



## WISCONSIN CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

TO: State Senator John Lehman, Chair  
Members, Senate Committee on Education

FROM: Kim Wadas, Associate Director

DATE: February 21, 2008

RE: Senate Bill 486, Educator Licensure in Milwaukee Parental Choice Program Schools

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The Wisconsin Catholic Conference (WCC) opposes Senate Bill 486, which would place new licensure requirements on educators working for Milwaukee Parental Choice Program (MPCP) schools. This requirement is unnecessary as Catholic schools within the Archdiocese of Milwaukee, as well as other MPCP schools, must already maintain high educator standards, which include state licensure, in order to obtain and retain accreditation.

Under Wisconsin Statutes s.119.23(2)(a)7, a private school participating in the MPCP must attain accreditation from a state-recognized accrediting institution. The Archdiocese of Milwaukee is listed as an accrediting institution. In addition to adhering to its own accreditation standards, the Archdiocese also complies with teacher standards as required by the Wisconsin Religious and Independent Schools Accreditation (WRISA), another approved accrediting agency.

The Archdiocese, in its school accreditation standards, requires that "All teachers are state-certified or pursuing an Archdiocese approved plan of study on an approved timeline, monitored by the principal annually." This plan of study should include a plan for certification, if applicable, that is kept on record in the employee's personnel file.

Under WRISA, instructional personnel must have "earned a bachelor's degree that includes 12 semester hours of credit in teacher education as part of or in addition to the degree, or is actively working toward meeting this requirement in three years."

Instructional personnel in a secondary institution must also possess "a college major (at least 24 semester hours) or certificate in their assigned field for the major portion of the school day." Professional personnel that meet the qualifications for certification or licensing by the state are considered in compliance with this quality benchmark.

By utilizing this standard, accrediting agencies maintain a high level of competency among educators. However, this standard also allows our Catholic schools to utilize second career teacher programs such as the Urban Education Fellows Program through Alverno and Mount

Mary Colleges. Individuals enrolled in this program seek a second career as teachers and are permitted to teach in an urban school setting while participating in a three-year graduate degree program that will provide them with state certification upon completion. The individuals who participate in this program for the Archdiocese are all required to have bachelor's degrees.

While we recognize the need to maintain excellent educators in our MPCP schools, the WCC asks that you continue to allow benchmarks to be maintained through the accrediting agencies recognized in s.119.23(2)(a)7.

The WCC thanks you for the opportunity to testify on this proposal and urges you to oppose SB 486.