



AGENDA OF THE WISCONSIN TECHNICAL COLLEGE SYSTEM (WTCS) BOARD

September 10-11, 2024

**Northcentral Technical College
1000 W. Campus Drive, Wausau, WI**

Tuesday, September 10, 2024

Location: Timberwolf Conference Center/D100

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Motion to Recess until Wednesday, September 11, 2024

Following completion of the Tuesday agenda, Board members and invited guests will attend dinner at the Cedar Creek Grill. No official business will be conducted.

If you require accommodations to observe the meeting, please contact Julie Drake at julie.drake@wtcsystem.edu or at 608-267-9066.



AGENDA OF THE WISCONSIN TECHNICAL COLLEGE SYSTEM (WTCS) BOARD

Wednesday, September 11, 2024

Location: Timberwolf Conference Center/D100

Breakfast will be available for Board members and invited guests at 8:00 am in the Timberwolf Conference Center/D100. No official business will be conducted.

8:30 am

Northcentral Technical College Presentation and Tour

9:30 am

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Lunch will be available for Board members and invited guests. No official business will be conducted.

If you wish to listen during the meeting, please contact Julie Drake at julie.drake@wtcsystem.edu or at 608-267-9066 to obtain instructions on how to join the call.

ITEM A: APPROVAL OF JULY 16-17, 2024, MEETING MINUTES

Board President Mark Tyler

ITEM B: REPORT OF THE BOARD PRESIDENT

Board President Mark Tyler

- Board of Regents Report

ITEM C: REPORT OF THE SYSTEM PRESIDENT

WTCS System President Layla Merrifield

ITEM D: BUILDING THE 2026-2030 STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

WTCS Provost and Vice President Dr. Colleen McCabe

The mission of the Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS) is established by state statute. Every five years, the WTCS Board revisits its strategic directions to envision the System's future. WTCS Provost and Vice President Dr. Colleen McCabe will outline the timeline and process for developing the Board's 2026-2030 Strategic Directions. Board members will engage in an initial planning exercise and Board President Tyler will seek volunteers for a Work Group. This Work Group, in collaboration with Dr. Colleen McCabe and WTCS Director of Strategic Directions, Katy Pettersen, will work over the next year to shape the System's forthcoming vision.

ITEM E: WORKFORCE ADVANCEMENT TRAINING (WAT) AND APPRENTICE-RELATED INSTRUCTION GRANT GUIDELINES

WTCS Grants Manager Tou Ya Khang

Resolution:

That, upon the recommendation of the president of the Wisconsin Technical College System, the Wisconsin Technical College System Board adopts the funding categories for the State of Wisconsin WAT and Apprentice-Related Instruction grant programs for fiscal year 2025-26.

The WTCS Board is required to approve guidelines annually for the distribution of state and federal grant funds. At its July 2024 meeting, the Board approved funding categories for federal Carl D Perkins grants and eight of the ten State of Wisconsin grant categories.

The Board will take action on the final two State of Wisconsin grant categories.

ITEM F: 2025-2026 BOARD MEETING SCHEDULE

That, upon the recommendation by the President of the Wisconsin Technical College System, the Wisconsin Technical College System Board adopt the 2025-2026 meeting schedule as presented.

2025

DATE & TIME	LOCATION
Tuesday, January 21 – 9 am – 12 pm	Hill Farms Building – Madison
Tuesday, March 11 – 4:30 pm – 6 pm Wednesday, March 12 – 8:30 am – 12 pm	Madison Area Technical College – Madison-Truax
Tuesday, May 20 – 9 am – 12 pm	Hill Farms Building – Madison
Tuesday, July 8 – 4:30 pm – 6 pm Wednesday, July 9 – 8:30 am – 12 pm	Nicolet Area Technical College – Rhinelander
Tuesday, September 9 – 4:30 pm – 6 pm Wednesday, September 10 – 8:30 am – 12 pm	Chippewa Valley Technical College – Eau Claire
Tuesday, November 4 – 4:30 pm – 6 pm Wednesday, November 5 – 8:30 am – 12 pm	Southwest Wisconsin Technical College - Fennimore

2026

DATE & TIME	LOCATION
Tuesday, January 20 – 9 am – 12 pm	Hill Farms Building – Madison
Tuesday, March 17 – 4:30 pm – 6 pm Wednesday, March 18 – 8:30 am – 12 pm	Blackhawk Technical College – Beloit-Janesville
Tuesday, May 19 – 9 am – 12 pm	Hill Farms Building – Madison
Tuesday, July 14 – 4:30 pm – 6 pm Wednesday, July 15 – 8:30 am – 12 pm	Western Technical College – La Crosse
Tuesday, September 1 – 4:30 pm – 6 pm Wednesday, September 2 – 8:30 am – 12 pm	Milwaukee Area Technical College – Milwaukee
Tuesday, November 10 – 4:30 pm – 6 pm Wednesday, November 11 – 8:30 am – 12 pm	Fox Valley Technical College – TBD

ITEM G: FUTUREMAKER PARTNER AWARD

Board President Mark Tyler and Northcentral Technical College President Dr. Jeannie Worden

ITEM H: TEACHING AND LEARNING – DIGITAL LITERACY & INTEGRATING AI IN PROGRAMS

WTCS Provost and Vice President Dr. Colleen McCabe, Associate Vice President-Student Success Dr. Christina Lorge, and Associate Vice President-Instruction Chrystal Seeley-Schreck; Northcentral Technical College Provost and Vice President for Learning Dr. Darren Ackley, Vice President of Business and Technology Dr. Chet Strebe, Senior Director of IT Jon DeGroot and IT Faculty Josh Stutting

In this presentation, leadership from the System Office and Northcentral Technical College (NTC) will explore the critical role of digital literacy in higher education and the transformative potential of integrating artificial intelligence (AI) into academic programs. Discussions will include how our colleges are using AI to strengthen student support structures, improve administrative efficiencies and enhance learning experiences both inside and outside of the classroom.

ITEM I: WISCONSIN TECHNICAL COLLEGE DISTRICT BOARDS ASSOCIATION

Association President Chuck Bolstad and Interim Executive Director Diane Handrick

Chuck Bolstad, Southwest Wisconsin Technical College trustee and current president, and Interim Executive Director Diane Handrick will provide the Board with an overview of recent Association activities.

ITEM J: WTCS PRESIDENTS’ ASSOCIATION

Association President Richard Barnhouse

Dr. Richard Barnhouse, president of Waukesha County Technical College and current Association president, will provide the Board with an overview of recent Association activities.

ITEM K: CONSENT AGENDA

WTCS Associate Vice President of Instruction Chrystal Seeley-Schreck

WTCS Director of Facilities Development Dan Scanlon

- Program Development
- Facilities Development

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

Authority for the initiation and development of programs is vested with the Wisconsin Technical College System Board as provided under s. 38.001(1m), Wis. Stats.

CONCEPT REVIEW

During the Concept Review phase for occupational programs, the district provides information on local labor market demand and employment trends. In addition, the district provides a summary of discussions with other districts, which offer the same or a similar program. The results of the Ad Hoc Advisory Committee discussions are shared, and District Board approval is documented. Approval of the Concept Review does not authorize the district to offer the program. Approval of the Concept Review does allow the district to proceed with compiling and documenting information required in the next and final stage of the approval process.

The information, analyses and documentation submitted in the Concept Review phase are reviewed by System Office staff for adequacy. The following Concept Reviews are recommended for approval. Board approval of the following Concept Reviews will initiate the Program Approval phase.

<u>College</u>	<u>Program Title</u>
Madison Area Technical College	IT-Cyber Compliance Specialist Associate of Applied Science Degree
Milwaukee Area Technical College	Criminal Justice-Law Enforcement 720 Academy Less-Than-One Year Technical Diploma
Nicolet Area Technical College	Marketing – Digital Marketing Promotions Less-Than-One Year Technical Diploma
Northcentral Technical College	Advocacy & Social Justice Specialist One-year Technical Diploma

Concept Review – Requested by: Madison Area Technical College

Program Title: IT-Cyber Compliance Specialist

Program Description: The IT-Cyber Compliance Specialist Associate of Applied Science Degree prepares students to manage compliance challenges within cybersecurity. Through a blend of foundational analysis and hands-on experience, students acquire the expertise needed to safeguard organizational assets and navigate the evolving landscape of cybersecurity compliance, policies and standards. Graduates are employed as information security analysts and risk analysts.

Demonstration of Program Need: Madison Area Technical College demonstrated program need through a variety of sources including labor market information and advisory committee support.

Summary of Collaborative Discussions: Madison College notified the 13 colleges with the same or similar programs. There were no concerns.

Salary: \$36.79/hour

District Board Approval Date: 7/8/2024

Concept Review – Requested by: Milwaukee Area Technical College

Program Title: Criminal Justice-Law Enforcement 720 Academy

Program Description: The Criminal Justice-Law Enforcement 720 Academy Less-Than-One Year Technical Diploma program prepares students to perform the essential functions of a law enforcement officer in the State of Wisconsin. With instruction based on the criteria set forth by the Wisconsin Department of Justice, Training and Standards, this program provides a solid foundation in defense tactics, emergency vehicle operations, criminal investigations and more. Graduates are employed as law enforcement officers.

Demonstration of Program Need: Milwaukee Area Technical College (MATC) demonstrated program need through a variety of sources including labor market information, employer surveys and advisory committee support.

Summary of Collaborative Discussions: MATC notified 13 colleges with the same or similar programs. There were no concerns.

Salary: \$32/hour

District Board Approval Date: 6/24/2024

Concept Review – Requested by: Nicolet Area Technical College

Program Title: Marketing – Digital Marketing Promotions

Program Description: The Marketing – Digital Marketing Promotions Less-Than-One Year Technical Diploma prepares students to create digital marketing content, promote products and services in a digital environment, build websites and create e-commerce platforms. Graduates are employed as market research analysts, marketing specialists, digital marketing coordinators and social media specialists.

