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JOHN H. ASHLEY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

TO: Assembly Education Reform Committee
FROM: Dan Rossmiller, Legislative Services Director
DATE: May 22, 2007
RE: **2007 Assembly Bill 165**, relating to the transportation of four-year-old kindergarten pupils who attend private schools.

The Wisconsin Association of School Boards (WASB) **supports** Assembly Bill 165.

AB 165 allows school districts that do not offer a 4-year-old kindergarten (4K) program the option of transporting pupils enrolled in a private 4K program.

Under current law, school boards are generally required to provide transportation to and from school for private school pupils who reside both within the school district and at least two miles from school. This requirement applies regardless of the grade in which the private school pupil is enrolled.

AB 165 provides that if a school board does not operate a 4K program, it is not required to transport 4K pupils who attend private schools. Under the bill, a school board could still choose to provide transportation for these pupils but it would not be required by law to do so. Thus, public and private school students would continue to be treated equally.

With escalating fuel costs, transportation costs are consuming an increasing portion of school district budgets. State transportation categorical aids reimburse school districts for only 10 percent of their costs on average. Ninety percent of school district transportation costs are funded by dollars that could be spent in the classroom. In the effort to direct as many dollars as possible into classrooms while meeting revenue limits, school districts are continuing to seek ways to reduce costs.

We ask your support for Assembly Bill 165.