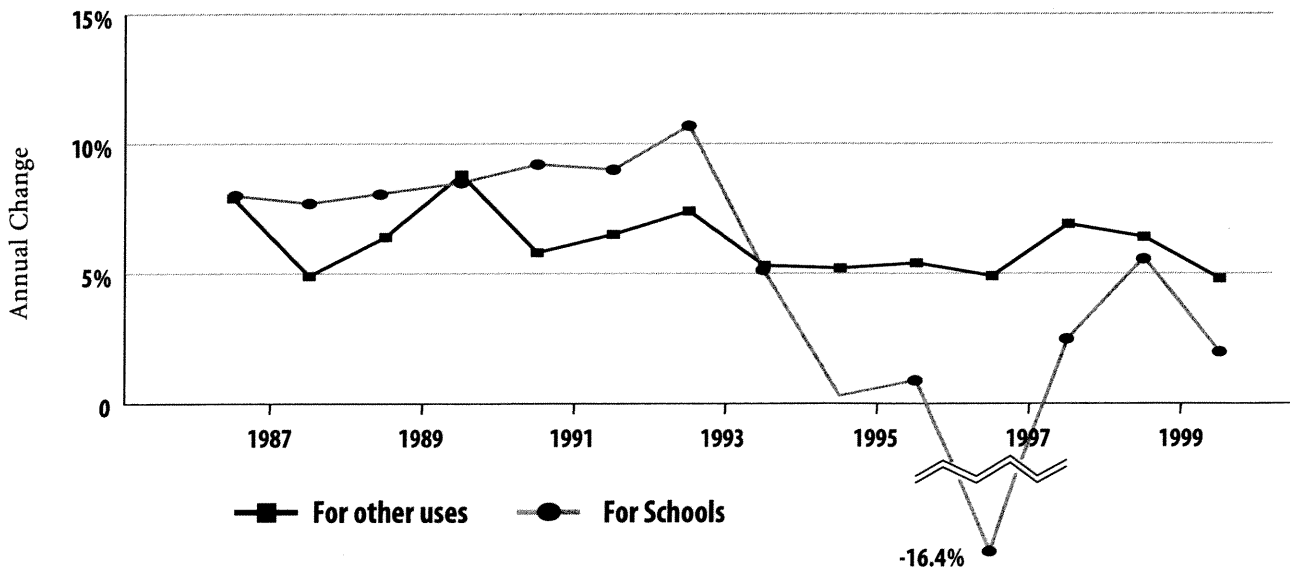
Findings

Over 1,000 people attended the forums. Of these, 263 people from 78 districts provided testimony. About one-third of those speaking were parents. School administrators and teachers each represented about one in five speakers. Others testifying were students, school board members, and community leaders.

Wealthy, poor, urban, suburban and rural districts all reported similar patterns of cutbacks touching almost every aspect of school operations. These were the most commonly mentioned problems:

Larger classes: In spite of the state's SAGE program – designed to reduce class size in early grades – budget shortfalls have resulted in very large classes for children above third grade.

Annual change in property tax levies for schools and other uses



Source: Wisconsin Taxpayers Alliance



"For many students, school is the only place where they have access to computers. If schools are not financially able to fill the technology chasm, then economically disadvantaged students risk becoming economically challenged adults."—*Marty Stogsdill, Beloit student*

Delayed maintenance: Districts are unable to cover the cost of building repairs, ongoing maintenance, building improvements and new construction. Many districts have frozen maintenance budgets for a number of years.

"Students are still taught in a 77 year-old building with a defective, out-dated boiler and chicken wire on the ceiling to keep falling plaster in place."—*Michelle Bjela, Stevens Point parent*

"I have had a plastic bag on my computer for six years, because when it rains, it falls on my computer. The roof hasn't been fixed in six years. The children eat lunch on the gym floor, (because) we don't have a cafeteria."—*Don Balliet, Appleton teacher*

"Our buildings and playgrounds and stadium bleachers are more poorly kept each year. If we are lucky...our meager maintenance budget stays one step ahead of disaster... We have parking lots with only one light when we need two or three, and roofs that, while not leaking, are not keeping the heat in, costing us more to heat the building."—*Cynthia DiCamelli, Oregon school board member*

Teacher wage issues: School administrators, college students, parents, business experts and teachers agreed that current wage levels for many teachers were too low to attract skilled and ambitious persons, resulting in a "brain drain" from the public schools.

