



**Alberta Darling**  
**Wisconsin State Senator**  
Co-Chair, Joint Committee on Finance

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Assembly Bill 581

Senator Alberta Darling

December 17, 2015

Thank you Chairman Thiesfeldt and committee members for holding a public hearing this morning on Assembly Bill 581. As you know, this bill would expand the experience-based method to obtain a teaching license to include certain vocational education subjects.

The bill before you was brought to me by a group of education administrators who are currently having a difficult time finding qualified licensed teachers in many vocational subjects. Due to the small pool of applicants qualified for these subjects, schools often resort to hiring a less desirable applicant, using emergency licenses, or making the decision not to offer these particular classes to their students.

As many of you know, the state of Wisconsin is experiencing a skills gap. My goal with this legislation is to increase the exposure of these vocational subjects to our students. The best way to do that is to increase the pool of teacher applicants who are both willing and capable of leading a classroom in these very niche education subjects. Giving our kids the opportunity to take these classes during their primary and secondary years of education will hopefully instill not only an interest but a passion for these subjects that will translate into a future career.

The process for obtaining a license is modeled off legislation we passed earlier this year for technical education subjects. Today, you will hear testimony from individuals who will give you first-hand examples of how the new tech ed licensing process enabled them to find great teachers in tech related subjects.

During the last couple months I have been privileged to visit almost every school district in my senate district. Each district has mentioned the challenges they face with hiring for many of these subjects. It is my hope that this legislation will give them another tool to help attract great new teachers.

Finally, I want to thank Representative Knodl for his work as the assembly co-author and for the support he has shown for this piece of legislation.

Thank you again for giving me the opportunity to testify on Assembly Bill 581. It is my hope that you will vote in favor of this legislation.



---

# DAN KNODL

---

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 24<sup>TH</sup> ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

Chairman Thiesfeldt and members of the committee, thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify today on Assembly Bill 581. This bill will provide much needed relief to school districts having difficulty hiring teachers for vocational subjects such as business, agriculture, healthcare occupations, and family and consumer education. It will also allow the state's school districts to more easily implement creative plans to help close the skills gap we currently face.

This bill is an expansion of the experience based licensure for technical education teachers included in the 2015 biennial budget. This pathway was developed by Sen. Darling and a large group of school districts. Brown Deer School District leadership who had spearheaded the budget motion approached Sen. Darling and myself about expanding the program earlier during meetings we held with our school districts after the budget. Many of the other school districts who helped then have helped this time around as well.

We have representatives from seven school districts here today to speak with you and I will let them share their experiences and the numbers trying to hire teachers for these in demand and valuable classes. This bill increases local control for our school districts and will benefit students across the state. In 2013 the legislature passed a bill requiring every school to implement academic and career planning services for students in grades 6-12. To do this effectively, and give the students every opportunity to succeed, our districts need to have the ability to hire qualified teachers. Currently there is a very small pool of applicants for these jobs, but the districts are finding there are many mid-career professionals with experience and connections that are ready to share their knowledge in the classroom.

Since the passage of the current budget, Brown Deer School District has been able to hire and license two technical education teachers that had abundant industry experience that they have now been able to bring to the classroom. One of the teachers, Craig Griffie has submitted written testimony for you to read in regards to how the new licensure pathway has helped him bring new and improved lesson plans to his classroom because he was no longer forced to spend nights and weekends studying for irrelevant classes. He has moved on to take classes that are immediately relevant to his work under this program.

