



The League of Women Voters of Dane County, WI, Inc.
Presents...

General Meeting and Issues Forum

Understanding Rural Dane County

Speakers:

Nikki Jones, Dane County Board Supervisor, District 28

Barb Feeney, Oregon School District Board of Education

Mark Hazelbaker, Attorney representing Dane County Towns Association

Wednesday, September 6, 2017

Please introduce a friend to our League!

Open house with pizza and potluck snacks – 6:00 p.m.

Program with our speakers – 7:00 – 8:30 p.m.

Location:

The Capitol Lakes Grand Hall*, 333 West Main Street, Madison

(*Free parking in the ramp available across the street.
Please bring parking voucher in for validation.)

Committee: Dorothy Wheeler, Brook Soltvedt

For more information visit the League's website at www.lwvdanecounty.org or call 608-232-9447.

Study and discussion questions:

1. State league positions emphasize the need for countywide planning for development, transportation, sustainability, development. When towns can opt out of county zoning rules, the impact is felt throughout the county. Is AB 109, as amended, consistent with state League positions?
2. Consider our tagline, "Encouraging informed and active participation in government since 1920." Town government is said to be the most democratic form of government. Does AB 109, as amended, increase or decrease citizen participation in local government decision-making?
3. If adopted, do you think the "Fair Funding for the Future?" proposal would provide relief to rural school districts? Is the proposal consistent with League positions? Do you think the proposal is likely to be adopted by the state legislature? What are likely to be barriers to its passage?
4. Consider the idea of "urban privilege"—access to services such as public transportation, fire and ambulance protection, broadband and cable, proximity to tertiary care health facilities, the county courthouse and jail, DMV offices, and more. How are rural residents challenged in ways urban residents are not?
5. How do urban poverty and rural poverty differ?
6. What role does the public library play as a service provider in both rural and urban areas (<http://www.dcls.info/services>)?

Local Positions:

Local Government Relationships within Dane County [adopted 1972]

Support of:

1. County responsibility for housing, solid waste, health and multimodal transportation that includes airports
2. Shared responsibility by county and local units for parks
3. County responsibility for air pollution while working toward regional and state responsibility
4. Mandatory procedures for citizen participation at the study, planning, and administrative stages of the above services

State positions:

Support for strengthened county government.

Placement of primary reliance for performing services and handling revenue on a strengthened and improved county government structure.

Transfer of functions from town to county level; establishment and enforcement of minimum legal requirements for the continued existence of towns.

Boundary Adjustments

Support of policies of flexible boundary adjustments that make the welfare of the area as a whole the primary consideration, including a permanent boundary commission with sufficient power to implement its decisions.

Finance

Support of the state's role in financing and organizing effective local government through equitable distribution of state monies including:

1. Equitable sharing of tax proceeds by state and local units through improvements in distribution of taxes raised by the state;
2. A property tax relief formula that would tend to reduce local property taxes where they are above the state average;
3. Use of the property tax as part of the revenue mix, but decrease the percentage of reliance as part of that mix;
4. A highway aids formula that reflects cost, such as vehicle mileage or use; and
5. Use of increased users' fees at both state and local levels.

Support of the state's role in financing and organizing effective local government through improved assessment policies including equity in local property taxation through improvement in standards and procedures of the assessment process.

Education Funding

Support of an education formula that takes into account a local community's total tax burden and total available financial resources.

Support of a system of financing that ensures that a child's opportunity for a good education is not limited by the fiscal ability of the local school district; an education aids formula that provides that the state will assume a significant amount of educational financing, include the costs of building and debt service in the formula and provide increased state payments for children with special needs.

