2013-15 Budget Issue Paper
Statewide Student Information System

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Governor's Proposal:

Provide $13,875,900 GPR in 2013-14 and 1.0 GPR position, and $1,590,500 PR in 2013-14 and $2,955,200 PR in 2014-15 and 3.0 PR positions beginning in 2013-14 for the procurement, implementation, and ongoing support of a statewide student information system (SSIS) as required by 2011 WI Act 32, the biennial budget bill. Modify the current law GPR appropriation for SSIS from a biennial to a continuing appropriation. PR-S authority from per pupil fees charged to districts.

DPI Position: Support

Rationale for Support:

❖ **The SSIS improves data quality, while saving districts staff time and money.**

Based on a survey of school districts, the cost to districts to license student information systems is more than $8 million annually and the cost to enter data required for state and federal reporting is more than $31 million annually. Much of this latter cost is driven by the fact that districts currently have to reenter data into different databases to meet various reporting requirements. This duplicative work will be eliminated with a SSIS that centrally stores student information and performs automatic checks on the data in real time. Additionally, the experience in other states has shown that single statewide contracts lead to more favorable per pupil rates by vendors, further reducing costs.

❖ **A student information system is the core operational system of a school district.**

A student information system is a software application that currently varies in complexity from district to district, from simple database tracking systems to highly sophisticated programs used for the admissions process, class and teacher scheduling, absence and discipline records, demographic information, pupil assessments, and academic progress. Districts also use these systems to comply with federal and state reporting requirements.

While the SSIS will replace local student information systems over a five year transition period, districts will continue to select their own human resource, finance, and other local data systems.

❖ **The SSIS will provide the groundwork for school accountability and educator effectiveness efforts statewide.**

The SSIS will provide one consistent set of data into the department's longitudinal data system for every school district, charter school, and private school that participate in the system. Consistent, clean data in this data warehouse system is essential to statewide efforts around school accountability, educator effectiveness, the evaluation of early childhood programs, and evaluating college and career readiness through the new SMARTER and ACT assessment initiatives.

❖ **The transition to the SSIS will be paid for by the state, not local districts.**
The appropriation in this budget covers the costs of districts implementing the SSIS including data migration and local staff training.

❖ **The SSIS empowers parents, students, and teachers in improving academic achievement.**
Having a SSIS will provide a level of familiarity for parents and students. As families move, parents and students will be able to access student and parent information in the same way as they did in their prior school district. The same is true for teachers who will, for the first time, have consistency as they move from one district to another, preventing the need for retraining. Most importantly, however, the SSIS will equalize the types of data available to all school districts to use to improve student achievement. Many smaller districts, for instance, will be able to access data in ways that may have been beyond their budgets.

❖ **The SSIS will enhance data security.**
The SSIS will be hosted on more secure servers than is currently the case in some districts.

❖ **The SSIS is an ongoing initiative.**
2011 Wisconsin Act 32 required the state superintendent of public instruction to work with the Office of the Governor to establish a SSIS to be used to collect and maintain information about pupils enrolled in public schools. The act also allowed the state superintendent to charge a fee to any person that uses the SSIS. In November 2011, the Joint Committee on Finance (JCF) voted to allow for an exception to allow a school district to use software different than the state system provided they met certain criteria.

The Governor's proposal will provide the resources and funding for the department to meet its statutory requirements to establish a statewide student information system within the statutory five-year window.