



School Nutrition Association of Wisconsin

State Government Affairs Report (April / May 2013)

OVERVIEW:

April and May in the State Capitol has been nothing short of a whirlwind. The Legislature's powerful Joint Finance (i.e., budget) Committee began debating Gov. Scott Walker's two-year state budget proposal in earnest, and over the past two months, has dissected and re-written much of the 1,000-plus page, \$68 billion spending bill.

Once the Committee completes its work, the proposal will go before the full Legislature for approval before it's sent back to the Governor for his signature. As of the end of May, the Finance Committee has yet to take action on Department of Public Instruction budget items, which includes funding for the School Lunch, School Breakfast and School Day Milk Programs.

Since the state budget process began earlier this year, the SNA-WI Government Affairs Teams has been hard at work to achieve two critical legislative goals: 1.) To ensure no funding reductions are made to state school nutrition programs; and 2.) Provide access to and new funding for school breakfast programs in Wisconsin's independent charter schools. These schools are the only schools in Wisconsin that do not currently receive state school breakfast reimbursement funding.

Originally, SNA-WI was seeking an additional \$1.7 million to increase the school breakfast reimbursement rate (for all schools), but our request was scaled back due to the Legislature's general desire not to increase state spending and many legislators hesitancy to make a commitment to increase school breakfast funding. By the time this report is published, the Finance Committee will likely be done with their work, and SNA-WI will have a much clearer idea on how state school nutrition funding will be impacted by the budget bill.

On a non-budget, and much more exciting note, Gov. Walker declare May 6-10 School Nutrition Employee Week in Wisconsin.

Please find below the April / May 2013 SNA-WI State Government Affairs Report:

ADVOCACY EFFORTS:

- The SNA-WI Government Affairs Team sent out multiple grassroots advocacy "Action Alerts" to all members asking them to contact their legislators and urge them to support greater access to and new funding for school breakfast programs in the state budget.
- The SNA-WI Government Affairs Team sent out a strategic Legislative Action Alert to SNA-WI members living in the legislative districts of Finance Committee members, asking them to contact their legislators on SNA-WI's budget priority: 1.) Preserve school nutrition program from funding reductions; and 2.) Urge the passage of budget language to provide school breakfast reimbursement funding to Wisconsin's independent charter schools:
 1. **Modify current law to authorize the state to disburse school breakfast reimbursements to Wisconsin's independent charter schools; and**
 2. **Provide \$105,000 over the biennium to fully fund the change to state law.**
- The SNA-WI Government Affairs Team worked with SNA-WI leadership to place strategic calls to SNA-WI members living in the legislative districts of Finance Committee members asking them to contact their legislators on SNA-WI's budget priority.

LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITY:

- **State Budget Bill – School Breakfast Reimbursement Funding**
The SNA-WI Government Affairs Teams continues to lobby legislative leaders, legislators who serve on the Joint Finance Committee and other key lawmakers on SNA-WI’s budget priority: Ensure school nutrition program funding is not reduced and to urge the passage of budget language to provide school breakfast reimbursement funding to the state’s independent charter schools.

- **State Budget Bill – Other**
The Joint Finance Committee added a provision to the state budget bill that would prohibit municipalities and counties from passing an ordinance or resolution prohibiting the sale of food and beverage products based on size, caloric content or other nutritional values. SNA-WI has confirmed that the budget provision would not apply to schools and therefore, would not impact school nutrition programs in the state.

- **Other Legislation** – The SNA-WI Legislative Committee has voted to support or monitor the following legislative proposals:
 - **Assembly Bill 78 / Senate Bill 73** – SNA-WI supports this legislation that would promote workplace wellness by creating a tax credit for Wisconsin small businesses that offer wellness programs for their employees. Under the bill, employers that implement wellness programs would be eligible for a tax credit equal to 30% of the cost of their program. While the bill would not directly impact school nutrition, studies have shown that parents who learn healthy eating and exercise habits at work tend to bring that knowledge into the home.
Status: The bill has received a public hearing in both the Assembly and Senate and is awaiting further action.

 - **Assembly Bill 110** – The bill would require FoodShare recipients to use at least two-thirds of their benefits to purchase foods and beverages that are approved by the WIC program or are otherwise considered “healthy” under guidelines established in the legislation. SNA-WI is neutral on the bill and is simply monitoring its progress.
Status: The bill was passed in the Assembly and is awaiting further action in the Senate.

- **School Nutrition Employee Week** – Gov. Scott Walker declared May 6-10 School Nutrition Employee Week in Wisconsin. The official proclamation recognized the dedication of Wisconsin’s school nutrition professionals, the critical role they play in the lives and academic careers of students, and the many challenges they face in the workplace.