Community Policy

State, county and local governments should develop complementary policies to improve fiscal and growth management through such means as:

- "smart growth" practices that encourage sustainability, green space, population density and equitable development. These practices should consider the future service needs of aging community members, while also addressing the needs of young workers;
- consolidated governmental services;
- investments to increase the tax base;
- subsidies that enable and expand affordable housing near community centers, workplaces and public transit for low- and middle-income and senior populations, as well as persons with disabilities and persons experiencing homelessness;
- investments to secure and maintain infrastructural integrity and modernization, including wired and wireless communication networks;
- sustainable practices for meeting energy needs, food security and recreation;
- planning and programs that promote inclusive, multi-modal transit, including bicycle-friendly and pedestrian-friendly passage;
- programs in housing, education, recreation, job training, energy efficiency, child and elder care should be available to complement measures intended to enhance the economic base and to further the quality of life for all residents.

State aids should be targeted to declining and/or distressed Wisconsin communities.

These two articles address recent events around towns deciding whether to withdraw from Dane County zoning authority, and the current state of state legislation governing the process. On pages 7 and 8, see a reformatted version of the Wisconsin Legislative Memo on AB 109 and Amendments 2, 3, and 4, which has passed the Assembly and been sent to the Senate.

Middleton Times Tribune, February 23, 2017

**New bill would allow towns to opt out of county zoning without a vote from residents
by Kevin Murphy**

A copy of this article is available as a PDF on the Dane County Board website (https://plandev.countyofdane.com/zoning/pdf/zoning_withdrawal/NewsArticle-AB_109-2-23-17_Middleton_Times-Bill_would_allow_towns_to_opt_out_without_citizen_vote.pdf)

Dane County towns could opt out of county zoning without approval from residents under a proposal Republican legislators were seeking sponsors for this week.

The proposal titled, LRB 1041/2, was being circulated for co-sponsorship by State Reps. Keith Ripp, R-Lodi, John Jagler R-Watertown, and State Sen. Luther Olson, R-Ripon, who each have parts of the county in their districts.

The proposal would repeal a section of Act 178, passed last year, that required a positive vote of the residents at an annual town meeting or in a referendum.

ACT 178 was amended to include residents' approval in order to give town residents in Dane County a voice in the decision enjoyed by every other town resident in the state where the county has zoning authority, said Majid Allan, the county's senior planner.

Under current law, if town residents do not vote to opt out of county zoning, then the county would continue to make zoning decisions for that town, Allan said. However, under the proposal, the opt out decision would be made by the town board and not town residents, a situation that concerned County Board Supervisor Nikki Jones, town of Cross Plains.

"That would be expedient but it removes an important choice from the residents...If it were up to me, I'd want input from the people in that town and the decision to be made in an open and transparent process...not just leave it up to just the town chair and the (town) board," said Jones.

Mark Hazelbaker, attorney for the Dane County Towns Association, which has advocated for town-controlled zoning, said zoning is too complex an issue for voters to decide on an "up or down" basis.

"[The issue] is not the best suited for a referendum decision," said Hazelbaker.

Also, towns are not true democracies; he said, residents only get a direct say on the amount of money a town would borrow or raise in taxes or disposing of property.

Town of Middleton residents resoundingly voted not to sell acreage behind the town hall at a 2014 annual meeting and the town board dropped the idea of developing it into a residential subdivision. However, town of Middleton Board Supervisor Tim Roehl, would not say what he would do as board member if the law changed to give town boards the only vote on the opt out decision and residents voted against opting out in April.

"I'm not going to preordain my vote," he said.

Roehl did say that he would look at the annual meeting discussion to see if more education was needed on the merits of withdrawing from county zoning. That could lead to another vote by residents or the

town board acting contrary to the residents' choice, but Roehl remained uncommitted to any course of action after the annual meeting.

Asked if he thought town residents would vote to opt out, Roehl said, the issue is being manipulated by a "micro minority... who don't understand that (town-controlled) zoning would save the town and its residents money."

The opt out choice also is about a power struggle between the county and the towns and the "contention has always been, Dane County doesn't want to lose power. That's the issue," Roehl said.

The 1041/2 proposal could become law by the town's annual meeting, and for opt out proponents to introduce it now shows that they lack faith in the public wanting to opt out, too, said County Executive Joseph Parisi.

