

SOUTHEASTERN WISCONSIN SCHOOLS ALLIANCE

January 2009 Legislative Priorities

The Southeastern Wisconsin Schools Alliance is a coalition of public school districts in southeastern Wisconsin formed to study educational issues and respond to policy decisions that affect public education.

Purpose of Legislative Priorities

The purpose of the legislative agenda is to proactively influence public policy related to education through Legislative advocacy for the benefit of students, families, and communities.

School Funding: Statement of Principles

- ✓ Support funding models that provide:
 - Local control
 - Taxpayer equity
 - Balance between district revenues and expenditures including negotiated settlements, instructional quality, financial stability, reasonable property taxes
 - Resources to support high achievement for all students

School Improvement

- ✓ Support establishment of recognition program for high schools which promote development of high level math and science standards
- ✓ Provide option for School Performance Reports to be posted on district Web sites as opposed to being mailed to every constituent.

Limits on School Revenue/Expenditures (TABOR)

- ✓ Oppose any additional limits, statutory or constitutional on school district revenues and/or spending.

School Funding

- ✓ The current school finance model is built on QEO, revenue limits, two-thirds state funding, and equalization formula. An adjustment to any of these factors requires corresponding adjustment to other components. We support alignment of personnel costs and revenue and flexibility to manage the issue.
- ✓ Support the restoration of two-thirds state funding of K12 public education by law.
- ✓ Support the school equalization aid formula as the primary distribution mechanism for the state school finance system
- ✓ Maintain Categorical Aid Structure as Opposed to a Weighted System of General Aid
- ✓ Provide relief for declining enrollment school districts
- ✓ Support broadening the tax base to support education and the reduce tax burden on home owners

Special Education

- ✓ Align Wisconsin special education law with federal IDEA requirements
- ✓ Support special education private contracting reimbursement
- ✓ Support special education funding at a level necessary to meet state and federal mandates

- ✓ Support supplemental funding for low incidence, high cost disabled students
- ✓ Support an increase in Medicaid reimbursement for schools

Health Care

- ✓ Support measures to improve the quality and efficiency of health care in Wisconsin
- ✓ Support measures that would provide school districts with relief regarding increased health insurance costs
- ✓ Support development of mechanisms to manage the fiscal challenges posed by rising health care costs
- ✓ Ensure that no consequences can be enacted for asking a health insurance provider for data regarding claims, costs analysis, etc.

Levy Certification

- ✓ Support changes in levy certification dates to allow the Department of Public Instruction and local school districts time to collect and analyze data in a reasonable and accurate manner

SAGE Funding

- ✓ Increase funding for SAGE to reduce class sizes, maximize achievement and close the achievement gap

Four-Year-Old Kindergarten

- ✓ Fully fund four-year-old kindergarten

Transportation Funding

- ✓ Increase the level of categorical aid to support school districts in managing the rising cost of student transportation

English Language Learners

- ✓ Increase the level of categorical aid funding for serving English language learners in response to growing needs