Demonstration of Program Need: Nicolet Area Technical College demonstrated program need through a variety of sources including labor market information and advisory committee support.

Summary of Collaborative Discussions: Nicolet College notified the three colleges with the same or similar programs. There were no concerns.

Salary: \$29.13/hour

District Board Approval Date: 4/16/2024

Concept Review – Requested by: Northcentral Technical College

Program Title: Advocacy & Social Justice Specialist

Program Description: The Advocacy & Social Justice Specialist One-Year Technical Diploma program prepares students to advocate for justice and change within their communities. Graduates are employed as support specialists, sexual assault victim services client advocates, domestic abuse client advocates, legal systems program client advocates and volunteer coordinators.

Demonstration of Program Need: Northcentral Technical College (NTC) demonstrated program need through a variety of sources including labor market information, employer surveys and advisory committee support.

Summary of Collaborative Discussions: There are no other colleges with the same or similar programs.

Salary: \$19/hour

District Board Approval Date: 6/4/2024

PROGRAM APPROVAL

During the Program Approval phase for occupational programs, the district prepares a final analysis of the new program and the cost/benefit to district stakeholders. The analysis includes a final estimate of labor market need, instructional costs and career pathway opportunities. In addition, the district prepares a response to any issues or questions raised by the Board in the Concept Review phase.

The information, analysis and documentation submitted in the Program Approval phase are reviewed by System Office staff for adequacy. The following programs are recommended for Board approval. Board approval will complete the occupational program development process.

<u>College</u>	<u>Program Title</u>
Milwaukee Area Technical College	Bricklaying Less-Than-One Year Technical Diploma
Waukesha County Technical College	Manufacturing Integration Engineering Technology Associate of Applied Science Degree

Program Approval – Requested by: Milwaukee Area Technical College

Program Title: Bricklaying

Program Description: The Bricklaying Less-Than-One Year Technical Diploma prepares students to lay and bind building materials, such as brick, structural tile, concrete block, cinder block, glass block and terra-cotta block, with mortar and other substances, to construct or repair walls, partitions, arches, sewers and other structures. Graduates are employed as bricklayers.

Cost/benefit to district stakeholders: This degree will benefit stakeholders by providing local communities with skilled employees in this occupational field. Initial program startup costs include curriculum development and instructional support.

Program Approval – Requested by: Waukesha County Technical College

Program Title: Manufacturing Integration Engineering Technology

Program Description: The Manufacturing Integration Engineering Technology Associate of Applied Science Degree prepares students to implement various automated and robotic systems to enhance manufacturing operations. Graduates are employed as electrical engineering technicians, automated systems specialists and mechatronics technicians.

Cost/benefit to district stakeholders: This degree will benefit stakeholders by providing local communities with skilled employees in this occupational field. Initial program startup costs include curriculum development and instructional support.

PROGRAM DISCONTINUANCE

A program is discontinued at a district’s request, or as initiated by System Office staff, when labor market projections decline or a program experiences low enrollment over a long period of time. Prior to being discontinued, programs are suspended for three years. In some cases, the program is modified or combined with another program. Discontinuing low-demand programs helps ensure that Wisconsin technical college programs maintain high quality and relevance to state workforce needs.

<u>College</u>	<u>Program Title</u>
Lakeshore Technical College	Carpentry Apprentice Apprenticeship Program discontinued due to low enrollment. Program originally approved: 12/1/1986
Lakeshore Technical College	Metal Fabrication Apprentice Apprenticeship Program discontinued due to low enrollment. Program originally approved: 12/6/1999
Lakeshore Technical College	Plumbing Apprentice Apprenticeship Program discontinued due to low enrollment. Program originally approved: 7/7/2014
Lakeshore Technical College	Sheet Metal Construction Apprenticeship Program discontinued due to low enrollment. Program originally approved: 5/1/1987
Lakeshore Technical College	Sheet Metal - Industrial Apprenticeship Program discontinued due to low enrollment. Program originally approved: 5/1/1987

FACILITIES DEVELOPMENT

Blackhawk Technical College – Construction of facilities in Janesville at a cost of \$335,000.

Blackhawk Technical College – Construction of facilities in Janesville at a cost of \$333,733.

Chippewa Valley Technical College – Remodeling of facilities in Menomonie at a cost of \$1,500,000.

Chippewa Valley Technical College – Remodeling of facilities in Eau Claire at a cost of \$1,500,000.

Chippewa Valley Technical College – Remodeling of facilities in Eau Claire at a cost of \$1,500,000.

Fox Valley Technical College – Remodeling of facilities in Appleton at a cost of \$1,317,000.

Fox Valley Technical College – Remodeling of facilities in Appleton at a cost of \$1,200,000.

Gateway Technical College – Remodeling of facilities in Racine at a cost of \$1,500,000.

Madison Area Technical College – Remodeling of facilities in Madison at a cost of \$1,500,000.

Madison Area Technical College – Remodeling of facilities in Madison at a cost of \$1,500,000.

Madison Area Technical College – Remodeling of facilities in Madison at a cost of \$1,500,000.

Madison Area Technical College – Remodeling of facilities in Madison at a cost of \$600,000.

Madison Area Technical College – Remodeling of facilities in Madison at a cost of \$800,000.

Madison Area Technical College – Remodeling of facilities in Madison at a cost of \$500,000.

Milwaukee Area Technical College – Remodeling of facilities in Milwaukee at a cost of \$1,450,000.

Milwaukee Area Technical College – Remodeling of facilities in Milwaukee at a cost of \$725,000.

Southwest Wisconsin Technical College – Rental of facilities in Platteville at an annual cost of \$22,157.

Waukesha County Technical College – Remodeling of facilities in Pewaukee at a cost of \$400,000.

Blackhawk Technical College – Construction of Facilities in Janesville

The Blackhawk Technical College district, pursuant to s. 38.04(10), Stats., requests approval to construct facilities at the Main Campus in Janesville.

The District proposes to construct additional components at its Innovative Manufacturing Education Center (IMEC) (Manufacturing programs 112 FTEs). The IMEC construction was approved by the WTCS Board at its July 2023 meeting and was bid with alternates that were not in the District's budget at that time. This construction project seeks to add alternates to enhance the overall project. The project entails constructing additional electrical infrastructure for training equipment, canopies over entrances to improve weather resistance and additional exterior signage and wayfinding. These improvements are designed to enhance training options and the student experience.

The estimated cost of this project is \$335,000. The original cost per square foot for the IMEC construction was \$207 and these additional components add \$9 per square foot. The project will be funded from the District's fund balance.

Blackhawk Technical College – Construction of Facilities in Janesville

The Blackhawk Technical College district, pursuant to s. 38.04(10), Stats., requests approval to construct facilities at the Main Campus in Janesville.

The District proposes to construct various items around the Public Safety Training Center (PSTC). The proposal includes construction of a large monument sign and digital display at the intersection of South County Road G and West Sunny Lane, which will mark the start of campus and offer information and advertising to students and guests. There will be five additional smaller monument signs and banner poles between the corner and the main entrance. Additional fencing around the training pond and along the western edge of the property increases safety by keeping large animals and people away from vehicles using the Emergency Vehicle Operations Course (EVOC).

The cost of the project is \$333,733 and is being funded with the savings from all the District's referendum projects. The project will be funded by district borrowing as authorized by the successful \$32,000,000 November 3, 2020, referendum.

Chippewa Valley Technical College – Remodeling of Facilities in Menomonie

The Chippewa Valley Technical College district, pursuant to s. 38.04(10), Stats., requests approval to remodel facilities in Menomonie.

The District proposes to remodel approximately 8,200 square feet to create an Automation Engineering Lab (9 FTEs), improve Healthcare High School Academy spaces and update the Certified Nursing Assistant (8 FTEs) Lab. The remodeling project will create one lab and one office and will update three labs, three classrooms and various storage and corridors. The existing lighting and finishes have reached the end of their useful lives and will be updated to meet the District's unified design standards.

The project will not meet the System requirement of LEED Silver and an exception to meeting this requirement is granted. A significant number of LEED points are unavailable because the project is being served by the existing HVAC systems, involves no changes to the building exterior and consists of mostly

interior finish updates. The lighting and interior finishes are being designed and specified to meet the requirements outlined for a LEED Silver facility. The project will achieve LEED Certified, the next lower level.

The estimated cost of the project is \$1,500,000 and the unit cost of the remodeling, exclusive of professional fees, calculates to approximately \$155 per square foot. The District will spend an additional \$400,000 on equipment to furnish the space. The project will be funded by district borrowing.

Chippewa Valley Technical College – Remodeling of Facilities in Eau Claire

The Chippewa Valley Technical College district, pursuant to s. 38.04(10), Stats., requests approval to remodel facilities in Eau Claire at its Applied Technology Center Campus.

The District proposes to remodel approximately 6,600 square feet at its Applied Technology Center to create a dedicated Safety Training Education Center. The District currently offers safety training in areas such as OSHA 10/30, CPR/AED/First Aid, Bloodborne Pathogens, HAZWOPER (hazardous waste and emergency response), Confined Space, Forklift/Scissors-lift operation, Lockout/Tagout, Machine Guarding, Fall Protection and Electrical Safety. Creating these dedicated spaces will allow simultaneous training class scheduling and will eliminate equipment set-up and break-down of training scenarios. The District provides approximately 1,200 hours annually in contract safety training for local employers who have expressed significant demand for workplace and OSHA safety training.

The project will not meet the System requirement of LEED Silver and an exception to meeting this requirement is granted. A significant number of LEED points are unavailable because the project is being served by the existing HVAC systems, involves no changes to the building exterior and consists of mostly interior finish updates. The lighting and interior finishes are being designed and specified to meet the requirements outlined for a LEED Silver facility. The project will achieve the next lower level of LEED, Certified.

The estimated cost of the project is \$1,500,000 and the unit cost of the remodeling, exclusive of professional fees, calculates to approximately \$202 per square foot. The project will be funded by district borrowing.