"For people in towns, the annual meeting is democracy at its most basic level. It allows the people to take part in the decision-making process but now, a few weeks before the vote, apparently the people pushing this idea feel the election isn't going their way and want to change the rules," Parisi said.

Also, to say that the public can't understand the complexities of voting on opting out is "insulting," and "appalling," Parisi said. Residents in eight town may have the opt out choice at their annual meetings and if any town decides to opt out, Parisi said he would abide with their decision.

"I would disagree with it policy-wise, but would respect their decision because they were allowed to step forward," on the issue," he said.

State Rep. Dianne Hesselbein (D-Middleton) would not co-sponsor LRB 1041/2 and remained opposed to the idea.

Ripp did not return a call about his proposal by deadline.

<http://isthmus.com/news/news/rural-towns-are-rejecting-dane-county-zoning-authority/>

Isthmus, April 27, 2017

Dane County's "Brexit": Some rural towns are rejecting county zoning authority

BY ALEJANDRO ALONSO GALVA

Tim Roehl is sick and tired of being bossed around by big-city folks.

"It's a no-brainer," says Roehl, a former town of Middleton board member. "City people should not have rights over townspeople."

As a town board member, Roehl had pushed for Middleton to "opt out" of Dane County's zoning laws. Currently Dane County controls all zoning in the county outside of villages and cities. That means if a resident of Berry wants to extend a driveway or build a garage, he or she has to get permits from both the town of Berry and Dane County. And that has Roehl fired up.

"People that are against [opt-out] are against people's personal property rights," Roehl says.

This month, eight of Dane County's 33 townships considered opting out of Dane County's zoning laws. Six of these towns—Bristol, Berry, Sun Prairie, Springfield, Westport and Blue Mounds—voted to control their own zoning. Black Earth did not hold a vote after missing a legal deadline.

But it turns out Roehl's anti-city sentiment, while fierce in some parts, is not universal. His own town of Middleton voted overwhelmingly April 18 to stay under Dane County control during a contentious annual town meeting. The issue was so divisive that it had already cost Roehl his town board seat—he

was one of two incumbents who lost to write-in candidates in the April 4 election, an unheard of phenomenon.

The Middleton board election, which also ousted Bill Kolar, turned into a war over opt-out.

“I would say that there are frankly decades of simmering discontent between some of the towns and Dane County,” says Mark Hazelbaker, senior counsel to the Dane County Towns Association. Over the past 30 years, he adds, “some of the towns in Dane County have grown significantly, and they deserve to have the opportunity to decide for themselves how they are going to manage their own land use.”

But opponents of opt-out say private real estate and construction interests are behind the effort and are hoping to profit from deregulation. Campaign documents show Roehl, a real estate agent with Coldwell Banker Success, received \$550 from real estate executives for his re-election bid. He is also the chair of the lobbying arm of the Realtors Association of South Central Wisconsin.

At the April 18 town of Middleton meeting, residents expressed concern that opting out would give too much zoning power to a few board members and a private company. Resident Tom Wise called it “a recipe for corruption.”

The battle over zoning control heated up in 2015 when the Legislature passed a law—designed specifically for Dane County—giving townships here the power to opt out for the first time in 50 years.

“Out of Wisconsin’s 72 counties, Dane County was one of the only counties that did not allow towns to opt out,” says Hazelbaker. “The county didn’t update its zoning laws since 1938 in order to keep towns from opting out.”

The 2015 bill allowed townships to hold an opt-out vote during the town’s annual meeting or during an election. Townships are required to notify Dane County six months before they hold an opt-out vote and fulfill a long list of requirements. However, towns are only allowed to go through the process once every three years, and 2017 was the first chance to exit.

Dane County is now reviewing its zoning ordinance, but some town officials say it’s too little too late.

