



WISCONSIN LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL STAFF MEMORANDUM

Memo No. 2

TO: MEMBERS OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON IMPROVING EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES IN HIGH SCHOOL

FROM: Rachel Letzing and Jessica Karls-Ruplinger, Senior Staff Attorneys

RE: Options for Consideration by the Special Committee

DATE: November 15, 2012

This Memo sets forth options for committee discussion at the November 19, 2012 meeting of the Special Committee. The Memo is intended to assist the committee in identifying options for legislation and to present issues for which the committee may wish to provide a recommendation through a letter to appropriate individuals or agencies, or a through a report. The options provided in the Memo are not intended to be an exclusive list, but rather are intended to help focus committee discussion.

OPTIONS FOR LEGISLATION

1. The Youth Apprenticeship Program

Background

The Youth Apprenticeship program is a one or two-year program for 11th and 12th grade students that combines academic and technical instruction with on-the-job learning as part of their high school coursework. The Department of Workforce Development (DWD) may award grants to local partnerships (including one or more private employers, school districts, local governments, technical colleges, state agencies, and nonprofit organizations) which may use the grant money for any of the following:

- Recruiting employers to provide on-the-job training and supervision for youth apprentices and providing technical assistance to those employers.
- Recruiting students to participate in the local youth apprenticeship program and monitoring the progress of youth apprentices participating in the program.

- Coordinating youth apprenticeship training activities within participating school districts and among participating school districts, postsecondary institutions, and employers.
- Coordinating academic, vocational, and occupational learning, school-based and work-based learning, and secondary and postsecondary education for participants in the local youth apprenticeship program.
- Assisting employers in identifying and training workplace mentors and matching youth apprentices and mentors.
- Any other implementation or coordination activity that DWD may direct or permit the local partnership to perform.

[s. 106.13 (3m) (a) and (b), Stats.]

Current law specifies that a grant may not exceed \$900 per youth apprentice. A local partnership that is awarded a grant must provide matching funds equal to 50% of the grant amount. [s. 106.13 (3m) (d), Stats.]

Current law specifies the following expected outcomes for a youth apprenticeship program: (1) at least 80% of the youth apprentices who participate in the program for two years must receive a high school diploma on completion of the apprenticeship; and (2) at least 60% of participating youth apprentices who participate in the program for two years must be offered employment by the employer that provided the on-the-job training for the apprentice on completion of the apprenticeship. [s. 106.13 (3m) (e), Stats.]

The Youth Apprenticeship program includes two types of grants that DWD may award. The 2011-13 biennial budget provides \$1,858,500 per year to fund the local youth apprenticeship grants and does not provide funding for local youth apprenticeship training grants.

Options

- a. Eliminate the \$900 maximum grant amount per youth apprentice.
- b. Appropriate funding for the local youth apprenticeship training grants.
- c. Remove the expected outcome that requires at least 60% of participating youth apprentices to be offered employment by the employer that provided the on-the-job training for the apprentice on completion of the apprenticeship.
- d. Change the activities for which local partnerships may use youth apprenticeship grant money.
- e. Require DWD to form a taskforce to study the effectiveness of the program.

2. The Youth Options Program

Background

The Youth Options program enables 11th and 12th grade students to attend a Wisconsin postsecondary institution for the purpose of taking one or more courses for high school and postsecondary credit.

Under the program, a student must notify the school board of his or her intent to participate in the program and apply to the postsecondary institution. Current law requires a school board to pay for any course taken at a postsecondary institution that is not comparable to a course offered in the district. [s. 118.55 (3), Stats.] For an institution in the UW system, a private college or a tribal college, a school board generally must pay the actual cost of tuition, fees, books, and other necessary materials directly related to the course. [s. 118.55 (5), Stats.] If a student attends a technical college, the school board must pay an amount equal to the cost of tuition, course fees, and books. [s. 118.55 (7r) (d), Stats.]

A school board may establish a written policy limiting the number of credits for which the board will pay to the equivalent of 18 postsecondary semester credits per pupil. [s. 118.55 (7t) (a), Stats.] If a student receives a failing grade in a course or fails to complete a course for which the school board has made payment, the student's parent or guardian, or the student if he or she is an adult, must reimburse the school board upon the board's request. [s. 118.55 (7t) (c), Stats.]

Options

- a. Remove the requirement that school boards pay for postsecondary courses taken under the program.
- b. Require that students pay for postsecondary courses taken under the program if the student wants to receive credit from the postsecondary institution.
- c. Require that school boards pay for a certain percentage of the costs related to the program. For example, the committee could specify that school boards are required to pay for 50% of the cost of tuition, cost of course fees, and cost of books.
- d. Reduce the number of credits per student that a school board may limit a student to taking through the program under a written policy.
- e. Create a mechanism by which high school teachers may teach postsecondary courses to high school students.

