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Assembly Committee on Education

Testimony from Rep. William Penterman in favor of Assembly Bill 1005

Chair Kitchens and fellow members of the Assembly Committee on Education – thank you for taking my testimony in support of Assembly Bill 1005 (AB 1005), relating to student teaching requirement for teacher preparatory programs and granting rule-making authority.

We are currently grappling with a substantial teacher shortage, exacerbated by the soaring costs of higher education and the stagnation of industry standards. These factors have created a scenario in which the teaching profession struggles to fill essential vacancies. The consequences of classrooms lacking qualified educators are keenly felt by students, communities, and our entire state. In response to these challenges, the proposed legislation aligns with successful initiatives from states like Texas and California, implementing the "2+2" model. This model involves two years of lectures coupled with two years of hands-on classroom experience.

AB 1005 takes a strategic and forward-thinking approach to address the existing hurdles faced by aspiring teachers, with the primary goal of enhancing the quality of education and enriching the overall educational experience for students. Recognizing the significance of practical, on-the-job learning for teachers, the proposed apprenticeship model mirrors academic research and endeavors to ensure that educators are well-prepared for the dynamic challenges presented in the classroom.

Amidst a teacher shortage affecting our state, the adoption of a teacher apprenticeship model emerges as a practical solution to attract and retain high-quality educators. The bill's emphasis on hands-on learning and the reduction of financial barriers aims to make teaching a more appealing and accessible profession.

Notably, the apprenticeship model has garnered widespread support from a diverse range of stakeholders, transcending partisan lines. This includes backing from the Biden administration, National Education Association, Council of Chief State School Officers, ExcellnEd, and the Institute for Reforming Government, among others. The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) has also expressed support by affiliating with the National Center for Grown Your Own network, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization offering technical assistance to entities interested in launching teacher apprenticeships.

In essence, this bill represents a proactive and innovative approach to confront the challenges faced by our education system. By moving this legislation forward, we are not only investing in the future of our educators but also laying the groundwork for a more resilient and effective educational environment for our students.

Thank you for your time and consideration.



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To: The Assembly Committee on Education
From: Sen. Dan Feyen
Re: Assembly Bill 1005

Hello Chair and members of the committee, thank you for taking the time to hear testimony on AB 1005.

Every single one of us represents an area with teacher shortages. Wisconsin is seeing workforce shortages across the board, but teachers are drastically needed in our cities, suburbs and rural areas.

AB 1005 is one way we can address this shortage by incentivizing students to pursue teaching as a career and then getting those students into the classroom sooner. This bill joins 28 other states by creating the framework for a teacher apprenticeship program.

Currently, teaching students in Wisconsin spend 3.5 years in a university classroom and are only "learning on the job" through student teaching for one semester. This leads to new teachers with very little in-class experience and can cause high turnover rates. AB 1005 allows a university to increase the amount of student teaching up to 4 semesters. This will give teaching students ample time to adapt to the classroom setting and have them better prepared for their career by the time they graduate.

This will also get our teaching students into the field quicker, helping alleviate teacher shortages. AB 1005 can also help lower the burden of college tuition for teaching students. By requiring the Department of Instruction to establish a teacher apprenticeship program, apprentices can earn "while they learn" in the student teaching setting. Through this bill, Wisconsin could also become eligible for Teacher Apprenticeship grants available through the Department of Labor.

Lastly, I want to stress that this bill is permissive. It does not force any university to adopt, it simply gives them the ability to opt into the model. If a university decides to pursue a teacher apprenticeship program, they will maintain all autonomy over the program, including control of entrance requirements, general education requirements, partnerships with school districts, and student fees.

Thank you very much for holding a public hearing on this bill.



TO: Assembly Committee on Education

FROM: Alex Ignatowski, IRG Action Director of State Budget and Government Reform
Quinton Klabon, IRG Senior Research Director

DATE: February 1, 2024

RE: AB 1005, “teacher apprenticeship” teacher preparation legislation

Representative Kitchens and committee members, thank you for the opportunity to testify on Assembly Bill (AB) 1005, important teacher preparation legislation that could set up Wisconsin for the best version of an excellent new policy: teacher apprenticeships. Thank you also to Rep. Penterman for his leadership on this bill, and thank you to the many cosponsoring legislators.

