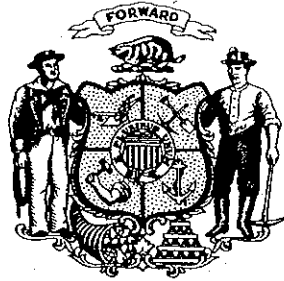


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January 22, 2009

Ms. Elizabeth Burmaster
State Superintendent
Department of Public Instruction
P.O. Box 7841
Madison, WI 53707-7841

Dear Superintendent Burmaster:

We are writing in our capacity as chair and vice chair of the Joint Legislative Council's Special Committee on Building Wisconsin's Workforce. The Special Committee recognizes the importance of ensuring that students who graduate from high school have the necessary mathematics skills to enter the workforce. This letter sets forth the committee's recommendations regarding this issue. Although the committee may not recommend legislation to address all of the recommendations below, the committee expects that this issue will continue to be important to the Legislature and the state.

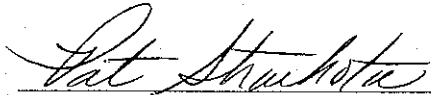
The Special Committee has heard testimony about the lack of basic mathematics skills in students graduating from high school and in the workforce in general. Employers testified about the difficulty in finding workers with the mathematics skills necessary to fill the employers' unmet labor needs. A student should be competent in basic mathematics, such as using a ruler and understanding fractions, before the student graduates from high school.

At the committee's August 18, 2008 meeting, you testified about the efforts of the Department of Public Instruction (DPI), in conjunction with the American Diploma Project and the Partnership for 21st Century Skills, to evaluate the state's model academic standards in mathematics and English language arts. The committee also heard testimony from Deborah Mahaffey, Assistant State Superintendent, at its October 22, 2008 meeting, regarding the efforts of DPI to approve equivalent course options to satisfy the credits, including mathematics credits, required for a high school diploma.

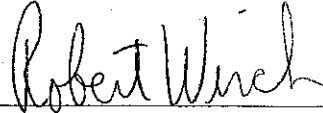
The Special Committee strongly urges DPI to revise the state's model academic standards in mathematics to align the standards with the skills needed to fill occupations where workforce shortages exist. In addition, the Special Committee strongly urges DPI to continue approving equivalent course options to satisfy the mathematics credits required for a high school diploma.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. If you have any questions, please contact Jessica Karls or Scott Grosz, Legislative Council Staff Attorneys.

Sincerely,



Representative Pat Strachota
Chair, Special Committee on
Building Wisconsin's Workforce



Senator Robert Wirch
Vice Chair, Special Committee on
Building Wisconsin's Workforce

PS:RW:ksm

cc: Jennifer Kammerud, Legislative Liaison, Department of Public Instruction
Deborah Mahaffey, Assistant State Superintendent, Division for Academic Excellence,
Department of Public Instruction