3. The Number of Mathematics and Science Credits Required for a High School Diploma

Background

Under current law, a school board may not grant a high school diploma to any pupil unless the pupil has earned all of the following minimum credits in the high school grades:

- Four credits of English, which incorporate instruction in written communication, oral communication, grammar and usage of the English language, and literature.
- Three credits of social studies, which incorporate instruction in state and local government.
- Two credits of mathematics, which incorporate instruction in the properties, processes, and symbols of arithmetic and elements of algebra, geometry, and statistics.
- Two credits of science, which incorporate instruction in the biological sciences and physical sciences.
- One and one-half credits of physical education, which incorporate instruction in the effects of exercise on the human body, health-related physical fitness, and activities for lifetime use.

Current law also requires the completion of one-half credit of health education in grades seven to 12 to earn a high school diploma. Therefore, a student must earn a minimum of 13 credits in order to receive a high school diploma. [s. 118.33 (1) (a) Stats.; and s. PI 18.03, Wis. Adm. Code.]

Options

- a. Increase the number of mathematics credits to three and the number of science credits to three.
- b. Increase only the number of mathematics credits to three.
- c. Increase only the number of science credits to three.

4. Academic and Career Plans (ACPs)

Background

Current law requires each school board to provide a program of guidance and counseling services for students. [s. 121.02 (1) (e), Stats.] A guidance and counseling program must satisfy all of the following requirements:

- The school district must maintain a school board approved plan for the provision of a program of guidance and counseling services.
- The program must be developmentally based and available to every pupil in every grade of the school district.
- The program must be systematically planned by licensed school counselors in collaboration with other licensed pupil services staff, teachers, parents, and community health and human service professionals; and provided by licensed school counselors in collaboration with other licensed pupil services staff, teachers, parents, and community health and human service professionals.

- The program must provide developmentally appropriate educational, vocational, career, personal, and social information to assist students in problem solving and in making decisions.
- The program must include pupil appraisal, postsecondary planning, referral, research, and pupil follow-up activities.

[s. PI 8.01 (2) (e), Wis. Adm. Code.]

The committee received testimony on ACPs being used by the Green Bay School District and Sheboygan South High School, also known as individual graduation plans or individual learning plans. ACPs were also recommended in “The Road Ahead: Restoring Wisconsin’s Workforce Development,” the report prepared by Tim Sullivan for Governor Scott Walker.

Options

- a. Require that all high school students have an ACP beginning in 9th grade.
- b. Require that all students have an ACP beginning earlier than high school; for example, beginning in one of the middle school grades.
- c. Appropriate funding to school districts to implement and administer ACPs.
- d. Encourage school districts to have ACPs for high school students beginning in 9th grade.
- e. Encourage school districts to have ACPs beginning earlier than high school.

If the committee recommends that school districts be required or encouraged to have ACPs for students, the committee could also consider: (1) what criteria should be included in an ACP; and (2) whether to include accountability measures as part of ACPs. Instead of providing specific recommendations regarding these issues, the committee could recommend that the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) create a taskforce to determine what elements and accountability measures must or should be included in ACPs statewide.

If the committee decides to specify the elements that must be included in an ACP and to require certain accountability measures regarding the ACP in legislation, the committee could make a specific recommendation as follows:

- a. Specify that an ACP must contain certain elements. For example, an ACP could include career exploration; career-planning activities; a suggested sequence of courses the student must take to support his or her postsecondary education or career goal; personal goals; extracurricular activities to support the postsecondary or career goal; and work-based learning experiences to support the postsecondary or career goal.
- b. In specifying the elements of an ACP, include parts of the Education for Employment program in the ACP. The Education for Employment program must provide information to students at various grade levels as follows:

- Career awareness at the elementary grade levels.
- Career exploration at the middle grade levels. Career exploration must address stereotyping and may include work-based learning experiences and career research identifying personal preferences in relation to future work roles.
- Career planning and preparation at the high school levels, including all of the following:
 - Career research identifying personal preferences in relation to specific occupations and school supervised work-based learning experiences.
 - Instruction in career decision-making and employability skills, including work behaviors.
 - Instruction that provides for the practical application of academic skills and applied technologies.
 - The study of the practical application of economics and American economic institutions, including entrepreneurship education.
 - Pupil access to technical education programs that have a curriculum incorporating accurate national, regional, and state labor market information, including labor market supply and demand.

