



Luther S. Olsen

State Senator

14th District

TO: Senate Committee on Education
FROM: Senator Luther Olsen and Representatives Hebl and Jagler
DATE: Thursday, August 17, 2017
SUBJECT: Testimony for Senate Bill 301

Thank you members of the Senate Committee on Education for holding a public hearing today on Senate Bill 301.

Currently, the only online summer or interim session classes that qualify for state aid must fulfill a high school graduation requirement in either English, social studies, math, science, or physical education. We introduced SB 301 after hearing from a number of people that were interested in expanding this requirement to include any class that fulfills a graduation requirement.

This legislation will expand what classes qualify for state aid from its current list to include classes in health education as well as classes that count toward the number of credits required for graduation in any combination of vocational education, foreign languages, and fine arts.

We believe this bill will be very beneficial to school districts as it will allow them more flexibility in determining which additional classes they may offer. The ability for school districts to be able to offer additional classes that are required will be especially beneficial to students who need credit recovery in order to graduate on time. It will also help students who are planning out their schedules get the credits they need in order to fulfill graduation requirements no matter which requirement they may still need.

Thank you, members. I ask for your support and would be more than happy to answer any questions.

Senate Committee on Education
August 17, 2017

**Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction
Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 301**

Senator Olsen and members of the committee, thank you for engaging around expanding summer learning opportunities for students in Wisconsin. The Department of Public Instruction (DPI) is supportive of Senate Bill 301, as it aligns to our efforts to have more kids participate in summer learning.

As many of you know, DPI has been working to expand summer learning opportunities for students. As part of that effort, we recently led a cross-sector effort in Milwaukee to increase summer school attendance that resulted in tremendous successes this year.

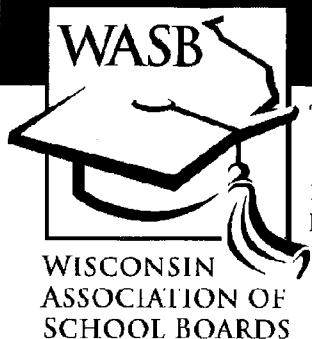
Now in its second year, "Hot Summer MKE" is a central hub website for fun educational summer activities. This year we ran a digital campaign to promote the site, which generated over 1.3 million ad views, sending almost 22,000 people to HotSummerMKE.com. For comparison, we had around 3,400 people visit the site last year. So, we had a 650 percent increase in the web traffic to the site!

Most importantly, that is translating into real increases in summer school participation. MPS' early registration increased over 11 percent and their attendance/participation jumped over 22 percent compared to last year! These are big numbers.

DPI appreciates Senator Olsen and Representative Hebl's leadership on this important issue. We know students experience significant learning loss when they do not participate in educational activities during the summer months.

We need to actively work against the "summer slide" and increasing the options students have to access summer learning opportunities is part of the solution, which is why we are happy to offer our support to Senate Bill 301.

Thank you for your time today – I am happy to answer any questions you may have.



"Leadership in Public School Governance"

JOHN H. ASHLEY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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PHONE: 608-257-2622 FAX: 608-257-8386

TO: Members, Senate Committee on Education
FROM: Dan Rossmiller, WASB Government Relations Director
DATE: August 17, 2017
RE: **SUPPORT for SENATE BILL 301**, relating to summer school and interim session classes.

The Wisconsin Association of School Boards (WASB), on behalf of all 422 public school boards in the state of Wisconsin, **supports** Senate Bill 301. This bill supports increased summer learning by expanding the types of online summer or interim session classes that qualify for state aid and that are offered to students entering grades 9 to 12 in the fall and, in certain cases, to students entering grades 7 and 8 in the fall.

Under current law, in order for an online summer or interim session class to qualify for state aid, it must be taught by a DPI-licensed teacher and the school board must determine that the online class fulfills a statutory requirement for high school graduation as specified under s. 118.33 (1) (a) 1, Wis. Stats. in: (a) English, including writing composition; (b) social studies, including state and local government; (c) mathematics, including certain computer sciences and certain career and technical education classes; (d) science, including certain agriculture and career and technical education classes; and (e) physical education. (While state statutes specify a minimum of three credits each of math, social studies and science, four credits of English, and one-half credit of health education, each school board determines the total number of additional credits it requires students to earn in order to graduate with a high school diploma. On average, boards require about 25 credits to graduate.)

Under current law online summer school or interim session classes in most of the statutorily required content areas qualify for state aid. There is one notable exception. Current law does not allow online summer school or interim session classes in health education, which is statutorily required for graduation, to qualify for state aid. (State law provides that students may fulfill their health education requirement in any grade between grade 7 and grade 12.) Further, current law does not allow elective classes not statutorily required for graduation to qualify for state aid when they are offered online in summer or interim sessions.

Senate Bill 301 would expand the online summer or interim session classes that qualify for state aid to include classes the school board determines fulfill either the statutory graduation requirement in health education or classes the school board determines meet its own requirements to count toward the number of credits it requires for graduation. Under the bill online classes in any combination of vocational education, foreign languages, fine arts, and other courses that the school board determines meets the requirements for high school graduation would be eligible for state aid.

To qualify to be aided, online classes in these subject areas must also comply with all other state summer or interim session course requirements (e.g., fees, partnerships, academic courses, etc.) and must provide 8,100 minutes of direct instruction to earn one (1) credit to be eligible to count students for membership. A district must document and retain records used in the calculation of the instructional minutes generated for each such class.