The biggest argument against the original experienced based tech ed licensure pathway was that we did not need it because of emergency licenses. I feel that Mr. Griffie's story shows otherwise. I would also like to point out that this pathway requires stronger credentials than the emergency licensure does to enter into this pathway. It also requires a new teacher to complete a curriculum prescribed by the school district before being granted a permanent license. I feel that this bill will allow us to better serve the students of Wisconsin and help us close the skills gap by making it easier for our school districts to hire qualified and eager applicants that may not have otherwise been able to make the shift to teaching. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

**Assembly Committee on Education  
December 17, 2015**

**Department of Public Instruction Testimony  
Assembly Bill 581**

I want to thank Chairman Thiesfeldt and members of the committee for the opportunity to testify before you today on Assembly Bill 581 (AB 581). My name is Sheila Briggs. I am the Assistant State Superintendent of the Division for Academic Excellence at the Department of Public Instruction (the department) and with me today is Jeff Pertl, Senior Policy Advisor. We are here to testify in opposition to AB 581. While we are supportive of flexibility, and certainly understand the desire to quickly expand a pool of potential applicants in the face of worries over shortages and the resulting market effects on salaries, we have concerns about the ultimate effects of the bill as it is currently drafted. One of the most important components of a student's success is an effective teacher. This bill would change the minimum qualifications for how Wisconsin defines the preparation to be that effective teacher.

**Licensing Overview**

Before moving into the bill, I think it is important to quickly review the many routes, or pathways, to becoming a licensed teacher. You may recall that when we appeared in front of you in the beginning of the session we discussed this in great detail, along with the additional flexibilities and routes the department had created over the last few years.

At its basis, all routes to licensure should revolve around ensuring minimal expectations of high quality. We currently have 11 distinct pathways to becoming a licensed educator in Wisconsin, with the last three routes added in the last biennial budget. Our pathways include traditional routes through our colleges and universities to receive a bachelor's degree, routes for career changers, and routes for currently licensed teachers adding additional areas of licensure.

**Pathways to Licensure**

- |                                       |   |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Bachelor's Degree                  | 7. International & Guest Teacher            |
| 2. Post Baccalaureate                 | 8. Trade Specialist Permit                  |
| 3. Alternative Route Program          | 9. Experience-Based on Technology Education |
| 4. License Based on Equivalency       | 10. License Based on Reciprocity            |
| 5. Adding Additional License via Exam | 11. Montessori                              |
| 6. Professional Teaching Permit       |   |

In Wisconsin, we have 33 Wisconsin colleges and universities that have educator preparation programs, 10 alternative route programs, and 2 license based upon equivalency providers. Please note that alternative route program providers can include school districts, CESAs, colleges, and

private for profit and nonprofit entities. The department has a rigorous process of approving these programs, and then a yearly evaluation that is called the Continuous Review Process, to ensure quality and continuous improvement of these programs.

Wisconsin has always been known for our high-quality licensing system. Wisconsin has previously required all candidates for licensure to demonstrate that they both have the content and pedagogical knowledge needed to meet minimum state expectations to be an effective teacher. In the past, regardless of the route you took, everyone had to meet the same bar. This is no longer the case.

### **AB 581**

In order to discuss this bill, we have to note what it is modeled on--the experience-based license for technical education created in the budget. This bill replicates issues with that license.

First and foremost, I think most parents assume that to be a teacher you have to have met some minimal state qualifications. This bill eliminates standard minimal qualifications for vocational subjects, which we call Career and Technical Education, and replaces them with a points menu districts can utilize. Some examples include:

- Anyone with a bachelor's degree in any subject can meet the points required to teach any vocational subject regardless of their major.
- Anyone who has worked full-time for 18 weeks and has earned at least 7 credits at a technical college in science, technology, engineering, math course, or in a subject related to the vocation can teach.
- Anyone who has ever received a teaching license in any subject or to teach as a substitute teacher can teach any vocational course.
- Anyone who has ever received a teaching permit, meaning they haven't met the qualifications to be a fully licensed teacher, can teach any vocational course.

As a result of this points menu, the licensing and renewal process is now based on qualifications determined by local school districts. There is no state process aligned to state standards. There are no requirements to pass the same tests everyone else has to in order to be a teacher. There is a loss of transparency here for parents and to the state. It is no longer true that all teachers have to meet the same bar to be fully licensed.

