

To: Senate Committee on Education and Government Reform

From: Dee Pettack, Legislative Liaison, DPI

Date: April 2, 2015

Re: Statement on Senate Bill 59

The Department of Public Instruction (DPI) offers the following statement for information on Senate Bill 59 (SB 59).

Earning a high school diploma demonstrates that a graduate is ready to be successful in the next steps of life. As such, reducing the need for college remediation and improving readiness of high school students are priorities shared by both DPI and the UW System. Both agencies are currently collaborating to address remediation issues and overall readiness for students who attend any UW System school.

Several years ago, DPI overhauled Wisconsin's English Language Arts and Mathematics Standards. Leaders from business, commerce, workforce, and higher education were convened to tell us what they expected from Wisconsin's high school graduates. As a result, Wisconsin's new academic standards for mathematics and English language arts are higher and more rigorous than the previous standards. We heard from faculty at public and private colleges and universities throughout the state who support Wisconsin's higher standards and that their implementation will help to reverse a trend of too many incoming students needing remedial education in mathematics.

DPI has the following concerns with the proposal as currently drafted:

- The bill does not provide a provision related to non-traditional students who may have exited high school years ago and are now returning to finish their degree.
- SB 59 requires UW campuses to track high school students and create a report specifically for the legislature. Sharing that report with the schools, school boards, and parents who may have more information about non-reported factors, opposed to or in addition to sharing it with the legislature, may be useful.
- It is unclear what methods will be used to delineate between the variance in tests and proficiency scores used to determine mathematics and English remediation at UW System schools and how that will be reflected in the reported data.
- The proposal is unclear as to the protections it will provide to maintain student privacy under the new reporting requirement.

DPI will continue to work with our educational partners around the state on college readiness. We want to make sure that all our students are on the path to success in the next stage of their academic career.