

**Assembly Committee on Education**  
**February 19, 2014**

**Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction**  
**Testimony on 2013 Assembly Bill 749**

Thank you to Chairman Kestell and members of the committee for the opportunity to testify before you today. My name is Bob Soldner and I am the Director of the School Financial Services Team at the Department of Public Instruction. I am here today on behalf of State Superintendent Tony Evers to testify for information only on Assembly Bill 749 (AB 749).

AB 749 would provide additional flexibility for school districts as they schedule their calendars while keeping in statute a minimum number of hours all school districts are required to offer regular instruction.

This flexibility is something school districts have repeatedly requested. In fact, the requirement for school to be held for 180 days is the most common waiver proposal the department receives from school districts every year.

AB 749 would provide a solution in how to treat online classes for purposes of summer school, and now interim session, in state statute. School districts have in the past wanted to offer online or blended learning opportunities and the department has been unable to recognize those classes for aid purposes. This bill will allow us to do so and, as a result, create additional options for the delivery of instruction.

Additionally, the department has received inquiries from some schools who would like to move to a year round calendar to address academic needs. A major barrier to this has been the realization that this would result in an inability to provide interim session courses due to a lack of state aid. The Senate companion to this bill included language to fix this problem and thus provide schools and districts with another scheduling option moving forward. We understand that there is a substitute amendment (Assembly Substitute Amendment 1) to AB 749 that would include this language. If that amendment is approved we will be in support of the bill moving forward.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.