

Wisconsin AB446 Introduction

[00:00:00] **Joel Kitchens:** And so we are now going to turn to AB 4 46 and the two authors of this bill are representative kitchens was making his way down and Senator burn year. I see Senator Bernier is here. And as soon as representative kitchens reaches his destination, you two can flip a coin and see what gets go. I'll defer to my colleagues since we're in the assembly committee.

[00:00:38] It wasn't too long ago.

[00:00:44] Okay. Well, thank you to chairman Thies and members of the committee for holding a hearing on AB 4 46. Um, I submitted written testimony, but I'm really gonna kind of go off script just so that Senator Bernier and I are not redundant in our testimony. Okay. When people ask me what my biggest concern [00:01:00] is for the state of Wisconsin.

[00:01:01] I tell them it's the, um, you know, it's the achievement gap. We have that the, the growth of, of generational poverty, where we have, you know, families that are, that are locked into poverty and dependence on the government generation after generation. Um, and there are a lot of close that door it's yeah, because we have the doors closed back there, please there's conversation in the hallway that I'm sure is very important.

[00:01:25] Yeah, just kind of distracting of kind of these automatic doors here. So there's a button somewhere anyway. Maybe that's better. Anyway, they're almost better. Sorry. I hate to be so picky here, but that's all right. I think they've quieted down now. Okay. Anyway, there are a lot of factors that go into this increase that we have in generational poverty, and certainly overly simplistic to blame the schools for all of this.

[00:01:53] But really education is the one it's the only chance we have of breaking the cycle and the [00:02:00] far and away the biggest determinant. A kid getting a good education and succeeding is learning to read in the early years. So that is where we need to put our resources. You know, I still think that the United States is the land of opportunity.

[00:02:13] I think we have the most, you know, upward mobility possibilities of, of any country in the world. But if we don't teach these kids, especially to read and to get a good education, that that American dream is, is locked off to them. So reading right now in Wisconsin is an absolute crisis. Um, and what that means for the future of our state should really scare the hell out of all of us.

[00:02:35] According to the national assessment of educational progress in Wisconsin, 64% of fourth graders are not prefers proficient in reading and 30% fail to meet even the basic level. We have the widest achievement gap between blacks and whites in the country. Um, Uh, in both the fourth and eighth grade of the 42 states that report black test scores, African-American test scores separately.

[00:02:59] We [00:03:00] ranked 42nd dead. Last. We fall in 31 places since 1992 there. Um, during the same time white students have fallen from sixth of the country to 27th are Hispanics from first to 28th. And what this means later in life is. You know, pretty staggering 85% of juvenile offenders are essentially illiterate in 70% of prison inmates, 75% of welfare recipients struggle to even read the simplest of texts.

[00:03:31] Low literacy scores lead to four times the healthcare costs, uh, compared to people that that are able to read. And the children of parents with low literacy are 70%, 72% more likely to have children that have low literacy. The achievement gaps between the races and adults in Wisconsin is probably, probably we know in income and health outcomes is, um, between the races is, is also the worst in the country.

[00:03:56] But when you look at these reading scores, there's absolutely no [00:04:00] reason for us to be optimistic that it's going to get any better. It's going to get worse. So there's no time to waste on this. We, you know, this has to be our top priority is. Teaching kids to read early so that they have a chance to succeed later in life, we have to be very aggressive sticking to the old, to what has been tried and what has failed.

[00:04:17] So many students is not an option. So I'm going to now turn this over to Senator Bernier, to explain how this legislation will help to begin to meet these goals. Thank you, chairman Thiess Felton committee members. It's always a pleasure to be over in the assembly and talk to my friends over here. Um, I have friends everywhere, but you know, here's a pretty special actually spending 10 years with these, uh, this side of the house.

[00:04:41] Um, the Capitol, um, I'm going to go into the detail of the bill, what it does and does not do, but I'm excited, uh, that we have science-based educational opportunities for our children, that we can, [00:05:00] we have the tools to do something. About our M disastrous, um, ranking here in the United States. And the fact of the matter is, is, um, within this, the country in the nation, um, Wisconsin, children can and should be competitive, um, here and abroad.