"Teacher salaries are significantly lower than what comparable college educated professionals make. Lest you think this is an issue purely of self-interest to teachers . . . data show that—controlling for parents' educational level, income, and later educational attainment—the earnings of male high school graduates increase by 1% for every 3% increase in the average teacher salary in their high school."—*Cheryl*

Maranto, associate dean of Marquette University College of Business Administration

"It is a pretty harsh reality when a veteran teacher with over 25 years of experience comes away with a net increase of \$11 per month in his or her paycheck."—*Dr. James Fitzpatrick, Fort Atkinson superintendent*

Rising fixed costs: Parents and district administrators, particularly those from northern districts, stated that annual increases in revenue limits were inadequate in the face of rising costs for heating, utilities, and fuel for transportation. In rural communities, transportation is a costly and critical component of the budget.

"Antigo spends \$1.5 million a year for gasoline to get our children to and from school. When gas prices went up, there was nothing we could do but cut programs."—*Lance Alwin, Antigo superintendent*

"District fuel costs have increased 17% to over \$100,000 this year. Natural gas costs have risen 25% to over \$110,000. Cutting bus routes is not an option. Students wearing jackets in cold classrooms is not an option."—*Donna Spotts, Ashland parent*

"If it could be possible, please just give us enough money to heat our building, please."—*Katie Heisel, Superior student*



Special-needs students: Schools are increasingly unable to meet the higher costs of students with disabilities, students with limited English proficiency, and students from low-income households. Because state and federal supports have not kept pace with rising costs, schools have been forced to cut back on regular programming to fund mandated programs for special-needs students.

"Our children require specialists—special needs teachers, speech pathologists, occupational and physical therapists, and teaching assistants to help them stay in an 'inclusive' classroom. The additional money that the state pays is not nearly enough... My daughter has lost access to several regular classrooms. She asked me if this is happening because I forgot to give her a good brain when I made her."
—*Kelly Hurda, Bayside special needs parent*

"Students having certain physical needs, such as the hearing or visually impaired, have extensive costs—\$32,000 for one hearing impaired child. These dollars compete with the needs and programming of regular education children. In 1989, our classroom budgets were \$1,200 to \$1,800. In the current year, they are \$225."
—*Susan Katrosits, Grafton special education teacher*



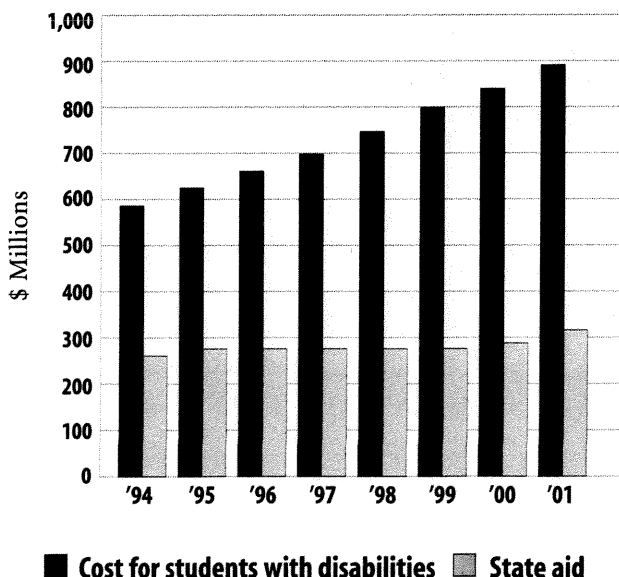
Difficulties with referenda: Speakers involved in the referendum process have found them to be extremely difficult to pass. Public schools are the only branch of government in Wisconsin forced to go to taxpayers for authorization to increase spending for routine operating costs, taxpayers' only opportunity to vote against a tax increase. This is particularly important since approximately three out of four voters do not have children in school.

