

WISCONSIN STATE
LEGISLATURE
COMMITTEE HEARING
RECORDS

2005-06

(session year)

Senate

(Assembly, Senate or Joint)

**Committee on
Education
(SC-Ed)**

File Naming Example:

Record of Comm. Proceedings ... RCP

- > 05hr_AC-Ed_RCP_pt01a
- > 05hr_AC-Ed_RCP_pt01b
- > 05hr_AC-Ed_RCP_pt02

Published Documents

> Committee Hearings ... CH (Public Hearing Announcements)

> **

> Committee Reports ... CR

> **

> Executive Sessions ... ES

> **

> Record of Comm. Proceedings ... RCP

> **

*Information Collected For Or
Against Proposal*

> Appointments ... Appt

> **

> Clearinghouse Rules ... CRule

**

> Hearing Records ... HR (bills and resolutions)

> **

> Miscellaneous ... Misc

> **05hr_SC-Ed_Misc_pt03**



WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

P.O. BOX 8952 • MADISON, WI 53708

February 16, 2005

Mr. William G. Andrekopoulos, Superintendent
Milwaukee Public Schools
5225 W. Vliet Street
Milwaukee, WI 53208

Dear Superintendent Andrekopoulos,

We are sure you agree that this week's research study from the Manhattan Institute, entitled *Public High School Graduation and College-Readiness Rates: 1991-2002*, revealed some good news for MPS. We applaud the progress detailed in the report, and wish you the best as you continue to work to increase the graduation rates of all your students. As state legislators and state Senate Education Committee members, we strive to keep a keen eye on the successes and failures of our state's school districts, especially in areas relating to academic performance.

While Wisconsin sports the third highest overall graduation rate in the nation, the minority student graduation rate falls woefully short. The Manhattan Institute report shows that in 2002, 91% of white students graduated from our high schools, but only 50% of African-Americans and 58% of Hispanics graduated. The wide difference in overall school success between the white children and minority children can be referred to as an education gap. We need to close that gap.

Fifty-one schools in Wisconsin fit under the "Identified for Improvement" category, based on the 2003-04 WKCE and WAA test results. As you know, most of those are MPS schools. To that end, one of the areas we are interested in assisting you with in your current efforts is the unfortunate education gap that exists between low income minority children and the rest of the school district. As you seek to build on the news summarized in this week's graduation rate report, we want to be of assistance to you and the school board.

During a recent conversation regarding the performance of some the district's highest performing schools, the topic of 90-90-90 schools arose. As you know, in any given year, these schools have 90% or more minority enrollment, 90% or more of their students are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, and had 90% or more of these students scoring at or above the basic or above performance level on the Wisconsin Reading Comprehension Test (WRCT).

We are concerned that the district has been unable to replicate the achievements exhibited by these schools and implement the necessary program district wide.

February 16, 2005
Andrekopoulos / Education Gap
Page 2.

While discussing the education gap, two questions came to mind:

Is it possible to identify what is working in these schools and use that winning formula to transform some of your schools identified for improvement?

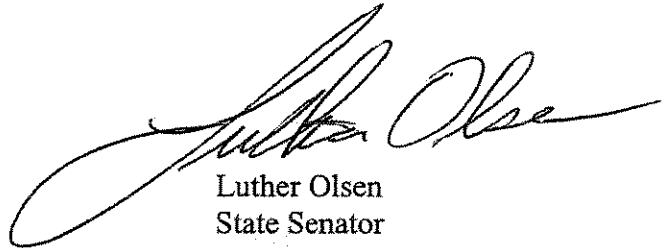
How can we, as state policymakers, better assist your administration in overcoming the minority student dropout and graduation problem?

It appears that MPS has found an answer, but has been unable to reproduce the success on a system wide basis. The progress shown by the district is admirable, and we again acknowledge and appreciate your efforts to ensure all students receive the best educations possible.

Sincerely,

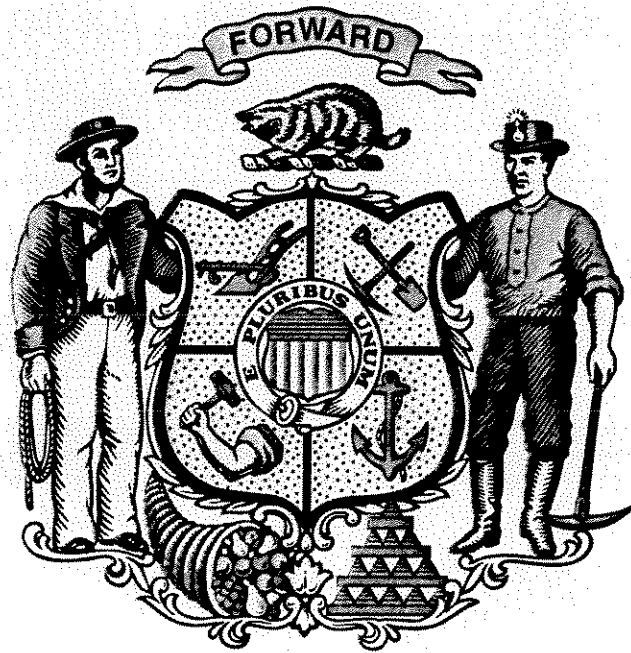


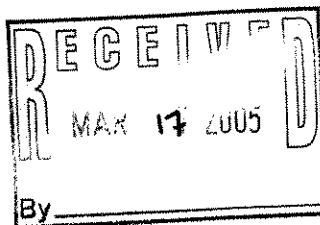
Alberta Darling
State Senator



Luther Olsen
State Senator

Cc. Members, MPS Board of Education





March 16, 2005

Senator Alberta Darling
P O Box 7882
Madison, WI 53707

Dear Senator Darling:

Thank you for your continued support of Milwaukee Public Schools. Daunting challenges face our students, but despite these challenges, we can point to genuine progress across the educational spectrum. This progress is in part due to the lessons learned from our high-achieving, high-attainment schools. We continue to strive to build from already successful practices found currently in our district. However, we also recognize that the additional reforms we have launched will be key to sustaining and improving upon these results.

The good news is that our students are coming to class in greater numbers. Nearly two-thirds of all MPS middle schools and high schools had higher attendance rates in 2003-04 compared to the year before. Almost 80% of the 21 MPS high schools recorded an improvement in the number of students successfully moving to the next grade in 2003-04 compared to the year before. After three years of increases in our high school graduation rates, we expect another increase this current school year.

Yet, we have so much more to do. With the ongoing support of the Wisconsin Legislature, I know we can achieve our shared goals. MPS has developed a district-wide school improvement process that is based on scientific research. This strategy, along with the work of the Milwaukee Partnership Academy, is improving the academic performance of our children.

We know it is working. The percentage of fourth grade students scoring at or above the proficient levels rose from the year before in all five subject areas assessed on the Wisconsin standardized tests in 2003-04. The average gain in percent scoring at or above proficient was eight points in reading and 12 points in mathematics in the lowest-achieving elementary schools in 2002-03. Just over 40% of all MPS elementary schools met, exceeded, or were within 90% of the statewide percentage of students scoring proficient or above in reading in 2003-04, up from 32% the year before and 18% the year before that. The achievement gap with the state has narrowed in each of the last four years, particularly at grade four in reading (26% to 15%) and in math (30% to 21%).

66% of all district third graders reached the proficient or advanced level on Wisconsin's reading comprehension test, the highest percentage in seven years. The achievement gap between MPS and the state has narrowed from 24 percentage points two years ago, to 16 points in 2003-04. Enrollment in MPS advanced placement high school courses rose by over 7%, with a significant increase for African-American students. Almost 800 students took advanced placement exams last year, an increase of 36% from the year before.

We will create 40 small high schools during the next five years around the core beliefs of rigor, relevancy, and relationships, and we will significantly change our large, comprehensive high schools around these same beliefs. As a community, we simply can no longer tolerate the high number of minority students dropping out of high school. We are confident that the high school reform strategies will greatly improve our graduation rate for all students.

Schools have stronger accountability systems with annual reporting of three indicators of school quality: 1) attaining standards, 2) student achievement growth, and 3) creating a climate that nurtures teaching and learning.

These school quality indicators reflect our belief that it is important to compare student performance against grade-level expectations. It is important to give schools credit for the growth they foster in student achievement. In addition, it is important to create a school climate that fosters good education. We have embraced other accountability measures. A customer satisfaction survey is used to continually improve service to schools. We also have the ability to impose sanctions on nonperforming schools that are under contract with the Board of School Directors.

The No Child Left Behind Act requirements apply at both the school and district level and help hold us accountable in reading, mathematics, attendance, test participation and graduation rates. We have built these requirements into our overall accountability plans. MPS no longer measures success by the 90-90-90 rule. We are striving to ensure that all of our students are proficient or advanced, and through partnerships like the Milwaukee Partnership Academy, we are working to ensure our families have the support they need.

MPS can report that significant progress is being made within our "Schools Identified for Improvement" under the No Child Left Behind Act. In 2003-04, 55 MPS schools were identified for improvement. In 2004-05, the number of schools identified was reduced to 43. MPS closed three of the 43 schools at the end of the 2003-04 school year: Sholes Middle School, Steuben Middle School, and Global Learning Center. Eleven of the schools identified for improvement are contract schools designed to service our most at-risk youth. Eight of the schools identified for improvement earned "Improved" status, and as you know, it takes two years of improvement to come off of the list. These improvements are related to the academic culture shift that we are trying to make in the district. This shift has been more quickly realized in smaller learning communities such as the elementary and K-8 schools.

A program that has demonstrated local success that cannot currently be replicated is the "Preschool to Grade 5 Program" (P5). I encourage the legislature to open dialogue about expanding the P5 program so districts like MPS can replicate effective models beyond the 20 schools currently being served. This program has a history of success in Milwaukee and supports shared decision-making, smaller class size, greater accountability, and active parental involvement. P5 is a program we would like to see expanded so MPS can replicate the successes found in those schools districtwide. P5 schools have narrowed the gap between them and the rest of the district in many of the important achievement measures. Performance on the WRCT has increased 16 percentage points over the last two years. Parent involvement is up 18 %. Only one P5 school has ever been identified for improvement and they are currently in "improved" status.

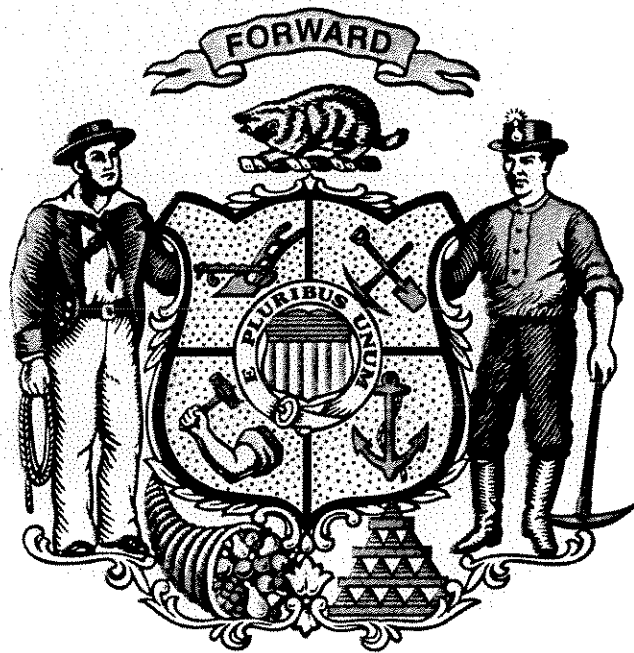
All of the support, focus, and creativity aimed at increased student achievement give me reasons for optimism for the years ahead. With the Legislature's assistance to expand programs like P5, together we can ensure that the classroom is the most important place and that every child will be successful.

