

Wisconsin Education Committee

[00:00:00] **Kymyona Burk:** Okay, so up next, um, we have Dr. Camana Burke, the Senior Policy Fellow for early literacy at the Foundation for Excellence in Education. Um, Dr. Burke's, the former K-12 state Literacy Director for the Mississippi Department of Education. She led the state level implementation of the 2013 Literacy Based Promotion Act, which aims to ensure that all students are proficient readers by third grade.

[00:00:20] And under her lit state literacy leadership from 2013 to 2019, Mississippi's fourth graders increased 10, uh, scale score points in reading on the, on the nap, and improved to 29th in, in the national rankings, which is tied for the national average. For the first time was the only state to make significant gains in fourth grade, uh, reading.

[00:00:39] I think it's commonly known as the Mississippi Miracle, what happened? So really anxious to hear what she has to say to us today. Did we lose her? Good morning, everyone. Well, it's almost afternoon. Good afternoon everyone. Are you able to hear me? Chair kitchens can hear you. Can't see you anymore though, right?

[00:00:55] Okay. Are you able to see the presentation? Yeah. Yeah. Can see that? Yes. Okay. [00:01:00] Um, well, once we're done, I will close the presentation out so that we can have questions. Okay. That's great. Okay. You'll be able to see me. All right. So a again, good afternoon everyone. I'm gonna talk just a bit about, um, what a comprehensive approach, um, would be to improving literacy outcomes.

[00:01:16] I've been able to hear some of the questions that have already been asked by the members. Um, so hopefully within my presentation I can address some of those. Um, and then any questions that you may have afterwards. Um, I'll start by, um, just discussing briefly why read by Three Matters. Um, this is this threshold, um, that has been known to be, um, the, the time in which students transition from learning to read, to reading, to learn.

[00:01:42] There are statistics here, especially from, um, specifically from the Annie e Casey Foundation, around the impact of not being able to read by the end of third grade. Um, I always like to look at subgroups. I love to

look under the hood. I know that we, we sometimes look at, at [00:02:00] numbers very generally and talk about this, this large percentage of students.

[00:02:04] Um, but when we think about students who are not reading proficiently in third grade, um, these students are four times more likely to not graduate from high school. If these students are African American or Hispanic, they're six times more likely to drop out or fail to graduate from high school. And if low income minority are eight times more likely to drop out or fail to graduate from high school.

[00:02:26] Um, and there's of course also statistics that show that seven out of every 10 inmates cannot read above a fourth grade level. So just a, a, a little bit more context around, um, how reading is not just an education issue, but also an economic issue. You've talked a bit about, you know, the workforce and of course our business leaders saying that this, the workforce is not.

[00:02:50] Um, you know, adequately prepared for the jobs that exist now, you know, or even the jobs that are going to exist in the future, those jobs that haven't [00:03:00] even really been created yet. Um, I, I want to take a, a moment for, for this slide to really talk about how our children right now who are struggling readers.

[00:03:12] If there are no interventions, no supports for our students, then they will become adults who are struggling readers. Um, the nation could be losing up to 2.2 trillion annually due to low adult literacy rates. Um, but let's talk a bit about how this impacts, um, the quality of life. Um, elementary school students have difficulty reading and understanding assignments, of course, reading directions to homework, um, to complete their homework.

[00:03:40] But personally, these students may have issues with writing or reading a birthday card. Right. We just had Valentine's Day, you know, children exchange those little Valentine's Day cards. Imagine a student who is struggling to read, who cannot read a Valentine's Day card, or cannot write to his or her [00:04:00] friend about, you know, Valentine's Day.

[00:04:02] So I, I want us to not only, again, look at this in, in the, through the eyes of what happens in the classroom, but how this really impacts children as they, as they go home and they engage in their community. Um, of course, these students, if, if intervention isn't provided, um, as they become adolescents, those issues from elementary school will, will persist.

[00:04:24] And these students have difficulty following instructions for science experiment, also passing a driver's license test, even filling out a job application, and as they grow into adults. You know, I think Dr. Seidenberg spoke earlier about how we, you know, always encourage families to, you know, read to your child or read with your child 20 minutes per day.

[00:04:47] Well, if I'm an adult who's struggling to read, I have difficulty with that. I have difficulty reading a bedtime story to my child even helping with this homework. Uh, and that's an entirely different conversation [00:05:00] in itself. Um, reading and completing job applications, housing applications, and also paperwork for doctor's visits and even filing insurance claims.

[00:05:13] So what is this comprehensive approach that we're, we're, we've been talking about, and I'll just talk a little bit about the Mississippi story. I know there were some things said earlier, um, from D P I about our process, and I do want to clarify, um, some of those things that were mentioned, um, to just really kind of to dig into a, a, a few things about the process.

