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Testimony in Support of Assembly Bill 361 *Assembly Committee on Labor & Integrated Employment* September 29, 2021

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, thank you for holding a public hearing on Assembly Bill (AB) 361. This proposal provides parity in the payment structures between school district employees and the employees for cooperative educational services agencies (CESAs).

In Wisconsin, school district employees have the ability to request that their pay be spread out over the course of 12 months for the work performed during the school year, providing payment consistency and income stability. This is permitted through an exemption to the requirement that an employee be paid within 30 days of performing the work.

This bill would give CESAs the same exemption. The 12 CESAs throughout our state provide many diverse services to their school districts, including career pathways, blended learning, driver's education, early childhood programs, academic and career planning, and youth apprenticeship programs. In CESA 9, which serves the 35th Assembly District, this bill would help benefit and retain speech and language clinicians, school psychologists, occupational therapists, Project SEARCH teachers (who help young adults with disabilities gain and maintain employment), and more.

Members of the committee, again I appreciate this opportunity to submit written testimony in favor of AB 361. I hope to see your support on this important legislation.



MARY FELZKOWSKI

STATE SENATOR • 12TH SENATE DISTRICT

Testimony on Assembly Bill 361

Assembly Committee on Labor and Integrated Employment

Senator Mary Felzkowski

12th Senate District

September 29, 2021

Good morning Chairman Edming and Committee Members,

Thank you for taking the time to hear testimony on Assembly Bill 361.

In Wisconsin, we allow our school districts to pay their employees over 12 months for the work they perform during the school year. This enables school district employees to have a consistent monthly income and stability when it comes to receiving their paycheck and budgeting for their families. This is permitted through an exemption to the requirement that an employee be paid within 30 days of doing the work. Employees have the ability to *opt in* to this payment structure, and the majority of them choose to do that.

This bill would give cooperative educational services agencies (CESAs) the same ability. There are 12 regional CESAs across Wisconsin who provide a variety of services to their school districts, including, but not limited to: helping with trainings and leadership, coordination and communication with tech schools and colleges, providing assistance with special education programming, and hiring speech and language clinicians, school psychologists, occupational therapists, and teachers on behalf of districts.

CESAs play a vital role in our educational infrastructure in Wisconsin, and this bill will allow them to offer the same payment structure as school districts, creating parity.

I want to note that this bill passed on the Senate floor yesterday with bipartisan support.

Thank you to my co-author, Rep. Callahan, and his staff, for their work on this bill, and thank you to all of you for taking the time to read my testimony.



Innovative Thinking. Tailored Delivery.

September 28, 2021

The Honorable James Edming
Room 109 West, State Capitol
PO Box 8952
Madison, WI 53708

RE: AB 361

Dear Assembly Committee on Labor & Integrated Employment:


My name is Dan Hanrahan and I am the agency administrator for Cooperative Educational Service Agency #2 (CESA 2) in Whitewater, WI.


I am writing in support of AB 361. The proposed legislation would allow CESA 2 to offer the same salary payment schedule to our nine (9) month school-year employees as our twelve (12) month employees. This would allow our nine (9) month school-year employees to have their wages distributed over a twelve (12) month period. Not only would this be beneficial to our employees but would enable CESA 2 to attract and retain critical hard-to-fill shared-staffing positions such as speech and language clinicians, school psychologists, physical therapists, occupational therapists, and more.


Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Daniel Hanrahan".

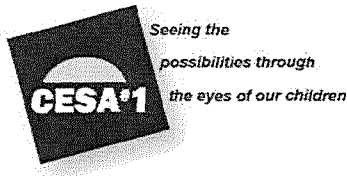
Daniel Hanrahan
CESA 2 Agency Administrator

cesa2.org 

262-473-1473 

info@cesa2.org 

1221 Innovation Drive, Whitewater, WI 53190 



September 27, 2021

Re: Assembly Bill (AB) 361

To the WI State Assembly Committee on Labor & Integrated Employment:

My name is Dr. Mary Gavigan and I am honored to serve as the Executive Director of Cooperative Educational Service Agency (CESA) #1. CESAs across the state fill a critical role and act as a link between the school districts in their region and between school districts and the state. CESA #1 serves 45 school districts in Southeastern Wisconsin, encompassing more than 300,000 students.

I am writing this letter in support of AB 361. Due to an exemption to current statute, school districts in Wisconsin are allowed to pay employees over a 12 month period for the work they do in a traditional academic year, rather than requiring they be paid within 30 days of completing the work. This allows those employees to have a consistent monthly income and provides stability for budgeting.

AB 361 would allow the same exemption for staff employed by the 12 CESAs in the state. One of the many services CESAs provide to districts is the hiring of itinerant staff who may be assigned to several area districts. These positions might include physical therapists, occupational therapists, speech language pathologists, and school psychologists, to name a few. These employees follow the same academic year as district employees. CESA #1 also provides several K12 learning programs in our region that serve students who need an alternative educational setting in order to achieve success. The staff employed at these sites also follow a traditional academic year. Being able to offer this same 12 month pay schedule will help us to recruit and retain high-quality staff, and provide continuity for our districts and students.

I appreciate your consideration of this matter, and respectfully ask that you vote in favor of the amendment to 109.03 (1) (b) of the state statute exempting cooperative educational service agency employees from wage payment frequency requirements to bring us to parity with school districts across the state.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mary J. Gavigan".

Mary J. Gavigan, Ph.D.
Executive Director
Pewaukee, WI

Good morning Chair Edming and the Labor and Integrated Employment Committee,

Thank you for reading my testimony in favor of AB 361. My name is Dr. Karen Wendorf-Heldt and I have the honor of serving as the Agency Administrator of CESA 9 in Tomahawk, WI.

Under current statute, school districts are allowed to pay their employees over 12 months for the work they perform during the school year. This enables school employees to have a consistent monthly income and stability when it comes to receiving their paycheck and budgeting for their families. This is currently permitted through an exemption to the statutory requirement that an employee be paid within 30 days of doing the work for which he/she was hired.

The proposed legislation would allow Wisconsin's cooperative educational service agencies (CESAs) to offer the same payment option to their employees who also work during the school year but who would wish to have those wages distributed consistently across a 12 month time period. CESAs provide a variety of services to the school districts they serve including the hiring of personnel who are then shared between school districts in their region of the state. Examples of the kind of staffing provided are speech and language clinicians, school psychologists, physical therapists, occupational therapists, nurses, etc.

CESAs play an important role in our state's educational system and the proposed legislation would create parity by allowing for the same payment structure that school districts offer to their school term employees. With the proposed amendment, for example, a speech therapist that a CESA hires on behalf of multiple districts to serve them would have the same wage payment options as a speech therapist would have if hired by a single district. Because CESAs employ similar school-term positions on behalf of the districts they serve through a cooperative service model, CESAs would find it very helpful to be able to offer this to their employees as well. It would help CESAs to attract and retain high quality staff to provide for consistency and continuity in service provision to the districts they serve.

Please vote in favor of the amendment to 109.03 (1) (b) of the state statute exempting cooperative educational service agency employees from wage payment frequency requirements as is already provided to school district and private school employees who voluntarily choose to have payment over a 12-month period for services provided during the school year.

Thank you for your consideration.

Karen Wendorf-Heldt

Karen Wendorf-Heldt, Ph.D.
Agency Administrator, CESA 9
Tomahawk, WI