[00:05:21] Although Wisconsin wants, um, a leader in literacy, our students now lag behind all states where evidence-based approaches to early literacy have been. Thankfully over the past two decades, neuroscience, including groundbreaking research right here at UWU Madison has allowed us to move beyond theory and guesswork to identify exactly how children become skilled readers and what effective literacy interventions look like for a child's struggling to read AB 4 46 aligns [00:06:00] Wisconsin law.

[00:06:00] With this growing body of research by strengthening state literacy screening standards, providing more transparency and ensuring teachers have the framework and the tools needed to help every child become a proficient reader. Under current law, Wisconsin schools are required to select and administer an annual literacy assessment to students.

[00:06:27] Four year olds. Kindergarten through second grade screening assessments are typically only a few minutes in length, eight and consists of a teacher or a volunteer using a flip chart or tablet to guide a child through a handful of the exercises costs of these assessments are reimbursed by the state.

[00:06:53] \$2.1 million. According to the fiscal estimate, you'll see. Um, along with the bill is already [00:07:00] budgeted for assessments assembly, bill 4 46, strengthens these, um, existing state screening standards and provides the framework and tools to help every child learn to read in five major ways, broadening screening components to reflect evidence-based best practice.

[00:07:21] Dozens of literacy screeners are available to schools, but not all assess what research shows are. The most critical components for reading this bill expands the required screening components from two to five components to ensure schools are using high quality evidence-based screeners. This helps teachers more easily identify reading difficulties and select effective intervention strategy.

[00:07:51] To help children overcome reading difficulties. It's all about the children. We [00:08:00] increase the assessment frequency annually to three times per year. Better evaluate student progress, build a baseline for each student and catch reading difficulties or. This only makes sense. Where is the child at the beginning of the year?

[00:08:15] How have they progressed in the middle of the year? How have we had an impact at the end of the year? That makes perfect sense. Keeps it keeps parents involved and informed too many parents do not find out their children is

struggling in reading until third grade when they received their child's forward exam results.

[00:08:35] By then they should be able to read. AB 4 46 requires schools to notify parents of screening results within 15 days, including plain language about the child's score percentile of rank. And if the child is identified at risk, the bill also requires schools to inform parents when a child begins a reading intervention and [00:09:00] plan and detail the intervention that will be used.

[00:09:04] It creates clear direction to get kids back on track. There are currently no requirements for when schools must provide additional literacy screening and there are minimal requirements regarding reading interventions for students. This bill requires students who score below the 25th percentile on literacy screener.

[00:09:26] Be given more comprehensive screener to inform targeted. Aligned interventions in, we increased transparency and accountability under the bills. Schools must annually report. The number of students identified at risk at each assessment level. And the number of students provided with literacy intervention, statewide, consistent.

[00:09:51] Statewide consistency across the screening components, testing frequency and reporting will give [00:10:00] districts and DPI and the legislature critical information to help us all make better informed policy decisions. The bottom line is that research shows that early the earlier we catch reading difficulties.

[00:10:17] And begin simple interventions. The more successful those interventions will be strengthening our existing literacy screening laws will ensure that every struggling reader gets the help they need before they have fallen behind they'd lost self-esteem they disengaged from school. They act out they are truant.

[00:10:40] I can go on and on how a poor. Or a per an, a student that has the inability to read will project in other areas of their education. It is common sense. The sooner you put out the fire, the less damage that will be done.

[00:11:00] Lastly, it's important for me to note that assembly bill 4 46 is not speculative or wishful thinking about what might be.

[00:11:12] In AB 4 46, we have drawn together the best evidence-based screening practices from around the country that are being employed today to close the achievement gaps, to raise the bar for literacy achievement across the

board, diverse states like Mississippi are using high quality screeners and simple interventions as the foundation for going for nearly, um, For going from nearly last in the nation in reading achievement to outperforming Wisconsin students in each and every demographic, but you don't have to does take my word for it.