This bill will enable schools to provide additional educational and enrichment opportunities to summer school and interim session students in an online format and will enable students to earn valuable graduation credits at a time and through a means that is convenient to them. In short, this bill will increase summer learning opportunities.

For the reasons indicated, the WASB supports Senate Bill 301. Thank you for the opportunity to address the committee today.

Testimony of State Senator Lena C. Taylor
Senate Committee on Education
Senate Bill 301 – Summer School and Interim Session Classes
August 17, 2017

Chairman Olsen, members of the committee, thank you for allowing me the opportunity to submit written testimony for Senate Bill 301, relating to online summer school and interim session classes. I am proud to co-author this important bill. Under current law, online summer courses that qualify for state aid must fulfill a high school graduation requirement such as English, math, or science. This bill will expand the types of courses that qualify for state aid to include health and vocation education, foreign languages, and the fine arts. This bill will not reduce access to required coursework. Instead, it expands opportunities for students to explore high-demand career options. Additionally, it will help schools receive financial support to continue and expand summer online education.

Senate Bill 301 can give students in underserved rural and urban areas more options to explore career pathways. Budget and staff constraints may limit what courses are offered. This is an even greater concern during the summer and interim sessions. Expanding the types of online education that can be covered by state aid will help schools support important summer coursework. In addition, this bill may encourage schools to expand or, in some cases, offer online summer education for the first time.

Expanding educational and career opportunities is particularly important for me. In my home district of Milwaukee, many of our children attend Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS). In 2016, only 18.4 percent of MPS students grades three through eight were proficient at language arts. This is particularly distressing considering that statewide, 42.7 percent of students grades three through eight, were proficient. We know that when we fail to invest in our children's early childhood education that it affects their educational outcomes in the future. Low proficiency in grades three through eight can result in failure to complete significant milestones such as attaining a high school diploma or attending college.

There is no doubt that education has important implications for household lifetime earnings and our state's workforce readiness. I would like to do a lot more to ensure that all of our children have an opportunity to receive a quality education that is extensive and robust. While my Republican colleagues and I have our disagreements on what education should look like in Wisconsin, I am glad we are able to work together on Senate Bill 301. It is an important step for schools and students.

Chairman Olsen, members of the committee, I ask for your support for Senate Bill 301. Students are Wisconsin's future. We should make it easier for students who are making the extra effort during the summer to meet requirements and explore careers. Likewise, we need to support our schools and make sure they have the resources they need to implement new and innovative programs. Senate Bill 301 accomplishes both of these goals and I urge the Committee to support it wholeheartedly.



STATE REPRESENTATIVE
GARY HEBL
46TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

Testimony on Senate Bill 301

8/17/17

Good morning. Thank you to the Committee and Chairman Olsen for hearing this bill today.

Senate Bill 301 is a short, simple bill. It would expand the types of online classes offered as summer classes or interim session classes that qualify for state aid. SB 301 would ensure that summer school classes in health education, vocational education, foreign languages, and fine arts would be eligible for reimbursement from the state if they fulfill graduation requirements or count towards credits needed for graduation.

In crafting this bill, we worked with representatives from the Wisconsin Association of School Boards and the Sun Prairie Area School District.

This bill will give greater flexibility to school districts that utilize online classes during the summer to fulfill graduation requirements. Many families are mobile during the summer months, going on vacations or living in a summer home. This bill would allow for students that want to take certain classes, but might not otherwise be able, to take those classes remotely. Expanding the kinds of classes that qualify for state aid will help to fight summer slide as well as allow credit deficient students to catch up and graduate on time.

One of the types of classes that will qualify for aid are online health education classes. Health education classes are required for graduation in every district. In Sun Prairie, the in-person health education classes offered by the Sun Prairie Area School District in the summer fill up very quickly. Unfortunately, under current law, online health classes are not eligible for reimbursement from the state, which can be seen as a disincentive to offer more online health classes in the summer. Under this bill, allowing online health classes to qualify for reimbursement would open the door for more schoolchildren to be able to take online health classes, helping them to fulfill a graduation requirement and keep them on the road to graduating on time- or even early. It also allows the students more flexibility, allowing them to take classes that may not otherwise fit in to their preferred school year schedule, which may include advanced world language classes such as Spanish 5.

In short, this bill provides flexibility to both schools and students. Schools will have more control to make decisions about which classes they can offer students in the summer, and in turn students will have more options when thinking about which classes they can take.

We also will be introducing an amendment to this bill on the advice of Legislative Council. The amendment is a technical fix that adds a cross reference. The bill expands the list of courses that are eligible for state aid, but, as currently drafted, does not explicitly incorporate those additional courses into the process for calculating state aid. Without this amendment, there could be confusion about how state aid should be paid for those additional courses. I have included a copy of that amendment for the members of the committee.

I want to thank the members of the committee for hearing my testimony on SB 301, and I will now take any questions that you might have.

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August 17, 2017

Senator Olsen and members of the Education Committee thank you for the opportunity to speak in favor of Senate Bill 301. The Wisconsin Rural Schools Alliance supports this Bill because it gives districts added flexibility in offering courses. It also gives students needed flexibility in scheduling, especially in rural districts where offerings are limited and may conflict during the school year. As a former High School Principal scheduling can become very tricky in smaller districts especially in Advanced Placement and college level courses where there is only one section. Because of these singletons students have a hard time making a schedule work because of course conflicts. By expanding the summer offerings through this SB 301 students will have more options and flexibility to make their school year schedule work.

Thank you for listening and I would be happy to answer questions.

Kim Kaukl

Executive Director of the Wisconsin Rural Schools Alliance