



Legislative Fiscal Bureau

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May 7, 2024

TO: Members
Joint Committee on Finance

FROM: Bob Lang, Director

SUBJECT: Wisconsin Technical College System: Section 13.10 Request for Release of Funding for Oral Healthcare Workforce Initiatives -- Agenda Item IV

REQUEST

On April 22, 2024, the Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS) submitted a request to the Joint Committee on Finance to release \$19,842,600 in the Committee's GPR supplemental appropriation [s. 20.865(4)(a)] to the WTCS appropriation for grants to district boards [s. 20.292(1)(f)] to support grants for oral healthcare workforce initiatives.

BACKGROUND

Under 2023 Act 19 (the 2023-25 budget act), \$20 million GPR was reserved in the Joint Finance Committee's supplemental appropriation [s. 20.865(4)(a)] for oral healthcare workforce initiatives under WTCS. Subsequent legislation was passed as 2023 Act 89 to implement the oral healthcare workforce program.

Act 89 specifies that the WTCS Board, in coordination with district boards, may submit a request for up to \$20 million in funding for district board programs to expand the state's oral healthcare workforce. The request must include a plan that identifies each district board that requests funding, the amount of funding each district board requests, and a detailed description of the eligible expenditures for which the requested funding would be used. Under the Act, eligible expenditures could include the following: (a) capital expenditures, such as for equipment or facility improvements or expansion; (b) instructional supplies, teaching materials and resources, consumables, or clinic fees; or (c) instructor bonuses for newly-hired instructors of up to \$5,000, provided certain conditions are met including that the instructor teaches courses in an oral healthcare program in a position that is at least a 0.5 full-time equivalent position, and repays the bonus if the instructor leaves after less than three years of employment.

Under Act 89, the plan submitted to the Committee for funding must include the following amounts: (a) up to \$2,000,000 for Northcentral Technical College to expand current dental hygienist and dental assistant programs and for development of a dental therapy program if dental therapy becomes an authorized dental practice; (b) up to \$1,430,000 to any district that currently offers a dental hygienist program, other than Northcentral Technical College; (c) up to \$1,000,000 to create a new program or expand an existing program for any district that currently offers no dental program or only a dental assistant program. (Dental therapy was authorized in Wisconsin under 2023 Act 87.)

The plan must include sufficient information for the Committee to determine that funding will be used only for eligible expenditures to expand a district board's existing oral healthcare program that has a capacity limit and a current waiting list for program admission or to create a new oral health care program offered by the district board after a finding of demonstrated community interest in and need for the program, and that the district board will provide matching funding, from sources other than the state grant, equal to at least 20% of the amount requested in the plan.

The WTCS Board is required to reimburse district boards for eligible expenditures under the approved plan if the specified requirements are met. If any funds have not been requested after 12 months after the Committee approves the plan, or if a district board informs the WTCS Board that it will not implement the program changes described in the approved plan, the WTCS Board may submit a request to the Committee to redistribute the funds allocated for that district. The request would be subject to a 14-day passive review.

REQUEST

Act 89 envisioned two submissions to the Committee. The first would be an initial allocation of funds under the s. 13.10 process. The second submission would be a request for a redistribution of funds if all of the \$20.0 million was not requested by districts in the initial allocation. The second submission would be addressed under a 14-day passive review process.

Rather than submitting two requests, WTCS has combined the initial allocation and the redistribution into the request before the Committee.

WTCS requests the transfer of \$19,842,600 GPR from the Committee's GPR supplemental appropriation [s. 20.865(4)(a)] to the WTCS appropriation for grants to district boards [s. 20.292(1)(f)] to support grants to technical college districts for oral healthcare workforce initiatives.

WTCS indicates that 14 of the 16 technical college districts submitted requests for oral healthcare funds. Two technical college districts (Moraine Park Technical College and Nicolet Area Technical College) did not submit requests for funds. Two other districts submitted requests for funding that is below the amount allocated in Act 89. As a result, the request redistributes the funds that would otherwise be unused (\$2.91 million) to 11 technical college districts that requested additional funding.