Chippewa Valley Technical College – Remodeling of Facilities in Eau Claire

The Chippewa Valley Technical College district, pursuant to s. 38.04(10), Stats., requests approval to remodel facilities in Eau Claire at the Business Education Center Campus.

The District proposes to remodel approximately 8,600 square feet to improve and consolidate space for faculty and staff. The project will consolidate faculty offices from various locations on campus into one central area with 11 individual offices and an open office with 40 workstations. The project creates five conference rooms for meetings and consultations for use for full-time and part-time staff with hoteling workstations for remote staff. The existing faculty spaces being vacated will be utilized for student training facilities in future projects.

The project will not meet the System requirement of LEED Silver and an exception to meeting this requirement is granted. A significant number of LEED points are unavailable because the project is being

served by the existing HVAC systems and there are no changes to the building exterior. The lighting and interior finishes are being designed and specified to meet the requirements outlined in a LEED Silver facility.

The estimated cost of the project is \$1,500,000 and the unit cost of the remodeling, exclusive of professional fees, calculates to approximately \$154 per square foot. The project will be funded by district borrowing.

Fox Valley Technical College – Remodeling of Facilities in Appleton

The Fox Valley Technical College district, pursuant to s. 38.04(10), Stats., requests approval to remodel facilities in Appleton.

The District proposes to remodel approximately 3,800 square feet to improve and expand space for the Dental Hygiene (24 FTEs) and Dental Assistant (28 FTEs) programs. The project will create six additional dental chairs, a simulation lab, a larger sterilization lab, a reception area and various storage spaces. The Dental Hygiene program will be expanded from 15 to 24 students and will offer Expanded Function Dental Auxiliary training starting in Fall 2025 with the District having significant employer demand for graduates of its dental programs.

The estimated cost of the project is \$1,317,000 and the unit cost of the remodeling, exclusive of professional fees, calculates to approximately \$313 per square foot. The District will spend approximately \$850,000 on equipment to furnish the space. The project will be funded by a dental grant.

Fox Valley Technical College – Remodeling of Facilities in Appleton

The Fox Valley Technical College district, pursuant to s. 38.04(10), Stats., requests approval to remodel facilities in Appleton.

The District proposes to remodel approximately 4,170 square feet to replace the existing Baking Lab which is 30 years old and has reached the end of its useful life. The remodeling will reconfigure the lab to meet the requirements of modern baking equipment, lighting and health regulations. The project also entails remodeling the dishwashing area for the culinary labs with the installation of a new grease trap under the floor. The Baking and Pastry Production (15 FTEs) and Management (29 FTEs) programs have consistent enrollments and employer demand.

The estimated cost of the project is \$1,200,000 and the unit cost of the remodeling, exclusive of professional fees, calculates to approximately \$225 per square foot. The District will spend approximately \$210,000 on equipment to furnish the spaces. The project will be funded by district borrowing.

Gateway Technical College – Remodeling of Facilities in Racine

The Gateway Technical College district, pursuant to s. 38.04(10), Stats., requests approval to remodel facilities in Racine.

The District proposes to remodel approximately 4,800 square feet for the existing Dental Assistant program (18 students annually) and the existing Dental Hygiene program (10 students annually). The project will allow the district to increase annual enrollments in both programs by ten students each. The remodeling will create a sterilization room, six X-ray rooms, a small lobby, a dental simulator lab and various storage and circulation spaces. The District has significant employer demand for graduates of its dental programs.

The estimated cost of the project is \$1,500,000 and the unit cost, exclusive of professional fees, calculates to approximately \$288 per square foot. The District will spend an additional \$380,000 on dental equipment to furnish the spaces. The project will be funded with an Oral Health Grant.

Madison Area Technical College – Remodeling of Facilities in Madison

The Madison Area Technical College district, pursuant to s. 38.04(10), Stats., requests approval to remodel facilities at the Truax Campus (3,536 FTEs).

The District proposes to remodel approximately 4,900 square feet to consolidate Student Affairs services. The Advising, Career and Transfer Services (ACTS) staff will be combined with the Career and Employment Services (CES) staff to better serve new students and graduating students. The combined service area will share multiple spaces to accommodate increased partner programming, co-locate related service teams and better highlight career and transfer resources for students. The remodeling creates 15 individual offices for student consultations, a conference room, a career closet and various storage rooms. The project is adjacent to other existing large and small meeting rooms for orientations, job fairs and consultations.

The estimated cost of the project is \$1,500,000 and the unit cost of the remodeling, exclusive of professional fees, calculates to approximately \$270 per square foot. The District will spend an additional \$287,000 on equipment to furnish the space. The project will be funded by district borrowing.

Madison Area Technical College – Remodeling of Facilities in Madison

The Madison Area Technical College district, pursuant to s. 38.04(10), Stats., requests approval to remodel facilities at the Truax Campus (3,536 FTEs).

The District proposes to remodel approximately 3,300 square feet to update the Student Services intake, reception, lobby and offices. The project will remodel seven offices, six reception/intake stations, a waiting area and significant portions of the existing corridors surrounding area. The reception/intake stations and staff will assist students with their needs and direct students to specific service staff and make appointments to address specific student needs. The offices will be staffed with full-time and full-time hybrid staff for directing and setting up appointments for student services and billing. These stations and offices are being designed to increase privacy and improve the confidentiality of student/staff conversations.

The estimated cost of the project is \$1,500,000 and the unit cost of the remodeling, exclusive of professional fees, calculates to approximately \$412 per square foot. The District will spend an additional \$327,000 on furniture in the space. The project will be funded by district borrowing.

Madison Area Technical College – Remodeling of Facilities in Madison

The Madison Area Technical College district, pursuant to s. 38.04(10), Stats., requests approval to remodel facilities at the Health Education Building at the Truax Campus.

The District proposes to remodel approximately 3,500 square feet to improve and expand space for the Dental Hygiene (53 FTEs) and Dental Assistant (21 FTEs) programs. The project will create 15 additional dental chairs, an X-ray room, a larger sterilization lab, a reception area and various student and storage spaces. The Dental Hygiene program will be expanded by eight students and will offer Expanded Function Dental Auxiliary training starting in Fall 2025 for 15 students. The District has significant employer demand for graduates of its dental programs.

The estimated cost of the project is \$1,500,000 and the unit cost of the remodeling, exclusive of professional fees, calculates to approximately \$386 per square foot. The District will spend approximately \$1,154,000 on equipment, furniture and technology to furnish the space. The project will be funded by a dental grant of \$625,000 and district borrowing of \$875,000.

Madison Area Technical College – Remodeling of Facilities in Madison

The Madison Area Technical College district, pursuant to s. 38.04(10), Stats., requests approval to remodel facilities at the Truax Campus.

The District proposes to remodel approximately 3,000 square feet for the Nursing associate degree (213 FTEs) and Nursing Assistant (57 FTEs) programs. Three general classrooms will be remodeled to create a five-bed lab, a four-bed lab, a general classroom and a combined staff workroom/storage area. These new labs will allow for greater class size and additional stations for practice. These labs will alleviate scheduling conflicts that occur at the existing practice labs. There is significant employer need and student interest in the districts nursing programs.

The estimated cost of the project is \$600,000 and the unit cost of the remodeling, exclusive of professional fees, calculates to approximately \$178 per square foot. The District will spend an additional \$178,000 on furniture in the space. The project will be funded by district borrowing.

Madison Area Technical College – Remodeling of Facilities in Madison

The Madison Area Technical College district, pursuant to s. 38.04(10), Stats., requests approval to remodel facilities at the Health Education Building at the Truax Campus (3,536 FTEs).

The District proposes to remodel approximately 1,400 square feet to create a Student Wellness Center that will be created in the lobby of the Health Education building and consists of a food pantry, two offices and a meeting/conference/consultation room. The lobby of the health building was chosen for its centralized location on campus, health education staff, proximity to parking and pedestrian circulation. The food pantry will have dry storage, refrigerated storage and sorting and assembly of supplies. There are lockers in the corridor for after hour pick up. The Wellness Center staff will assist students to develop components of wellness and reduce financial stress, which will help improve their ability to learn. The program is designed to develop and present educational programs and materials aimed at

engaging the student body on important personal wellness, health-related topics and contribute to a healthier campus environment.

The estimated cost of the project is \$800,000 and the unit cost of the remodeling, exclusive of professional fees, calculates to approximately \$500 per square foot. The cost per square foot is high due to the addition of plumbing needed in the food pantry. The District will spend an additional \$43,000 on equipment to furnish the space. The project will be funded by district borrowing.

Madison Area Technical College – Remodeling of Facilities in Madison

The Madison Area Technical College district, pursuant to s. 38.04(10), Stats., requests approval to remodel facilities at the Health Education Building at the Truax Campus.

The District proposes to remodel approximately 1,200 square feet to relocate and consolidate the School of Health Sciences faculty (five staff). The current offices will be vacated to create a new dental suite and the health offices will be relocated. The remodeling will create two offices, one conference room, a kitchenette, storage space, an open office area for three workstations and a reception/waiting area with a workstation. The three open workstations will provide space for full-time and hybrid staff.

The estimated cost of the project is \$500,000 and the unit cost of the remodeling, exclusive of professional fees, calculates to approximately \$388 per square foot. The District will spend an additional \$139,000 on equipment to furnish the space. The project will be funded by district borrowing.

Milwaukee Area Technical College – Remodeling of Facilities in Milwaukee

The Milwaukee Area Technical College district, pursuant to s. 38.04(10), Stats., requests approval to remodel facilities at the Walker Square Campus in Milwaukee.

The District proposes to remodel approximately 4,700 square feet to create a new Carpentry Lab to expand training space. An unused space at Walkers Square building will be developed into the carpentry lab which requires, in addition to typical remodeling, a new HVAC system, walls and a sprinkler system. The new space will allow the District to increase class size from 16 students to 24 students each semester. The District has consistent enrollments and employer need for graduates in the construction trades programs.

