



Legislative Fiscal Bureau

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Joint Committee on Finance

Paper #535

Delete Pupil Achievement Program (DPI -- Categorical Aids)

[LFB 2011-13 Budget Summary: Page 348, #1]

CURRENT LAW

The Milwaukee Public Schools board is permitted to apply to DPI for an annual grant of up to \$10,000,000 to implement initiatives to improve pupil academic achievement in all grades, such as employing licensed teachers to tutor pupils who are struggling academically, or employing persons to coordinate the district's instructional programs and provide ongoing professional development for teachers. The MPS board must submit with its application a plan for DPI's approval describing the initiatives for which the grant will be used, describing the research showing that the initiatives have a positive effect on pupil academic achievement, and including criteria for evaluating the effectiveness of the initiatives, such as high school graduation rates or the results of the Wisconsin knowledge and concepts exam. Annual funding for this grant is \$9,650,000.

GOVERNOR

Delete \$9,650,000 GPR annually to eliminate base level funding for grants for improving pupil academic achievement and delete related statutory language.

DISCUSSION POINTS

1. The improving pupil academic achievement program was created under 2007 Act 20, with funding of \$10,000,000 first provided in 2008-09. Under the 2009-11 budget, funding was reduced by 3.5% to \$9,650,000 annually, as part of across-the-board reductions made to most categorical aid programs.

2. As part of the Department's 2011-13 biennial agency budget request, DPI

recommended consolidating a number of categorical aid programs into a single program aimed at improving high school graduation rates and reducing dropout rates in targeted school districts around the state. All of those programs were subsequently recommended for elimination under the Governor's version of the budget bill. However, the Governor would delete the pupil achievement program, even though this program was not recommended for elimination and consolidation by DPI.

3. MPS uses the pupil achievement grant for an initiative they call the Milwaukee Mathematics Partnership (MMP), which was originally established in 2003 with a five-year grant from the National Science Foundation. The program uses research-based strategies to raise student academic performance in mathematics in all grades, by providing ongoing professional development for mathematics teachers, development of a district-wide framework for mathematics proficiency, setting learning targets aligned with the state's model academic standards for each grade level, and providing a new system of classroom assessments that provide improved feedback on performance for both students and teachers. The MMP program also offers credit courses and workshops through the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and Milwaukee Area Technical College to improve teacher preparation, content knowledge, and student progress analysis. Finally, the MMP targets high school students for extra assessment and counseling, in order to reduce the number of students who require remedial math courses at post-secondary institutions and to help students successfully transition from high school math to appropriate post-secondary courses.

4. In addition, state funding for improving academic achievement has also been used to expand the roles of mathematics 'teacher leaders' in each school. Teacher leaders are full-time classroom teachers, but also attend monthly professional development seminars focused on mathematics content development, leadership skills, and assessment practices. They work directly with district mathematics instruction experts and, in turn, provide support and professional development at their own schools. Teacher leaders have been used successfully in some school reform efforts around the country. Ideally, they are experienced and highly trained, and are available on-site to help fellow teachers problem-solve as issues arise in the classroom, providing alternative strategies to communicate difficult concepts, helping to analyze and assess student progress, and improving the quality and effectiveness of instruction in the school overall.

5. The achievement gap between MPS and the rest of the state, that is, the difference in the percentage of students scoring proficient or better on state tests, in mathematics is significant and persistent. The table below shows the percentage of pupils scoring proficient or advanced on the Wisconsin knowledge and concepts exams (WKCE) mathematics exams in fourth, eighth, and tenth grades, for MPS and for the state as a whole, since 2002-03.