[00:05:33] Before I get into that, you know, what, what are these most recent forces behind early literacy policy momentum? Yes. We've had the science for over 40 years. Um, we have, you know, had this conversation around the shift from phonics and. You know, of the Sesame Street, the Reading Rainbow, all of the things that focus on phonics.

[00:05:51] Um, and then this shift to whole language and this shifts to then balanced literacy. But now what is this? What are the most recent forces behind early literacy [00:06:00] policy momentum where the science of reading is now at the center? Um, I'll say, uh, that Emily Hanford's Hard Words, and of course now sold a story, has, um, really

translated these conversations that we're having at this level, uh, or at state, at agency, um, rooms, uh, offices, also district offices.

[00:06:20] It's now in, in homes at dinner tables where tea, where parents have listened to these podcasts and said, wait, you know, I've seen my child really utilize pictures to try to figure out a word, or I've seen my child where it seemed it appeared as if they were reading, but they had memorized the entire sentence, right.

[00:06:40] So what's going on here? So there's this science of reading resurgence around, uh, what good and bad reading instruction looks like. Of course, Nate, fourth grade reading data nationally, even prior to the pandemic. Uh, our students, especially in fourth grade, were not performing, um, to the level that they should.

[00:06:57] Um, and of course, post pandemic, [00:07:00] um, nearly two decades of progress, um, is, is gone, um, because of the, the challenges that we had, especially pivoting during that time. There's also dyslexia, focus reform now at the federal level, um, where Senator Cassidy from Louisiana is really looking to ensure that there's, um, specific supports for our students who are identified with dyslexia.

[00:07:23] And, um, the shaywitz always say, who literally wrote the book on dyslexia, uh, out of Yale, um, that you can't be counted if you're not identified. So how do we ensure that we are identifying students to provide the supports that those students need? And then of course, the, um, covid pandemic. . So these are the things, some of the strategies that we used in Mississippi.

[00:07:46] Um, the first one, um, is educator training at all levels, um, including educator preparation programs, uh, the, the faculty and also candidates. Also students. We allowed, [00:08:00] um, students and educator preparation programs to attend our training. Um, our candidates must take, and I believe the same is, is true for Wisconsin, the foundation's a reading exam, um, to, to be licensed.

[00:08:13] Um, so we have been, as we are transitioning, and you've talked a lot about ED prep and that is a big shift to turn around. So as we are transitioning, wanting to ensure that our candidates were getting what

they need, we offered our, um, training to our students, um, and again, as well as faculty, um, with this educator training.

[00:08:33] I wanna be sure to, to note that this is not just training in the science of reading. , which is extremely important because it helped us to determine and really to establish this common language across the state, around what good reading instruction looks like. You know, how children learn to read what we should do with those, um, to, to support those who have difficulty.

[00:08:54] So not just training in the science of reading, also training in our state standards, right? [00:09:00] Because we have to be able to translate this knowledge that we have about reading into ensuring that our children are meeting grade level standards as well. And our coaching for teachers. So our model for coaching is that our coaches are assigned to schools.

[00:09:16] Um, we have a layered kind of level of support for our coaches, where we have literacy coaches, we have regional coordinators who support those coaches serve as thought partners to those coaches, but they also coach in a school. And then we have assistant state literacy coordinators who support regions of the state, and then of course a state literacy director.

[00:09:35] So our coaches are assigned to schools, and you know it as you begin to think about where your coaches will be and how your coaches will be assigned. We very intentionally placed coaches in our lowest performing schools. We would love to have a coach at every school. Uh, but that was just not feasible.

[00:09:52] Um, so we looked at an average of two years of third grade reading data and rank ordered schools based on the highest [00:10:00] percentage of students who were below proficient. Now, why did we school choose schools and not districts? Because we have some dis districts that have high performing schools in those districts.

[00:10:11] So if you look at the district overall, it looks like the district is actually doing okay, but then you'll find there are a couple of schools within that district that may, um, we have an A through F grading system

that may be F schools, that may be D schools. And so we wanted to make sure that we targeted our support in the right way.

[00:10:29] Our coaches are hired. , um, by the State Department of Education, they go through the application process, but they are not employees of our State Department of Education. We have pins for our state agencies and there was no way that we could ask for over 70, uh, pins, uh, for them to become employees, um, of the Department of Education.

[00:10:49] So we have memorandums of understanding with school districts, um, and if the coaches apply for the positions, they are, are selected for the position, then we send the [00:11:00] funds to that school district. And the coach serves for us as an educator in residence. So the coaches on loan from the school district.

[00:11:08] Now, that's very attractive to coaches because it also ensures some job security, right. Um, we are, we have annual appropriation from our legislature. Um, the first year, 20 13 20 14 was nine and a half million. It has been 15 million every year since then. And this year we're celebrating our 10, 10 years, uh, from the passing of our literacy based promotion act.

