



WISCONSIN LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

IMPROVING EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES IN HIGH SCHOOL

Room 411 South
State Capitol

October 24, 2012
10:00 a.m. – 2:40 p.m.

[The following is a summary of the October 24, 2012 meeting of the Special Committee on Improving Educational Opportunities in High School. The file copy of this summary has appended to it a copy of each document prepared for or submitted to the committee during the meeting. A digital recording of the meeting is available on our Web site at <http://www.legis.state.wi.us/lc>.]

Call to Order and Roll Call

Chair Olsen called the committee to order. The roll was called and it was determined that a quorum was present.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Sen. Luther Olsen, Chair; Rep. Paul Farrow, Vice Chair; Sens. Tim Cullen and Glenn Grothman; and Public Members Bill Fitzpatrick, Joe Garza, Robert Hein, Patricia Hoben, William Hughes, Suzanne Kelley, Jim Leef, Jeff Monday, Harry Muir, Patricia Neudecker, Sheila Ruhland, and S. Mark Tyler.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS EXCUSED: Rep. Sondy Pope-Roberts; and Public Members Joni Burgin and Mark Kaiser.

COUNCIL STAFF PRESENT: Jessica Karls-Ruplinger and Rachel Letzing, Senior Staff Attorneys.

APPEARANCES: Mary Diez, Professor of Education and Dean of the School of Education, Alverno College; Public Member Patricia Hoben, Principal, Carmen High School of Science and Technology; Len Mormino, School Counselor, James Madison Memorial High School; Miles Tokheim, Career and Technical Education Coordinator, Madison Metropolitan School District; Erica Kruger, Program Support Counselor, Madison Metropolitan School District; Paul Brost, Principal, Monona Grove High School; Andrew Briddell, Director of Instruction, Monona Grove School District; Nicole North Hester, Science Teacher/Instructional Coach, Monona Grove High School; Public Member Joe Garza, Superintendent, New Berlin School District; Dr. Eileen Depka, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, New Berlin School District; Mary Washbush, Director of Teaching and Learning, New Berlin School District; Michelle Schwab, Director of Educator Effectiveness, New Berlin School District; Larry Lueck, Director of Learning Technology, New Berlin School District; and Joan Paque, Chief Academic Officer, New Berlin School District.

Approval of the Minutes of the September 13, 2012 Meeting of the Special Committee

Mr. Garza moved, seconded by Vice Chair Farrow, to approve the minutes of the Special Committee's September 13, 2012 meeting. The motion passed on a voice vote.

Presentations by Invited Speakers on Core Abilities

Mary Diez, Professor of Education and Dean of the School of Education, Alverno College

Ms. Diez described the ability-based learning program created at Alverno College. She spoke about the 8 specific abilities that students are expected to develop and how the 8 abilities are connected with content-based instruction in order to form an outcome-based framework for learning. She noted that the ability-based learning approach encourages students to see how skills and principles learned in the classroom are applicable in the real world. She stated that the Council of Chief State School Officers' Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium model core teaching standards were recently revised to incorporate teaching ability-based education.

Patricia Hoben, Principal, Carmen High School of Science and Technology

Ms. Hoben explained how Carmen High School of Science and Technology took the Alverno 8 abilities framework and adapted it for high school students. She described how students are expected to develop the 8 abilities throughout their courses, internships, and community service. She noted that students assess their own performance in relation to these abilities and receive feedback from teachers and peers. She then explained how the 8 ability framework is used as a tool for assessing college and career readiness in connection with the ACT suite benchmarks and alignment with the Common Core standards.

In response to questions from committee members, Ms. Hoben noted that Carmen has had very high college enrollment percentages and that Carmen has a full-time faculty member who tracks students during and after college. She stated that the 8 abilities framework could work at the state level and could enable each district to tailor its own method of incorporating the abilities. She explained that writing the assessments and aligning them to outcomes for each course taught at Carmen was very challenging and time consuming and that professional development was, and continues to be, necessary to successfully implement Carmen's approach. She clarified that students still need to master the content of each course and may not pass out of a course by passing only the assessment.

Presentations by Invited Speakers on EXPLORE/PLAN/ACT

Paul Brost, Principal, Monona Grove High School; Andrew Briddell, Director of Instruction, Monona Grove School District; Nicole North Hester, Science Teacher/Instructional Coach, Monona Grove High School

Mr. Briddell explained that the district has adopted the EXPLORE/PLAN/ACT suite for all students in grades 7 to 11. He said that the ACT suite provides a more realistic measure of students' college and career readiness than the Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts Examination (WKCE), allows the district to measure students' growth over time, and enables staff to use the ACT data to continuously improve college and career readiness work.

