



JOEL KITCHENS

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 1ST ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

TO: The Assembly Committee on Education
FROM: Representative Joel Kitchens, 1st Assembly District
DATE: January 28, 2016
RE: Testimony in Support of Assembly Bill 734

Thank you Chairman Thiesfeldt and members of the Assembly Committee on Education for holding this public hearing.

One of the most important factors preventing Wisconsin businesses from reaching their full potential is a lack of skilled employees. These are often high paying, desirable jobs that do not require a four-year degree. At the same time, countless students are graduating from our four-year schools, saddled with high debt and unable to find employment in their field of study. While some school districts have done an outstanding job in alerting students to these opportunities and advising them on career and academic choices, too many are unable to meet the needs of Wisconsin students. AB 734 will create a new pilot program designed to assist schools, parents, and students in career and workforce education.

To begin, AB 734 states that the 12 Cooperative Educational Service Agencies (CESA) must apply and compete for the grant to conduct this pilot program. The Department of Public Instruction, in conjunction with the Department of Workforce Development, will then choose one of the applying districts to conduct the pilot program. Over a two-year period, the CESA that is awarded the grant will employ a Career and Workforce Education Coordinator.

The Coordinator's duties will include workforce education, business development outreach, coordination between businesses and school boards, and apprenticeship and job training opportunity advancement. Additionally, they will work with the school districts within the CESA to assure that students and their families receive sufficient career and academic counseling to make informed choices. Ideally the Coordinator will work together with other local agencies already working on this problem. The Coordinator will also be responsible for submitting a report evaluating the implementation and efficacy of the pilot program to the state superintendent.

Funding for this pilot program has been set at \$250,000 for the employment of a Career and Workforce Education Coordinator over the two-year period. These funds will cover eligible expenses including the salary paid to a career and workforce education coordinator hired to implement the pilot program and programming and travel expenses related to career and workforce education. At the end of this period, the program will be examined and may be reinstated, expanded or discontinued.

AB 734 is the result of months of effort by the Future of Education Work Group to address these crucial issues, and I would like to thank Representatives, VanderMeer, Schraa, Steienke, and Tauchen as well as DPI and DWD for their efforts and input. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Alberta Darling
Wisconsin State Senator
Co-Chair, Joint Committee on Finance

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
Assembly Bill 734
January 28, 2016

Thank you Chairman Thiesfeldt and committee members for hearing Assembly Bill 734. The legislation before you would create a career and workforce education pilot program.

As you know, Wisconsin is facing a skilled labor shortage. Like you, business owners tell me they could expand if only they were able to find employees to fill job vacancies.

I believe that one solution to the labor shortage in Wisconsin is to provide K-12 students with courses for these skilled labor professions. More often than not, these professions are high paying and do not require a four year degree.

At its core, AB 734 creates a pilot program for a Career and Workforce Education Coordinator. Each Cooperative Educational Service Agencies (CESA) will apply and compete for a grant to conduct this pilot program. The Department of Public Instruction, with the help of the Department of Workforce Development, will select from the applying districts. It will be the coordinator's responsibility to provide workforce education, coordinate opportunities between businesses and school boards of school districts within the selected CESA, business development outreach, and apprenticeship and job training opportunity advancement.

Some schools in my district are already working with local businesses to provide students with wonderful educational experiences and real hands on work opportunities. In school districts like Brown Deer and Germantown, businesses are more than willing to work with their local schools to provide opportunities for the students in their communities. These businesses know the future of their company is right next door. This opportunity should be available for every student in the state.

This bill comes from the tireless effort of the Future of Education Work Group. I want to applaud the work of Representatives VanderMeer, Schraa, Steineke, and Tauchen for their contributions to this work group. Additionally, I want to thank DPI and DWD for their input on this matter.

Lastly, I'd like to thank Representative Kitchens for co-authoring Assembly Bill 734. It has been a pleasure working with him.

Again, thank you committee members for your consideration of AB 734.

**Assembly Committee on Education
January 28, 2016**

**Department of Public Instruction Testimony
Assembly Bill 734**

Good morning, and thank you, Chairman Thiesfeldt and committee members, for your time today. My name is Sheila Briggs, and I am the Assistant State Superintendent of the Division for Academic Excellence at the Department of Public Instruction (DPI), and with me today is Dee Pettack, DPI's Legislative Liaison. The department would like to thank Representative Kitchens, Representative Tauchen, Representative Vandemeer, and Representative Steineke for engaging us in their efforts to support youth workforce readiness. DPI is testifying today in support of AB 734.

DPI is advancing education reforms to support our vision that every Wisconsin student graduates from high school college and career ready. AB 734 would provide helpful funding to a CESA to create a position designed to enhance public/private collaboration and offer a greater number of opportunities to students. This type of collaboration and innovation is in direct alignment with the work of DPI in a number of areas. I would like to take this opportunity to share with you some information about work already in progress, and how AB 734 would support that work.