[s. PI 26.03 (3), Wis. Adm. Code.]

- c. Require that the student, his or her parent or guardian, and the school counselor or other school personnel charged with assisting the student with the ACP meet to review the ACP on a specified timeline. For example, the review could be required annually, once every semester, or on a shorter timeframe.
- d. Require that the student and his or her parent or guardian sign the ACP.

5. EXPLORE/PLAN/ACT (ACT SUITE) and WorkKeys and Agenda 2017

Background

Under the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), public schools are required to test 3rd to 8th grade students in reading and mathematics each year and to administer science assessments once each in elementary, middle, and high school. Under NCLB, states are to select and design their own assessments, which must align with the state's model academic standards.

State law requires the State Superintendent to adopt or approve examinations designed to measure pupil attainment of knowledge and concepts in grades 4, 8, and 10. [s. 118.30 (1), Stats.] The State Superintendent has adopted the Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts Examination (WKCE) to meet the federal and state requirements. Students in grades 3, 5, 6, and 7 take tests in reading and mathematics. Students in grades 4, 8, and 10 take tests in reading, mathematics, science, language arts, writing, and social studies.

The committee received testimony on the ACT Suite at its October 24, 2012 meeting. DPI recently announced its 2013-15 budget proposal that requires all high school students to take the ACT Suite and WorkKeys; this proposal would replace the mathematics, reading, and language arts portions of the WKCE that is administered to students in grade 10. Under the DPI proposal, students in grade 9 would take the EXPLORE test, which assesses the pupil's strengths and weaknesses in academics and potential career options. Students in grade 10 would take the PLAN test, which assesses the pupil's academic progress in high school and assists with college and career planning. Students in grade 11 would take the ACT test, which is a college entrance exam, and WorkKeys, which assesses job skills. DPI's ACT Suite and WorkKeys proposal is part of Agenda 2017. Under Agenda 2017, DPI proposes to reach certain goals regarding college and career readiness for students.

Options

- a. Amend state law to require that all high school students take the ACT Suite and WorkKeys, as described above.
- b. Amend state law to require that all high school students take the ACT Suite and WorkKeys, as described above, and also require school districts to administer the EXPLORE test in grade 8.
- c. Appropriate funding to school districts to implement the ACT Suite and WorkKeys.

6. The Plan Test and the Smarter Balanced Assessments in 10th Grade

Background

In its 2013-2015 biennial budget request, DPI is proposing to use the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) assessment system in grades 3 to 8 beginning in the 2014-15 school year. The SBAC assessment system is aligned with the Common Core State Standards and would replace the mathematics, reading, and language arts portions of the WKCE in grades 4 and 8. However, the SBAC assessment system will not replace the science and social studies portions of the WKCE; instead, DPI is proposing to use a science and social studies test that has not been chosen yet to meet the state testing requirements in grades 4, 8, and 10.

As noted above, DPI is proposing to use the ACT Suite in high school in grades 9, 10, and 11. Specifically, DPI is proposing that EXPLORE be administered in grade 9, PLAN be administered in grade 10, and the ACT and WorkKeys be administered in grade 11. Therefore, under the DPI proposal, students in grade 10 would take the PLAN test and the yet-to-be determined science and social studies assessments.

Options

- a. Require that students take the PLAN test, the SBAC (mathematics, reading, and language arts), and the science and social studies assessments in grade 10.
- b. Prohibit DPI from requiring that students take both the PLAN test and the science and social studies assessments in grade 10.

- c. Require or encourage DPI to consider whether students in grade 10 should take both the PLAN and the science and social studies assessments after the assessments have been implemented.

7. Alternative Certification for Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Teachers

Background

Current law provides that certain individuals who have not received an education degree from a college or university may obtain a license to teach. Such a license is commonly referred to as an “alternative license.” An individual who satisfies the following requirements may apply to the State Superintendent for enrollment in an alternative teacher training program established by DPI: (1) holds a bachelor’s degree in engineering, music, art, foreign language, computer science, mathematics, or science from an accredited institution of higher education; (2) has at least five years of experience as a professional in the subject area in which the degree was awarded; and (3) demonstrates, to the satisfaction of the State Superintendent, competency in that subject area that is current and compatible with modern curricula. A professional teaching permit is awarded to a person who satisfactorily completes the training program. The permit specifies the subject area in which the person may teach. The initial permit is valid for two years, during which the individual must be supervised by an individual who holds a regular teaching license. The permit is renewable for five-year periods. [s. 118.192, Stats.]

