

IRG Action Fund: Supports taxpayer refund for closed schools

Posted on Thursday, Feb 10, 2022

>> **WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)**

Madison, Wis. — Today IRG Action Fund’s Executive Vice President Chris Reader testified in front of the Assembly Committee on Education in support of [Assembly Bill 964](#) - legislation that requires school districts to refund taxpayers if it closes its doors to in-person learning for an extended amount of time. Support for the bill comes on the heels of school districts across Wisconsin closing during the COVID-19 pandemic, yet still receiving full per-student funding in addition to massive federal funding in the form of COVID relief.

“This bill sends an enforceable message that the Legislature, parents, and taxpayers will not accept public school districts locking their doors to students for days and weeks at a time,” **said Chris Reader in his testimony.** “After all, parents pay for the schools. They should not be paying the same price when the school district fails its most basic test: to welcome students inside to learn.”

The mechanics of the refund, as spelled out in the bill, would increase the school property tax credit for residents in districts that close to in-person instruction for more than 10 days of instruction in the semester. Under the formula in the bill, residents would see a refund of up to 10% of their property taxes or rent constituting property taxes based on a formula that takes into account the number of days schools were closed. Residents with school children would see their refund increased to up to 25%, limited to those households with gross incomes under \$80,000 or \$150,000 for married couples.

Read below for key excerpts from his testimony:

“... That’s why, in June of 2021, over 175 parents sent all of you a letter demanding refunds for closed schools[6]. These parents and taxpayers were forced to pick up

the tab when schools closed to stay at home from work or pay costs related to childcare or virtual learning. That's unfair to Wisconsin families, especially when Wisconsin school districts continued receiving their full per-student state funding, not to mention massive federal funding for COVID relief. In short, taxpayers were paying full price and then some for an incomplete product. In any other area of life, a refund would be expected.

“Members of the committee, you have an opportunity with this bill to say never again will it be okay for districts to put unions ahead of families and children. IRG Action encourages you to support this bill and move it forward to the full Assembly.”

Click [here](#) to read the full testimony in support of AB 964.