“The real story is the fact that this required an act of legislation at the state level to prompt the county board to initiate a comprehensive review,” says Brent Renteria, a Middletown town board member who compares the movement to “Brexit,” when voters in the United Kingdom narrowly voted to leave the European Union. “I wish this hadn’t become such a hot-button issue.”

Roehl says the county created the problem. “The county had the opportunity [to change its zoning laws],” he says. “Now their hand is forced, and they’re acting like spoiled children that aren’t gonna get their way.”

In February, Roehl lobbied on behalf of the Dane County Towns Association for Assembly Bill 109, which would have eliminated the need for a public vote and put the power to opt out solely in the hands of town board members.

It’s one of the reasons that Cynthia Richson, a town plan commission member, ran a write-in campaign for the town of Middleton board. She is irked that Roehl said at a town meeting that a public vote should not be required because board members understood zoning laws better than residents—Roehl made similar comments to *Isthmus*.

“There was an audible gasp in the room,” says Richson. “He said a mere advisory vote would be sufficient because he knew more. He didn’t think residents had the right to decide for themselves.”

After significant pushback, AB 109 was amended to require a public vote through a “special meeting” or “special election,” with only 30 days of notification. Opponents still cried foul.

State Rep. Scott Allen (R-Waukesha) was one of only three Republicans to vote against the bill. He says opt-out proponents might not have wanted to do the hard work of convincing voters. "In my opinion it was seen by some individuals as easier to bring the issue to the state Legislature and modify the rules."

Allen supports a town's right to control its zoning laws, but was opposed to how the bill undermined the democratic process. "Turnout at elections is oftentimes low; for the spring election, it was only 15 percent statewide," Allen says. "At a special election, it would probably be lower than that. Zoning impacts people's lives, it impacts their quality of life, and I wanted to make sure that the electors in those towns that would withdraw are in the best position to participate."

The bill passed the Assembly 57 to 34 and now awaits a Senate vote. If the bill passes, five more towns may vote to opt out this year. If the bill fails, Dane County townships would have to wait until 2020 before being allowed to consider opting out again.

When the Legislature voted to allow towns to opt out of county zoning regulations, Dane County officials argued that it would lead to more urban sprawl and the loss of valuable farmland. County officials also say that townships that opt out will see a drop in the quality of services. They will have to manage their own zoning and planning services. This could be done by hiring staff, creating co-ops with other towns or contracting with private companies to do it.

Todd Violante, director of Dane County Planning and Development, doesn't see the upside. "The only distinction in the decision-making process that towns will gain by opting out is that they will be able to approve projects that Dane County opposes or wants to impose conditions on that the applicant may or may not support," Violante says. "But that's a very rare occurrence. It occurs in about 1 percent of zoning petitions. Most of the time the towns and the county see eye to eye on developments."

Towns could also lose money, Violante argues. Townships contribute about 20 percent of the county's tax revenues, while cities and villages pay the other 80 percent. Yet townships use more funding since cities and villages provide their own zoning management. The county management includes covering legal fees at no extra cost to towns when development projects run into trouble. A report by Dane County estimated towns would need to raise taxes significantly to cover new costs, with half the towns requiring tax levy increases upwards of \$90,000.

Roehl dismisses the county's numbers as a "scare tactic." Berry town board chair Anthony Varda says townships will now keep 15 percent of rezoning fees when it partners with General Engineering Company, a private zoning company out of Portage. According to Varda, towns will also be able to raise their town tax levy in exchange for residents no longer paying a tax levy to the county.

Just as with Brexit, Renteria worries that the opt-out debate has become an emotional battle clouding the real issues.

"To put it bluntly, it has to do with power and money," he says. "Governments don't like to give up power or money."

