



# MIKE ROHRKASTE

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 55<sup>TH</sup> ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

## Assembly Bill 851

Relating to: a pilot grant program to support college courses taught in high schools and making an appropriation.

Testimony of State Representative Mike Rohrkaste  
Assembly Committee on Education  
February 7, 2018

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

Assembly Bill 851 has been introduced to help remedy an issue regarding faculty education standards for dual credit teachers set forth by the Higher Learning Commission. The Higher Learning Commission is an organization that accredits post-secondary institutions in 19 states, including Wisconsin. This accreditation makes schools eligible for federal funds. The Higher Learning Commission accredits post-secondary schools on a variety of criteria, including the quality of education, an aspect of which is that the faculty of the institution provide effective, high-quality programs and student services.

The Higher Learning Commission has criteria that post-secondary institutions must meet to maintain their accreditation. If schools do not follow these criteria, they could lose their accreditation and therefore also lose access to federal funds. The Higher Learning Commission recently adjusted their "Assumed Practices" to require that any faculty member must have one of the following: a Master's Degree in the discipline; or a Master's Degree in another discipline and at least 18 graduate credit hours in the discipline. Because many high school teachers in Wisconsin also teach dual credit courses for college credit, they would be held to this standard. This will mean that a high school teacher who is teaching a dual credit course is required to have at least 18 graduate-level college credits.

The legislation requires the Office of Educational Opportunity at the University of Wisconsin System to award grants to school districts, independent charter schools, and private schools to assist high school teachers in meeting the minimum qualifications necessary to teach dual enrollment courses for a post-secondary school accredited by the Higher Learning Commission. The legislation provides for a \$500,000 pilot grant program with the requirement that each year at least one grant shall be awarded to a school district with fewer than 650 pupils, a school district with 650 – 1,600 pupils, a school district with over 1,600 pupils, a charter school, and a private school. The school would then choose through their own process teachers to assist in meeting the minimum education requirements set forth by the Higher Learning Commission.

Thank you for your time, and I encourage members of the committee to support Assembly Bill 851.



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## Luther S. Olsen

State Senator

14th District

**TO:** Assembly Committee on Education  
**FROM:** Senator Luther Olsen  
**DATE:** Wednesday, February 7, 2018  
**SUBJECT:** Testimony for Assembly Bill 851

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Thank you Chairman Thiesfeldt and members of the Assembly Committee on Education for holding a hearing and allowing me to testify in support of Assembly Bill 851 (AB 851).

The Higher Learning Commission (HLC) is an organization that accredits post-secondary institutions, which makes schools eligible for federal funds. If schools do not meet the criteria required by the HLC they could lose their accreditation as well as access to federal funds. Recently, the HLC adjusted their "Assumed Practices" to require that any faculty member must have one of the following: 1) A Master's Degree in the discipline they teach; or 2) A Master's Degree in another discipline along with at least 18 graduate credit hours in their discipline.

The new assumed practices required by the HLC for accreditation will also require that high school teachers comply with the standards, otherwise their classes will not count as dual credit courses. Unfortunately, many high school teachers do not meet these specific standards. Many teachers who teach dual credit courses have a Master's Degree in Education or School Administration rather than the specific discipline they are teaching. In order to address these concerns and allow teachers the time to become compliant with the new faculty qualifications the HLC is allowing institutions until September 1, 2022 before they begin to enforce the new requirements.

This bill will require the Office of Educational Opportunity at the University of Wisconsin System to award grants to school districts, independent charter schools, and private schools to assist high school teachers in meeting the minimum qualifications necessary to teach dual enrollment courses. The legislation provides for a \$500,000 pilot grant program with the requirement that each year at least one grant shall be awarded to a school district with fewer than 650 pupils, a school district with 650–1,600 pupils, a school district with over 1,600 pupils, a charter school, and a private school.

Again, thank you for holding a hearing today. I ask for your support on AB 851 and I would be more than happy to answer any questions.



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**Testimony on AB 851**  
**February 6, 2018**

Thank you to the committee for creating this opportunity to provide input on important legislation. I am Mike Sereno, and I serve as the Director of Secondary Teaching and Learning in the School District of Elmbrook. Elmbrook serves the students, parents and taxpayers in the communities of Brookfield, Elm Grove and New Berlin in Waukesha County. We serve over 7,250 students and send about 95% of students to a two year or four year college.

I am here to testify in support of AB 851, a bill that was collaboratively designed with legislators, K-12 education leaders, and the leadership at the UW System. The bill is designed to overcome an obstacle to K-12 districts attempting to reduce the time and cost to a post-secondary degree for their students and families. This obstacle is a result of the federal accrediting organization known as the Higher Learning Commission or HLC. Several high schools across the state of Wisconsin offer students the opportunity to enroll in concurrent enrollment courses;. Such courses are offered in conjunction with university partners, are taught by high school teachers who also serve as university adjuncts, and have historically provided students and families with an opportunity to earn both high school and university credit at a substantially reduced per/credit rate - as low as 15% of traditional credit costs. The HLC requires that university adjuncts, including high school teachers instructing concurrent enrollment courses, obtain a Master's degree and a minimum of 15 graduate credits in their content area.

