



Legislative Fiscal Bureau

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Joint Committee on Finance

Paper #275

K-12 Educational Services Division (ECB)

[LFB 2019-21 Budget Summary: Page 113, #2]

CURRENT LAW

The Educational Communications Board (ECB) currently receives no revenue specifically for K-12 education services. Gifts and grants funding is used to support staff and other costs associated with the education unit. There are 8.0 PR positions assigned to the education unit, three of which are currently filled.

GOVERNOR

Provide \$230,300 GPR annually beginning in 2019-20 as funding for K-12 educational services and reduce PR funding correspondingly.

DISCUSSION POINTS

1. In the 2015-17 budget (2015 Act 55), GPR funding for programing through what was known as the Wisconsin Media Lab was eliminated, for a reduction of \$1,073,400 GPR annually and 6.20 GPR positions. Act 55 provided \$625,000 PR and 6.20 PR positions to replace a portion of this GPR reduction, but gift moneys would be needed to support this spending and staff.
2. In 2018-19, ECB indicates that \$291,000 of gift moneys are being used to support their K-12 efforts. This funding covers salary and fringe benefit costs for three employees (a web developer and outreach and communications staff) as well as supplies and services costs. Since the K-12 unit was reconstituted after the Act 55 funding deletion, ECB has partnered with Wisconsin Public Television (WPT) at the UW, and has access to their fund raising efforts. However, because education material is not broadcast content, donors for this specific purpose are limited.
3. In its 2019-21 agency budget submission, ECB requested \$500,000 GPR annually to reinstate GPR funding at ECB for K-12 educational media production. This request included 4.0 GPR

positions, with \$190,700 for salaries, \$79,000 for fringe benefits, and \$230,300 for supplies and services annually. ECB requested a corresponding reduction in PR funding and positions. The Governor's budget would provide the requested amount of GPR for supplies and services, but does not provide the requested GPR positions and related funding.

4. ECB indicates that since the K-12 education unit was reconstituted with WPT two years ago, it has produced an online educational game (Jo Wilder and the Capitol Case), which was designed with the assistance of a cohort of 3rd to 5th grade social studies teachers as a tool to assist pupils to engage in critical thinking and historical inquiry. In addition, the unit has made two additions to its Wisconsin biographies series. There are 13 biographies in the series, which provide a variety of material that can be used in the classroom consistent with grade level academic standards.

5. In submitting its agency budget request, ECB identified a number of projects that would be developed if funding was available, including: (a) a project dealing with Wisconsin agriculture that would use online interactive media to provide an overview of important topics in agriculture education; (b) a project providing instructional resources to teach about Hmong culture, history, and emigration to Wisconsin; and (c) additional biographies for the Wisconsin biographies series. These projects were identified in the context of the full agency budget request and give an idea of the activities of the educational unit.

6. The K-12 education unit creates instructional material with a Wisconsin focus. This material is available online for public schools, private schools, and children who are home schooled. However, fund raising can be challenging because of the limited market for these materials. Staff at ECB indicate that additional state support helps leverage donor contributions.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Approve the Governor's recommendation to provide \$230,300 GPR and delete \$230,300 PR annually.

ALT 1	Change to	
	Base	Bill
GPR	\$460,600	\$0
PR	<u>- 460,600</u>	<u>0</u>
Total	\$0	\$0

2. Provide \$432,600 GPR in 2019-20 and \$500,000 GPR in 2020-21 and 4.0 GPR positions beginning in 2019-20 to fund the ECB budget request, adjusted to provide nine rather than 12 months of salary and fringe benefits funding in 2019-20. Delete corresponding amounts of PR funding and positions.

ALT 2	Change to Base		Change to Bill	
	Funding	Positions	Funding	Positions
GPR	\$932,600	4.00	\$472,000	4.00
PR	<u>- 932,600</u>	<u>- 4.00</u>	<u>- 472,000</u>	<u>- 4.00</u>
Total	\$0	0.00	\$0	0.00

3. Take no action.

ALT 3	Change to	
	Base	Bill
GPR	\$0	- \$460,600
PR	<u>0</u>	<u>460,600</u>
Total	\$0	\$0

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