

Author: Neu, Scot D.

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STUDENT:

NAME: Scot D. Neu

DATE: December 20, 2019

ADVISOR: (Committee Chair if MS Plan A or EdS Thesis or Field Project/Problem):

NAME: Kathleen Brock

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- | | |
|------------------------|-------|
| 1. CMTE MEMBER'S NAME: | DATE: |
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Neu, Scot D. *Dual Enrollment Offerings Taught by High School Instructors and the Impact of HLC Instructor Qualifications in North Central Wisconsin*

Abstract

The following study was an attempt to discover possible impacts on secondary schools in north-central Wisconsin and their dual enrollment offerings of the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) guidelines for faculty qualifications as articulated in a revision of Assumed Practice B.2. Research exists that shows correlation between increased college attendance and postsecondary degree completion among rural and low-income students and the opportunities for those students to earn college credit during high school. Evidence also exists that indicates the HLC's instructor qualifications could reduce the number of secondary instructors able to teach dual enrollment courses.

This non-experimental, qualitative research found evidence that there could be impacts to dual enrollment offerings at schools included in the study and that efforts are in progress to minimize possible reductions in dual enrollment opportunities available to students. The researcher also discovered that despite some schools' efforts to minimize the impacts of the HLC requirements on course offerings, others still faced challenges to maintain and possibly add both offerings and qualified staff members to teach the courses. In conclusion, the ability to collaborate and pool problem-solving ideas among studied schools could provide both support to current offerings and the ability to expand opportunities in the future.

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Chapter I: Introduction

High school students utilize opportunities to earn college credit before finishing high school throughout the United States. By definition, dual credit, also referred to as dual enrollment, concurrent enrollment, and joint enrollment, is defined as a course or program where high school students earn both high school and postsecondary credit for one course (Bishop-Clark et al., 2010). Dual enrollment courses allow students, particularly rural students, to get a college experience prior to graduating from high school (Young, Slate, Moore & Barnes 2014). Twelfth grade rural students many times find themselves, having completed their academic coursework, worrying more about extracurricular activities, jobs or simply cutting unengaging classes (Brophy, 2006). This can cause something called a ‘senior slump,’ leaving the student unprepared for their next educational step (Peterson, 2003). Second, earning college credit while in high school reduces the amount of time it takes a student to earn a postsecondary degree (Young et al., 2014). Reducing the time needed to earn a postsecondary degree in turn reduces long-term costs of college (Bailey, Hughes & Karp, 2002; Bishop-Clark et al., 2010). The cost of college has been increasing – high school students are usually able to take dual enrollment courses for little or no cost, which reduces both the overall cost of college and the number of years spent pursuing a postsecondary degree (Bailey, Hughes & Karp, 2002). Third, it improves the coherence between high school and college curricula (Young et al., 2014). Brophy (2006) adds that dual enrollment opportunities, particularly for seniors, are important to their overall academic experience in high school, better preparing them for postsecondary opportunities. This coherence can provide a psychological transition from high school to college as well (Bailey, Hughes & Karp, 2002). This is significant because several non-academic reasons are cited by students who drop out prior to earning a degree: lack of focus, the feeling of being overwhelmed

by new surroundings or having the wrong expectations about the college experience (Noel, Levitz & Saluri, 1985).

High schools who offer dual enrollments taught by a teacher in the secondary school must ensure that teacher meets the requirements of the state, partnering college and regional accrediting body. According to Horn, Reinert, Jang and Zinth (2016), these requirements vary by state. Twelve states have no state policy, eight states are governed by accreditor-approved qualifications, while others have master's degree and graduate credit requirements or equivalent, and still others require high school teachers to have equivalent qualifications to the college course instructor. According to Zinth (2015), dual enrollment courses can be taught by the college instructor, but it is more likely to be taught by a high school teacher. Zinth (2015) says that public high school students in academically-oriented dual enrollment courses are 10 percent more likely to take their course at a secondary school - 62 percent compared to 52 percent.

Participation in dual enrollment programs has been growing over the past 20 years (Bailey, Hughes & Karp, 2002; Young et al., 2014). Young et al. (2014) states that nationwide, dual enrollments increased 31 percent over a two-year period beginning with the 2007-2008 school year, up to a total of 180 million enrollments in the 2009-2010 school year. These increases have provided students with an improved chance at both continuing their education beyond high school and completing a postsecondary degree. Wisconsin high schools and technical colleges have been part of the growth seen nationwide in dual enrollment opportunities. Partnerships created by Northcentral Technical College (NTC) in Wausau, Wisconsin, led to 40 different dual enrollment course offerings during the 2012-2013 school year, with participating students earning nearly 7,500 college credits, equaling a student cost savings of over \$102,000 (Northcentral Technical College, 2013). Dual enrollment students in Wisconsin have also shown

improved rates of persistence to a fourth college term and either graduate with an Associate Degree or are prepared to continue their education at a four-year institution (Phelps & Chan, 2016).

The Higher Learning Commission (HLC) is one of six regional institutions that accredit degree-awarding, postsecondary institutions in the north-central region. This region includes 19 states, including Wisconsin (Higher Learning Commission, 2019). The Commission made a policy revision in 2015 clarifying that all high school teachers who teach dual enrollment, general education courses, must have a master's degree in the subject they teach, or a master's degree and 18 credits in the subject they are teaching if the master's is not in that same subject (Higher Learning Commission, 2016). The HLC differentiated between general education and Career and Technical Education (CTE) instructors. Requirements for teaching CTE courses indicated the instructor hold a bachelor's degree in the field they teach and/or some combination of education, training and tested experience. Tested experience is identified as experience that can be substituted for earned credentials as determined by the institution the faculty member works for (Higher Learning Commission, 2016). The institution in question is the credit-awarding college, meaning high school instructors teaching dual enrollment courses on high school campuses should hold the same minimum qualifications of the college's own faculty (Higher Learning Commission, 2016). General education courses are those that fall into one of the four core subject areas – English language arts, math, science and social studies (Partnership, Great Schools, 2013). Colleges had until the beginning of the 2017-2018 school year to ensure instructors met the qualifications; however, many colleges requested an extension, giving them until the beginning of the 2022-2023 school year to work toward compliance. NTC and Nicolet

Colleges, both located in north-central Wisconsin, were among schools that requested and were granted extensions.

Schools in north-central Wisconsin and their dual enrollment programs could be negatively impacted by strict adherence to the HLC's policy. This possible impact could inhibit the ability of some students to attend college. Education is a way to improve ones' position in life, but can be more difficult to obtain for those who need it, particularly those students who come from a low-income background (Schefers, 2012). Simply put, rates of college attendance are lower for low-income students when compared to their higher-income counterparts, and it seems as though the gap is continuing to widen (Kane, 2001). Wisconsin's state school accountability report card shows that 11 of the 19 Cooperative Educational Service Agency (CESA) Area 9 school districts (north-central Wisconsin) have an economically disadvantaged rate of over 35% (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 2018).

Statement of the Problem

Currently, it is unclear what impact the HLC's policy will have on CESA 9 schools. It is also unclear if future hiring decisions in these districts will be impacted by the policy. The HLC's announcement in 2015 was not a new policy – it merely made this announcement stating explicitly a policy that was already in place (Gerwertz, 2015; Horn, 2016). Gerwertz (2015) adds that other states may experience negative impacts from stricter adherence to the HLC's policy. For example, Indiana school officials report many principals in the state say about 90 percent of their staff members currently teaching dual enrollment courses would not qualify under the HLC standard if followed explicitly. One principal in Minnesota indicates that while his teachers meet the qualifications, some of those staff members are approaching retirement and replacing them with candidates qualified to teach dual enrollment could be a challenge.