The estimated cost of the project is \$1,450,000 and the unit cost of the remodeling calculates to approximately \$308 per square foot, and the project will be funded by district borrowing.

Milwaukee Area Technical College – Remodeling of Facilities in Milwaukee

The Milwaukee Area Technical College district, pursuant to s. 38.04(10), Stats., requests approval to remodel facilities at the Walker Square Campus in Milwaukee.

The District proposes to remodel approximately 2,700 square feet to create three new general-purpose classrooms and a restroom (Walkers Square 176 FTEs). The unusable third floor space at the Walkers Square building will be developed into classrooms which requires, in addition to typical remodeling, a new HVAC system, walls and a sprinkler system. These new spaces will allow the District to add the classrooms to the inventory of available rooms on campus.

The estimated cost of the project is \$725,000 and the unit cost of the remodeling calculates to approximately \$271 per square foot, and the project will be funded by district borrowing.

Southwest Wisconsin Technical College – Rental of Facilities in Platteville.

The Southwest Wisconsin Technical College District, pursuant to s. 38.04(10), Stats., requests approval to lease facilities in Platteville.

The District proposes to continue to lease approximately 2,500 square feet in Platteville. The District offers adult basic education and high school equivalency classes to aid transitions into academic programming. The District also offers testing services, general education and continuing education classes. The District serves 11 FTEs annually at this location.

The facility consists of one large classroom that can be separated into two classrooms with a moveable partition, two small testing rooms, bathrooms, one office, waiting/lobby area, kitchenette/vending area and a small storage room. Ten parking spaces are available on site for use by students, as well as street parking.

The term is five years, and the annual cost of the lease increases 3% annually and is described below.

- Year 1 - \$20,866
- Year 2 - \$21,492
- Year 3 - \$22,137
- Year 4 - \$22,801
- Year 5 - \$23,485

The average cost of the lease over five years is approximately \$22,157 annually, approximately \$8.86 per square foot and the lease will be funded through the District's operating budget.

Waukesha County Technical College – Remodeling of Facilities in Pewaukee

The Waukesha County Technical College district, pursuant to s. 38.04(10), Stats., requests approval to remodel facilities at the main campus in Pewaukee.

The District proposes to remodel approximately 2,200 square feet to create three separate mechanical rooms in three buildings on campus. The existing underground heating distribution system has reached the end of its useful life and has failed in multiple locations on campus in the last three years. Creating these mechanical spaces will allow the district to install high efficiency boilers to respond to each building's needs.

The estimated cost of the project is \$400,000 and the unit cost, exclusive of professional fees, calculates to approximately \$164 per square foot. The project will be funded from the district's fund balance.

ITEM L: GATEWAY TECHNICAL COLLEGE – PROJECT CONCEPT REVIEW – REMODELING OF EXISTING FACILITIES IN RACINE

WTCS Director of Facilities Development Dan Scanlon and Gateway Technical College Executive Vice President of Academic Affairs Matthew Janisin

Resolution:

That, upon the recommendation of the president of the Wisconsin Technical College System, a finding is made that the concept for Gateway Technical College’s proposed remodeling is reasonable. The final scope and design of the project are subject to review and approval by the Board as required by s. 38.04(10) Stats.

Consistent with established procedures, projects for additional or new facilities and remodeling of existing facilities with budgets in excess of \$1,500,000 are subject to a two-phased review process beginning with a Project Concept Review. This initial review considers the project at its conceptual stage with the primary focus on programmatic needs. While a limited amount of detail may be available at this stage, the review can identify areas of concern and factors to be considered in subsequent planning and development of the project. Following this review, the project is subject to approval by the Wisconsin Technical College System Board, pursuant to s.38.04(10), Stats.

The Proposal

Remodeling of Existing Facilities

The District proposes to remodel 12,000 square feet in the Technical Building to enlarge facilities for Welding (114 FTEs) and Welding Fabrication (119 FTEs) programs. The District’s Business and Workforce Solutions department has been approached by the U.S. Navy’s submarine industrial base (SIB) command with interest in offering a welding certificate program in bootcamp format. The program goal is that welding certificate completers would be employed by SIB employers contracted to support the Navy’s submarine fleet modernization efforts. The U.S. Navy expressed a willingness to fund capital and operating costs of an expanded welding program. The investment will be done in collaboration with the industry trade group Blue Forge Alliance.

The existing welding program space has 18 welding booths and will be expanded to 40 booths to accommodate the additional training space. The remodeling will also create a fabrication lab. The project will reconfigure both labs to meet the number of training stations needed. The remodeling will upgrade the labs’ infrastructure by adding air conditioning, improving air filtration, lighting, exhaust systems and will improve the electrical infrastructure for new equipment.

The preliminary list of the spaces being remodeled is shown below.

<u>Function</u>	<u>Area (Square Feet)</u>
Welding Lab w/ 40 welding booths	7,600
Fabrication Lab w/ 18 welding booths	4,400
Total:	12,000

The estimated cost of the remodeling project is \$3,100,000 and will be funded by a grant from the U.S. Navy in collaboration with the Blue Forge Alliance industry group. A significant amount of new equipment will be funded by donations.

Staff Finding

Staff concludes that there is a need to update these labs. The new labs will improve the health and safety of the occupants, meet the needs of modern equipment and will add the workstations needed for additional training.

ITEM M: WESTERN TECHNICAL COLLEGE – PROJECT REVIEW – CONSTRUCTION OF ADDITIONAL AND REMODELING OF EXISTING FACILITIES IN LA CROSSE

WTCS Director of Facilities Development Dan Scanlon

Resolution:

That, upon the recommendation of the president of the Wisconsin Technical College System, approval is granted to the Western Technical College District to construct additional and remodel existing facilities to create an Innovation Center in La Crosse at a cost of \$6,238,584.

The Western Technical College District, pursuant to s. 38.04(10) Stats., requests approval to construct additional and remodel existing facilities at its Business Education Center to create an Innovation Center.

The project will be funded through district borrowing and donations, gifts and grants.

An analysis of the requests with the applicable criteria are below.

**Analysis of Request for Approval
Western Technical College District
Construction of Additional and Remodeling Existing Facilities at the La Crosse Campus
Innovation Center**

Applicable review criteria: TCS 5.04(2) & TCS 5.04(4) Wisconsin Administrative Code

TCS 5.04(2)(a) & TCS 5.04(4)(a) – A resolution of the District Board approving the construction of new facilities and remodeling of existing facilities contingent upon WTCS Board approval.

The District Board of the Western Technical College adopted a resolution at the July 8, 2024, meeting approving the project.

TCS 5.04(2)(c) & TCS 5.04(4)(c) – Evidence of compliance with s. 1.11 Stats.

The District is in compliance with s. 1.11 Statutes and did not require an Environmental Assessment or an Environmental Impact Statement.

TCS 5.04(2)(d) & TCS 5.04(4)(d) – A report relating programmatic and student requirements and the needs of business and industry to the need for additional and remodeled facilities.

As discussed during the Project Concept Review there is a demonstrated need for additional facilities to promote collaboration between the computer and manufacturing programs. As these two areas of study become more intertwined, the district needs flexible classrooms, lab space and space for discipline integration. There is significant employer demand for graduates of IT and Manufacturing programs in the district. Below is a list of programs that will utilize the remodeled spaces.

<u>Program</u>	FTE 2024	FTE 2025 Projected	FTE 2026 Projected
IT Data Analytics AAS	10	12	14
IT Cyber Security/Network Technician AAS	46	51	56
IT Computer Support Specialist & Tech AAS	12	14	16
IoT Integration Specialist AAS	3	6	8
Electromechanical Maint. Tech.	5	15	16
Electromechanical Technology AAS	12	15	16
Mechatronic & Robotic Engineering Technology AAS	10	12	14
IT-Web & Software Developer AAS	21	14	16
Industrial Machine Controls	1	2	4

TCS 5.04(2)(e) & TCS 5.04(4)(e) – Educational specifications relating specific space requirements for approved programs to the need for additional and remodeled facilities.

The remodeling will double the available space for robotic equipment with connected programming and computer equipment labs. The project will provide additional classrooms for all K-12 classes and high school academies and allow the district to expand the number of these students introduced to these programs. The new labs and classrooms are being designed with significant upgrades to respond to the electrical needs of modern equipment and flexible enough to change as technology progresses.

The allocation of space for the primary functional areas of the new and remodeled area is shown below:

<u>Function First Floor</u>	<u>Area (Square Feet)</u>
Robotics Lab	3,575
1 Classroom/ 3 Computer Labs	3,055
Business and Industry Lab/Classrooms/Offices	905
IT & Advanced Manuf. Lab	1,431
2 New Entrances/Vestibules	910
H.S. First Robotics Lab	2,314
2 Restrooms	403
Corridor	1,685
Total for First Floor:	14,278
<u>Function Second Floor</u>	<u>Area (Square Feet)</u>
Student Lounge	863
Data Analytics Classroom and Lab	2,466
Cyber Security, Web, Software Lab/Classroom	3,055
2 Faculty Offices	218
3 Restrooms	483
Corridor	2,319
Total for Second Floor:	9,404
Project total	23,682

The project includes improvements to the exterior of the building, landscaping and wayfinding elements.

TCS 5.04(2)(f) & TCS 5.04(4)(f) – An analysis of the impact of the additional facilities on the District’s budget including the availability and source of funds.

The project will be funded through district borrowing of \$1,500,000 and gifts, grants and donations totaling \$4,738,584. The District will spend approximately \$2,461,000 on equipment to furnish the facility.

TCS 5.04(2)(g) & TCS 5.04(4)(g) – A conceptual sketch of the proposed addition and remodeling.

Architectural drawings have been submitted and found to be satisfactory. Plans and elevations are attached to this analysis.

TCS 5.04(2)(h) & TCS 5.04(4)(h) – The estimated project cost.

