



WISCONSIN LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT GUARANTEE IN EDUCATION (SAGE) PROGRAM

Room 411 South
State Capitol

October 22, 2014
10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

[The following is a summary of the October 22, 2014 meeting of the Study Committee on the Student Achievement Guarantee in Education (SAGE) Program. The file copy of this summary has appended to it a copy of each document prepared for or submitted to the committee during the meeting. A digital recording of the meeting is available on our Web site at <http://www.legis.state.wi.us/lc>.]

Call to Order and Roll Call

Chair Olsen called the committee to order. The roll was called and a quorum was determined to be present.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Sen. Luther Olsen, Chair; Rep. Mary Czaja, Vice Chair; Sen. Dave Hansen; Reps. Jill Billings, Sondy Pope, and Jeremy Thiesfeldt; and Public Members John Gaier, N. David Kipp, Randy Nelson, Miguel Sanchez, and Anne Smith.

COMMITTEE MEMBER EXCUSED: Public Members Beth Graue, Robert Way, and Angela Wiemer.

COUNCIL STAFF PRESENT: Katie Bender-Olson and Jessica Ozalp, Staff Attorneys.

APPEARANCES: Dr. Sarah Archibald, Education Policy Advisor & Committee Clerk, Office of Senator Olsen; Jonas Zuckerman, Director, Title I and School Support, Department of Public Instruction (DPI); and Laura Pinsonneault, Director, Office of Educational Accountability, DPI.

Approval of the Committee's Minutes of the September 22, 2014 Meeting

The committee unanimously approved the minutes of the committee's September 22, 2014 meeting.

Presentations by Invited Speakers

Dr. Sarah Archibald, Education Policy Advisor & Committee Clerk, Office of Senator Olsen

Dr. Sarah Archibald addressed the committee regarding two research-supported interventions, one-to-one tutoring and instructional coaches, that could be used by school districts as potential alternatives to small class sizes. Dr. Archibald discussed these particular interventions because they are specified interventions schools could use under draft legislation under consideration by the committee.

Dr. Archibald first noted that one-to-one tutoring by a certified teacher and instructional coaching achieved larger effect sizes than other interventions studied in a 2007 report worked on by Dr. Archibald. The effect size of these interventions was greater than the effect of small class sizes. She informed the committee that implementation of tutoring would be most effective if schools used vetted programs, such as those appearing within the What Works Clearinghouse. Dr. Archibald also noted that implementation of instructional coaching would be most effective if schools select coaches who can increase instructional quality in the classroom, have expertise in the particular area, and have instructional skills suitable for adults.

Dr. Archibald commented that identifying the particular interventions a school can use, rather than letting a school choose any intervention it wishes, will help ensure implementation of the most effective interventions. However, allowing schools to implement the two alternative interventions also comes with administrative challenges because monitoring compliance is more difficult than simply measuring class size on the third Friday in September, as is done for the current small class size requirements of the SAGE program. Dr. Archibald informed the committee that small class sizes are supported by research, but that the effects have only been demonstrated for class sizes of 14 to 17 and not for class sizes of 18, the size limit under the current SAGE program.

Dr. Archibald then answered questions from committee members regarding one-to-one tutoring and instructional coaching. The committee discussed the type of licenses or certifications that should be required for tutors or instructional coaches. The committee also discussed the need for state-level or CESA-level training and support for tutors and coaches. Members also suggested the need for additional flexibility so that schools may innovate and use interventions other than tutoring, instructional coaching, or small class sizes.

Jonas Zuckerman, Director, Title I and School Support, DPI

Laura Pinsonneault, Director, Office of Educational Accountability, DPI

Mr. Zuckerman and Ms. Pinsonneault provided a presentation regarding potential methods of measuring reductions in the achievement gap between low-income students and other students. Ms. Pinsonneault initially noted that the current SAGE program does not require accountability for outcomes, while the draft legislation under consideration by the committee would focus on reducing achievement gaps through three possible interventions.

Ms. Pinsonneault offered attendance rate data as another possible outcome measurement, in addition or as an alternative to the state test score measurements specified in the draft legislation. She informed the committee that attendance data is available for the early grades and state test data is not because state tests are not administered until third grade. Ms. Pinsonneault noted that while attendance does not specifically measure achievement, attendance is a strong indicator of outcomes and that low-income students attend at lower rates.

Mr. Zuckerman provided information regarding the timeline for existing SAGE contracts. He noted that 352 participating schools (of the 425 total) have contracts that will expire at the end of the 2014-15 school year, and that renewal applications will be due from these schools in April 2015. Renewed contracts for these schools will likely be in place by July 2015. Mr. Zuckerman noted that this renewal timeline provides context for the work of the committee.