Purpose of the Research

The purpose of the research was to confirm the dual enrollment offerings of the high schools in Wisconsin's CESA Area 9, how the schools have attempted to meet the HLC requirements and what, if any impacts the HLC policy might have on current and future staffing. Wisconsin has signed into law two provisions to aid school districts and technical colleges toward compliance. First, Act 59 authorizes workforce training grants that can be used to train dual enrollment teachers. Second, Wisconsin 2017 S.B. 711 enacted April of 2018 directs the Office of Educational Opportunity in the University of Wisconsin (UW) System to award grants to districts, charter schools, and certain private schools to help high school teachers meet the dual enrollment teaching qualifications (Horn, Parks, Zinth & Sisneros, 2018). It is unknown if CESA 9 schools are familiar with these provisions or if schools have applied for and received them. It is also unknown if schools have received funds from these provisions how exactly those funds were used.

Research Objectives / Questions

The research will seek to answer the following questions:

1. What are the dual enrollment course profiles of districts in CESA 9?
2. How are CESA 9 school districts utilizing Act 59, UW System grant program or local funds to address their dual enrollment instructor requirements? How have funds been utilized, and if not, what is their plan to address their teachers' qualifications?
3. Do CESA 9 administrators expect to consider dual enrollment teacher qualifications in future hiring decisions?

Importance of the Study

The Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTE) has established several research problem areas that this research satisfies. Within the objective of transition to postsecondary education, this research will address three areas: aspects related to alignment of secondary and postsecondary education standards, articulation of programs between secondary and postsecondary education, and dual enrollment and programs of study. This research will also address aspects of teacher competence and CTE teacher education and preparation (Lambeth, Elliot, & Joerger, 2008).

There is a possibility that CESA 9 districts are not aware of what, if anything their neighbors are doing to address possible impacts on their dual enrollment courses. This non-experimental qualitative research aims to discover what may already be going on related to dual enrollment in individual school districts. Discovering within CESA 9 high schools what, if any, impacts the HLC's policy has on districts' existing programs may uncover a solution that could be utilized by another district. A better understanding of future staff requirements related to dual enrollment courses may also better support district's plans for future hiring of teachers who would end up teaching those courses.

Limitations to the Scope of the Study

The scope of the research could be limited by the following factors:

- This research will be limited to 18 school districts that include high schools in the CESA 9 service area.
- Not including avenues for dual enrollment outside of the model of a high school teacher delivering content within the boundaries of the school district. For example, students can take transcribed credit courses when participating in the Wisconsin

Youth Apprenticeship program. Students can also earn college credits through the Early College Credit Program (ECCP), formerly known as Youth Options (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 2019).

Definition of Terms

The following terms are defined in order to establish a common understanding of the material presented in this research.

Act 59 (2017 Assembly Bill 64). A Wisconsin state assembly bill amended in 2017 authorizing the safety and professional services department to give workforce training grants to programs that provide teacher training. This amendment also includes training teachers who teach in dual enrollment programs (Horn, et. al. 2018)

Cooperative Educational Service Agency (CESA). Regional groupings of school districts in Wisconsin who are serviced by a centralized center. These centers provide a number of services to their member school districts (EXs: teacher and administrative professional development, coordination of Youth Apprenticeship programs, administration of Carl Perkins Grant) (CESA 9, 2019).

Cooperative Educational Service Agency (CESA) district 9. There are 18 school districts that operate high schools serviced by CESA 9 – they include the following districts: Antigo, Athens, D.C. Everest, Edgar, Elcho, Minocqua Joint 1, Marathon, Merrill, Mosinee, Northland Pines, Phelps, Prentice, Rhinelander, Rib Lake, Stratford, Three Lakes, Tomahawk, Wausau (CESA 9, 2019). The Wausau School District operates two separate high schools, and references to 19 high schools served by CESA 9 are referenced in the research.

Dual enrollment. A high school student who is enrolled in a college-level course prior to high school graduation, and takes the course on a campus within their K-12 school district and is taught by a high school instructor.

Early College Credit Program (ECCP). Wisconsin program formerly known as Youth Options; renamed as part of the state's passage of Act 59 in 2017. Program that allows high school students to enroll in one or more courses at a University of Wisconsin System school and earn high school and college credits concurrently (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 2019).

Higher Learning Commission (HLC). An accrediting agency that accredits colleges and universities across a large portion of the Midwest and West, including Wisconsin (Higher Learning Commission, 2019).

Postsecondary. Any education a person receives following completion of grades nine through 12. Examples include colleges, graduate schools, technical and community colleges, along with technical or professional instruction with the awarding of an educational certificate or recognition of the achievement of a vocational objective (Schild, 2014).

Secondary. School that ends with grade 12, which follows elementary or middle school grades (Schild, 2014).

Transcribed credit. Credits that appear on both a student's high school transcript and college transcript after completing college coursework in high school (Schild, 2014).

Wisconsin 2017 Senate Bill 711. Authorizes grants to be awarded to districts, charter schools and some private schools to aid high school teachers in meeting the required qualifications to teach dual enrollment courses. These grants are awarded by the Office of Educational Opportunity, which is part of the University of Wisconsin System. They can be

awarded from the 2018-2019 school years through June 30th, 2022. Grant awards must fall under certain parameters. At least one grant award must go to a district with fewer than 650 students, one to enrollment with 650 to 1,600 students and one to a district with over 1,600 students (Horn et al., 2018).

Chapter II: Literature Review

The purpose of the study was to bring clarity to the impacts of the HLC's faculty qualification policy on CESA 9 schools and their dual enrollment programs. The independent variable of the study is the HLC's policy, which requires high school teachers who teach dual enrollment, general education courses to have a master's degree in the subject they teach or have a master's degree of any kind and 18 graduate credits in the subject they teach. CTE teachers are required by the HLC to have a bachelor's degree in the field they teach and/or some combination of education, training and tested experience (Gerwertz, 2015; Higher Learning Commission, 2016). The dependent variables of this research include two separate areas. First, will CESA 9 schools dual enrollment offerings change as a result of the HLC ruling. Second, how, if at all, will staffing considerations change for district administrators as it relates to current staff and/or future staff teaching dual enrollment courses.

The following information is aimed to provide details on concepts that better define dual enrollment and impacts on high school students enrolled in college courses. Dual enrollment background and the development and impacts on students were explored. Instructional innovation and rigor was also reviewed as it relates to the impacts dual enrollment courses have on high school curriculum. Rigor is a key component of the purpose for dual enrollment being offered to high school students. Relationships have been documented detailing the rigor of high school courses and success in postsecondary education. Bailey et al. (2002) states that challenging students of all skill levels with dual enrollment courses will help them achieve higher levels of postsecondary success. Finally, qualifications and development of dual enrollment high school instructors was explored. Rigorous curriculum that prepares students for postsecondary success is best delivered by well-prepared and dedicated teachers (Abdul-Karim,

2010). CTE teachers are among those who may deliver dual enrollment course content to high school students. Evidence exists that describes a decline in both the number and skill level of CTE teachers. Camp and Heath-Camp (2007) cite two events that set this trend in motion. First, the 1983 report *A Nation at Risk* ultimately prompted schools to increase student course taking in traditional or general education academic subjects, reducing CTE opportunities. Second, Perkins II legislation in 1990 redirected funds to local schools and away from state-level programs used previously to support CTE teacher education. Because of these reductions, alternative methods of licensure have been developed, but their ability to properly prepare a teaching candidate and retain them in education could be debated (Camp & Heath-Camp, 2007). This situation is occurring at a time when public secondary school CTE enrollments are expected to grow, increasing demand for more CTE courses (Camp & Heath-Camp, 2007).