A second concern is the fact that this license is portable. While the school district must apply with the individual to get the license, once that individual has the five-year license they can apply to work anywhere on that license.

Additionally, the only quality control requirement is that the individual completes a local school district curriculum created by the district that initially hired them. There are no requirements as to what this curriculum should entail. There is no alignment with the existing state teacher standards and state renewal processes that apply to all other licensed teachers who want to renew their license. What this creates are different licensing standards across 424 school districts.

This bill and the technical education experience-based license also create implications for the preparation of the teacher teaching core courses in English, mathematics, and science. The

committee should be aware that school districts across the state have received equivalency for many courses. What I mean by that is many agriculture courses also count as science courses for purposes of graduation credit. Some business courses count for English credit. Technical education courses can count for science or mathematics credit.

Our experience with the technical education experience-based license created in the budget has given us a picture of how this bill will likely play out. The budget passed when many school districts already had staffing set for the 2015-16 school year. Even with this timeframe, however, 19 school districts applied with an applicant for one of these licenses and 19 were approved. You have the chart in front of you. As you can see there is a range of what is considered minimal preparation requirements.

AB 581 creates new issues as well. For instance it creates a broad vocational license which appears to cover all career and technical education licenses and some areas we don't license currently. It is unclear if the department has the authority to give vocational education experience-based licenses by subject area to address this, but if we do, it should be noted that this will also increase the complexity of our licensing system by creating multiple new categories of licensure.

One last implication of this bill is the unknown effect on existing preparation programs, both traditional and alternative. Over time, if people are increasingly licensed through this alternative, there may be a point where some of these programs may cease to exist due to costs involved and tests that need to be passed by candidates that aren't present in this proposal.

The department has worked hard over the last five years to provide additional flexibility and add additional licensure pathways to fit almost any situation. We are prepared to continue to work with our stakeholders and the legislature to remove additional barriers that may exist, but we believe a deeper conversation needs to occur over what minimal expectations and qualifications are necessary before people are placed in front of students.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify, and at this time we would be happy to answer any questions you may have.





122 W. Washington Avenue, Madison, WI 53703  
Phone: 608-257-2622 · Fax: 608-257-8386

John H. Ashley, Executive Director

TO: Members, Assembly Committee on Education  
FROM: Dan Rossmiller, Government Relations Director  
RE: Position on Assembly Bill 581, licenses to teach vocational education subjects.  
DATE: December 17, 2015

Chairman Thiesfeldt and committee members, thank you for the opportunity to speak with you about Assembly Bill 581. My name is Dan Rossmiller and I am the government relations director for the Wisconsin Association of School Boards (WASB), representing 423 school boards across the state of Wisconsin.

We have taken a neutral position on this bill. We recognize that those who worked to develop the bill raise legitimate concerns about the shortage of qualified vocational teachers and the need to address this problem.

However, upon closer inspection, we also recognize teacher shortages are a growing, nationwide problem and a long-term concern, a problem not likely to be corrected by piecemeal approaches such as this bill.

We call upon the Department of Public Instruction to convene a high level task force as soon as possible to examine best practices and evidence-based solutions addressing teacher shortages from around the country and recommend necessary changes. Such a task force should involve all stakeholders and have a clear emphasis on ensuring that schoolchildren receive high quality instruction that prepares them to succeed beyond high school and meet the needs of our state's economy and employers.

We also recommend that a Legislative Council study committee be convened to address the teacher shortage with a similar focus. This issue deserves a thorough examination.

We thank you for the opportunity to bring these concerns to your attention.

Dear Education Committee,

My name is Craig Griffie, and I hold an Experience-Based Tech Ed License. I am grateful for the work that went into the 2015 budget, because this new avenue of licensing has positively affected my life and classroom. This is my 3rd year of teaching. Last year was my 2nd year of an emergency license, and also my 2nd year of night classes (with 3 more years to go to get my full 220 Tech Ed license).

