



Legislative Fiscal Bureau

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Joint Committee on Finance

Paper #872

Eligibility for Secured Correctional Facilities (TEACH)

[LFB 2001-03 Budget Summary: Page 631, #11]

CURRENT LAW

School districts are eligible to receive TEACH block grants, and school districts, private schools, CESAs, technical colleges, private colleges, public library systems and boards and the state residential schools are eligible to receive telecommunications access funding. CESAs and consortia of school districts, CESAs, and public library boards are eligible to receive training and technical assistance grants.

In 2000-01, \$35,000,000 GPR is provided for block grants, and \$4,000,000 GPR is provided for educational technology training and technical assistance grants. For telecommunications access in 2000-01, \$7,195,700 SEG is provided for school districts and CESAs, \$2,014,600 SEG is provided for libraries and technical colleges, \$1,003,100 SEG is provided for private K-12 schools, and \$55,200 SEG is provided for the state residential schools. The telecommunications access program is funded through the universal service fund (USF).

GOVERNOR

Provide \$251,100 SEG in 2001-02 and \$233,400 SEG in 2002-03 to fund telecommunications access services for three juvenile secured correctional facilities. Specify that the secured correctional facilities would be the Southern Oaks Girls School, the Ethan Allen School and the Lincoln Hills School. Create an appropriation to fund subsidized telecommunications access for those facilities. Require TEACH to promulgate rules to ensure that secured correctional facilities that receive access to data lines and video links use them only for educational purposes. Staff from DOA indicate that these funding amounts should be revised downward by \$62,800 SEG in 2001-02 and \$58,400 SEG in 2002-03.

Provide that these facilities would also be eligible to apply for educational technology training and technical assistance grants as members of consortia.

Require the Secretary of Corrections to submit a written request to TEACH in order for those facilities to be eligible for educational technology block grants. Limit the amount the Department of Corrections (DOC) would receive in block grants for each facility to \$5,000 annually, and allow DOC to allocate the funds received through this program among the eligible facilities as it deems appropriate, although the monies would have to be deposited in a separate fund.

Require DOC to submit a report to DOA by June 30, 2002, that specifies any cost savings by DOC due to secured correctional facilities' receipt of grants or subsidies from TEACH.

DISCUSSION POINTS

1. The Wisconsin secured juvenile correctional facilities are funded with program revenue generated by statutory daily rates charged to counties and the state for certain serious juvenile offenders. County costs are reimbursed, in whole or in part, by GPR funds for community youth and family aids (youth aids).

2. The Governor's proposal is based on an agency budget request submitted by DOC. The Department operates middle and high school programs in its secured correctional facilities serving about 900 pupils on average each day. According to DOC, the pupils tend to be several grade levels behind their age peers when initially assessed for educational placement upon incarceration, often due to long periods of separation from school because of disciplinary or behavioral problems and learning disorders.

3. Arguably, while youth are placed with DOC for secure facility services, the youth should advance their education, so that they can make a successful transition back to community school programs or vocational programs upon release. Without exposure to the types of educational technology used in Wisconsin's schools, youth are more at risk of again falling behind their age peers when they return to school and being unable to take advantage of the learning and work opportunities offered through technology.

4. Treating the secured correctional facility schools like school districts and education agencies in the state in terms of access to TEACH grants and subsidies would enable the purchase of newer equipment, training of education staff, and appropriate access to on-line resources and distance learning for incarcerated youth.

5. TEACH technology training and technical assistance grants are awarded through a competitive process. DOC would be allowed to compete for these grants as members of consortia under the Governor's proposal, but would not be guaranteed an award. These grants are funded through a biennial appropriation, and for 1999-01 a total of \$9 million was available. For 2001-03, the bill provides a total of \$8 million for this purpose, with no additional funding provided to reflect the proposed participation of these facilities.

6. TEACH would be required to pay DOC \$15,000 annually for block grants for the three juvenile secured correctional facilities for educational technology block grants. The Governor did not increase the total amount of funding that the TEACH Board will have available for block grants in 2001-02 or 2002-03. Therefore, if these monies are provided to these facilities, funding available for block grants to school districts would be reduced by \$15,000 annually, which would represent a reduction of 0.04% in each year.

7. The TEACH telecommunications access program is funded through the USF. Under current law, telecommunications providers are allowed to fully recover their share of assessment costs for USF expenditures related to the TEACH Board through a "pass-through" adjustment applied only to subscribers' local exchange service rates. Under the proposal, this assessment, passed through to subscribers, would be raised to cover the additional costs of funding Internet access for these facilities at DOC.

8. Including the proposed \$251,100 in 2001-02 and \$233,400 in 2020-03 to fund telecommunications access services for three juvenile secured correctional facilities, the budget bill would authorize \$13.7 million annually from universal service fund assessments for the TEACH program. The total USF pass-through assessment would be \$16.5 million in 2001-02 and \$16.4 million in 2002-03 under the bill. Because this pass-through assessment affects millions of telephone customers, it may be undesirable to extend the use of this funding to additional entities.

9. The amount of funding that these facilities would receive under the Governor's recommendations relating to block grants and training and technical assistance grants would likely represent only a small portion of total funding for these programs. However, these appropriations are counted towards state two-thirds funding of K-12 partial school revenues, and this proposal could be viewed as weakening the state's commitment to the 426 public school districts in the state. In addition, if a determination is made that these facilities are eligible for these state categorical aids under TEACH, it is possible that, in the future, to be consistent the law would be modified so that other state categorical aids under DPI would apply to these facilities.

ALTERNATIVES TO BASE

1. Approve the Governor's recommendation as modified to reflect corrected funding amounts, which would: (a) make three secured juvenile correctional facilities eligible for TEACH block grants and training and technical assistance grants; (b) provide \$188,300 SEG in 2001-02 and \$175,000 SEG in 2002-03 to fund telecommunications access services for these three facilities; and (c) require DOC to report cost savings.

Alternative 1	SEG
2001-03 FUNDING (Change to Base)	\$363,300
<i>[Change to Bill</i>	<i>- \$121,200]</i>

2. Maintain current law.

Alternative 2	SEG
2001-03 FUNDING (Change to Base)	\$0
<i>[Change to Bill</i>	<i>- \$484,500]</i>

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