Sincerely,



William G. Andrekopoulos
Superintendent of Schools

C: Milwaukee Board of School Directors



Alberta Darling
Wisconsin State Senator
Joint Committee on Finance

October 26, 2005

Honorable Senator Luther Olsen
State Capitol, 5 South
Madison, WI 53707

Honorable Representative Debi Towns
State Capitol, 302 North
Madison, WI 53707

Dear Senator Olsen and Representative Towns,



As the Chairs of the Senate and the Assembly Education Committees, I respectfully request that you schedule a joint public hearing in the coming weeks, in order to hear invited testimony on how best to close the achievement gap between Wisconsin's white and black students.

Specifically, I would appreciate you dedicating an entire hearing on the achievement gap in Wisconsin. The ensuing discussion and debate should help to refocus the Legislature's efforts not on public education's dollars and cents issues, but on the real reform ideas needed to be implemented and supported in order to close the gap. I envision the ultimate goal of a hearing to be the determination if current efforts to combat the problem are worthwhile, and what future role we as state policy makers should play to improve this debilitating dilemma once and for all.

The Nation's Report Card, otherwise known as the National Assessment of Educational Progress, recently released by the Department of Education reveals what many have feared for years; that we as a state are not closing the achievement gap fast enough and that in some testing areas, little if any progress has been made. The NAEP report is just the latest study to confirm that minority students in Wisconsin do not get the same benefits from the public school system that their white counterparts do. I firmly believe that the Legislature must make closing the state's achievement gap our principal educational goal this session and beyond.

It is my hope that you will consider my request to hold a public hearing. Only when local and state policy makers, non-partisan educational professionals and affected parents come together to reach this common goal will we realize sufficient improvement.

Thank you for your assistance and support and please contact me if you have questions.

Sincerely,



ALBERTA DARLING
State Senator

Enclosures

Original URL: <http://www.jsonline.com/news/state/oct05/364339.asp>

State's learning gap still vast

In 2 of 4 areas on latest test, gulf between black, white pupils leads nation

By SARAH CARR
scarr@journalsentinel.com

Posted: Oct. 19, 2005

Wisconsin students stayed above national averages in test results released Wednesday, but a Journal Sentinel analysis of the data shows that the gap between black and white students was among the largest in the nation. In eighth-grade reading and in fourth-grade math, the gaps were larger than in any other state in the country.

"It breaks your heart when you look at gaps of that size," said Ross Wiener, the policy director for the Education Trust, a Washington, D.C.-based organization that advocates for disadvantaged students. "Wisconsin is not doing a good job of educating its black students."

But some in education cautioned that while the gaps are a continuing source of concern, the scores provide only a rough picture of student achievement.

"To treat the state as if it's a single school district is not particularly helpful," said Russ Allen, a researcher at the Wisconsin Education Association Council, the state teachers union, referring to the fact that the test results are based on a limited sample of kids from across the state.

"It's a very rough measure of how the state of Wisconsin is doing."

The National Assessment of Educational Progress, commonly called the Nation's Report Card, is the closest thing the country has to a national test, and as such offers the only detailed state-by-state comparisons available. Math and reading scores broken down by race and socioeconomic class are released for fourth- and eighth-graders in every state. The test is administered by a statistical arm of the federal Department of Education.

Overall, the results showed that the country's students continue to improve in math, particularly fourth-grade math, but have not made as significant gains in reading.

"It's very clear that our educational system is not making the kind of progress in literacy that we are making in numeracy," said John Stevens, a member of the NAEP governing board.

Wiener added: "We're not seeing as much progress in reading as in math, and we are not seeing as much progress in the older grades as the elementary grades. I think there's been a growing recognition that we need to reform what's going on in the middle schools."

In both subjects and grade levels, Wisconsin students scored above national averages. In eighth-grade reading, for instance, the average score (on a weighted scale of 0 to 500) was 266 in Wisconsin and 260 across the country. But in that same category, the average score for white students in Wisconsin was 271, and for African-American students, 236. That 35-point gap was larger than in any other state.

For Hispanic students, the gap was still significant, but less pronounced. In eighth-grade reading, the gap in scores was 24 points.

Education

The study also found that the average score for African-American students in Wisconsin fell below national averages for African-American students in all four categories. White students in Wisconsin beat the national averages for white students in three of the four categories, though by only one to three points.

Test samples students

The NAEP exam, which is administered to a representative sample of students scattered throughout each state, offers a check on the testing systems used in different states. Generally, individual state achievement tests offer a rosier view of student performance than the results of the NAEP test.

In fourth-grade math, 59% of Wisconsin students scored in the basic or below-basic categories; 41% scored proficient or advanced, according to the NAEP results. In fourth-grade reading, 67% of Wisconsin students scored basic or below basic; 33% scored proficient or advanced.

Those percentages were comparable for eighth-graders. In math, 64% of students scored basic or below basic; 36% were proficient or advanced. In reading, 65% scored basic or below basic; 34% scored proficient or advanced.

Nationwide, the strongest improvement was in fourth-grade math, where scores were up for every major racial and ethnic group since the last NAEP release in 2003.

President Bush, meeting with Education Secretary Margaret Spellings at the White House Wednesday, called the overall results encouraging. The results are used by many educators and experts to try to gauge whether federal education policies - including a relentless focus on basic subjects and testing - are working.

"It shows there's an achievement gap in America that's closing," Bush said, according to The Associated Press.

In a statement, National Education Association leader Reg Weaver said, "improvement in test scores is a good sign, but can't be used as the sole indicator of student success."

"This national test is just one way for us to see part of what students are learning."

Gloom over gap

There was little to cheer about when it came to Wisconsin's achievement gap, as the gap between white and African-American students was the largest in some categories for the second time.

In 2003, the gaps in eighth-grade reading and math were the largest in the nation. That year, there was a 49-point difference between the average scores of white and black eighth-graders in math (the gap this year is 45 points).

Wisconsin has shown some progress in lifting the scores of African-American and poor students, but "black students in Wisconsin learn less than in most other states," said Wiener at the Education Trust.

Allen at WEAC notes that "we can't ignore the fact that poverty has a tremendous impact on how kids do in school. It's never an excuse, but to pretend it doesn't matter is really unrealistic and probably naïve."

In its release about the scores, officials at the state Department of Public Instruction note that state schools are experiencing the highest levels of poverty in more than a decade.

EDUCATION: REPORT CARD

While Wisconsin's overall scores in national math and reading tests in fourth and eighth grades are higher than the national average, the gap between black and white students in Wisconsin is greater than that of any other state in some areas. This chart shows the states with the highest test gaps in each subject and grade, and the average scores for black and white students in those states.

FOURTH-GRADE MATH SCORES

STATE	WHITES	BLACKS	GP
Wisconsin	247	210	37
Michigan	245	211	34
Illinois	245	212	33
Nebraska	244	211	33
Minnesota	251	219	32

FOURTH-GRADE READING SCORES

Minnesota	231	197	39
Illinois	230	194	36
Michigan	226	193	36
Nebraska	228	194	34
Connecticut	234	201	33
New Jersey	232	199	33
Ore.	230	197	33
Wisconsin	227	184	33

EIGHTH-GRADE MATH SCORES

Nebraska	289	243	46
Wisconsin	281	246	45
Minnesota	296	251	45
Connecticut	293	249	44
Illinois	289	249	40

EIGHTH-GRADE READING SCORES

Wisconsin	271	246	36
Minnesota	273	239	34
New York	276	242	34
Pennsylvania	273	239	34
Connecticut	272	240	32

HOW WISCONSIN COMPARES WITH THE REST OF THE NATION

The average scores for Wisconsin students on the National Assessment of Education Progress tests and how those compare with the national averages.

MATH SCORES

	4TH GRADE		8TH GRADE	
	WIS.	U.S.	WIS.	U.S.
All students	241	237	285	278
Black	210	220	246	254
White	247	246	281	269
Asian	238	251	286	284
Hispanic	224	225	263	261

READING SCORES

All students	221	217	269	260
Black	194	189	236	242
White	227	228	271	269
Asian	226	227	262	270
Hispanic	208	201	247	245

Note: The maximum score on each test is 500.
Source: National Center for Education Statistics, Wisconsin Department of Education

Journal Sentinel

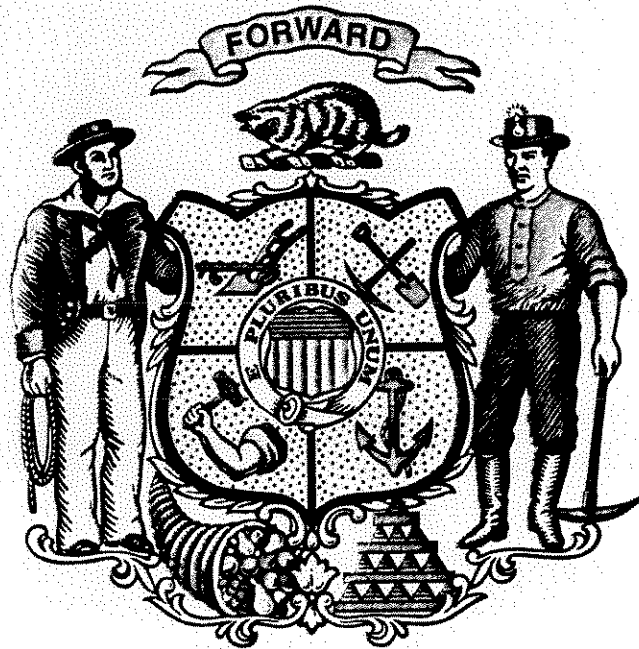
Graphic/Journal Sentinel

[Click to enlarge](#)

"We've made great strides in providing the (class reduction) and early childhood programs," said Tony Evers, the deputy state superintendent. "I don't think our efforts have been for naught. We do see on various other tests - where we test all children - slow, but steady progress."

From the Oct. 20, 2005, editions of the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel
Have an opinion on this story? [Write a letter to the editor](#) or start an [online forum](#).

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From: Petri, Tom
Sent: Wednesday, November 23, 2005 11:22 AM
To: Hogan, Rebecca; Langan, Casey
Subject: RE: November 29th hearing

See below. I can get you two short mini-bios if you'll need them for any reason.

This is what I'm sending to people:

Our hearing should start around 11:30 and run about 90 minutes. Senator Darling is hopeful that you can provide insightful perspective on the issue. She would like you to know that comments based both on your personal and professional opinions are welcome. Also, any and all suggestions on how the state legislature can better assist local school districts in addressing the issue will be favorably received. Finally, Alberta would like to know your point of view on why Milwaukee seems to be struggling with the minority achievement gap more than other urban districts of similar size and shape.

Your individual time before the committee will likely be limited to just 15-20 minutes, so please don't be afraid to build on previous speakers' comments, take the discussion in a new direction or use a hand-out to frame your thoughts. Alberta will open up the hearing with some prepared comments, but then defer to the speakers (5 total) and the other committee members for much of the hearing.

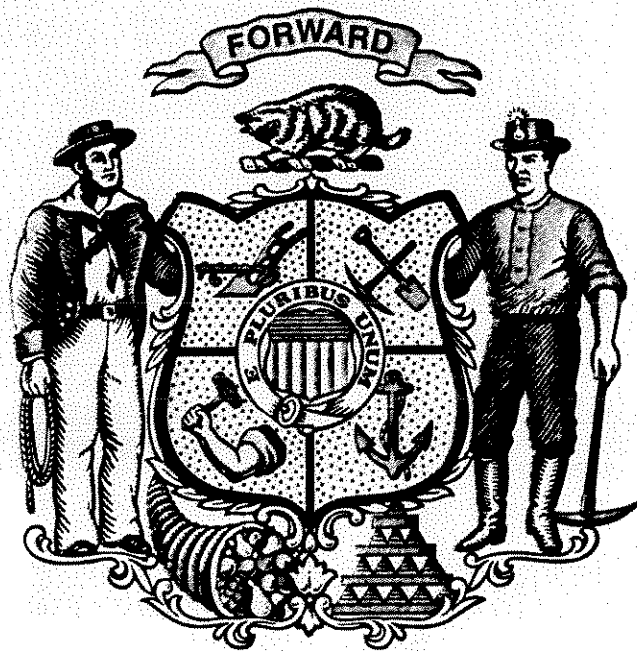
From: Petri, Tom
Sent: Friday, November 18, 2005 2:14 PM
To: Hogan, Rebecca; Langan, Casey
Subject: November 29th hearing

The new and FINAL list of testifiers for the achievement gap hearing next Tuesday.