The table below shows the Act 89 amounts, the amounts requested by each college, the

additional allocations, and the total amount that would be received by each college under the request.

Act 89 Allocations and Requested Amounts

	<u>Act 89 Amounts</u>	<u>Initial Request</u>	<u>Additional Allocation</u>	<u>Total</u>
Blackhawk	\$1,430,000	\$1,430,000	\$264,545	\$1,694,545
Chippewa Valley	1,430,000	1,430,000	264,545	1,694,545
Fox Valley	1,430,000	1,430,000	264,545	1,694,545
Gateway	1,000,000	1,000,000	264,545	1,264,545
Lakeshore	1,000,000	1,000,000	264,545	1,264,545
Madison Area	1,430,000	1,430,000	0	1,430,000
Mid-State	1,000,000	1,000,000	264,545	1,264,545
Milwaukee	1,430,000	1,430,000	264,545	1,694,545
Moraine Park	1,000,000	0	0	0
Nicolet Area	1,000,000	0	0	0
Northcentral	2,000,000	2,000,000	264,545	2,264,545
Northeast WI	1,430,000	1,278,128	0	1,278,128
Northwood	1,000,000	1,000,000	264,545	1,264,545
Southwest WI	1,000,000	74,400	0	74,400
Waukesha Co	1,430,000	1,430,000	264,545	1,694,545
Western	<u>1,000,000</u>	<u>1,000,000</u>	<u>264,545</u>	<u>1,264,545</u>
Total	\$20,010,000	\$16,932,528	\$2,909,995	\$19,842,523

ANALYSIS

According to January, 2024, data from the federal Health Resources and Services Administration, 34 of Wisconsin's counties are experiencing a county-wide dental health professional shortage, with an additional seven counties containing shortage areas.

WTCS indicates that technical colleges currently operate eight dental hygiene programs, enrolling more than 1,300 students each year, and 14 dental assistant programs, enrolling more than 600 students per year. Dental education is costly to provide; it is estimated that equipping a new lab for students, including necessary facility improvements such as floor trenching and waterlines and purchasing dental chairs and other operatory equipment, typically costs over \$1 million, and operating costs for hygiene students total \$30,000 per year.

Dental education provided by technical colleges trains individuals to fill the following roles: (a) dental assistant, a role that assists dentists with procedures, prepare patients for treatments and procedures, and perform other tasks under the direction of a dentist; (b) dental hygienist, a role that provides dental cleanings, dental x-rays, and preventative treatments such as sealants and fluoride; and (c) expanded function dental auxiliary a dental assistant who receives additional training to be able to perform additional functions and procedures, such as placing fillings, applying sealant, or removing sutures or dressings.

The request submitted by WTCS indicates that the funds for each district would be used for the following. For each, WTCS indicates that the district would provide matching funds equal to 20% of the total project cost.

- For Blackhawk Technical College, funds would be used to expand the capacity of an existing dental hygienist program through the purchase of equipment and through facility improvements, including expanding clinical treatment areas. These improvements would allow the college to increase its annual cohort from ten students to twelve, as well as make it easier for students to obtain required clinic hours and improve the public accessibility of the dental clinic. The request indicates that there are currently 69 students waiting for one of ten available seats in the program.

- Chippewa Valley Technical College would use its grant award to purchase equipment and supplies to expand its existing dental assistant, dental hygienist, and expanded function dental auxiliary programs. This expansion would allow five additional students to be added to each dental assistant and dental hygienist cohort and ten additional students to be added to each expanded function dental auxiliary cohort, for a total of 40 additional students annually.

- Fox Valley Technical College would use its funds to purchase equipment and supplies and make facilities improvements to expand its existing dental assistant and dental hygienist programs, allowing nine additional students to complete its programs annually.

