



Wisconsin State Legislature

FOR MORE INFORMATION
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State Legislature Approves Olsen Education Bills

Protecting children from adults with a history of sexual misconduct should be the goal of parents, schools and the state Department of Public Instruction. Doing so will be easier under a bill I introduced that was approved by both houses of the legislature this month. In addition to that bill, the State Assembly and the State Senate voted on two other education-related bills I introduced. The State Senate approved a fourth education-related bill, which is now being considered by the State Assembly.

The first bill, Senate Bill 253, was introduced to help the state comply with a part of the federal Elementary and Secondary Schools Act. The re-authorization of the federal law, known as the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), requires that states that receive federal funds under ESSA have laws prohibiting any licensed individual, like a teacher or administrator, from assisting a school employee in getting a new job if they know that the employee engaged in sexual misconduct regarding a minor or student in violation of the law. Over the years, we've heard stories about individuals who were fired from one district for misconduct, only to have these same individuals hired by other school districts that did not know the full story behind their dismissal. This bill would update the current statute to specify that it is immoral conduct for a licensee to help another employee obtain a new job if the licensee knows that the employee has committed a sexual offense of a minor or pupil. The state superintendent can revoke a license on the ground of immoral conduct.

The second bill, Senate Bill 299, would expand access to Montessori teacher training programs. Currently, the state can issue an initial teaching license to a person who has successfully

completed a teacher education program that is accredited by the Montessori Accreditation Council for Teacher Education (MACTE). Senate Bill 299 would allow the state to issue an initial teaching license to a person who has successfully completed a Montessori teacher education program accredited through the Association Montessori Internationale (AMI). This bill will help to address the shortage of Montessori-trained teachers that is impacting a number of schools throughout the state.

The third bill, Senate Bill 382, allows schools to screen potential employees for tuberculosis (TB), rather than requiring that they test potential employees. Under current law, potential hires undergo a physical examination, TB test and chest x-ray. This bill expands the list of practitioners who can complete the physical exam to include a licensed physician, doctor of osteopathy, physician assistant, or advanced practice nurse prescriber. The exam must include a screening questionnaire approved by the Department of Health Services and the practitioner must certify that the individual appears to be free from tuberculosis in a communicable form. By expanding the list of practitioners who can conduct the physical exam and allowing a screening rather than a TB test, this bill will allow schools to save money and reduces their administrative burden. If future TB screenings are necessary, a school nurse would be authorized to conduct them.

In addition to the three bills that were approved by both the Senate and the Assembly, Senate Bill 301 was approved by the Senate and is awaiting a vote in the Assembly. This bill expands the online summer or interim session classes that qualify for state aid to classes which fulfill a graduation requirement in health education as well as classes that count toward the number of credits required for graduation in any combination of vocational education, foreign languages, fine arts, and other courses. Under current law, only classes that fulfill a high school graduation requirement in English, social studies, math, science, or physical education qualify for state aid.

It is my hope that the State Assembly will vote on Senate Bill 301 when they return in January and that Governor Walker will sign the three other bills into law soon.

If you have any questions about any of the information I have included or if you have suggestions on other topics or issues you would like learn more about, you may call my office toll-free at (800) 991-5541; write me at P.O. Box 7882, Madison, WI 53707; or e-mail me at: Sen.Olsen@legis.state.wi.us. You can also sign up for our newsletter at our website: <http://www.legis.state.wi.us/senate/sen14/news/index.htm>.

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