The effects of the new law, and the updated status of my teaching license, have found their way directly into my shop and classroom. Now that I have the Experienced Based Tech Ed teaching license, and no longer need to take night classes that have no application to my classroom, I actually have the time to advance my curriculum and to network with local businesses in the Brown Deer community. This is so important for a Tech Ed teacher. This means that my students now have the attention of more of my non-teaching hours, so our projects are more rigorous and the learning is richer. This also means that I am able to find ways to prepare our students for the local economy because businesses are getting more input into the Tech Ed classes. Just a couple weeks ago on 12/4 we had an Industry Breakfast at school with 33 guests to see how we can collaborate more in the Tech Ed and Engineering classes at Brown Deer, and this is something that I could not have organized last year.

I heard that there is a new bill to address licensing in the broader CTE fields. While I am not familiar with the specifics of the bill, I do know that the Tech Ed bill from last year is a good thing for Wisconsin students.

Respectfully,

Craig Griffie  
Technology Education  
**Brown Deer Middle/High School**  
8060 N 60th Street, Brown Deer, WI 53223  
o: 414-678-1488  
c: 414-379-5648  
Follow me on Twitter @MrGriffie



Brown Deer

Cudahy

Elmbrook

Fox Point/  
Bayside

Franklin

Glendale/  
River Hills

Greendale

Greenfield

Grafton

Hamilton

Hartford

Hartland Lakeside

Kenosha

Kettle Moraine

Milwaukee

Menomonee Falls

Mequon-Thiensville

Muskego-Norway

Nicolet

Oak Creek/  
Franklin

Oconomowoc

Pewaukee

Port Washington/  
Saukville

St. Francis

Shorewood

South Milwaukee

Waukesha

Wauwatosa

West Allis/  
West Milwaukee

Westosha UHS

Whitefish Bay

Whitnall

December 17, 2015

Members of the Assembly Education Committee,

My name is Terri Phillips and I am the Executive Director for the Southeastern Wisconsin Schools Alliance (SWSA). We represent 32 public school districts in the Southeastern Wisconsin region and educate over 200,000 public school students.

We are pleased to support Assembly Bill 581 which expands the opportunity to obtain a license to teach a technical education subject.

Our school districts greatly appreciated the bill that was passed this past budget cycle which provided greater flexibility in hiring applicants with professional experience in the area of technical education. However, we continue to experience great difficulty in finding applicants in the rest of the "career and technical education fields" and are supporting Assembly bill 581 that will provide flexibility to these areas as well.

We are supporting AB581 for the following reasons:

1. There are courses and programs aimed directly at jobs and skills local employers are requesting. Our districts need to offer these classes in order to fill the skills gap employers are citing. There are so few qualified applicants available to teach these courses that we are unable to fill these job postings with existing candidates in a timely manner.
2. Our districts have had great success finding mid-career professionals who are seeking an opportunity to teach their skills to students in the classroom. These candidates have considerable content knowledge that can be shared with our students. In addition, because these candidates are often still connected with the "working world", there are more opportunities for internships, apprenticeships, and other real life experiences.
3. The current path to licensure is expensive, long, and too much to ask for a mid-career professional who may have more knowledge of the topic area than some of our current educators.

**Terri Phillips**  
Executive Director

p: 262.442-0047

swsaexecdirector@gmail.com

*The Mission of the Southeastern Wisconsin Schools Alliance is to advocate for and inform education policy in support of world class public schools to benefit all students and the economic vitality of the region.*

4. Some of the licensure requirements are often irrelevant to what our teachers really need to know. For example, there is a skilled chef who wishes to teach culinary arts; however a license in Family and Consumer Education is required by the state. The required courses included textiles and family financial management. Unfortunately, many of our mid-career professionals are not willing to undertake these hurdles.

5. We are very concerned about hiring the “best and brightest” for our students. Licensure flexibility comes hand in hand with our rigorous Human Resource screening, Educator Effectiveness review of all staff, and the state required mentoring. Our non-traditional candidates will be chosen carefully and guided in their new roles.