Dual Enrollment Background

Dual enrollment allows a high school student to complete a course that awards credit toward both high school graduation and completion of a college degree. As early as 2011, 38 states – including Wisconsin - have instituted dual enrollment initiatives, and they are also being developed overseas (Watt-Malcolm, 2011). The concept of dual enrollment originally appeared in 1976 in California in response to three concerns. First, studies in California showed a decrease in postsecondary completion rates. Second, the academic rigor of a student's senior year in high school came into question. This question arose because of the third concern, that being the increasing demand for remedial postsecondary courses for students who were not academically prepared for college-level work (Mokher & McLendon, 2009).

Further review of data by Mokher and McLendon (2009) revealed additional conclusions related to dual enrollment policy adoption at the state level.

- A state was more likely to adopt a policy if a neighboring state had done so.
- A state was likely to adopt a policy if a state had low levels of college aptitude among high school seniors.
- A state was likely to adopt a policy if it had a higher percentage of total postsecondary enrollments in two-year institutions.
- A state was likely to adopt a policy if a structure of PK-16 coalition existed; this consolidated governing board could then communicate across multiple sectors of education.
- A state was likely to adopt a policy if it had previously adopted innovative policies like voucher policies and merit-aid programs.

A program called Tech Prep was also part of the dual enrollment equation. It was conceived in the 1980's with the goal of improving student transitions between high school and community college (Bailey & Morest, 1998). Tech prep accomplished this by formalizing articulation agreements between secondary and postsecondary education. This was accomplished by offering career pathways that linked high school classes, which typically began during the last two years of high school, to advanced technical college courses (Bailey et al., 2002). Bailey (2002) provided details on several other aspects of Tech Prep. Federal funding began being allocated to Tech Prep in 1990. Programs for students were organized locally by consortia of businesses, secondary and postsecondary institutions.

A challenge to further growth of Tech Prep was timing. Bailey et al. (2002) indicated that the primary focus of secondary schools in the 1990's was on core academic subjects while Tech Prep's focus was viewed more as a high school vocational program, meant only for smaller group of students who were not considered four-year college material.

Dual enrollment courses began as a result of three concerns of educators in the 1970s – a decrease in postsecondary completion rates, reduced course rigor in a secondary students' final year in school and increased demand for remedial courses for academically unprepared students entering college. Partnerships between high schools and colleges developed as a result, and local businesses also came aboard to develop programs to better prepare students for a wide variety of postsecondary opportunities.

Dual Enrollment Development

There are several reasons why students chose to participate in dual enrollment courses as opportunities grew. Karp (2007) discusses several of these reasons. One is to facilitate transcribed credit – where successful completion of one course awards credit toward both high school and college transcripts. This allows a student to 'try out' college while still in high school and reduce the time needed to complete a postsecondary degree (Barnett & Stamm, 2010). Karp (2007) notes a large research study that analyzed over 800,000 dual-enrolled students in New York and Florida. The study, funded by a grant from the US Department of Education, determined that dual enrollment is a positive strategy to increase postsecondary success, including success in CTE programs, in the following ways:

- Students in these dual enrollment programs showed an increase likelihood of entering college compared to students not in dual enrollment courses (Barnett & Stamm, 2010; Karp, 2007).
- Students in these dual enrollment programs showed increased preparedness for college level work compared to students who did not take dual enrollment courses in high school (Barnett & Stamm, 2010; Karp, 2007).

- Dual enrollment students in the study recorded higher postsecondary grade-point averages (Barnett & Stamm, 2010; Karp, 2007).
- Dual enrollment students in the study recorded higher rates of college degree attainment (Karp, 2007).

Another reason schools chose to expand dual enrollment opportunities was to increase course rigor. Andrews (2000) cites a comment in the Wall Street Journal (WSJ) indicating why this increased rigor is important, specifically to high school seniors. Tom VanderArk, president of the Education Commission of the States, said in the WSJ article that large comprehensive high schools do not work for most kids. VanderArk stated that a lack of course rigor during senior year turns the year into one where students do not grow academically. High schools in many states have been working to increase the academic rigor of a student's senior year as a result. Andrews (2000) highlighted growth in many states in dual enrollment courses, many of which are at low or no cost to secondary students. Virginia reported their dual enrollments more than tripled from 1991 to 1997 (2,000 to 6,700), Illinois indicated that 77 percent of community colleges reported dual enrollment increases during the 1990s, and North Carolina reported a one-year dual enrollment increase of 36 percent from 1997-98 to the following school year.

Admission requirements to dual enrollment courses vary. This has raised concern about what the true goal of dual enrollment is and whether or not it raises or lowers the standard of college level coursework. Fontenot (2003) cites examples of states that have very specific and challenging standards students must meet to participate in dual enrollment courses. Illinois, Georgia and Oklahoma hold strict standards like high ACT / SAT scores, grade point average and class rank as well as a recommendation from the school's principal. Other states, though, have less restrictive requirements. For example, if in a state a student can simply be accepted to

any college, they could be accepted into dual enrollment courses. Fontenot (2013) says goals and objectives of any dual enrollment course offerings need to be collaboratively set by the participating institutions, including an acceptable admissions policy to ensure the integrity of the coursework.

High school students' participation in dual enrollment courses showed positive results. A large study showed a higher likelihood of postsecondary preparedness compared to non-participating students. Dual enrollment opportunities also proved to increase course rigor, particularly for secondary students in their final year of school. These outcomes led to increases in student participation in dual enrollment courses across many states during the 1990s. It was not determined if variance of admission policies to dual enrollment courses across states impacted the documented outcomes. Collaboration between participating institutions, regardless of the admission policies, was strongly recommended to ensure coursework integrity.

Dual Enrollment Impacts

Statistical measures of students participating in dual enrollment courses in high school have shown positive returns on postsecondary outcomes in comparison to their student counterparts who do not participate in dual enrollment courses. Berger (2013) reported several findings from a study of 10 high schools in California from 2002 to 2011. The study included nearly 2,500 students selected by lottery and followed them three years beyond high school completion. It found that students who participated in dual enrollment courses had an increased likelihood of graduating from high school – 86 percent compared to 81 percent of non-dual enrolled students. The study also found that dual enrollment students had a higher likelihood of enrolling in college following completion of high school – 80 percent of dual enrollment students enrolled in college within the study's time frame compared to 71 percent in the same time frame

who did not participate in dual enrollment. It also found dual enrollment students had a higher likelihood of attaining a college degree – 22 percent of participants completed a degree (usually an Associate’s Degree) within the study’s time frame compared to two percent of those who did not participate in dual enrollment.

