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WAME Alert!

*This is a **WAME Alert!** The **Wisconsin Advocates for Music Education** will email timely and important music education information on a monthly basis to keep members informed and involved. If you have ideas to contribute, please email Rich Mannisto, WAME Chair-Elect: rmannisto@aol.com.*

Budget Alert

There's been quite a bit of news about the State Budget recently. Perhaps you were wondering how the budget may affect music education in Wisconsin. Here are some examples depending on what is approved by the State Legislature and the Governor over the next three weeks. There is still time for you to contact your Assemblyman, State Senator and Governor Doyle to express your personal views.

1. Should the current version of the budget be adopted first by the State Senate, then the Assembly, property taxes would not rise. However, spending limits would be lowered for school districts. For instance, the School District of Oak Creek would receive approximately \$550,000 less in state aid for the 2003-2004 school year and \$1.2 million less in state aid in 2004-2005. As you can see, this budget will necessitate teacher cuts in many school districts including the area of music and the arts this year and in the future.
2. If Governor Doyle would veto the entire budget, the possibility exists that his original budget proposal would remain in effect. While there are some cuts to education, it is much less than proposed by the Senate and Assembly Joint Finance Committee.
3. A final possibility exists that the funding levels would remain at the 2002-2003 levels until the budget is settled. While this appears attractive, it leaves many school districts "hanging in the lurch" concerning layoff notices to teachers and decisions on program cuts.

I encourage you to contact your state legislator and Governor Doyle to express your concern over the cuts to education. Stress the fact that music and art are highly valued by children and parents, yet these are the very experiences that are taken away from children when budgets are reduced. The arts take more than their fair share of cuts. Give specific examples of cuts if you can and note how they directly affect children.

Visit www.legis.state.wi.us to locate your State Senator or Assemblyman and visit www.wisgov.state.wi.us/contact.asp to contact Governor Doyle.

Your views can make a difference - please share them today! If you would like more information about these issues or have questions, please feel free to contact Rich Mannisto, Chair-Elect, Wisconsin Advocates for Music Education. Email: [**rmannisto@aol.com**](mailto:rmannisto@aol.com)

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