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DRAFT LETTER NO. 10

December 17, 2012

State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Evers
Department of Public Instruction
125 South Webster Street
Madison, WI 53707-7841

Dear Superintendent Evers:

We are writing in our capacity as Chair and Vice Chair of the Joint Legislative Council's Special Committee on Improving Educational Opportunities in High School. The Special Committee is directed to develop legislation to create and enhance opportunities for both lower and higher achieving students in high school. Specifically, the Special Committee is directed to evaluate current options available to high school students for both career and technical education and post-secondary enrollment, including the Youth Options Program; examine both career and technical education and post-secondary enrollment options available to high school students in other states; and determine how to promote coordination between high schools, technical colleges, universities, and employers to ensure that high school students have the skills necessary to meet the workforce needs of employers in this state.

The Special Committee received testimony from Mary Diez, Professor of Education and Dean of the School of Education at Alverno College, and Patricia Hoben, Principal of Carmen High School of Science and Technology in Milwaukee and member of the Special Committee. Ms. Diez described the ability-based learning program created at Alverno College, which is based upon eight specific abilities that students are expected to develop, and explained how the eight abilities are connected with content-based instruction in order to form an outcome-based framework for learning. Ms. Hoben explained how Carmen High School of Science and Technology adapted the Alverno eight abilities for high school students. She described how students are expected to develop the eight abilities throughout their courses, internships, and community service and how the eight ability framework is used as a tool for assessing college and career readiness.

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The Special Committee was supportive of the idea of school districts incorporating the use of core abilities in high school as a measure of competency and as a way to add meaning to a high school diploma. However, the Special Committee is unable to pursue this idea before the Special Committee concludes at the end of 2012. Therefore, the Special Committee requests that DPI form a taskforce to determine how core abilities can be incorporated into high school assessment and to suggest legislation that may be required in order to accomplish this goal.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Senator Luther Olsen, Chair
Special Committee on Improving
Educational Opportunities in High School

Representative Paul Farrow, Vice Chair
Special Committee on Improving
Educational Opportunities in High School

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