

May 22, 2014

Dear District Administrators:

In recent weeks, the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) has been in contact with several school districts regarding their concerns about Course Options, a new law enacted as part of 2013 Wisconsin Act 20 and replacing part-time open enrollment. One of the main concerns we have heard pertains to the future of dual enrollment courses that are offered in some Wisconsin high schools in partnership with a University of Wisconsin (UW) institution. To that end, I am pleased to share with you the announcement from UW System President Ray Cross (<http://www.wisconsin.edu/news/2014/r140522.htm>). The UW System is proposing to fully fund what had previously been the student tuition charge for UW dual enrollment courses for the 2014-15 school year.

This solution is a win-win for the students of Wisconsin who wish to participate in these courses and the school districts that offer them in partnership with a UW institution. It ensures that, for next school year, districts will not be asked to contribute more for these programs than they already do – through the salary and benefits of the high school teacher who serves as the adjunct instructor, the classroom facilities that the high school provides, and other in kind contributions made by the high school. Critically, this solution also ensures that low income students who were previously priced-out of these dual enrollment programs by the cost of tuition and the lack of financial aid will now be eligible to earn college credits alongside their more affluent classmates.

I thank President Cross for stepping up to the plate with funding so these courses can continue, and I have committed to working with him, Governor Walker, legislative leaders, and other PK-16 stakeholders to make improvements to the Course Options program for the future. We all share the same goal of ensuring that every Wisconsin child has as many opportunities as possible to access the rigorous coursework that will help them succeed in college, career, and life. Thanks to today's announcement, there is one less barrier to offering our students these opportunities.

As we continue the important work of improving Course Options for the future, we know that many of you continue to have questions and concerns about this new program. As we have shared in the past, DPI has created a website (<http://courseoptions.dpi.wi.gov/>) that includes information about the requirements of the new law. This site now includes Frequently Asked Questions that we will continue to update as new questions or issues arise.

As always, please continue to contact us with any questions or concerns you might have about Course Options or any issue facing public education in Wisconsin. Thank you for your continued partnership and your leadership on behalf of Wisconsin students.

Sincerely,



Tony Evers, PhD  
State Superintendent

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