Academic and Career Planning

Academic and Career Planning, or ACP, is a student-driven, adult-supported process in which students create and cultivate their own unique and information-based visions for post-secondary success, obtained through self-exploration, career exploration, and the development of career management and planning skills. We are currently nearing the end of the rule process for PI 26 (included in packet) which will ultimately allow school districts to have the autonomy to determine local implementation strategies that work for their school district and community.

DPI is partnering with 25 pilot school districts to help define ACP professional development and implementation support service needs. In November, there was a successful statewide ACP Conference in which school districts were able to send teams of individuals--including counselors, teachers, and administrators--to learn about and plan for ACP implementation.

Wisconsin Examples:

Some of our school districts are well on their way to implementing ACP services. One of many examples would be Whitewater High School:

- Career and Academic Portfolios and presentations are required to graduate;
- 92 percent of staff agree that ACP helps postsecondary planning;
- 86 percent agree that ACPs helped to set and achieve goals;

- 100 percent of teachers and community members agree that students better discover connections between interests and career options;
- ACT scores have improved one whole point; and
- Attendance rates have increased, the number of failures has decreased, and class GPA has increased.

AB 734 would come at an optimal time for schools and districts who are beginning to design and implement ACPs. The career and workforce education coordinator would be able to assist school districts in the selected Cooperative Educational Service Agency (CESA) with successful implementation of ACP structures.

Career and Technical Education Incentive Grants

The Career and Technical Education (CTE) Incentive grants provided a valuable funding source to promote CTE programs that result in students graduating from high school and earning industry-recognized credentials. These grant funds were first made available in the second year of the 2013-15 biennial budget for \$3 million and were continued in the 2015-17 biennial budget for \$6 million over the two years. We are grateful for this support, as it provided 224 school districts with valuable funding in 2014-15 for offering these programs. We worked closely with our colleagues at the Department of Workforce Development and the Wisconsin Technical College System to administer this program, and we look forward to ongoing collaboration around this important initiative.

Wisconsin Examples:

Green Bay Area Public Schools (GBAPS) & Broadway Automotive

GBAPS allocates a full-time staff position as a Director of College, Career, & Community Readiness, to find, develop, and support business relationships for quality talent development and articulation with industry and college. Recently, a need for automotive programming was determined. GBAPS reached out through current partnership channels to find willing partners. Within six days, David Cuene of Broadway Automotive donated \$25,000 and found additional funding partners that resulted in a total of \$170,000 raised and an upgrade of equipment and facilities. Still pursuing national auto certification, the students earn credit by taking courses at the district, allowing them immediate advancement into their programs at Northeast Wisconsin Technical College, feeding the local community with desired technicians.

Beloit Memorial High School (BMHS)

On September 10, 2015, the Assembly Speakers' Taskforce on Youth Workforce Readiness heard from the Beloit Superintendent, Tom Johnson, the district's Career and Technical Education Director, Ryan Rewey, and the district's Career Advocate, Lindsay Healless. The three spoke passionately about how they've completely transformed the high school's career and technical education program and physical environment. They attributed much of their success to their ability to hire Ms. Healless into the new career advocate position.

AB 734 would provide a career and workforce readiness position in a CESA to support districts that have not been able to afford a similar resource position for their students.

Statewide Partnerships

In order to be successful and expand the opportunities available to students at the state level, we collaborate with multiple agencies and organizations. For example, in family and consumer sciences, a partnership with the Wisconsin Restaurant Association supports school districts as they implement culinary arts programs and other work-based learning programs including Prostart, which equips students with the knowledge and skills necessary for the foodservice industry.

There are numerous partnerships in the area of technology education. This includes efforts with the Wisconsin Automotive and Truck Dealers Association where each summer professional development is offered for technology education teachers to receive industry training in the automotive services sector. This partnership is critical to ensure that teachers have the training necessary to offer certificate programs where students train for industry certification.

The position created as a result of AB 734 would provide additional support for districts in a CESA to access these partnerships, and may even provide leadership toward developing new partnerships.

In summary, there is a great deal of work happening around the state to ensure our students graduate college and career ready. Some of the things I've mentioned are fairly new reforms that are just beginning to take shape. Others are long standing practices in schools and districts that now have an opportunity to catch on elsewhere. AB 734 will provide funding to a CESA for positions designed to expand opportunities and develop public/private collaboration that would be a benefit for students in districts that have not experienced some of the successes we spoke of earlier.

As I stated earlier, DPI is actively involved in the work of youth readiness and shares the authors' enthusiasm for ensuring our students are ready to enter the workforce. We support this bill and are happy to answer any questions you might have at this time.