The breakdown of the cost for the project is shown below:

Item	Cost
General Construction	4,049,126
HVAC	742,500
Plumbing	115,000
Electrical	580,900
Elevator& Special Construction	220,000
Fees	531,058
Total:	\$6,238,584

The unit cost of the construction and remodeling project, exclusive of professional fees, calculates to approximately \$241 per square foot.

TCS 5.04(2)(i) & TCS 5.04(4)(i) – The District energy analysis indicating compliance with s. 1.12 Stats.

This remodeling project will utilize the existing building HVAC systems and only alters the distribution of the heating and cooling, not its generation. The project will not achieve the System requirement of LEED Silver and an exception to meeting these requirements has been granted. There are insufficient alterations to the exterior of the building to achieve the daylighting requirements outlined in LEED. The components of the remodeling such as: lighting, plumbing fixtures, wall finishes and floor finishes are being designed and specified to meet the requirements of LEED Silver. The addition of two entrance vestibules will improve the energy efficiency of the existing building.

Staff Finding

Staff concludes there is a need for the project, the additional spaces for computer programming in conjunction with manufacturing reflects the future of industry. The remodeling of the underutilized space, updates to the support spaces and creation of new flexible labs will allow the district to respond to employer and student needs.

ITEM N: 2025-27 BIENNIAL BUDGET REQUEST

WTCS Executive Vice President James Zylstra; WTCS Policy Advisors Megan Stritchko and Brandon Trujillo

Resolution:

That, upon the recommendation of the president of the Wisconsin Technical College System, the Wisconsin Technical College System Board approves submission of the 2025-27 WTCS budget request to the Wisconsin Department of Administration.

As part of its biennial budget development, the System Board is required to submit to the Wisconsin Department of Administration (DOA) its agency budget request for the upcoming biennium. Budget requests must be submitted by mid-September of even-numbered years for consideration by the Governor as the proposed executive budget is prepared.

The budget currently being developed is for the 2025-27 biennium that begins on July 1, 2025, and ends on June 30, 2027. The Governor will likely release the proposed executive biennial budget early in 2025 with action by the Wisconsin Legislature expected by June 30, 2025, before the start of the new biennium.

The WTCS Board must consider and take action on the biennial budget recommendation at its September 11 meeting. This action will be based on recommendations provided to the System president from the WTCS Budget Development Work Group, which held its final meeting on July 17, 2024. The Work Group includes System Board members, technical college presidents, representatives of the District Boards Association, System leadership, a faculty member and a student.

The Board will receive a presentation and discuss the recommended budget priorities and funding amounts.



General Aid for Wisconsin's Technical Colleges

2025-27 Biennial Budget Initiative

Issue

The Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS) is the largest higher education system in the state. The 16 technical colleges deliver education and training that meet employer demands across a wide variety of essential industries, reach a broad set of learners and provide packages of services to support student success. Additional investment is needed for technical colleges to support growing enrollments and expand upon WTCS innovative practices to deliver more of the education and training opportunities that connect students to in-demand careers among Wisconsin's employers. Flexible general state aid funding provides opportunities for each WTCS college to use funds differently to meet the unique, local needs of their colleges and communities.

Background

Delivering Career-Ready Education and Training

A leader in demand-driven, cutting-edge education, WTCS creates a pipeline of skilled talent essential to Wisconsin's workforce and economy through an extensive portfolio that includes adult education, dual credit for high school students, more than 500 postsecondary degree programs, classroom instruction for more than 75 state-registered apprenticeship programs and customized instruction tailored to meet specific business needs. WTCS education and training supports career advancement based on employer-identified needs and an individual's career goals and timeline.

WTCS colleges place a high value on their meaningful relationship with Wisconsin's industry, labor and workforce development partners to ensure education and training is aligned with the needs of Wisconsin's employers. Together, WTCS colleges and employers closely collaborate to build the talent pipeline through the creation of industry -aligned curriculum taught by industry-prepared faculty who are experts in their respective fields. Over the last three years, more than 70% of WTCS credentials were earned in high-demand fields. Technical colleges continuously engage in program development, revision and discontinuance to ensure education is relevant and applicable to employers' evolving workforce needs, labor market research and industry trends and best practices. In 2023, more than 60 new programs were developed and half as many programs were discontinued, and within programs, curriculum is regularly refined, allowing colleges to meet evolving employer needs and the skillsets employers demand from their workforce. The relationships technical colleges cultivate with their local employers and the relevancy of WTCS programs have proven to be effective with 96% of employers being satisfied with technical college graduates' education.

Wisconsin's skilled labor needs are significant. With nearly 160,000 job openings and a comparatively low unemployment rate near 3%, there are almost twice as many job openings

as unemployed workers.^{1 2} The number of non-farm jobs is at the highest level it has been in four years, with growth taking place across the state and across multiple industries.³ WTCS is a partner in talent attraction and retention and a critical component of workforce development within the state. Importantly, because 91% of technical college graduates stay and work in the state, Wisconsin’s employers benefit from industry-aligned skilled talent and WTCS graduates benefit from high employment rates and family-sustaining wages. The growth in new WTCS graduate wage rates demonstrates how highly valued WTCS credentials are within the Wisconsin labor market. The median annual salary within six months of graduation has grown nearly 30% over the last five years, to more than \$52,300 across all degree types for 2023 graduates, outpacing median wage gains statewide.⁴

Amid this period of high workforce demands, the state’s changing demographics and increased infrastructure investments, industry leaders representing the breadth of Wisconsin’s economy including manufacturing, agriculture, utilities, public safety and healthcare, continue to turn to technical colleges given their proven effectiveness in generating a skilled talent pipeline. For example, Emergency Medical Services (EMS) in Wisconsin is experiencing significant workforce shortages, particularly in rural areas. Because all 16 WTCS colleges offer courses in EMS and issue credentials ranging from Emergency Medical Responder (EMR) certificates to technical diplomas in Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) and Advanced EMT and associate degrees in Paramedic Technician, technical colleges are positioned to help address these workforce shortages in EMS. Many WTCS colleges must balance several factors in scheduling EMS courses, for example, rising instructional costs, the availability of instructors and creating the appropriate blend between the flexibility of virtual learning and the need for face-to-face skills-based labs. Many WTCS programs require similarly thoughtful decision-making and resource allocation to best prepare students for these essential industries that are searching for talent.

This unprecedented period of demand for WTCS programs, services and graduates exceeds technical colleges’ current capacity and additional resources are needed to keep pace. Flexible funding for technical colleges can support industry-prepared faculty and the continued collaboration between technical colleges and industry partners, ensuring the alignment of WTCS curricula and credentials to meet the evolving needs of Wisconsin’s employers across multiple sectors simultaneously.

¹ Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, WisConomy JOLTS Job Openings to LAUS Unemployment Ratio for May 2024, retrieved <https://jobcenterofwisconsin.com/wisconomy/pub/jolts.htm>. August 13, 2024.

² Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, WisConomy, June 2024 statewide unemployment rate, retrieved https://bi.wisconsin.gov/t/DWD/views/LAUSCountyMap/CountyMap?iframeSizedToWindow=true&showVizHome=no&%3Aembed=y&refresh=yes&showAppBanner=false&embed=y&display_count=no&render=false&%3Adisplay_count=n&%3AshowVizHome=n&%3Aorigin=viz_share_link&%3Arefresh=yes. August 13, 2024

³ Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, WisConomy, Wisconsin & MSA Quick View, June 2024, retrieved https://bi.wisconsin.gov/t/DWD/views/MSAQuickTable2v1/WIMSAQuickDash3?iframeSizedToWindow=true&%3Aembed=y&%3AshowAppBanner=false&%3Adisplay_count=no&%3AshowVizHome=no&%3Arefresh=yes. August 13, 2024

⁴ Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, WisConomy, Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics (OEWS) Historical Wage Report, retrieved <https://jobcenterofwisconsin.com/wisconomy/pub/oes.htm#Viz>. June 12, 2024.

Expanding the Pipeline of Talent

Enrollment growth in recent years demonstrates that students recognize the value of a WTCS education; 2022-23 enrollments increased 5% over the previous year and nearly 16% compared to a temporary slump during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020-21. Despite this recent growth, WTCS colleges recognize that innovative strategies such as the development of seamless educational pathways and investment in proven recruitment, retention and completion strategies present opportunities to expand the talent pipeline.

Educational Pathways

Partnerships across education sectors develop effective and efficient pathways for students, including the successful and growing dual credit programs that technical colleges sponsor with K-12 partners. Last year, nearly 285,000 technical college credits were awarded to 62,200 Wisconsin high school students, saving families \$41.6 million. Wisconsin high school students have multiple options to earn WTCS credits and there are no costs to the students or their families for course tuition and fees. WTCS colleges forgo traditional tuition and fee revenue to offer dual enrollment programming, allowing students to benefit from cost savings, early entry into career pathways and strong postsecondary outcomes. Dual credit students are more likely to enroll into a WTCS postsecondary program following high school graduation and have higher grade point averages in their first year, higher program retention rates and higher program completion rates compared to students that did not enroll in dual credit programs in high school. WTCS colleges are committed to impactful dual credit programs and provide resources to support this educational pathway that is driven by students, not tuition revenue. For example, colleges dedicate staff to serve as liaisons and coaches, creating intentional connections between high schools and WTCS colleges that foster relationships and help students maximize their dual credit opportunities. The interest and demand for these programs have increased dramatically: student participation in dual credit programs has grown by 126% over the last ten years. Additionally, enrollment in dual credit courses have more than doubled in the same period and the number of dual credit courses that students participate in have increased significantly in recent years, causing dual credit not only to be more popular among students, but also increasingly complex for WTCS colleges to offer. This drastic growth in dual credit options increases the amount of time and resources colleges must allocate to operate these programs and there is limited revenue to support this work.

