

**Assembly Task Force on Youth and Workforce Readiness
September 10, 2015**

**Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction
Testimony for the Speaker's Assembly Task Force on Youth and Workforce Readiness**

Good Morning. Thank you Chairman Kulp for inviting the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) to offer testimony for the Speaker's Assembly Task Force on Youth and Workforce Readiness. Thank you Task Force members for your time today.

My name is Sheila Briggs and I am the Assistant State Superintendent in the Division for Academic Excellence at the Department of Public Instruction. I am happy to be here today to share information about the work that DPI is engaged in to support youth workforce readiness.

Wisconsin is a national leader in graduation rates, ACT scores, and Advanced Placement results. Under the leadership of State Superintendent Tony Evers, DPI is advancing education reforms to support our vision that every Wisconsin student graduates from high school, college and career ready. We are excited that Speaker Vos created this Task Force because we feel the task forces' goal of "putting youth in the best shape possible to enter the workforce" is in direct alignment with the work of the Department in a number of areas. I would like to share with you some information about work already in progress.

College and Career Readiness

The foundation for everything we do is based upon the vision, every child a graduate, college and career ready. A student graduating (or not) is easy to measure. But being college and career ready is not as clear cut. Wisconsin has defined what we mean by college and career ready, and I think you will be interested in that definition. First of all, when we say "college", we are talking about all types of post-secondary education, including our world-class technical college system. And as you can see, college and career readiness is much more than academic preparation; which will always be a priority, but we are looking for much more. Students need to be ready for workbased training, meeting the high standards of the military, or participating in an apprenticeship. The Wisconsin way of college and career readiness also values social and emotional competence and includes the skills and habits we collectively value. We are teaching our students the employability skills (or soft skills) to become responsible employees and engaged citizens for their future.

Wisconsin Examples:

- DPI is the lead agency for a Wisconsin team called the College and Career Readiness Partnership, consisting of leaders from DPI, CESA, WTCS, UW System, and WAICU that have been collaborating over the last four years. We have been working to ensure that efforts around college and career readiness are aligned K-16.

- State Superintendent Evers is collaborating with WMC’s Wisconsin Future Project to engage business leaders in a project to implement the CCSSO Task Force Recommendations, which include:
 - Enlist the employer community as a lead partner in defining the pathways and skills most essential in today’s economy
 - Set a higher bar for the quality of career preparation programs enabling all students to earn a meaningful postsecondary degree or credential.
 - Make career readiness matter to schools and students by prioritizing it in accountability systems.

Academic and Career Planning

The Academic and Career Planning initiative is one part of a comprehensive approach to support ALL students, not just in one particular job sector, to manage their learning based on their goals. ACP service delivery builds on the long history of CTE in schools, but it is reimagined. The purpose of ACPs are to emphasize the importance of class selection aligned with one’s future goals and provide opportunities and experiences to students in order to ensure students and families make informed postsecondary plans. These opportunities will be provided in partnership with families and the community. We are currently nearing the end of the rule process for PI-26 (included in packet) which will ultimately allow school districts to have the autonomy to determine local implementation strategies that work for their school district and community.

DPI is partnering with 25 pilot school districts to help define ACP professional development and implementation support service needs. In November, there will be a statewide ACP Conference in which school districts can send teams of individuals, including counselors, teachers, and administrators. A special pre-conference session will take place with the goal of developing strategies to support ongoing relationships among education, business, and other community stakeholders.

Wisconsin Examples:

Some of our school districts are well on their way to implementing Academic and Career Planning Services. Whitewater High School...

- Requires Career & Academic Portfolios & presentations to graduate
- 92% agree ACP helps postsecondary planning
- 86% agree ACPs helped to set and achieve goals
- 100% of teachers and community members agree students discover connections between interests and career options
- ACT scores improved one whole point
- Attendance rate increased, Number of failures decreased, Class GPA increased

Career and Technical Education Programming (CTE)

CTE is one of the most important aspects of a school’s delivery of ACP services. I have provided a copy of our 16 page CTE brochure that gives an overview of CTE and the data behind this programming in your packet. These six broad content areas (Agriculture and Natural Resources, Business and Information Technology, Family and Consumer Science, Health Science, Marketing, and Technology and Engineering) allow students to begin to explore the relevance of their academics and how that applies to career areas.

CTE courses are built from a set of standards rooted in business and industry practices. CTE standards include 21st century skills (some call them employability skills, others call them soft skills) that are an important part of career readiness. You have a handout that explains these Wisconsin Common Career Technical Standards—they are common (or the same) in all six sets of CTE standards.

Another powerful component to our CTE programs is our six Career and Technical Student Organizations. In addition to coursework, CTE provides co-curricular opportunities to expand on learning in careers through CTSOs— DECA, FBLA, FFA, FCCLA, HOSA, Skills USA. You also have a handout on these programs.

Wisconsin Examples:

- Data shows CTE Concentrators (students that have taken 3 or more sequenced CTE courses) graduate at higher rates than non-CTE participants. (Page 14 in CTE Brochure) 96.5% graduated compared to 88.2% of non-CTE participants.
- Data shows that for Special Populations Students (academically disadvantaged, students with disabilities, English Language Learners, and economically disadvantaged students) graduation rates are higher. The benefits of CTE to special populations, as illustrated by the data, show special population students enrolled in CTE courses graduate at a rate of 90.6% compared to 79.7% for those students not enrolled in CTE. Those students who took 3 or more CTE courses (CTE Concentrators) graduated at the even higher rate of 92.6%.
- The Beloit School District is a great example, (that you are going to hear more about today) of how a school district placed a high priority on CTE programming, the changes they made, and the results they are getting. There are many strong examples across the state, but until we have these choices for all students, there is still work to be done.

