

WTCS 2027-29 Biennial Budget Proposal

Type: Program

Issue Title: Dual Enrollment

Strategic Direction Goals: Innovate, Collaborate, Inspire, Transform

Statutory Modification: ☒ Yes ☐ No

Amount:

<u>FY 28</u>	<u>FY 29</u>
\$4,099,400	\$50,126,800

Summary:

Provide \$4.1 million GPR in FY28 and 1.0 FTE position and \$50.1 million GPR in FY29 and 1.0 FTE position to support high-quality dual enrollment opportunities at technical colleges.

- Dual enrollment provides an opportunity for students to earn college credit while in high school. Dual enrollment allows high school students to experience college-level courses to better prepare them for the social and academic requirements of college, build confidence and expose students to career and academic planning early on. Research shows that dual enrollment programs positively impact several student outcomes, including high school academic achievement and graduation, college access and enrollment, and attainment of a college degree. Accelerating students' progress towards postsecondary credentials saves students time, makes college more affordable for families and develops the workforce pipeline.
- Within WTCS, dual enrollment (referred to as dual credit) is provided through several mechanisms:
 - Transcribed credit: A college course and college resources, including a college mentor, are provided to a qualified high school teacher to deliver the full college course to students in high school. Students receive a college transcript and college and high school credit.
 - Start College Now: Allows high school juniors and seniors who meet certain requirements to take postsecondary courses at a technical college.
 - 38.14 contracts: Contracts between a technical college and high school to allow high school students to gain college level instruction from a college instructor and earn college level credit and high school credit.
 - Youth Apprenticeship: Allows high school juniors and seniors who meet certain requirements to receive school-based and work-based instruction. A high school

can contract with a technical college and instructor to teach a college level course to high school students when appropriate.

- Advanced Standing is also referred to as “Credit in Escrow.” The credit is activated when a student enters a program at the college. The college has an articulation agreement with the high school stating that one or more high school course(s) outcomes align to the first college level course.
- More than 99% of dual credits are earned through transcribed credit, Start College Now, or 38.14 contracts.
- Technical colleges served more than 67,700 students in 2024-25 and these students earned 328,883 college credits. Because technical college dual enrollment opportunities are offered at no cost to students and families, there were nearly \$50 million in college credit savings in 2024-25, an average savings of \$736.64 per student.
- Nationwide, 71% of dual enrollment students took their courses at community colleges in 2023-24. Wisconsin is one of three states that have been identified as not providing any state funding for dual enrollment at community colleges. Instead, school districts and technical colleges support the costs of these programs from their own budgets without passing costs to students and families. The funding mechanisms vary based on the type of dual enrollment program.
- Participation in dual enrollment has grown 37% over the last five years, demonstrating the rising interest in dual enrollment. The significant growth in demand for dual enrollment increases the financial pressures on school districts and technical colleges pressures to sustain current programming.
- More than 600 high schools were served by a WTCS dual enrollment program in 2024-25, but hundreds of high schools around the state remain unserved despite participation growth. A recent study from the Wisconsin Policy Forum found dual enrollment access gaps in schools that are small, urban or with high rates of poverty. Additional resources could expand outreach and opportunities for many of these underserved high schools and students and reach new student populations.
- Research has found that as dual enrollment has grown, one of the challenges that has been identified is “random acts of dual enrollment,” referring to the selection of dual enrollment coursework based on availability rather than the alignment with a student’s education and career plans. Successful dual enrollment models can center around guided career pathways that intentionally align to college degrees and careers in fields of interest, and advising and supports that encourage early career and academic exploration and planning. Intentional dual enrollment can maximize the impact of a student’s dual enrollment experience by building upon existing technical college dual enrollment successes to make dual enrollment more valuable for students. Importantly,

these high-value models are resource-intensive and costly for colleges and school districts to implement.

- The creation of a new WTCS grant program specifically for dual enrollment would provide investment for a more sustainable dual enrollment model by:
 - Stabilizing current programming by lessening the financial burden on technical colleges and school districts; and
 - Expanding innovative and high-impact dual enrollment focused on expanding access and developing intentional dual enrollment models.
- A statutory change would create the authority for dual enrollment grants to technical colleges and specify that grants can be used for activities supporting dual enrollment programs. Under this structure, grants could support local technical college district needs and could include, for example:
 - Instructors
 - Staffing to support expanding access and student outreach and recruitment
 - Stipends for high school dual enrollment instructors
 - Professional development for high school dual enrollment instructors and college employees
 - Development or modification of programming into guided pathways
 - Academic, financial and wraparound support resources and staff
 - Tuition or contract fees that would otherwise be funded by school districts
 - Non-tuition costs for students, including transportation and course-related materials
 - Equipment directly related to dual enrollment courses
- The statutory change would also specify that grant funding could be allocated so that a portion of the funds is awarded using a formula that distributes funding to each technical college and a portion of the funds is awarded based on technical college proposals to achieve at least one of the following goals:
 - Expand program access
 - Deliver high-quality dual enrollment programs
 - Support student success
- Under this statutory structure, funding could be allocated in two tiers, partially by formula to stabilize current programming and support each technical college district, and partially competitively to expand innovative and high-impact programming based on proposals from colleges that represent the needs of their districts and local school district partners.
 - Tier 1: Stabilize and support current programming (\$10 million)

- 60% distributed to each college equally
- 40% distributed by formula that considers the number of local educational agencies within the technical college district and the number of 10th graders within the technical college district
- Tier 2: Expand innovative and high-impact dual enrollment (\$40 million)
 - Award funds using a competitive process that evaluates college proposals to meet the goals of increased program access, high-value programming and supporting student success.
- The WTCS System Office has limited staffing and lacks capacity to support dual enrollment program expansion and administer a new grant program without additional staff. The request includes 1.0 new FTE for program support, grant administration, disseminating grant best practices and providing technical assistance to colleges.

Request: Provide 1.0 FTE GPR and increase GPR funding by \$99,400 in FY28 and \$126,800 in FY29 in the General Program Operations appropriation (20.292(1)(a)) for the WTCS System Office to expand staff capacity to support dual enrollment.

In addition, increase GPR funding in a new continuing appropriation by \$4 million GPR in FY28 and \$50 million in FY29 to fund dual enrollment grants to technical colleges. Colleges would receive planning funds in FY28 to support preparations for the new grant funds in FY29.