[00:11:29] So with our funding, we're able to support and send grants to those school districts to pay for the coaches. Um, and the understanding is that we, at the Department of Education, of course, um, will decide and deploy coaches to where they're needed most based on data. So I wanted to kind of clarify the role of our coaches and how, um, our coaches are deployed and then also employed, um, um, in Mississippi.

[00:11:55] Coaches help with fee, providing feedback to students modeling support, um, for [00:12:00] teachers. Also with curriculum implementation support. We're a local control state as well. Um, so, but this was the first time that we had a state led initiative around literacy. And the role of the state agency is to provide guidance on best practices, and that's what we did as a state agency.

[00:12:22] Um, I think one thing that also helped was that our teachers, once they began to get this knowledge about what the science of reading is, we came late to the high quality instructional materials game too. Um,

it was our teachers on the ground saying, well, I'm going back to my classroom and these curriculum, uh, materials that I'm using, they are not aligning with this new knowledge that I have about how it's best to teach children to read.

[00:12:46] Like these resources don't align. Uh, you know, just the, the texts, you know, none of these things align, um, to, to the science of reading. So we came late to that, to that game in partnership with, um, ccs, s o [00:13:00] and developed a plan and resources and all of those things about high quality instructional materials.

[00:13:05] And so our coaches are onsite to help those teachers implement and help them to support that. And if you're purchasing a new curriculum, make sure that you purchase the professional development that comes along with the curriculum. , because that's different from the science of reading that's different from state standards.

[00:13:22] It's how do you use this curriculum? So make sure you're profe, um, purchasing the professional development that goes along with that. And then of course, they assist with data analysis. The other components include the early identification. I know that you mentioned that you have a, a screener, um, for your students.

[00:13:38] Our screener, uh, for universal screening is K three. Um, and we, um, screen students beginning, middle, and end of year to ensure that we are collecting data from a trend line. We don't wanna screen students at the beginning of the, of the year and then at the end of the year and say, oh, wow, we missed it. You know, you were having some problems in the middle of the year, but because we didn't screen you, we couldn't, you know, address those [00:14:00] deficiencies.

[00:14:00] So beginning, middle, and end. And then dyslexia screening is also, um, its own law. Um, and students are screened at the end of kindergarten and beginning of first grade for characteristics of dyslexia. Parent communication is key. Really communication with. , any and all stakeholders is key. Be transparent, even if you don't have the answer today.

[00:14:20] You know, be transparent about, um, where you are, educate, um, you know, your stakeholders about your efforts and, and what you're

doing. Um, we also have the individual reading plans for students, um, that includes the interventions that are being provided to those students and progress monitoring. And then Mississippi has the, uh, promotion retention component, um, where promotion, um, is granted based on an assessment.

[00:14:45] They have an opportunity for two retests and there are all also five good cause exemptions that students may, um, qualify for one of those. And then I'll talk just a bit about data. So [00:15:00] anytime I talk about data with a state, I want to make sure that the, the conversation is around, um, ensuring that we understand where we've been and the gains that we can make.

[00:15:13] because it doesn't matter where we are right now, that means that we know that we can get better because we've been there before, right? Um, and, and we can get better than, than where we were, um, even during that time. Um, I want to also make a note of our Department of education, um, structure with this Literacy Based Promotion Act.

[00:15:34] There is a dedicated office to the implementation of this law, dedicated office. There is an office for literacy to support literacy. We have an office of intervention services that supports multi-tier system of support, um, dyslexia and also, um, English learners. So we intentionally had to ensure that we had an office of, again, [00:16:00] a state literacy director.

[00:16:01] There are four assistant state literacy coordinators, and then you have your coaches who are out in the field, right? So we have this. This specific office. So you will have to determine where the hub is going to be and who's gonna be responsible for making sure that all of these things, um, are, are implemented.

[00:16:20] So let's talk a little bit about data. Um, when you look at Wisconsin and compare Wisconsin to Florida and Mississippi, and of course the nation, the reason that, um, I've compared Wisconsin to Florida and Mississippi is simply because Florida and Mississippi both have literacy laws. Um, Florida's law was passed in 2002.

[00:16:38] Mississippi's law passed in 2013. Um, and our law is fashioned after Florida's, it's almost identical, um, to Florida's law. Um, but I want us to just take a look at where we are now in 2022 and Wisconsin, you say.

Okay. Wisconsin's ranked at two 17. Um, one skill score above the [00:17:00] national public average also tied with Mississippi.

[00:17:04] Well, that's great. . You know, we say, well, you know, we're tired with Mississippi. We hear all these things about Mississippi, but we're tied with Mississippi. But I do want to, to just give a little context for that. In 19 92, 30 years ago, Wisconsin's fourth grade students outperformed their peers nationally by nearly one grade level at a scale score of 2 24.