[00:11:53] We brought with us today, Changemakers from around the country and across our state [00:12:00] who will speak to Wisconsin's dire literacy situation and immense opportunity for this bill represents. For our kids. Now I'm not an expert. Um, but we have experts that are going to testify to you, uh, for you today. And you can ask them all the technical questions on why screening is so imperative.

[00:12:23] And I would also note that I won't present this bill. We won't, we don't present this bill as the magic bullet, but it is the ability to catch the small fire. And the fact of the matter is if you're going into fourth grade and you can't read that is when the IEP start, that is when the interventions and the reading specialists are brought in, that is, um, not effective in my opinion.

[00:12:53] And many of our, um, experts will say, we need to catch it early in. And help [00:13:00] them learn to read early so that they don't miss out on the other educational opportunities that they can learn in math and word problems in math and social studies and science. If they're still learning to read from fourth grade to eighth grade, then we have a problem with them being able to absorb and learn other, um, Other, um, educational opportunities that they are, um, presented with in later grades.

[00:13:29] So I know you have a hundred questions. I know that Democrats have 100 questions. Um, so I will, uh, end my testimony there. Thank you. All right. Thank you to both of you. Um, just a note here. We have a lot of people who are going to testify today, not as many as we've had on some bills. Um, so I, I have not set any timeframe for testimony right now.

[00:13:54] Uh, but for those who are coming afterwards, Would be appreciated if [00:14:00] you didn't re didn't re-emphasize things that have already been said. Uh, so, and things are best set. If you, not that you shouldn't read what you have. Sometimes people are nervous about just speaking off the cuff, but that's how it's most effectively received by the committee is, is IDI contact speaking from the heart rather than a written piece of information.

[00:14:21] So, uh, with those two things, I, I. Ask before you come to the microphone to consider all of that. Uh, and as we go through the questions here

as was stated at the beginning, um, the, the Democrats are not in the room. They are in their offices. And so they have supplied some questions ahead of time, which I'll be referring to periodically, uh, as we go through this.

[00:14:44] And then I will read the question for that interview. Representative. So with that I saw was it represented? Wiki was first. Uh, and then I'm going to switch over to one of the Democrats and then we'll get some more of you in there. So [00:15:00] representative go for it. Thank you, Mr. Chair. And, uh, I, I really appreciate, uh, finally some legislation that's got some teeth to it that will actually maybe try to move the needle the right way.

[00:15:14] Um, I have, I have one. And that is, is that, uh, we kind of turned the administration of this over to the same agency, same 421 school districts. Now that have us in the S in, in this plight that were, that weren't, that were on and a few go through and look at some of the testimony from the usual subjects I have.

[00:15:34] They're not too keen on this because of the burden, because of all the good things they're doing, which, which I don't hear. Was there any thought given in this bill to turning over this assessment process? To an outside firm and into independent firm. Um, I know. So for example, in my own district, I have, uh, a smaller firm, uh, Mrs.

[00:15:56] Meyer's reading room that does assessments does them very well.
[00:16:00] Um, is there, was there any thought given to possibly having these initial assessments done by someone outside of what has been happening over the last 15 to 20.

[00:16:15] You want me to take her to? Okay. So, so, uh, we met with many, many interested parties, but the fact of the matter is we have a constitution that creates a state educational system and department of public instruction is the head of that statewide system. And we have millions of children that attend public school.

[00:16:40] Far more than private schools and for the idea of being able to work, the perfect scenario is this, that the teacher, the classroom teacher that has a relationship with the child understands that child knows [00:17:00] that child. And then they do the assessment. It's a fairly quick assessment. And it only takes, you know, no more than five minutes actually.

[00:17:09] So, so it is better for the teacher that is teaching that child to do the assessment, to follow the progress and then reassess, and then the final

assessment. So we haven't discussed that, uh, you know, If there is a model out there, some way that the students would get tested elsewhere. It breaks my heart.

