



Legislative Fiscal Bureau

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January 25, 2006

TO: Members
Joint Committee on Finance

FROM: Bob Lang, Director

SUBJECT: Assembly Bill 308: Establishing a Clearinghouse for Information about Special Education Transition Services

Assembly Bill 308 was introduced April 12, 2005 and referred to the Assembly Committee on Children and Families. On May 24, 2005, the bill was passed by the Committee on a vote of 7 to 0. On September 27, 2005, the bill was passed by the Assembly and ordered immediately messaged to the Senate. On September 30, 2005, the bill was referred to the Senate Committee on Education, which passed the bill on December 2, 2005, by a vote of 7 to 0. AB 308 was referred to the Joint Committee on Finance on December 5, 2005.

BACKGROUND

The Wisconsin statewide transition initiative (WSTI) is a project of the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) to provide special education transition services. Twelve coordinators, one in each regional cooperative educational service agency (CESA), the project director, and a DPI transition consultant provide transition support services, information dissemination, and staff development to parents, education professionals, and community agencies. Specifically, the WSTI statewide clearinghouse provides information for students with disabilities and their parents and teachers regarding post-secondary education, community participation, vocational training, employment, continuing and adult education, independent living, and adult services agencies. The project works with each county to develop manuals that list contact information for transition services that are available in that county. Currently, 63 of the 72 counties participate in this project, and it is anticipated that all 72 will be participating by the end of the 2005-06 school year. The project was developed in reaction to requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1997. A dedicated website for this project is linked from the DPI website.

In addition, interagency agreements exist between DPI and the Division for Vocational Rehabilitation within the Department of Workforce Development, as well as between DPI and the Department of Health and Family Services, to cooperate to provide transition services for students with disabilities.

SUMMARY OF BILL

Assembly Bill 308 would require the State Superintendent, in cooperation with the Department of Workforce Development and the Department of Health and Family Services, to establish a clearinghouse for information about the special education transition services and vocational opportunities available in each county. The bill would require that each of the three departments post information about the clearinghouse on its Internet site.

FISCAL EFFECT

According to DPI, the proposed requirement would have no fiscal effect on the Department because the WSTI and statewide clearinghouse have been established, and DPI currently works cooperatively with DWD and DHFS to provide transition services.

According to DWD, it is current practice at the Department to share information with DPI and other state agencies on transition and vocational issues. The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation website currently links to other vocational resources, and there would be no additional cost to the Department to create links to the WSTI website.

According to DHFS, links could be added to the DHFS website for DPI and DWD special education transition services. In addition, the Department has information regarding transition services available to the public, and this could be added to the website as well. The Department estimates that an additional 0.30 FTE and \$11,400 (\$5,700 GPR and \$5,700 FED) for salary, fringe and supplies and services costs would be needed for activities related to the bill. According to DHFS, those activities would include locating and formatting information and posting it on the Department's website, meeting with DWD and DPI to ensure that all departmental sites are coordinated and accurate, and ensuring that special education transition information provided by DHFS is consistent. No funding is provided in the bill.

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