This evidence certainly cannot be generalized across all dual enrollment-participating students, but the evidence shows a possible improvement in the academic trajectory with more dual enrollment students earning a college degree and higher rates of four-year institution enrollments compared to other students (Berger et al., 2013).

Instructional Rigor

Many states are working to increase graduation rates and put more students on a college-bound pathway by increasing academic rigor in high schools. One way to do this is to provide college-level work in high school (Hoffman, Vargas, & Santos, 2009). Multiple positive outcomes have been noted from increased class rigor through dual enrollment courses, according to Hoffman, Vargas and Santos (2009).

- College readiness increased for students in underserved populations as a result of participation in dual enrollment.
- Students were exposed to realistic information about skills necessary to succeed in college before attending following high school graduation.
- Dual enrollment participants reduced the years of financial investment needed to complete a college degree.
- Low to no cost for credits and high expectations for dual enrollment courses increased student motivation.

- Feedback related to standards, assessments, curriculum and transition from high school to college between secondary and postsecondary schools improved as a result of dual enrollment agreements.

Not all high schools have access to the same resources. Partnerships between secondary and postsecondary institutions through dual enrollment courses can provide schools the opportunity to increase the rigor of courses and make the junior and senior years of high school more meaningful (Barnett & Stamm, 2010). Daggett (2017b) argues that in order to make instruction more meaningful during the junior and senior years of high school, instructors must concentrate first on how to teach students to do whatever it is that will be important in their lives, rather than first worry about course content. This would require an update of what students are taught to better align with 21st century skills (Daggett, 2017b). Daggett (2017b) provides evidence that could be interpreted by some that high school is not properly preparing students for the world they will live in. A 2015 study completed by the non-profit Successful Practices Network showed entry-level reading requirements for military, entry-level jobs and personal use are more rigorous than what students are being prepared for currently in high school. Daggett (2017b) provided several ways to address the shortcoming. First, literacy education must include non-fiction and technical materials, not mostly fiction. Second, the additional literacy education must emphasize the need to comprehend data. Third, students must be encouraged and driven to be creative and innovate, no matter what the subject may be. Daggett (2017b) argues this transformation can be initiated simply by being intentional about teaching reading and writing skills across multiple content areas. To pull off these changes, Daggett (2017a) argues schools must become future-focused and keep up with changing technologies in the workplace. The

changes Daggett (2017a) proposed that would allow schools to make this shift include the following:

- changes to instructional practices,
- changes to how instruction is organized, and
- changes in what is taught.

Evidence exists, however, that the academic success of dual enrollment students may not paint an accurate picture of what additional skills were attained from those courses. Fontenot (2003) noted inconsistencies among institutions with the performance criteria they selected to evaluate their dual enrollment programs, stating specifically that many have focused on student satisfaction rather than outcomes based on course competencies and rigor. Bailey, Hughes and Karp (2003) added that findings like this tend to increase positive responses. Other similar studies have been criticized because only pre-selected students were included in many of the studies. In most cases, these students were already high achievers and likely were better positioned for postsecondary success regardless of whether or not they participated in dual enrollment courses (Fontenot, 2003).

Instructor Qualifications and Development

A key component in offering rigorous and meaningful dual enrollment courses is having qualified teachers to deliver the content and adhere to the required standards. CTE teachers do not make up the entire field of instructors who teach dual enrollment courses. However, Camp and Heath-Camp (2007) documented a decline in qualified CTE teachers, due in part to a downward trend in CTE teacher preparation programs. This trend has reduced the number of qualified teachers entering CTE fields at the same time that public school student enrollments are rising (Camp & Heath-Camp, 2007), increasing the need for more qualified teachers.

Another factor influencing the decrease in available qualified teachers was an increase in the rigor of many states' teacher licensing requirements (Walter & Gray, 2002). Consider rising public school enrollments, increased licensing rigor and throw in high numbers of experienced CTE teachers retiring with fewer qualified teachers entering the field and a shortage of teachers is the end result (Walter & Gray, 2002). States have instituted other means of preparing teaching candidates in order to fill the gap. These programs have shortcomings, however, which include the following:

- Most programs focus on content and not much on how to teach (Camp & Heath-Camp, 2007; Milgram, 2017).
- Success lies primarily in the hands of each individual school and the support systems in place for alternately-licensed teachers (Milgram, 2017).
- Schools may not consider at the time of hiring whether or not a person without a teaching background would be willing to go through the process of improving their teaching ability (Milgram, 2017).

CTE programs in schools as well as jobs in CTE disciplines have and continue to change, creating additional challenges in finding, hiring and supporting qualified staff (Walter & Gray, 2002). CTE courses previously were geared toward apprenticed trades – many times these apprenticeships led to jobs attainable immediately after high school. That path does not line up with how CTE programs or post-graduation jobs in CTE fields have changed, according to Walter and Gray (2002). Many of the jobs secured through apprenticeships following high school years ago now require certifications or Associates' degrees. Dual enrollment instructors must be prepared to deliver rigorous college content that is required to help students earn these certifications and degrees without the need to take additional or remedial courses (Abdul-Karim,

2010). Andrews (2000b) says the quality of dual enrollment instructors chosen cannot be over-emphasized, as a college puts their reputation on the line with who they choose to deliver their courses, regardless of whether it is on a high school or college campus. To ensure this integrity, Andrews (2000b) states the importance of dual enrollment instructors having similar or the same credentials as college faculty members who teach on the college campus.

The number of qualified instructors available to teach dual enrollment courses at the high school level is declining. Changes to teacher licensing requirements and fewer available teachers in the field make it more challenging for high schools to deliver rigorous content, particularly through dual enrollment courses. Some changes in the licensing requirements have been aimed at promoting alternative pathways to enter the teaching profession, but the success of many of those programs are primarily dependent on local school districts and many times only provide guidance on content, not on how to teach.

Chapter III: Methodology

The purpose of the study was to bring clarity to some of the impacts of the HLC's policy on CESA 9 schools and their dual enrollment programs. Three questions needed to be answered during the research process. First, what are the dual enrollment profiles of the high schools in CESA 9? Second, are CESA 9 high schools utilizing available funding (federal or state grants, or local funding) to help address their dual enrollment instructor requirements, and, if not, what is the plan to address possible gaps in teacher qualifications? Third, how, if at all, will staffing considerations change for district administrators as it relates to current staff and/or future staff being qualified to teach dual enrollment courses?

Discovering what, if any, impacts the HLC's ruling has on districts' existing programs may uncover a solution that could be utilized by another district. It is possible that CESA 9 districts are not aware of what, if anything their neighbors are doing to address possible negative impacts on their dual enrollment courses. A better understanding of future staff requirements related to dual enrollment courses may also better support districts' plans for future hiring of teachers who would end up teaching those courses.

The following paragraphs provide details on the design of the research, details on the population that data was gathered from, the instruments used to collect the data, how it was collected and strategies used to organize and analyze the data.