[00:17:32] Wisconsin outperformed Florida 30 years ago by one and a half grade levels, and outperformed Mississippi by two and a half grade levels. Now in 2022, Florida now outperforms Wisconsin by nearly a grade level. Wisconsin is now tied with Mississippi, um, who again was, you know, formally two and a half grade levels behind, [00:18:00] and now Wisconsin only scores one point above the national average.

[00:18:04] At. Two 17, we can get into the, uh, per pupil expenditure, but I think that that's a, a, a, a different conversation, um, around it. I, I do want to say again and just stress the fact that we have funding that is dedicated, um, to the implementation of this law. And when we begin to think about, um, universal screeners and curriculum and, and those types of things that are normally the business of school, we have to consider that these are items that school districts are purchasing anyway.

[00:18:43] Now, when we think about the quality of it, yes, that's gonna increase the cost, but when we think about what they're purchasing, you know, they're purchasing these things anyway. Our goal in providing guidance to schools and districts around best practices is so that you can purchase the [00:19:00] right thing, so that you can purchase the evidence-based thing.

[00:19:05] right? So as we consider talking about, you know, funding and ways in which we can support schools to make the right decisions, um, uh, you know, and I, and I do like the fact of, hey, we're going to come up with a list. There are some states that have come up with criteria, and so I'm gonna talk about that a little bit in a minute.

[00:19:25] So from policy to practice, I always say passing the law is a great first step. We need you. Passing the law is a great first step. Why do you need a law? Because some of these things are happening in some

places in Wisconsin. The issue is that they're not happening everywhere in every school in Wisconsin.

[00:19:45] So having a law gives teeth to ensuring that, um, these things are happening and are required to happen for kids. So one of our resources at Excel is our comprehensive early literacy model policy. [00:20:00] So those things that I talked about in Mississippi is just kind of an overview of our strategies are very specific here.

[00:20:06] Um, supports for teachers in policy, including that we are increasing teachers knowledge, adding reading coaches, educator preparation program coursework that's aligned to the science of reading. Our state board of education just approved the 12 hours that should, um, be taught in our educator preparation programs.

[00:20:27] Our state board was able to do that because again, our state, our, our Department of Education is responsible for program approval. So in order for your programs to be approved, guess what? You have to have these courses. But we know that it goes beyond just having these courses, uh, you know, in, in the course catalog or in syllabi that you, you actually have to be teaching, uh, these things effectively in class.

[00:20:51] Um, and then of course, funding the next piece. Is assessment and parent notification. I talked about the universal screeners, but we have to make sure that parents are [00:21:00] notified early and often, um, because we want parents to serve as partners in this work. Um, the next section of course is instruction and intervention.

[00:21:07] The materials, eliminating materials that have three cueing instructional materials. Um, Arkansas was the first state to do that a couple of years ago. Louisiana became the second state last year to eliminate, um, instructional materials with three cueing in law. And accelerate now is working with seven states that have bills right now, uh, to eliminate the use of three cueing instructional materials.

[00:21:30] So you think about, well, how do we have this workaround? You know, yes, we have local control. How do we tell teachers which curriculum to use? Well, some of the loopholes have been that we have said, yes, these curricula have to be aligned to the science of reading. They

have to include all the five components, but we haven't said what they should not include.

[00:21:48] So being very specific about if you are adopting curriculum, yes, they should be aligned to the science of reading, but they should also eliminate, they should also, you should also ensure that they do not have practices [00:22:00] within those materials that support three, queuing as a strategy to teach word reading.

[00:22:07] Um, individual reading plans for students, interventions, progress monitoring, summer reading camps and opportunities and of course resources for parents and families. And again, our retention and intensive intervention, um, component that we had in Mississippi that we do know, um, it's not the appetite for all states.

[00:22:25] Okay. Another resource is our comprehensive house to guide. And the reason that I, that I wanted to share this with you is that, you know, I've gotten questions from people all over the country about, well, what did Mississippi do? What did Mississippi do exactly. But there are other ways to implement these various specific.

[00:22:45] Best practices, the fundamental principles that I talked about. Yes, Mississippi had one vendor. Um, we had letters for the last nine years. We just adopted AIM Pathways last year. So we are now using aim, um, states like [00:23:00] Nebraska. They're using aim, they're also using other, um, you know, uh, vendors for professional development or creating courses.

[00:23:08] So there are different ways to meet the same goal. Everyone is not gonna have the same resources, the same staff, the same capacity, um, and even the same law. So in this comprehensive house who guide, it gives you, um, different ways, um, to implement each of those fundamental principles that I talked about earlier.

