

REFORMING EDUCATION



PROTECTING TAXPAYERS

Representative Brett Davis

Legislative Package Summary

School Finance Reform

We have a proud history of supporting education in Wisconsin, both through innovative reforms and significant investments. Creating an equitable, sustainable school finance formula that protects property taxpayers is in the best interest of our students and the economic well being of our communities.

Given the state of our economy and challenges people all across Wisconsin are facing due to job loss, it is critical we work hard to invest in education while bringing costs in line with people's ability to pay.

To ensure Wisconsin has a sustainable school finance formula, Assembly Republicans are introducing the following legislation that will give school districts the tools they need to better control their costs and protect property taxpayers.

Restore QEO and Align with Revenue Limits (LRB 3576 - Davis)

The major reason school districts go to referendum is because there is a gap between major expenses and allowable revenues, primarily caused by state law. This legislation restores and aligns the QEO with revenue caps to eliminate the gap between allowable revenue and a district's major expense. If school boards want to settle employee contracts above the QEO they are allowed to do so.

Reduce Property Taxes by restoring 2/3rds Funding (LRB 3576 - Davis)

Reduce property taxes by requiring an increase in the state's share of general aid funding. The state would be required to fund 2/3rds of total school costs by 2015/16 budget cycle (3rd cycle).

Reduce Health Care Costs (LRB 3576 - Davis)

Lower health care costs for many school districts by providing state health benefits to teachers. Districts would be required to bid out their health insurance and select the lowest health insurance bid that is similar to cost and quality of state health insurance.

Restore Arbitration Factors (AB 441 - Gottlieb/Davis)

Restore arbitration factors for school district employee contracts that were deleted by the state budget. This provision requires arbitrators to give the greatest weight to any expenditure or revenue limits imposed by the state, and greater weight to local economic conditions within the jurisdiction.

School Efficiency Incentives (AJR 65 - Newcomer)

Remove disincentive for low tax/low debt school district to take on increased financial burden of merged school districts. Hold lower rate school district taxpayers harmless and allow taxpayers of old school district with higher rate to pay off debt over time at a different rate.

Reward Good Teachers with Merit Pay (AB 538 - Davis)

Implement a Merit Pay Program, which would reward our best teachers. School boards would compete statewide from a menu of several measurable goals they hope their schools would meet; including raising low or maintaining high test scores and improving attendance, drop-out, graduation and achievement gap rates.

**all provisions would have a start date of 11/12 biennium unless noted.*

Wisconsin Student Assessment Reform

Innovative student assessment reforms are taking place at the grassroots level all across Wisconsin. It is time the state takes a stronger role in helping school districts implement these reforms, which will focus on individual student achievement gains, faster dissemination of best practices, and getting assessment results back more quickly.

Assembly Republicans are introducing the following ideas to reform our current student assessment system:

- Expand Value-Added Modeling (VAM) to every Wisconsin public school district by 2012-2013 school year.
- Require the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) to update state standards and performance levels on state assessments in English language arts, math, science and reading by September 1, 2011. The standards and performance levels will be evaluated every 10 years and tied to international levels, as determined by DPI and the Governor.
- Governor's Summit on Student Achievement to be held November 2010 to focus on faster dissemination of best practices and closing the achievement gap.
- Eliminate the current 10th grade WI Knowledge & Concepts Examination (WKCE) and require all 11th graders to take a new state assessment with ACT at its core, but aligned to state standards. Students would begin taking the new exam during the 2011 school year.
- Require all school districts to use benchmark assessments that measure individual student growth in grades 3-10 and administer the assessments at least 2 times per school year.
- Require all new state assessments to be made available to school districts and parents within 6 weeks of taking the exam.
- Funding will come through a partnership between the federal, state and local governments, and philanthropic organizations. The federal government has \$360 million in grants available to states and local school districts to modernize their assessments.

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Student Test Scores vs Education Funding

