



2015 - 2016 Bills of Interest to Wisconsin Technical Colleges

As of March 18, 2015

Bills or proposed bills of interest to technical colleges in the 2015 - 2016 legislative session are described below. This document evolves with the addition of new bills and updates to existing bills throughout the session.

- New and updated bills are highlighted.
- The District Boards Association's position or recommended position, if any, is provided at the end of each bill description.
- An index organized by bill subject begins on the next page.
- Each bill's complete text, sponsors, procedural history and status is available at: <http://legis.wisconsin.gov/>. Enter the bill number (e.g., "AB 22") under "Find a Proposal."
- A summary guide to understanding bills' procedural histories/status online follows at the conclusion of this report.

The District Boards Association's lobbying efforts and positions are available at the Government Accountability Board (GAB) "Eye on Lobbying" website: <https://lobbying.wi.gov/Home/Welcome?session=2015REG>. This site includes cross-referenced links to other organizations taking a lobbying interest on each bill.

The current legislative session officially runs from January 2015, through December 2016, but effectively ends with the adjournment of both houses. Adjournment may occur by late Winter or early Spring, 2016.

Readers are welcome to contact Paul Gabriel at the District Boards Association office for more information: (608) 266-9430 or pgabriel@districtboards.org.

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Bills of Interest

New – AB 20 – Requiring that Local Government Contracts Include the Use of U.S. Made Products

AB 20 was introduced in February 2015, and is awaiting a hearing.

Like other local governments, technical college districts follow a number of rules for contracting involving facility construction or repair. This bill would require that any contract entered into by a local government, including a technical college district, contain a provision that the contractor will use materials that are manufactured in the United States.

There's no compelling reason that matters of economic common sense or patriotism need to be written into statute to be encouraged or valued. There is no strong reason to support or oppose this bill.

Recommended position: None/monitor.

AB 21 (also SB 21) – The 2015 – 2017 State Budget Bill

AB 21 and SB 21 were introduced at the Governor's request in February 2015. They were referred to the Joint Finance Committee (JFC), which held agency briefings in early March. The JFC will conduct 4 public hearings on the budget between March 18 and March 26. The JFC will then begin "executive action," voting to adjust the bills through hundreds of individual motions topic-by-topic over several weeks in April and May. After the JFC concludes its adjustment of the bills, the JFC bill version is sent to each house. Each house may further amend the bill and must reconcile any late changes with the other house. Once both houses pass identical versions of the budget, it goes to the Governor for line-item vetoes and signing. The state budget establishes state appropriations and state programs for the two-year period from July 1, 2015, through June 30, 2017.

For the latest budget bill updates and details, see: www.districtboards.org and click on "Legislative Updates."

New – AB 30 (also SB 17) – Providers of Continuing Education to Chiropractic Technicians and Chiropractic Radiologic Technicians

These twin bills were introduced in February 2015, and are awaiting committee hearings.

These twin bills change the procedure for approving the provision of continuing education to licensed chiropractors, chiropractic technicians (CTs) and chiropractic radiologic technicians (CRTs). Moraine Park Technical College offers four programs for students who then may become licensed CTs and CRTs. These bills affect MPTC's ability to provide continuing education to those licensed individuals. MPTC's ability to train these individuals and provide them continuing education was seriously undermined by 2009 budget bill provisions described below. These new bills, as introduced, do not remedy the core 2009 changes.

Currently, MPTC graduates who become licensed CTs and CRTs may not acquire continuing education from their *alma mater* unless the MPTC instruction is "sponsored" by a "program sponsor." By law, program sponsors are limited to: the Wisconsin Chiropractic Association (WCA), International Chiropractors Association, an approved college of chiropractic that trains doctors of chiropractic, or an accredited college of medicine or osteopathy.

These bills would add to the list of continuing education program sponsors the Chiropractic Society of Wisconsin and the American Chiropractic Association. The bills would not add MPTC, even though it is an accredited college offering degrees preparing students to be CTs and CRTs. While these bills expand the organizations that could sponsor MPTC continuing education, the college should have direct authority to provide continuing education as a program sponsor itself.