1. Bill Andrekopolous – MPS Superintendent
2. Brother Bob Smith – Head Administrator at Milwaukee Messmer High School
3. Gerard Robinson – Marquette University's Institute for the Transformation of Learning
4. Libby Burmaster – DPI Superintendent
5. Dr. Howard Garber – The Milwaukee Center for Independence
6. Somebody from the MTEA - *Dennis Outahan, president of MTEA*

Alberta has not indicated a preference for the order, so unless she says something to me, I would guess Luther and Debi will decide who goes first.

Tom Petri
Office of State Senator Alberta Darling
316-South
608-266-5830 / 1-800-863-1113



Hogan, Rebecca

From: Goldrick, Liam - Office of Governor Jim Doyle
Sent: Wednesday, November 23, 2005 12:57 PM
To: Hogan, Rebecca; Plona, Katie - Office of Governor Jim Doyle
Cc: Langan, Casey; Casper, Tim - Office of Governor Jim Doyle; Henderson, Patrick - Office of Governor Jim Doyle; Olver, Aaron - COMM
Subject: RE: November 29th hearing

Rebecca,

In general, I have asked folks to speak to the merits of requiring additional units of math and science in order to graduate high school and about the challenges and obstacles that school districts and high school may face in implementing higher graduation requirements. Particular individuals will speak to the issue from an educational, economic/workforce or academic perspective, depending upon their areas of expertise. I can explain further if needed. I'll leave it up to you in terms of what order you'd like people to testify.

Unfortunately, I struck out with all 4 national organizations (NGA, Jobs for the Future, Ed Trust West and the Gates Foundation) I invited to participate in the hearing, due to short notice and other commitments.

Here's the roster in no particular order:

- ~~X~~ Cora Marrett, Senior Vice President, Academic Affairs, UW System
- ~~X~~ Norman Webb, Wisconsin Center on Education Research (WCER), UW-Madison
- ~~X~~ Ryan Champeau, principal, Waukesha North High School; co-chair, DPI High School Task Force; member, Governor's Task Force on Educational Excellence (2004)
- ~~X~~ Norb Resheske, superintendent, Cashton Public Schools
- Brad Donner, principal, Waterloo High School [tentative]
- ~~X~~ Aaron Olver, Executive Assistant, Wisconsin Department of Commerce
- ~~X~~ Paul Linzmeyer, President, Bay Towel, Inc. and chair, Governor's Council on Workforce Investment
- ~~X~~ Tom Still, President, Wisconsin Technology Council
- ~~X~~ WEAC [tentative] I spoke with Deb Sybell--WEAC is working on an individual - Russ Allen - Research's Professional Development Cons.
- ~~X~~ ~~WASB - I spoke with Pam Rewey - will have someone there~~
- SAA - I spoke with John Forester - he was working on additional superintendents/high school principals
- Wisconsin Mathematics Council - I invited them; awaiting answer
- Wisconsin Society of Science Teachers - I invited them; awaiting answer
- Wisconsin Technical College System - likely will not testify, but may have someone at the hearing

Others I spoke with:

I had a very good conversation with Dr. Gregory Joseph, superintendent for 15 years in the Hortonville School District--in Sen. Olsen's Senate district. While he cannot make it on 11/29, he said he'd be happy to help Senator Olsen in any way he could. Hortonville made the change to 3 years of math & science about 5-7 years ago.

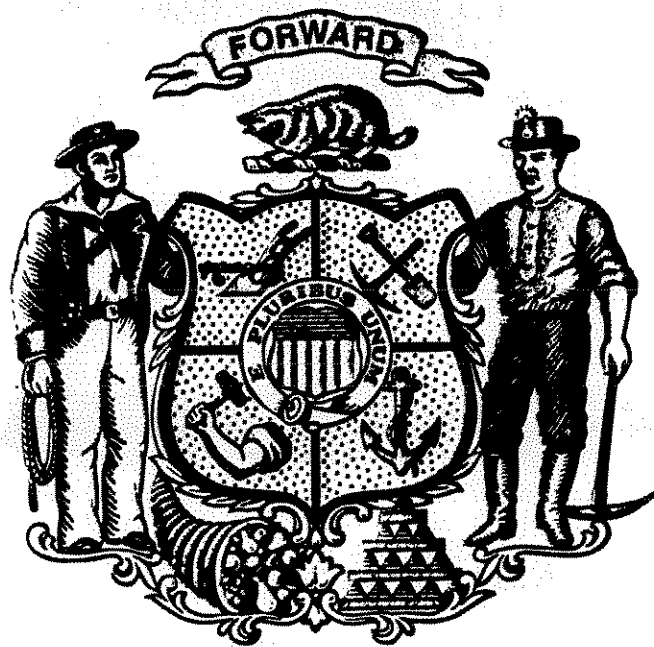
I also spoke with Joe Bertone, superintendent in the Barneveld School District, who unfortunately had to cancel yesterday. Scott Pierce, superintendent of Kenosha schools, also was unable to travel to Madison on 11/29. Linda Murray, former superintendent of San Jose (California) schools and now with Education Trust West, said she's try to send information about that district implemented a "college prep for all" curriculum and still raised test scores, lowered dropout rates, and raised high school graduation rates in a majority Latino, high-poverty urban school district.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Liam

From: Hogan, Rebecca [mailto:Rebecca.Hogan@legis.state.wi.us]
Sent: Wednesday, November 23, 2005 11:32 AM
To: Goldrick, Liam - Office of Governor Jim Doyle; Plona, Katie - Office of Governor Jim Doyle
Cc: Langan, Casey
Subject: FW: November 29th hearing

Tom sent out the following information to the speakers of the Achievement Gap portion of the hearing. See the list of speakers below. Do you guys have something similar you can send to me?



Original URL: <http://www.jsonline.com/news/editorials/nov05/373630.asp>

The great divide

Bridging the black-white achievement gap

By DIANE M. HARDY

Posted: Nov. 27, 2005

A recent study again showed that Wisconsin's achievement gap between African-American and white students is one of the largest in the nation.

The study failed to address where the greatest gaps are occurring. Is it in urban, suburban or choice schools? What about other struggling minority groups? For example, in the Milwaukee Public Schools, Latino males have one of the lowest graduation rates.

In my discussions with students and fellow educators, we realized that only a multidimensional approach will begin to solve the problem. Several themes emerged while discussing the achievement gap.

Nearly everyone raised questions about poverty and fractured families. As someone who grew up in a home full of books and learning opportunities, it was hard for me to face how many urban children do not share such advantages. Yet programs that help children catch up, such as Head Start and 4-year-old kindergarten, are often under attack.

Some parents have not completed their own educations. Many children have no help with homework. Other families become so mired in survival that working an extra shift takes precedence over checking homework or making sure a child went to school.

Some African-American students mentioned that well-educated parents know how to work "the system" and get their kids into the best schools. Others said that some fall into the trap of thinking "whites are smarter" or "the world is against me" so trying becomes moot.

The lack of personal responsibility is troublesome. In many cases, societal injustices do create obstacles to learning, but ultimately young people need to make the decision of whether or not to learn. This issue brought heated debate among my students.

Some kids said that some teens face so many barriers it takes a near superhero to get through them. These barriers exist in public and private schools as well as urban and suburban schools.

My students raised other disconcerting problems. Several mentioned that while few, some teachers simply believe African-Americans aren't smart enough. Some schools track black students away from advanced courses. Other teachers give less instruction and support to certain students and even "dumb down" the curriculum. Many said if teachers demanded rigor, most kids would rise to the challenge.

Almost every student mentioned inadequate funding of public schools. Teachers and support staff are being cut in districts throughout the state. Class sizes have exploded. Classes of almost 40 students are too common in MPS.

Testing and government red tape occupy even more teacher and instruction time than ever before. In poor districts, there are few adequate libraries, computer or science labs or classroom materials. Class offerings have been slashed. Many MPS schools lack current or sufficient textbooks in core subject areas.

Many good teachers are bolting from MPS and education altogether. Often the poorest students get the most inexperienced

Stiller & Propper 10/27

teachers. Staff turnover in the city is excessive. It is difficult in many buildings to create a stable learning environment when classrooms go through multiple teachers in one year.

Minority students wish that people would acknowledge that race is still an issue in today's society. While laws provide equality and redress on paper, bias still exists in school systems, government policy-making and testing.

Ultimately, it will be a family and civic partnership that will chip away at these problems and improve the achievement gap. Families need to be sure that their children are surrounded by supportive adults. If parents are unable to assist their child, other adults need to step up and help educate both students and parents. Educators are on the front lines. However, churches, community organizations and members can help bridge the gap.

Mentoring is one of the greatest gifts a successful person can give a struggling student. It is disheartening to see organizations such as Big Brothers/Big Sisters have massive waiting lists for mentors.

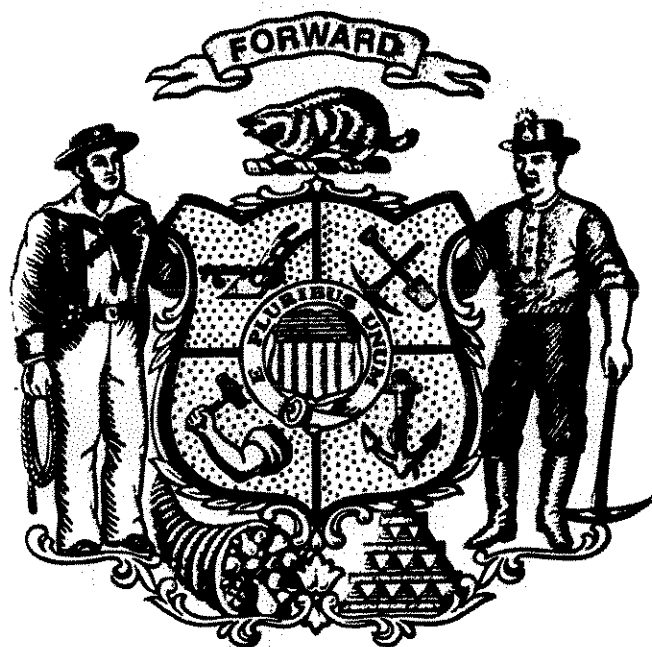
We also need to be open to ideas from all perspectives to reform education. Some people will refuse discussion of ideas from someone of another ideology. Policy debates get mired in arguments about politics instead of focusing on our kids.

Only with cooperation and sincere discussion will the achievement gap narrow.

Diane M. Hardy of Milwaukee is an educator in the Milwaukee Public Schools. Her e-mail address is talktodianehardy@yahoo.com

From the Nov. 28, 2005, editions of the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel
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November 28, 2005

State Senator Luther Olsen
State Capitol
P.O. Box 7882
Madison, WI 53707-7882

Dear Senator Olsen:

I am writing in regard to the public hearing being held on November 29th to address the achievement gap in Wisconsin.

In the almost ten years that I have been working on child nutrition programs, I have visited many schools across the state and talked to many parents, children, and school officials. While any discussion around educational achievement involves matters of finance, infrastructure, teaching, and testing, invariably the conversation comes back to one fundamental issue: Are kids prepared to learn?

In Wisconsin, many children are not prepared to learn when they step off a bus and enter a classroom because they are not adequately nourished. The facts speak for themselves. In October 2005, the US Department of Agriculture released a study which showed that measurable food insecurity increased in Wisconsin from 8.4% of Wisconsin households to 9.0% of Wisconsin households. (NOTE: 8.4% of Wisconsin households were labeled as "food insecure" between 1999-01; 9.0% of state households were labeled as "food insecure" between 2002-04. The percentages are averages for each of those time periods.) The USDA defines "food insecurity" as not having access to enough food for active, healthy living.