IRG Action is the advocacy and lobbying partner of the Institute for Reforming Government, a Delafield-based think tank that works to give all Wisconsinites an opportunity to prosper. Central to our prosperity is having high-quality teachers in high-quality public and private schools. Districts across the state, including yours, lack enough high-quality teachers to fill classrooms, forcing them to be less selective. If we can increase the quantity, quality, and stability of the teachers that come from our universities, we can strengthen our schools and ensure much more academic growth for our K-12 students.

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Thanks for your time! I’m Quinton Klabon, Senior Research Director at IRG. My mother taught special education her whole life in my beloved hometown, Wisconsin Rapids, despite the constant turnover of that role. And I live in Milwaukee now, where the urban school I worked at for years was among the few that could fill its jobs. I truly care about our rural, urban, and suburban teacher corps, and I’ve never seen a teacher shortage this bad.

We’re here to talk about “teacher apprenticeships,” which can help solve the shortage. I’ll talk to you about what they are, why they’re needed, and why Representative Penterman’s bill could help create the best version of them. Additionally, after this bill went to committee, Governor Evers announced a teacher apprenticeship pilot. It truly could be a big step forward but needs significant improvement. AB 1005 could help.

The Teacher Shortage Crisis

The teacher shortage has a few causes. First, we simply don't have enough young people who enter college to become teachers. Why? It's too expensive. Who wants to start a \$38,000-a-year job with \$22,000 in debt? Few do, and working-class students can't. On top of that, the last semester of most teachers' college careers is "student teaching," where they pay tuition to practice working in a classroom instead of getting paid for their labor. It's not just an unpaid internship, it's a pay-to-play internship! When only middle-class people can become teachers, the result is a brutal teacher shortage.

Second, too few education majors actually graduate college. This affects students from all walks of life, but it especially affects diversity. Men have an -8% lower graduation rate in the UW System. Hispanic and Southeast Asian students have a -15% lower graduation rate than White students, and it's -30% lower for Black and Indigenous students. Many things can trip them up: finances, mental health support, academic preparation in classes that don't relate to their major. The result is the same: 70% of Wisconsin teachers are White women, and we rely too much on their contributions. We lack Hmong speakers in Wausau and Spanish speakers in Racine. I saw my fellow boys in Wisconsin Rapids struggle without male role models because just 17% of K-8 teachers are men. I know Black boys from my Milwaukee elementary school job who never had a Black man teach them in high school. Any person can educate any person, but a community should be able to educate its own children.

Third, a shocking amount of teachers who begin and complete their education degrees immediately quit teaching. According to DPI, an astounding 18% of teachers quit within their first 2 years. We don't have teachers in schools because the 18-year-olds who dreamed about becoming educators aren't teaching when they're 24. Surveys and exit interviews say the same thing: teachers are not prepared enough for the classroom. If you meet with your constituents, you've heard them. "It wasn't what I expected." "My classroom was out of control and it was driving me insane." "I would cry myself to sleep some nights and dread coming to school on Monday because it felt like I couldn't do anything right." We lose 18% to burnout because they didn't get enough hands-on practice before the real thing.

Finally, as bad as this is for teachers, it's horrible for kids, too. Research tells us that teachers are not very effective in their first 2 years. The first year is about surviving. The second year is about perfecting the craft. It's not until year 3 that teachers really help kids grow. That means 18% of Wisconsin teachers leave before they ever hit their prime. Even worse, that churn means your child has a 13% chance of being taught by a novice teacher. If your child got a series of newbie educators, they could be set back permanently. That's happening in many schools across the state, especially rural and urban, and is likely partially to blame for our mediocre reading scores.

So, we have a teacher shortage caused by students not going to college, not graduating from college, and not staying in the profession. Therefore, if we want to fix the teacher shortage with high-quality teachers, we need to make sure that college is affordable and accessible enough to get through, and we need to ensure that teachers get 2 years of experience to be able to tough out their early years in the classroom.

