

WASBO's

# Money Talks

What the Hail?

The Storm Damage Episode

April 24, 2026

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*"It was all pretty neat but can you show me Wisconsin again?"*

# Our Panel

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- We're not lobbyists or attorneys, just WASBO colleagues
- We share non-partisan, veteran perspectives on how to navigate the financial challenges present in your school district
- Opinions expressed are our own, not necessarily those of our employers (but we're usually right)



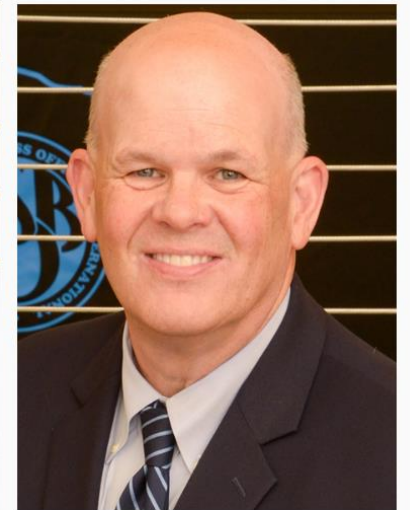
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# April 2026 Topics

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- State Budget Surplus (Zzzzz....zzzz)
- Referenda Results (Butternut Landslide!)
- ESEA Funds for 2026-27 (Ok, Brian)
- Approach to Purchasing Cut Off (Now!)
- Audit Delays - Actuarial Report, Fixed Assets Valuations (Gotta Do It)





# State Budget Surplus Negotiations



# WI Budget Surplus:

Wisconsin has roughly \$2.5 billion in available one-time surplus funds

Opportunity to address the special ed reimbursement rate  
2025-27 budget promised a 42% & 45% reimbursement  
Turns out to be closer to 38% for 2025-26 (maybe?)

Will a surplus deal get done? No one really knows

Gov: Special ed reimbursement +\$200MM, increase general aid for K-12  
Leg: Tax rebates, School Levy Tax Credits  
Both plans use approximately \$1.3 to \$1.5 billion of the surplus  
Decisions made now will affect school budgets well beyond this biennium

# April 7, 2026 – Wisconsin School Referenda:

75 total school referendum questions statewide

46 approved; 29 rejected

Included operational, recurring, non-recurring, and capital (debt) measures



# Approval Rates and Comparisons

- Spring 2026 overall approval rate 61.3% (46 of 75)
  - Spring 2024 approval rate: 60.2% (nearly same)
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# Margins of Victory and Defeat

- 18 of 75 referenda (24%) decided by fewer than 90 votes
  - 11 measures passed by 83 votes or fewer
  - Butternut rolls with a one vote margin!
  - 4 measures failed by fewer than 24 votes
  - Roughly 50% decided by under 10 percentage points
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# Operational vs. Capital Results

- Capital (debt) referenda: 9 of 12 passed (75%)
- Operational referenda: 37 total; 32 passed ( $\approx 56\%$ )
- Recurring operational: 6 total; 5 passed
- Non-recurring operational: 57 total; 32 passed

# Wisconsin ESEA (Title) Funding Timeline School Year 2026–27

Timeline and impact of Wisconsin's changing share  
of federal Title I funds



# When DPI Shares Title I Allocations

- Late winter / early spring 2026:
    - U.S. Department of Education releases estimated state Title I allocations
    - Wisconsin's share of the national Title I total is projected to drop from 11.96% to 11.03%
  - March–April 2026:
    - DPI applies federal formulas and shares **preliminary** district estimates
  - June–July 2026:
    - DPI posts final district Title I allocations in WISEgrants
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# What the Change in Wisconsin's Share Means

Wisconsin's percentage reflects its share of the national Title I allocation pool, not a guaranteed funding level

- A drop from **11.96% to 11.03%** means Wisconsin is projected to receive a smaller share of national funds relative to other states
- Even with a lower percentage:
  - Total WI dollars could still increase if Congress raises national Title I funding (Not likely!)
  - Or decrease more sharply if national funding is flat or reduced
- District impacts will vary based on **local poverty counts** and DPI redistribution formulas

# Purchasing Cut-Off for Fiscal Closing





# Avoiding Audit Delays:

Actuarial  
Report

Asset  
Valuation  
Report

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**See You Next Time:  
Friday, May 29<sup>th</sup>  
Happy Weekend!**

