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Joint Committee on Finance

Paper #656

Academic and Career Planning (DPI -- Administrative and Other Funding)

[LFB 2023-25 Budget Summary: Page 510, #8]

CURRENT LAW

The State Superintendent is required to do the following: (a) ensure that every school board is providing academic and career planning services to pupils in grades 6 to 12; (b) procure, install, and maintain information technology, including computer software, to be used statewide by school districts to provide academic and career planning services; (c) provide guidance, training, and technical assistance to school districts and their staff on how to implement the information technology and model academic and career plans; and (d) promulgate rules to implement the program.

DISCUSSION POINTS

1. The academic and career planning program was created under 2013 Act 20 (the 2013-15 biennial budget act) to equip pupils and their families with tools to make informed decisions about their postsecondary education, training, and careers. The Act required DPI to ensure that, beginning in 2017-18, every school board provides academic and career planning services to pupils enrolled in grades 6 to 12 in the district. Funding for the program, which is provided in a continuing appropriation, was first provided in 2014-15 and has totaled \$1,100,000 GPR annually.

2. An academic and career plan is a comprehensive, individualized plan developed and maintained by a pupil that includes the pupil's academic, career, personal, and social goals and the means by which the pupil will achieve those goals both before and after high school graduation. Academic and career planning services include the activities, instruction, resources, and opportunities provided by a school district to assist a pupil with developing and implementing an academic and career plan.

3. Under current Administrative Code Chapter PI 26, school districts are required to engage parents in academic and career planning by annually informing parents about the services their child receives, providing parents with multiple opportunities to participate in their child's academic and career planning, and updating parents throughout the school year on their child's progress. School districts are also required to provide information to pupils, including: (a) career awareness in the elementary grades; (b) career exploration in the middle school grades to identify personal preferences in relation to potential occupations and careers; and (c) career planning and preparation at the high school level, including school supervised work based learning experiences, instruction in career decision making and employability skills, access to career and technical education programs, access to accurate labor market information, and instruction which provides for the practical application of academic skills, applied technologies, economics, entrepreneurship education, and personal financial literacy.

4. DPI contracts with Xello, a Toronto-based software company, to provide school districts with computer software for college and career planning. DPI indicates that 417 school districts currently use the software, which is in its sixth year of use. DPI maintains contracts with each of the 12 cooperative educational service agencies (CESAs) to support the implementation of academic and career planning by subsidizing the cost of academic and career planning coordinators who provide professional development and other services to school districts located within the CESA region. DPI also contracts with the Wisconsin Center for Education Research (WCER) at the University of Wisconsin-Madison to conduct evaluations of the academic and career planning program.

5. In its agency budget request, DPI indicated that the \$1,100,000 GPR in annual program funding was provided in a continuing appropriation to allow sufficient time to identify a software vendor and delivery method for technical assistance to school districts, and the full appropriated amount was not expended in 2014-15 or 2015-16. The table below shows the program expenditures by category each year since 2016-17. As shown in the table, expenditures have exceeded the appropriated amount in each of the past six years, and are anticipated to exceed the appropriation in 2022-23. As a result, the amount of funds carried over has decreased each year and the appropriation is projected to have a shortfall of -\$54,200 for 2022-23. DPI indicates that it will seek to amend current contracts and use GPR from its general program operations appropriation to make up for the shortfall.

Academic and Career Planning Program Expenditures, 2016-17 to 2022-23

	<u>Xello Software</u>	<u>CESAs</u>	<u>WCER</u>	<u>Other*</u>	<u>Total</u>
2016-17	\$952,800	\$120,000	\$281,500	\$56,100	\$1,410,400
2017-18	959,300	180,000	284,800	46,000	1,470,100
2018-19	915,600	192,000	0	4,300	1,111,900
2019-20	920,500	234,500	200,000	57,700	1,412,700
2020-21	1,098,000	270,300	162,500	0	1,530,800
2021-22	763,000	298,250	137,500	-83,700	1,115,050
2022-23**	985,000	300,000	137,500	0	1,422,500

*Includes funding for professional development and limited-term employees, as well as accounting corrections.

**Estimated.

6. DPI indicates that the contract costs for the college and career planning software are based on the prior year enrollment of school districts that use the software. The current costs for the software total an estimated \$985,000 in 2022-23 and are expected to remain constant in 2023-24, and increase to \$1,044,000 in 2024-25, while the annual contracts with CESAs and WCER are expected to remain constant in the 2023-25 biennium. As a result, DPI indicates the projected budget shortfall is expected to be -\$322,500 in 2023-24 and -\$381,500 in 2024-25; therefore, additional funding would be required to continue the current costs of ongoing contracts for services.

7. Assembly Bill 43/Senate Bill 70 would provide \$322,500 GPR in 2023-24 and \$381,500 GPR in 2024-25 over annual base level funding of \$1,100,000 GPR to support the academic and career planning program. [Alternative 1]

8. DPI indicates that if additional funding is not provided, it would reduce the amount of training and technical assistance provided to school district staff related to advising pupils on developing academic and career plans and use of the required software. Based on the expenditures shown in the table on the previous page, it appears that the amount of the shortfall is such that funding may no longer be available for the regional coordinators placed at each CESA who provide professional development to school staff located within each CESA region. [Alternative 3]

9. The Committee could also consider providing \$322,500 GPR in 2023-24, which would fund the projected budget shortfall in the first year of the biennium, and placing \$381,500 GPR in the Committee's supplemental appropriation. [Alternative 2] Under this alternative, any unused funds after the first year could be used in the second year because the program is funded from a continuing appropriation, as noted, and DPI could request additional funds if necessary.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Provide \$322,500 GPR in 2023-24 and \$381,500 GPR in 2024-25 over annual base level funding of \$1,100,000 GPR to support the academic and career planning program.

ALT 1	Change to Base
GPR	\$704,000

2. Provide \$322,500 GPR in 2023-24, which would fund the projected budget shortfall in the first year of the biennium. Place \$381,500 in the Committee's supplemental appropriation to be released upon request by DPI.

ALT 2	Change to Base
GPR	\$704,000

3. Take no action.

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