



Jeff Mursau

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 36TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

Assembly Committee on Colleges and Universities

Assembly Bill 64, Amendment to include tribal charter schools

Good Afternoon Chairman Murphy and Committee Members. Thank you for holding a public hearing on Assembly Bill 64 which Rep. Weatherston amended to include tribal colleges and nations establishing charter schools. I appreciate Rep. Weatherston's support in amending his bill.

During last week's State of the Tribes speech, one of the issues the tribes supported and requested was the ability to establish charter schools. As some of you may know, I chair the State-Tribal Relations Committee and this is one of the proposals that was recently agreed upon by that committee. I am glad that we were able to address the tribes' wishes so quickly with this amendment to Assembly Bill 64.

Currently the statutes provide three mechanisms by which a charter school can be established:

- Teachers may petition their school board to create a charter school;
- A school board may establish a charter school;
- An "independent authorizer" may establish a chart school.

The statutes establish four independent authorizers:

- The common council of the City of Milwaukee
- The chancellor of the UW-Milwaukee
- The Milwaukee Area Technical College District Board
- On a pilot basis, the chancellor of the UW-Parkside

This amendment authorizes a tribal college or one or more American Indian tribes or bands to establish and operate or initiate a contract for the operation of a charter school. The amendment defines "tribal college" as an accredited college operated or controlled by a federally recognized American Indian tribe or band in this state.

Thank you for your time and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.



Van H. Wanggaard

Wisconsin State Senator

March 10, 2015

Testimony in Favor of Assembly Bill 64

Thank you Mr. Chairman and members of the committee for having me here today to testify in favor of Assembly Bill 64.

Assembly Bill 64 gives each technical college district board the ability to authorize independent charter high schools that provide a curriculum focused on occupational education and training or science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM). Under this bill, technical colleges would also have the ability to operate charter schools allowing for potential cost savings from sharing of resources and greater flexibility to adjust curriculum to changing market trends. It is important to note that this bill does not force technical colleges to authorize independent charters, it simply gives them the power to do so.

This bill allows students who want to pursue certain career fields to gain valuable hands on experience before they even leave high school. Technical charter high schools would have the ability to create programming that focuses on subjects ranging anywhere from welding to nursing to information technology. Because our technical colleges are deeply interconnected with local employers they can respond to the needs of Wisconsin's workforce and adjust programming and curriculum as needed.

This bill also opens the door for technical colleges to create customized programs where students can earn college credit and get a jump start on their associate's degree, with the potential of finishing their degree ahead of schedule. With the rising cost of higher education, students can leave school with less debt and more prepared for the workforce.

With a pending long term skills gap due to the retirement of the baby boomer generation, the demand for skilled workers in manufacturing, health care, and information technology is stronger than ever. This bill builds on Wisconsin's tradition of providing strong vocational and technical education with programs such as Course Options and the Technical Education High School Diploma. By empowering our technical colleges to authorize and operate independent charter high schools we can ensure that Wisconsin students are better educated and prepared for the workforce of tomorrow.

Thank you and I am happy to answer any questions.

Serving Racine and Kenosha Counties - Senate District 21

State Capitol, P.O. Box 7882, Madison, WI 53707-7882 • (608) 266-1832 • Toll-free (866) 615-7510
Sen.Wanggaard@legis.wi.gov • SenatorWanggaard.com



THOMAS WEATHERSTON

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 62ND ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

Testimony on AB 64 before Assembly Committee on Colleges and Universities, March 10, 2015

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, thank you for holding this hearing on AB 64.

This bill allows each of the sixteen Technical College District Boards to create independent charter high schools with a curriculum that focuses on a technical education. The curriculum for the school will be centered on occupational education and training, or STEM – science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

There are currently two ways to establish a charter school in Wisconsin. The most common method is to have the school district enter into a contract to create the school. Otherwise, current law allows a limited group of other entities to start charter schools, specifically UW-Milwaukee, UW-Parkside, Milwaukee Area Technical College, and the City of Milwaukee. These charter schools are also called “2R” schools, named after the statute that authorizes them.

The bill allows a Technical College District to employ the teachers at the charter school, so that instructors at the college could teach at the high school without any issues. It also allows MATC to create schools outside the City of Milwaukee, but does not change its existing authority to start schools in the city. This bill does not create any new state boards or accountability measures. It only changes the existing charter school law by allowing all Technical College Districts to have the same type of ability that MATC currently has within the City of Milwaukee.

The issue of technical education is one that has a special importance to me. I grew up in Buffalo, New York and attended Williamsville Central High School. I wasn't that interested in school and might have dropped out, but then I started taking Tech Ed classes. I discovered that I had a fascination with technical training, which eventually led me to graduate from college with a degree in industrial engineering.

