

WASB Policy Modifications Related to Open Enrollment

Recommended changes to the current WASB resolution on open enrollment (Policy 3.77):

Current f.: The options for the districts to limit the number of students leaving the school district under the open enrollment program, if the school board believes that number is large enough to threaten the viability of the district.

Proposed f.: The option for the districts to limit the number of students leaving the school district under the open enrollment program, if the school board believes the fiscal stability of the district is threatened.

Rationale – As school districts are confronted by a combination of revenue limits and declining state aid, fiscal issues are overriding attention paid to the educational programs offered to our children. The law originally limited open enrollment transfers to 3% of a district's total enrollment and was designed to provide parents with enrollment options for their students.

Now, districts lack the flexibility or capacity to adjust to large scale student population shifts. Districts already fiscally weakened by nearly two decades of revenue limits, and more recently, cuts to general state aids – particularly in small, rural districts – are left with the options of dissolving the district, or Draconian cuts to the educational program.

Current i.: The WASB supports a clarification in state statutes to limit the number of students enrolling in nonresident school districts to 10 percent of the resident district membership.

Proposed i.: The WASB supports limiting the number of students enrolling in nonresident school districts to 3 percent of the resident district membership.

Rationale – The law originally capped open enrollment to 3% of a district's total enrollment. This change returns control of open enrollment transfers to locally elected school board members. If districts choose to limit open enrollment transfers to less than 3%, correspondingly, a district would have to use the same method/policy for *accepting* students through open enrollment.

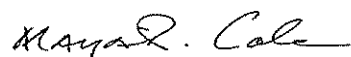
Proposed j.: The WASB supports a fiscally neutral exchange of state dollars in open enrollment transfers.

Rationale – Current law requires that a sending district pay the receiving school district approximately \$6,500. The \$6,500 payment is the estimated statewide cost of educating a student; however, in practice this amount doesn't really reflect the costs of educating a student in the receiving district, or takes into account the loss of revenue to the sending district.

The law could be changed by lowering the dollar amount to \$5,000, or the amount of state aid per pupil received by the sending district in the prior year, whichever is less.

While the WASB supports public school open enrollment, participation in the program should not be a fiscal hardship. The current state/nation fiscal climate and local economic circumstances confronted by school districts, has dramatically changed the fiscal equation and requires modifications to the state's open enrollment law.

Approved by the School Board of: Madison Metropolitan School District **Date:** 9/13/10



Signed: (Board President)