Teacher Apprenticeships

Luckily, other states have invented a way to do this: teacher apprenticeships. They're something my group, IRG, has discussed with stakeholders for 1 year. What are teacher apprenticeships? In short, we plug the current registered apprenticeship system of mentored, paid work into the college experience to get the best of both worlds. Colleges extend the amount of student teaching time students receive at university from a half a year up to 1 or 2 years. They provide student teachers with experienced mentors at local schools for a certain number of hours (2,000 in Wisconsin). That qualifies them as registered apprentices, the same as plumbers, electricians, or nurses. Students can earn as they learn to pay down student debt and get real-life experience that prepares them for real-life classrooms. If becoming a teacher is more affordable, practical, and closer to the real thing, more teachers will start college, finish college, and remain in the classroom long-term.

That's why I'm so thrilled about AB 1005. It's not creating yet another alternative teaching scheme that will produce 5 graduates a year and then peter out. It's the first bill I've seen that addresses all of the root causes of the teacher shortage. What the bill actually does is allow colleges to opt into providing a pathway where students do up to 4 semesters of student teaching. That means students could work long enough to become apprentices, once the Department of Workforce Development finishes setting that up. Being an apprentice means they earn as they learn and their program qualifies for federal apprenticeship funding, both of which are going to cut student debt. On top of that, those 2 years in a classroom with a high-quality mentor are going to give them the battle scars they need to handle it on their own after graduation. The bill would help drop that 18% turnover rate. Academically, each teacher who graduates through an apprenticeship model will be in their 3rd-year prime. No child will ever have a rookie teacher again, and that's going to get test scores up statewide.

But I especially love how this bill contrasts with other states' teacher apprenticeships. They don't cut student debt enough, and they don't actually diversify the teaching corps. This bill could do both. The bill gives general education credit for each semester of student teaching. While it doesn't direct colleges on how to distribute this credit, IRG would suggest colleges use the credits to fulfill the gen ed course requirements that keep far too many students from

graduating without adding to the skills they'll need in their careers. Teachers would still take all of their major's required courses on how to teach and the subject they'd teach, but they'd buttress that knowledge with 2 years of real-world experience. The more students are outside of classrooms, the lower colleges can make tuition, and the more students they can recruit. This bill is the first I've seen that addresses it. Let me make its importance very clear to you all. Does the future of the teaching profession depend on adequate pay? Of course. Does it depend on classroom conditions? Absolutely. But it also depends on if your potential kindergarten teacher can pass French III or calculus in college. The future of your bipartisan law to fix how kids learn to read relies on whether the special education teacher who's incredible at inspiring a love for reading in children gets a good grade in college chemistry. The system we have now leads to rural principals covering classrooms because no one applied for their middle school opening. The system we have now leads to (God bless them) Milwaukee flying immigrants in from Nigeria, Mexico, or the Philippines and dropping them into some of the most struggling high schools in the state. Our district schools and our choice schools demand something bold, and AB 1005 boldly addresses what needs fixing.

Luckily, teacher apprenticeships are such a good idea that they're loved by everybody. Tennessee's Republican governor started them with President Biden's administration in 2022. Both small colleges and the University of Tennessee system now use them. In just 2 years, they're in 28 states, blue and red. The National Education Association union likes them just as much as ExcellnEd, the conservative group that advised you on Act 20 literacy reforms. The National Rural Education Association, state labor departments, and right-leaning American Enterprise Institute all see their benefits. There is even momentum in Wisconsin! Shortly after the Senate bill got its committee hearing, Superintendent Underly herself rolled out a pilot concept this month with the Department of Workforce Development. Though I hassle them sometimes, I am amazed by how forward-thinking and kid-focused DPI has been on key issues. Between literacy reforms and teacher apprenticeships, they have been far more productive than previous decades.

Perfecting the Concept

Related to that, DPI actually submitted commentary at the Senate hearing that I can address. They objected to a couple of elements.

First, I believe they think the bill would replace teaching courses with the teacher apprenticeship. It would do the opposite, allowing students to double down on the courses with the apprenticeship. It's the general education requirements that don't help teachers teach.

Second, they state that the bill requires universities to have a dissimilar education program from CESA or non-profits, violating state law. The bill would offer an opt-in format, and doesn't create anything so different as CESA retraining professionals with bachelor's degrees to teach.