Not every student is suited for the college preparatory type curriculum taught in most schools. I believe that many students would respond better to alternative learning methods, much like I did. Students who may be bored at a traditional school may find a technical education more interesting. At-risk students may find the practical and job oriented education to be a better option than dropping out of school.

Allowing the technical colleges to charter high schools means that the technical colleges would be able to ensure that students who graduate from those high schools would be ready find skilled work much sooner than students from a traditional school. Much of the work the technical colleges do is retraining workers for their second or third career. This bill will allow them to train students for their first job.

I am also offering an amendment to this bill that would allow tribal colleges as well as tribes themselves to charter schools. There are others here to testify on this amendment, so I will let them explain why this is needed and will just explain what the amendment does.

The amendment adds tribes and tribal colleges to the list of "2R" entities that can establish a charter school, similar to what the original bill does with technical college districts. However, the amendment would not limit the grade level or curriculum of the charters as the bill does for technical college districts. Like the City of Milwaukee, tribes and tribal colleges would be able to create any type of charter school that is needed.

This amendment was originally proposed as a bill by the 2014 Special Committee on State -Tribal Relations. It was also one of the requests made during the State of the Tribes Address last week.

Thank you again for holding this hearing. I hope that we can work together to expand the education opportunities for students in Wisconsin, and would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

To: Assembly Committee on Colleges and Universities

From: Dee Pettack, Legislative Liaison, DPI

Date: March 10, 2015

Re: Statement in Opposition to Assembly Bill 64

The Department of Public Instruction (DPI) offers the following statement in opposition to Assembly Bill 64 (AB 64), which allows technical colleges to authorize independent (2r) charter schools.

This proposal erodes local control and continues a flawed funding system for independent (2r) charter schools that pulls state aid from other public schools. Additionally, statewide expansion is unnecessary because Wisconsin is already a leader in charter school creation and technical college partnerships.

Funding Challenge: The Department's principle concern is that AB 64 would exacerbate the current independent charter funding problems, where each student generates \$8,075. This is a "first draw" against general school aid. Last year, general aid to every Wisconsin school district was reduced by 1.5 percent to fund independent (2r) charter schools. This reduction totaled over \$64 million for the 8,100 students attending independent charter schools in Milwaukee and Racine. School boards are allowed to replace this lost general aid with property taxes under their revenue limit. This funding flaw should be addressed before any expansion of the independent (2r) charter program is contemplated.

Plentiful Partnerships: Wisconsin currently has one of the highest numbers of charter schools in the nation, with over 220 charter schools. Many school districts enjoy strong partnerships with their local technical colleges, offering students dual enrollment and advanced credit opportunities.

These partnerships are an important component of career and technical education (CTE), helping students become college and career ready through innovative instruction on state of the art technical college equipment. Additionally, these partnerships help put students' creativity to work for local industry, create pools of local talent in communities, and make learning relevant and engaging to students. For example:

Northcentral Technical College, which serves Wausau and the surrounding region, collaborates with the Wausau School District to deliver more than 35 different courses for high school students in areas like manufacturing, welding, business, and health care; and

Baldwin-Woodville School District, OEM Fabricators, and Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College created the Manufacturing Careers Pathway Partnership in 2010 to expose middle and high school students to advanced manufacturing through career exploration, job shadowing, youth employment, state of the art training facilities, dual enrollment, and tuition assistance.

These are just two of the hundreds of innovative partnerships that allow high school students to explore career opportunities and earn technical college credits. More than 90,000 students are currently taking CTE courses in fields like manufacturing, agriculture, business, family and consumer science, health occupations, marketing, technology and engineering. AB 64, as drafted, could undermine these partnerships by undermining local school boards and drawing general school aid from successful districts.



**WISCONSIN LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
STAFF MEMORANDUM**

Memo No. 14-3

TO: MEMBERS OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON STATE-TRIBAL RELATIONS

FROM: David L. Lovell, Principal Analyst

RE: Establishment and Operation of a Charter School by an American Indian Tribe or Band

DATE: October 9, 2014

This Memo provides a brief overview of the statutes governing the establishment and operation of charter schools, with particular attention to those statutes that would apply to a school chartered by an American Indian tribe or band, if that were allowed.

Charter schools are designed to create innovative educational options for students and parents. They are nonsectarian and are created through a contract, or charter, between an operator and a chartering authority. The charter defines the school's mission and methods and describes how the school will meet the special needs and interests of its community, parents, and students. The statutes exempt charter schools from most state rules and regulations in exchange for greater accountability with regard to results. The principal statute governing charter schools is s. 118.40, Stats.

CREATION OF CHARTER SCHOOLS

The statutes provide three mechanisms by which a charter school can be established.

Petition by Teachers

Teachers may petition their school board to create a charter school. The petition must be signed by at least 10% of the teachers of the district or at least 50% of the teachers of a school in the district. Certain information must be included in the petition, much of which constitutes a plan for the proposed charter school.