[00:23:28] And our early literacy network. Um, there have been about 34 states, I believe, plus DC that have adopted many of those fundamental principles. Um, that I showed earlier. 28 of those states in DC actually are included in Excel in its early literacy network. So we support state ed agencies. It's our own professional learning community because no one's really trained on how to be a literacy director for a state.

[00:23:55] So we support, um, state education agency leaders, [00:24:00] um, MTSS coordinate, whoever's a part of ensuring that the literacy bill or law, um, is actually implemented well. Um, we provide support for that. Alaska just passed their Alaska res act. They're part of the network. Virginia, um, recently passed their Virginia Literacy Act and this session right now, they have introduced, and it's already passed in one um, chamber, they've introduced their fourth through eighth grade literacy law.

[00:24:26] Well, it would include, uh, middle school, put coaches in middle schools and ensured that students were being given those supports and those teachers were also being given professional development in the science of reading. . So there's a lot going on across the country right now in early literacy. Um, this quote just says, America's low literacy crisis is largely ignored, historically underfunded and woefully under research.

[00:24:52] Despite being one of the great solvable problems of our time, we know what it takes to teach children [00:25:00] how to read. Um, we just have to make sure that we do the work. And what will it take? It will take this interconnected system from policy to practice, um, to ensure that all children, um, have this right.

[00:25:16] Um, this, this civil right to learn to read. So I will end there. And . There you go. Good to see you. So yeah, thank you so much for, for being with us today. Um, you know, I think we're gonna be leaning on you a lot in the future. Um, . One of the controversial things with Mississippi is the retention piece of it, and you've touched on it briefly, um mm-hmm.

[00:25:44] and I know not a lot of other states have that. How important do you think that that is? Well, we recently released a study. We, um, contracted with Boston University, um, with Marcus Winters and one of his colleagues. He's done [00:26:00] a lot of work on studying retention laws, um, across the country. The one thing that we found, we followed the cohort of students, uh, that were in the first cohort of students who were retained 20 14, 20 15.

[00:26:12] Um, they were able to follow those students to sixth grade. Um, they also followed a com, uh, another group of students, those students who were promoted but were barely promoted. Right. So you have your cut score, you have the students at the bottom who were

retained, those who may have answered a few questions, uh, you know, more correctly those who were promoted.

[00:26:33] So they looked at those students, um, English language arts scores when those students were in sixth grade. And then of course, um, for those students who moved on and, and were in seventh grade. And what it showed is that those students who were retained, because again, you you we're not talking about retention for retention's sake, not just saying you're gonna go back to third grade.

[00:26:52] I lost specifically states that students who are retained must also have an individual reading plan, must have 90 minutes of [00:27:00] uninterrupted instruction. You know, structured literacy instruction must be with a, a teacher who has proven effective in teaching in reading. So there, there are specific supports for those students.

[00:27:09] Um, but it showed that those students, um, out scored and outscored and outperformed those students who were promoted. There was a, a large standard deviation of 1.2. What does that mean? That means that those students who were retained, scored about in the 60th percentile versus those students who were promoted, uh, scored, who scored in the 20th or so percentile.

[00:27:31] um, it did not have a, a negative impact on, um, an increase in, um, suspensions. I'm, I'm sorry, an increase in referral to special education because, you know, that's also like, well, if a child's retained, they'll eventually be referred to special education. It did not have an increase on referral to special education, nor did it have an impact on, um, attendance, um, that students who were retained just stopped going to school.

[00:27:58] You know, people say that [00:28:00] sometimes as well, but it did not have an impact on, on, um, attendance for students. So I think with this type of law, this, this particular principal in place with the, um, promotion and retention component, the one thing that you know, I always say is that when we think about third grade laws, we think about, you know, this is a third grade teacher's responsibility, but it's not.

[00:28:22] This is a kindergarten through third grade, um, effort, and it shows that. Our kindergarten teachers need to ensure that children are

ready before they get to first grade, first grade, before they get to second grade, second grade, before they get to third grade. And it's all hands on deck. So for us, it it, it created accountability in a space like K2 that had, that normally doesn't have to, uh, have an accountability, um, component because state testing begins in third grade.

[00:28:50] Um, so I think it was important for us so that everyone could understand that they had a role in preparing the student for the next level. That we're not waiting [00:29:00] until third grade, that it starts when the child enters kindergarten. Um, and that was just extremely important for us and for accountability and for students to be identified early and get the supports that they need early, um, instead of waiting until, till later on.

[00:29:16] But, um, most of the states you've been working with are resistant to that and I Is that, does that cause a problem? ? Well, a few, a few states made are, are resistant to that. Um, there are several states that have, um, adopted the retention component. Um, but I, I don't believe, you know, we always say, well, you know, how do we ensure what's best for kids?