Our district's goal, and the goal of this bill, is to create a scalable and replicable system that allows high school teachers to become adjunct college professors so they can deliver college course work to high school students. In order for us to deliver on reducing costs to a college degree and reducing time to a degree, we need a scalable and replicable model to establish adjunct professor status for more high school teachers. Elmbrook is trying to build mechanisms that would permit us to offer our students and families the opportunity to earn 15-30 college credits before graduating from high school. This bill provides the funding for the design and execution of a pilot program that helps high school teachers gain adjunct professor status, allowing those teachers to deliver concurrent enrollment courses. This pilot is good for Wisconsin's kids and families, and, if passed, will reduce the time and cost to a degree.

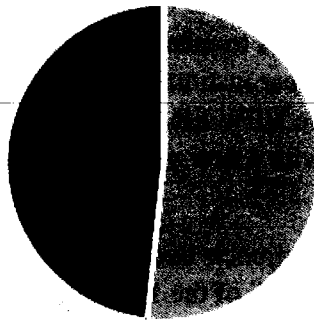
We would appreciate the committee's consideration and support .

I thank you for your time today, and I would welcome any questions that you may have time.

Sincerely,

**Michael Sereno**  
*Director of Secondary Instruction*

HLC Compliance Status  
UW Oshkosh CAP Program  
(Sept. 2017)



■ HLC Compliant ■ HLC deficient

There were roughly 300 high school teachers in the 43 year old UW Oshkosh CAP Program as of the start of this school year who have been certified as adjuncts by our department chairs and committees of professors. Additionally, we have around 50 new adjunct applications in various stages of approval that mimic this nearly 50/50 split regarding adjunct academic credentials as they pertain to HLC compliance. We have not changed our adjunct "hiring" criteria in the face of HLC compliance, as we are continuing to meet the needs of school district's and student's wishes for increased access to concurrent enrollment courses from UW System providers.

By 2022, all adjuncts in the State of Wisconsin, who pair with an HLC certified IHE must have either a master's degree in subject area, a master's degree out of subject area and 18 graduate credits in subject area, OR, a master's degree in subject area and some other departmentally approved academic credentials.

Last year alone, the CAPP Office, through its own budget, helped to defray the cost of graduate coursework that leads to HLC compliance for 22 adjuncts. We do not have the funds to assist all teachers in the orange area of the image above with their full complement of between 17 and 2 remaining graduate credits in subject area. Anecdotal evidence suggests that most Private and Public schools in our organization are NOT helping defray the costs of graduate courses, nor do they provide contractual compensation for HLC compliance (or addition of graduate courses). Therefore, schools and educators who want to continue to offer concurrent enrollment courses to their students, place the entire budgetary burden upon the adjuncts. Additionally, ALL partner

schools in Wisconsin want to increase concurrent enrollment offerings, a hope shared by the Governor, UW System, all concurrent enrollment providers, and private and public school administrators. Finally, the 1+3 programs in high need IT fields that we have implemented at the Governor's request cannot sustain the loss of adjuncts in critical subject areas, and survive to allow students access to three year bachelor's degrees (and join the workforce pipeline in a quicker fashion, while reducing their cost to degree).

The NEW ERA group and the CAPP Office at UW Oshkosh have created a suite of online/hybrid/in person graduate courses to meet the needs of adjuncts in Wisconsin Technical Colleges, UW System two and four year institutions, as well as those teachers who work with private colleges. Please reference the NEW ERA folder for specific courses built for all adjuncts to access this Spring and Summer (with a new set of courses launching each semester over the coming years).

The final piece to having Wisconsin adjuncts become HLC compliant by 2022, like adjuncts from West Virginia to Arizona (the reach of the 19 state HLC Region), is a small modicum of funding that AB851/SB 711 proposes to make available through grants.

The UW Oshkosh CAPP Office, UW Oshkosh, and our vast network of partner schools and teachers, fully support Assembly Bill 851/Senate Bill 711 as a way to help Wisconsin schools and their teachers meet the HLC requirements we all operate under.

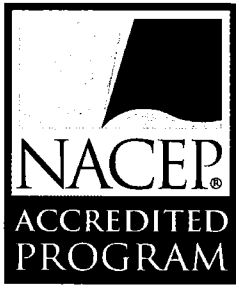
Thank you for your time and efforts as they pertain to access for all to concurrent enrollment courses for all kids in Wisconsin.

