



Legislative Fiscal Bureau

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Joint Committee on Finance

Paper #863

Grants for Health Care Credits in Dual Enrollment Programs (Wisconsin Technical College System)

[LFB 2023-25 Budget Summary: Page 696, #3]

CURRENT LAW

The statutory purposes of the Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS) include contracting with secondary schools, including tribal schools, to provide educational opportunities for high school age pupils in order to enhance their potential for benefitting from postsecondary education and for obtaining employment. WTCS also coordinates with secondary schools to facilitate the transfer of students into postsecondary technical college education through curriculum articulation and collaboration.

DISCUSSION POINTS

1. WTCS awards credits to high school pupils through the following five programs or types of dual credits: (a) Start College Now, which allows public high school juniors and seniors to take postsecondary courses at a technical college; (b) transcribed credit, which provides resources to a qualified high school teacher to deliver a full college course to pupils while in high school; (c) youth apprenticeship, which allows high school pupils to receive credit through a combination of school-based and work-based instruction under contract with a technical college; (d) a contract authorized under section 38.14 of the Wisconsin statutes, which allows public and private educational institutions to contract with technical colleges to provide high school pupils with college level instruction from a college instructor; and (e) advanced standing credit, which is awarded to students when they enter a program at a technical college that has an articulation agreement with a high school stating that one or more high school courses align to the first college level course. Students do not pay for dual enrollment courses taken through a WTCS institution. For transcribed credit courses, school districts pay the salary of the high school teacher who teaches the course, and provide classroom space and

materials, but do not pay an additional fee. For other types of credits, schools may pay a fee based on a contract between the district and the technical college.

2. WTCS reported that 77.8% of technical college credits awarded to high school pupils in 2021-22 were transcribed credits, 11.3% were awarded through the Start College Now program, 9.8% were awarded under contracts with educational institutions, 0.5% were awarded through the youth apprenticeship program, and 0.5% were awarded as advanced standing credits. WTCS indicated that 463 high schools in the state offered transcribed credits in 2021-22, and the most common types of courses offered involve business management and administration; science technology, engineering, and math (STEM); manufacturing; associate of arts or associate of science; finance; and agriculture, food, and natural resources.

3. The table below shows the number of unduplicated high school pupils and the total number of technical college credits earned by those pupils under the various dual enrollment programs in each of the last five years, as reported by WTCS in its dual enrollment publication. As shown in the table, the number of pupils and credits earned increased in each year, with the exception of the 2020-21 school year. Participation in the various dual enrollment programs in that year was negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. WTCS states that high school pupils saved a total of \$36.8 million in technical college tuition and fees (or an average of \$643 per pupil), based on the number of credits earned in 2021-22. In that same year, WTCS resident tuition for postsecondary (associate degree and technical diploma) courses was \$141.00 per credit.

**Number of Dually Enrolled High School Pupils and Credits Earned at WTCS
2017-18 through 2021-22**

	<u>Unduplicated Pupil Count</u>	<u>Total Credits Earned</u>
2017-18	46,310	190,064
2018-19	51,408	216,438
2019-20	52,543	228,769
2020-21	49,422	226,599
2021-22	57,219	256,985

4. According to a February, 2017, report from the Institute of Education Sciences, which is the statistics, research, and evaluation arm of the U.S. Department of Education, dual enrollment programs have had positive effects on student outcomes. Because dual enrollment programs are often offered for free or at a discounted tuition rate, participation in such programs reduces the overall cost of college and may increase college attendance and completion of students with lower socioeconomic statuses. In addition to reducing the cost of college, researchers found that students who participate in dual enrollment programs are more likely to complete high school and attain a college degree, and may have improved general academic achievement in high school and reduced need for development coursework in college. Dual enrollment programs may expose high school pupils to content that is otherwise not available in their school, which prepares them for the academic requirements of college while providing additional support.

5. The Wisconsin Hospital Association's 2022 Health Care Workforce Report indicates that the health care industry is facing a labor shortage due primarily to an aging population with increased healthcare demands. The report also indicates that resignations of healthcare professionals have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. The report specifies vacancy rates by type of healthcare position in Wisconsin. According to hospital personnel surveys, vacancy rates have increased in recent years for lab technicians and technologists, radiographers, respiratory therapists, and, to a lesser extent, occupational therapists. The report also indicates that, according to the U.S. Census Bureau of Labor Statistics, the health care industry had the highest number of unfilled positions across the nation in November, 2021, followed by professional and business services, manufacturing, financial activities, and accommodation and food services.

6. Assembly Bill 43/Senate Bill 70 would provide \$2,000,000 GPR annually for grants to technical colleges to reimburse the colleges for costs related to providing high school pupils dual enrollment courses related to health care. The bill would allow the System Board to determine how to distribute the grants. WTCS indicated that the amount of funding is based on current enrollment of high school pupils in dual enrollment courses related to health care. [Alternative 1a]

7. The System Board distributes \$24.1 million annually in state categorical aid funding to district boards to support grant categories relating to specific types of training and credentials. In 2021-22, the Board funded grants under nine categories, including (a) core industry; (b) career pathways; (c) workforce advancement training; (d) completion; (e) integrated education and training; (f) systemwide leadership; (g) developing markets; (h) professional growth; and (i) apprenticeship-related instruction.

8. Grants awarded under the career pathways category are for strategies to earn credentials necessary to obtain employment or advance to a higher level of employment within an occupational industry. Career pathway grants may be used for developing or expanding instruction, supportive and planning services, professional development for faculty and instructional staff, the establishment of dual credit agreements, and other activities to support students' transitions into the workforce and on to higher positions. In 2021-22, \$4.0 million was available for career pathways grants, and 11 grants were awarded to eight districts. In 2022-23, the amount was reduced to \$3.5 million, and 15 grants were awarded to nine districts, including four grants for healthcare career pathways, one of which was specifically for a dual credit academy in health care for K-12 pupils.

9. One could argue that other industries, including manufacturing, childcare, education, emergency medical services, public safety, construction, and transportation, are also facing workforce shortages and that workforce needs vary based on geographic location. If the Committee wishes to provide assistance to address workforce shortages in other career sectors, the Committee could consider providing funding to reimburse the costs of providing high school pupils dual enrollment courses for all career sectors, as determined by the System Board. [Alternative 2a]

10. If the Committee wishes to provide funding to reimburse technical colleges for the cost of providing high school pupils dual enrollment courses related to health care at a reduced cost, the Committee could consider providing \$1,000,000 GPR annually. [Alternative 1b] The Committee could also consider providing a reduced amount of funding to reimburse the costs of providing high

school pupils dual enrollment courses for all career sections, as determined by the System Board.
[Alternative 2b]

ALTERNATIVES

1. Provide funding in a new GPR appropriation for grants to technical colleges to reimburse the costs of providing high school pupils dual enrollment courses related to health care equal to:

- a. \$2,000,000 annually.

ALT 1a	Change to Base
GPR	\$4,000,000

- b. \$1,000,000 annually.

ALT 2a	Change to Base
GPR	\$2,000,000

2. Provide funding in a new GPR appropriation for grants to technical colleges to reimburse the costs of providing high school pupils dual enrollment courses related to any high demand field, as determined by the System Board, equal to:

- a. \$2,000,000 annually.

ALT 2a	Change to Base
GPR	\$4,000,000

- b. \$1,000,000 annually.

ALT 2b	Change to Base
GPR	\$2,000,000

3. Take no action.

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