



## Wisconsin Taxpayers Alliance

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# NEWS

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### **School Taxes Up Most Since 1992-93** Increased School Levy Credit Tempers Increase Slightly

MADISON—Total Wisconsin school property taxes are up 7.4% on December 2007 tax bills, according to a new report from the Wisconsin Taxpayers Alliance (WISTAX). The increase is the largest since the 10.7% jump in 1992-93, and moves the school levy above \$4 billion for the first time. Celebrating its 75th anniversary, nonprofit WISTAX keeps Wisconsin citizens informed about state and local government through nonpartisan research.

WISTAX researchers cited the combination of a late state budget with its unchanged school aids and state-imposed revenue caps as the primary drivers behind the increase. Under state revenue limits, when state aid increases are small, districts are permitted to raise their allowable revenues, in part, through increased property taxes.

To help counter the school tax jump this year, the state increased school levy credits by \$79 million. However, even with the increased credit, net school levies would have increased nearly 5.5%. The new study also notes that school referenda contributed more than \$60 million of the \$278.8 million increase.

What is noteworthy about the 2007-08 school tax growth is how widespread it was. Increases in K-12 districts averaged 7.4%. Union high (UHS) districts averaged 6.8% and K-8's, 5.7%. This year, 286 (67.7%) districts increased levies 5% or more; 147 (34.8%) had double-digit increases.

According to the new report, the average school property tax rate in 2007-08 was \$8.41 for every \$1,000 of full-market property value compared to \$8.31 last year. With rapidly appreciating land and home values in the past, it has been rare to see rate increases. Accelerating school taxes and the real estate slowdown contributed to this year's higher tax rate, WISTAX said.

School levies, tax rates, and changes for 2007-08 for all Wisconsin school districts can be found on the WISTAX website ([www.wistax.org/facts](http://www.wistax.org/facts)).

For a free copy of *Focus*, "School taxes up 7.4%, largest jump since '93," contact WISTAX by e-mail at [wistax@wistax.org](mailto:wistax@wistax.org); by phone at 608-241-9789; or by mail at 401 North Lawn Avenue, Madison, WI 53704. WISTAX celebrates 75 years of public policy research and citizen education. □

*(Editors' Note: An electronic version of this release is available at [www.wistax.org](http://www.wistax.org).)*

The Wisconsin Taxpayers Alliance, founded in 1932, is the state's oldest and most respected private government-research organization. Through its research, publications, civic lectures, and school talks, WISTAX aims to improve Wisconsin government through citizen education. Nonprofit, nonpartisan, and independently funded, WISTAX is not affiliated with any group—national, state, or local—and receives no government support.