Sincerely,

Mr. John Dobyns

M.S. Biology, M.A.T. Science Education  
Director of Outreach and Operations, CAPP Office  
UW Oshkosh  
920-424-3260

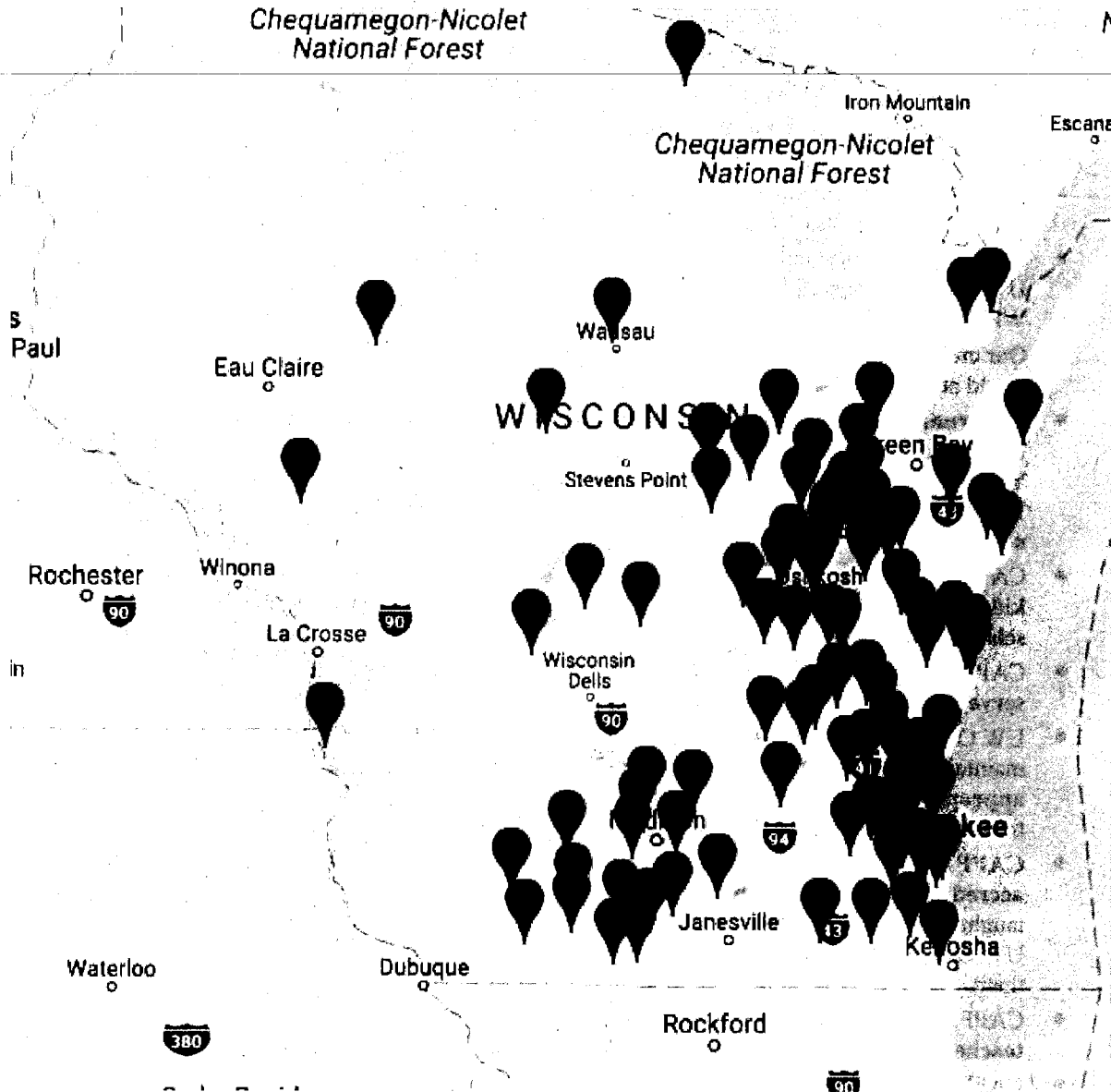




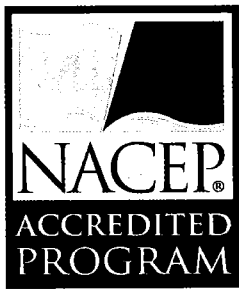
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**CONCURRENT ENROLLMENT IN WISCONSIN: SAVING STUDENTS TIME AND COST TO DEGREE, SERVING SECONDARY EDUCATION PARTNERS, AND MEETING THE NEEDS OF WISCONSIN BUSINESSES**