In Milwaukee, the numbers are alarming. In August 2005, the US Census Bureau reported that Milwaukee was the seventh-most impoverished city in the nation. That same report found that Milwaukee's child poverty rate was the fourth-worst in the country. In October, the Brookings Institution released a study which showed that Milwaukee ranks with New Orleans as among ten American cities with the highest concentrations of urban poverty (Milwaukee was ranked number 9 in the Brookings study).

These distressing statistics set the context for the achievement gap discussion. As an advocate, I have witnessed the struggles of poor families and their children. It is no surprise that many poor children, whether from Milwaukee or elsewhere, struggle in school. There is no single solution that will help Wisconsin's children learn.

Federal nutrition programs such as school lunch, school breakfast, summer food, and WIC can help close the achievement gap. These programs are supplemental, and are designed to temporarily help households at-risk of hunger or food insecurity. School lunch, school breakfast, and summer food programs are entitlement programs, meaning that eligible kids only need to enroll to participate.

These federal nutrition programs need to be viewed by policymakers as investments. Hungry children do not learn. Wisconsin is a state where more kids than ever are going to school hungry or malnourished. Federal nutrition programs should be viewed as a piece of the overall achievement gap puzzle. These programs are available and federally funded; we only need to take advantage of them to ensure that children are at least fed before starting a day of learning.

Wisconsin's policymakers can help maximize the impact of federal nutrition programs. Since the beginning of the decade, Wisconsin has provided a ten-cent reimbursement to schools for every school breakfast served. This investment has made the difference between offering the program and not offering the program for some schools.

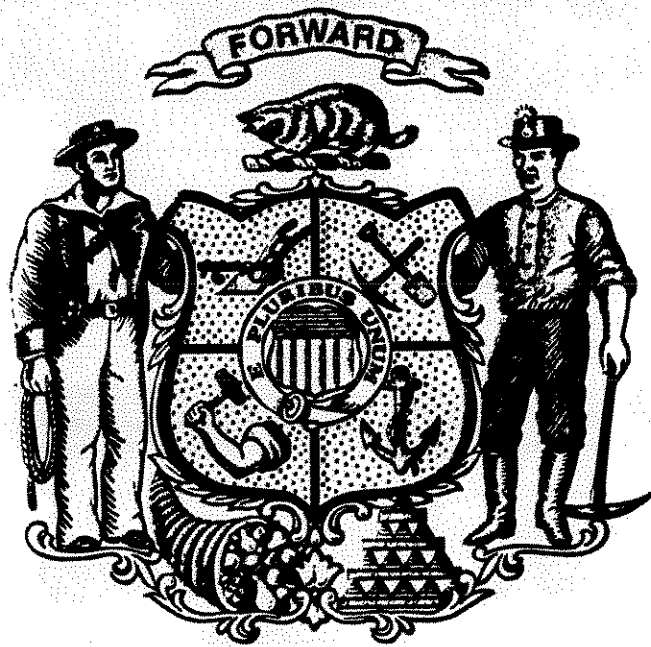
Wisconsin used to provide supplemental funding for the state's WIC Program, but that support has disappeared. Unlike other states, Wisconsin does not provide resources for the support of summer food programming.

There are many good examples of states that invest substantially in federal nutrition programs. The key word is "invest." Like any investment, the timeframe must be long-term. We must invest in these programs now to produce significant results later. There must be recognition that to close the achievement gap, state investments must be made to ensure that kids are listening to their teacher instead of wondering when breakfast or lunch will be served.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this issue. Please contact me at 414-777-0483 or jon@hungertaskforce.org if you have questions or comments.

Sincerely,

Jon Janowski
Director of Advocacy



Hogan, Rebecca

From: Hogan, Rebecca
Sent: Monday, November 28, 2005 11:18 AM
To: Goldrick, Liam - Office of Governor Jim Doyle; Petri, Tom; Langan, Casey
Cc: Smith, Heather
Subject: Final list of testimony

Unless something changes, this is who we have planned for testimony tomorrow in no particular order. Please note there is a larger amount of speakers for the math and science requirement, however, we'll try to keep both topics to 90 minutes. Also - Liam I know you have others that are tentative but until we have firm commitments, I'm leaving them off the list. Please have additions to me ASAP.

Math and Science Requirements:

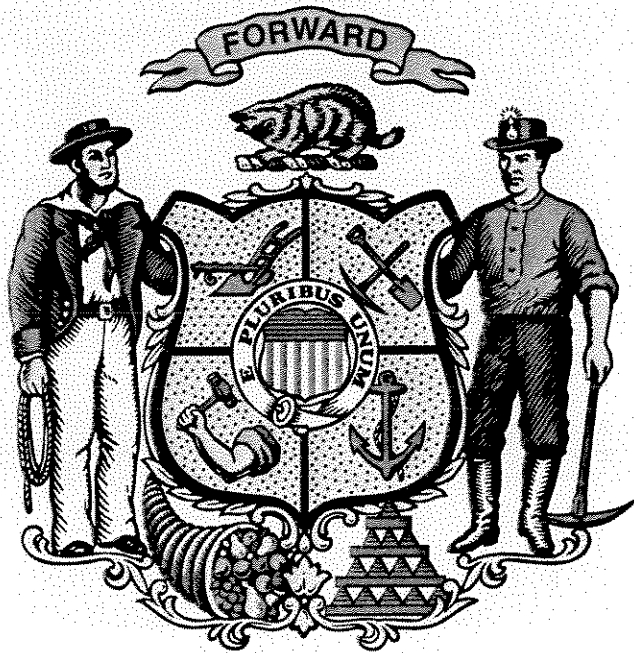
- Cora Marrett, Senior Vice President, Academic Affairs, UW System
- Norman Webb, Wisconsin Center on Education Research (WCER), UW-Madison
- Ryan Champeau, principal, Waukesha North High School; co-chair, DPI High School Task Force; member, Governor's Task Force on Educational Excellence (2004)
- Norb Resheske, superintendent, Cashton Public Schools
- Aaron Olver, Executive Assistant, Wisconsin Department of Commerce
- Paul Linzmeyer, President, Bay Towel, Inc. and chair, Governor's Council on Workforce Investment
- Tom Still, President, Wisconsin Technology Council
- Russ Allen - WEAC Research and Professional Development Consultant
- ~~SAA - John Forester still working on person~~

Achievement Gap:

- Bill Andrekopolous - MPS Superintendent
- Brother Bob Smith - Head Administrator at Milwaukee Messmer High School
- Gerard Robinson - Marquette University's Institute for the Transformation of Learning
- Libby Burmaster - DPI Superintendent
- Dr. Howard Garber - The Milwaukee Center for Independence
- Dennis Oulahan, President of MTEA

Rebecca Hogan

Office of Senator Luther Olsen
608-266-0751



Hogan, Rebecca

From: Goldrick, Liam - Office of Governor Jim Doyle
Sent: Monday, November 28, 2005 4:07 PM
To: Hogan, Rebecca; Petri, Tom; Langan, Casey
Cc: Smith, Heather
Subject: RE: Final list of testimony

Rebecca,

I've instructed speakers to try to keep their remarks to roughly 5 minutes to leave time for questions and to allow the hearing to end by 11:30 in time for the achievement gap topic.

The list below is accurate. I have one addition for you:

Dale Basler, president of the Wisconsin Society of Science Teachers. He will be traveling down from Appleton with Ed Miller, the executive director of WSST.

If possible, we'd like Aaron Olver to start the hearing off. He'll provide a brief, but broad, overview of the rationale behind the proposal. Tom Still needs to leave the hearing by 11:15. Otherwise, I haven't received any special scheduling requests from other participants.

My best,
Liam

From: Hogan, Rebecca [mailto:Rebecca.Hogan@legis.state.wi.us]
Sent: Monday, November 28, 2005 11:18 AM
To: Goldrick, Liam - Office of Governor Jim Doyle; Petri, Tom; Langan, Casey
Cc: Smith, Heather
Subject: Final list of testimony

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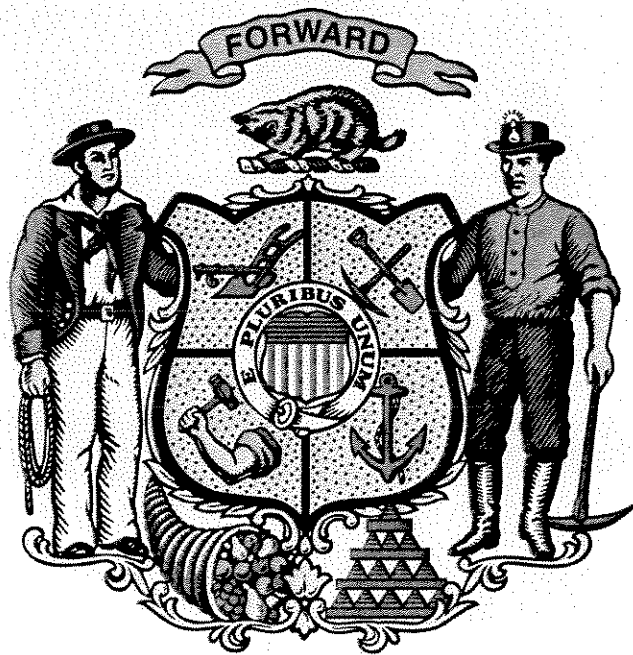
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- Dennis Oulahan, President of MTEA

Rebecca Hogan



November 29, 2005

Testimony of Norman L. Webb before the Joint Hearing of the Wisconsin Assembly and Senate Education Committees, 10:00 AM, November 29, 2003, Room 412 East, State Capitol.

Regarding Mathematics and Science Course Graduation Requirements

I am Norman Webb and a senior research scientist at the Wisconsin Center for Education Research at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. My field of study and research is in the area of mathematics education.

I am here today to report on the research and literature on the value of higher state graduation requirements. There have been relatively few research studies conducted on the impact of increasing high school graduation requirements. The results are, in general, inconclusive in providing a definitive answer. Much of the research that does exist was done 10 to 15 years ago, in the early 1990s, and used national databases from that era. One reason for the lack of a large body of research on this topic is due to the number of variables that would need to be controlled to determine the impact on schools of increasing graduation credits. The required research would need to utilize fairly sophisticated models because of the variations among states and within states.

My recommendations based on the literature:

1. Mathematics and science graduation requirements should be raised to three credits each because research indicates no harmful impact: Over half of the states and a number of Wisconsin districts have already implemented this policy.
2. The increased graduation requirements should be directed toward a clear goal of increasing the percentage of Wisconsin students who have a solid understanding of mathematics and science as defined in the Wisconsin Model Academic Standards and required for success in work and higher education.
3. The Wisconsin Model Academic Standards should be revised to express in broad and explicit statements, by course, what students should know and be able to do.
4. The increased graduation requirements should be coupled with an early high school intervention to deter students from dropping out because of failures in mathematics and science, a possible downside of increasing the requirements (e.g., individual instruction, small group instruction, summer school, etc.).
5. The grade 10 WKCE (Wisconsin Knowledge & Concepts Examination) should be eliminated and an end of grade 11 examination given to obtain evidence that student learning of three years of solid high school mathematics is increasing.
6. Rigorous voluntary end-of-course tests should be made available on line (administered and scored electronically) by DPI for the most common mathematics and science courses, so that teachers can determine whether students are learning what they should by the end of each course. Courses should be defined by districts, but the state should provide resources that teachers can use to assure quality.

7. Teacher credentialing and renewal should reflect the increased expectations.

I have summarized some of the major points that can be derived from the literature.

I. In the past 15 years, a significant number of states have increased the course graduation requirements in mathematics to 3 or more credits.

