



MARY FELZKOWSKI

STATE SENATOR • 12TH SENATE DISTRICT

Testimony on Senate Bill 358

Senate Committee on Education

Senator Mary Felzkowski

12th Senate District

September 16, 2021

Good morning Chair Darling and Committee Members,

Thank you for taking the time to hear testimony on Senate Bill 358.

In Wisconsin, we allow our school districts to pay their employees over 12 months for the work they perform during the school year. This enables school district employees to have a consistent monthly income and stability when it comes to receiving their paycheck and budgeting for their families. This is permitted through an exemption to the requirement that an employee be paid within 30 days of doing the work. Employees have the ability to *opt in* to this payment structure, and the majority of them choose to do that.

This bill would give cooperative educational services agencies (CESAs) the same ability. There are 12 regional CESAs across Wisconsin who provide a variety of services to their school districts, including, but not limited to: helping with trainings and leadership, coordination and communication with tech schools and colleges, providing assistance with special education programming, and hiring speech and language clinicians, school psychologists, occupational therapists, and teachers on behalf of districts.

CESAs play a vital role in our educational infrastructure in Wisconsin, and this bill will allow them to offer the same payment structure as school districts, creating parity.

Attached to my testimony, you will find letters from CESA administrators across the state requesting this change and sharing examples of how this would benefit their organizations.

Thank you for taking the time to hear my testimony and I hope you support this bill.

Cooperative Educational Service Agency 8

223 West Park Street - Gillett, WI 54124
920.855.2114 - 920.855.2299 (fax)
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David Honish, Administrator



Everyone Engaged in Educational Excellence

Topic: SB 358

To Sen. Darling and committee members,

My name is David Honish, and I am the administrator of Cooperative Educational Service Agency 8 (CESA 8), located in Gillett, WI. CESA 8 provides educational services and support to 27 member districts located in Northeastern Wisconsin.

This letter is in support of SB 358. CESA 8 currently employs educators and specialty service providers that work directly in school districts. Under current law, these professionals must be compensated within 30 days of any services rendered. Many of these employees provide direct service following the public or private school calendar of the districts they serve. For this reason, I support allowing employees to voluntarily request the ability to have their compensation divided equally of the twelve-month calendar. This option is authorized for public and private school employees working under the same certification or job classification.

I appreciate your consideration on this matter. Furthermore, I appreciate your commitment to the students, families, and educators of our state.

Thank you again for your support,

Sincerely,

David Honish
Agency Administrator
CESA 8

Good morning Chair Darling and Committee Members,

Thank you for reading my testimony in favor of SB 358. My name is Dr. Karen Wendorf-Heldt and I have the honor of serving as the Agency Administrator of CESA 9 in Tomahawk, WI.

Under current statute, school districts are allowed to pay their employees over 12 months for the work they perform during the school year. This enables school employees to have a consistent monthly income and stability when it comes to receiving their paycheck and budgeting for their families. This is currently permitted through an exemption to the statutory requirement that an employee be paid within 30 days of doing the work for which he/she was hired.

The proposed legislation would allow Wisconsin's cooperative educational service agencies (CESAs) to offer the same payment option to their employees who also work during the school year but who would wish to have those wages distributed consistently across a 12 month time period. CESAs provide a variety of services to the school districts they serve including the hiring of personnel who are then shared between school districts in their region of the state. Examples of the kind of staffing provided are speech and language clinicians, school psychologists, physical therapists, occupational therapists, nurses, etc.

CESAs play an important role in our state's educational system and the proposed legislation would create parity by allowing for the same payment structure that school districts offer to their school term employees. With the proposed amendment, for example, a speech therapist that a CESA hires on behalf of multiple districts to serve them would have the same wage payment options as a speech therapist would have if hired by a single district. Because CESAs employ similar school-term positions on behalf of the districts they serve through a cooperative service model, CESAs would find it very helpful to be able to offer this to their employees as well. It would help CESAs to attract and retain high quality staff to provide for consistency and continuity in service provision to the districts they serve.

Please vote in favor of the amendment to 109.03 (1) (b) of the state statute exempting cooperative educational service agency employees from wage payment frequency requirements as is already provided to school district and private school employees who voluntarily choose to have payment over a 12-month period for services provided during the school year.

Thank you for your consideration.

Karen Wendorf-Heldt

Karen Wendorf-Heldt, Ph.D.
Agency Administrator, CESA 9
Tomahawk, WI



Testimony in Support for SB 358

September 14, 2021

Good morning Chair Darling and Committee Members,

Thank you for your work and dedication to the students and staff of this great state. My name is Jerry Walters and I am honored to serve as the agency administrator of CESA 11, the educational service agency serving NW Wisconsin.