Our top priority is a good educational outcome and the best opportunities for all students. Unfortunately, with the very limited pool of candidates in the vocational education area, we are forced to hire candidates who may be mediocre, or we find ourselves hiring educators away from adjacent districts. Unfortunately, all too often, we close down programs and courses that may be critical to the economic growth of our economy.

The SWSA appreciates the opportunity to provide feedback on Assembly Bill 581. We welcome any questions you might have for our organization and member districts.

Respectfully submitted,



Terri Phillips  
SWSA Executive Director



## School Administrators Alliance

*Representing the Interests of Wisconsin School Children*

---

**TO:** Assembly Committee on Education  
**FROM:** John Forester, Director of Government Relations  
**DATE:** December 17, 2015  
**RE:** AB 581 – Licenses to Teach Vocational Education Subjects

Good morning Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important issue today. The SAA is testifying for information only on Assembly Bill 581 (AB 581), relating to licenses to teach vocational education subjects.

This past year, the SAA convened a team of Wisconsin school administrators to identify an evidence based policy agenda that could provide Wisconsin with an effective path to improving student achievement and closing achievement gaps. We partnered with researchers at the Wisconsin Center for Education Research at the University of Wisconsin-Madison to provide research and policy expertise. Regarding educator preparation, we found that the most important school factor determining whether students achieve academically is the knowledge and skills of the classroom teacher. Therefore, if our objective for education policy in Wisconsin is to improve student achievement for all students and close achievement gaps, it is critically important that we continue raising the bar for what our teachers know and are able to do.

The research was very clear on the importance of rigorous teacher preparation. Whether we are discussing traditional teacher preparation programs or alternative certification programs, high quality teacher preparation helps candidates to develop the knowledge and skills they need in the classroom. Both strong content knowledge and strong pedagogical content knowledge are important elements of high quality teacher preparation. While the research is inconclusive about many facets of teacher preparation, industrialized nations whose students outperform U.S. students tend to invest heavily in pre-service preparation. Compared to the U.S., these nations had very different teacher preparation criteria, marked by more extensive advanced coursework and specialization in content knowledge, more rigorous selection and admissions criteria, more pedagogical content and general pedagogical preparation, exit exams and certification and licensing programs.

---

4797 Hayes Road, 2nd Floor • Madison, WI 53704 • (608) 242-1370 • Fax (608) 242-1290 • [www.wsaa.org](http://www.wsaa.org)

An Alliance of:

Association of Wisconsin  
School Administrators

Wisconsin Association of  
School District Administrators

Wisconsin Association of  
School Business Officials

Wisconsin Council for  
Administrators of Special Services

I think if given the clear choice, Wisconsin school leaders would hire candidates that are products of high quality, rigorous teacher preparation. Unfortunately, we have a big problem. The evidence demonstrates that in Wisconsin and in the nation there is a conflict between two key factors. While more rigorous, selective educator preparation tends to yield improved student outcomes, our current incentives and program structure do not entice the best and the brightest to enter and remain in education. In Wisconsin, we are witnessing declining numbers of candidates entering colleges of education, increasingly thin applicant pools in most if not all subject areas, and quality teachers leaving the state and even the profession. It is these factors that led the SAA to recommend to lawmakers and the State Superintendent that we convene a high level effort to focus like a laser beam on educator recruitment, retention and training and develop a comprehensive, long-term approach to attack this problem head-on.

Some school districts are currently facing a critical situation in which they have concluded they either get flexibility in the licensure of technical and vocational education candidates or they will have to close popular academic programs. It's not the loss of the program itself that is the travesty. Rather, the travesty is the resulting loss of educational opportunities for students in program areas they are enthusiastic about and that we as a state hold as an important priority. So we understand why some school administrators are supporting AB 581.