WISCONSIN LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL AMENDMENT MEMO

2017 Assembly Bill 109 Assembly Amendments 2, 3, and 4

Memo published: April 3, 2017 Contact: Andrea Brauer, Staff Attorney (266-2987)

2017 ASSEMBLY BILL 109

Under current law, a Dane County town may withdraw from the Dane County zoning ordinance and comprehensive plan, if certain requirements are met, and may also adopt a town zoning ordinance under certain conditions. Withdrawal may occur only during a one-year period every three years. 2017 Assembly Bill 109 (“the bill”):

- Modifies the timeline for the necessary steps in the withdrawal process;
- Removes the current requirement that the town send copies of an official town map to the county clerk prior to withdrawal;
- Removes the current requirement that the town zoning ordinance and the town ordinance withdrawing from county zoning are subject to approval by the town meeting or a referendum of the town’s electors; and
- Modifies the effective date of the withdrawal.

ASSEMBLY AMENDMENT 2

Under current law, if a town is located in a county that has enacted a county zoning ordinance, the following criteria apply to a town board’s zoning authority: (a) the town board may not enact town zoning unless it is granted village powers; and (b) the town zoning ordinance is subject to approval by the town meeting or a referendum vote of the town electors. These requirements currently apply regardless of the county’s population. [s. 60.10 (2) (h), Stats.] Under **Assembly Amendment 2**, these requirements apply only if the county has a population of fewer than 485,000. The specific requirements for enactment of town zoning in a Dane County town, which withdraws from Dane County zoning, are identified in other sections of the statutes. [ss. 60.23 (34) and 60.62 (2), Stats.]

ASSEMBLY AMENDMENT 3

Among other requirements that apply to a town’s withdrawal from Dane County zoning, the town must enact an ordinance withdrawing the town from Dane County zoning, and must also enact a town zoning ordinance. The bill and Assembly Amendment 3 modify current law with respect to whether and how these ordinances must be approved, if enacted by the town board.

Approval of an Ordinance Withdrawing a Town from Dane County Zoning

Under current law, an ordinance withdrawing a town from Dane County zoning is subject to approval either at the annual town meeting or in a referendum called by the town board for that purpose at the next spring or general election, to be held not sooner than 70 days after the referendum is called by the town board. [s. 60.23 (34) (b) 3., Stats.]

The bill repeals this requirement. Under the bill, a town board’s ordinance withdrawing a town from Dane County’s zoning is not subject to approval.

Assembly Amendment 3 requires that an ordinance withdrawing a town from Dane County zoning must be approved either at a special town meeting or in a referendum called by the town board for that purpose. The following criteria apply:

- If the vote is by special town meeting, the meeting must be called by the town board not later than 30 days after the date on which the town board must send certified copies of documents to a county clerk, as required for withdrawal under s. 60.23 (34) (b) 2., Stats. A Class 2 notice of the special town meeting must also be published not later than 30 days before the meeting.
- If the vote is by referendum, the referendum must be held at the time of any regular or special election.

Approval of a Town Zoning Ordinance

Under current law, if a town is located in a county that has enacted a county zoning ordinance, any town zoning ordinance is subject to approval by an annual or special town meeting, or by a referendum vote of the electors of the town held at the time of any regular or special election. This requirement applies regardless of the county's population. [s. 60.62 (2), Stats.]

Under the bill, a town zoning ordinance is not subject to such approval, if the town is located in a county with a population of 485,000 or greater.

Under Assembly Amendment 3, town zoning ordinance approval requirements are as follows. If the county's population is less than 485,000, current law continues to apply, and the town zoning ordinance must be approved by an annual or special town meeting, or by referendum. If the county's population is 485,000 or greater, the town zoning ordinance must be approved either at a special town meeting or in a referendum called by the town board for that purpose, subject to the same criteria that are described in the bullet-pointed list above.

ASSEMBLY AMENDMENT 4

Assembly Amendment 4 specifies how levy limits are affected when a town withdraws from county zoning. **Current law** creates several exceptions to local levy limits. In particular, when a political subdivision transfers responsibility for providing a service to another political subdivision, the levy that would have been incurred to provide that service, as determined by the Department of Revenue, also transfers to the new political subdivision. [s. 66.0602 (2) and (3), Stats.]