Third, they say it's redundant and that they're taking care of it. While I truly think the pilot Governor Evers announced has a lot of good in it, I don't think it will solve the urgent teacher shortage. To the best of public knowledge, the structure of it is 2 years in the existing "Foundations of Teacher Education" programs at a technical college, then 2 years, presumably online, at Lakeland University, which specializes in experiential learning and online learning. Students would do their local apprenticeship during the day and take a full course load at night. First, it's a year-long pilot. In 1.5 years, Tennessee had teacher apprenticeships rolled out to small colleges and every University Of Tennessee school in the state. Second, the FOTE program is not offered at 7 of the 16 technical colleges, including those of 6 members of this committee. Milwaukee and Madison, the 2 biggest and neediest regions, would either have no access or entirely online access to this program, nor would rural northwestern or southwestern Wisconsin. Third, if a major ceiling on quantity and diversity of teaching graduates is dropping out, why would we increase the burden to students graduating by giving them, essentially, 2 full-time jobs? Fourth, I truly respect Lakeland for pioneering this program and for the great work they're doing and have cited it publicly. But it's worth mentioning that Lakeland produces 14 takers of FORT, the reading test, a year, and that 2 pass, the lowest percentage in the state. They absolutely should take part in teacher apprenticeships, but our eggs should not be all in 1 basket. I genuinely think the pilot will cut some costs and prepare graduates to stay in the classroom, but it excludes areas that cannot be excluded and won't help those regions' college students graduate.

I can't think of anything with higher stakes than teaching, and I can't think of anything more urgent than getting high-quality teachers to fill the massive shortage in front of us. AB 1005 creates a space for the best version of teacher apprenticeships to bloom. I hope that we treat the policy as an effective solution to an urgent crisis, not an alternative program to diversify our offerings. It seems like the legislature and state leadership are pointing in the same direction. I hope the best version of teacher apprenticeships comes out of their discussions.



February 1, 2024

Assembly Committee on Education

**Department of Public Instruction Testimony
2023 Assembly Bill 1005**

The Department of Public Instruction (DPI) expresses gratitude to Chairperson Kitchens and committee members for the opportunity to submit testimony in opposition to Assembly Bill 1005 (AB 1005).

DPI supports a registered apprenticeship model for teacher preparation, recognizing its potential to create robust "grow your own" programs with high retention rates. Apprenticeships serve as a strategic approach to both attracting and retaining educators, especially crucial given the state's 67% retention rate in the first five years. The department has collaborated closely with the Department of Workforce Development (DWD) to establish a registered teacher apprenticeship program, with plans for the first apprentices to begin in the fall.

While DPI acknowledges the intentions behind AB 1005, we are concerned about the potential impact on all educator preparation programs in the state. This bill could disrupt ongoing efforts to launch a teacher apprenticeship by changing the entities responsible for setting rules around apprenticeships.

Section three of the bill introduces a differentiated system for educator preparation programs. State law currently mandates that all programs, including institutions of higher education, for-profit and non-profit entities (such as Cooperative Educational Service Agencies - CESAs), and school districts, must meet the same requirements. AB 1005 imposes specific requirements on higher education institutions, raising questions about the state superintendent's authority to recognize longer periods of teaching in other programs.

To extend the student teaching period, higher education programs would need to award general education credit for the experience, contrary to Wisconsin's current approval process based on knowledge and skills acquisition rather than credits or courses. This requirement could burden students attempting to graduate from a higher education program. The bill's provision for full-day student teaching for full semesters, along with other program requirements, would significantly extend the time needed to complete a program.

Section four of the bill could impede progress on developing internships by creating a conflict in statute regarding which agency oversees the requirements and conditions of registered apprenticeship for teachers. AB 1005 authorizes DPI to develop teacher apprenticeships, conflicting with DWD's statutory authority.

Additionally, section one of the bill contains an unimplementable provision requiring the department to report on the duration of student teaching. DPI does not collect student-level information on those enrolled in preparation programs and lacks a system to gather this data. The department currently meets reporting requirements under 115.28 (7g) using data collected by the federal government under Title II of the Higher Education Act.

In summary, DPI is already working with DWD on a teacher registered apprenticeship, making this legislation unnecessary.

For further inquiries or additional information, please contact Kevyn Radcliffe, Legislative Liaison, at kevyn.radcliffe@dpi.wi.gov or (608) 264-6716.