



To: Members of the Board of Education

From: Daniel A. Nerad, Superintendent

Date: September 13, 2009

Subject: **2009 WASB Resolutions**

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Attached to this memorandum are three proposed 2009 WASB Resolutions. These resolutions will be discussed as part of the Student Achievement and Performance Monitoring Committee meeting on September 14, 2009. The specific resolutions have been developed in consultation with Board member Maya Cole.

Please let me know if you have any questions on these proposals.

Attachments

## **PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS FOR 2009 WASB DELEGATE ASSEMBLY**

### **Resolution I: Role of the State in Purchasing**

WASB supports a substantially increased role of the State in supporting, coordinating and helping facilitate the cost-effective, cooperative procurement of goods and services between Wisconsin school districts, other local units of government, and the State.

Rationale: Wisconsin local units of government are entirely responsible for the procurement of goods and services for their respective jurisdictions.

While the local units of government may access available procurement contracts through the State of Wisconsin and its respective agencies (utilizing VendorNet), there is minimal communication and coordination by the State with local units of government regarding their procurement needs.

A number of other states, such as Virginia and Washington, purposefully take into consideration the needs of their local units of government and provide procurement services and resources to their local units of government. The collaboration between these states and their local units of government involving the procurement function is a recognized “best practice” that lowers the net cost of acquiring goods and services for both state and local units of government.

### **Resolution II: Localized Purchasing of Nutritious Foods**

WASB supports, as part of the need to focus on ensuring healthier school aged children, the purchase of local products and produce from local farms in their respective county based upon availability.

Rationale: Boards of Education recognize the connection between a healthy diet and a student’s ability to learn effectively and experience success in school. The Board also recognizes the school district’s role, as part of the larger community, to establish and maintain life-long healthy eating habits, support the local economy and act as a good steward of community resources.

Boards shall actively promote the purchase of local products and produce from local farms in their respective county based upon availability. School districts, CESAs and county organizations should work together to coordinate a list of producers to increase the amount of products purchased from local farms and organic food suppliers.

Recent changes in the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 that addresses procurements in Child Nutrition Programs, along with the amended section to the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act require the U. S. Secretary of Agriculture to encourage institutions to purchase unprocessed locally grown and locally raised agricultural products. Specifically, “[T]he Secretary shall allow schools to use a geographic preference for the procurement of unprocessed agricultural products, both locally grown and locally raised...to the maximum extent practicable and appropriate.”

Effective October 1, 2008, the National School Lunch Act allows institutions (school districts) to apply a geographic preference when procuring unprocessed locally grown or locally raised agricultural products. Districts, in citing geographic preference include, for example, State, county, region, etc.

In addition, as Woodbury (IA) County Rural Economic Development Director, Robert Marqusee, stated for the July 2007 national Association of Counties publication on Local Food Systems and sustainable communities, "Most people think we have to look outside of [our county] to reinvigorate our economy... We simply have to be willing to support local farmers and help them develop products that are lucrative in today's markets rather than putting them out of business just to save a few dollars in the short term."

### **Resolution III: School Finance Network Plan**

WASB supports legislative action on the School Finance Network Plan

Rationale: Wisconsin's public school districts continue to face serious challenges and problems under the current funding formula. In addition, the Vincent v. Voight State Supreme Court case is in recognition of the fact that certain groups of students require additional expenditure of monies creating further constraint at the local level.

Recently the School Finance Network finalized a school funding plan that is supported by a diverse group of funding organizations and organizations that advocate on behalf of the needs of Wisconsin's children. The Assembly Chair of the Education Committee recently held a hearing on this plan. There is a need now for legislative action on this plan which would allow for the necessary public policy discussions and debates regarding critical questions such as what it costs to educate children in our state, in light of existing state and federal standards and related moral imperatives to ensure an educated citizenry, and what it costs our state when we fail to educate children well.