Mr. Brost explained that among the reasons why the district likes the ACT suite is that it is research-based; skill-based; students, staff, and parents see the value in the test; and it is well aligned with the Common Core standards. He said that teachers use the test results to work with students to increase college and career readiness. He noted that the district has been working with Hersey High School, which adopted the ACT skills set around 2000, and is trying to emulate Hersey's successful ACT growth rate.

Ms. North Hester provided a teacher's perspective on the ACT. She explained that teachers look at growth scores and use them to evaluate programs and to adapt classes to needs of students. She said scores from previous years' tests are used to place students in courses, to group students together when teaching certain concepts and skills, and to align content and skills assessments. She said that the ACT data enables continuous assessment of skills throughout the year. She noted that in terms of achievement gaps, ACT data helps focus what teachers should be working on and where to target student interventions. She noted that the high school uses the ACT benchmarks to set school improvement goals and strategies.

In response to questions from committee members, Ms. North Hester said that teachers feel that because the ACT suite data is skill-based, it provides more continuous feedback and can be normed across different groups, the data is more applicable and useable. Mr. Brost said those skills can be adjusted to course content, so staff enjoys that flexibility. He said the ACT scores are not tied to formal teacher evaluations, but are used for professional growth and development. The panel members all noted their support for implementing the ACT suite statewide.

Len Mormino, School Counselor, James Madison Memorial High School; Miles Tokheim, Career and Technical Education Coordinator, Madison Metropolitan School District; Erica Kruger, Program Support Counselor, Madison Metropolitan School District

Ms. Kruger began the presentation by providing examples of how the district uses the ACT suite and WorkKeys to inform instruction and interventions, including using 8th grade EXPLORE data to inform 9th grade course selection and to guide interventions in 9th grade. She noted that subject areas use ACT suite data to examine student growth over time.

Mr. Mormino spoke about teacher orientation to the ACT suite. He said that the shift from content-based to skill-based testing can be challenging for teachers at first. He said counselors help students interpret their scores, explain the significance of benchmark scores, and provide them with ideas to improve their performance. He noted that counselors try to inform students and parents about the relevance of the tests in preparing students to be college and career ready. He said that students use the Career Cruising guidance program, which enables them to enter their scores and look up careers that interest them.

Mr. Tokheim explained that the district uses WorkKeys and the National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC), a WorkKeys program which is being piloted in Madison high schools in partnership with the Department of Workforce Development (DWD). He explained that the NCRC is a portable credential which certifies that the student has essential skills important for workplace success. He said that in order to earn the certificate, a student must complete three sections and tests which are based on how students apply their skills, and the certificate is awarded at one of four levels based on their scores. He said the key element is the range of businesses that support the NCRC. He noted that the curriculum used for the NCRC is called KeyTrain, which is sponsored by ACT, and is based on career clusters.

Ms. Kruger explained that in the future, the district hopes to have subject area teachers integrate the skills from the ACT suite into daily instruction, to explore broader use of WorkKeys to help students acquire a NCRC, and to implement individualized learning plans (ILPs).

In response to questions from committee members, the panel recommended funding the ACT suite and WorkKeys statewide, implementing ILPs in a standard format statewide, and providing an incentive for employers to work with high school students in programs such as Youth Apprenticeship. Ms. Kruger noted one of the best things about the ACT suite is that all students are able to access it and provides evidence to all students that the school has high expectations of them.

Presentations by Invited Speakers on New Requirements for School Districts

New Berlin School District - Joe Garza, Superintendent; Dr. Eileen Depka, Director of Curriculum and Instruction; Mary Washbush, Director of Teaching and Learning; Michelle Schwab, Director of Educator Effectiveness; Larry Lueck, Director of Learning Technology; Joan Paque, Chief Academic Officer

Mr. Garza introduced New Berlin school board member John Kegel and staff introduced themselves. Mr. Garza explained that his presentation will pull together a number of issues the committee has been hearing about over the last few months. He noted that his district is performing at a high level which is challenging to maintain and grow especially in the face of many current challenges.

