

Sen. Marklein: Rural school funding bill moves to the Governor's desk

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MADISON – State Senator Howard Marklein’s rural school funding bill, Assembly Bill (AB) 835, passed the State Senate today with a bipartisan vote of 31 – 1. It is now before Governor Scott Walker for signature. Sen. Marklein (R-Spring Green) is the Senate author of this legislation and has led the charge on this bill. AB 835 increases sparsity aid funding for small rural schools and increases the revenue limit ceiling for low spending school districts with an amendment to enable the Darlington School District to benefit from the legislation.

“It is another great day for rural schools! I am proud to continue the charge for additional funding for rural schools with the passage of this bill,” Marklein said. “I have worked tirelessly to educate my colleagues on this legislation while finding ways to build consensus among legislators to get this done. I am confident that Governor Walker will sign this legislation.”

AB 835 and Senate Bill (SB) 690 were introduced on January 10, 2018 with strong support in both houses of the legislature. The Senate version passed the Joint Finance Committee on February 8, 2018. The Assembly passed AB 835 on Tuesday, February 13, 2018. It is coauthored by Representative John Nygren (R-Marinette). Governor Scott Walker has also championed the legislation.

The bill will increase sparsity aid from \$300 to \$400 per pupil for the 2018-19 school year, an estimated \$6 million boost for rural schools. In addition, this proposal also increases the low revenue ceiling from \$9,100 to \$9,400 for the 2018-19 school year, with the low revenue ceiling rising by \$100 per year thereafter up to \$9,800 by the 2022-23 school year. School districts who have had a failed referendum

within the last three years would be ineligible for the low revenue ceiling increase.

In the 17th Senate District, 22 of the 33 school districts with fewer than 745 students and less than 10 pupils per square mile will receive a \$1 million increase in Sparsity Aid. The change to the low revenue ceiling will impact six school districts in the 17th Senate District as well, including one district that does not qualify for sparsity aid.

“AB 835 enhances the historic \$11.5 billion investment in K-12 funding in the biennial budget by providing additional support for rural schools,” Marklein said. “I am proud to champion good policy on behalf of the school districts I serve.”