WTCS colleges also engage with higher education partners to create pathways at the postsecondary level. Partnerships and articulation agreements with four-year colleges and universities represent opportunities to build transfer pathways that benefit students across educational sectors, employers and communities. The changing economy and shifting workforce demands make it essential that credentials be portable and buildable throughout an individual's career and why it is important that credit transfer in Wisconsin remains a swirl among sectors, not a one-way pipeline. More than 12,700 students transfer to a WTCS college annually and almost 20% of transferring students have a bachelor's degree or higher. Whether students are transferring from WTCS or to WTCS, clear academic paths and collaboration among higher education sectors save students valuable time and resources by making transfer options seamless and efficient for students. The number of articulated pathways is growing

considerably and this growth in transfer opportunities will contribute to growth in credit transfer in the future. Continued collaboration among technical colleges and four-year institutional partners is essential to ensure advancements in articulation are thoughtful and effective. The most successful agreements are developed program-to-program and institution-by-institution to account for nuances and find opportunities to best serve students. Because WTCS colleges must spend more time and resources identifying, building and formalizing partnerships and engaging in ongoing collaboration with partners, the workload in this area will continue to grow.

WTCS colleges provide education throughout an individual's lifetime and at multiple points along the education and career journey and collaborate closely with educational partners to ensure pathways are evolving with the changing education landscape and the state's economic needs; however, there is not a dedicated revenue stream to support this work. With additional flexible funding for technical colleges, ongoing resources can be dedicated to this essential collaborative work, including support of dual credit options that have proven to provide significant benefits to students and the continued development of postsecondary pathways.

[Focused Recruitment, Retention and Completion Strategies](#)

Due to Wisconsin's changing demographics and workforce shortages, employers need a wide pool from which to generate a skilled talent pipeline. As open access institutions with broad education portfolios, WTCS colleges are in the best position to generate this talent pool given they are accessible to students of all backgrounds, levels of preparedness, and personal and professional responsibilities. Effectively serving these groups not only improves student experience and success, it can also help a student complete their credential and move into the workforce sooner. WTCS colleges are using innovative strategies to engage all students with targeted tactics.

While WTCS colleges have consistently achieved graduation rates that are higher than the national graduation rate for two-year postsecondary students, WTCS colleges are focused on areas of growth to reach more student populations, improve student outcomes and successfully move all students through the talent pipeline. For example, graduation rates among all new program students have increased, including a notable increase among new program students with disabilities. Because students with disabilities represent approximately 7% of WTCS postsecondary students, the ability to effectively serve these students and improve graduation rates is essential to the talent pipeline. Many colleges prioritize reaching these students early in their college transition, sometimes before students enroll at the college, to provide information on disability services and support. As examples, these strategies can include events and courses focused on college transition and career exploration, dedicated transition staff to work specifically with students with disabilities, and partnerships among student specialists and success coaches to spread awareness of disability services and referrals. Targeted strategies to serve these students have contributed to the improvement in the three-year graduation rate among WTCS colleges for new program students with disabilities.

As providers of adult education, WTCS colleges serve students building academic skills, working to earn a high school credential, working to improve their employment situation and students

who are learning English. There has been a significant increase in the number of students seeking English Language Acquisition (ELA) services and an increase in the proportion of English Language Learning (ELL) students who have attained a college degree. Supporting these internationally trained professionals with ELL services can remove language barriers for these skilled professionals and presents another example of an opportunity to expand the talent pipeline for Wisconsin's workforce.

In addition to providing adult education, WTCS colleges connect adult learners to career pathways and postsecondary programs to continue their education and skill building. For example, the Integrated Education and Training (IET) approach provides adult education and literacy activities concurrently and contextually with workforce preparation activities and training. Several WTCS colleges are focused on transitioning their adult education and ELL students to postsecondary opportunities with significant results; research shows IET participation improves college credit completion, persistence and the attainment of a WTCS credential. Because a growing proportion of adult education learners are employed full-time or part-time, adult education programming presents an opportunity for upskilling and growing workforce talent within a community. Many adult education student populations are statutorily exempt from tuition and WTCS colleges rely upon non-tuition fund sources, including general state aid, to support these essential programs and services.

Educational programs for justice-involved individuals provide opportunities for high-quality educational offerings in adult education and a variety of occupational programs, including welding, cosmetology and heavy equipment operation. Upon release from incarceration, many individuals choose to continue their education at a WTCS college. The number of justice-involved individuals enrolled in postsecondary programs has almost doubled over the last ten years and, importantly, there has been steady growth in the number of graduations, representing yet another example of a successful strategy to engage all learners. Within the last three years alone, graduations among justice-involved individuals have increased more than 40%. In addition to improving graduation rates among this student population, the job placement services WTCS colleges provide all students is strategically more intensive for this student population to best connect students with employers by offering the right assistance to students to support their transition, and by helping employers best access and work with this talent pool. Moreover, educational programs for justice-involved individuals increase the likelihood of post-release employment and reduce the likelihood of recidivism, with estimates that those participating in educational programs are 43% less likely to recidivate.⁵

WTCS colleges serve a wide variety of student populations, the breadth of which requires significant resources to support a broad spectrum of programming and services to meet individual students where they are. With additional flexible funding, WTCS colleges can build upon their successes serving their varied student populations, develop specialized learning

⁵ Davis, Lois M, Robert Bozick, Jennifer L. Steele, Jessica Saunders, and Jeremy N.V. Miles. "Evaluating the Effectiveness of Correctional Education: A Meta-Analysis of Programs that Provide Education to Incarcerated Adults." Rand Corporation, 2013, retrieved: https://bj.a.ojp.gov/sites/g/files/xyckuh186/files/Publications/RAND_Correctional-Education-Meta-Analysis.pdf

spaces and resources for students that may learn differently, and create opportunities to expand the talent pipeline.

Supports to Help Students Thrive

As open access institutions, technical colleges provide a gateway to higher education for students with varied backgrounds, levels of preparedness, support, and personal and professional responsibilities. WTCS colleges serve different types of learners and navigate student expectations of the college experience that are increasingly complex. For example, the average age of a WTCS student is 31, yet there are also many WTCS students that are transitioning directly from high school; the proportion of WTCS graduates under 25 has grown by more than 17% over the last ten years. As additional examples, WTCS serves a growing number of students with limited English proficiency, Veterans, students that have obligations outside of the classroom, students that prefer virtual learning, students that prefer an on-campus experience, students that attend full-time, students that are working and attending part-time, and students that are parenting or caregiving. Despite this variety among WTCS students, one commonality is that students want to direct how they learn to best fit their unique needs. WTCS colleges respond with student-driven delivery models and a wide variety of supports to cover the breadth of their student populations. All students need support to move them through the enrollment, retention and completion pipeline, but students' individual needs differ. Not only do WTCS colleges provide high-quality and innovative education, they also recognize the importance of meeting students where they are and guiding them toward completion. To that end, WTCS colleges prioritize efforts to support students through a package of services and interventions, recognizing that the talent pipeline is most effectively built when students are thriving.

Comprehensive Student Supports

WTCS colleges provide comprehensive support for every student's holistic development. On campuses, WTCS colleges offer a range of resources to students, including academic advising; basic needs support; career services; technology rental; tutoring services; writing labs; academic, athletic, and social clubs and organizations; assistive and adaptive equipment; networking opportunities; job placement assistance; and leadership development. While these college-sponsored supports are essential, the needs among students are significant and WTCS colleges do not have the capacity or resources to serve as direct providers of all services and resources technical college students may need. To complement these services, WTCS colleges have also invested in partnerships with organizations within the community that are better positioned to provide the wide range of supports students need, including the following examples:

- Housing agreements with four-year colleges and universities and local apartment buildings to expand options available to students.
- Collaborations with local food pantries and Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) providers to expand access to affordable, healthy food options for students experiencing food scarcity.

- Referrals to community mental health care providers through Memorandums of Understanding and access to virtual mental health providers to supplement the available in-person services.
- Partnerships with local childcare providers.
- Sharing on-campus spaces with community service providers to improve accessibility for students.

While WTCS colleges rely upon the assistance of community organizations and resources to support students in a variety of areas of need, some services, such as childcare, have limited availability within the wider community. Childcare is a challenge for many families across the state; childcare slots are severely limited, with estimates of a three-to-one ratio of children under five in need of childcare compared to the licensed childcare slots available. In Wisconsin’s rural areas, there are significant waitlists for available childcare slots and nearly 80% of rural residents live in a childcare desert.⁶ The lack of affordable childcare presents unique and significant challenges for technical college students and WTCS colleges have engaged in several strategies to respond to this barrier. Some colleges offer financial assistance for use on childcare costs, while other colleges have improved access through childcare centers on their campuses. Importantly, full-time childcare during the traditional workday does not align with the unique needs of students, whose schedules can be inconsistent and childcare needs may be short-term or unpredictable, and affordable drop-in childcare options are essential for students to access education. Community childcare providers with highly demanded childcare slots can have limitations on the flexibility that can be offered to students. While there are efforts to collaborate with childcare providers to increase the drop-in options that are available to student parents, several colleges operate on-campus childcare centers that serve students, employees and community members, and reserve slots for drop-ins. Despite these efforts to expand affordable childcare options for WTCS students, access remains severely limited, waitlists are common, and the expense of purchasing or providing childcare is significant. Resources are needed for WTCS colleges to continue to explore alternative childcare options for students.

Available and affordable childcare is essential but represents only a portion of the needs of the student parent population within WTCS, which can be near 40% at some WTCS colleges, though this figure can vary. This student population can encounter a unique set of challenges that make it difficult to balance their personal responsibilities and education, and WTCS colleges are providing innovative solutions to support student parent success. For example, some colleges offer family-friendly events; groups and communications specific to student parents; children’s activity and toy baskets on campus; student parent study rooms that accommodate the whole family; and a baby basic needs closet. The ability to eliminate barriers can improve access and completion for these students and deliver the skilled talent employers demand. WTCS colleges need additional resources to continue to build upon successes among this student population.