Research Design

This non-experimental qualitative research aimed to capture what may already be going on related to dual enrollment in each high school in CESA 9. Non-experimental research looks at variables as they occur in natural settings (Wiersma & Jurs, 2009). There was no attempt to manipulate any of the schools' dual enrollment programs prior to or following contacts with

personnel from each school. This is the reason for the research being non-experimental. A survey (see Appendix A) was the primary tool used to capture data. The survey captured data related to the study's three questions from CESA 9 schools at a single point in time. The independent variable of the study is the HLC's policy to require high school teachers who teach dual enrollment to have the same credentials as a college instructor. General education instructors are required to have a master's degree in the subject they teach or have a master's degree of any kind and 18 graduate credits in the subject they teach. CTE instructors are required to hold a bachelor's degree in the field they teach and/or some combination of education, training and tested experience (Higher Learning Commission, 2016). The dependent variables of this research include two separate areas. The first is each school's dual enrollment profile and any possible changes that may occur as a result of the HLC requirements for teacher qualifications. The second is any possible updates or changes to each school's teacher hiring requirements as a result of the HLC requirements for teacher qualifications.

Population

The population associated with the study were the 19 high schools located in the CESA 9 area, which comprises north-central Wisconsin. The demographic details provided about the schools and their populations were gathered from the Wisconsin DPI's 2017-2018 school report card (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 2018). This report card provides scores on a scale from zero to 100 and is divided into tiers that denote levels of achievement of specific priority areas. These areas include student achievement, growth related to English and math, closing gaps related to English and math performance and post-secondary readiness.

Data Collection

Data collection helped to build a profile of each school's dual enrollment opportunities. Employees at CESA 9 and regional colleges (Nicolet and North Central Technical) were contacted and information about each school's offerings as of the 2018-2019 school year were recorded. Once each school's initial profile was built, contact was made with each school principal via an electronic survey with instructions and timelines for completion. No information about other schools was exchanged between the researcher and school administrators that were included in the study.

Data Analysis

The three questions the study aimed to answer served to initiate the gathering of data. Data compiled related to research question one - what are the dual enrollment course profiles of high schools in CESA 9 – were aligned in a way to view similarities and differences among reporting schools in relation to the number of general education and CTE courses offered as dual enrollment.

Data compiled related to research question two - how are CESA 9 school districts utilizing either Act 59, other grant programs or local funds to address their dual enrollment instructor requirements, how have funds been utilized, and if not, what is their plan to address their teacher's qualifications – were organized in a similar way. Patterns of how and if grant funds were used were noted.

Data gathered regarding research question three - what factors will CESA 9 administrators consider in future hiring decisions as they relate to dual enrollment offerings – were organized similar to question two, with patterns noted between schools. Each school in the study, for the purpose of reporting responses to this question, was categorized as large, medium

or small based on 2017-2018 enrollment numbers. Schools were categorized this way to protect the identity of each individual school's prospective hiring practices in relation to possible future dual enrollment instructor hirings. The categories that each of the 19 CESA 9 high schools fall into can be found in Appendix A.

Limitations

The study has some limitations based on the scope of the study. Those limitations include:

- Missing school population and economically disadvantaged totals from Marathon High School.
- Results of the research should not be applied to all 19 states governed by the HLC. This study was limited to data collected from the 19 high schools served by CESA 9.
- Avenues outside of dual enrollment in which students can earn both high school and college credits are not included in the research. For example, students can take transcripted credit courses when participating in the Wisconsin Youth Apprenticeship program. Students can also earn college credits through the Early College Credit Program (ECCP), formerly known as Youth Options (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 2019).
- School and county population data utilized in the study was collected and reported between July 2017 and June 2018 and used as a basis for comparisons to data collected between July 2018 and June 2019.
- The 11 high schools (out of 19 in CESA 9 in north-central Wisconsin) and their representatives who did not reply to the research survey.

- School report card data and course data are not from the same school year. Report card data used was from the 2017-2018 school year while course information gathered from schools was from the 2018-2019 school year. Both data sets were the most recent available at the time the research was conducted.

Summary

The dual enrollment profiles of 19 high schools in north-central Wisconsin served by CESA 9 were gathered and assessed. The data was gathered to determine what, if any impacts a 2015 HLC policy had or may be having on the dual enrollment offerings in those schools and any possible changes to hiring practices of personnel to teach those courses. A non-experimental, qualitative approach was taken to analyzing the data and a cross-sectional survey was used to gather the data from an administrator at each school. Data gathered was charted, patterns were noted between schools related to the number of dual enrollment offerings available, number of teachers teaching those courses and what, if any additional education those staff members need in order to continue teaching dual enrollment courses. The research is limited by several factors. Those factors include one school's missing population numbers, a specific focus on CESA 9 schools when others served by the HLC may be impacted by the policy, other dual enrollment avenues being ignored and comparison data from school and county populations not being from the same year as that gathered from administrators in the study.

Chapter IV: Results

This research focused on 19 high schools located in north central Wisconsin served by CESA Area 9 and the possible impacts of the HLC's instructor requirements to teach dual enrollment courses.

Demographics

The state of Wisconsin produces an annual report card on each school and school district in the state. The results reflect each school's success in reaching goals under a variety of criteria determined by the state to be indicators of schools successfully preparing students for postsecondary life. A scale of zero to 100 is used, with 100 being the highest rank. Table 1 reflects various score ranges and which schools fell into which ranges.

Table 1

Wisconsin 2017-2018 School District Report Card Rankings of CESA 9 Schools

<u>Meets Few Expectations</u> (53-62.9)	<u>Meets Expectations</u> (63-72.9)	<u>Exceeds Expectations</u> (73-82.9)	<u>Significantly Exceeds Expectations</u> (83-100)	<u>Alternate Ranking</u> (satisfactory progress)
Antigo	Lakeland Union	DC Everest	Tomahawk	Elcho
Athens	Merrill	Marathon		Phelps
Edgar	Prentice	Mosinee		
	Rhineland	Northland Pines		
	Rib Lake	Wausau East		
	Stratford			
	Three Lakes			
	Wausau West			

The report card also noted the percentage of a school's population deemed to be economically disadvantaged. The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) defines economically disadvantaged as a student who meets one of the following criteria:

- is identified by certification of participation in the National School Lunch Program,
- is a member of a household meeting income eligibility guidelines for free or reduced-priced meals,
- is identified by another means, like the alternate household income form
(Economically Disadvantaged Status, 2019).

Figure 2 categorizes the 19 high schools in CESA 9 within varying ranges of percentages of economically disadvantaged students. The percentages were captured from the 2017-2018 school year report card.

Table 2

Economically Disadvantaged Population Percentages (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 2018)

<u>10-15%</u>	<u>19-22%</u>	<u>24-27%</u>	<u>30-32%</u>	<u>34-38%</u>	<u>55% <</u>
Stratford	Athens	DC Everest	Merrill	Antigo	Phelps
	Tomahawk	Edgar	Northland	Elcho	
		Mosinee	Pines	Lakeland	
			Prentice	Union	
			Rhineland	Rib Lake	
				Three Lakes	
				-Wausau East	
				-Wausau	
				West	

The total number of students in the 18 school districts that operate a high school who reported enrollment and economically disadvantaged data is 9,249 for the 2017-2018 school year. The average percent of economically disadvantaged students in that population is 30.4. The 19 CESA 9 high schools are located in the following six Wisconsin counties: Oneida, Vilas, Forest, Langlade, Lincoln and Marathon. Fourteen of the 19 high schools in the study are located in rural locations, as defined by the U.S Census Bureau (Ratcliffe, Burd & Holder, 2016). Data estimates from July 2017 indicate 23.3 percent of residents in the six-county area (57,962) have earned a bachelor's degree or higher (U.S. Census Bureau Quick Facts, 2019).