Work-Based Learning experiences vary from short term job shadowing to fully integrated paid internships through State Certified Skill Standards Co-op and Youth Apprenticeship. These experiences are offered by the school district as part of a comprehensive career (school-to-work) exploration and preparation. In your folder there is a brochure that illustrates different work-based learning options.

School supervised work-based learning reinforces the connections between work and school, provides an opportunity for meaningful contact with adults/mentors, improved their chances for successful employment as young adults, and helps solidify career interests.

In some cases, competing priorities and lack of resources prevent many school districts from offering an extensive array of work-based learning options. The Career and Technical Education Incentive grants provided a valuable funding source to promote CTE programs that result in students graduating from high school and earning industry recognized credentials. These grant funds were first made available in the second year of the 13-15 biennial budget for \$3 million and were continued in the 15-17 biennial budget for 6 million over the 2 years. We are grateful for this support as it provided 224 school districts with valuable funding in 2014-15 for offering these programs. We worked closely with our colleagues at the Department of Workforce

Development and the Wisconsin Technical College System to administer this program and we look forward to ongoing collaboration around this important initiative.

Wisconsin Examples:

Green Bay Area Public Schools (GBAPS) & Broadway Automotive:

GBAPS assigns a full time staff person as a Director of College, Career, & Community Readiness to find, develop, and support business relationships for quality talent development and articulation with industry and college. Recently, a need for automotive programming was determined. GBAPS reached out through current partnership channels to find willing partners. Within six days, David Cuene of Broadway Automotive donated \$25,000 and found additional funding partners that resulted in a total of \$170,000 raised and an upgrade of equipment and facilities. Still pursuing national auto certification, the students earn credit by taking courses at the district allowing them immediate advancement into their programs at Northeast Wisconsin Technical College, feeding the local community with desired technicians.

Precision Plus:

Precision Plus offers youth apprenticeships and internships so students can gain exposure to a manufacturing environment under the guidance of an experienced mentor. Precision Plus also hosts Elkhorn's Manufacturing Career Panel, bringing in representatives from manufacturing industries across the county to discuss with students the many opportunities in manufacturing careers and the skills and experiences employers are looking for. Precision Plus generously provides ongoing facility tours to students and parents and is developing on-site classes to train students from neighboring schools in high-demand manufacturing skills. Their commitment is further recognized by keeping a dedicated business-educator liaison on staff.

Appleton Area School District & Willems Marketing:

The [Willems Student Marketing Team](#), Advanced Marketing course requires that students engage in a yearlong internship with the Appleton/Fox Valley Community. Students work with clients in the Fox Valley to develop marketing strategies for their companies and organizations. Students collaborate with one another each day at the Willems Student Marketing Team Office and are required to schedule meetings with their clients to present ideas and receive feedback for project continuation. Students have to prepare marketing materials and concepts for client work which requires peer collaboration and continuous improvement thinking. Students are accountable for their time and have to record hours spent on projects. When problems occur with client work, students have to engage with the client and with one another to find creative solutions and then re-adjust their work and deadlines.

State Superintendent Evers' Business Friends of Education–The business Friends of Education (BFoE) awards program is being revamped to remove limits on number of business-education partnerships that are recognized and better leveraging existing partnerships. We are partnering with WMC's Future Wisconsin Project to engage both the education and business community around partnership activities that support students' academic and career plans.

Business-Education partnerships can enhance virtually any educational initiative in a variety of ways. The new BFoE program will help DPI identify effective partnerships so we can share best practices and encourage more business education partnership throughout the state.

Statewide Partnerships

In order to be successful and expand the opportunities available to students at the state level we collaborate with multiple agencies and organizations. For example, in family and consumer sciences, a partnership with the Wisconsin Restaurant Association supports school districts as they implement culinary arts programs and other work-based learning programs including Prostart which equips students with the knowledge and skills necessary for the foodservice industry.

There are numerous partnerships in the area of technology education. This includes efforts with the Wisconsin Automotive and Truck Dealers Association where each summer professional development is offered for Technology Education teachers to receive industry training in the automotive services sector. This partnership is critical to ensure that teachers have the training necessary to offer certificate programs where students train for industry certification.

DPI supports the efforts of the Wisconsin Agriculture Education and Workforce Development Council. This council is focused on the attraction, development, and retention of the agriculture workforce required to grow Wisconsin's agricultural industry, food, and natural resource systems. In addition, Agriculture Education and the FFA program have a unique and strong support system in the Wisconsin FFA Foundation, Inc. The Foundation, with support from individuals and businesses, raised over \$555,000 to provide leadership programs, awards, and career focused opportunities for FFA members. This record breaking fundraising year means even greater financial support for agricultural education and FFA members around the state.

In summary, there is a great deal of work happening around the State of Wisconsin to ensure our students graduate college and career ready. Some of the things I've mentioned are fairly new reforms that are just beginning to take shape. Others are long standing practices in some schools and districts, but have not taken hold in others. Every year we see amazing success stories in schools all across the state. As you heard from State Superintendent Evers in the video at the beginning, he spends every February touring some of the successful CTE programs in Wisconsin. I personally know he won't be satisfied until he's had a chance to see every child have access to all these same opportunities. So there is much work yet to be done.

Thank you Task Force members. As I stated earlier, DPI is actively involved in the work of youth readiness and shares your enthusiasm for ensuring our students are ready to enter the workforce. We are excited that the Task Force is engaged in this important work and we are happy to discuss any of what I presented in further detail. I have provided you with handouts covering much of what I have talked about today for your further review and welcome any questions you have at this time.