



Legislative Fiscal Bureau

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May 6, 2014

TO: Members
Joint Committee on Finance

FROM: Bob Lang, Director

SUBJECT: Public Instruction: Section 16.505 Authorization of 1.0 PR-S Project Position --
Agenda Item IV

REQUEST

On February 26, 2014, the Department of Administration (DOA) approved the creation of 1.0 program revenue-service (PR-S) two-year project position to provide a research analyst for the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) under the s. 20.255(1)(ke) appropriation for funds transferred from other state agencies--program operations. This DOA position approval is subject to a 14-day passive review by the Committee. On March 14, 2014, the Co-Chairpersons of the Committee sent a letter to DOA indicating that an objection had been made to this request and that the Committee would schedule a meeting to review it.

BACKGROUND

The Department of Children and Families (DCF) is acting as the fiscal agent for the state's federal Race to the Top--Early Learning Challenge grant approved by the U.S. Departments of Education and Health and Human Services. DCF receives the federal funding and provides DPI its funding under the grant awards. These moneys will be expended by DPI through the 20.255 (1) (ke) appropriation, which authorizes the expenditure of all moneys received from other state agencies. However, any positions that would be funded under this appropriation must be authorized by the Legislature, or by the Joint Finance Committee acting under s. 13.10 or s. 16.505 (2) of the statutes.

ANALYSIS

The state received a grant award of \$22.7 million over a four-year period in December of 2012, in phase 2 of the federal grant program, which represented 50% of the amount requested in the state's application for phase 1 funding. As part of the phase 2 grant application, state agencies

identified 9.5 positions to be funded from the grant, including 7.0 positions in DCF, 1.5 positions in DPI, and 1.0 position in the Department of Health Services. The overall grant was intended to address several areas relating to early childhood, including: (a) increasing the supply of high quality early learning and development programs, particularly for children whose care is subsidized by Wisconsin Shares; (b) helping high need families to access these programs; (c) improving data systems for use in making policy and practice decisions; and (d) aligning efforts across early learning and development sectors. In July, 2013, the state was awarded an additional \$11.35 million in supplemental funds to support their grant activities.

In its initial request to DOA, DPI indicated that it had an existing 0.5 PR position available to support its grant activities, so that it needed 1.0 position to meet the staffing identified in the grant application. The 1.0 PR-S project position approved by DOA would be involved in performing research and evaluation work related to the grant, and the development and utilization of the Wisconsin Early Childhood Longitudinal Data System (ECLDS). It is estimated that 50% of the position's time would be allocated to serving as a lead analyst for the ECLDS data for the Office of Early Learning at DPI, 30% of the position's time would be used to build the analytic capacity of the agencies to do early childhood program and policy research, and 20% of the position's time would be allocated to serving as the analytic expert on data and research matters related to early childhood research and evaluation and the ECLDS. If the position would not be approved, DPI indicates that it would need to work with DCF to determine if there are options that would meet federal grant requirements.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Approve the request to create 1.0 PR-S two-year project position for a research analyst under the 20.255(1)(ke) appropriation under DPI for duties associated with the federal Race to the Top--Early Learning Challenge grant received by the state in 2012-13.
2. Deny the request.

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