



Legislative Fiscal Bureau

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2017

Joint Committee on Finance

Paper #505

Milwaukee Summer School Grants (Public Instruction -- Categorical Aids)

[LFB 2017-19 Budget Summary: Page 352, #13]

CURRENT LAW

Current law allows any school board to choose to operate summer classes, although no district is required to do so. In general, summer school funding is provided by allowing districts to include a fraction of summer school pupils in their enrollment counts. If a school board receives aid for summer school programming, it is not permitted to charge tuition to resident pupils, but may establish fees for social, recreational, or extracurricular summer classes which are not credited towards graduation or counted for state aid purposes.

GOVERNOR

Provide \$1,400,000 GPR annually for summer school grants to public schools in the Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS).

Require the MPS Board to develop a program to annually award grants to develop, redesign, or implement a summer school program to increase pupil attendance, improve academic achievement, or expose pupils to innovative learning activities. Specify that grants could be awarded to public schools located in the city of Milwaukee, except independent charter schools.

Require the State Superintendent to distribute to the Board the total amount requested by the Board to pay grants to schools under the program. Specify that the Board could not request more than the amount in the appropriation in any school year.

DISCUSSION POINTS

1. Summer school classes provide remediation for pupils who have fallen behind academically, as well as academic enrichment outside of the normal school calendar. By doing so, summer classes seek to minimize the impact of "summer learning loss," which refers to the loss of academic skills and knowledge that can occur over the summer months if pupils do not have opportunities to practice skills learned during the school year. Some research indicates that pupils who do not attend summer programs can fall behind, particularly in reading and math, and may receive lower scores on standardized tests at the beginning of a school year than they did on the same test at the end of the previous school year. Pupils from low-income families may be affected more than pupils from more affluent families who may have greater access to summer activities like camps or private lessons. As a result, some point to summer learning loss as a contributing factor to achievement gaps.

2. School districts receive funding for summer school programs by including in their membership count pupils who attended summer school in the summer prior to the start of the school year. Under current law, 48,600 minutes (810 hours) of summer school instruction is equal to one full-time equivalent (FTE) pupil. Districts can include summer school FTEs in their membership for general aid purposes, and can count 40% of their FTE summer school enrollment in the three-year rolling average pupil count for revenue limits. School districts can also receive certain categorical aids for pupils attending summer school. Transportation categorical aid is provided for pupils transported to summer school, and school districts can receive special education categorical aid for eligible expenses incurred during the summer, such as instruction required under a pupil's individualized education program (IEP). Additionally, the revenue limit three-year rolling average is used to calculate the distribution of per pupil aid, equal to \$250 per pupil in 2016-17.

3. Wisconsin administrative code states that, to be eligible for state aid, summer school academic classes or laboratory periods must be necessary for academic purposes, defined as related or similar to instruction that is offered during the rest of the school year or for which credit towards graduation is given. Courses can include the following: (a) instructional minutes, including field trips if accompanied by a DPI-licensed teacher; (b) music programs, lessons, sectionals, or clinics, if taught by a DPI-licensed teacher; (c) swimming instruction programs, if taught or directed by a DPI-licensed teacher at the site of the instruction; or (d) online classes offered to pupils in grades 7 through 12.

4. MPS's summer school program, called Summer Academy, includes the following: (a) elementary and middle school programs emphasizing reading, writing, and math skills; (b) an 8th grade promotional program for pupils who require academic intervention in order to transition to 9th grade; (c) high school programs offering credit acceleration and credit recovery for high school pupils, including online blended learning programs to recover failed credits; and (d) special education programs that help pupils maintain skills developed during the school year and prepare pupils with disabilities for life after finishing school. Academic programs are typically provided to pupils in the morning, with optional recreational programs provided in the afternoon by Milwaukee Recreation, MPS's recreation and community services department.

5. In May, 2016, the MPS Board approved a budget for the 2016-17 year that provided

\$4.0 million for summer school programming, an increase of \$1.4 million compared to 2015-16. This amount included \$2.3 million for an extended school year program for special education pupils, as well as \$1.7 million for regular education pupils. MPS data from Summer, 2016, indicates that daily attendance averaged 2,331 for K-8 pupils. Sixty-three pupils participated in the 8th grade promotional program, 57 of whom successfully completed the program's requirements, and 1,580 high school pupils earned a total of 863.5 high school credits. Additionally, 545 special needs pupils participated in special education programming.

6. In Summer, 2017, MPS's summer academy offerings will include the following: (a) 18 sites offering elementary and middle school programs; (b) one site offering the 8th grade promotional program; (c) three sites and one online option for high school pupils; and (d) special education programs including five sites for elementary school pupils and two sites for high school pupils.