[00:17:32] When I was a freshmen assembly woman, I went to the Masonic temple in Eau Claire, Wisconsin. And there were people from where I worked at Shippo county courthouse. Uh, one particular I heard there was more than one, but the one I worked with at the county brought her child. To learn how to read. She went to the triple false school system and she took her child to the Masonic temple.

[00:17:58] There was a long waiting [00:18:00] list and they used Orton-Gillingham methods for teaching, reading. They were coming all the way from St. Croix county to, to help their child learn how to read. I am confident in our public school system with the direction that we give to EPA. And that five components and the companies that meet those five components that have assessments and that assessment also has direction onto follow through of how to address this type of reading issue.

[00:18:34] I am confident that we can have an impact in our public school system, through the department of public instruction with direct. Same as our plumbers and our electricians and building a house right now, I'm confident that my house will not start on fire and my plumbing will work. And that is what we're providing.

[00:18:51] We're providing direction. I'd add to that. I guess there are districts around the state that have looked at this and said, well, we're already doing all that. And they are so [00:19:00] we're, we don't want this to be an adversarial thing with, with DPI. We want to bring them on board and I, and I think we'll get there when they see the.

[00:19:06] And hopefully those districts can present at the conventions and stuff, the results they're getting through this. So, um, I think it would be, it would be a problem if we did this in an adversarial kind of way, there are also private schools doing this. All right. And I don't disagree, but you might want to come to my corner of the state where I've got schools.

[00:19:25] When I visited, uh, the MPS superintendent that only have children that are at 9% proficiency in my own. I've got schools that think 30% is just fine with huge achievement gaps. I worked on a task force with people that live in those neighborhoods and they want something done. Not just words, not just we're going to do something.

[00:19:50] They want to action. And so that's why I'm, I'm a little concerned that if we're going to do this assessment, then let's get it right from the start so that we set so that we really [00:20:00] move the needle. My second question is. I can ask one more question, Mr. Chair. My second question has to do with, um, funding.

[00:20:08] Okay. Because that'll be the, the thing that'll be talked about a lot. Have, have you determined whether this, um, these assessments would qualify under the federal funding that's currently coming into these school districts under the learning loss provisions that are in there.

[00:20:28] You know, I can't really answer that question other than there is currently \$2.1 million in the budget for these assessments and only \$1.7 million has actually been utilized in the last, um, budget, uh, according to my, uh, my data. So there's money available for the assessments, um, and, uh, currently more than enough, but, um, we can take a look.

[00:20:56] Other funding if necessary [00:21:00] has asked that question of fiscal bureau, because I want to make sure that there's no deterrent to this. Um, I have no problem with the legislation, but like I said, I want to make sure we're going to turn the needle and not just check the box and say we did something. We got good legislation and then it languishes.

[00:21:17] Thank you very much. Well, we're going to be here. I'm sure. In the questions for the Democrats on that, about the funding and obviously the assessment itself has paid for. As we said in the testimony, these aren't all day tests, you know, these are quick assessments that become part of the part of the curriculum.

[00:21:31] And, you know, I just really think that what's a higher priority than this than getting kids reading at an early grade. So, I mean, that's the problem. That's the problem we've been sitting with this problem for 15 years and no one wants to recognize the fact that we've had these low achievement gaps that we've had this poor reading and.

[00:21:54] Um, results for over a decade. So if we're really wanting to do something, I, I suggest that we [00:22:00] take some really bold steps and make sure that we we've got the, the scientific knowledge to say, this is what's really going to take the attorney. I read through everything that you've got. Um, I'm really appreciative of everything that you put into this legislation.

[00:22:13] And I know representative , uh, was in as well, but, uh, I I'm, I, I just get concerned that it it'll be another one of these initiatives that will slowly kind of waver through. And you gotta remember, I S I sat as president of, uh, of, uh, of an urban school district. And so I kind of know how some of these things work and that's why I want to see some change.