⁶ Wisconsin Economic Development Association, Childcare Breakdown: The Scarcity of Childcare in Wisconsin is Fueling Workforce Shortage and Economic Challenges, retrieved <https://weda.org/10075-2/>. May 2, 2024.

Importantly, the work to support students is ongoing and requires continuous innovation and investment because student needs are ever-changing. With additional flexible funding, WTCS colleges can continue to support long-term, consistent student support resources, ensuring colleges can continue to offer and expand upon the effective strategies and evolve their services to their student populations' needs.

Complex Operational Needs

Technical colleges must balance their mission to deliver a talent pipeline with the necessary skills and supports to thrive in the Wisconsin economy against the rising costs of their day-to-day operational needs. Annual rates of inflation have ranged from 4.1% to 8.0% in each of the last three years, significantly impacting college operational costs. Many colleges are experiencing increases in the materials costs associated with their courses. For example, the per credit expenditures within instructional areas that rely upon steel products, such as automotive, construction and manufacturing, and those that rely upon personal protective equipment, such as health care, have increased steadily over the last four years. As employers themselves, WTCS colleges are also challenged by their own skilled talent shortage and competition with the wider regional economy for their high-quality employees. Because technical colleges rely upon industry-trained faculty who are experts in their respective fields, colleges compete against industry wages in the recruitment and retention of their faculty and as a result, competitive faculty salaries are essential to sustain programming capacity. Finally, rapidly advancing technology requires ongoing investment in hardware, software and security. For example, as WTCS colleges strive to keep pace with artificial intelligence (AI) development and integrate it in college administrative and classroom experiences, colleges must also adopt essential data protection and security measures to guard against risks to college systems and sensitive student data. These rising costs and operational complexities risk draining college resources without additional investment of flexible state aid funds.

WTCS colleges continuously deliver strong outcomes through innovative, relevant education and training. These demonstrated successes prove investments in WTCS drive positive change and deliver a sizable return on investment. Wisconsin's demand for skilled talent is significant and multi-faceted and technical colleges need additional flexible funding to expand their capacity and continue to build upon their proven successes.

Request

\$20 million GPR in 2025-26 and \$25 million GPR in 2026-27 for state aid for technical colleges under s. 20.292(1)(d). This funding will provide colleges with the flexibility to expand their capacity to deliver a talent pipeline that is positioned to thrive.

Issue: Student Debt – Open Educational Resources

Through 2023, students in the United States have accumulated \$1.76 trillion in student loan debt. In Wisconsin, students have accumulated \$23.2 billion and the median debt for a technical college student graduate is \$10,130. Student debt not only creates a hardship for Wisconsin families, it also creates a strain on the economy because debt lowers credit scores and limits purchasing power. This ultimately means individuals with debt are less able to participate and help grow the economy.

The 2023-25 biennial budget provided the Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS) with one-time funding for Open Education Resources (OER). The one-time funding allows WTCS colleges to develop initial resources for students in a limited number of program areas. The WTCS projects the one-time funding will save over 50,000 students an estimated \$7.6 million annually. However, without the ability to update and maintain the materials with on-going funding, these materials may not be available in the future due to the content of the instructional materials becoming outdated and no longer relevant to the courses. These savings will cover the initial investment and accumulate year after year, amplifying the financial savings for students over time. Continuing investments into OER will provide cost-saving benefits to more students, particularly in high demand program areas where these free resources and materials have not been developed. This budget initiative is in alignment with Wisconsin Student Government's legislative priorities.

Background

OER are teaching, learning and research resources that reside in the public domain or have been released under an intellectual property license that permits their free use and re-purposing by others. OER may include full course materials, modules, textbooks, streaming videos, tests, software and any other tools, materials or techniques used to support access to knowledge. The average postsecondary student spends between \$600 and \$1,200 annually for books and supplies as of the most recent academic year (2021-22) the data was available. The price of textbooks increased an average of 6% each year and are rising roughly three times the rate of inflation. Providing students with access to OER materials has been a major step in saving money and reducing debt.

Beyond affordability for students, these investments enable more individuals to pursue higher education, leading to a more skilled and knowledgeable workforce. This enhances productivity and innovation across various industries. Additionally, the widespread availability of OER supports upskilling, allowing workers to adapt to changing job requirements and technological

advancements. As a result, businesses can thrive with a more prepared workforce, which will support overall economic growth in Wisconsin.

In the first year of grant funding for OER, System staff worked with the colleges in identifying the high demand and high enrollment programs that would provide savings and impact the most students. Some of the high demand program areas of focus are Nursing, Business Management, Accounting, Information Technology, Environmental Engineering Technology, Mechanical Design Technology, Surgical Technology, HVAC, Diesel, Automotive and Manufacturing. Within these programs, technical colleges have initiated the creation of 128 instructional materials for courses within 27 program offerings. With the funding received from the previous legislative session, over the current biennium, WTCS projects that more than 100,000 students will collectively save over \$14.6 million, equating to a \$3.86 return for each dollar the state invests, which will continue to grow in future years. While this investment is benefitting thousands of students within these 27 programs, technical colleges offer over 500 programs and thousands of course offerings where additional students could benefit from the further development of additional materials and resources with the investment of ongoing funding from the state.

Additional funding will support not only the creation of new OER materials in various program areas but also the essential upkeep and modernization of existing resources. Like traditional textbooks that undergo periodic revisions and updates, OER materials require similar attention to remain current. This ongoing process demands considerable time and effort from faculty and staff to produce and maintain high-quality, relevant content. Continuing to provide students with these materials at no cost for high-demand programs, technical colleges can effectively align with the evolving needs of pivotal sectors such as health care, trades and business.

OER materials have benefits beyond the dollars and cents they save students and employers' college reimbursement programs. According to the Midwest Higher Education Compact, research indicates students in degree programs with OER materials persist and complete at higher rates in the same degree program using traditional materials. The studies also show that students who benefit most from the use of OER in their classes are those who are low income, first-generation and/or from a group that is traditionally underserved in higher education. With the growing economy, it is imperative the state continue to invest in OER to assist students in accessing and completing credentials so they may enter the workforce.

Request

An increase of \$1 million GPR in 2025-26 and \$2 million in 2026-27 and thereafter in s. 20.292(1)(f) to provide grants to technical colleges to create OER textbooks and other materials that can be utilized by all students within the Wisconsin Technical College System and beyond.

DRAFT

Issue

The advancement of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies is shifting the skills needed in Wisconsin's economy. As educators and developers of Wisconsin's skilled workforce, technical colleges must be on the forefront of AI adoption and integration. Investment in professional development is needed to ensure that Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS) educators have the knowledge and skills to keep pace with AI concepts, tools and applications.

Background

AI technologies are rapidly and profoundly reshaping the skills that employers demand to sustain a thriving Wisconsin economy. As generators of the skilled talent pipeline in Wisconsin, WTCS colleges are critical in preparing the workforce for the changing technological landscape. To best prepare students for the evolving workplace, WTCS instructors, support staff and leaders must increase their own capacity and knowledge of AI concepts, tools and applications to effectively incorporate these tools in ways that meet the needs of their students and the local community.

Current AI technologies represent opportunities for WTCS faculty to gain efficiency in their work and explore teaching strategies that engage and support students. Some WTCS faculty are already incorporating AI tools to generate ideas for lesson plans, quiz questions, and class activities and assignments. For example, faculty can use AI tools to create roleplaying examples for students to practice problem solving scenarios they are likely to face in the workplace and to write dozens of quiz questions on a particular topic area and pick the questions they find will best assess their students. AI allows faculty to save time as they are generating these ideas and to work iteratively with AI tools to refine their instructional techniques in fractions of the time. For students, AI tools provide opportunities for individually tailored learning through question-and-answer prompts, quiz and flash card generation, tutorials, and the creation of goals and checklists. Some new learning software is embedding AI tools in ways that can help faculty manage grades and content and include interactive ways for students to engage with materials, such as questions embedded within assigned reading. WTCS faculty and staff not only need to have the knowledge and skills to use these AI tools themselves, they also need to be knowledgeable on how to guide and educate their students to use these tools.

While AI tools can add significant value to instruction techniques and student learning, they are also essential for ensuring curriculum remains industry aligned. As employer demand for AI-related skills and adoption of AI technologies across a wide range of industries continues to grow, WTCS instructors will align their curriculum with evolving industry practices to best prepare students to be work-ready upon completion. As examples, the culinary industry can use AI to generate menus, modify recipes, manage inventory and tailor marketing; industrial

maintenance, automation, CNC and welding can use AI for predictive maintenance; and healthcare can use AI in patient messaging, administrative tasks and analysis. For students to be ready for these tools in the workplace, they must become familiar with AI tools and techniques within the classroom. WTCS faculty and staff must be knowledgeable not only of the education-related AI tools and techniques, but also of the industry-specific AI trends. The pace at which the AI landscape is changing across industries will require continuous learning opportunities for faculty and staff to ensure their knowledge of industry remains up-to-date and relevant.

Importantly, as WTCS faculty and staff adopt AI technologies to support educational outcomes and workforce preparation, WTCS institutions must also be prepared to address the ethical considerations of AI to ensure they are responsible users of AI and are preparing students to be responsible users of AI within the classroom and workplace. To this end, WTCS faculty and staff must be prepared to account for and educate students on the limitations and risks associated with AI. For example, a student that is using AI tools to generate marketing ideas must also be aware of potential legal and copyright risks that may arise, depending upon the source of the content. Given these nuances surrounding AI technologies, WTCS faculty and staff need specialized training to foster ethical awareness and critical thinking among students.

Beyond the classroom, AI technologies present opportunities across functional areas, including student services, accounting and grant management, human resources, information technology, library services, enrollment and recruitment. AI presents opportunities to streamline operations, improve efficiency and increase opportunities for data-driven decision-making. For example, technical colleges can use Chatbot options to provide personalized assistance to students by answering questions and connecting them to resources; predictive analytics can evaluate student risk factors and inform student interventions; and data analysis can inform faculty professional development. Given the wide-ranging implications and uses of AI, college leadership's understanding of AI tools and concepts is crucial for policy development, administration and evaluation. Foundational knowledge of AI allows leaders to better anticipate the impact of AI across areas and find an appropriate balance between innovation and safeguarding ethical, privacy and security considerations.