Neither current law nor the bill specifically state whether a town's withdrawal from county zoning triggers this exception. **Assembly Amendment 4** provides that if a town withdraws from county zoning, the withdrawal must be considered a transfer of zoning services from the county to the town, thus triggering a transfer of the corresponding levy from the county to the town.

BILL HISTORY

On March 20, 2017, Representative Ripp offered Assembly Amendments 2, 3, and 4. On March 28, 2017, the Assembly Committee on Local Government recommended adoption of Assembly Amendments 2 and 4, each on a vote of Ayes, 6; Noes, 3. The committee recommended adoption of Assembly Amendment 3 on a vote of Ayes, 9; Noes, 0. The committee then recommended passage of the bill, as amended, on a vote of Ayes, 6; Noes, 3.

AB:jal

Wisconsin Department of Instruction Superintendent Tony Evers has proposed a school finance reform plan called Fair Funding for Our Future. On the DPI website (<https://dpi.wi.gov/budget/fairfunding>), you can watch a short video explaining the need. You can also click on a sidebar link for FAQs, an excerpt from which is printed here.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q) What is “Fair Funding for Our Future”?

Fair Funding for Our Future is the name given to State Superintendent Tony Evers’s school finance reform plan. The plan addresses some of the most critical problems with the current school funding system and proposes changes to help to ensure the quality of our schools, protect taxpayers, and provide a greater level of transparency by assuring state aid for schools goes directly to schools.

This plan is realistic and ready, providing solutions that are good education and public policy, as well as politically viable. It is a powerful first step that makes long overdue changes to the funding formula, maximizes existing resources, and sets the stage for greater state support in future years.

Q) Why are changes needed to the way in which we fund our schools?

Across our state, schools are struggling. Many have been forced to lay off staff and cut programs. Others are struggling to determine how to address aging facilities and how to ensure that students receive the quality education they need for success in the future. To be sure, the tradition of excellence in Wisconsin education is at risk.

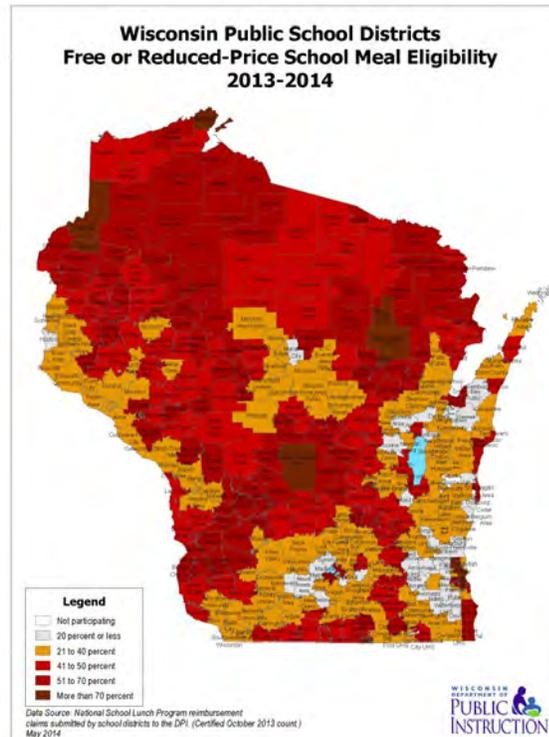
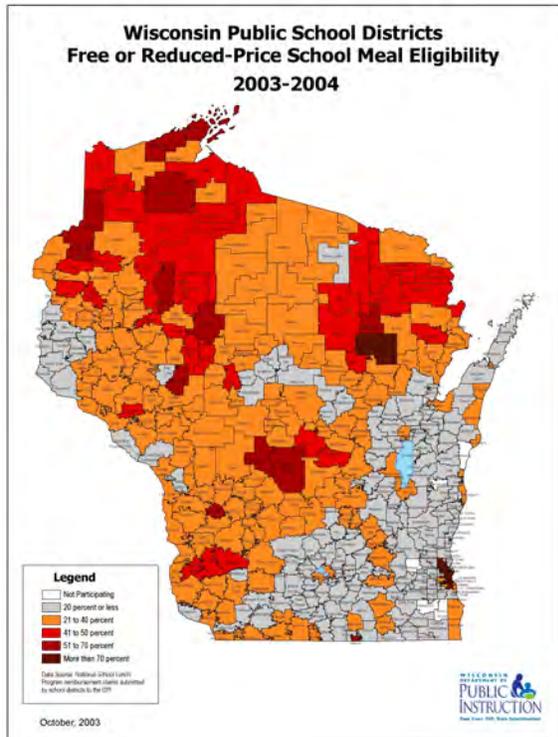
There are many reasons why the current school funding system simply does not work for our schools and students:

- Revenue limits have required many districts to increase class sizes, reduce programming, etc.
- There is no minimum funding per student in Wisconsin, and dozens of districts get little or no general school aid.
- The current system counts the School Levy Tax Credit as “state support for schools”, when none of those dollars go directly to schools.
- The current system relies only on property wealth, without accounting for income as a factor in communities’ ability to pay for schools—thus districts with high property values but low per capita income fare poorly.
- We no longer have a predictable system of funding our schools that districts can count on.

Q) How does the “Fair Funding” plan address these problems?

The plan reforms Wisconsin’s school funding system by:

- **Guaranteeing a minimum amount of state funding for every student (\$3,000)**, providing vital resources to the school districts that currently receive little or no state aid;
- **Incorporating a poverty factor into the formula (20%)**, accounting for families’ ability to pay—not just their property value;
- **Making technical formula changes** that strengthen rural, declining enrollment and negatively aided districts by increasing the secondary cost ceiling and hold harmless level;
- **Restoring revenue limit authority (+\$200-204 per pupil)** to all districts, providing a modest increase in school spending while protecting taxpayers; and
- **Increasing transparency** by redirecting the school levy and first dollar tax credit so all state aid goes right to school boards.

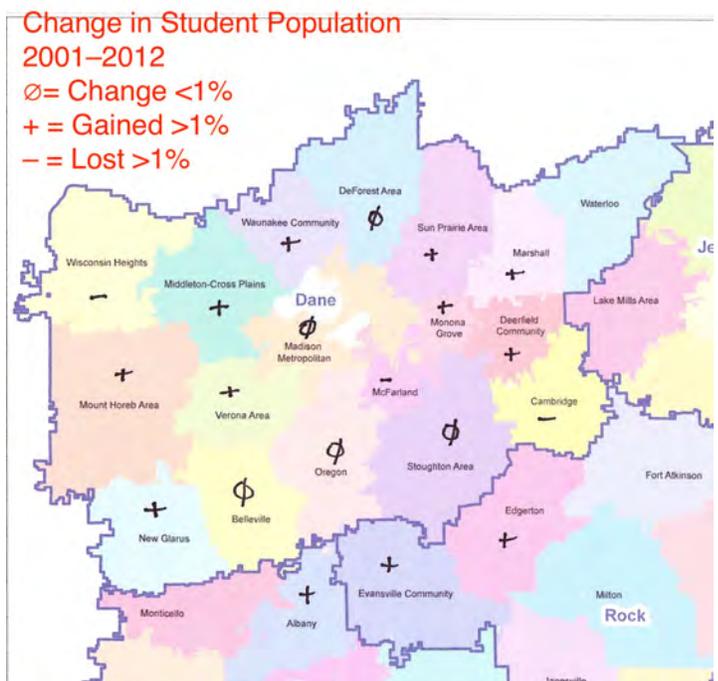


DPI slide text:

Rural schools face **specific challenges**, such as:

- Declining enrollment;**
- Growing poverty;**
- Staff shortages;**
- Higher transportation costs; and**
- Increasing numbers of English Language Learners (ELL).**

- Small schools have less **economy of scale**, making technology and infrastructure investments more expensive (fewer students to absorb costs).
- Rural districts generally have **fewer support staff and administrators** (*the superintendent often is a principal and business administrator*), meaning there fewer staff to implement state and federal initiatives.
- Rural educators often receive **lower compensation and wear many hats**, requiring high levels of certification and commitment.