[00:22:36] I have you talked about someone, um, at, you know, Claire that you met, I will tell you that attending a session where I S where, um, a young gentleman from one of our inner city schools step forward, and one of the, uh, disciplinary, uh, groups that they were working with when they asked him, what, what was the thing he liked about it?

[00:22:58] The most, he said he [00:23:00] learned to read to see the tears in his mother's house. And T and the joy in his face because of the world had opened up to him. W we can't go on any longer and just say that we're going to, to, to trust that this'll just get done and I don't want to be adversarial, but I want to action.

[00:23:17] And unfortunately, I don't see a lot of it out of the agency. That's supposed to be over this. Thank you. You're going to hear some of those stories again today. And I, I think you're right, that if some school districts will look at, we're just going to check the box and pretend and go through the motions.

[00:23:29] And if they do that, it's not going to be successful. Uh, I'll insert a comment here just based on what I've heard, you know, the, the testing that would be done here, the assessment as is the terminology that's going to be using, we are not talking, like you said about something like day long tests, you think of like the state test that's done in the spring each year.

[00:23:52] That's not what this is. These are short tests. And I think the people testifying up we'll make that clear, probably be able to give actual time [00:24:00] frame as to what it takes. Uh, and as for narrowing down, what is the problem? We've got three tiers here, you know, tier one, tier two or tier three in each one goes a little deeper in terms of identifying what the problem is.

[00:24:17] Uh, and the point of it all is to keep these kids out of special education, because if we're worried about. Special education for who knows how many years costs a whole lot more than just these assessments do. Yeah. So I would encourage everybody to keep that in mind and speakers who are coming, if you could address that issue also as you step forward, that would be appreciated.

[00:24:39] The mentees felt if I might, um, you know, a rep would get, um, makes a great point that you know, this. Going to be the whole thing, but I've had conversations with department of education at river falls, Claire stout, um, whitewater, um, because I was enjoying [00:25:00] finance and they were calling me and I never miss an opportunity to talk about training.

[00:25:05] So training these teachers go into education because they love children and they want to help children read and they are struggling to, to really do that. And they are there. I am sure that they are just as frustrated with why can't I teach this childhood. Because they haven't been taught how to teach reading properly.

[00:25:28] And so this never miss an opportunity. I challenge you all when you talk to higher ed people and you just keep pounding away at it because I mean, we were getting action it's, you know, in the legislature is all a slow roll usually. Huh. But you know, the fact of the matter is, is. Pounding away at it. We are not satisfied with the plummeting numbers of our, um, of our standing in the United States for our education.

[00:25:58] We used to be a leader. [00:26:00] I appreciate that because I talked to Dr. Robin Fox at whitewater myself when I was there. And just one more comment before I'll go onto representative Pope on read her question. Uh, there was reference to. From representative Wiki about being uncomfortable with DPI's role in this, um, because of DPI's, uh, I guess you might say reluctance to make these, or support these changes in the past.

[00:26:28] Is that an accurate assessment of your thoughts? Well, let's just say that I've been on other committees where I've gotten testimony from them, um, that they really don't. Let's just say the enforcement aspect and the quote teeth in the law. Aren't there for them to do that. And I guess I look at it and say for how long have we had this going on?

[00:26:50] I think it's time to start looking at some different ways to do things. Yeah. And I, I can just assure you, I have those same thoughts whenever I'm putting legislation together. [00:27:00] Um, but we run into that constitutional issue that comes up and really in this bill, as best as I can see DPI's role is limited to really, in terms of, uh, accepting the report.

[00:27:13] From the school districts and then funding the money that is supposed to go to them. And then of course, filing reports for all of us to be able to see as to, in terms of statewide data, they will also provide the list of the

assessment tools, the, the, the assessments that, um, comply with the five standards.