- For Gateway Technical College, funds would be used to establish a new dental hygienist program with a cohort of 12 annually. The grant would fund initial accreditation fees and equipment and supplies needed to establish the program.

- For Lakeshore Technical College, funds would be used to establish a new dental hygienist program with a cohort of ten students annually. The grant would be used for facilities improvements, dental chairs and other equipment, and initial accreditation fees.

- For Madison Area Technical College, funds would be used to expand its existing dental hygienist program and establish a new expanded function dental auxiliary program. Madison College has 239 students on the waiting list for 40 spots in its dental hygienist program, and the grant would allow the program to add eight additional students to each cohort over two years, and the new expanded function dental auxiliary program would serve 15 students annually.

- Mid-State Technical College would use its grant to establish a new dental hygienist program with a cohort of 12 students, and expand its existing dental assistant program to serve an additional 18 students. The funds would be used to construct an oral health instructional facility, pay initial accreditation fees, and develop content and curriculum. Funds would also be used to add an additional five dental chair stations.

- Milwaukee Area Technical College would use its grant award to expand its existing dental hygienist program capacity by expanding clinical space and purchasing additional equipment. The college currently has 130 students waiting for 24 seats available per semester, and the project would allow an additional six students to be added each semester.

- For Northcentral Technical College, grants would be used to establish new expanded function dental auxiliary and dental therapy programs through expanding and renovating its existing dental clinic, purchasing equipment, and funding initial program accreditation. The college expects to enroll 24 students in its expanded function dental auxiliary program and 16 students in its dental auxiliary program annually.
- For Northeast Wisconsin Technical College, funds would be used to expand an existing dental hygienist program and establish a new expanded function dental auxiliary program, including building improvements, and purchasing additional equipment and supplies. In Spring, 2024, the college had 331 students waiting for 20 available seats in the dental hygienist program; the project will allow ten students to be added to the cohort annually. The new expanded function dental auxiliary program would serve 18 students annually.
- For Northwood Technical College, funds would be used to expand an existing dental assistant program and establish a new expanded function dental auxiliary program through the purchase of a mobile dental training lab, which would allow the dental assistant program to be expanded to the Superior campus and the new expanded function dental auxiliary program to be offered at the Rice Lake campus. The expansion would create a total of 18 additional seats.
- Southwest Wisconsin Technical College would use its grant to purchase replacement equipment that would allow the college to continue serving students without reducing enrollment.
- Waukesha County Technical College would use funds to expand an existing dental hygienist program through equipment purchases and facility improvements. In Spring, 2024, the college had a waitlist of 90 students for 20 available seats, and the grant funds will allow the college to add 10 students to each cohort annually.
- Western Technical College would use its grant to establish a new expanded function dental auxiliary program serving 24 students annually. Funds would be used for equipment and supplies, faculty training, and a new simulation laboratory.

ALTERNATIVES

The Committee could approve the request as submitted (Alternative 1). Or, if the Committee wishes to follow the two-step process under Act 89, it could approve the initial release of \$16,932,600 and have the remaining \$2,910,000 taken up under the passive review process (Alternative 2). However, because it is very unlikely that the request amounts will change, the Committee may want to address the entire amount at this time.

1. Approve the request to transfer \$19,842,600 GPR from the Joint Finance Committee's supplemental appropriation [s. 20.865(4)(a)] to the WTCS appropriation for grants to district boards [s. 20.292(1)(f)] to support grants for oral healthcare workforce initiatives, to be distributed as described in the request submitted by WTCS.

2. Approve the release of \$16,932,600 GPR from the Joint Finance Committee's supplemental appropriation [s. 20.865(4)(a)] to the WTCS appropriation for grants to district boards

[s. 20.292(1)(f)] to fund the Act 89 allocation amounts for the colleges that requested the funding. A separate request would be needed for the release of the remaining \$2,910,000.

3. Deny the request.

Prepared by: Christa Pugh