The school board must hold a hearing on the petition within 30 days of receiving the petition, and must act to grant or deny the petition within 30 days of holding the hearing.

A school board may grant a petition to convert all the schools in the district to charter schools if the petition is signed by at least 50% of the teachers in the district and the board provides alternative public school attendance arrangements for pupils who do not wish to attend or are not admitted to a charter school.

School Board Initiative

A school board may establish a charter school. At least 30 days before entering into a contract with the proposed school operator, the school board must hold a hearing on the contract. The contract must include all the elements that must be in a petition, under the petition process, described above. At the hearing, the board must consider the level of parental and employee support for the proposed school and the fiscal impact the school would have on the school district. If a school board converts all schools within the district to charter schools, it must provide alternative public school attendance arrangements for pupils who do not wish to attend or are not admitted to a charter school.

Initiative of Independent Authorizer

Four entities are authorized by statute to establish charter schools. They are commonly referred to as "independent authorizers." They are:

- The common council of the City of Milwaukee.
- The chancellor of the University of Wisconsin (UW)-Milwaukee.
- On a pilot basis, the chancellor of the UW-Parkside.
- The Milwaukee area technical college district board.

Again, the contract establishing the school must include all the elements that must be in a petition, under the petition process, described above. It must also specify the effect of the establishment of the charter school on the liability of the contracting entity. The statutes include a number of requirements that apply specifically to the establishment of a charter school by each of these entities.

If the Legislature were to enact legislation authorizing tribes to charter schools, it most likely would be as independent authorizers.

OPERATION OF CHARTER SCHOOLS

A charter school must be non-sectarian in all aspects of school operations, and non-discriminatory in its admissions policies. If a charter school replaces an existing public school, it must give enrollment preference to students living in the district of the school it replaced. Charter schools may not charge tuition.

Charter schools are exempt from all statutes and administrative rules applicable to public schools, with the following exceptions:

- A charter school must administer state standardized pupil assessments to 3rd through 8th grade pupils and to 10th grade pupils, and adopt pupil academic standards in mathematics, science, reading and writing, geography, and history.
- A charter school must develop and enforce a policy specifying criteria for promoting a pupil from 4th grade to 5th grade, from 8th grade to 9th grade, and for granting a high school diploma. A charter school cannot promote a pupil from 4th to 5th grade or from 8th grade to 9th grade unless the pupil satisfies the promotion criteria, and cannot grant a high school diploma unless the pupil has satisfied these criteria.
- A charter school is included in a school district's annual school performance report.
- All instructional staff of a charter school must hold a license or permit to teach issued by the Department of Public Instruction (DPI).

If a school district determines that a charter school is an instrumentality of the district, all personnel of the school must be employed by the district; otherwise, the district may not employ any of the school's personnel. A school chartered by an independent authorizer is not an instrumentality of the school district in which it is located.

A school chartered by an independent authorizer is not part of any school district. The independent authorizer is responsible for ensuring that the operator complies with the charter (contract) and with state law and that the school meets state standards of accountability.

FUNDING OF CHARTER SCHOOLS

A school district is responsible for funding a school it charters. The contract specifies the amount of funding the district will provide to the operator of the charter school in each school year. The funding is on a per-pupil basis.

Schools chartered by independent authorizers receive funding directly from the state, in an amount calculated according to a statutory formula, which is also on a per-pupil basis.

In addition, charter schools may apply for grants. In particular, the U.S. Department of Education has provided funding to DPI to fund grants to charter schools.

DLL:jal



WISCONSIN LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Terry C. Anderson, Director

TO: MEMBERS OF THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON COLLEGES AND
UNIVERSITIES

FROM: David L. Lovell, Principal Analyst

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Lovell", written over the printed name in the "FROM" field.

RE: LBRa0221/1, an Amendment to 2015 Assembly Bill 64, Allowing Technical District
Boards to Authorize Certain Charter Schools

DATE: March 11, 2015

Your committee heard testimony yesterday on 2015 Assembly Bill 64 (AB 64), which allows technical district boards to establish certain charter schools. You also heard testimony regarding Assembly Amendment 1 (AA 1) to AB 64. That amendment is based on legislation developed by the Special Committee on State-Tribal Relations (Special Committee).¹

AA 1 authorizes a tribal college or one or more American Indian tribes or bands to establish and operate or initiate a contract for the operation of a charter school. The draft defines "tribal college" as an accredited college operated or controlled by a federally recognized American Indian tribe or band in this state.

Under current law, several other entities are designated as "independent authorizers," entities that may authorize or operate a charter school. Various limits apply to their authority, regarding matters such as where a school they charter may be located and the academic focus of the school. The Special Committee expressed its intent that no such limits apply in the case of a charter school authorized or operated by a tribal college or by one or more tribal governments. However, as drafted, AA 1 would limit enrollment in a tribal charter school to students who reside in the school district in which a charter school is located. LRBa0221/1 specifies that this restriction does not apply to tribal charter schools. In all other respects it is identical to AA 1.

