

➤ Hearing Records ... HR

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**WISCONSIN STATE  
LEGISLATURE COMMITTEE  
HEARING RECORDS**

**2009-10**

(session year)

**Assembly**

(Assembly, Senate or Joint)

**Committee on  
Education**

**(AC-Ed)**

(FORM UPDATED: 06/28/2010)

**COMMITTEE NOTICES ...**

➤ Committee Reports ... CR  
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**INFORMATION COLLECTED BY  
COMMITTEE FOR AND AGAINST  
PROPOSAL ...**

➤ Appointments ... Appt  
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Name:

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➤ Hearing Records ... HR (bills and resolutions)  
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➤ Miscellaneous ... Misc  
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AB 806



PH 3/9/10

AB 201, AB 557, AB 622, AB 805, AB 806, AB 807, AB 808, AB 809

AB 798 & SB 250

Comparison  
Bills





4797 Hayes Road, Suite 102, Madison, WI 53704  
Phone: 608-244-1455 Fax: 608-244-4785 wi\_office@pta.org

[www.wisconsinpta.org](http://www.wisconsinpta.org)

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March 9, 2010

Thank you for holding this hearing today so that for the third year in a row, we can come to the Capitol and tell the Assembly Committee on Education just how desperately schools need a better funding system.

I appreciate that you have tried to do something to help schools, but your efforts could be called mis-directed. This is not meant as an insult, but it is a fact. For example:

- AB-805 provides more money for consolidation studies, even though the money allocated for consolidation studies is not getting used.
- AB-806 speeds up the schedule for schools to consolidate. Only one set of districts in the state has consolidated recently and people from there readily admit that it is a short-term solution. Consolidation is very distasteful.
- AB-807 might be useful. Maybe. Is there ever money left over in the DPI transportation fund to give out more money?
- AB-808 might be helpful. However, it starts us down the slippery slope. If 18 students is acceptable for a small class, why not 21. It's only 3 more kids.
- AB-809 will be helpful for MPS, but there are not many private schools in rural areas.

You as a committee have heard over and over the cries of parents, teachers, administrators, even students whose education is suffering because of missing courses, supplies, and opportunities. These students don't even know many of the things that their education is lacking until they become adults who did not have the life-skills classes in high school.

You know what needs to be done. You know, and many of you have said, that the school funding system is broken. Revenue caps are choking our children's education. When revenue caps were imposed, Wisconsin was 9<sup>th</sup> in the nation for per pupil spending, now we are 19<sup>th</sup>.

We need more money in the system. A one percent increase in the sales tax for education funding has been proposed and has much support. So why hasn't that been introduced?

You are the people who have the power to change this system and rescue the next generation of students from a mediocre education. We are pleading with you to be courageous and do the right thing. Or give the office up to someone who will.

Jill Gaskell  
Wisconsin PTA  
State Legislative Chair





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Date?

**Public Hearing**  
Committee on Education  
Tuesday, March 9, 2010  
10:00 am, Rm. 417N (GAR Hall)

## Testimony – AB 806 Consolidation Referenda Dates

Thank you Chair Pope-Roberts and members of the committee. I testify today in favor of AB 806, relating to the procedure for school district consolidations.

None of us wants to see schools consolidated, however the current fiscal environment for schools today makes it clear that more consolidations may very well occur. This legislation provides an increased measure of flexibility to districts navigating the many issues involved in consolidation.

Current law allows two or more school districts to order consolidation of their respective districts by a resolution ordering consolidation – which would take effect in July of the second year. However, a voter referendum is required to approve the consolidation if one or more of the boards orders it, or if a petition requesting a referendum is signed by 10% or more of the electors in any of the affected districts. Under current law, if a referendum is required, it can occur only during the November election, and if passed by all affected districts, it commits the districts to consolidation in July of the following year.

Although it is not required by current law, the reality for almost all districts is that a referendum will be required to affect consolidation. This bill allows school districts considering consolidations more flexibility in planning by allowing them to hold referenda in conjunction with either the April, September, or November elections. Offering two alternate timelines for referenda will allow districts additional time for planning, and more time for interim boards to be formed and make decisions on behalf of the future consolidated district.

In working with two of the districts I represent that are currently facing consolidation, it is clear that the process of bringing two separate entities with long proud traditions of independence and close associations with their communities together can be difficult and often controversial. Decision making can be difficult at best, and often progress can look like “two steps forward and one step back.”

Our goal in this legislation is simple – to provide as much flexibility as possible so that at least we are not hindering the process, and schools can do the best planning possible. I ask for your support today for this small piece of relief for both current and future schools facing the difficult prospect of consolidation.