As of 2004, 21 states require 3 high school course credits in mathematics and 6 require 4 credits. Twenty states require 3 credits of science and 3 require 4 credits. (Blank & Langesen, 2005, p. 11)

This is compared to 1992, when 10 states required 3 Carnegie Units (50 minutes, five days a week) in mathematics for graduation, 30 states required 2 units, 3 states required 2 units, plus an additional unit in science or mathematics, and 7 left the policy to the local school district. (Hoffer, Rasinski, & Moore, 1995, p. 2)

In 1992, 3 states required 3 units of science, 36 required 2 units, 3 required 2 units of science and one additional unit of mathematics or science, 2 required only one unit, and 7 left the policy to the local school district. (Hoffer, Rasinski, & Moore, 1995, p. 2)

II. The requirement of three or more credits of mathematics and science does not directly lead to a higher proportion of students taking higher mathematics.

Among the states requiring 2.5 credits or more of mathematics for graduation, there is a range in the percentage of students taking higher mathematics courses (geometry and above). In 2004, North Carolina required students to take 3 credits of mathematics for graduation and 72% of the students in grades 9–12 were enrolled in higher level mathematics courses, one of the highest percentages in the country. However, Minnesota also requires 3 credits of mathematics covered in its 9–11 standards; but in 2004, only 46% of the students in grades 9–12 were enrolled in higher-level mathematics courses.

Even though Wisconsin only requires 2 credits of mathematics for graduation, in 2004 61% of the high school students in Wisconsin were enrolled in higher mathematics courses. This is a higher percentage than 14 of 17 states that required 2.5 to 4 credits of mathematics in 2004. (Blank & Langesen, 2005, p. 15)

Of the states with a higher or as high percentage of high school students enrolled in higher mathematics as Wisconsin, North Carolina (72%) and Texas (64%) require 2.5 to 4 credits; Utah (74%) requires 2 credits; and Nebraska (61%) and Pennsylvania (61%) leave the decision to local school boards. (A caution: These results do not account for any dropouts. A high percentage in course taking could be the result of those less likely to take these courses dropping out early in high school.)

III. There is some evidence that an increase in course graduation requirements relates to an increased proportion of students taking higher-level courses and an increased number of credits taken overall.

Even though higher requirements do not mean that a state will have a high enrollment in advanced mathematics courses, raising graduate requirements does appear to be associated with increasing the number of credits students do take compared to the number taken when a fewer credits are required. However, taking additional credits does not necessarily relate to higher achievement.

1. Clune and White (1992) studied the transcript of graduates of high schools enrolling mostly lower-achieving students in four states adopting high school graduation requirements in the 1980s. They found an average increase in credits per students in all academic areas. They also found that the level of difficulty of courses increased.

2. Dee (2003) analyzed census data from 1980 to 1988 on those who were 18 ($N = 1,348,766$). At this time, graduation credits were moving from no requirements to one credit of mathematics and one credit of science. He found that Course Graduation Requirements (CGR) had no significant effects on either of two measures of educational attainment—high school graduation and college entrance.

However, his models suggested that high Course Graduation Requirements reduced the probability of graduating from high school by a significant amount, .48%. (This is equivalent to reducing the increase in graduation rates by 14%).

High CGR significantly reduced the high school graduation rate for White males and Black students (both males and females), but not for White females.

Dee concluded that the largest impact (negative) of high standards is on those whose socioeconomic status puts them at high risk for academic failure.

Dee also used the High School & Beyond and National Education Longitudinal Study (NELS) data (grade 10 students in 1980 and 1990, $N = 18,134$) to consider the relationship of higher Course Graduation Requirements on Carnegie units taken. Higher Course Graduation Requirements (3+ units) was related to a significant increase in academic course taking among students, about .4 credits in science and .1 credit in mathematics.

3. Hoffer (1997), using NELS: 88, 90, 92 data, found little support for the notion that requiring more mathematics courses is generally beneficial, or harmful. No effects were found on either the probability of dropping out or on achievement gains. The effects of SES (socioeconomic status) were not reduced in the schools requiring three mathematics courses. Hoffer's finding did support Dee's finding that students in schools with higher Course Graduation Requirements took higher-level courses. However, Hoffer's findings suggest that students received less benefit from these courses.

IV. When students take higher-level courses, their achievement increases.

Hoffer et al. (1995) and other researchers have shown clearly that the more mathematics or science a person has had, the higher is their achievement. This finding results in a paradox in that graduation requirements increase course work, and course work affects achievement, but graduation requirements do not affect achievement. One way this could be explained is that the mathematics courses taken by those in high-credit schools are less effective in promoting achievement scores.

V. There is evidence that when Graduation Course Requirements increase, the courses taken by a greater number of students do not become watered down, at least in the early implementation of the reform.

Porter, Kirst, Osthoff, Smithson, and Schneider (1993), in their study of "Reform Up Close," found that a large influx of new students in more demanding courses did not result in watered-down courses. They concluded that increased high school mathematics and science graduation credits proved to be effective. They found, in analyzing transcripts and administering assessments, no negative effect on the percentages of students graduating from high school. Along with this, they found that even with a larger number of low-achieving students taking mathematics courses, the teachers did not lower the expectations for the courses (Porter, 1998).

VI. Other factors or issues raised by researchers and others related to increased Course Graduation Requirements.

1. The effect of increased dropout on research results related to increased CGR is difficult to call. A large percentage of students who drop out do so in their early years of high school as a result of a high rate of failure and other factors before facing the increased requirements.
2. The dropout issue can be addressed by targeted intervention, such as summer school.
3. Increased state CGR may not have a large impact because some school districts already require three credits in mathematics and science, and a high percentage of high school students in Wisconsin already take three credits of high school mathematics and science.
4. Increased CGR could have differential effects on schools and districts because of resources required. Not all schools have a qualified physics teacher, for example.
5. If three credits are to be required, then there could be more of an impact if the requirement is more prescriptive. North Carolina has one of the highest percentage of students taking advanced mathematics (72%). North Carolina specifies three courses of study for their students: Career Preparation, College Technical Preparation, and College Preparation. Students in all courses of study have to take three mathematics credits:

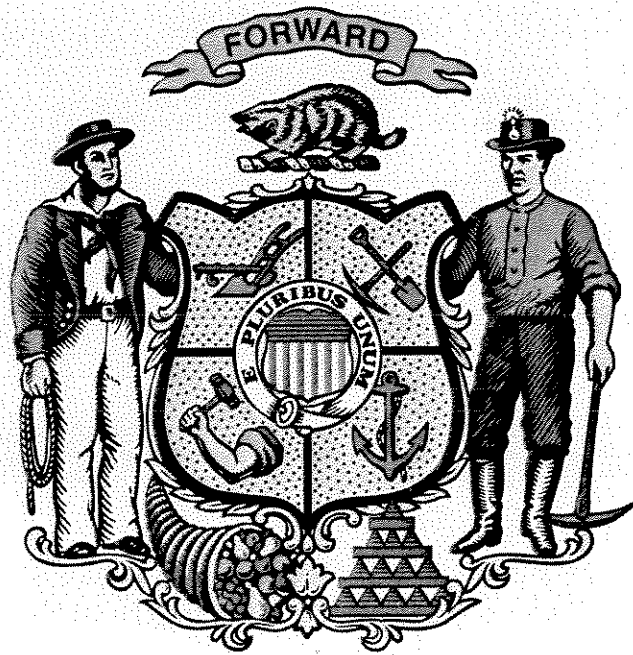
Career (including Algebra I), College Technical (Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II, or the equivalent integrated mathematics), and College (a fourth credit beyond the College Technical Preparation requirements).

6. Any policy for increasing CGR needs to specify clear objectives and provisions explicitly shaped to meet these objectives—e.g., to increase the number of students taking mathematics and science in higher education, increase the knowledge of students graduating from high school, raise achievement in the lower-performing schools, etc.

7. A policy should include some evaluation in order to analyze what the effects of the policy change are.

References:

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- Clune, W. H., & White, P. A. (1992). Education reform in the trenches: Increased academic course taking in high schools with lower achieving students in states with high graduation requirements. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 14, 1, 2-20.
- Dee, T. (2003). Lessons from the “First Wave” of Accountability. In Paul Petersen & Martin West (Eds.), *No Child Left Behind? The Politics and Practices of Accountability*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, pp. 268-300.
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- Porter, A. C. (1998). Upgrading high school mathematics and science. In Diane Ravitch (Ed.), *Brookings Papers on Education Policy: 1998*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, pp. 123-172.



Legislative Hearing Presentation, 11/29/2005

-Dennis Oulahan, President of the Milwaukee Teachers' Education Association.

-how are the children?

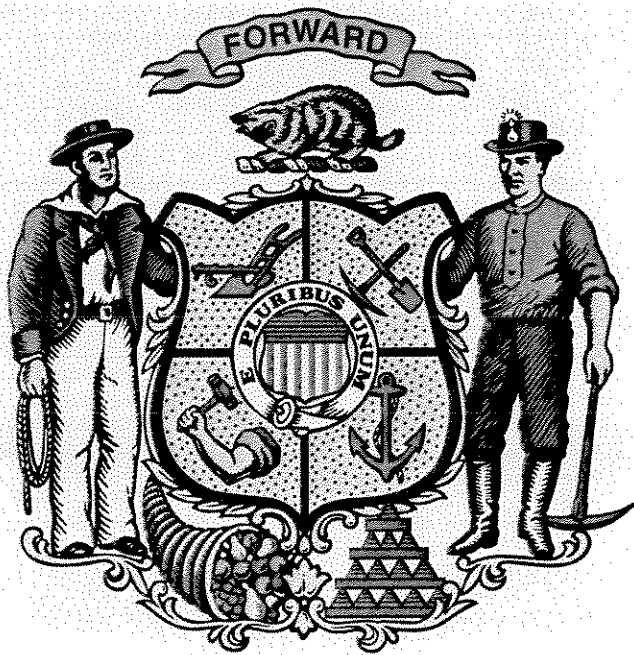
-we work in three frames: industrial unionism (when women were paid less than men), professional unionism (because true professionals are concerned with quality control and professional development) and social justice unionism (because the social justice issues in Milwaukee, 80%+ free and reduced lunch, astronomical rates of unemployment amongst African American men, come to our members' classrooms every day).

-the NEA Foundation Grant works in all of these areas. Working conditions because educators are happier when their students are doing well. It's a pleasure to come to school when they are achieving, it's a frustration when they aren't. Professionalism because the projects address the quality of instruction, and the quality of the instructors. Social justice unionism because the achievement gaps are a social justice issue. It should not be acceptable to any community that one group of students are doing badly in comparison with another based on race, gender, language, economics or any other factor. It is gaps not gap. And the achievement gaps in our district are not acceptable to the people of Milwaukee or to the educators of the Milwaukee Public Schools.

-the NEA Foundation Grant is different for us. It's different than the Reform du Jour because it comes from us. 2.5 million dollars, 2.7 million members of the NEA. The projects are designed by educators. They are not top down. The people who implement the interventions design them. What a concept. A unit you put together yourself will be more effective because you know what to put in it to meet the needs of the kids in your room. And you will put more into it because it's your work, it's not something put together by a big publishing company.

-there are other resources at our disposal. Higher education community, business community, institutions such as the Milwaukee Public Museum and the Zoo through the MPA. Story of the action research training. Also resources available through NEA and WEAC. National connections with Church groups. PDA assistance with highly qualified status for our EA's.

-parental involvement projects included and community involvement encouraged (projects run by MMABSE's commissions). Projects are focused, research based. But there is a cumulative effect as well from this grant and the other 60 million in grants through the MPA. Keep the pressure on to raise scores in math, literacy, writing. Incremental measures of progress (value added) ultimately lead to movement in WKCE scores, particularly at the middle school and high school level. We have to convince these kids, and ourselves that they can do it. Incremental measures are the way to do that.



A QUALITY
EDUCATION
FOR
EVERY
CHILD



State of Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

Elizabeth Burmaster, State Superintendent

Senate Committee on Education
Assembly Committee on Education
November 29, 2005

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction Testimony on Closing the Achievement Gap State Superintendent Elizabeth Burmaster

I want to thank Chairperson Olsen and Chairperson Towns for holding a joint hearing. I also want to thank Senator Darling for requesting an informational hearing on this topic.