The background on MPTC's loss of its previous authority is quite striking. The 2009-11 state budget bill as passed contained provisions requested by the Wisconsin Chiropractic Association (WCA). They were added to the bill without discussion or debate after midnight on the final night of budget amendments in a large multi-topic miscellaneous motion.

Among other provisions, the changes altered the definition of, and authorized training and continuing education related to, the CT and CRT job positions. Until this point, MPTC's graduates were hired as highly trained and highly compensated CTs and CRTs. The budget amendment had the effect of making the CT and CRT titles refer to a much lower level of training (to be offered by the Wisconsin Chiropractic Association). It also made it impossible for MPTC graduates to use these titles unless they took new state licensing tests for the suddenly lower-level job titles.

The amendment also eliminated MPTC's authority to provide CTs and CRTs continuing education. The law required that MPTC could only offer continuing education to the

extent it was sponsored (for a fee) by the WCA or others as described above. These and other controversial licensing changes helped lead some members of the chiropractic community to create a new trade group, the Chiropractic Society of Wisconsin, as an alternative to the WCA.

While these bills broaden the groups able to sponsor MPTC continuing education, the bills should be amended to restore direct continuing education authority for CTs and CRTs to MPTC.

Recommended position: None/monitor.

New – AB 32 (also SB 49) – Eliminating Prevailing Wage Laws for Public Projects

These identical bills were introduced in February 2015, and are awaiting public hearings.

“Prevailing wage” laws require that workers, laborers, mechanics and truck drivers for certain public construction projects be paid the “prevailing wage” for workers in that trade in that geographic area. Three distinct prevailing wage laws cover local, state and highway projects of \$100,000 or more for multi-trade projects and \$48,000 or more for single-trade projects. These laws also require that workers be paid overtime if required to work more than the “prevailing hours” for full time employment for the trade in that area.

These bills would eliminate all state prevailing wage laws.

Recommended position: None/monitor.

New – AB 56 – Requiring the UW System to Report on the High School of Students Requiring Remedial Instruction

These bills were introduced in February 2015. The Assembly version, AB 56, is on a fast track. It received a public hearing on March 10, was voted out of committee on March 12, and went to the full Assembly on March 17, 2015, where it was amended and passed on a voice vote. It was “messed” to the Senate and awaits action there.

As amended, AB 56 requires the UW System to report annually on any high school from which 6 or more students who graduated in the prior year and immediately enrolled at the UW needed to take remedial English or math upon entering the UW. The UW would report to the Legislature and State Superintendent of Public Instruction. The State Superintendent would be required to share this information with school districts.

As drafted, this bill does not directly affect technical colleges.

Recommended position: None/monitor.

New – AB 63 (also SB 33) – Eligibility for Broadband Expansion Grant Program

These twin bills were introduced in February 2015, and are awaiting a hearing.

The 2013-15 state budget bill created a broadband expansion grant program. The program provides that the Public Service Commission (PSC) make up to \$500,000 in grants annually to expand broadband infrastructure in areas of the state served by less than two internet providers or that the PSC deems are underserved by broadband services. “Broadband” is the common name for large and high-speed capability to transmit communications and internet data. Under current law, grants may be awarded to: an “organization,” a telecommunications utility, or to a city, village, county or town that applies in partnership with an organization or utility.

These bills expand eligible applicants for grants to include technical college districts, school districts and/or public libraries that apply in partnership with an organization or telecommunications utility that is also an eligible applicant.

These bills would expand grant eligibility to important public community “hubs” – schools, libraries and technical colleges. Areas most in need of greater broadband access likely have large numbers of individuals dependent on these community hubs for their internet access.

Recommended position: Support.

New – AB 64 – Technical College Authority to Operate Occupational and STEM Charter Schools

This bill was introduced in February 2015, and received a public hearing on March 10. It remains in committee with several potential amendments to be considered at a later date. The bill was scheduled for a committee vote on March 12 but was not acted upon as scheduled. One of the pending amendments, Assembly Amendment 3, by Representative Travis Tranel, R-Cuba City, would amend the state (K-12) school aid formula to provide that state aid, not local K-12 property tax levies, fund the incremental cost of any new charters under the bill.

