

Wisconsin Association of School Boards: Statement on state budget

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The state budget signed into law today significantly invests in our public school students and districts, one of the best investments we can make as a state. The substantial increases in per-pupil aid and other categorical aids are welcome and vitally important to our public school districts that serve the vast majority of students in Wisconsin and are tasked with preparing all of them for college and/or careers.

I also applaud the mental health-related supports for students and school districts included in the state budget. These needs have been overlooked for too long.

I am disappointed that neither revenue limit relief for low-spending districts nor an increase/expansion of sparsity aid were included in the final budget. Both are targeted to school districts that have special challenges and this was a lost opportunity. I am also disappointed with the further expansions of private school vouchers and special needs vouchers which continue to take us down the path of funding dual education systems when we have not been able to maintain even inflationary increases for our constitutionally mandated public school system. In addition, several policy items were included in the budget (e.g. teacher and administrator licensure changes, scheduling of referendum restrictions and restrictions for energy savings projects) that will impact the efficient operations of school districts.

Ultimately, I understand that a budget comes down to making hard choices with available resources and there will be provisions that school board members

statewide both support and oppose. On behalf of all 422 locally elected school boards in Wisconsin, I want to thank the governor and members of the Legislature for their public service and for the positive items included for public schools. I also look forward to continuing to work with both the governor and lawmakers for the remainder of this legislative session.

The Wisconsin Association of School Boards is a nonprofit association that provides information and services to Wisconsin school boards in the areas of school law and policymaking, bargaining, legislation and leadership development.