



Legislative Fiscal Bureau

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Joint Committee on Finance

Paper #582

Minority Teacher Grant Program (DPI -- Categorical Aids)

[LFB 2019-21 Budget Summary: Page 335, #34]

CURRENT LAW

No provision.

GOVERNOR

Provide \$500,000 GPR annually to create a minority teacher grant program. Require DPI to award grants on a competitive basis to school districts to recruit minorities to teach in the school district beginning in the 2019-20 school year. Define a minority as an individual who is any of the following: (a) Black American; (b) American Indian; (c) Hispanic; or (d) a person admitted to the United States after December 31, 1975, who is either a former citizen of Laos, Vietnam, or Cambodia or whose ancestor was or is a citizen of Laos, Vietnam, or Cambodia.

Require DPI to award 50% of the total appropriation to Milwaukee Public Schools, and the remaining 50% to other school districts in the state. Additionally, require DPI to give preference in awarding funding under the remaining 50% to school districts that have a high percentage of pupils who are minorities, as defined by DPI by rule.

DISCUSSION POINTS

1. Under the proposal, grants would be awarded through a competitive process to school districts to recruit minority teachers. A minority would be defined as an individual who is any of the following: (a) Black American; (b) American Indian; (c) Hispanic; or (d) someone who is Laotian, Vietnamese, or Cambodian, and was admitted to the United States after December 31, 1975.

2. Minority pupils may benefit from being taught by an educator of the same race. A study

published by the Institute of Labor Economics in March, 2017, cites research demonstrating that elementary school pupils score higher on standardized tests when randomly assigned to a teacher of their race, and also show improvement in their attendance rates and suspension rates. The study found that African-American pupils who are assigned to an African-American teacher at least once in 3rd, 4th, or 5th grade are less likely to drop out of high school and more likely to report an interest in pursuing a college degree, with the largest effect found in low-income African-American boys.

3. A number of possible reasons have been cited for these effects. Pupils may identify more strongly with a teacher of the same race, and therefore may be more likely to view that teacher as a role model. Minority teachers may also be better able to relate to or understand their minority pupils than a white teacher, particularly if those teachers come from similar backgrounds and communities as their pupils. The effect of unintended and unconscious racial biases could also be a factor, such as if white teachers hold stereotypes about their pupils' academic abilities or behavior that influence their actions in the classroom.

4. Staffing data indicates that the percentage of Wisconsin public school teachers who are minorities is significantly lower than the percentage of pupils who are minorities. The table below shows the percentage of teachers from each race or ethnic group, based on data available from DPI staff reports, compared with the percentage of pupils from each group in 2017-18, both statewide and in Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS).

Percentage of Wisconsin Teachers and Pupils by Race, 2017-18

	Statewide		MPS	
	Teachers	Pupils	Teachers	Pupils
White	94.9%	69.9%	71.2%	11.1%
Hispanic	1.9	12.0	8.7	26.5
African-American	1.8	9.1	16.5	52.1
Asian	0.8	4.0	2.5	7.1
Two or More Race	0.3	3.8	0.7	2.6
American Indian	0.3	1.1	0.0	0.6
Pacific Islander	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1

5. Under the bill, DPI would be required to award 50% of the total appropriation to MPS, and the remaining 50% to other school districts in the state. At DPI's agency briefing, the State Superintendent indicated that MPS and other urban districts are targeted by a number of proposals in the budget bill because of their concentration of minorities and low-income pupils, and because of the persistent achievement gaps in those districts. In 2017-18, MPS educated 50.0% of the African-American pupils enrolled in public schools in Wisconsin, and 25.9% of the state's total minority pupil population. Therefore, it could be argued that specifying that 50% of the minority teacher grant program funds would be distributed to MPS represents a use of funds that is proportionate to the distribution of minorities in the state.

6. The Budget in Brief document indicates that the Governor's intent is for the grant program to replace the minority teacher loan program under the Higher Education Aids Board

(HEAB), which would be deleted under a separate provision of the bill. A separate issue paper under HEAB will address that proposal.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Approve the Governor's recommendation to provide \$500,000 annually to create a minority teacher grant program to award grants to school districts to recruit minorities to teach in the school district.

ALT 1	Change to	
	Base	Bill
GPR	\$1,000,000	\$0

2. Take no action.

ALT 2	Change to	
	Base	Bill
GPR	\$0	-\$1,000,000

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