AI technologies are complex, nuanced and rapidly advancing. WTCS faculty and staff need ongoing professional development to stay current with evolving technology; keep pace with industry trends; learn effective, specialized pedagogical strategies to convey complex AI concepts and ethical considerations in an accessible manner; and operationalize the use of AI at the institutional level. Without dedicated funding to support professional development and tools at the technical colleges, students may adopt outdated or inaccurate information and have limited understanding of AI concepts. Dedicated foundational investment is needed in WTCS colleges to support professional development and tools for faculty, staff and leaders and ensure they are knowledgeable and prepared to incorporate AI within the classroom and beyond.

Request

\$5 million GPR in 2025-26 and \$5 million GPR in 2026-27 in s. 20.292(1)(f) to provide funding for professional development and tools to support technical colleges in their adoption of artificial intelligence.

DRAFT



System

General Program Operations

2025-27 Biennial Budget Initiative

Issue: General Program Operations – System Support

The Wisconsin Technical College System (System) Board, the governing body of the largest higher education system in Wisconsin, is responsible for developing Wisconsin's essential workforce and providing career opportunities for individuals throughout their lives.

Over the last ten years, the System has implemented numerous transformative changes, streamlining operations and services to improve outcomes. The System has used multiple strategies, including leveraging technology and securing grant funding, to accomplish these changes despite significant reductions in its position authority and stagnant state and federal funding.

New GPR investment to fully fund all currently authorized full-time equivalent (FTE) positions and information technology infrastructure and security is required to maintain the System's effective operations and enable continuous improvement in System outcomes.

Background

The Board's staff (System) consists of 55 full-time equivalent (FTE) state employees who are responsible for approving programs and courses at the 16 technical colleges, overseeing facility development, distributing state aid, administering state and federal grant programs, establishing System-wide policies, collaborating with education and government partners, ensuring compliance with state and federal rules and regulations and providing many other leadership and coordination services to the technical colleges.

Over the last decade, the System has initiated several transformative changes, enhancing overall operations and outcomes. These include the establishment of the WTCS Student Success Center, progress towards the 60Forward Postsecondary Attainment goal, modernization of program approval and grant evaluation processes, expansion of dual enrollment options, data-driven policy transformation, increased data security and restructuring of credential programs to fit a career pathway model.

Continuous improvement and increased responsibilities have occurred despite dwindling resources. System staff positions decreased by 33.2% between 2009-11 and 2017-19, from 82.30 to 55.00 FTE. Total authorized FTE positions has remained unchanged since 2017-19.

While the System has increased employee productivity despite these challenges, it no longer has sufficient resources to fund mission critical positions nor meet the cyber security demands for modern higher education data systems. The System's GPR general program operations for 2024-25 (\$3,175,400) is less than the 2002--03 appropriation (\$3,487,100) in nominal dollars and is 52% less on an inflation-adjusted basis.

Meanwhile, federal funding has remained stagnant for the last decade. Of the System's current 55.0 FTE, 43% are authorized as federally funded positions. Unlike GPR funding, the System's federal funding does not increase with State-authorized general wage adjustments. As a result, federal funding has been insufficient to fund the System's authorized FED positions since 2013--15.

The System has successfully used multiple strategies to minimize the impact of insufficient funding to date, including holding positions vacant, securing private grants to fund data visualization software and temporary positions, reducing travel and other operating costs and increasing employee productivity through lean process changes. However, these measures can no longer offset the System's increased workload demands driven by the need for continuous innovation in program offering and delivery, grant management, adult education, student success and cyber security. Sustained deficits are hindering the System's ability to provide the transformative programs and services required by students, employers and other System stakeholders.

System staff responsible for oversight of college program and course approval possess expertise in instructional design and delivery. In addition, they must have a working knowledge of the skill and competency requirements in the relevant employment sector and specific career areas. The current practice of maintaining vacant positions to save money requires current staff to take on additional responsibilities to ensure the vacant career areas are still maintained so the colleges can continue to develop and maintain their program delivery for their local businesses and other stakeholders. This increased workload can lead to inefficiencies as employees may struggle to manage their expanded duties effectively. Position vacancies at a time of rapid transformation in the economy and workforce expectations have increased the amount and complexity of the System's instructional staff workload. The pressing need to incorporate artificial intelligence knowledge and tools across all WTCS program areas will add to that workload exponentially over the next decade.

System instructional staff are also responsible for identifying and supporting innovations in instructional delivery which often involve building collaborations with multiple partners including technical colleges, other higher education institutions, K-12 districts and state agencies. These instructional delivery innovations expand access to technical college programs and increase Wisconsin's skilled workforce. Insufficient funding for instructional positions limits the System's capacity to build these collaborative partnerships and drive innovation. **Providing the necessary GPR funding to fill a current instructional staff vacancy will ensure WTCS can continue to innovate its programs and services to meet Wisconsin's workforce demands of the future.**

Each year, the System manages just under \$50 million in state and federal grant programs, including Workforce Advancement Training Grants, Apprenticeship-Related Instruction, Career

Pathways, Core Industry, Developing Markets, and federal Perkins and Adult Education and Family Literacy Act funding. System grant managers are responsible for converting the state federal policy makers' program objectives into comprehensive grant application materials, working with colleges to design and implement initiatives to meet those program objectives and ensuring compliance with relevant grant eligible uses and expenditures.

Increasingly, System grant managers are responsible for overseeing one-time or short-term grant programs designed to address specific state needs. In the last biennium, the System assumed responsibility for just under \$27 million in such short-term grant programs, including \$20 million to expand oral health programs. These targeted, temporary grant programs support innovations that have immediate benefits for students, employers and the state. However, the very nature of these unique, outcome-driven and accelerated initiatives requires significant development, design, implementation and accountability responsibilities of System grant managers. Insufficient funding for grant manager positions limits the System's capacity to develop and build these collaborative partnerships and drive innovation. **Providing the necessary GPR funding to fill a current grant manager vacancy will ensure WTCS can continue to successfully leverage ongoing and short-term grants to support innovations in career and technical education.**

For many well-documented reasons, Wisconsin will face a skilled workforce shortage for the foreseeable future. In response, WTCS is continually exploring new ways to prepare more individuals, faster, for entry into the workforce. Integrated Education & Training (IET) programs are proven to successfully expand the pool of potential workers and accelerate their acquisition of in-demand skills and knowledge. IET programs fully integrate three instructional components, adult education and/or literacy services, workforce training and workforce preparation services to help participants acquire a combination of academic, critical thinking, digital literacy, self-management, employability and other skills necessary for successful completion and transition to the workforce. Participation in IET programming is significantly and positively associated with completing college credits in the first semester, persisting in college to the second year, achieving a cumulative GPA of a 2.0 or greater, and obtaining a WTCS credential in comparison to like students who did not access IET programs. Expanding the use of IET across WTCS program areas will advance the state's most vulnerable communities, including the 354,000+ Wisconsin adults who do not have a high school diploma and the 142,000+ Wisconsin adults who are not proficient in English. **Providing the necessary GPR funding to fill a student success vacancy with a dedicated IET specialist will increase the availability of WTCS IET programs, provide more individuals with a proven pathway to employment and help to address Wisconsin employers' skilled labor needs.**

The System maintains large and complex data systems used to evaluate student outcomes, assess and ensure consistency and high-quality programming across the state, identify barriers to student success, and document best practices in instruction, retention, completion, student

assessment, program design and delivery. Increased reliance on data analysis to identify, implement and evaluate innovative learning strategies and more effective and efficient operating practices has increased System IT staff programming workload. In addition, the on-going maintenance and cybersecurity costs for these data systems continues to increase.

At the same time, public demands for greater transparency and access to data, and the frequency and consequences of cybersecurity threats continues to grow. The comprehensive student data systems maintained by the System and other higher education entities are rich targets. In 2021, universities in Minnesota and Georgia suffered database hacks that compromised student names, contact information, Social Security numbers and more personally identifiable information. Lincoln College, a small school of about 600 in rural central Illinois recently closed after a ransomware cyberattack. Cybercriminals frequently use artificial intelligence tools to impersonate students and steal financial aid dollars. It is the responsibility of the System to maintain robust cybersecurity measures to help safeguard against data breaches, ensuring the privacy and security of all stakeholders. Additionally, a strong cybersecurity framework fosters trust among the colleges, their students, faculty and supports the state's reputation and operational continuity. It is crucial for the System to stay aligned with the technical colleges in maintaining robust security systems, ensuring that the state government agency does not become the weak link that cybercriminals exploit to gain access.

Providing the necessary GPR funding to fill a currently vacant IT specialist position and to meet IT infrastructure needs, will ensure the System continues to both protect and leverage WTCS data systems to improve student outcomes and meet Wisconsin's workforce demands of the future.

Request

Additional GPR investment is needed to keep pace with growing operational costs, leverage and secure data resources, and meet student and employer demands for innovative, cutting-edge education and training programs.

An increase of \$700,000 GPR in s.20.292(1)(a), WTCS general program operations in each year of the biennium to convert four (4.0) FED positions to GPR positions and to fund data infrastructure and cybersecurity needs. No additional position authority is requested.

ITEM O: ETHICS FOR PUBLIC OFFICIALS TRAINING

WTCS Executive Vice President James Zylstra

The Wisconsin Department of Administration has developed an ethics for public officials training module that must be completed by members of boards to state agencies. Board Members will receive ethics for public officials training.

ITEM P: ANNOUNCEMENTS/ADJOURN

Board President Mark Tyler

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the WTCS Board is November 12-13, 2024, at the new AMETA Center at Mid-State Technical College in Stevens Point.