7. It could be argued that additional funds for MPS summer school programming would be beneficial to address MPS pupils' low proficiency rates on statewide assessments and low graduation rates. MPS's four-year graduation rate was equal to 58.2% in 2014-15, compared to the statewide average of 88.4%. On the 2015-16 statewide assessments, 20.0% of MPS pupils in grades 3-8 and 11 scored proficient or advanced on state English language assessment, compared to a statewide average of 42.4%. On the statewide mathematics assessment, 14.6% of MPS pupils in grades 3-8 and 11 scored proficient or advanced on the statewide mathematics assessment, compared to a statewide average of 41.0%. It may be the case that expanded summer school programming would provide pupils with more classroom time to increase reading and mathematics proficiency, and could provide pupils with more opportunities to earn high school credits, resulting in a higher graduation rate.

8. It could be the case that providing additional funding for MPS summer school programming would increase the number of pupils participating in the program. Despite MPS's low proficiency rates, summer school enrollment at MPS is typically low compared with other large districts in the state. The table below compares the number of FTE pupils enrolled in summer school in Summer, 2016, with the 3rd Friday in September count for the five largest school districts in Wisconsin.

Summer School FTEs Compared to School Year FTEs, 2016-17

	<u>Total FTEs</u>	<u>Summer School FTEs</u>	
		<u>Count</u>	<u>% of Total</u>
Green Bay	21,946	581	2.6%
Kenosha	21,515	453	2.1
Madison	27,211	576	2.1
Milwaukee	78,424	210	0.3
Racine	19,822	332	1.7

9. MPS staff indicate that the additional funds provided in the budget could increase summer school participation by approximately 700 pupils each summer, increase course offerings,

and offer additional enrichment and internship opportunities. Staff indicates that funds could be used for the following: (a) additional teachers and other staff; (b) instructional materials; (c) transportation to additional summer school sites; and (d) transportation for field trips or work-based learning experiences such as internships or apprenticeships.

10. Because the bill will not go into effect until July 1 or later, grant funding for 2017-18 will not be available until after decisions about summer school have been made and the summer school program has begun. Therefore, it may be preferable to delay the start of the program until 2018-19 [Alternative A2]. On the other hand, it could be argued that school districts typically make summer school decisions before their state general aid or revenue limit amounts are determined, and therefore providing 2017-18 grants after the start of the school year would be consistent with current school finance practice.

11. Under current law, school districts are prohibited from starting school prior to September 1, with some exceptions. In its agency budget request, DPI requested statutory language that would have created an additional exception allowing MPS to start school prior to September 1 district-wide. DPI indicated that the earlier start date would provide more learning time for MPS pupils, reducing the effect of summer learning loss, and would provide pupils with more time to prepare for statewide assessments and advanced placement (AP) tests, which are typically administered in the spring. The request was not included in the Governor's budget.

12. In December, 2016, the MPS Board approved a new calendar for the 2017-18 school year, which will use the exceptions granted in current law to start school in mid-August 2017 and end in mid-May 2018 for some middle and high schools. Under DPI administrative rules, school districts may offer specialized programming for pupils before September 1. Specialized programming can include gifted and talented classes, remedial education, migrant programs, or the youth options program. For a school in need of improvement, new learning strategies may be considered specialized programming. While the rule allows certain activities for targeted groups of pupils to begin before September 1, it does not allow a school board to officially begin its term before September 1.

13. MPS plans to add an additional non-compulsory four weeks of school in June through a "J-term" pilot program at Rufus King and Ronald Reagan high schools in June, 2017, with J-term programs at other high schools and middle schools added in June, 2018. The additional term would allow pupils to take condensed courses for credit recovery or acceleration, develop academic skills, and stay on track for graduation. Traditional summer school will continue to be offered in July. The Board also expressed interest in expanding the program in future years to include additional schools.

14. The Committee may wish to consider modifying statutory language to provide an exception to the current law start date that would allow MPS schools to start prior to September 1 [Alternative B1]. DPI indicates that a change to statutory language would be required to allow additional MPS schools to start prior to September 1 in future years.

ALTERNATIVES

A. Funding

1. Approve the Governor's recommendation to provide \$1,400,000 annually for summer school grants to public schools in MPS.

ALT A1	Change to	
	Base	Bill
GPR	\$2,800,000	\$0

2. Modifying the Governor's request by deleting \$1,400,000 for summer school grants in 2017-18. Under this approach, grants would be available in 2018-19 and future years.

ALT A2	Change to	
	Base	Bill
GPR	\$1,400,000	-\$1,400,000

3. Delete provision.

ALT A3	Change to	
	Base	Bill
GPR	\$0	-\$2,800,000

B. MPS Start Date

1. Provide an exception to the current law start date that would allow MPS schools to start prior to September 1.

2. Take no action.

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