¹ The specific proposal on which AA 1 is based is LRB-1441/1. It will be reported to the Joint Legislative Council on Wednesday, March 18, with the recommendation of the Special Committee that the Joint Legislative Council introduce the proposal.

If you have any questions regarding the amendments to AB 64, please contact me at the Legislative Council staff offices.

DLL:ty



TESTIMONY TO THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

Representative Murphy and Members of the Assembly Committee on Colleges and Universities:

Thank you for this opportunity to share our perspective on the impact of AB64 on rural school districts throughout the state. I am Jerry Fiene, Executive Director of the Wisconsin Rural Schools Alliance, a statewide organization representing administrators, board of education members, teachers and community members from rural school districts. Our membership includes school districts, CESAs and ten of our state's technical colleges.

Our organization opposes this bill which has the potential of inflicting additional damage to schools that are the heart and center of their rural community. Rural communities are proud of their schools and locally elected school boards work together with their administrators, teachers and neighboring technical colleges to provide the best education possible for all of their children with the limited resources they have available to them.

Our greatest concern is that the funding for these newly created independent charters will be similar to the current 2R Charter Schools in Milwaukee. This year 1.5% of every school district's general state aids for a total of over \$68 million are being deducted to pay for these charters. This can be tens of thousands of dollars for even a small, rural district. In almost all districts this deduction is being made up by an increase of the same amount in the local property taxes. Rural districts need every penny available in their revenue limit, in fact, a greater number of rural districts each year are dependent on additional funds from referenda to exceed revenue limits in order to maintain existing and essential programs for their students.

AB64 will surely and dramatically increase the deductions from rural districts' state aids in order to pay for the newly created independent charters statewide resulting in further increases to the local property taxes. It doesn't make a difference if the independent charter school is located anywhere near your school district, you still have the same aid deduction. The real irony is that the property poorest districts in the state, which are most dependent on state aid, will be the ones that will proportionally pay the most to support the independent charters.

We are not aware of technical colleges that are seeking this chartering authority as a means of establishing schools that focus on science, technology, engineering and mathematics or on occupational education and training. I can tell you that excellent examples of collaborative efforts and partnerships have been developed on a regional basis by local school districts and technical colleges, such as the Woodlands and Northwoods Regional Technical Academies in partnership with Northeast Wisconsin Technical College and the Central Wisconsin Academies in partnership with Northcentral Technical College. These are efforts that truly provide the choices that this legislation is trying to promote and hold great promise to strengthen our rural school districts.

It is efforts like these that promote collaboration and not competition that create a win-win environment not a win-lose environment that we strongly support. Our neighbor to the southwest, the state of Iowa, has found ways to financially support the start-up of such cooperative efforts between rural schools and community colleges and we encourage you to find ways we can also move in this positive direction in Wisconsin. We can and should continue to advance efforts that support STEM and occupational education. Then the real winners will be our rural youth no matter where they live.

Thank you for your service and your efforts.



School Administrators Alliance

Representing the Interests of Wisconsin School Children

TO: Assembly Committee on Colleges and Universities
FROM: John Forester, Director of Government Relations
DATE: March 10, 2015
RE: Assembly Bill 64 -Independent Charter School Expansion

The SAA opposes Assembly Bill 64, relating to the expansion of independent charter schools in Wisconsin. If adopted, AB 64 will expand the number of entities permitted to authorize independent charter schools, drain resources from students attending traditional public schools throughout Wisconsin, and likely result in local property tax increases.

The SAA has the following concerns about AB 64:

Partnerships Between School Districts and Technical Colleges

First of all, we are certain that this legislation is intended to give students more opportunities in occupational education and STEM training. However, we firmly believe we can accomplish this objective within current policy without fragmenting our education system any further.

We already have tremendous collaborative partnerships between school districts and technical colleges. To allow technical colleges to authorize new independent charter schools will potentially undermine the collaboration that exists and diminish existing opportunities for students who want to graduate from their traditional high school with technical college credits.

I offer two examples of the collaborative partnerships that currently exist between Kettle Moraine High School and the Waukesha County Technical College; and Burlington High School and Gateway Technical College.

Students enrolled in the Advanced Manufacturing Certificate program at Kettle Moraine High School graduate with their high school diploma, a two-year youth apprenticeship experience, technical college credits, and scholarship money to continue their post-secondary learning. Many of them graduate with a full time job.

In Burlington, the school district and Gateway Technical College have participated in a unique arrangement for a decade. The school district provides academic space to the technical college on the high school campus by leasing two district buildings to the technical college. Gateway provides nurse assistant (CNA) and paramedic training for Burlington High School students on the high school campus during the school day.