Not only is closing the gap in achievement a moral imperative, but it makes the most sense economically.

By investing in children and education, we can ensure a well-educated, high-skilled workforce as our best asset in competing for high-end jobs. This generation, birth to 25, who are living in poverty must become those highly skilled citizens who have the opportunity to achieve economic security.

Around our state, educators have worked hard to raise achievement and close the achievement gap. In our schools, efforts include:

- Increased accountability.
We now have assessments that measure all of our model academic standards and under NCLB in reading and math at grades 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 10. We have curriculum guides to help schools as they implement all of the model academic standards.
- And we have interventions such as the Reading Excellence and Demonstration of Success Initiative (READS). We have Reading First, SAGE and P5.
- Under NCLB we are developing and implementing a state-wide system of support for districts with schools identified for improvement. We will work with districts to focus resources and programs on what works for improving student achievement in our neediest schools.
- Early learning opportunities are essential for school readiness. Four-year-old kindergarten as well as other early childhood initiatives have demonstrated effectiveness.
- The state has implemented breakfast, lunch, and after-school programs. All federally funded Community Learning Center's (CLC) must now have an academic tutoring program.

- Our state has supported alternative schools, charter schools, the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program, open enrollment, and access to AP courses in an effort to meet the needs of students. I have also initiated a high school task force and an alliance for attendance to address high school reform and regular student attendance – fundamental to increasing achievement.
- It is critical that students have quality teachers in every classroom and a quality principal in every school. The Wisconsin Quality Educator Initiative PI 34 has facilitated our compliance with the NCLB Act and helped us to secure a Wallace Foundation grant to transform urban school leadership in Green Bay, Kenosha, Madison, Milwaukee, and Racine—our largest urban school districts.

We are working with Education Trust and Milwaukee Public Schools to study the distribution of quality teachers throughout the state.

- Family and community involvement is essential. Students must attend school, be engaged in their own learning and see how what they are learning applies to the real world. That takes parental and community involvement.

Service learning and citizenship programs, and working to better inform families about the performance of their schools and districts through our Wisconsin's Information Network for Successful Schools (WINSS) system promotes family and community involvement.

- Students need to believe they can aspire to higher education. Programs that focus on these efforts include GEAR-UP, Talent Search, and Upward Bound. These programs provide over 9,000 students the skills, encouragement, and preparation needed to pursue postsecondary education.

While we have done much as a state, there is much more we could do. I have heard these ideas emerge throughout our state from constituents:

- Local school districts could advance year round education.
- We could provide wrap around health and social services.
- We could explore the use of more summer school, alternative or charter schools as well as boarding schools.
- We could provide and expand tutoring and mentoring for students and model the gains in Madison through the Schools of Hope project.
- We could expand our targeted programs like GEAR-UP that make college a reality for students.

- We could offer free post-secondary education for all students with a certain grade point average and who score advanced on the WKCE modeled after states like Georgia and South Carolina.

As we move forward to close the gap, we should be proud of the educational progress of our students – third grade reading scores are the highest they have ever been in Milwaukee, 144 schools (in our state) with over 50% of their students living in poverty scored above the state average in reading and math, and more students of color took AP classes in our state than ever before, with the number of African American students increasing by over 50%. The trend in student achievement is going in the right direction. But the increases in poverty among our urban families continues to grow. According to the US census bureau, Wisconsin increased faster than any other state in 2003 and 2004—especially in Milwaukee where they rose to the 7th poorest city in the U.S. For children the impact is even greater-- 62,000 children or 41.3% of all the children in the city live in poverty. That poverty rate for children ranks the city fourth in the nation (tied with Miami).

But our schools can't do it alone.

We need:

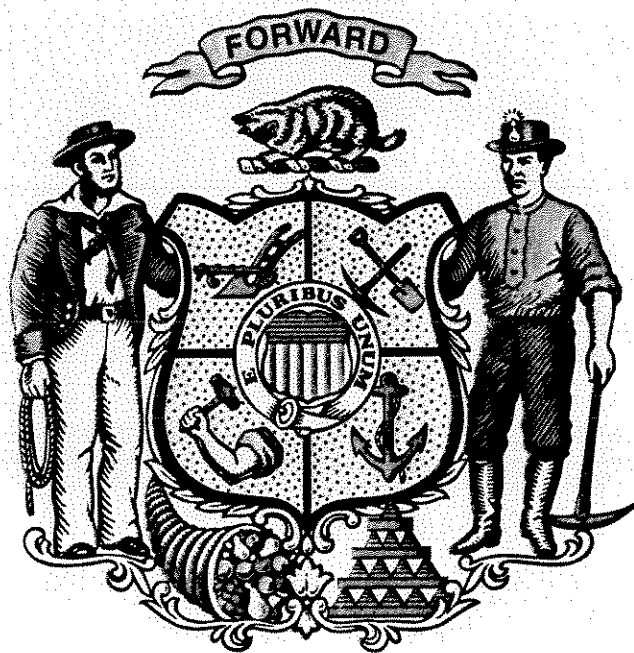
- Jobs
- Access to health and social services
- Safety in our communities
- Access to cultural institutions, such as public libraries and museums, and arts programs
- Quality child-care, and after-school programs
- Support for working families as they try to provide and spend time with their children

Educational progress is more than scores measured on standardized tests. Most parents understand the importance of everyday progress of their children and the need for demonstrated performance of skills. We want students to think critically, have analytical and technical skills, as well as pride in accomplishment, and know the rights and responsibilities of citizenship in a democracy.

Closing the achievement gap between economically disadvantaged students and students of color and their peers must be our number-one priority if we are to ensure long-term economic security and the security of our democracy.

Each community must work to bring people together around our shared value and responsibility to close the achievement gap. Investing in the human capital of this generation is the best investment we can make.

Thank You.



**Testimony before the Wisconsin Senate and Assembly Joint Public Hearing
on
Closing the Achievement Gap
by
Gerard Robinson, Ed.M.
Senior Fellow
Institution for the Transformation of Learning, Marquette University
Tuesday, November 29, 2005**

A Tale of Two Wisconsins

Thank you Senator Olsen and Representative Towns for the invitation to testify before this joint hearing regarding a subject that is vitally important to the social and economic well-being of the state of Wisconsin: closing the achievement gap. This topic is not only important to Wisconsin, but it is of immense interests to lawmakers, scholars, and parents eager to find a solution to what is one of the most critical domestic policy issues facing America. As an educator working with community groups in Milwaukee to help close the achievement gap, I am in a good position to discuss this topic with committee members and fellow presenters.

Release of the 2005 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) scores revealed mixed results.¹ From a national perspective, African American, Latino, white, and low-income 4th graders received the highest math score recorded on NAEP since the first administration of the test in the early 1990s. The same is true for reading. Relying on these national results, reviewers conclude that the achievement gap is closing and that minority students are, on average, making positive gains. While minority student gains are improving, these national scores must be put into perspective.

The national African American-white achievement gap in reading for 4th graders is smaller in 2005 than it was in 2000, but a 29 point gap remains. For 8th graders, the 26 point achievement gap in 2005 is only one point lower than the point difference in 1998. The 4th grade African American-white achievement gap in math closed by 8 points between 1996 and 2005, however, a 26 point gap exists. As for 8th graders, the achievement gap closed by 6 points between 2000 and 2005 though a 34 point gap remains. So while the national NAEP scores are moving in the right direction, the African American-white achievement gap is too high for a self-congratulatory celebration. The magnitude of the existing achievement gap across racial lines within the states also tells a very sad story.

At the state level, minority students often have lower NAEP scores than their white peers, and for African American students in particular, their scores are usually the lowest. Wisconsin is one state where this achievement gap is shamefully stark. Although Wisconsin's overall scores are above the national average, scores for African Americans and Hispanics are among the lowest in the nation. These disparities create what can be called a tale of Two Wisconsins: one high performing, middle class, and white; the other low performing, lower-income, and minority.

¹ Figures supplied by a 2005 Education Trust report.

In order to consider the Governor's proposal to require three years of high school math and science, we must first address the existing reading and math problems facing students in lower grades. If a student is unable to read and perform basic calculations in elementary or junior high school, it is unrealistic to expect a student to adequately tackle the demands of high-level mathematics and science. Existing approaches can address this problem. My task this morning is to identify them. Therefore, I will lay out the facts about the achievement gap in Wisconsin and provide five recommendations for how to close it, particularly for low-income African American students.

A Tale of Two Wisconsins: NAEP Reading and Math Scores in Black and White

We have much to be proud of in terms of educational outcomes. For "one" Wisconsin, students have high ACT scores, a significant percentage enrolls in AP coursework, and the high-school-to-college transition rate is good. At the lower grade levels, 4th and 8th grade students surpassed the national average on NAEP. At the same time, we have much to be alarmed about in terms of educational outcomes for the "other" Wisconsin. For example, African American students have low ACT scores, do not graduate from high school in great numbers, and attend college at a rate far below their peers. At the lower grade levels, African American 4th and 8th grade NAEP scores are abysmal. Data below point to this stark reality.

Fourth Grade Reading and Math Results

- Wisconsin's reading score of 221 is higher than the national average of 217.
- Wisconsin's math score of 241 is higher than the national average of 237.

- Wisconsin's reading score of 194 for African Americans is below the national average of 199.
- Wisconsin's math score of 210 for African Americans is the *lowest* score in the nation for states with available data for African American students.

Fourth Grade Achievement Gap

- Wisconsin's 33-point African American-white achievement gap in reading is higher than the national average of 29 points, with only Minnesota, Illinois, Michigan, and Nebraska having a higher achievement gap than Wisconsin.

- Wisconsin's 37-point African American-white achievement gap in math is the *highest* gap in the nation.

Eighth Grade Reading and Math Results

- Wisconsin's reading score of 266 is higher than the national average of 260.
- Wisconsin's math score of 285 is higher than the national average of 278.

- Wisconsin's reading score of 236 for African Americans is second only to Alabama in terms of having the lowest score in the nation for states with available data for African American students.
- Wisconsin's math score of 246 for African Americans is below the national average of 254.

Eighth Grade Achievement Gap

- Wisconsin's 35-point African American-white achievement gap in reading is the *highest* in the nation.

- Wisconsin's 45-point African American-white achievement gap in math is the *second highest* in the nation behind Nebraska.

Recommendations

Closing the achievement gap is a Herculean task that will require the political will of all Wisconsin stakeholders. Only through partnership can we accomplish this goal. And while disagreement about the appropriate methods to close the achievement gap exists, let us not allow the rhetoric of fear to trump the reality of hope. Some of the best opportunities to close the achievement gap will occur within the public school sector, other times in the private school sector, and sometimes after school and on weekends. Below are five recommendations I believe will help close the achievement gap.

Lift the Cap on the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program

Evidence about the impact choice participation has on low-income African American students who participate in publicly- and privately-supported choice programs in Wisconsin, Ohio, New York, Florida, and Washington, DC suggests that it works.

Support the Small Schools Effort in Milwaukee

Milwaukee's vibrant public school sector is producing wonderful results for some of our students. By supporting the effort to create smaller learning environments citywide, more students will benefit.

Retain and Place High-quality Teachers in All Schools

Quality teachers matter, so we should ensure all classrooms have one.

Create After School and Weekend Educational Partnerships

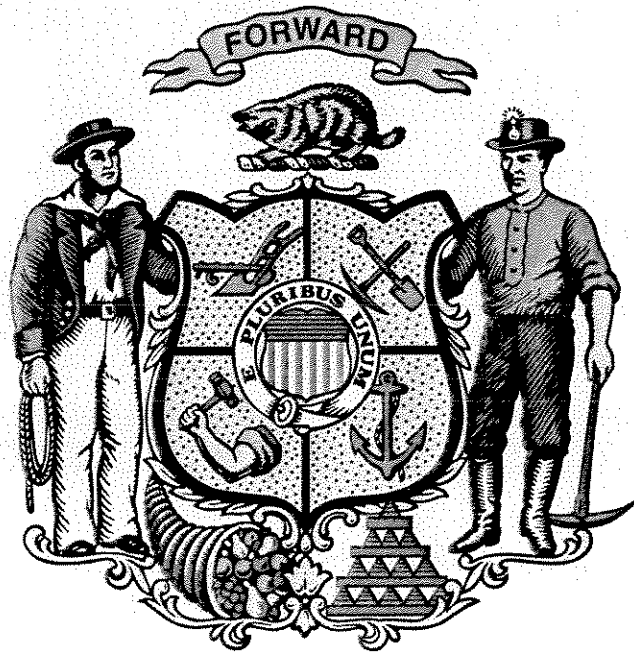
Some students need attention beyond the traditional schedule. Creating a partnership with existing programs designed to meet the needs of these students will be beneficial to all parties.