Mr. Garza explained that 21st Century skills utilize technology but involve much more. Mr. Lueck described a diagram outlining 21st Century skills, including skills such as critical thinking, life and career skills, technological skills, and core subjects that are the base for all of those skills. He noted that standards and assessments, rigorous curriculum, and professional development are also a part of 21st Century learning. Mr. Garza showed a video which he said demonstrates that times have significantly changed and he noted that public education has not kept up.

Mr. Garza provided an overview of challenges identified in the Sullivan Report, and recommendations including regional alignment, academic and career plans, using the ACT, providing a uniform way to measure student achievement, closing achievement gaps, performance-based funding, and awareness of various career pathways in high school.

Mr. Garza then showed a video of State Superintendent Tony Evers describing his Agenda 2017, which includes increasing college and career readiness, alignment of standards and instruction, and school and educator effectiveness.

Mr. Garza provided a timeline for the implementation of accountability measures and other requirements, including Smarter Balanced assessments, the ACT suite, school report cards, and the Common Core, compiled by DPI that schools must address beginning in 2011-12. He noted that he has the staff to address these issues but that many school districts do not.

Mr. Garza provided the following recommendations to the committee: reallocate resources differently; create awareness of current efforts and align resources between K-12, technical colleges, four year colleges, and CESAs; audit teacher preparation programs and require coursework in relevant changes in education under the NCLB waiver and 21st Century skills; support common themes in the Sullivan Report and Agenda 2017; require use of rigorous academic and career plans; consider a K-16 system; create regional centers and academies to offer technical level courses or to better utilize

facilities at local technical colleges; review Youth Options and other dual credit options; and assign technical college counselors to school districts.

Committee Discussion on Memo No. 1, *Issues for Consideration by the Special Committee,* and Other Options for Further Consideration by the Committee

Vice Chair Farrow led the discussion of Memo No. 1. He explained that there are three types of recommendations the committee could offer: legislation; a letter to appropriate individuals or committees; or a report that highlights issues that should be addressed in the future.

First, Vice Chair Farrow asked committee members whether there were additional topics to add to the list in Memo No. 1.

Mr. Tyler said he wants to encourage experimentation.

Ms. Kelley said she would like to incentivize best practices and experimentation. To that end, she requested a comparison of the effectiveness, cost, and number of students served in the current programs available to high school students.

Chair Olsen suggested there be legislation or a recommendation to create a platform for school districts, postsecondary institutions, and businesses to coordinate information and resources. The CESAs may be the entity to coordinate these efforts.

Chair Olsen also recommended that the committee consider whether schools use the Alverno 8 abilities as a way to determine what a high school diploma means. Mr. Hughes said he would like to enable each district to use the 8 abilities and to provide incentives for districts that want to innovate.

Mr. Hein stated that he would like to provide school districts with more flexibility including additional waiver options.

Mr. Garza requested that the recommendations provided in his presentation be considered by the committee.

The committee then began discussion of Memo No. 1. Committee members discussed regional coordination, increasing the number of math and science credits, and Youth Options.

Regarding the Youth Apprenticeship program, Chair Olsen said the committee could recommend that DWD and a broad range of stakeholders conduct a study of the program, perhaps with a regional focus.

Committee members also discussed whether the Education for Employment program should be recreated on a regional basis or in connection with academic and career plans.

Several committee members expressed interest in receiving an inventory of current work-based programs, how much is spent in each program, the number of students who participate in each program, and when the programs were enacted. Chair Olsen suggested that the committee could request an audit of those programs and recommend that the programs be evaluated in the context of how they fit with the Common Core, the ACT suite, and 21st Century education.

Vice Chair Farrow asked whether committee members wanted to remove any of the topics in Memo No. 1 from future consideration. Regarding state requirements for secondary assessments, several committee members agreed that districts should not be required to administer both the Smarter Balanced assessment and the PLAN test in 10th grade. Senator Grothman stated that disabilities issues may be beyond the purview of the committee and expressed concern that the guidance counselor inequity issue could hamstring school districts. Mr. Garza agreed that school districts should not be restricted regarding guidance counselor requirements. Ms. Neudecker stated that the committee should be sensitive to include all students in the committee's recommendations.

Chair Olsen stated that staff would be sending an email survey to committee members regarding the items in Memo No. 1 and other recommendations offered during the meeting so that members can rate or rank the importance of each item in an effort to fine tune the list of recommendations.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 2:40 p.m.

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