[00:29:40] The goal in the end is to ensure that children are not retained at the end of third grade. Um, so for states that we work with, we support, if they say, well, we don't have the appetite for the promotion retention component right now, okay, we get that. But we have to make sure that all of these other supports are in place to [00:30:00] ensure that by the time children get to third grade or the end of third grade, that they're learning to read and that there are supports, there are states that may say, we don't have this retention component, but we want to put into, uh, law that if a child by the end of third grade is not reading at grade level, then they must attend a summer reading camp or they mu, do you understand what I'm saying?

[00:30:20] So there may be other provisions. . It's not just saying that, well, they're not reading by the end of third grade, so they get to just move on to fourth grade. Um, they're putting additional provisions and supports, even providing tutors, um, for students, whether it's during the summer and then also during the school year.

[00:30:36] So there are ways to get to a happy medium, uh, without, um, the retention component. But the, the, the goal and the very, very

important pieces of that includes all of the things that should be done to support teachers, administrators, students, parents, and families prior to the end of that third grade year.

[00:30:57] Okay. Thank you, uh, *Representative Shelton*. [00:31:00] Thank you, Mr. Chair. Um, thank you Dr. Burke for joining us today. It's, it's great to see you on the screen. I wish you were here in person, but it's, thank you for giving us your time. I have three questions for you. I'll make it quick. Um, okay. In terms of the third grade retention, I, as you mentioned, in some states do, some states do not, do you have a sense whether in Mississippi or nationally, cuz you have this cohort, what it costs districts to retain students?

[00:31:24] Uh, if, if they allow that provision? Yep. I don't have that number, um, about what it costs to retain students, um, or if there's a cost associa associated. Yeah. I, I do want to, um, add though that some students, of course, not just in third grade, but maybe in other grades, are retained based on district policies.

[00:31:45] You know, a policy, whether a student has, you know, attended school regularly or they failed another. Subject other than reading. So there are also district policies for promotion as well that will be from kindergarten through [00:32:00] 12th grade. So I can't specifically say what the cost would be. Um, and if you pull out third grade and what that impact is.

[00:32:08] Okay. Yeah. Thank you for that. Um, the second question is, um, your fourth grade, uh, the, the data points that you included, do you have, so that includes third graders who receive two years of instruction? Correct. So are those students who received two years of instruction rolled into the fourth grade overall data?

[00:32:27] And do you have data, and if so, do you have data that disaggregates the fourth grade reading scores from the, to remove the third graders that receive two years of instruction? Does that make sense? I'm trying to follow you, um, with the, so you, so you have fourth graders, right? That you have the data that you shared.

[00:32:48] But within some of those students, they received two years of instruction. So I'm wondering if that two years of instruction impacts the

data outcomes that you're sharing as a fourth grade metric. [00:33:00] Well, are you, you're talking about for those students who were retained? Correct. Correct. Are you talking fourth grade?

[00:33:06] Okay. So in, within the study, so within the study, um, they have, the researchers of course, have all the data. Um, and for those students who were retained and had those, the two years of instruction, um, you're asking if the data was pulled out for, I'm wondering if the data from your fourth grade set is impacted by some of the students who are receiving two years of instruction versus others receiving one year.

[00:33:33] Which data? The fourth grade reading scores that you shared. Oh, our, our NAEP scores? Yeah. Our national data, not our state data. I, I can't remember what, I don't have the slide in front of me. I'm sorry. Yeah. No, no, no. I was, I was trying to figure out when you were talking about data, which data you were talking about, um, from our NATE data.

[00:33:52] Mm. So great question. Um, especially for 2019 now. Now I'll say this, [00:34:00] Mississippi's scores, we passed our law in 2013. We were, we did not have a group of students who were retained until 2015 in third grade, but we were scoring at a 209 in 2013 when we passed our law in 2015, before any third grade students were retained those fourth grade students, uh, our score jumped from 209 to two 14.

[00:34:28] So we actually made the largest gains on NAEP during our first two years. The gains that we've made recently aren't even as large as those gains that we made from 2013 to 2015. Again, retention was, uh, had not been in effect yet. . So we went from 209 to two 14 in 2015. In 2017 we went from two 14 to two 15.

[00:34:53] Uh, uh, yeah, I believe two 15 or two 17, something like that. But in 2019 is when we went to the [00:35:00] score of two 19. That group of students, that's the year that everyone talks about this, the, you know, this miracle. But that's the year, um, that our fourth graders were first in the nation for gains made on eighth.

[00:35:15] That fourth grade cohort included 95% of the third graders the previous year. Because think about it, those students who had been in third grade were those students who had started school with our literacy based promotion act in full effect. We had teachers who were trained. Uh,

we had, um, parents and families who knew about the law, who were receiving resources.