Currently, school boards may contract with individuals, groups, businesses or certain public bodies to establish charter schools, which operate with fewer constraints than other schools. A limited number of public entities currently may also establish their own independent charter school with or without a contract with a school board. These entities are: MATC Milwaukee, UW-Milwaukee, UW-Parkside, and the City of Milwaukee.

AB 64 would expand the independent charter school authority (ability to create a charter with or without a contract with a school board) to technical college district boards and (by bill amendment) tribal community colleges in Wisconsin. These charter schools would be limited in purpose to “occupational education” or “science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).”

An independent charter school created under this bill by a technical college district could operate within the college’s district boundaries or in a “county adjacent to” the college district. The bill does not otherwise affect MATC Milwaukee’s existing authority.

No technical college requested this authority and there are no distinct plans to use it if it becomes law. Technical college leaders have noted that a college is more likely to partner with a school district under current law than to create its own charter school outside of the school district’s existing authority. At this time, financing a new charter school is most likely prohibitive to a technical college district acting independently. A number of college leaders have also noted that the colleges are faced with tight resources to accomplish an already broad mission for district taxpayers.

While many college leaders would support charter schools as a vehicle to create greater occupational and STEM opportunities for youth, the only position the colleges support by consensus is to maintain current/existing charter school law.

Recommended position: None/Monitor.

New – AB 86 – Workforce Growth Grants for Technical Colleges

This bill was introduced in March 2015, by 23 Assembly Democrats and 5 Senate Democrats. The bill is a combination of prior bills (Workforce Growth Grants bills were introduced but not passed in the 2011 and 2013 sessions) and several of the WTCS’s 2015-2017 state budget requests made by the WTCS Board but not included in the Governor’s executive budget bill.

First, AB 86 would appropriate \$20 million annually to the WTCS Board for new technical college “Workforce Growth Grants” distributed to districts on a competitive basis by the WTCS for projects in which:

- The college partners with a business, consortium of businesses, an economic development organization or a local workforce development board;
- To meet local needs supporting sectors with a “documented skills gap” or high workforce shortage, including manufacturing, energy, informational technology, skilled trades and healthcare;
- For activities that address development of individuals prior to entering the workforce or for workforce training; for any of the following:
 - “Job training scholarships” based on local labor market needs;
 - Building or infrastructure construction;
 - Equipment and material purchases;
 - Faculty hiring;
 - Development of certain industry-driven curricula; and
 - Student career support services including job placement and business recruitment.

In awarding grants, the WTCS Board would be required to consider the likely speed of responsiveness and would be required to give preference to projects that seek to eliminate waiting lists for courses in topics related to jobs with high employment demand.

Second, the bill would provide \$9 million over the next 2 years to implement three programs requested by the WTCS Board as part of its 2015 – 2017 state budget request. These requests were not put forward in the budget bills, AB 21 and SB 21, as introduced by the Governor. They are:

- Dual enrollment opportunity grants (\$3 million in 2016-17);
- Innovation grants to foster entrepreneurship (\$500,000 annually); and
- Veterans success grants (\$2.5 million annually for 2 years with project costs to be expended by June 30, 2019).

This bill is very positive in that Workforce Growth Grants would provide new capacity targeted to filling existing or emerging high skill jobs. The nature of Workforce Growth Grants would be competitive, but ongoing and stable as a new investment.

The bill also funds priorities identified by the WTCS Board in its budget request developed with input from the college presidents, district boards, faculty, and students. However, it is not common practice to request (and we didn’t request) a stand-alone bill be introduced during the budget process that restates budget request items the Governor did not include in the budget bill.

Recommended position: Support, with the understanding we did not request a bill to include budget items distinct from the formal budget process.

New – AB 87 – Use of Wisconsin Products and Services in State and Local Government Purchasing

This bill was introduced in February 2015, and is awaiting a public hearing.