- The Cooperative Academic Partnership Program (CAPP) at UW Oshkosh has provided WI students with access to college credits through credentialed high school teachers, for **43 years**.
- UW Oshkosh partners with 110+ Wisconsin high schools (**public and private**), and serves 3500+ high school students a year through CAPP.
- We have 85 courses built for concurrent enrollment dissemination, and our courses generate a UW Oshkosh transcript students can take with them to over 220 colleges and universities around WI and the rest of the United States to jumpstart their college careers.
- Our credit prices are set by UW System at \$100 per credit (this year). Over 50% off of the rates found at most UW System two and four-year campuses.
- **Governor Walker's Office**, the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh, CAPP, UW System, and the Northeast Wisconsin IT Alliance (with area Chambers of Commerce) have created a **THREE YEAR Bachelor's degree in Information Systems, Computer Science, Engineering Technology, and Education** through our concurrent enrollment program, to meet workforce needs in Wisconsin.
- CAPP infuses over **\$150,000 a year back into our partner schools through scholarships for kids, professional development funds for teachers**, and site budget allocations for our partner schools.
- CAPP students are high-achieving students in urban, rural, and suburban school districts. **We serve all eligible students in Wisconsin!**
- UW Oshkosh and the CAPP Office are committed to helping high school teacher-adjuncts maintain or meet **Higher Learning Commission (HLC) requirements through the building of appropriate professional development sessions and graduate level online, hybrid, and traditional format coursework.**
- **CAPP is the only NACEP (National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships) accredited provider of concurrent enrollment in Wisconsin.** This assures that our courses, taught in the high schools, maintain the highest standards of alignment, rigor, quality, they ARE UW Oshkosh level courses, and this increases credit transferability for the students that enroll in them.
- CAPP, through 30 UW Oshkosh degree granting departments, **works with over 300 high school teacher-adjuncts** to help CAPP students access true college courses, with no high stakes exams.
- CAPP, the UW Colleges, and Wisconsin Technical College System schools, like FVTC, are partnering to improve the advising high school students receive regarding what concurrent enrollment courses will do for them upon graduation from high school.

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February 7, 2018

Dear Chairman Thiesfeldt and Education Committee Members,

My name is Dr. Mary Pfeiffer and I have the privilege of serving the Neenah Joint School District as the superintendent. Our District serves just over 6,500 students and we have approximately 650 employees. Thank you for providing this forum for public input regarding Assembly Bill 851.

I am here today to ask for your support to provide advanced learning completion for teachers through this proposed grant program. Teaching a post-secondary credit-yielding course is a significant investment, commitment and responsibility. In our District, we have been fortunate to not only have a strong partnership with UW-Oshkosh, but also technical colleges and private universities. This partnership has benefited our students and families for many years. Last year, we had a student graduate from Neenah High School with 51 college credits and he entered UW-Madison with his sophomore year almost completed. This particular family saved tens of thousands of dollars and will likely not have the debt many parents are concerned about after their son graduates from college. This could not have happened without our dedicated staff.

As we discuss the 3+1 model and other ways to provide a jumpstart for our students, we must also consider building our educational workforce at the secondary level. In order for our families to continue saving thousands of dollars on college tuition, development of our staff must be a part of that conversation. We are fortunate in Neenah that our staff continue to commit themselves to all students in order to maximize students' learning. In order to teach post-secondary college courses in the CAPP system, teachers must have a Master's degree in the area they are teaching in. For some teachers, this can be a challenging time commitment and also present a financial challenge to them as well. This legislation would provide some relief to those capable and willing to advance their learning in order to assist students in receiving college credit prior to graduating from high school.

Some people may wonder about accountability related to paying for courses for teachers. I suggest the following:

1. For those districts receiving the grant, I would suggest that they provide a summary of how the dollars were used and the impact on student credit earnings. We would be happy and proud to provide that information and I know that my colleagues would as well. As an example, in the first semester of this school year, 43% of our students in grades 9-12, or 893 were enrolled in at least one post-secondary credit-yielding course.

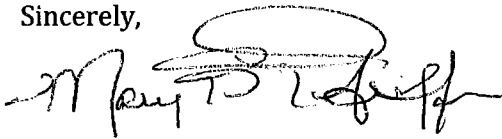


2. There are several students who have come to our District in order to take post-secondary credit-yielding courses not offered at their school. Should there be districts teaching multiple courses, please consider giving additional grants to those school districts.

In closing, I would like to thank the sponsors of this legislation and ask for your support in advancing this. Our students depend upon our staff for helping them to be the best they can be and to make a successful transition after high school graduation. This legislation would provide some assurances that these important credit-yielding course options continue to take place in our high schools.

Thank you for providing this forum to share our thoughts and for your work in service to our great state of Wisconsin.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mary B. Pfeiffer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized initial "M" and "P".

Dr. Mary Pfeiffer, Superintendent  
Neenah Joint School District  
410 S. Commercial Street  
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