	<u>Grade 4</u>		<u>Grade 8</u>		<u>Grade 10</u>	
	<u>MPS</u>	<u>State</u>	<u>MPS</u>	<u>State</u>	<u>MPS</u>	<u>State</u>
2002-03	47.0%	71.0%	35.0%	73.0%	28.0%	69.0%
2003-04	53.1	74.1	29.2	65.9	29.8	69.7
2004-05	46.4	72.5	36.4	73.6	31.2	71.7
2005-06	44.8	72.6	38.9	74.2	32.1	71.6
2006-07	53.1	77.3	41.2	74.9	29.7	70.6
2007-08	51.7	76.6	39.9	75.3	28.7	69.4
2008-09	60.2	81.0	50.2	78.4	28.8	69.3
2009-10	58.5	80.5	52.1	78.0	30.4	69.8
2010-11	56.7	79.3	47.5	78.3	31.6	70.8

6. As the table shows, although 10th grade scores have increased slightly, MPS mathematics scores have improved significantly in the 4th and 8th grades since 2002-03, by 9.7 and 12.5 percentage points, respectively. Since 2005-06, MPS mathematics proficiency rates have improved by 6.3 percentage points in the 3rd grade, by 14.7 points in 5th grade, 16.8 points in 6th grade, and by 13.0 points in 7th grade. (These grade levels were not tested by the WKCE prior to 2005-06).

7. However, MPS students continue to lag behind the statewide average. In 2010-11, results from the WKCE indicate that the rate of pupils scoring either proficient or advanced in mathematics was much lower for MPS. The disadvantage for MPS compared to the state ranged from -22.6 percentage points in 4th grade to -39.2 percentage points in 10th grade.

8. In addition, MPS serves a diverse population, with high rates of students with exceptional educational needs. In 2010-11, district enrollment is 15.0% white, 23.2% Hispanic, 55.9% black, and 5.0% Asian. The state as a whole is 74.4% white, 9.3% Hispanic, 9.9% black, and 3.5% Asian. With respect to low-incomes, 77.4% of MPS pupils are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, compared with a statewide average of 39.3%. In MPS, 10.0% of pupils have limited English proficiency, versus 5.7% on average statewide, and 19% of pupils receive special education services, while 13.7% of pupils statewide receive such services. Although Wisconsin as a state has one of the lowest teen birthrates in the country, Milwaukee has one of the highest among cities, at 44 births per 1,000 girls ages 15 to 17 in 2009, with higher rates found among black teenagers and Hispanic teenagers.

9. Both Milwaukee and the state as a whole see large achievement gaps between economically disadvantaged versus non-economically disadvantaged pupils. In mathematics, the disparity between low-income pupils and higher-income pupils in Milwaukee averaged around -23 percentage points, ranging from -27.3 points in 3rd grade to -13.7 points in 10th grade in 2010-11. However, the achievement gap for low-income pupils across the state was similar. The average achievement gap for low-income pupils was -24 percentage points in mathematics statewide, ranging from a -30.4 point disadvantage in 10th grade to -21.4 points in 5th.

10. Some would argue that, given the challenges facing the city that are known to

contribute to lower pupil academic achievement, it is appropriate to provide MPS with additional resources, including for projects like the Milwaukee Mathematics Partnership. As general state aid and revenue limits are significantly reduced under the budget bill, categorical aids such as this one represent important additional resources to school districts, because they are outside of revenue limits. If the Committee felt that the program should see reductions on a par with most other GPR-funded programs, one option would be to reduce funding by a certain percentage, so that the program could continue at a reduced funding level. On the other hand, the Governor has argued that, given diminished state revenues, categorical aid programs that benefit a relatively small number of school districts should be eliminated, including the pupil academic achievement grant targeted specifically to mathematics instruction in Milwaukee.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Approve the Governor's recommendation to delete \$9,650,000 annually to eliminate base level funding for grants for improving pupil academic achievement and delete related statutory language.

2. Modify the Governor's recommendation to restore 90% of base level funding. The net funding level would be \$8,685,000 annually, for a reduction of \$965,000 compared to the base, which would result in a 10% reduction in funding from the base like most other categorical aid programs.

ALT 2	Change to Bill Funding
GPR	\$17,370,000

3. Modify the Governor's recommendation to restore 50% of base level funding. The net funding level would be \$4,825,000 annually, for a reduction of \$4,825,000 compared to the base.

ALT 3	Change to Bill Funding
GPR	\$9,650,000

4. Delete the provision.

ALT 4	Change to Bill Funding
GPR	\$19,300,000

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