This legislation circumvents the type of local control that created these effective partnerships, and could potentially undermine business partnerships that school districts are working to establish. To inject competition when we should be collaborating jeopardizes opportunity for students.

New Charter School Funding

The per pupil payments to independent charter schools (currently \$8,075 per pupil) are funded as a draw on the general school aids that would otherwise be payable to all school districts receiving general aid in the state. Given the clear objective of this bill, it will result in a growing aid reduction to public schools. Currently, the reduction in general school aids attributable to independent charters is \$68 million, or about a 1.5 percent reduction statewide. For every additional 1,000 students enrolling in independent charter schools, \$8,075,000 will be taken from the general school aid appropriation. And because local school districts are allowed to levy property taxes to cover the reduction in state aid, this bill will likely result in increases in local property taxes.

Sum Certain vs. Sum Sufficient

Finally, I would like to comment on the policy of providing independent charter schools with a sum sufficient appropriation. To my knowledge, it is one of only a handful of sum sufficient appropriations in K-12 education. Others include national board certified teachers and the private school voucher programs. The general school aid appropriation, from which the sum sufficient appropriation for independent charter schools comes, is sum certain. Special education is sum certain. School day milk is sum certain. School breakfast is sum certain. Pupil transportation, which is reimbursed at less than seven cents on the dollar, is sum certain. The SAA believes that providing independent charter schools with a sum sufficient appropriation is simply not justified.

Thank you for your consideration of our views. If you have any questions regarding the SAA's position on AB 64, please call me at (608) 242-1370.



Pride of the Ojibwe

13394W Trepania Road. Hayward. Wisconsin. 54843
Phone 715-634-8934. Fax 715-634-4797

Testimony from the Lac Courte Oreilles Band of Lake Superior Chippewa in Support of 2015 Assembly Bill 64; An Act allowing each technical district board to authorize independent charter schools focused on occupational education and training or science, technology, engineering, and math with the proposed amendments that includes Tribes and Tribal Colleges being able to Charter Schools.

Esteemed Representatives: The Lac Courte Oreilles Band of Lake Superior Chippewa offers its support of AB-64, in particular the amendment that includes Tribes and Tribal Colleges being able to charter Schools.

It has long been our belief that in order for our Tribe to flourish we need the ability and the access to frame the educational opportunities offered in our communities. For too long we have been saddled with pedagogy that is controlled by outside institutions that traditionally have not taken into account our worldview that is expressed through tribal customs and language.

The Lac Courte Oreilles Tribe supports the opportunity for educational success that quality charter schools are able to provide. Previously, the Tribe worked to amend state charter school law to make it possible for tribes in conjunction with public school districts to operate a charter school on tribal lands. This made sense for us as our Waadookodaading Ojibwe language immersion school was a place where our language was getting a second chance at life while its students thrived socially and academically, and it made sense that our language should be spoken within the boundaries of our northern Wisconsin woodland home.

However, the caveat we didn't anticipate during that legislative adjustment was the dearth of financial support that accompanies establishment of a charter school in the state of Wisconsin. Waadookodaading, since its inception, survived on grants rather than any set amount of per pupil funding guaranteed to any other type of public school. Private foundation funding was often off limits, as foundations assumed that students were provided for through state public education funding and their foundations prohibit the funding of charter schools. As a result, there was no consistent stream of funding for the school as a charter, and the situation became untenable, forcing the school to disband as a charter and be absorbed into the local districts. The Hayward area public school education choices are thus more diminished, and the opportunity to become a bilingual and culturally competent citizen of Wisconsin is no longer available to the general public.

Had we had the option, the Lac Courte Oreilles Tribe could have authorized the charter school through another of our local institutions of higher education, the Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwe Community College (LCOOCC). The LCOOCC offers the option for local Sawyer County residents to get a jump-start on their four-year college education, as LCOOCC has 2+2 agreements with University of Wisconsin schools.

For these reasons we are fully in support of AB-64 and the possibility of chartering as a Tribe. The health of any community can be unequivocally linked to the number of educational options offered to its constituents. The ability of the Lac Courte Oreilles Tribe to increase its educational options will become the cornerstone of the future of generations to come.

We thank you for your consideration and look forward to the passing of this important legislation.

**Testimony from the Lac Courte Oreille Band of Lake Superior Chippewa in Support of
2015 Assembly Bill 64 with the proposed amendments that includes Tribes and
Tribal Colleges being able to Charter Schools**

March 10, 2015



WISCONSIN COALITION FOR
PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS

Good afternoon Chairman Murphy and other members of the Assembly Committee on Colleges and Universities. My name is Kristy Casey and I am the Director for the Wisconsin Coalition for Public Charter Schools. We are a collaboration of organizations that support the growth of high-quality public charter schools in Wisconsin. Thank you for the opportunity to share my thoughts on Assembly 64.