[00:35:40] Um, we had all of those things in place. We had been using our new, more rigorous curriculum for a few years already, so, I'm sorry. Um, standards, our new, uh, rigorous standards. So by the time those students in every year with our retention rate, it was decreased every year. First [00:36:00] year, 2015, we had 85% of our third graders retained.

[00:36:03] Um, the following year we had about 87% retained. Um, the next year there were 92%, then 93%. And then by the time these students, um, took the assessment, there were literally about less than 5% of those students who failed it because, again, support starting kindergarten. So for the 2019 gains that we had, again, that was 35, there was 95% of those students from third grade.

[00:36:29] So it wasn't that there could have even been students pulled out for us to make the gains that we made. Um, now we're in an even year for Nate. , right. So Nate was odd years. We're now an even year 2022, even post pandemic, um, in, in, uh, chair kitchens. I'll say that Mississippi is now 21st. Uh, in fourth grade even.

[00:36:51] We went from 29th and 2019 to 21st, um, in 2022 post pandemic and, um, scoring, uh, [00:37:00] one skill score above the national average. Um, for the first time we've tied the national average in 2019. And now scoring a grade level, I mean, I'm sorry, a skill score above the national average. Thank you so much Dr. Burke. I, I really appreciate you walking me through that.

[00:37:14] I have one final question for you about data. Um, can you talk to me about your eighth grade scores and what that tells you about reading, um, and literacy over time and the impact of your work as students continue to move up in grades? Thank you. And thank you for your time today. Thank you. And I was in Wisconsin a couple of weeks ago.

[00:37:32] Um, I was there. I I just didn't get a chance to say hi. So come back. Um, so what we've seen with our eighth grade scores is that there is a lot of work to do on the eighth grade level. Um, this is why we have an

initiative now. We have pilots now in Mississippi around ensuring that our middle school teachers are fourth through eighth grade.

[00:37:51] Teachers are trained in the science of reading. Um, and because it hasn't been, and in, uh, sustainable in the middle grades, [00:38:00] I'm an alternate route teacher. I came through education alternate route. Uh, so thankful for that. Um, and when you are trained in a content area where you go to school for English or you know, to teach English or those things, then you do not get the preparation that you need.

[00:38:15] And from what we have said today, even going through epps does not, you know, early or elementary education, um, does not guarantee that you get the training. But when you're teaching middle and high school and I taught middle and high school English, um, then you are considered a content area expert.

[00:38:29] Teaching English is not the same as teaching a child how to read. Um, so it's not for a lack of will. A lot of our secondary teachers, um, do not have the knowledge on how to address students who are in their classrooms, who are struggling readers. Um, so we have an effort to, um, make sure that we are addressing that here.

[00:38:54] *Representative LaKeshia Myers* Hi, Dr. Burke. Hi, . I was hoping I'd see you [00:39:00] today. Yes, I'm here. Uh, wonderful presentation. My questions for you, um, are with the threshold for distribution of the regional literacy coaches that you all have in Mississippi. Um, from dpi. You talked, they talked, told us that you had 78 coaches, and when you first began your presentation, you talked about, uh, how those coaches were distributed A little bit, but I wanted to get into that.

[00:39:26] If we are, if our DPI is requesting, I think it was 26. And we have 72 counties in our state. Mississippi has 82. How, how did you determine who got a coach and or how many coaches they were to receive? Yeah, so, um, you know, and I, and I remember she called it regional literacy coaches. Um, we have regional literacy coordinators that coordinate a region, but our literacy coaches are based, are, are, um, deployed in to a school that regardless of the region across the state, we look at school [00:40:00] data because that was the only way that we will be able to, um, get to our neediest schools first.

[00:40:06] Um, for those schools that again, had the highest percentages of students who were below proficient in third grade reading, we looked at state assessment data and looked at an average of two years of, uh, for that. But we began this initiative now with 24 people. Okay. I was one of them. because when we first begin, and this is something that I will caution any state who was saying, we're gonna have all of these coaches when we begin, we did not have enough educators with the capacity around the science of reading to serve as a reading coach, serve as a literacy coach.

[00:40:39] Because you not only have to know, uh, reading, you also have to know how to get a, well get along well with other adults, right? Because you have to be able to build relationships. So we were looking for both of those things, your knowledge, capacity to teach reading and to support support teachers, and being able to do that by building relationships.

[00:40:55] So as we, um, went on each [00:41:00] year, we added more coaches and the more coaches we added, the more schools that we were able to support. But what one thing that we also did is that, um, at the state agency, we, there's a model that we created for training coaches because it's gonna be extremely important for coaches to continually, uh, receive professional development themselves so that they can support.