While resources are currently constrained in our State, there is an immediate need for this public policy debate to take place. Supporting the translation of the School Network Plan into legislation would allow this to take place.

### **Resolution IV: Amend WASB Resolution 2.04\* with 2.04a**

Resolution 2.04 a. The WASB endorses an additional state sales tax, the funds derived therefrom to be exclusively dedicated to general and categorical aides to Wisconsin public school districts to assist in the development of a well-balanced tax system that lowers Wisconsin's heavy reliance on the income and property taxes and to reach the promised two-thirds funding.

\*WASB - Adopted as 2.04 Balanced Tax System

The WASB recommends developing a well-balanced tax system that lowers Wisconsin's heavy reliance on the income and property taxes while maintaining the current two-thirds funding commitment for schools and properly funding existing mandates. (03-10)

Note: This is from WAES who I have worked with to find out if their group will be using this as their public agenda in the coming months; they are planning to support us and will use this idea as a way to address school finance.

Rationale:

1. The State of Wisconsin is increasingly unable to support the promised aid to our school districts, shifting the major burden to local property taxpayers, and this is no longer viable.
2. School districts are turning to referenda to allow them to raise the needed funds, and more of these referenda are failing every year.
3. While it's factual that the state's economy - and the world's economies - are not healthy, cutting funding for our schools is counterproductive as a response. If anyone thinks that we will overcome the current problems with a less-than-well-educated work force, they are mistaken.
4. Wisconsin's current means of collecting revenue to fund state aid to education are insufficient and unsustainable. The recent use of federal state stabilization dollars to address this is temporary and new sources must be found.
5. Wisconsin needs to find new revenue sources, and the state's State Sales Tax, at 5%, is lower than surrounding states and in the mid-level of state sales taxes nationally. Raising it to 6% would not be unrealistic. Reform of sales tax exemptions would also be a very good idea.
6. Concerns about the regressivity of sales taxes can be addressed via targeted income or property tax credits.]
7. This addition to Resolution 2.04 does not represent a change in policy for WASB, but an increased specificity for a longstanding position.

**Resolution V: WASB Should Support Legislation implementing Property Tax Credits for Volunteers in School Districts.**

WASB should support property tax relief/earned income credits to people who volunteer time to their public schools.

Rationale:

1. Strengthening connections between a community and its schools has proven to be a good investment all around.

2. National efforts are working on increasing volunteerism in our communities.
3. Studies consistently show that the volunteer benefits from increased activity in the school.
4. An increase in volunteers in the schools lowers the staff to student ratio which can result in higher student performance.
5. The tax burden on retired persons and low-income families continues to be a burden — this would be one way to provide tax relief for low-income and retired citizens.

### **Resolution VI: WASB Should Open Its Governance Model So That Large Districts are Defined and Represented as a Caucus.**

Rationale: [See my opinion below.]

As the WASB liaison from Madison, I have observed at the annual meeting how lopsided the vote on the issues becomes at the larger meeting. These resolutions essentially push what will be a part of the lobbying agenda for WASB on behalf of us for the coming year.

MMSD's dilemma (and other districts over 15,000 students) is that we get one vote - much like the U.S. Senate.

ONE vote for MMSD, one for Milwaukee and one vote for some small district in northern Wisconsin.

Many of the smaller districts have members that vote together (like a block) because of the relationships built up over the years; board members from these smaller districts have been on the school board for 15 to 20 years or more! In some ways, there is consensus on issues before the vote is even taken on the floor.

This sort of confirms to me that our one lobbying group (WASB) is passing the buck (or not) when it comes to the issues facing large metropolitan areas vs. smaller districts by continuing this one district/one vote governance model.

My second observation about this process is that board representatives from larger districts get frustrated but many aren't on long enough to make any significant changes.

After attending the WASB annual meeting, I have to say I would like to make some of these issues known to the general public and put some pressure on WASB.

This is really up to the rest of the Board.

Thank you for your time!