DPI recently created the Wisconsin License Based on Equivalency (LBE) Standards-Based Assessment pathway for certain individuals who do not have an education degree from a college or university to obtain a license to teach. According to DPI, an individual who satisfies the following requirements may receive an LBE: (1) has three years of teaching experience in Pre-K to 12, postsecondary, or industry; and (2) completes a performance-based assessment process to determine competency in the Wisconsin educator standards.

Options

- a. Codify the LBE Standards-Based Assessment pathway.
- b. Authorize school districts to provide alternative certification for STEM teachers.
- c. Direct DPI to review current methods of alternative certification and create new, more flexible methods for alternative certification.
- d. Increase flexibility in teacher certification to permit licenses to authorize interdisciplinary instruction.

OPTIONS FOR ADDITIONAL ISSUES

The committee has discussed other issues about which the committee may want to develop a recommendation through a letter to appropriate individuals or agencies or through a report. Those issues are provided below. Under each issue, certain options are provided; however, additional options suggested by committee members may also be pursued.

A. Request that the Joint Committee on Audit direct the Legislative Audit Bureau to conduct an audit of work-based learning programs, including Youth Apprenticeship, that are available to high school students and that are administered by DPI or DWD. The audit should evaluate the cost of the program; the number of students, including students with disabilities, enrolled in the program; and the effectiveness of the program.

B. Facilitate awareness of information and resources for programs and options available to high school students.

Options: (1) Send a letter to DPI requesting that DPI increase outreach to school districts regarding programs and options available to high school students; (2) send a letter to DWD requesting that DWD increase outreach to businesses regarding opportunities to mentor, involve, and assist high school students; or (3) send a letter to DPI and DWD encouraging them to create a website that consolidates all programs regarding high school students.

C. Consider how high school credit can be awarded for demonstrating competency and require or encourage the use of core abilities as a measure of competency.

Option: Send a letter to DPI requesting that DPI form a taskforce to examine how to increase the methods of earning high school credits by demonstrating competencies and how to incorporate the use of core abilities as a measure of competency in high school.

D. Review teacher training programs and require that the programs include instruction in relevant changes in education, including 21st Century Skills.

Option: Send a letter to University of Wisconsin-System, the Wisconsin Technical College System, and the Wisconsin Association of Independent Colleges and Universities requesting that they review their respective teacher training programs to ensure that the programs include instruction in 21st Century learning skills.

E. Revise or eliminate the 20 education standards.

Options: (1) Send a letter to DPI requesting that DPI form a taskforce to review the 20 standards to determine whether they should be revised or eliminated; or (2) send a letter to the co-chairs of the Joint Legislative Council requesting that the Council appoint a Special Committee in 2014 to review the 20 standards to determine whether they should be revised or eliminated.

F. Coordinate the efforts of the Special Committee with the efforts of the College and Workforce Readiness Council and the DPI.

Options: (1) Send a letter to both the Council and DPI expressing the committee's support for the work of both entities; (2) send a letter to Governor Walker and the co-chairs of the Joint Committee on Finance expressing the committee's support for the work of the Council and DPI; or (3) send a letter to the chairs of the Senate and Assembly Committees on Education expressing the committee's support for the work of the Council and DPI.

G. Encourage experimentation, innovation, and best practices in school districts.

Options: (1) Send a letter to DPI expressing the committee's support for these issues; or (2) send a letter to the co-chairs of the Joint Committee on Finance encouraging the committee to change the school aid formula to provide incentives for school districts to be innovative.

H. Increase the availability of technical education courses in high school.

Options: (1) Send a letter to DPI requesting that DPI form a taskforce to examine the availability of technical education courses in high school and recommend ways to increase those types of course offerings; (2) send a letter to the Wisconsin Association of School Boards (WASB) recommending that WASB advise its members to consider using mobile tech labs as a way to offer more technical education opportunities in high school; (3) send a letter to the WTCS encouraging WTCS to increase the availability of online courses available to high school students; or (4) send a letter to each of the Cooperative Educational Service Agencies (CESAs) encouraging each one to serve as a regional technical education center for high school students.

I. Create a formal platform for school districts, postsecondary institutions, and businesses to coordinate on opportunities available to high school students.

Options: (1) Send a letter to the CESAs recommending that each one create a taskforce comprised of representatives from school districts, postsecondary institutions, and businesses to coordinate information and resources regarding work-based learning programs, career opportunities, and postsecondary options for high school students; or (2) send a letter to the CESAs recommending that each one create an online resource to facilitate communication and coordination among school districts, postsecondary institutions, and businesses regarding work-based learning programs, career opportunities, and postsecondary options for high school students.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us directly at the Legislative Council staff offices.

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