[00:27:34] And so they will, um, expand that list. We have sample, uh, correct. This will answer a question that somebody. Um, Pearson, from what I understand does meet that five criteria that the list that we provided is only a sample list. DPI has the authority and should provide all of the assessment tools to this as an option to the public school districts, um, [00:28:00] that, um, that they can choose from.

[00:28:02] So that is only a sample list. The list that you referred to are the assessment. Could be chosen by the school districts. Right. Am I correct to say that that the ones that are listed in the bill must be on the list and DPI has the power to add additional ones? Is that correct? And it's a non-statutory.

[00:28:25] And I don't want to get into the details. They're not just Willy nilly adding any sort of group in there. It has to meet certain qualifications in order to be included on the list. Correct. Alright. Um, I'm going to read a question from representative pulpits of two-part question. And she says screening is additional screening is additional student testing, which is already over prescribed.

[00:28:49] How does additional screening change outcomes without specific curriculum programs, guidelines, and funding for intervention? Uh, [00:29:00] and then the second one is kind of a followup to that. It says we already know what needs to be fixed. So why continue to point out the problem instead of addressing solution?

[00:29:10] Well, I think we've answered a lot of that, but when these parents are finding out for the first time that their kids are struggling with reading, when they're in third or fourth grade, it's way too late. So at this early screening, and I think she misses the point. Again, these are screens, these screenings are become sort of effortless and part of the, part of the routine as you get into this.

[00:29:27] So I, I don't, I think she's missing the point of that Senator or anything to add? No, I think we really hit on all of her points. Okay. You know, um, and the fact that, that the assessments are currently supposed to be occurring. Um, but there's not enough direction and not enough specifics and it's already funded.

[00:29:49] And I think you were exactly right when you said the special ed is way more expensive. So if we can get these early, when they, when they don't cost very much, the districts will be better off. All right. I have a [00:30:00]

question from representative Duco and then representative. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I've got a couple and I'm going to be fast.

[00:30:06] And if you guys can answer fast, I can get to all my questions. All right. Now. Okay. So currently, do they report any of the testing they're doing now because they are doing some screening, correct? Yes. Okay. I believe, I believe they're reporting those two assessments. No. No look at the experts say, no, they're not.

[00:30:29] Okay. So that is a problem. Isn't it? It is. And I'm, I'm kinda with, um, representative wood in the chairman here that I want to make sure there's some accountability here. So when they're doing these screenings and I like the idea of, you know, beginning, middle end, all good. Um, could those results be put on the school report card?

[00:30:46] What their percentage of people who are proficient, you know, poor with that, could that be added to a score report card that everybody could look at? Um, that sounds like another bill that rep Duco would be [00:31:00] interested in proposing and, and she, she wouldn't, she wouldn't, I think we're a little ways from that, but I think it'd be a great idea.

[00:31:05] We'll get to that point. Okay. So at the end of the year, or they go as a school, let's just say kettle Moraine high school, are they going to produce a document at the end of the year, that shows that they had in the third grade, 20% kids started here and went here. So we know that there, so we can see the.

[00:31:23] So they test the third graders beginning, middle end. I think it would be able to give us a percentage of kids that started at 20%. And now we're at 30% proficiency. I don't know exactly how that looks, uh, rep kitchen, but I, but because that information does have to be reported, it could easily be, um, uh, Manipulate the data could show the percentages of increase in all of that, because that's the whole point of this, right?

[00:31:51] Where, you know, we're decreasing, decreasing, uh, falling, uh, drastically with, um, our, our, uh, kids. And so that's [00:32:00] part of what DPI does is. Um, gather that information and categorize it and report it back to the legislature or anyone else. And I'm looking at my staff to make sure I'm not saying anything in appropriate or inaccurate.

[00:32:14] Okay. And people are being paid for good performance. I'm all about merit-based, you know, increases. And I could see that maybe we could in the budget say, looking at back at last year's report card or their reading scores,

those schools that had some sort of. Maybe we could give them a financial incentive to help them keep increasing that achievement because obviously they worked hard to get that.