Wisconsin is home to 243 public charter schools that serve over 46,000 students. These schools have a successful track record of closing achievement gaps and meeting students' specific needs at the same time that Wisconsin families are demanding more educational options for their children.

Unfortunately, Wisconsin law limits the real potential for charter schools. While public charter schools have existed in Wisconsin for over twenty years, there has not been much progress made in strengthening our public charter school law. Out of the 43 states that have public charter school laws, Wisconsin ranks 38th.

For example, while independent charter schools continue to be the highest performing sector of schools available to students and families in Milwaukee, there are few options for these schools to grow beyond Milwaukee's borders. With their proven success in closing the achievement gap for the city's students, it is clear these high-quality options should be made available throughout the entire state.

I applaud Representative Weatherston and Senator Wanggaard for recognizing the need for additional authorizers for charter schools in Wisconsin. However, my coalition supports the broader approach contained in the Governor's budget. His proposal allows founding charter school groups - in any part of the state - to apply to another entity (in addition to local school boards) to charter a school. This would include all technical colleges, as proposed in Assembly Bill 64.

We support the Governor's proposed budget because of its broad, but accountability-based, approach to statewide expansion of high-quality independent public charter schools. The opportunities that Representative Weatherston and Senator Wanggaard provide in this bill to cultivate and grow charter schools through STEM education and the skilled trades are certainly worthwhile, but only part of the solution to a much larger problem.

By working together to strengthen our public charter school law statewide, we can create high-quality public school options for families across the state and ensure the sustainability of Wisconsin's public education system.

Thank you for your continued work on providing public charter school options for Wisconsin families.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kristy Casey, Director, Wisconsin Coalition for Public Charter Schools

The Wisconsin Coalition for Public Charter Schools
Kristy Casey, Director | kristybcasey@gmail.com

Public Hearing Testimony
Committee on Colleges and Universities
Assembly Bill 64
March 10, 2015

I'm Glen R. Schwalbach. My address is 1090 Moonriver Dr., De Pere, WI 54115. I'm a licensed Professional Engineer in this state. Through my professional society and employer, I have been involved in engineering and engineering technology education issues for more than thirty years.

What I have to say may sound like a minor technicality but the misuse of the word "engineering" in regard to post-secondary education causes serious negative implications which increase confusion among students, parents, and, even, educators as to what is the proper educational path to become an engineering technician, an engineering technologist, or an engineer.

This confusion has increased in recent years as technical colleges expanded their engineering technology programs and often referred to them as "engineering" programs. In addition, the technical colleges have established "2 plus 2" agreements with four-year schools who allow students to get the first two years of engineering technology at a technical college and the second two years of engineering technology at the four-year school. These can be successful programs for the students and employers if everyone understands that the graduates are trained to be engineering technologists, not engineers, except in one new, unique program.

Two-year and four-year engineering technology programs and four-year engineering programs all have very different curriculum content even though the names of the specific courses within each program may sound similar. ABET, the accreditation organization for engineering technology programs and engineering programs, states a two-year engineering technology program develops an engineering technician. A four-year engineering technology program develops an engineering technologist. A four-year engineering program develops an engineer. ABET, which accredits all three types of programs, uses different outcome criteria to accredit engineering technology programs versus engineering programs. ABET indicates that only an ABET four-year engineering program prepares a graduate to practice engineering and, when require, to be qualified to sit for the examinations for a Professional Engineer license.

The significance in the above distinctions is that only the Professional Engineer has been educated to be qualified to accept personal responsibility for public safety and welfare and for the oversight of engineering teams which include engineering technicians, engineering technologists and other engineers. Thus, it is important that the distinction be clear between engineering technology education and engineering education programs.

Another implication here is that students who don't understand the differences and are capable of completing an accredited four-year engineering program might choose instead to spend two years in an associate engineering technology program only to find out they do not have the necessary education to achieve their goals. They not only would have wasted their time and money but also may no longer be in a position to pursue the four-year degree. In these cases, Wisconsin loses potential engineers in its workforce.

So, to not add to the confusion and since AB 64 involves technical colleges, the bill should not use the word "engineering" but the words "engineering technology". It may seem awkward but it is correct to refer to "science, technology, engineering technology, and math" in this context.

Home > Accreditation > New to Accreditation? > What Kinds of Programs Does ABET Accredite? >

Engineering vs. Engineering Technology

How are they different?

Engineering and engineering technology are separate but closely related professional areas. Here are some of the ways they differ:



Curricular Focus

Engineering programs often focus on theory and conceptual design, while engineering technology programs usually focus on application and implementation.

Also, engineering programs typically require additional, higher-level mathematics, including multiple semesters of calculus and calculus-based theoretical science courses. Engineering technology programs typically focus on algebra, trigonometry, applied calculus, and other courses that are more practical than theoretical in nature.

