



School Administrators Alliance

Representing the interests of Wisconsin school children

2005-06 Legislative Agenda Scorecard

September 27, 2005

Limits on School Revenues/Spending

The SAA opposes any additional limits, statutory or constitutional, on school district revenues and/or spending. Such limits would undermine the principle of local control and the ability of local school officials to address the unique needs of their students.

The SAA and the anti-TABOR/Freeze coalition has been extremely effective in fighting off the various TABOR proposals. Governor Doyle again vetoed a Freeze proposal from the 2005-07 state budget. Lawmakers continue to build support for TABOR, and rumors abound regarding possible Action on TABOR later this legislative session.

State School Funding, QEO and Revenue Limits

The SAA supports continuation of the current level of state funding (as a percentage of total funding) for K-12 public education, and supports changing the current “sum certain” general aid appropriation to “sum sufficient” status. The SAA also maintains that any change in the QEO requires corresponding adjustments to revenue limits as well as changes in the current mediation-arbitration laws.

With creative use of his partial veto pen, Governor Doyle increased general aid by more than \$700 million, restored the per-pupil revenue limit adjustment allowed under current law and restored two-thirds state funding of public education in Wisconsin. The Legislature removed QEO repeal from the Governor’s budget proposal, maintaining current law. The general aid appropriation remains on a “sum certain” basis.

Health Insurance

The SAA supports measures that would improve the quality and efficiency of health care delivered to Wisconsin school district employees, and that provide school districts with the tools necessary to manage rising health insurance costs.

No change through the budget process. Given the current political dynamic, any significant change is highly unlikely.

Transportation

The SAA supports increasing the current level of state categorical aid funding to help school districts manage the rising cost of transporting Wisconsin school children.

The 2005-07 state budget contains a \$12.75 million increase in pupil transportation aid over the biennium.

High Cost Special Education Students

The SAA supports a permanent high cost special education categorical appropriation to reimburse school districts for 90% of the costs incurred in serving high cost special education students. This reimbursement would apply only to costs in excess of three times the state per pupil average.

The 2005-07 state budget contains \$3.5 million for high cost special education.

Special Education Categorical Appropriation

The SAA supports an inflationary increase in the special education categorical appropriation. We also support making the special education categorical a “sum sufficient” appropriation.

The 2005-07 state budget contains a \$12 million increase in this appropriation over the biennium. The appropriation remains on a “sum certain” basis.

District Control of Federal Funds

The SAA supports changing current law/rules to allow school districts to use their entitlement flow-through federal funds in accordance with federal requirements without additional restrictions from the state. The SAA believes these federal funds should only “flow through” the state and should be considered school district entitlement funds to be used flexibly to meet the instructional needs of students.

The SAA is supporting AB 362/SB 177 to gain more flexibility regarding the expenditure of IDEA funds for privately contracted services. The bills have received public hearings. The DPI and WEAC are opposed, but the SAA continues to work with them on compromise language.

IDEA

The SAA supports the federalization of Wisconsin special education procedures and recommends replacing Wisconsin Statutes Chapter 115 (special education procedures) with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) 2004. In addition, the SAA encourages the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) to apply, as part of IDEA 2004, to be one of 15 states to receive a 3-year waiver for IEP development and paperwork reduction.

The SAA is currently working on a bill to federalize Wisconsin Statutes Chapter 115. This effort is our top priority for the remainder of the session.

Bilingual/ Bicultural Aid

The SAA supports increasing the current level of state categorical funding to districts required to offer programming for limited English proficient (LEP) students. The SAA also supports extending aid to districts that serve LEP students but do not currently qualify for aid.

The 2005-07 state budget contains a \$2.4 million increase over the biennium.

Relief for Declining Enrollment Districts

The SAA supports changing the current 75% hold harmless non-recurring exemption to a recurring exemption that districts could retain in their base revenue limit for the forthcoming year, and in each year thereafter.

Although State Superintendent Burmaster and Governor Doyle forwarded proposals to provide relief for declining enrollment districts, the Legislature failed to act.

Relief for Low Spending Districts

The SAA supports increasing the low revenue ceiling to \$8,200 in 2005-06 and to \$8,600 in 2006-07.

The 2005-07 state budget increases the low revenue ceiling to \$8,100 in 2005-06, and \$8,400 in 2006-07.

Unused Revenue Limit Carryover

The SAA supports changing current law to increase the allowable percentage of unused revenue limit carryover from 75 percent to 100 percent beginning in 2005-06.

The 2005-07 state budget applies the 100 percent carryover beginning in 2004-05.

Medicaid School-Based Services Funding

The SAA supports changing current law to increase the percentage share of Medicaid funds claimed that the state distributes to school districts, CESAs and the state residential schools for Medicaid school-based services (SBS) provided.

No action during the budget session. The SAA supports SB 313.

Four-Year-Old Kindergarten

The SAA supports maintaining the current level of state financial support for four-year-old kindergarten.

The SAA helped fight off attempts to slash 4K funding. Current law was maintained.

SAGE

The SAA supports maintaining the current level of state financial support for the SAGE program. The SAA also supports allowing school districts participating in SAGE to choose whether to lower class sizes in grades two or three; and flexibility in the mandated 15-1 student-teacher ratio.

The Governor vetoed the SAA-supported flexibility proposal advanced by the Legislature. The state budget also contains a \$6.1 million increase in SAGE funding.

State School Finance System

The SAA supports a formula of school equalization aid as the primary distribution mechanism for the state's school finance system.

The equalization aid formula remains the primary distribution mechanism.

Categorical Aid System

The SAA supports a system of categorical aid for targeting state financial support to specific student services, programs and/or costs (special education, bilingual/bicultural, transportation, etc.), as opposed to a "weighted" system of general aid.

The categorical aid system of targeting state financial support to specific student services, programs and/or costs was maintained.