[00:32:35] So I'm thinking maybe there's not always a stick there's might be a carrot. I agree with that. And, and I think that, you know, we do have to look down the line through the budget process and how, how this is working and how in there maybe additional funding, um, necessary. But I, I want to point out something, um, before I'm off the stage here, um, [00:33:00] Um, Mississippi, uh, ranks 28th, um, and of course, much better with African-American students.

[00:33:09] Um, they spend, um, around \$9,000 per student, um, Florida ranks six, um, and they spend around \$9,200 per student, Wisconsin ranks 26. And flat at the bottom and African-American students and we spend \$12,446 per student. And so though I want, I would prefer a carrot. Um, one can argue that the basic teaching of education, uh, starts with reading and reading is so very important, uh, from K.

[00:33:56] Through four so that they can read [00:34:00] to learn. And so even though we can look at money, the fact of the matter is it's not about the money. And I agree with you Senator. Um, I think that the, the numbers we use to say, what we spend in the state of Wisconsin are very skewed because there are some school districts that get a whole lot of money, you know, NPS gets about \$16,000 a kid, and I got a school district that's getting.

[00:34:23] So I think that our numbers are skewed because we look at how many students, we have 75,000 students in NPS to get that much money. So I think that actually skews, when we say what we're spending in education across the state, it's not actually apples to apples because we are w we have, we have got, uh, one big, wait, I, one of the side that kind of brings up, you know, and I, I don't know that's the case or not the case with Mississippi and Florida.

[00:34:45] So I don't want to get into the weeds of what each individual school district, these are just average. Um, but the fact of the matter is if money bought a great education, Minneapolis school district would have [00:35:00] Einstein's. They spend \$23,000 per student. They have a 50% graduation rate. It's not about the money.

[00:35:10] Thank you, Senator

[00:35:14] presented. Ramson. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, thank you both for your testimony today to the representative. Is this a blue ribbon commission

residual, since you chaired the committee a couple of sessions ago, what now is it a blue ribbon commission, residual bill. Now this, the readings I think really started after the blue ribbon.

[00:35:29] Okay. I had to ask because you did share the committee and you're leading on the bill and I was curious, um, uh, question number two, maybe for the Senator. Um, there are several entities that are objecting to. And you've touched on some of them in your comments. Have you reached out to them to try to have them see the light to work with, to compromise or anything like that?

[00:35:51] We have reached out to a long list of entities, including DPI. And WSR a, and, um, I have [00:36:00] a list here, but yes, um, Do you want the list or do you know? I, I read, I read through the testimony was B was one of them too, that has expressed a desire for compromise. We've reached out to 12 different groups. Thank you.

[00:36:13] That's that's a great answer. I appreciate that. And then the last and final inquiry is, um, you touched on other states as far as activity with not meeting their standards. Is there any legislation elsewhere in the state, in the country, rather that aligns to what you're proposing? Any other states doing legislation or have to have they have implemented legislation similar to this bill in their states?

[00:36:36] Well, we fashioned ours after the legislation that passed to Mississippi that has jetted them upward as well as Florida. And, and there are several other states. We just picked out Florida as an example and Mississippi, um, because I don't know, um, since I've been in the legislature now 14 years, Um, whenever we talked about education, [00:37:00] we kind of mocked Mississippi.

[00:37:02] Um, we don't want to be like Mississippi. Um, but I would argue now we do, um, thank you for the response you answered. Actually the second part of the question, if we did model it after what was their success rate and you're saying that it's good. So that is adds merit to the bills. Well, thank you, Mr.

[00:37:19] Chairman on, uh, insert a question here. Uh, Representative ransom. Some of what you said. I think we'll, um, one of our speakers on video here shortly, we will works. It was a lot of con uh, work nationwide and we'll be able to answer some of that, I think. Um, so, uh, varying organizations, including the

department of public construction have been mentioned as to, uh, their involvement in putting this bill together.