The concern we have about AB 581 is the "message" of the bill and its long term effects. "Professional teacher preparation and licensure is no longer necessary in Wisconsin" is not the message we should send in our education policy. School leaders in Wisconsin are concerned that if we continue to go down this road, in 5 or 10 years we will look back at the results and say, "What the heck were we thinking?" And do we want that to be our legacy?

Mr. Chairman, I understand that I am testifying for information only but, I would like to make a couple of recommendations. First of all, sunset the experience-based licensure approach for technical and vocational education subjects in 3 to 5 years, at which time the Legislature will consider the results and decide whether to keep it or not. Secondly, please support convening a high-level effort of all relevant PK-16 education stakeholders to develop a long-term, comprehensive approach to attack our recruitment, retention and educator training problems here in Wisconsin.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. If you should have any questions regarding the SAA's statement on AB 581, please call me at (608) 242-1370.

**Testimony to the Committee on Education regarding Assembly Bill 581  
relating to: licenses to teach vocational subjects.**

**December 17, 2015**

Earlier this year the legislature passed Wisconsin Act 55 which created an "experienced-based method" to obtain a license to teach technical subjects. Now, less than 6 months later, a bill is being drafted to broaden the scope to include vocational subjects including agriculture, child services, clothing services, food services, housing and equipment services, family and consumer education, family and consumer services, home-economics-related occupations, health care-related occupations, business education and marketing education. Not only do I oppose this bill, but recommend that 118.191 be eliminated in its entirety thus eliminating this pathway for licensure in any discipline. My main concern is for students. This licensure pathway compromises the quality of k-12 education by putting underprepared "teachers" in Wisconsin schools.

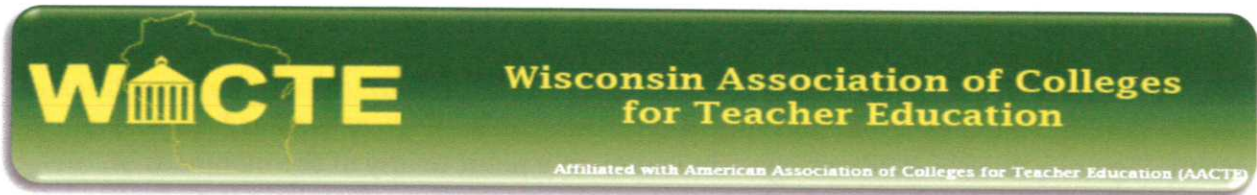
Teacher education programs at colleges and universities in Wisconsin undergo a rigorous review process in order to be eligible to produce licensable teachers. This new pathway contradicts the legislature's own requirements that were established in PI34 in 2000. Upon review, you will note that this pathway does not stipulate requirements outlined in PI 34 such as minimum grade point average; course work; proficiency in basic skills such as reading, writing, and mathematics; minimum competency in their discipline as documented by passage of a standard test; clinical experiences culminating in student teaching; and presentation of a professional portfolio. In addition, in an attempt to respond to a national call to improve the competencies of novice teachers, all teacher candidates completing an approved teacher education program in Wisconsin after August 2016 must pass a rigorous performance assessment of their teaching, the Educative Teacher Performance Assessment (edTPA) before they can be licensed. I recognize the seriousness of the shortage of high quality teachers, but the answer should not be eliminating important requirements that have been established to insure that all students in Wisconsin have access to highly qualified teachers.

There is also a concern for equal access to a quality education across the state. This is a right guaranteed by the Wisconsin Constitution. Article X, Section 3 requires that we provide the state's children with schools that are "as nearly uniform as practicable." This bill requires individuals to agree "to complete during the term of the license a curriculum determined by the school board of the district in which the individual will teach." I have the greatest respect for citizens that serve on school boards but most are not equipped for the task this proposes. In addition, there are no provisions within this bill for oversight of the programs established by school boards thus rendering it implausible that they will be uniform. This bill essentially returns the state to localized teacher certification that was eliminated in the 20<sup>th</sup> century in an attempt to provide all students equal access to a quality education.