Rural areas are disadvantaged by lack of access to many things, including

- broadband for business and education
(see the Wisconsin Broadband Coverage map: <http://www.broadbandmap.wisconsin.gov/> and Assembly Bill 123, providing funding for broadband expansion: <https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/2017/related/proposals/ab123>)
- healthcare (see report from Wisconsin Council on Medical Education & Workforce: <http://www.wcmew.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/2016physicianReportWCMEW.pdf>)
- public transportation (see LWVWI statement to the Joint Finance Committee about transportation funding: [http://www.lwvwi.org/Portals/0/News and Events/PDFS/Memo_to_JFC_transportation.pdf](http://www.lwvwi.org/Portals/0/News%20and%20Events/PDFS/Memo_to_JFC_transportation.pdf))

Assembly Passes Rural Broadband Expansion Bill: \$35M Rural Broadband Expansion Measure Heads To Senate

Tuesday, May 2, 2017, 10:20pm, by Danielle Kaeding (<https://www.wpr.org/assembly-passes-rural-broadband-expansion-bill>)

The state Assembly passed a bill Tuesday that would devote \$35 million to expand broadband in rural areas of the state. State Rep. Beth Meyers, D-Bayfield, served on the state's study committee for rural broadband last year. Meyers said the bill is a good first step toward bringing high-speed internet to residents and students in rural Wisconsin.

"We're looking at \$11.5 million from the universal service fund, \$15.5 million from the Public Service Commission and \$7.5 million for the TEACH program toward eligible rural school districts," she said.

The bill directs the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin to weigh proposed broadband expansion projects on whether they would improve high-speed internet service for students or people receiving home care. Meyers said an amendment to use the federal definition of rural areas didn't make it into the bill.

"The emphasis of this funding is to be spent in unserved and underserved areas, and I'm really looking forward to seeing this money come to northern Wisconsin and specifically the 74th Assembly District," she said.

The PSC would prioritize projects in areas that lack an internet service provider offering wired or wireless service.

Projects would also be given more weight if they enhance service where providers offer internet speeds far below federal broadband standards.

The bill will now be taken up by the state Senate for approval.

The PSC received 37 applications to expand broadband in rural Wisconsin last year — a 32 percent increase from the number of applications received in 2015. Roughly 710,000 people in rural Wisconsin lack access to higher download speeds, according to the Federal Communications Commission.

Report Says Wisconsin Faces Looming Doctor Shortage: National Competition To Recruit Physicians Is Fierce, Coalition Of Hospitals And Medical Schools Says

(<https://www.wpr.org/report-says-wisconsin-faces-looming-doctor-shortage>)

Tuesday, August 23, 2016, 3:15pm, by Shamane Mills

Wisconsin has taken a number of steps to head off a doctor shortage, but a new report says more can be done.

According to the report, progress has been made since a future shortage of doctors was initially predicted in a 2011 study—which called for 100 new physicians a year—but not enough to ensure the supply of doctors meets demand.

Worst case scenario, the state could be short 4,000 doctors by 2035, said George Quinn, executive director of the Wisconsin Council on Medical Education and Workforce.

"What would mitigate that number would be further changes in the way care is delivered; moving more towards a team-based care model where other clinicians are substituted for physicians," he said.

Quinn said increased use of technology can also help alleviate the projected shortage.

He said medical students who go to school in Wisconsin and then stay to do residency training are more likely to remain in Wisconsin to practice.

To increase the chances of that happening, the state has expanded residency programs for family medicine, psychiatry and general surgery, especially in rural areas. The University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health and the Medical College of Wisconsin have also increased enrollment.