

News Release

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WEOP college tours

MADISON—Wisconsin Educational Opportunity Program (WEOP) took to the road during the end of June and mid-July to give nearly 60 students an opportunity to visit colleges and universities they might not have dreamed they could attend.

“We created these trips to show our high-achieving students some realistic postsecondary options they may not have considered or may have thought were out of their reach,” said Rick Emerson, a WEOP adviser.

Emerson notes that, for WEOP students, studying at a prestigious college or university can feel like an unrealistic goal. Yet, these schools tend to provide substantial aid programs and other resources specifically designed for students from underrepresented backgrounds.

“We want college to be an option for all students interested in taking that path,” said State Superintendent Tony Evers. “These opportunities provided by WEOP make the possibility of college a reality for many Wisconsin students.”

On the first trip, which drew from Racine and Milwaukee schools, 28 students embarked on June 24 to tour Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU), including Howard University, Morgan State University, Hampton University, Norfolk State University, and North Carolina A&T. The students were selected based on their participation in WEOP during the past year, their GPA, and their response to an essay question: “how would a trip like this benefit you and help you to plan for your future?”

In addition to providing students with the opportunity to see and experience potential colleges, the HBCU tour included cultural enrichment. While in Washington D.C. to visit Howard University, students also visited the National Mall and monuments, the National Aquarium, and the Smithsonian African American and African Art museums. The group returned to Milwaukee on June 29.

Comprised of students from WEOP locations throughout Wisconsin, the Ivy League tour headed east on July 8 and returned July 14. The students traveled to a number of elite schools on the East Coast,

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including Yale, Cornell, Harvard, and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). They also did some sightseeing along the way, including a guided tour of the Freedom Trail in Boston. Like the HBCU tour, students were selected based on GPA, involvement with WEOP, and responses to the essay prompt “if there was only one spot left on this trip, why would we choose you to go?”

“The WEOP summer college tour was a very fun and informative experience. I learned about many college opportunities I didn’t know I had and was able to have fun while still learning about all of the places we visited,” said one student. Another student said “it was a great experience and I wouldn’t have been able to do it without the tour.”

WEOP’s mission is to prepare youth and adults to pursue higher educational opportunities by providing college and career readiness programs, resources, and support. Through a mix of federal grants, all WEOP programs are fully funded, so the youth attending the two college tours had an opportunity to visit colleges without the costs of transportation, food, or housing.

Overall, student feedback was enthusiastic. Students emphasized the excitement of being on college campuses, the utility of learning about their options, and the thrill of traveling to a different, and for many students, new part of the country.

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NOTES: A list of schools that had Wisconsin Educational Opportunity Program students attending one or both of the college tours follows. This news release is available electronically at <https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/news-release/dpinr2018-65.pdf>.

WEOP College Tours

Students Attend the Following Schools

Historically Black Colleges and Universities Tour (June 24 – June 29)

Bay View High School (Milwaukee)

Milwaukee High School of the Arts

Riverside University High School (Milwaukee)

Rufus King International High School (Milwaukee)

South Division High School (Milwaukee)

Washington Park High School (Racine)

William Horlick High School (Racine)

Ivy League Tour (July 8 – July 14)

Ashland High School

Bayfield High School

DC Everest High School (Weston, Schofield, Rothschild)

Eau Claire Memorial High School

Eau Claire North High School

Green Bay East High School

Green Bay West High School

Ronald Reagan High School (Milwaukee)

Rufus King International High School (Milwaukee)

Wausau West High School