Career Paths

Graduates from engineering programs are called engineers. They often pursue entry-level work involving conceptual design or research and development. Many continue on to graduate-level work in engineering.

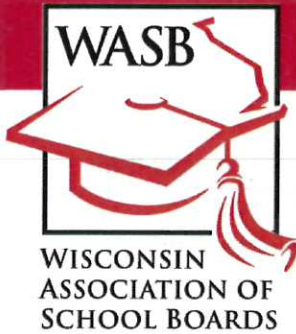
Graduates of four-year engineering technology programs are called technologists, while graduates of two-year engineering technology programs are called technicians. These professionals are most likely to enter positions in sectors such as construction, manufacturing, product design, testing, or technical services and sales. Those who pursue further study often consider engineering, or facilities management, or business administration.

Of course, there is much overlap between the fields. Engineers may pursue MBAs and open their own consulting firms, while technologists may spend their entire careers in design capacities.

Differences in ABET Accreditation

For ABET accreditation, engineering and engineering technology programs are reviewed and accredited by two separate accreditation commissions, using **two separate sets of accreditation criteria**: the Engineering Accreditation Commission and the Engineering Technology Accreditation Commission.

ABET
415 North Charles Street, Baltimore, MD 21201
Phone +1.410.347.7700
Copyright © 2011-2013 ABET ®



122 W. Washington Avenue, Madison, WI 53703
Phone: 608-257-2622·Fax: 608-257-8386

John H. Ashley, Executive Director

TO: Members, Senate Committee on Education
FROM: Dan Rossmiller, Government Relations Director
RE: Testimony on Assembly Bill 64 relating to allowing each technical district board to authorize independent charter schools focused on occupational education and training or science, technology, engineering, and math.
DATE: March 10, 2015

Mr. Chairman and members, my name is Dan Rossmiller, and I am the government relations director for the Wisconsin Association of School Boards (WASB). Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Assembly Bill 64.

Wisconsin school boards have been national leaders in the creation of charter schools, ranking in the top ten nationally of states that have instituted charter schools. The Legislature has provided school boards great latitude in designing, implementing and staffing charter schools, and school boards have worked with their communities to design charter schools that fit community needs. Indeed, charter schools that focus on occupational education and training or science, technology, engineering, and math have been authorized by school boards in a number of Wisconsin school districts including Appleton, Milwaukee and Waukesha.

We question the need to create entirely new schools and entirely new school bureaucracies when Wisconsin currently already has multiple options for students seeking career and technical education opportunities at no cost to the student. These options include:

TRANSCRIPTED CREDIT

Under what are known as voluntary “articulation agreements” between school districts and technical colleges, Wisconsin high school students can earn technical college credit—including in career and technical education courses or STEM courses—through transcribed credit, under which both the high school and the respective technical college provide students credit for successfully completing the same course. Students earns these dual credits tuition-free.

YOUTH OPTIONS

This long-standing statutorily-established program allows public high school juniors and seniors who meet certain requirements to take postsecondary courses at a UW institution, a Wisconsin technical college, one of the state's participating private nonprofit institutions of higher education, or at a tribally-controlled college. Approved courses count toward high school graduation and college credit.

COURSE OPTIONS

This program, created in the 2013-15 state budget act, provides students with the opportunity to enroll in courses offered by charter schools, various institutions of higher education (including technical colleges), and approved nonprofit organizations at no cost to the student. Courses available through Course Options include career and technical education courses or STEM courses.

We also have strong concerns about any expansion of independent charter schools given the way these schools are currently funded, which reduces state aid to all public school districts in the state. Under this funding mechanism a school district's state aid is reduced whether or not students from that district are able to enroll in an independent charter school or not.

As a result, we are concerned about the effect this bill would have on public school funding statewide. Because the per pupil payments independent charter schools receive are funded from a first draw on the general equalization aid formula before any aid payments are distributed to school districts, if additional independent charter schools are authorized, two things will happen:

- 1) general equalization aid will be siphoned from all local school districts to fund independent charter schools regardless of where those independent charters are located; because school districts are permitted to make up for this lost aid by raising property taxes this bill would likely result in property tax increases statewide; and
- 2) because these per pupil payments are drawn from state general equalization aid a greater proportion of this lost aid will be transferred away the property poorest school districts in the state—districts that can least afford to raise property taxes—in order to support independent charter schools that may be located great distances from those districts; in effect, independent charter schools are funded by a tax on poor school districts.

In short, if this bill is passed, taxpayers in school districts remote from independent charter schools authorized by a technical district board could end up paying higher property taxes even if no students from that local district attend those independent charter schools. We believe this is unfair.