UW System colleges and universities have a long rich history preparing educators. Our faculty and staff are professionals that have dedicated their careers to researching and delivering quality programs. None of the existing teacher education programs that serve the licensure areas affected by this bill are running at capacity. We welcome the opportunity to work with other stakeholders in the state to develop solutions to the serious teacher shortage problem without compromising the quality of education that all students in the state deserve and are entitled to by the Wisconsin State Constitution.

Respectfully submitted by

Dr. Brian K. McAlister, Associate Dean  
College of Education, Health, and Human Sciences and  
Technology Education Program Director  
University of Wisconsin-Stout  
715-232-1168  
mcalisterb@uwstout.edu



December 17, 2015

TO: Members of the Wisconsin State Assembly and Senate Committees on Education  
FROM: The Executive Committee—Wisconsin Association of Colleges for Teacher Education  
RE: Assembly Bill 581

Dear Members of the Wisconsin State Assembly and Senate Committees on Education:

I am here today as the President of the Wisconsin Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, a consortium of 33 public and private educator preparation programs from around the state. Our Association has grave concerns about bill 118.191 particularly as it relates to deskilling of teaching and the profession, lowering standards and the implications for student learning.

The 33 educator preparation programs already undergo a rigorous review process to produce licensable teachers for Wisconsin's classrooms. Each institution has programs reviewed annually. This state developed and implemented process provides critical feedback leading to an ongoing program improvement process. The bill would bypass this system completely in targeted and often high needs areas. WACTE membership strongly oppose bill 118.191 that would support an underregulated and underdeveloped "experienced-based method" by which individuals could obtain a license to teach technical education subjects as well as vocational subjects including agriculture, child services, clothing services, food services, housing and equipment services, family and consumer education, family and consumer services, home-economics-related occupations, health care-related occupations, business education and marketing education. Teaching is a skilled profession like any profession. It requires knowledge of content and practices in particular areas, as well as knowledge about teaching.

WACTE opposes this bill because it lowers teacher licensing standards at a time when we should be strengthening them in efforts to best serve Wisconsin students. A licensure pathway not supported by research-based best practices in teaching methods and content is counterproductive to teacher quality efforts and the professionalization of the field. It puts our students, our communities, and our economy at risk.

Bill 118.191 gives the state department of education the authority to grant an initial teaching license to teach a technical education subject to an individual based on a point system that ignores teaching methods, content, and knowledge that educational systems around the world know to be essential to quality teaching. Surprisingly, the bill actually

ignores instructional technology skills needed for the 21st century teaching workforce. The ability of a teacher to understand and use today's technologies cannot be underestimated in our classrooms. Students must be thoughtfully taught how to critically understand the messages sent and received through technology as well as how to use technologies to their best advantage. One need only point to any of the instances of terrorism and the use of social media to spread these messages. Teachers in today's classrooms need a depth of understanding in many pedagogical practices. The point system articulated in this bill does not provide adequate evidence of a depth of understanding by any potential licensee.

We are concerned that the bill would allow the department to issue a teaching license to teach a technical education subject if the individual completes the curriculum determined by the school board of the school district that determined the curriculum. This practice will ultimately lead to inconsistency in setting standards – a practice that we have long moved away from – in establishing a rigorous statewide curriculum. Wisconsin already has a researched-based statewide curriculum in place. Additionally, giving the department an increased responsibility, in this case around issuing licenses, to an already understaffed and underfunded institution is also counterproductive, particularly when there is a 45-day timeline in which the department would need to respond to license applications. Failing to respond in 45 days does not automatically determine a level of expertise or qualify an individual to teach our children.

We also know that teachers who are fast-tracked in earning a license do not stay long in the classroom. Newly licensed and inexperienced individuals entering the professional environment will require extensive support in their acclimation to organizational culture and climate and professional expectations of a district, a school and profession. Onboarding these individuals will be challenging as they learn to function within unfamiliar and highly scrutinized school systems adding to the already long list of administrator responsibilities and challenges faced by initial educators. This again is counterproductive to strengthening the quality of teaching when we know that a large majority of inexperienced teachers leave the classroom within the first few years – particularly those placed in hard-to-fill classrooms.

