



School Administrators Alliance

Representing the Interests of Wisconsin School Children

TO: Senate Committee on Education
FROM: John Forester, Executive Director
DATE: December 19, 2017
RE: SB 159 – Education About Nutrition

The School Administrators Alliance (SAA) is opposed to Senate Bill 159, relating to education about nutrition, as it is currently drafted.

SB 159 essentially does three things. It requires the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) to modify its nutrition education standards to include knowledge of the nutritive value of foods and the role of a nutritious diet in promoting health. The bill also requires school boards to change their instruction about nutrition to conform to the new DPI nutrition education standards. Finally, the bill would require that a nutrition education component be incorporated into the health education class, which is a requirement for high school graduation.

In anticipation of this hearing, I sought input on SB 159 from a broad cross-section of SAA members. I'd like to share with you their key thoughts on the bill. As a preface, I would like to share that SAA members in general believe that the intent behind the bill – promoting health, preventing chronic disease, and battling obesity – is laudable.

Nearly all the SAA members I consulted with recoiled at the requirement in Section 2 of the bill that a nutrition education component be incorporated into the health education class, which is a requirement for high school graduation. They fear that every time we add a mandate something else needs to be watered down to meet the mandate. They believe that local educators and local school boards, operating within the broad parameters established by the state and federal government, are in the best position to determine the instructional programming that best meets the unique educational needs of the children in their communities.

I have worked with the authors on Senate Amendment 1, which removes Section 2 of the bill. If this amendment is adopted, the SAA will remove its opposition to the bill.

Thank you for your consideration of our views. If you should have any questions on our thoughts on SB 159, please call me at 608-242-1370.