



122 W. WASHINGTON AVENUE, MADISON, WI 53703
PHONE: 608-257-2622 FAX: 608-257-8386

JOHN H. ASHLEY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

TO: Members, Senate Committee on Education
FROM: Dan Rossmiller, Government Relations Director
DATE: October 3, 2013
RE: Support for Senate Bill 316, relating to the school district levy
for community programs and services

The Wisconsin Association of School Boards (WASB) strongly supports Senate Bill 316, relating to the school district levy for community programs and services (often referred to as the Fund 80 levy). We thank Senator Petrowski and representative Spiros for bringing this bill forward.

Senate Bill 316 would correct what we believe to be two unintended consequences of language included in the state budget that effectively caps Fund 80 levies at their 2012 levels.

First, the budget act language negatively impacts districts that acted in a fiscally responsible manner to hold down property taxes by lowering their 2012 Fund 80 levies on a one-time basis. In some cases districts did so by substituting general funds for Fund 80 levies. In other cases districts simply cut fund 80 programs with the understanding that these programs would be restored as the economy improved. In any event the budget language prevents these districts from restoring the one-time cuts.

Senate Bill 316 addresses this issue by setting the cap at the higher of the district's 2011 or 2012 levy to allow those districts that lowered their Fund 80 levy on a one-time basis to return to the level of their previous Fund 80 levy.

The second issue the bill addresses is that some districts had already voted on their Fund 80 levy prior to the passage of the budget. In effect, the budget retroactively changed the levy approved by the annual meeting. The bill would allow a district whose school board and annual meeting vote approved a Fund 80 levy prior the adoption of the state budget to set its Fund 80 levy at the level approved by that earlier action.

This bill respects local control and fiscal responsibility. The WASB urges your support for Senate Bill 316.