We deeply respect the expertise of school board members, their service to the community and schools, and the challenges they face in their role as community leaders. However, most would agree that determining vocational curriculum including agriculture, child services, clothing services, food services, housing and equipment services, family and consumer education, family and consumer services, home-economics-related occupations, health care-related occupations, business education and marketing education for educators is not their primary area of expertise.

The Wisconsin Association of Colleges for Teacher Education strongly opposes bill 118.191 as an expedient and perhaps careless option to place warm bodies in the classroom at the expense of student learning.



Sincerely,

The Executive Committee  
Wisconsin Association of College for Teacher Education (WACTE)

Melanie Agnew  
WACTE President  
Assistant Dean College of Education  
UW Whitewater  
agnewm@uww.edu  
262-462-4677

Reid Riggle  
WACTE President Elect  
Associate Professor of Education  
St. Norbert College  
reid.riggle@snc.edu  
920-403-3065

Jeanne F. Williams  
WACTE Past President  
Educational Studies Department Chair  
Ripon College  
williamsj@ripon.edu  
920-748-8386

Brian K. McAlister  
WACTE Treasurer  
School of Education Director  
University of Wisconsin-Stout  
mcalisterb@uwstout.edu  
715-232-1088

Annette Nelson  
WACTE Secretary  
Education Department Chair  
Northland College  
anelson@northland.edu  
715-682-1673

Hope Longwell-Grice  
WACTE UW System Representative  
Associate Dean School of Education  
UW Milwaukee  
hope@uwm.edu  
(414) 229-3245



**Metropolitan Milwaukee  
Association of Commerce**

**Metropolitan Milwaukee Association of Commerce  
Testimony in Support of Assembly Bill 581  
Assembly Committee on Education  
December 17, 2015**

Members of the Committee on Education:

Thank you Chairman Thiesfeldt and committee members for the opportunity to share these comments and for hearing testimony today on this important piece of legislation. My name is Andrew Davis and I am the Legislative Director for the Metropolitan Milwaukee Association of Commerce (MMAC). The MMAC represents nearly 2,000 member businesses employing more than 300,000 workers throughout the metropolitan Milwaukee area. We are a membership organization that advocates for the Milwaukee business community and our members. Two of the issues that the Chamber is constantly working on are workforce development and education. This piece of legislation before us today helps address needs in both those areas.

In the metro Milwaukee area, it is estimated that with even modest economic growth, our regional economy will need over 25,000 new workers in the next 5 years. That is a daunting challenge, and one that speaks to the need to ensure that our education pipelines in both four year and vocational degrees are operating at peak efficiency. One of the keys to that performance is the availability of skilled teachers and trainers in our vocational fields. As the demand for skilled workers accelerates, so must the tools available to our school districts for recruiting and retaining skilled instructors in our vocational education fields. This legislation provides pathways for finding those critically needed instructors. As such it presents a creative solution to our schools' instructional talent shortages in certain fields. By doing so, it also creates a critical link in the education and workforce chain necessary to fuel a growing Wisconsin economy.

The MMAC believes that education is best serving the community when it is preparing the workforce of the future. Expanding the definition of "vocational education subjects" to include industry specific occupational fields does just that. We have long advocated for our technical education system to be a tool in training our young millennial workforce and teach them the skills needed. There is no better way to accomplish such a task than to provide that future workforce with experience-based instruction preparing them for the real world. A student would have the opportunity to receive knowledge and experience-based instruction and have the potential to enter the workforce sooner. That employee is entering the workforce better trained and better educated.

Once again thank you for the opportunity to share these comments and for your attention to this important issue. We respectfully ask you to support Assembly Bill 581 and move this bill on to the full Assembly for timely action.