"When a district goes to referendum, it absorbs the time, energy, and personnel of the district from three to six months. That means that all other issues which these people should be concerned with get pushed aside until the referendum is over. Increasingly, districts are finding that they have to go four or five times to get people to approve changes in their school budget."
—*Carol Carstensen, Madison school board member*

"I am tired of the political rhetoric that the solution is simple—just go to referendum. A referendum is the only time a citizen can say 'no' to rising taxes. They may be angry with the tech school budget increase of over 12% or the county increase of over 5% for the jail. The public school referendum is the only opportunity to say 'no!'"
—*Linda Kunelius, Northland Pines superintendent*

"Merrill lost 350 students and had to cut \$300,000 this year. We cut supplies, textbooks, and maintenance. Next year, we will cut people and programs. We can't cut transportation because we are a rural district. This is a blue-collar district and a referendum will probably not pass."
—*Pam Kurcheval, Merrill finance director*

Differential between costs for students with disabilities and state reimbursement



Source: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction



Funding reforms requested: Fifty-four speakers called for reforms in the school finance system:

Changes to the funding formula;

Restoring full authority to local school boards to raise local funds for schools;

Carve-outs or exemptions to the caps for technology and buildings;

Increases in revenue caps should match increases in staff wages and benefits;

Increase state funding for special-needs programming.

Conclusion

While a call for further tax cuts remains a priority for some, there is increasing public demand that attention be paid to education funding. The information presented at the hearings speaks to an emerging crisis in the state's public education system. The shortfalls are frequently being addressed in a stopgap manner by using reserve funds, a limited resource. Classes are already too large, program reductions have already been made, purchases have been delayed, and repairs have been postponed. The gap between the cost of important needs and revenue limits is growing. And the number of districts with declining enrollments is growing, which compounds

financial difficulties by imposing even tighter revenue limits. Citizens called upon state and local policymakers to address the school-funding crisis to prevent fiscal collapse at the local level in the short-term and to ensure institutional stability and effectiveness in the long-term.

Acknowledgments

The information in this report was compiled from forums organized under the auspices of the following groups:

Appleton PTA Council
Big 8 Summit on Spending Caps
Institute for Wisconsin's Future
Janesville Joint Legislative Committee
Price County Citizens Who CARE
Stevens Point Area PTA
Superior School District
West Allis/West Milwaukee PTA Council
Wisconsin Federation of Teachers
Wisconsin PTA

A special thanks to the people who served as commissioners in Appleton, Janesville, Rhinelander, Stevens Point, Superior and West Allis. In particular Winnie Doxsie, President of the Wisconsin PTA and Bert Grover, former State Superintendent of Schools, who both contributed many hours and drove many miles to serve as commissioners at all six forums.





School boards are using lay-offs, delays in hiring and non-replacement of staff to lower annual costs. This has increased class size, reduced curriculum options and limited support services available to students.

"My nephew in eighth grade is in a physical education class with 58 children and one teacher. This cannot be a safe environment." — *Tammie Walsh, Superior parent*

"This year we have classes in the basement, on the stage in the auditorium, and in the middle of the library. There are a great number of special needs students in the regular classrooms without the extra staff support necessary." — *Michelle Demerath, Appleton teacher*

Program cuts: School programs are being reduced or eliminated to meet budget shortages. These include academics, athletics, arts, at-risk intervention, special opportunities for the gifted as well as extracurricular activities and student services at all school levels – in spite of protests from parents and students.

"We were forced to reduce our summer school offerings, eliminate band in fifth grade, reduce a program to improve the writing skills of our students, and reduce professional development for remedial programs." — *Benjamin Villarruel, Ashland superintendent*

"Kenosha has an after-school program for 19,000 middle schoolers in danger of closing. Of those who attend the program, 98% are free of delinquency referrals, 62% decrease truancy, and 72% maintained or improved their grade point." — *Jill Anderson, Kenosha parent*

Outdated books: Textbooks and curriculum materials are often outdated, insufficient and/or in poor shape. Students must share books and are unable to take books home. Textbook replacement cycles have moved from once every five years to once every ten years and curriculum materials for classroom use are increasingly inadequate.

"The textbooks we use are the same ones we used when I was a student. You should see their faces when I give them books that look like that."

