



Wisconsin Educational Media Association
2005-2006 Legislative Session
Issue: Maintenance of Efforts

The Wisconsin Educational Media Association supports current law regarding "Maintenance of Effort" for public libraries. WEMA does not support any legislative efforts which would repeal this requirement.

Maintenance of Effort refers to current law (Wisconsin Statutes 43.15 (4)(c)) that codifies how local libraries must meet several requirements to belong to one of the 17 regional public library systems. According to the Legislative Reference Bureau, current law requires each county in a public library system to maintain its financial support for library services at a level that is not lower than the average of the previous three years. A municipal, county, or joint public library participating in a public library system must also receive funding from the municipality or county at a level that is not lower than the average of the previous three years.

The current statutory requirements are designed to prevent municipalities from reducing local funding, and as a result, take unfair advantage of neighboring municipalities by relying on the regional library system for the needs of their communities.

Public libraries are working with State Legislators to maintain adequate funding from state resources. WEMA and the Wisconsin Library Association have continually supported efforts to ensure the state provides full statutory funding. Current state funding levels are below the statutory requirements. Eliminating the Maintenance of Effort for counties and municipalities will further erode public funding for libraries.