



JIM DOYLE
GOVERNOR
STATE OF WISCONSIN

April 18, 2006

TO THE HONORABLE MEMBERS OF THE ASSEMBLY:

I am vetoing Assembly Bill 84. This bill eliminates the requirement that school be held for at least 180 days each year and the requirement that school districts include in their annual report the number of school days taught by teachers legally qualified to teach. AB 84 retains the minimum required number of hours of direct pupil instruction in current law, but specifies that if a school has scheduled a greater number of hours for direct pupil instruction in the 2005-2006 school year than current law requires, the number of scheduled hours in the 2005-2006 school year becomes the minimum requirement for that school. Finally, AB 84 clarifies that the annual report of the school district include the number of hours of direct pupil instruction provided "in each school" by teachers legally qualified to teach.

I am vetoing Assembly Bill 84 because I object to creating the opportunity for school districts to reduce the number of days students are actively involved in learning. Lengthening the school day by as little as ten minutes – equivalent to less than two minutes per class period – would allow school districts to take five full days off the school calendar. I do not believe the extra ten minutes a day will lead to the same amount of learning as an additional week of school. In addition, shorter school years may be impractical for working families, who would face financial and logistical challenges with respect to child care and after-school supervision. Finally, by eliminating the requirement that schools report the number of school days taught in each year, that information would not be readily available to parents and citizens.

Our citizens are competing not only against students from Minnesota and New York, but India and Indonesia and Japan. Shortening the school year would be a real disservice not only to our kids, but to our country. We need to find ways to make our students and our schools more competitive in the global marketplace. Shortening the school year will do just the opposite.

Respectfully submitted,

JIM DOYLE
Governor