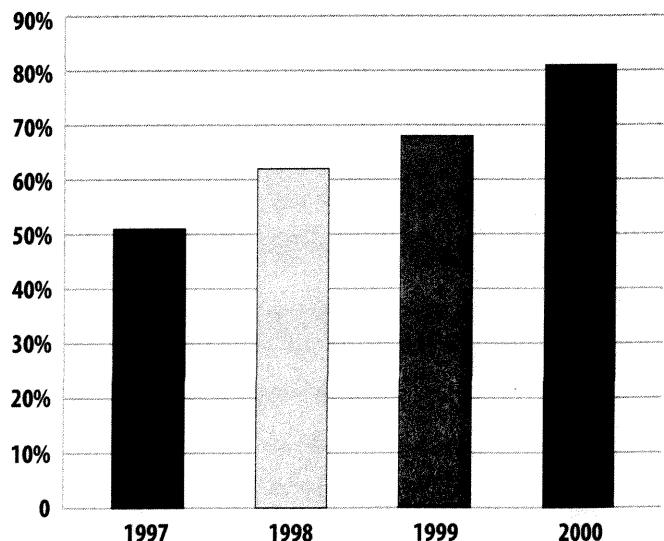
— *Laura Heller, Appleton teacher*

"Our school librarian cannot order one book, one video, or any book stickers because her library budget is zero." — *Ginny Thompson, Appleton teacher*

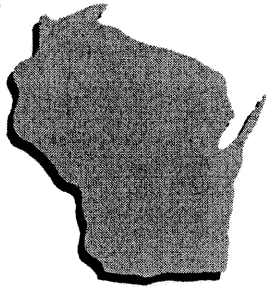
Inadequate technology: The lack of up-to-date computers, software and teacher training is widespread. There are not enough computers for students. Many buildings are not wired to handle the technology.

"In technical education, the books are old and tattered because they [bought wood instead]. For science, we use Apple IIE computers and a lot of new software doesn't even run on those old computers." — *Mahalia Miller, Stevens Point student*

Percentage of school districts where revenue limits growth is lower than the federal education inflation index



Source: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics



Report from the Statewide School Funding **SOLUTIONS COMMITTEE**

January 2001

SUMMARY

In 2000, a group of 40 school finance specialists representing 20 school districts and seven statewide education organizations, met six times to review the key financial problems facing school districts. This report summarizes the recommendations which emerged from this effort.

Key Problems

- **Revenue caps** create a growing gap between school funding and the cost of school needs.
- Costs for **special-needs students** grow much faster than does state aid.
- **Declining enrollment** – in half Wisconsin’s school districts – worsens fiscal problems.

Proposed Solutions

- Increase revenue-limit flexibility.
- Increase state reimbursement for special-needs programming.
- Help districts with declining enrollment.

Estimated Cost

- Total maximum annual cost for all detailed proposals: \$407 million.
- Two-year phase-in would limit the first-year cost to a maximum of \$236 million.

Funding Source

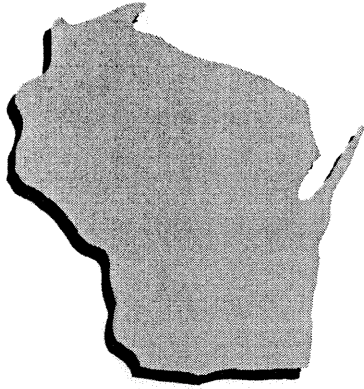
- The school levy tax credit is \$469 million annually.
- The credit is “school” aid, a part of the state’s two-thirds funding of school costs.
- But this money has never gone to schools.
- Already budgeted, redirecting the credit to schools would not increase state spending.

Committee Participants

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| • Advocates for Education of Whitefish Bay | • Janesville School District | • Waukesha School District |
| • Antigo School District | • Janesville Joint Legislative Committee | • Wisconsin Education Association Council |
| • Association for Equity in Funding | • Madison Metropolitan School District | • Wisconsin Federation of Teachers |
| • Beloit School District | • Middleton School Board | • Wisconsin PTA |
| • Brown Deer School District | • Milwaukee Public Schools | |
| • Columbus School District | • Oconomowoc School District | |
| • Greendale School District | • Palmyra-Eagle School District | |
| • Greendale School Board | • Superior School District | |
| • Institute for Wisconsin’s Future | • Superior School Board | |

Technical assistance from:

- Legislative Fiscal Bureau
- Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction



Report from the Statewide School Funding **SOLUTIONS COMMITTEE**

PARTICIPANTS:

Advocates for Education of Whitefish Bay
Antigo School District
Association for Equity in Funding
Beloit School District
Brown Deer School District
Columbus School District
Greendale School District
Greendale School Board
Institute for Wisconsin's Future
Janesville School District
Janesville Joint Legislative Committee
Madison Metropolitan School District
Middleton School Board
Milwaukee Public Schools
Oconomowoc School District
Palmyra-Eagle School District
Superior School District
Superior School Board
Waukesha School District
Wisconsin Education Association Council
Wisconsin Federation of Teachers
Wisconsin PTA

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FROM:

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction
Legislative Fiscal Bureau

Report prepared by:
Institute for Wisconsin's Future
January 2001

PART I: SUMMARY

In 2000, a group of 40 school finance specialists representing 20 school districts and seven statewide education organizations, met six times to review the key financial problems facing school districts. This report summarizes the policy recommendations, which emerged from this effort.

Key Problems

- **Revenue caps** create a growing gap between school funding and the cost of school needs.
- Costs for **special-needs students** grow much faster than does state aid.
- **Declining enrollment** – in half Wisconsin’s school districts – worsens fiscal problems.

Proposed Solutions

- Increase revenue-limit flexibility.
- Increase state reimbursement for special-needs programming.
- Help districts with declining enrollment.

Estimated Cost

- Total maximum annual cost for all detailed proposals: \$407 million.
- Two-year phase-in would limit the first-year cost to a maximum of \$236 million.

Funding Source

- School levy tax credit is \$469 million annually.
- This is officially designated as “school” aid, and counts as part of the state’s commitment to fund two-thirds of school costs.
- But none of it has ever gone to schools.
- And because it’s already budgeted, redirecting it to schools would not increase state spending.

PART II: DETAILS

Background

In December 1999, school board members, district administrators, students, religious, labor and community leaders from diverse regions of Wisconsin met to discuss the financial problems facing schools and how to coordinate efforts to address the problem. Representatives from 17 organizations located in rural, urban and suburban districts – both property-rich and property-poor communities – convened at the Monona Terrace to find common ground in ensuring that Wisconsin schools provide children with a thorough education. Two working groups were formed. One coordinated forums in different regions of the state to compile information on the impact of funding shortfalls on the schools. The other group – known as the “solutions committee” – focused on defining policy solutions that would increase resource levels for all schools while minimizing conflict between districts of varying property wealth.

The solutions committee invited school finance specialists and other district representatives to participate with a final working group of 40 people representing 20 districts and seven statewide organizations, as well as advisors from the Department of Public Instruction. The group met six times over ten months to review key financial problems facing school districts as well as policy recommendations emerging from different sources.

Key Problems

A consensus emerged about the core fiscal problems facing the state’s 426 school districts:

Revenue caps are prohibiting the majority of districts from spending enough to keep pace with rising costs – especially for salaries and benefits, utilities and gasoline, building maintenance, and staff training. For many districts, this means new programming is out of the question and existing programming is slashed.

Special-needs students are those with disabilities, with limited-English proficiency, and those from low-income families, including those in 3- and 4-year old kindergarten. Many require special, more costly programs. But the share of extra costs covered by state and federal funds has fallen drastically. The result is that many districts must choose between serving special-needs students or serving other students.

Declining enrollment means declining revenue growth, because enrollment is a major factor in calculating state aid. When enrollments fall, costs decline much slower, because most fixed costs are unaffected by a drop in students across grades and across schools. Over half the state’s districts have falling enrollment, a proportion that will continue to grow because of demographic trends.

Proposed Solutions

Participating groups reviewed solutions developed by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction Task Force, the School Administrators Alliance, the Association for Equity in Funding and other funding specialists. While there was not complete consensus among the participants on a long-term and comprehensive funding reform package, there was general agreement that the following proposals were important, viable and would ease schools' financial distress if implemented in the coming budget cycle. The primary recommendations are to:

1) Increase Revenue Limit Flexibility

- Give school boards authority to exceed revenue caps, with a two-thirds vote, by up to 1% of state per-pupil spending average.
 - At the option of the school district, the additional revenue is aidable by the state, at the same percentage the district received the year before.
 - If the additional revenue is aidable, it becomes part of the base for subsequent years.
- Give school boards authority to exceed revenue caps, with a two-thirds vote, to fund debt payments on certain limited borrowing.
 - Borrowing is limited to \$350 per pupil (or a minimum of \$250,000 per district) to pay for building repairs and remodeling, new buildings, technology upgrading, and safety needs.
 - As loans are paid down, districts can re-borrow up to the same maximum.
 - At the option of the school district, the annual debt payments can be aidable by the state, at the same percentage the district received the year before.