Dual Enrollment Profiles

Research question number one verified the dual enrollment course profiles of the 19 high schools in CESA 9. The question was broken into four parts. Part one asked schools to verify dual enrollment courses offered through Nicolet College or North Central Technical College (NTC) in the 2018-2019 school year. Part two asked schools to verify the accuracy of dual enrollment course agreements between CESA 9 schools and any other postsecondary institutions other than NTC and Nicolet College. Part three asked schools if there were teachers that did not meet HLC qualifications for courses offered as dual enrollment. Part four asked schools about the impact on future dual enrollment offerings taught by teachers who do not meet HLC qualifications.

Data was generated from schools who replied to the research survey. Eight of the 19 schools surveyed replied. Table 3 summarizes responding schools dual enrollment offerings, categorizing the number of general education and CTE courses.

Table 3

Number of General Education and CTE Courses Offered at CESA 9 High Schools in 2018-2019

Course type School	General Education	Career & Technical Education	Total dual enrollment courses offered
*Lakeland	2	2	4
*Merrill	4	7	11
*Rhineland	0	7	7
*Rib Lake	4	5	9
*Three Lakes	2	4	6
*Tomahawk	0	6	6
*Wausau East	2	12	14
*Wausau West	2	18	20
Totals	16	61	77
Non-reporting schools			
Antigo	4	18	22
Athens	3	8	11
DC Everest	3	21	24
Edgar	1	10	11
Elcho	0	1	1
Marathon	0	7	7
Mosinee	6	15	21
Northland Pines	2	5	7
Phelps	0	1	1
Prentice	2	4	6
Stratford	4	13	17
Totals (all schools)	41	164	205

(* = schools that responded to the survey, confirming their dual enrollment course offerings.

Summaries will focus on the schools that responded to the survey. Data on Tables 1, 2 and 3 was gathered through publically-accessible sources.)

All but two schools (Tomahawk and Rhineland) who reported offered at least two general education courses as dual enrollment courses during the 2018-2019 school year. Five of the eight schools offer two times more CTE dual enrollment courses than general education courses. This may or may not be related to the different HLC qualification requirements to teach dual enrollment. The number of overall courses offered is not directly correlated to school size in all cases. Rib Lake and Three Lakes (both small schools as categorized in Appendix B) both

offer equal to or more dual enrollment courses than two medium-sized schools (Tomahawk and Lakeland), while Rib Lake offered more courses than one large school (Rhineland).

Part three of question one asked which courses (if any) had non-qualified teachers teaching a dual enrollment course. Lakeland Union reported their Medical Terminology instructor was not HLC compliant. Three Lakes reported their Economics and Intro to Psychology instructors were not HLC compliant. Remaining schools that reported said their dual enrollment teaching staff is qualified to teach their respective courses. This may or may not mean the schools remain compliant entering the 2022-2023 school year as schools have until that time become compliant or risk not being able to offer their specific courses as dual enrollment.

Part four of question one asked how future dual enrollment offerings to students would be impacted by teachers not meeting HLC qualifications. Responding schools provided a variety of responses as indicated on Table 4.

Table 4

School Assessment of HLC Qualifications and Possible Impact on Future Offerings

School	Responses
Lakeland	If the classes are offered in the future there may be a gap before we can get staff qualified
Merrill	not sure
Rhineland	It would affect our offerings for the future if qualifications changed.
Rib Lake	NTC has worked with us to make accommodations to allow teachers to teach courses without a Master's Degree, etc.
Three Lakes	We are not able to offer the dual credit course to our students this current year and will not be able to in the future because our teacher does not meet the HLC qualifications.
Tomahawk	Teacher buy in to value of dual credits is key. Teacher incentive to become dual credit certified is important. Is there any direct personal benefit for becoming qualified, i.e., pay increase, etc. I see larger hurdles in the content areas outside of CTE because of the HLC requirements.
Wausau East	We lean on the technical college for guidance if our teachers are qualified to deliver their curriculum. We have excellent collaboration with NTC.
Wausau West	Same responses as Wausau East.

A wide variety of general education and CTE courses are offered for dual enrollment across school districts in CESA 9. The study revealed that of the eight schools who replied to the survey, six (Wausau West, Wausau East, Rib Lake, Merrill, Three Lakes, Lakeland) offer one or more courses that are considered general education. Wausau East and West indicated a reliance on their partnership with NTC for guidance on ensuring their teachers are qualified to teach their curriculum according to the HLC (general education courses offered at these schools include College Algebra w/apps, Trigonometry w/apps and Intermediate Algebra w/apps). Lakeland indicated there may be a gap in future course offerings in order to ensure one or more staff members are qualified to teach their respective courses (General Anatomy & Physiology, English 101 and 250). Merrill reported not being sure how offerings would be impacted by teachers not being qualified according to HLC requirements (they offer College Algebra w/applications, Intermediate Algebra w/applications, Introduction to Psychology and Introduction to Sociology as general education courses). Three Lakes indicated that despite dual enrollment agreements in place, they were not be able to offer their general education courses on in the 2018-2019 school year (see Table 3) or in the near future (2019-2020 school year) due to teachers not meeting qualifications. (Economics and Introduction to Psychology). Rib Lake indicated working closely with NTC to make accommodations to allow teaches to teach courses without a Master's Degree (College Algebra w/applications, Trigonometry w/applications, Oral & Interpersonal Communication and Written Communication). A review of the categories that general education courses offered at CESA 9 high schools fall into shows that classes fall into three of the four categories – English language arts, math and social studies. No science courses are currently offered as dual enrollment at schools who replied to the survey. The author is also

aware from previous research that this may also be the case at the 11 CESA 9 schools who did not reply.

Funding for Training

Research question number two asked how CESA 9 high schools utilized Act 59, the Office of Educational Opportunity grant program or local funds to address their dual enrollment instructor requirements. The question also asked if funds were utilized, and if not, what the school's plan was to address their teacher's qualifications. To answer this research question, survey participants responded to five questions. Part one asked if any state or federal grant money was used for staff development or college tuition reimbursement to support teachers meeting the requirements of a dual enrollment instructor. Part two asked if any other financial resources available to the district were used for the purpose of helping teachers meet the HLC requirements of a dual enrollment instructor. Part three asked if teachers currently not meeting HLC requirements were willing to take courses to meet qualifications. Part four asked the reasons teachers gave for being willing to pursue meeting HLC qualifications, and part five asked what reasons teachers gave for not being willing to pursue HLC qualifications.

Q2-1 – Use of state grants. Part one of question two asked if any state or federal grant money had been used specifically toward aiding teachers in meeting HLC requirements. Seven of the eight schools said no grant money of any sort had been used for this purpose. One (Tomahawk) indicated using grant money received from federal or state programs to help pay for professional development costs associated with HLC requirements.

Q2-2 – Other financial resources. Part two of question two asked if any other funds, such as school or district budgets, had been used to help teachers meet or achieve HLC requirements. Responding schools comments are displayed on table 5.