I am writing to express my support for SB 358, allowing our CESA the same payment options afforded to school districts. Through an exemption to current statute, school districts are allowed to pay their employees over a 12 month period for the work they perform during the traditional academic year, rather than requiring that we pay an employee within 30 days of completing the work. This enables school-year employees the opportunity for a consistent monthly income throughout the year, providing some sense of stability for budgeting purposes.

SB 358 would allow Wisconsin's CESAs (Cooperative Educational Service Agencies) the opportunity to offer the same payment options to our employees who work during the school year the same payment options as their colleagues who were hired by a school district. CESA 11 hires itinerant staff who provide services such as OT, PT, DHH, VI, S/L School Psychology, etc to a number of our small districts who do not have caseloads large enough to support a full-time specialist due to their small enrollment sizes. We would appreciate the same 12-month payment options as similar specialists who are employed by a single school district.

Please consider a vote in favor of the amendment to 109.03 (1) (b) of the state statute exempting Cooperative Educational Service Agencies (CESAs) from the wage payment frequency requirements that are already provided to our public and private school employees.

Thank you for your consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jerry Walters', is written over a faint, larger version of the signature.

Jerry Walters
Agency Administrator, CESA 11
Turtle Lake, WI



Innovative Thinking. Tailored Delivery.

September 13, 2021

The Honorable Alberta Darling
Room 122 South, State Capitol
PO Box 7882
Madison, WI 53707

RE: SB 358

Dear Senate Committee on Education:


My name is Dan Hanrahan and I am the agency administrator for Cooperative Educational Service Agency #2 (CESA 2) in Whitewater, WI.


I am writing in support of SB 358. The proposed legislation would allow CESA 2 to offer the same salary payment schedule to our nine (9) month school-year employees as our twelve (12) month employees. This would allow our nine (9) month school-year employees to have their wages distributed over a twelve (12) month period. Not only would this be beneficial to our employees but would enable CESA 2 to attract and retain critical hard-to-fill shared-staffing positions such as speech and language clinicians, school psychologists, physical therapists, occupational therapists, and more.


Yours Sincerely,


A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Daniel Hanrahan".

Daniel Hanrahan
CESA 2 Agency Administrator

cesa2.org 

262-473-1473 

info@cesa2.org 

1221 Innovation Drive, Whitewater, WI 53190 



September 14, 2021

Dear Senate Committee on Education:

I am the Agency Administrator that leads Cooperative Educational Service Agency #7 (CESA 7). CESA 7 is an educational intermediate agency which serves the State of Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) and our 38 member school districts in Eastern Wisconsin. From this position, I make the following comments and observations.

I am writing in support of SB 358. The proposed legislation would allow CESA 7 and all CESAs to offer the same salary payment schedule to our nine (9) month school-year employees as our twelve (12) month employees. This would allow our nine (9) month school-year employees to have their wages distributed over a twelve (12) month period. Not only would this be beneficial to our employees but would enable all CESAs to attract and retain critical hard-to-fill shared-staffing positions such as speech and language clinicians, school psychologists, physical therapists, occupational therapists, and more.

Please consider a vote in favor of the amendment to 109.03 (1) (b) of the state statute exempting Cooperative Educational Service Agencies (CESAs) from the wage payment frequency requirements that are already provided to our public and private school employees.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey P. Dickert, Agency Administrator
Cooperative Educational Service Agency #7



CALVIN CALLAHAN

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Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 358

Senate Committee on Education

September 16, 2021

Madam Chair and members of the committee, I appreciate you holding a public hearing on Senate Bill (SB) 358. This proposal is all about providing parity in the payment structures between school district employees and the employees for cooperative educational services agencies (CESAs).

In Wisconsin, school district employees have the ability to request that their pay be spread out over the course of 12 months for the work performed during the school year, providing payment consistency and income stability. This is permitted through an exemption to the requirement that an employee be paid within 30 days of performing the work.

This bill would give CESAs the same exemption. The 12 CESAs throughout our state provide many diverse services to their school districts, including career pathways, blended learning, driver's education, early childhood programs, academic and career planning, and youth apprenticeship programs. In CESA 9, which serves the 35th Assembly District, this bill would help benefit and retain speech and language clinicians, school psychologists, occupational therapists, Project SEARCH teachers (who help young adults with disabilities gain and maintain employment), and more.

Members of the committee, thank you again for this opportunity to testify before you today in favor of SB 358. I look forward to seeing the support for this legislation continue to grow in the days ahead.