[00:37:48] Um, And my experience here as chair having seen now three superintendents of public instruction, Tony Evers, Carolyn Stanford, Taylor, and now the latest [00:38:00] Jill Underly, uh, under now governor Evers, there, there was always a desire to improve reading. Cause it was pretty clear the direction we were headed at that time, but there was also just kind of a doubling down on doing the same thing.

[00:38:16] Uh, yeah. And DPI has powers in terms of implementing this stuff is really just kind of in terms of recommendations of what they would say should be done. Uh, but then to me, it started to turn under CA Carolyn Stanford Taylor. There seemed to be an openness to looking into some of this sort of stuff. And so I guess the jury is somewhat out on the current administration.

[00:38:40] And I see that the department has registered today in opposition. Uh, they're apparently not going to speak, uh, but they have submitted testimony. So I'm curious in your putting together the bill, what sort of response did you receive from the department where they [00:39:00] open? I mean, I, I would hope they're open to reading scores, improving.

[00:39:04] That would be obvious, but is there still this reluctance to. Recommendations on methodology. Well, I don't need to tell you that. Einstein says that doing the same thing and expecting different results is the definition of insanity. Um, but since educators are, are, um, involved in the department of public instruction, I don't, I don't believe we've gotten a clear explanation from DPI or anyone really, um, as to, um, their suggestions, um, on how we can improve.

[00:39:46] We've asked for that now whether we get it or not between now, and when we have the Senate hearing. As to, um, what methods of education and assessment, reading education and assessment will [00:40:00] actually give our children a better base. Um, we haven't gotten specifics and I think it's a matter of, um, unfortunately blame.

[00:40:13] So I met with a superintendent, um, recently from Missouri and she met with her teacher. Um, uh, she was a principal in Missouri. She's a superintendent in our state and I was disliking so excited to speak to her because she gave me a clear explanation of implementing this program. And they were at a 13% proficiency reading proficiency in her school.

[00:40:40] And she implemented this assessment process and science-based reading methods and she said, Um, she spoke with the teachers and said, what are the, what are the problems well free and reduced school lunch, you know, low income students. [00:41:00] Well, Florida has 48% free and reduced school lunch. Have you ever had somebody tell you that that's a reason why they can't accomplish things in education?

[00:41:10] They have 48% of their students that are free and risk. Um, 58. Mississippi has 75% free and reduced school lunch. And yet they exceed our capabilities here in our state. And we're only at 39% free and reduced school lunch. Um, I pretty much hit the ceiling and this is a tall ceiling when that's, um, that's asked or insinuated as if these children are, are not able to be educated.

[00:41:41] But the fact of the matter is, is we cannot continue down the same path for another 10, 20, 40 years, according to, um, Steven Dykstra, PhD from wa while at Towson, I read his testimony. You have it. He's not able to be with [00:42:00] us. He will be with us on, um, October 6th, hopefully, but I get pretty passionate about the excuses and the reasons and the whatever.

[00:42:11] Um, the Angie, uh, the teacher from Missouri said, if we're going to take, if we're going to send out blame for the 13% reading level, what if I can tell you, we can bring us up to 95% reading proficiency without any blame to anyone. But if we can do that as a school as educators, if we can do that, would you like to take the correct?

[00:42:39] Absolutely. Well, then we have to take credit for the 13%. They hit the 95%. They not only hit the 95%. The truancy went down, the absenteeism went down. Um, the, the, um, the [00:43:00] referrals for disciplinary actions. I went from a high number down to six, down to three, down to zero. And, and what excited me about her testimony to me was that they didn't, it didn't take them 10 years.

[00:43:16] It took them three years before the kids are out of, out of grade school. And so I'm excited for our kids. I know we can make a deal. And I think it's all hands on deck and we need to do this together. And the opposition, um, kind of blows my mind Mr. Chairman, and I, I want to compliment you on something before I go to the next question from representative Pope here.

[00:43:45] Uh, last night in preparation for this, I sat down and I, I did a flow chart of some sort, and I did not make any revisions to it, but I know that.