Table 5

Use of Funds to Support High School Dual Enrollment Instructor Professional Development

School	Responses
Lakeland	Yes, local funds have been used to help support teacher professional development
Merrill	Yes, we have paid for additional certification trainings for our staff out of our budget.
Rhineland	Yes, having teachers go to meetings during the school day. Pay for transportation and substitute teachers.
Rib Lake	No
Three Lakes	Teachers can be reimbursed for part of the cost of graduate courses that are completed
Tomahawk	Yes. Travel expenses, sub costs, etc. to attend technical college teacher training to meet HLC criteria.
Wausau East	Teachers receive points towards professional development for attending dual credit meetings. They've needed to earn up to 50 points to advance on the compensation model however this model is currently being changed and will not apply in the future.
Wausau West	Same response as Wausau East.

All but one school (Rib Lake) indicated using local funds to support dual enrollment professional development. These funds were primarily devoted to local training, sub pay so teachers could attend daytime meetings related to dual enrollment and travel expenses related to going to and from those meetings. Two schools (Wausau East and West) indicated having used these meetings to advance on their compensation model, but that it does not apply in the current or future school years. Only one school (Three Lakes) indicated using local funds to reimburse costs incurred by staff who take graduate courses to meet teaching qualifications.

Q2-3 – Instructor willingness. Part three of question two asked schools if they had teachers not meeting HLC qualifications to teach dual enrollment. Schools that indicated yes to this question were then asked to provide a brief overview of the number of faculty willing to pursue becoming qualified and the courses they teach. Responses can be found on Table 6.

Table 6

*Non-Compliant Dual Enrollment Instructors According to HLC Guidelines and the Courses**They Teach*

School	Responses
Lakeland	yes- one each in science, math ,and English
Merrill	Yes, can't recall specifics
Rhineland	Yes (no other information provided)
Rib Lake	Unknown
Three Lakes	We have one instructor who would need to complete coursework and potentially master's degrees in two areas, to meet the HLC qualifications. At this point they are not willing to take this on.
Tomahawk	We have not had problems with teachers in the CTE content area. Staffing outside of CTE are still learning the benefits of dual credit and weighing that against the pathway to certification and their own personal benefits of earning the credential (increased pay).
Wausau East	None
Wausau West	None

Four of the eight schools indicated one or more instructors who need to pursue additional coursework to meet HLC qualifications. Two additional schools (Merrill and Rhineland) also indicated they have instructors who need to pursue coursework, but did not provide specifics on which courses they teach. Three others did not know (Rib Lake) or did not respond to the question (Wausau East and West).

Q2-4 and 5 – Reasons for and against pursuing qualifications. Parts four and five of question two asked what reasons were given by teachers who were and were not willing, respectively, to pursue meeting HLC requirements. Those responses are on Table 7.

Table 7

*Reasons Dual Enrollment Instructors Chose To or Not To Pursuing Coursework to Meet HLC**Qualifications*

School	Reasons to pursue certification	Reasons to NOT pursue certification
Lakeland Merrill	In the best interests of students Additional opportunities for students, adding to the strength of the department.	Time constraints Time, stage of career
Rhineland	They want to continue teaching dual credit courses.	Time involved
Rib Lake Three Lakes	Not applicable Our teacher is not willing	Not applicable The barriers are both financial and time needed to devote to obtaining credentials to meet the qualifications
Tomahawk	Good for students in many aspects. Increased knowledge and skills, post-secondary benefits with financial implications and time savings.	Do not see the value in dual credits. Don't have confidence in all student populations being able to be successful in an advanced course. No financial incentive to put in the effort to become certified and teach a more rigorous course.
Wausau East	We currently do not have any teachers pursuing credentials to meet HLC.	We continue to teach dual credit based on the information we receive from our postsecondary partners.
Wausau West	Same as Wausau East	Same as Wausau East

Five of the eight reporting schools indicated staff members who may need to complete coursework to meet HLC qualifications have expressed willingness to do so. Two (Wausau East and West) did not provide a direct response while one (Three Lakes) indicated a staff member not being willing to take courses to meet qualifications. Reasons to pursue coursework to qualify under HLC guidelines given by staff at reporting schools ranged from providing good opportunities for students (Tomahawk, Merrill, Lakeland), to a desire to continue teaching dual enrollment courses (Rhineland). Tomahawk differentiated between CTE and general education dual enrollment offerings, indicating CTE teachers see value in the opportunity for students while general education course teachers do not at this time. It bears noting that

Tomahawk does not currently offer any general education courses as dual enrollment. Reasons given not to pursue coursework by staff to be qualified to continue teaching dual enrollment courses included additional time requirements of staff (Rhineland, Lakeland, Merrill, Three Lakes), no financial incentive (Tomahawk, Three Lakes) and not seeing value in dual enrollment (Tomahawk).

Future Hiring Decisions

Research question number three asked what factors CESA 9 high school administrators would consider in future hiring decisions related to dual enrollment offerings. The question was broken in to two parts. First, if the school currently, or is expected to in the future, have teaching positions available that may be required to teach one or more dual enrollment courses. Schools that answered 'yes' or 'possibly' to that part were then asked how, or possibly how teacher applicants will be handled in relation to meeting HLC requirements for teaching dual enrollment courses. Responses to the question are on Table 8 below based on school size.

Table 8

Possible Future Staff and HLC Qualifications Considerations at CESA 9 High Schools

School Size	Responses
Large	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Although we want dual credit teachers it's hard enough to find qualified or licensed CTE teachers much less one with the qualifications to meet the HLC. We are in a scarce market for CTE teachers. To apply additional requirements of applicants would magnify the shortage of CTE teachers. We can't find CTE teachers the way it is. Some of the experienced based license teachers we hired have a bachelors or associates degree. - Priority will be given to those who meet the requirements. Others will receive additional training. - This may determine who we hire or don't hire.
Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -It would be preferred that teaching applicants are qualified, but likely not required -I anticipate that the district posting would use language that states the applicant must be HLC certified or be able to be certified to teach dual credit courses.
Small	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Completing dual credit courses serves our students well. If we choose to have this requirement, we will need to list the requirements on the recruitment materials. We would then hope to receive applicants that meet the requirements. This may be a challenge though. -If not meeting expectations work with NTC to accommodate.

Responses from schools reported that there may be some possible impacts on hirings of future instructors who may be required to teach dual enrollment courses. Seven of eight schools indicated that future hires would either definitely or possibly be required to teach dual enrollment courses. None of the reporting schools indicated an unwillingness to hire teachers who didn't meet HLC qualifications at the time of hire, but at least one school of medium enrollment (325 students to 698 students), two schools of large enrollment (775 to 1,347) and one small school (55 to 261) indicated a likelihood to give preference to candidates who already meet HLC qualifications at the time of hire. Each of these schools indicated the likelihood of either including language in the position description stating the need to be qualified or the willingness to become qualified after being hired.

Chapter V: Discussion, Conclusions and Recommendations

Dual enrollment opportunities for CESA 9 students, particularly those in rural areas who are economically disadvantaged, improve their ability to attend and complete college. Rates of college attendance are lower for low-income students when compared to their higher-income counterparts (Kane, 2001). It is important to note that 14 of the 19 high schools targeted in the study are considered rural, according to the U.S. Census Bureau (Radcliffe, Burd & Fields, 2016). It is also important to note that across the entire CESA 9 region comprising north-central Wisconsin, 30.4 percent of high school students in the 2017-2018 school year were considered disadvantaged (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 2018). This study attempted to answer three primary questions – first, what were the dual enrollment profiles of the 19 CESA 9 high schools targeted in the study. Second, was (or has) any sort of state, federal or local grants or funds been used for the purpose of staff development in order to bring dual enrollment instructors into HLC compliance. Third, what factors, if any, would play a role in hiring future teaching staff in relation to the prospect's or ability to become HLC compliant to teach dual enrollment courses.