Utilize All Public and Private Options in Milwaukee

Milwaukee is ground zero for urban school experimentation, so let us utilize all parental options in creative ways to help close the achievement gap.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I believe today's joint hearing is a step in the right direction. We have the talent and the resources to close the achievement gap. We only need to employ the political will to do so. Therefore, I am committed to working with the committee and other stakeholders who are interested in bridging the gap between the Two Wisconsin. Once we do, we can proudly say we have One Wisconsin: strong, vibrant, and educated.



TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE AND ASSEMBLY COMMITTEES ON EDUCATION.

WISCONSIN'S MATH & SCIENCE REQUIREMENTS.

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 29, 2005.

GOOD MORNING. IT IS AN HONOR TO APPEAR BEFORE THIS DISTINGUISHED BODY TO SPEAK ON AN ISSUE THAT IF ENACTED WILL HAVE AN IMPACT ON PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS THROUGHOUT THE STATE. I AM NORB RESHESKE, THE DISTRICT ADMINISTRATOR FOR THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF CASHTON. WE ARE A SMALL RURAL DISTRICT OF 523 STUDENTS LOCATED IN SOUTH-WESTERN WI.

CASHTON IS A DISTRICT THAT HAS REQUIRED THREE CREDITS IN BOTH MATH AND SCIENCE FOR QUITE SOME TIME. HOWEVER, IF ALL WE HAD DONE WAS TO RAISE THE NUMBER OF CREDITS WITHOUT ALSO CAREFULLY CONSIDERING WHAT WE ARE TEACHING, AND HOW WE ARE TEACHING, WE PROBABLY WOULD HAVE HAD MINIMAL SUCCESS.

CASHTON PLACES A HIGH PRIORITY ON A STAFF DEVELOPMENT PROCESS THAT OVER TIME HAS MADE A DIFFERENCE IN THE ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL OF ALL OUR STUDENTS. THIS PROCESS ANALYZES MULTIPLE FORMS OF DATA, AND USES THE RESULTS TO SET DISTRICT-WIDE AND BUILDING LEVEL GOALS THAT DRIVE OUR STAFF DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES FOR THE FOLLOWING SCHOOL YEAR. OVER THE LAST TEN YEARS THIS HAS LEAD TO THE REALLOCATION OF RESOURCES TO SUPPORT A HALF-TIME CURRICULUM COORDINATOR. THIS POSITION PROVIDES EXPERTISE TO OUR FACULTY IN STANDARDS, CURRICULUM WRITING, INSTRUCTIONAL METHODOLOGY, AND AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENT PRACTICES. THE DATA ALSO IDENTIFIED THE NEED FOR A DISTRICT-WIDE LITERACY TEAM, WHICH PROVIDES OUR FACULTY WITH METHODS AND STRATEGIES THAT RESEARCH HAS SHOWN ARE SUCCESSFUL WITH ALL LEARNERS, ESPECIALLY LOW ACHIEVING STUDENTS. ONE EXAMPLE OF THIS WOULD BE OUR FOCUS ON DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION. AND PERHAPS MOST IMPORTANTLY, WE HAVE BEEN ABLE TO IMPROVE STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT BY FINDING A WAY TO CONTINUE TO INVEST IN TWO PRINCIPALS THAT ARE EXCEPTIONAL INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERS. THEY WORK INTENSIVELY WITH OUR FACULTY TO ENSURE THAT OUR TEACHING SKILLS ARE CONSTANTLY IMPROVING.

AS PREVIOUSLY STATED THIS PROCESS ALSO RESULTED IN CASHTON HAVING GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS IN MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE THAT EXCEED THE STATE'S REQUIREMENTS. OUR LEARNING COMMUNITY CONCLUDED THIS WAS NECESSARY IN ORDER FOR OUR STUDENTS TO BE BETTER PREPARED FOR POST-SECONDARY LIFE. HOWEVER, IT ONLY RESULTED IN IMPROVED STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT BECAUSE OF OUR COMMITMENT TO IMPROVING INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICE.

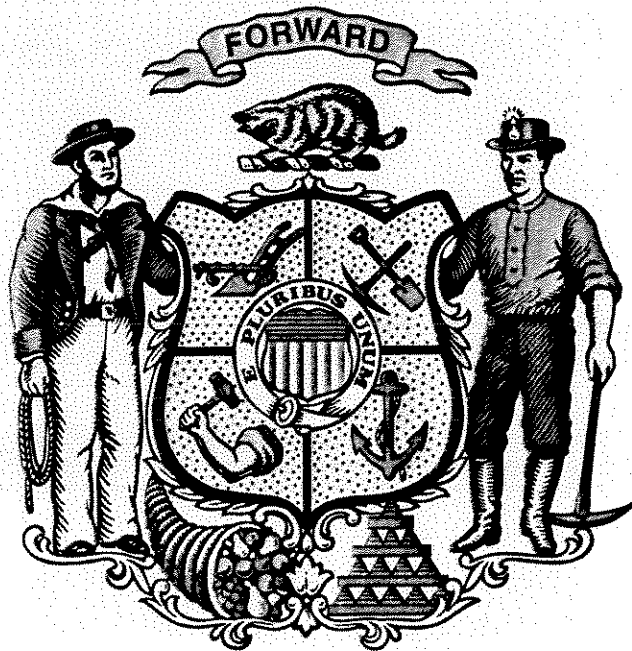
NOW WHEN ASKED IF WISCONSIN SHOULD RAISE ITS STANDARDS FOR GRADUATION, I AM TORN. WE HAVE HAD TO REDUCE STAFFING DO TO DWINDLING RESOURCES. DURING THE LAST THREE BUDGET CYCLES WE HAVE HAD TO CUT AND/OR REALLOCATE \$195K, \$85K, AND \$247K RESPECTIVELY, OUT OF AN OPERATING BUDGET THAT IS CURRENTLY \$5.5 MILLION. WE HAVE ALWAYS BEEN A BARE BONES

DISTRICT, AND THESE CUTS HAVE LEAD TO SOME DETRIMENTAL STAFFING REDUCTIONS. WITHIN THESE BUDGET CYCLES WE WERE UNABLE TO FILL ONE OF OUR MATH & SCIENCE POSITIONS, AND AS A RESULT HAVE A TEACHER CURRENTLY ASSIGNED TO SEVEN CLASSES PER DAY INCLUDING THREE DIFFERENT MATH COURSES, TWO DIFFERENT CHEMISTRY COURSES, AND PHYSICS. HE IS ALSO OUR HEAD FOOTBALL COACH. IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO MAINTAIN INSTRUCTIONAL EXCELLENCE WITH THAT KIND OF SCHEDULE. AS FURTHER CUTS BECOME NECESSARY, WE MAY BE FORCED TO REDUCE OUR GRADUATION STANDARDS TO THE CURRENT STATE REQUIREMENTS. WE MAY ALSO BE FACED WITH UNDOING MUCH OF THE STAFF DEVELOPMENT PROCESS THAT HAS BEEN INTEGRAL TO IMPROVING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT. I REGRET BEING FACED WITH THESE CONSIDERATIONS; HOWEVER, THEY ARE A REALITY OF THESE DIFFICULT FISCAL TIMES THAT WE ALL LIVE IN.

I FEAR THAT OTHER SMALL RURAL DISTRICTS IF FACED WITH A MANDATE TO RAISE THEIR REQUIREMENTS, SIMPLY WILL NOT BE ABLE TO FUND THE STAFFING NECESSARY TO BE IN COMPLIANCE. ADDITIONALLY, THOSE THAT MAY BE ABLE TO FIND THE RESOURCES, MAY NOT BE ABLE TO FIND QUALIFIED TEACHERS IN THESE AREAS. IN ANTICIPATION OF INCREASED STAFFING NEEDS, THERE WILL NEED TO BE ONGOING PK-16 CONVERSATIONS ABOUT WHAT IT WILL TAKE TO PREPARE EVEN MORE TEACHERS IN AREAS WHERE SHORTAGES ALREADY EXIST. SOME DISTRICTS MAY ALSO FACE FACILITY CONSIDERATIONS. WITH THE ADDITIONAL STAFFING NECESSARY TO MEET THE ADDED REQUIREMENTS, THEY MAY SEE THE NEED FOR ADDITIONAL CLASSROOMS OR SCIENCE LABORATORIES.

IN CONCLUSION LET ME SAY THIS IS A WONDERFUL IDEA; HOWEVER, DURING THESE CHALLENGING FISCAL TIMES WE NO LONGER HAVE ANY REMAINING AREAS FROM WHICH TO REALLOCATE. WHERE WILL THE RESOURCES COME FROM TO SUCCESSFULLY IMPLEMENT THIS NEW REQUIREMENT?

I THANK YOU FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY TO MEET WITH YOU, AND I ALSO WANT TO THANK YOU FOR ALL THAT YOU DO FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS. I KNOW IT IS NOT ALWAYS EASY.



WISCONSIN EDUCATION ASSOCIATION COUNCIL

Affiliated with the National Education Association

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Great School!*

MEMO

TO: Members of the Senate Committee on Education
Members of the Assembly Committee on Education

FR: Russ Allen, PhD, WEAC Research & Professional Development Consultant

DA: November 29, 2005

RE: Math & Science Requirements in Wisconsin

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak today. My name is Russ Allen. I work in the area of teaching and learning at WEAC, primarily as a research, instruction, and assessment specialist. I've taught at the secondary and university levels and worked at the DPI for 13 years--11 years as supervisor of test development. I also helped to develop three tests for the National Assessment of Educational Progress.

The proposal to increase the requirements for graduation to include three years in mathematics and three years in science is attractive because one way to improve students' knowledge and skills in any content area is through additional course work.

While no one denies the importance of mathematics and science, WEAC has several questions that it encourages members of this committee to consider as they discuss this proposal:

1. Will districts be able to hire enough qualified teachers in mathematics and science? This is a significant problem for many districts, and it will be exacerbated if this proposal becomes law. It's difficult for many districts to compete with the private sector for those with expertise in mathematics and science.
2. What can the state do to attract and retain qualified teachers in mathematics and science?
3. Should the state provide incentives to school districts to encourage them to integrate their mathematics and science curriculum with other subjects (for example, mathematics and social studies, science and social studies, mathematics and vocational/technical, mathematics and science, etc.) rather than a state-mandated, one-size-fits-all approach?
4. There are two final questions that are related: How can the revenue controls law be modified so that school districts, particularly declining enrollment districts, do not continue to eliminate course offerings? What might be the effect of these increased requirements on other subject areas, as the students are left with more and more requirements in mathematics and science, and fewer options in other areas?

The questions under point four are of special concern because data collected this fall show that the breadth of curriculum is narrowing in Wisconsin's public schools.

Stan Johnson, President
Dan Burkhalter, Executive Director



For the past 12 years, WEAC and the Wisconsin Association of School District Administrators have surveyed school superintendents about the effects of the revenue controls on the programs and services offered in the state's public schools. This year, the survey asked about the impact on eleven curricular areas.

Survey Findings.

More and more districts, especially those with declining enrollments (over one-half of districts) are eliminating individual classes and/or entire course areas in seven areas.