2) Increase State Reimbursement for Special-Needs Students

- **Students with disabilities (special education):**
 - State reimburses 90% of expenses for high-cost, low-incidence students whose annual costs exceed three times the state average.
 - State categorical reimbursement increases to 50% (from current 35%).
- **Limited-English proficiency:**
 - State reimburses for all students (not just those where the current threshold -- 10 to 20 students in a single language group -- is met).
 - State reimburses at two-thirds of prior year's cost per student.
- **Low-income:**
 - New categorical fund paid based on 10% of the state average revenue per member for each student eligible for reduced-fee or free lunch.
 - These new funds can be used for class-size reduction in schools with high concentrations of low-income students, for early kindergarten programs, for support programming, and other purposes as determined by school boards.

3) Provide Assistance to Districts with Declining Enrollment

- At the option of the school district, it can use the highest enrollment attained in any one year since 1993-94 for revenue-limit calculations. Any additional revenue allowed for by this provision would come from the local levy.

Estimated Cost for Solutions

Maximum potential state costs:

Revenue cap/1% exemption	\$ 43 million (maximum cost if all districts make use of it as aidable)
Capital-cost exemption	\$ 27 million (maximum cost if all districts borrow the maximum – at 6% for 10 years – and use it as aidable)
Special Education	\$178 million
Limited-English proficiency	\$ 39 million
Low-income	\$120 million
Declining enrollment	\$ 0
TOTAL POSSIBLE MAXIMUM	\$407 million

➤ **Immediate full implementation:**

- Revenue cap exemptions;
- Reimbursement of 90% of special education costs that exceed three times state average;
- Declining-enrollment exemption;
- Reimbursement for all limited-English proficiency students.

➤ **Potential two-year phase-in:**

- Special education reimbursement goes in first year to 43%, in second year to 50%;
- Limited-English proficiency reimbursement goes in first year to 30%, in second year to 66.6%;
- Low-income reimbursement goes in first year to 5% of state average, in second year to 10%;
- Maximum first-year cost: \$236 million.

Source of funds

- The state school levy tax credit is currently funded at \$469 million annually.
 - This is officially designated as “school” aid, and counts as part of the state’s commitment to fund two-thirds of school costs.
 - But none of it has ever gone to schools.
 - And because it’s already budgeted, redirecting it to schools would not increase state spending.
 - (Note: using the school levy tax credit would require technical adjustments in the statutory language regarding the state’s two-thirds commitment.)

Participants

We would like to thank the following individuals who contributed many hours by participating in the Solutions Committee process:

- Lance Alwin, Antigo School District
- Ken Bates, Columbus School District
- Dave Branback, National Insurance Services
- Bob Borch, Elmbrook School District
- Bob Buchholtz, Waukesha School District
- Douglas Bunton, Janesville Joint Legislative Committee
- Michael Butera, Wisconsin Education Association Council
- Darren Clark, Waukesha School District
- Lauri Clifton, Janesville School District
- Bruce Connolly, Brown Deer School District
- Winnie Doxsie, Wisconsin State PTA
- Thomas Evert, Janesville School District
- Frank Finman, Hawthorne Elementary School PTA in Waukesha
- Erin Gauthier, Palmyra-Eagle School District
- James Germain, Greendale School Board
- Doug Haselow, Association for Equity in Funding
- Bill Hughes, Greendale School District
- Douglas Johnson, Oconomowoc School District
- Janet Kane, Middleton School Board
- Russ Kava, Legislative Fiscal Bureau
- Cheryl Maranto, Advocates for Education of Whitefish Bay
- Bruce Meredith, Wisconsin Education Association Council
- Jay Mitchell, Superior School District
- Michelle Nate, Milwaukee Public Schools
- Ron Nortier, Beloit School District
- Brian Pahnke, Department of Public Instruction
- Dick Peterson, Beloit School District
- Keith Pollock, Department of Public Instruction
- Joe Quick, Madison Metropolitan School District
- William Rehnstrand, Superior School Board
- Greg Weyenberg, Wisconsin Federation of Teachers