High school students are usually able to take dual enrollment courses for little or no cost, reducing both the overall cost of college and the number of years spent pursuing a postsecondary degree (Bailey, Hughes & Karp, 2002). Brophy (2006) adds that dual enrollment opportunities, particularly for seniors, are important to their overall academic experience in high school, better preparing them for postsecondary opportunities. Rural twelfth grade students may find themselves, having completed their academic coursework, worrying more about extracurricular activities, jobs or simply cutting unengaging classes (Brophy, 2006). It could be argued that students in rural schools, particularly economically disadvantaged ones who desire to pursue

postsecondary education, may be impacted by changes to their school's dual enrollment offerings.

Conclusions

There is a possibility that some high school students in CESA 9 district high schools will have reduced opportunities to earn college credit through dual enrollment. Data collected from the surveys would seem to indicate general education courses offered as dual enrollment may be impacted more than CTE courses. This is due to the specific HLC requirement that general education instructors must possess a master's degree in the discipline or subfield of the course they teach, or a master's degree in another field and a minimum of 18 credits in the discipline or subfield of the course they teach (Higher Learning Commission, 2016).

- Wausau East, Wausau West, Rib Lake, Merrill, Three Lakes and Lakeland all offer one or more courses that are considered general education courses.
- Lakeland and Three Lakes reported having to alter or remove dual enrollment opportunities to students due to the lack of qualified staff.
- The author is also aware of, after having conducted previous research, eight other schools in CESA 9 who offer one or more general education courses (Athens, Northland Pines, Stratford, Antigo, Prentice, Mosinee, D.C. Everest, Edgar, refer to Table 3) that may experience or have already experienced similar impacts to their dual enrollment offerings.
- Two large schools in CESA 9 also indicated challenges with finding staff that were qualified to teach at all, much less coming into the district already qualified according to HLC guidelines. This hiring challenge could also impact both general education and CTE dual enrollment offerings in other CESA 9 high schools.

- Reduced opportunities for CESA 9 students to take dual enrollment courses could increase the postsecondary costs and increase the amount of time students spend pursuing degrees, or take away the opportunity of a postsecondary education altogether.
- No confirmed opportunities for students to take science courses as dual enrollment, where the opportunity exists in the other three general education categories (English language arts, math and social studies).

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations have been made:

1. Administrators should be familiar with the educational background of all staff members, particularly those currently teaching dual enrollment courses and those teaching in subject areas where dual enrollment courses would enhance postsecondary student opportunities.
2. Administrators and/or staff members should work closely with regional two- and four-year postsecondary institutions to stay current with regional labor market trends, types of jobs available in the region and the skills necessary to fill the positions. The schools should then work together to develop time- and cost-efficient pathways for all students to pursue self-sustaining career opportunities that include dual enrollment offerings at the secondary level.
3. Articulate a clear understanding to school staff members the importance of dual enrollment as part of the bigger picture of preparing all students to be prepared for college and workforce opportunities.

4. Include language in future position descriptions the need to meet HLC qualifications either at the time of hire or the willingness to pursue becoming qualified to teach dual enrollment courses.
5. Prioritize creating an incentive plan for current and incoming staff that are, or successfully pursue becoming qualified to teach dual enrollment courses as well as pursue future personal growth opportunities which increase student opportunities for dual enrollment course participation.
6. Collaborate with other secondary schools through the use of technology and scheduling to offer students dual enrollment courses they may currently not have access to due to the lack of a qualified instructor(s).

Recommendation for further study. A broader study is needed to capture more of the possible impacts of the HLC's policy and the impacts on dual enrollment offerings taught by high school instructors at CESA 9 high schools. Those recommendations include:

1. Examine more closely the significance each school places on students earning college credits and through which means (dual enrollment, Early College Credit Program (ECCP), Advanced Placement (AP)).
2. Research whether there are possible correlations between staff tenure and the development (or lack thereof) of different secondary schools' course offerings within general education and CTE departments.
3. Explore or work to create opportunities for students to take science courses as dual enrollment if student interest and ability to deliver content is accessible, either through a postsecondary partnership or a partnership with another secondary school.

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Appendix A: Survey

HLC Policy & Dual Enrollments

This is follow up to the previous email sent to you recently. It includes not only the survey below but also a consent form for your participation. If you have any additional questions, comments or concerns, please contact me by replying to the email you received this survey in or contacting me personally (920-901-4455).

Thank you for your consideration in providing information to me to complete this research.

Area 1 - Dual enrollment offerings

1-a. What courses (if any) were offered to students as dual enrollment during the 2018-2019 school years from institutions OTHER THAN Nicolet College and Northcentral Technical College? (Please list the high school course name, then the institution name. Do NOT include Advanced Placement courses.)

1-b. Please refer to the body of the email and review the courses listed as being dual enrollment for 2018-2019. Please confirm its accuracy by either replying "Accurate" or stating specifically any updates / changes.

1-c. For what courses do teachers currently NOT meet HLC qualifications for courses being offered?

1-d. If you have teachers not meeting qualifications, how do you see this impacting future offerings? Please provide specific details.

Area 2 - Professional development to meet HLC qualifications

2-a. Has money received from any state or federal grant been used for staff development or college tuition related specifically to teachers meeting requirements to teach dual enrollment courses?

2-b. Have any other financial resources (school/district budgets, etc.) been used for the purpose of helping teachers meet dual enrollment teaching requirements? If so, please provide specific details. If not, simply indicate 'No'.

2-c. Have faculty not meeting qualifications for teaching dual enrollment been willing to take courses to meet qualifications? Provide an overview of the number of faculty willing to do so and the subject(s) they teach.

2-d. What reasons have teachers given for being willing to pursue meeting HLC qualifications?

2-e. What reasons have teachers given for being unwilling to pursue meeting HLC qualifications?

Area 3 - Possible impacts on future faculty hirings

3-a. (NOTE: information in this question and 3-b will NOT be reported by individual district). Are there currently, or is it expected in the future that teaching positions will be identified where it may be required that an individual teacher teaches courses for dual enrollment? (NOTE: if you choose 'NO', do NOT answer question 3-b. If you choose 'YES' or 'POSSIBLY', please continue to question 3-b.)

3-b. How will (or how possibly will) teacher applicants / new teacher hires be handled in relation to meeting or not meeting HLC standards for teaching dual enrollment courses? Please explain.

Would you like a copy of the completed report?

4.If you wish to receive a copy of the completed research report, please indicate below by checking the 'yes' box below.

Yes

Appendix B: CESA 9 High School Enrollments (2017-2018 school year)

<u>Small (55 to 261)</u>	<u>Medium (325 to 698)</u>	<u>Large (775 to 1,347)</u>
Phelps (55)	Stratford (325)	Antigo (775)
Elcho (90)	Tomahawk (376)	Rhineland (778)
Rib Lake (144)	Northland Pines (389)	Merrill (803)
Prentice (144)	Mosinee (623)	Wausau East (962)
Three Lakes (148)	Lakeland (698)	D.C. Everest (1,234)
Edgar (176)		Wausau West (1,347)
Athens (182)		
Marathon (261)		