- Over the past three years approximately one-third of declining enrollment districts eliminated classes/courses in technology/vocational education and family and consumer education. About one-fourth did the same for music, foreign language, business, and art. The averages for growing or stable enrollment districts were about 9%.
- Classes or courses in mathematics, social studies, English/language arts, and science were far less likely to be eliminated, irrespective of whether or not the district was experiencing increasing, decreasing, or stable enrollment. The percentages were in the single digits.

These four areas have the strongest graduation requirements; they also are subjects tested by the State of Wisconsin to meet the requirements of state law and No Child Left Behind. Furthermore, research shows that high stakes testing programs tend to result in cuts in course areas not tested (see, for example, research by Audrey Amrein and David Berliner of Arizona State University (<http://www.nmsa.org/news/arizonatesting.htm>)). This same thing is happening in Wisconsin and has been made more serious because of the revenue controls.

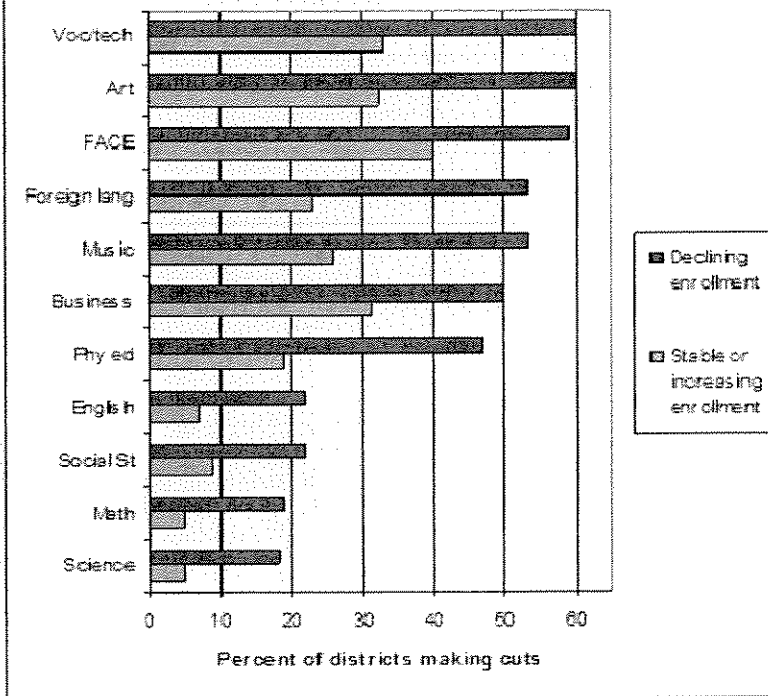
Superintendents also were asked the following question: assuming no changes in the revenue controls law, how likely is it that your district will eliminate classes or entire courses between 2006 and 2009 as a result of budget shortfalls, and not a change in student interest?

- Among districts projected to lose students, 55%, on average, say their district is "Very" or "Somewhat" likely to eliminate classes or courses in physical education, music/band/orchestra, foreign language, business education, technology/vocational education, art, and family and consumer education. Projected cuts are lower in mathematics (19%), English/language arts (22%), Social studies (22%), and science (18%).
- Districts with increasing or stable enrollments expect far fewer cuts. However, the figures still are significant for physical education, music, foreign language, business education, technology/vocational education, art, and family and consumer education (about 25%).

The figure below shows the results for districts projected to lose students and districts projected to have stable or increasing enrollments.

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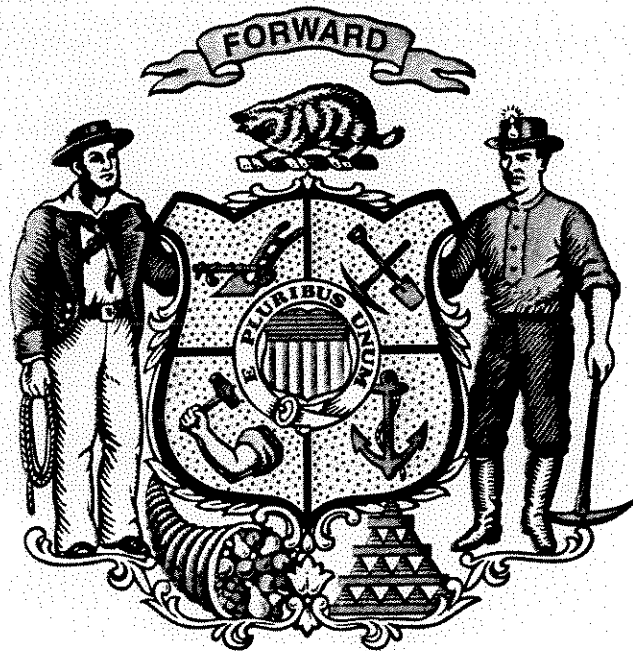
Projected Cuts in Next Three Years, by Subject



While the proposal to increase mathematics and science requirements has merit, WEAC believes that the proposal has to be thought through very carefully before it is adopted.

If you have any questions, contact Russ Allen, WEAC Research & Professional Development Consultant, at (608) 276-7711, extension 293.

*Every kid
deserves a
Great School!*





November 29, 2005

**A joint hearing of the Assembly and Senate Committees on Education
Room 412E, State Capitol**

Related to:

- **LRB Math and Science Requirements in Wisconsin**
- **LRB The Achievement Gap in Wisconsin**

**Testimony by Tom Still, president of the Wisconsin Technology Council
and the Wisconsin Innovation Network**

Dear Committee members:

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today regarding one of the most urgent issues facing Wisconsin's 21st century economy – the need to supply industry with workers who have the tools to succeed in today's competitive world.

At the Wisconsin Technology Council and the Wisconsin Innovation Networks, our boards understandably spend a fair amount of time working on ways to generate more investment capital for our state's start-up businesses, especially those in the tech arena.

But we devote an equal amount of time to the addressing the shortage of human capital. In fact, the Human Capital Committee is a standing committee of the Tech Council, and has been so since our publication of "Vision 2020: A Model Wisconsin Economy" in late 2002.

Why the urgency? Let me describe separate but ultimately connected events help to explain Wisconsin's efforts to compete in a changing world:

- Speaking to recently business leaders in Milwaukee, Hewlett-Packard vice president Kevin Gilroy said the “hypercompetitive global economy” has made it difficult for companies to stand out in the crowd. The worldwide “digital transformation” means factors such as distance, scale and working capital are no longer barriers to entry in business. “It doesn’t matter if you’re doing business in Manila, Madrid or Milwaukee ... the need to innovate in today’s marketplace never ends.”
- In a Madison meeting, the co-founder of Project Lead the Way explained why his rigorous pre-engineering program for middle- and high-school students has grown to include 1,400 schools in 44 states, including 32 in Wisconsin. “The competition for tomorrow’s jobs isn’t coming from New York or Michigan,” educator Dick Blais said, “but from China and India.”
- At the UW-Madison College of Engineering, Dean Paul Peercy recently put members of the college’s Industrial Advisory Board through exercises that will help him produce engineering graduates for a changing global market. The conclusion: Innovative engineers who can communicate and who have “global skills” will be at a premium.
- In different corners of the state, especially northeast Wisconsin, we are hearing from employers who say 2006 could be a very good year – if only they can find enough quality workers to fill the available jobs.

Across Wisconsin, business and education leaders are waking up to the fact that competing in the 21st century economy is no longer an automatic “win-win” for America. Globalization has collapsed time and distance and introduced the new reality that people living half a world away may be able to do your job cheaper, and perhaps just as well.

Columnist Thomas L. Friedman of the New York Times calls it the new “flat world.” Simply put, the leveling of the global economic playing field due to technology, democratization and innovation is allowing more people from more places to compete – and to collaborate. “When the world is flat,” Friedman wrote, “you can innovate without having to emigrate.”

Americans like to think of themselves as innovators, and with good reason. The nation still leads the world in most categories – and, in fact, launched the digital revolution that has changed everything. But we are losing our edge.

In 1975, the United States was third among all nations in the percentage of 18-to-24-year-olds who earned science and engineering degrees. Today, it ranks 17th, behind Taiwan and South Korea, Ireland and Italy. Friedman and others are sounding the alarm: Unless that slide in scientific competency is reversed, the nation's economic welfare and security will be threatened.

Those figures came from a report issued in May 2004 by the National Science Board, a federal advisory panel that has long charted America's standing in the global science and engineering market. The urgent tone of the report has been heard by business leaders, science and engineering educators, and federal and state policymakers.

In Wisconsin, the response has been good. Gov. Jim Doyle has proposed tougher math and science graduation requirements for Wisconsin students, this body is committed to closing the achievement gap in Wisconsin, and initiatives such as "Project Lead the Way" are catching on.

The United States must do a better job of growing its own math, science and engineering graduates. In the past, bright foreigners beat a path to our door and filled any gap produced by a lack of home-grown grads. That outside flow is threatened today because of new limits on the entry of highly educated foreigners and more intense global competition for their skills. Visas and visa applications for students, exchange visitors and highly skilled foreigners have dropped sharply since 2001.

At the same time, many Asian and European nations have realized that science and technology are crucial to their economic growth. They are better prepared to offer their best and brightest educational opportunities, and careers, at home.

The result is a squeeze play – fewer American students are signing up for math and science, and fewer foreigners are filling the gap. The result is a shortage of skilled workers in the very fields that are driving the 21st century economy.

In the international competition to produce the most "knowledge workers," America is falling behind. As a result, the world economy is getting flatter by the day. Unless the United States responds by turning out more kids who want to be engineers and scientists, and unless our businesses continue to

innovate, the world will become flatter still. Wisconsin can and must do what it can to keep the world round.

In his annual State of the State speech, Doyle proposed adding a third year of math and science to high school graduation requirements so that state students are better prepared “for the challenges of the 21st century.” He’s right about the nature of the problem. While children in other nations bone up on math and science, American students shy away from those courses for many reasons – starting in middle school.

Doyle’s proposal is one answer. It is a statewide shift in curriculum emphasis to respond to global realities. A strong economy in the 21st century won’t be determined by Marshfield outperforming Stevens Point or Milwaukee one-upping Madison. It will be about Wisconsin competing in a more educated, innovative world.

Another good idea is Project Lead the Way, a national, non-profit organization that prepares students to excel in technical fields. The program introduces middle school and high school students to engineering principles through hands-on exercises applying math and science concepts to real-world problems. Students who complete the program can receive college credit that gives them a head start toward their degree and a solid background that helps them navigate technological challenges.

In March 2004, the Kern Family Foundation in Waukesha launched Project Lead the Way in Wisconsin with a three-year grant to establish programs in 100 middle and high schools over time. Seventeen school districts are already taking part, the state’s PK-16 Leadership Council was told last week. Also, the state departments of Public Instruction and Workforce Development have provided matching grants.

Nationally, 73 percent of Project Lead the Way students from 640 schools have entered engineering or technology programs – and 98 percent of those who do advance to their second year of college. That compares to a national persistence rate of 50 percent.

Those results are hard to ignore. In some states, notably Illinois, Indiana and Ohio, governments are retooling grant programs to provide support. Business leaders are supportive because they forecast a national shortage of skilled workers – perhaps as soon as 2006.

Earlier this year, Wisconsin was visited by Robert Dugger, managing partner of the Tudor Investment Group in Washington, D.C. He's a venture capitalist, and it would be hard to find anyone who's more pro-capitalism.

Dugger warned that America will lose its economic competitiveness unless it invests more in education. Citing the work of Nobel Prize-winning economists, the Federal Reserve Board and a variety of pro-business groups, Dugger said upgrading workforce quality is essential if the United States hopes to compete in the 21st century.

"A nation that puts the interests of its children first, in everything it does, will do everything better," Dugger said. "A nation that puts kids first thinks long-term. It has a surer moral footing, less crime, stronger economic growth, a healthier environment and a greater ability to lead others by example."

Whether it's an extra year of math and science in high school or a focused program such as Project Lead the Way, or a combination of both, Wisconsin must do more to steer students toward careers in math, science and engineering. The handwriting is on the wall; it's time to read it and act.

Thank you.

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