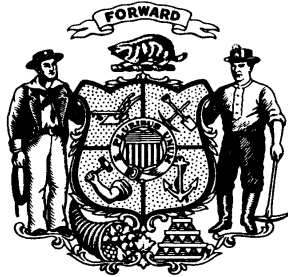


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DRAFT LETTER NO. 5

December 17, 2012

Senator Kathleen Vinehout, Co-Chair
Joint Committee on Audit
Room 316 South
State Capitol
Madison, WI 53701

Representative Samantha Kerkman, Co-Chair
Joint Committee on Audit
Room 315 North
State Capitol
Madison, WI 53701

Dear Co-Chairs Vinehout and Kerkman:

On behalf of the Joint Legislative Council's Special Committee on Improving Educational Opportunities in High School, we write to ask that the Joint Committee on Audit direct the Legislative Audit Bureau to conduct an audit of the work-based learning programs that are available to high school students in Wisconsin and that are administered by the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) or the Department of Workforce Development (DWD).

During the course of its meetings, the Special Committee received testimony about the declining number of enrollees in certain work-based learning programs, and, given the declining number of enrollees and the cost and requirements of the programs, the committee was unable to ascertain whether the programs have been and will continue to be an effective method by which to provide work-based learning opportunities to high school students. Therefore, the Special Committee reached the conclusion that the work-based learning programs available to high school pupils are in need of a comprehensive audit.

Generally, the Special Committee recommends that the audit evaluate the cost of each program; the number of students, including students with disabilities, enrolled in each program; and the effectiveness of each program. The audit should include the following programs: (1) Youth Apprenticeship; (2) Employability Skills Certificate; (3) Cooperative Education Skills Standards Certificate; and (4) Youth Leadership Skill Certificate. The audit should also include other work-based learning programs administered by DPI or DWD that are identified by the Joint Committee on Audit or the Legislative Audit Bureau.

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The need for an audit of work-based learning programs could not come at a better time. It is essential that Wisconsin's workforce has the skills necessary to meet the current and future needs of employers in Wisconsin. Work-based learning programs provide a learning experience for high school students outside of the traditional classroom and assist students in attaining workplace skills for future employment. Ideally, such programs serve to ensure that students have the skills necessary to enter the workforce, whether it be after high school or after post-secondary education. However, a better understanding of work-based learning programs is necessary for Wisconsin to ensure that it provides effective work-based learning opportunities to high school students.

Thank you for your attention to this audit 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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