Finally, we have concerns about the governance of the schools that might be created under this bill. The WASB supports charter schools authorized by locally elected school boards for experimental and innovative programs. However, the WASB, representing all 424 school boards in Wisconsin, generally does not support creating authorizing bodies at the state level or granting charter authorizing power to other governmental units. Technical college district boards are not elected and we firmly believe charter granting authority is best exercised by the locally-elected school board, which is directly accountable to the voters of the particular school district.

For these reasons, the WASB does not support Assembly Bill 64. I would be happy to answer any questions.

**Lac Courte Oreilles Band of Lake Superior Chippewa
13394 W. Trepania Road
Hayward, Wisconsin 54843
(715) 634-8934**

Testimony from the Lac Courte Oreilles Band of Lake Superior Chippewa in support of 2015 Assembly Bill 64: An Act allowing each technical district board to authorize independent charter schools focused on occupational education and training for science, technology, engineering, and math with the proposed amendments that includes Tribes and Tribal Colleges to also authorize Charter Schools.

The Lac Courte Oreilles Tribe supports the Assembly Bill 64 and amendments to renumber and amend 118.40 (2r) (a); and to create 118.40 (2r) (a) 2. And 118.40 (2r) (b) 1. E. and f. of the statutes; relating to: authorizing a tribal college to establish or initiate a charter school. This bill authorizes a tribal college or one or more American Indian tribes to establish and operate or initiate a contract for the operation of a charter school.

The level of sophistication of Wisconsin Indian tribes with management of their education institutions has improved to a degree previously unimagined. The Lac Courte Oreilles Tribe, near Hayward, for example has successfully operated an accredited K-12 tribal school for nearly forty years. This school has achieved AYP status during the past five years, which gives it a distinction of success with both strong leadership and capable instruction. Indian students meet the accreditation criteria and tiers of success required by the Federal Government's No Child Left Behind legislation. The Tribe also operates a successful Ojibwe Language Immersion pre-K-5 school, the Waadookodaading School, that began as a charter school previously authorized by the local public school district. This previous charter school, successful as an institution that instills effective learning lessons in Ojibwe language, is a national model in achieving both academic standards of excellence and high levels of Ojibwe language facility in its students.

Authorization for charter schools works more effectively when it is administered by a tribal college. Tribal Colleges are a unique category of higher education. Accredited by the Higher Learning Commission in Chicago, tribal colleges offer an assortment of college degrees beginning with A.A., to B.S., and then M.A. in fields like Business, Education, and Nursing. While these institutions face problems similar to those of other rural educational institutions in securing dependable funding for rural higher education, they provide an opportunity for American Indian students to get their start in higher

education. They have the capacity to provide leadership in the development and sponsorship of charter schools in their regions. They develop transfer agreements with state colleges and universities to enable their graduates to transfer to the larger state university in specialized fields.

Bay Mills College in nearby Michigan Upper Peninsula, authorizes a number of Michigan state charter schools quite successfully. Sometimes this arrangement helps the two school institutions develop helping relationships between them assisting in areas in which the tribal college has a unique capability to assist the charter school with studies like cultural diversity, student motivation and recruitment, or technological program development.

The Bay Mills College has an extraordinary successful experience in authorizing charter schools throughout the State of Michigan. They provide a helping service to numerous communities – 44 such communities. This can also be duplicated in the State of Wisconsin.

Previously, our Tribe worked to amend state charter school law to make it possible for tribes in conjunction with public school districts to operate a charter school on tribal lands. This made sense for us as our Waadookodaading Ojibwe language immersion school was a place where our language was getting a second chance at life while its students thrived socially and academically, and it made sense that our language should be spoken again in our homelands.

The charter school - Waadookodaading, since its inception, survived on grants rather than any set amount of per pupil funding guaranteed to any other type of public school. Private foundation funding was often off limits, as foundations assumed that students were provided for through state public education funding and their foundations prohibit the funding of charter schools. As a result, there was no consistent stream of funding for the school as a charter, and the situation became untenable, forcing the school to disband as a charter and be absorbed into the local districts. The Hayward area public school education choices are thus reduced, and the opportunity to become bilingual and culturally competent citizens of Wisconsin were no longer available to the general public.

Had we had the option, the Lac Courte Oreille Tribe could have authorized the charter school through another of our local institutions of higher education, the Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwe Community College. The LCOOCC offers the option for local Sawyer County residents to get a jump-start on their four-year college education, as LCOOCC has 2+2 agreements with University of Wisconsin schools.

For these reasons we are fully in support of AB-64 and the possibility of chartering as a Tribe. The health of any community can be unequivocally linked to the number of educational options offered to its constituents. The ability of the LCO Tribe to increase its educational options will become the corner stone of its health of the generation to come.

We thank you for your consideration and look forward to the passing of this important legislation.

Lac Courte Oreilles Tribal Governing Board

Hayward, Wisconsin 54843