Ms. Pinsonneault identified challenges in measuring achievement gap reduction or progress toward a specific statewide gap reduction goal. These challenges include the lack of state testing before 3rd grade, small cell sizes being measured in some schools, identifying a specific reduction goal, and the transition to new Smarter Balanced assessments in the current school year. She identified two methods for measuring achievement gap reduction or progress toward a goal: (1) a model-based approach to gauge change from a baseline; and (2) closing the achievement and attendance gaps between SAGE and non-SAGE students. Ms. Pinsonneault noted that the committee must determine the timeline for putting a new program into place and the method that should be used to calculate a target effect size. She recommended a one-year extension on existing SAGE contracts and also recommended waiting to set a target effect size until two years of performance data have been collected from the new Smarter Balanced assessments.

Mr. Zuckerman and Ms. Pinsonneault responded to committee questions following their presentation. When asked about an appropriate target for achievement gap closure over five years, they responded by describing the process DPI would use to set such a target. They noted that DPI would consider either one statewide goal, or different targets for different schools, and would need two years of baseline test data before the agency could set either type of goal. Mr. Zuckerman and Ms. Pinsonneault noted that the committee expressed an intent not to disqualify large numbers of participating schools that failed to accomplish a particular

achievement gap reduction goal. Therefore, any gap reduction target would need to consider the impact on schools and their resulting eligibility for future contracts.

Discussion of Committee Assignment

Chair Olsen initiated committee discussion of the three bill drafts under consideration: WLC: 0024/1, WLC: 0026/1, and WLC: 0027/1. Legislative Council staff summarized the contents of all three drafts. The committee proceeded to discuss the bill drafts and Jonas Zuckerman and Laura Pinsonneault of DPI made themselves available to answer questions.

The committee initially discussed WLC: 0027/1, relating to achievement gap reduction contracts requiring one-on-one tutoring for low-income pupils, instructional coaches for teachers, or small class size and professional development. The committee questioned the draft's reliance on 3rd grade assessment scores to measure gap reduction and asked about the possibility of using the Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS) assessment in earlier grades. DPI responded that the PALS assessment is intended as a screening and diagnostic tool, and is not intended for measuring achievement.

The committee also discussed the use of attendance data as part of a measurement of achievement gap reduction. Unlike state examinations which do not generate data until the end of 3rd grade, attendance data generates data at each of the SAGE grades (K-3). Committee members expressed concern about the use of attendance data as an accountability measure because attendance is not within the direct control of the school. Members also expressed general concern about using any measurement in a punitive manner to expel schools from participation in the proposed Achievement Gap Reduction (AGR) program and noted that the goal of the committee was not to reduce the number of participating schools.

The committee members then discussed allowing each school to propose its own achievement gap reduction goal for the five-year contract period. The committee proposed that each school participating in the new AGR program would create an achievement gap reduction goal and establish how the school would measure the progress toward or achievement of that goal, rather than having the statutes specify a particular achievement gap reduction requirement. For instance, a school could propose to show a reduction in the gap between reading assessment performance of low-income students and that of other students in the school and measure this reduction using scores on the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) testing the school chooses to administer to its students.

DPI responded to the committee discussion by raising policy questions for the committee to consider. The agency noted that the committee must determine whether DPI will approve school goals, whether DPI will monitor achievement of those goals, and whether the committee will set parameters regarding the types of assessments used to measure achievement gap reduction. DPI further noted that the committee should determine whether goals set by individual schools must be specific to reducing the achievement "gap," or whether they can simply set achievement goals for the students in that school.

Next, the committee discussed eligibility for the AGR program. The members noted that the draft legislation limited eligibility for the new AGR program to those schools currently participating in the SAGE program. The members determined that eligibility should remain limited to these schools for the initial years of the AGR program and that participants could be viewed as a “control group.” The experiences and outcomes in these 425 schools could then inform future revisions to the AGR program.

The committee also discussed the provision of the draft prohibiting AGR contracts from waiving any statutory requirements of the program. The members posited that a school might have good reasons for requesting a waiver of requests. For example, a school may seek a waiver to allow the school to use an innovative intervention other than the three specified interventions (tutoring, instructional coaching, or small class sizes). There was consensus that waiver requests should be allowed.

The committee then discussed whether to require evaluation of the new AGR program. Rob Meyer and Grant Sim, Value-Added Research Center (VARC), UW-Madison, made themselves available to answer questions regarding evaluation. They noted that evaluation can measure various items, including whether schools are implementing interventions with fidelity and whether certain interventions were more effective at particular grades. The committee determined that evaluation of the AGR program should be retained in the draft legislation.

Finally, the committee briefly discussed WLC: 0024/1, relating to including four year-old kindergarten (4K) in the SAGE program, and WLC: 0026/1, relating to a one-year extension of SAGE contracts. The committee determined that WLC: 0024/1 should allow a participating school the option to either have its 4K classes participate in SAGE, or to have its 3rd grade classes participate in SAGE. The committee also decided to move forward with WLC: 0026/1 to allow one-year extensions of SAGE contracts expiring at the end of the current 2014-15 school year.

Plans for Future Meetings

The next meeting of the Study Committee is scheduled for **Monday, November 10, 2014**, in Madison.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

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