This bill requires state purchasing and encourages, but does not require, local government purchasing of Wisconsin-sourced goods and services. The state would be required to purchase at least 20% of the value of products and services locally. For local governments, including technical college districts, the new law would state in part: “It shall be a goal of a local government unit that, annually, at least 20 percent of the aggregate value of purchases of products and services by that local government unit shall be local.” The bill further requires the local government unit to evaluate its performance on the 20% purchasing goal, but allows any government unit to opt out of evaluating its own performance simply by passing a resolution.

It is not clear whether local government units generally, and technical colleges specifically, already exceed 20% standard. Given that the product and services would count if purchased through a Wisconsin business regardless of where they were manufactured, it seems likely this standard is already greatly exceeded. Of course, local government units already have a natural interest in “buying locally” without codifying good practice and common sense into a new state law.

Recommended position: None/monitor.

(End of Bills of Interest Section)

This report was prepared by Paul Gabriel, who is responsible for the content, including any analysis or opinion. For more information, contact Paul Gabriel at 608 266-9430 or pgabriel@districtboards.org.

A Guide to Reading Bill Histories follows:

Reading Wisconsin Bill Histories – A Guide to the Basics

Paul Gabriel

Wisconsin Technical College District Boards Association

The text, sponsors, and procedural history of each state legislative bill are available at the Wisconsin Legislature's website, <http://legis.wisconsin.gov>. Enter the bill number, e.g., "AB xx," under "**Find a Proposal.**" In the search results, click on the specific bill.

At this site, under "**Links,**" readers will find the full bill text, any Report of Committee Proceedings ("ROCP"), Government Accountability Board Information (Lobbying positions on the bill), and other documents. Any twin bill introduced in the other house is linked under "**See Also.**" The bill's history and status is found under "**History.**"

When reviewing a specific bill history online, the following guide may be helpful:

Introduced by	Lists all legislators who have signed-on as a bill's co-sponsor.
Fiscal estimates	(Link to) estimated state (but not local) costs of implementing the bill as a new law.
Read first time ...	Provides the committee to which bill is referred for a hearing.
Public hearing held ...	Hearing held at which public was able to testify or register a position on the bill. Legislators may offer amendments at the hearing.
Executive action taken ...	The committee voted the bill out of committee and sent it to the full body with its recommendation/vote for passage by the full house.
Amendments	(Link to) any amendment that changes a bill text or a substitute amendment that replaces the original bill's full text.
Assembly/Senate amendment	Link(s) to the numbered amendment(s) to the bill (appears as AA 1, SA 2, etc.).
Assembly/Senate "substitute" amendment	Link(s) to the numbered "substitute" amendment. A "substitute" amendment <i>replaces entire original bill</i> . (appears as ASA 3, SSA 2, etc.).
Second reading	The full body considers the bill after it comes back from committee. This is the point at which amendments from the committee or from the floor are debated and, if adopted, officially attached.

Third reading	Clears the way for a full vote to pass or defeat the bill (on the third reading the bill may be voted up or down but not amended). Allowing a third reading on the floor on the same day, as the second reading requires waiving the rules without objection. For controversial bills, those opposed may object to waiving the immediate third reading in order to slow down passage.
Tabling	To “park” or stop a bill or a motion or other proposed action.
Pulling	To remove a bill from committee and bring it to the floor without it first being acted upon and voted out of committee.
Referral	To stop action on the floor by returning or sending a bill back to a committee.
Voice vote	Adoption by the body without a roll call.
Ayes/Noes	Click on this link to see the member-by-member roll call vote (not available when the action was by “voice vote”).
Messaged	After passage, the action sending the bill to the other house.
Concurred in	One house’s adoption of the other’s bill or bill version.
Enrolled	The passed bill is packaged as a complete piece of legislation and is available to be called for by, or sent to, the Governor.
Report approved, vetoed, or vetoed in part	Reflects the Governor’s signing, veto, or (for appropriations bills only) partial veto.
Report published	The date on which the Secretary of State published the new law, making it official and putting it into effect as a law.
Act (number)	When a bill becomes law it is transformed from a bill number to “2015 Act xx.” Click on the Act number to see the new law.