



"Leadership in Public School Governance"

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TO: Members, Joint Committee on Finance  
FROM: Wisconsin Association of School Boards (WASB)  
Dan Rossmiller & Chris Kulow, Government Relations  
DATE: May 2021  
RE: WASB Budget Positions

The WASB appreciates this opportunity to share our perspective and positions regarding the proposed 2021-23 State Budget alternatives before the JFC on Thursday, May 27. The WASB's positions are determined by resolutions voted on and approved by school board members statewide. If you have any questions on our positions, please contact us.

The WASB has four main budget priorities:

1. Secure an increase in spendable resources for school districts that, at a minimum, equals or is greater than the rate of inflation in each year of the two-year state budget;
2. Secure a significant increase in special education categorial aid;
3. Secure a significant increase in resources for school-based mental health services to students (and staff); and
4. Secure an adjustment to the rolling three-year membership average to mitigate the effects of the drop in student membership counts caused by the pandemic. That enrollment drop negatively impacts both school districts' revenue limit calculations and per pupil aid allocations.

With respect to the Budget Papers prepared for the committee's May 27 meeting we recommend the following alternatives:

**Paper #496: State Support for K-12 Education**

The WASB supports annual adjustments in per pupil resources that at least match the rate of inflation. In keeping with this position, the WASB supports annual increases of at least \$150 per pupil in spendable resources for schools either through **B4, B5, C3 or C4** or a combination of the two as well as an annual increase of at least \$200 per pupil in the low revenue ceiling.

**Paper #497: Buyback of Current Law General School Aid Payment Delay - A1**

The WASB supports all school aid payments being made in the same fiscal year to which they apply.

**Paper #498: Special Adjustment Aid – A1**

The WASB supports adjusting the aid formula so that school districts whose property values are rising well above the state average will not lose state aid as a result of property value increases.

**Paper #499: Revenue Limit and Per Pupil Aid Enrollment for the 2020-21 School Year – A2, B1**

The WASB supports provisions to mitigate the effects of the significant drop in 2020-21 student membership counts due to the pandemic (which would otherwise reduce both districts' revenue limits and per pupil aid aid) in the 2021-22 and 2022-23 school years.

**Paper #505: Special Education Aids – A2, B1, C1**

The WASB supports a significant increase in special education categorical aid and supports full state funding for children with high cost/low incidence disabilities. Our members support increasing special education categorial aid to reach an eventual goal of 60 percent reimbursement.

**Paper #506: Supplemental Per Pupil Aid – A2**

**Paper #507: Mental Health Programs – A1, B1, C1**

The WASB supports a significant increase in resources for school-based mental health services to students (and staff).

**Paper #508: Bilingual-Bicultural Aids – A1, B1**

The WASB supports either increased weighting of English learner (EL) pupils in the general school aids and revenue limit formulas or providing categorical aid to support school district services for all EL pupils in grades 4K through 12.

**Paper #509: Sparsity Aid – A2**

The WASB supports special initiatives at the state level to help small school districts remain fiscally viable and supports providing sparsity aid based on enrollment size and population density.

**Paper #510: School Nutrition Programs – A1, B1**

The WASB supports policies and programs that promote healthy and nutritious eating habits and opposes state legislation mandating that schools provide meals to any student who requests one, regardless of his or her ability to pay for the meal, unless the state provides funding to meet this mandate.

**Paper #511: High Cost Transportation Aid – A1**

The WASB supports providing funding mechanisms to assist school districts with per pupil transportation costs that exceed the statewide average. The WASB also supports a more expansive proposal developed by a number of GOP lawmakers who represent rural school districts.

**Paper #513: Four-Year-Old Kindergarten Grants - A1**