

TO: Members, Assembly Committee on Education

FROM: Daniel Henderson, School Programs Coordinator

SUBJECT: AB-99 – Maintaining a lifetime teaching, administrator, or pupil services license

DATE: May 25, 2023

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on AB-99. The Wisconsin Council of Religious and Independent Schools (WCRIS) takes no position on AB-99. But we would like to address the committee on some important issues relating to lifetime licenses.

As you may know, WCRIS represents over 600 private schools and over 120,000 students in K-12 schools across the state. Many of those students are taught by Department of Public Instruction (DPI) licensed teachers. Indeed, many of our member jurisdictions require licensure, such as the five Catholic Dioceses. We support the expansion of pathways so teachers can earn a lifetime license.

As it currently stands, AB-99 only counts time worked at the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) towards an educator's lifetime license. We need the inclusion of time worked at private schools' dioceses, synods, and jurisdictional central offices so they are treated like DPI agency service. Like DPI, these offices provide a similar oversight function for private schools.

WCRIS has worked with the bill's author. An amendment has been drafted that does include employment in a private school's diocese, synod, or jurisdictional central office to count towards the lifetime license requirements.

The idea is that someone should not be punished or disadvantaged in the pursuit of years of service needed for a lifetime license simply because the teacher tried administrative work and decided to return to teaching.

Further, many of our teaching staff move in and out of the public school systems throughout the course of their careers and could be affected by their current exclusion. We need to make licensure more obtainable, not less. We are requesting this simple tweak, which will accomplish that goal.

In summary, WCRIS is in support of the amendment and would be in favor of AB-99 if the amendment is adopted. We urge the committee to adopt the amendment to include private schools' dioceses, synods, or jurisdictional central offices.

Please notify WCRIS if we can be of further assistance. I am happy to answer questions. Thank you for your time and consideration.