



School Administrators Alliance

Representing the Interests of Wisconsin School Children

TO: Senate Committee on Education
FROM: John Forester, Director of Government Relations
DATE: October 3, 2013
RE: Senate Bill 316 – Community Services Levy

The School Administrators Alliance (SAA) strongly supports Senate Bill 316, relating to the school district levy for community programs and services (often referred to as Fund 80 levy). I would also like to thank Senator Petrowski for bringing this bill forward and for allowing the SAA to participate in the bill development process.

The 2013-15 state budget limited the amount a school district may levy for community programs and services in 2013 and 2014 to the amount it levied in the most recent year prior to 2013 in which it levied for community services and programs.

Subsequent to the adoption of these budget provisions, we received calls from numerous school districts highlighting two problems with the budget limits that we believe may have been unintentional.

First, the budget language clearly accounts for those school districts that did not, on a one-time basis, levy for community programs and services in 2012 by allowing these districts to go back to the most recent year prior to 2013 in which it had levied for community programs and services to establish its levy limit. The budget language however, made no such exception for those districts that lowered their Fund 80 levy on a one time basis in 2012. We believe that the budget language effectively punishes those districts for being fiscally conservative and sensitive to their taxpayers.

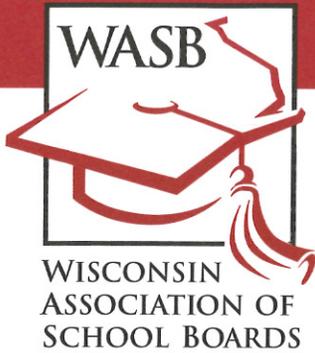
Second, prior to state budget action on the Fund 80 levy, some school boards had voted to approve an increase in their Fund 80 levy to meet local needs. Subsequent budget action then effectively changed these plans retroactively.

SB 316 makes exceptions to the Fund 80 levy limits to account for these two issues.

Finally, I would like to highlight the time sensitive nature of this bill. In order for the bill to solve these two problems as intended for 2013, it must be signed by the Governor in mid-October. DPI will certify school district state aid amounts on October 15th and districts must certify their levies in early November.

Thank you for your consideration of our position on SB 316.

An Alliance of:



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JOHN H. ASHLEY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

TO: Members, Senate Committee on Education
FROM: Dan Rossmiller, Government Relations Director
DATE: October 3, 2013
RE: Support for Senate Bill 316, relating to the school district levy
for community programs and services

The Wisconsin Association of School Boards (WASB) strongly supports Senate Bill 316, relating to the school district levy for community programs and services (often referred to as the Fund 80 levy). We thank Senator Petrowski and representative Spiros for bringing this bill forward.

Senate Bill 316 would correct what we believe to be two unintended consequences of language included in the state budget that effectively caps Fund 80 levies at their 2012 levels.

First, the budget act language negatively impacts districts that acted in a fiscally responsible manner to hold down property taxes by lowering their 2012 Fund 80 levies on a one-time basis. In some cases districts did so by substituting general funds for Fund 80 levies. In other cases districts simply cut fund 80 programs with the understanding that these programs would be restored as the economy improved. In any event the budget language prevents these districts from restoring the one-time cuts.

Senate Bill 316 addresses this issue by setting the cap at the higher of the district's 2011 or 2012 levy to allow those districts that lowered their Fund 80 levy on a one-time basis to return to the level of their previous Fund 80 levy.

The second issue the bill addresses is that some districts had already voted on their Fund 80 levy prior to the passage of the budget. In effect, the budget retroactively changed the levy approved by the annual meeting. The bill would allow a district whose school board and annual meeting vote approved a Fund 80 levy prior the adoption of the state budget to set its Fund 80 levy at the level approved by that earlier action.

This bill respects local control and fiscal responsibility. The WASB urges your support for Senate Bill 316.