[00:41:22] Teachers, we had a month, you know, monthly training for our coaches. They met in one place and all of those things. But we created these modules around training literacy coaches, how to provide feedback, have courageous conversations, how to document your supports, how to meet with administrators, to kind of guide your, your supports in their schools.

[00:41:41] Um, and I had a senator to say, well, you know, other schools are now saying they wanna coach. We don't have enough people. What do you do? So we decided to have these modules and say, if you're a lit, if you have this title of literacy coach in your schools, then we will train you on the same materials. [00:42:00] The what will give you the forms.

[00:42:02] We'll do all of those things to ensure consistency across the state and what we meant about how to be a literacy coach. Um, um, so just consistency in the practices, but also in the quality of that coaching process. And we do have a slide that says what the coaches will not do. ,

uh, cause they are, are to be full-time coaches, so they will not of course do bus duty.

[00:42:24] You know, I always say if they offer you walkie-talkie, don't take it. Um, you know, that's right. Those types of things. I'm sorry. No, I said that's right. That makes sense. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Um, so we were very specific about schools that received a coach as well. Like don't have them serving as, uh, the substitute teacher and, you know, just to ensure, uh, the quality of the coaching support.

[00:42:45] So, um, they again, were deployed based on the data and where the data told us that we needed them most. And then we began to, as we employed more coaches, we were able to support more schools. And was that, you talked [00:43:00] about the initial appropriation for, um, your reading bill in, uh, reading legislation in Mississippi was 9 million.

[00:43:09] Nine and a half. Nine and a half. So was that also taken care of with that nine and a half? So, you know, They say in the south that you do a lot with a little. Um, and, uh, I was, uh, on that email blast when Indiana, I believe received at 111 million endowment in Tennessee, has put 140 million in early literacy, uh, with their Esther funds in those things.

[00:43:33] But yes, nine and a half million was our initial appropriation. Uh, 20 13 20 14. It's been 15 million every year since then. So I'll give you the breakdown of that. Um, of the 15 million, 61% or 9.1 million was spent on literacy coaches coaching support that included their salaries, right? French benefits, their travel, um, in their travel to the schools.

[00:43:57] Um, 17% of those funds [00:44:00] were on statewide professional development, which, you know, of course at that time, literacy, uh, letters. We were using letters. Now we're using AIM Pathways, um, which is about two and a half million dollars. , um, 4% of those funds are about \$600,000. \$600,000 was used on materials that our coaches needed, um, to, um, you know, make sure that they had the chart paper that they needed, markers, all of those things.

[00:44:23] Um, 15% of those funds are 2.25 million was for our K three assessment system. We have a, we have a one kindergarten readiness assessment system that is, um, kindergarten readiness assessment that is

administered to our four year olds, um, in our public pre-K schools, and then also to our kindergarten students.

[00:44:44] But then we have, that includes our universal screeners, administrations three times per year because we reimburse school districts for screener cross. And then the last, um, part 3% of those funds are about more than \$50,000 was used to support those [00:45:00] other offices that were stood up, um, to support just their personnel.

[00:45:04] Um, our Office of Intervention Services and then our, um, office, uh, , um, our office that was dedicated to professional development. So we also stood up another office of professional development to provide on-demand pd and also about our coaches. So our coaches support two schools. Each coach supports two schools.

[00:45:24] They spend half of the week in one school, the other half of the week in the other school, if it is a mega school, meaning that there are at least six teachers per grade level, kindergarten through third grade, then those coaches will support one school. Um, so as we were beginning to think about how we could best support those schools, um, and as many schools as we could, um, then the goal was for our coaches again to, um, each coach, two schools and mega school.

[00:45:54] There's one coach for that school. Thank you so much, *Senator John Jagler*. [00:46:00] Thank you. Uh, just to follow up a little bit on Representative Shelton's question about the promotion side of it, I, I didn't quite understand the answer or it wasn't the question. I, I I, to rephrase it, the Mississippi Miracle, everyone's been, you know, we talk about it in a much applauded, fantastic.

[00:46:17] How much of those, what, what would that score be if the children who weren't held back were removed? In other words, is there data showing, like if you, if you didn't have the retention part of it and the kids just moved on, no matter what, if those kids are, are, are taken out of the, out of that aggregate score, do you have that number?

[00:46:44] Do you know what I mean? No, because, because this is Nate, like, this is the, the National Assessment of Educational Progress. And as you've known, Nate chooses, they have their own process. No state has any stake in or recommendations [00:47:00] for which students, which

schools are, uh, administered. The NA assessment, as you know, it's a representative sample for the states.

[00:47:08] Um, so there was no way for nate to know which students had been retained or for us to know, uh, prior to Nate sending the schools that they were actually targeting. And, and again, Nate targets schools based on their criteria of, you know, demographics, uh, whether it's a, an urban school or whether it's a, you know, Nate has all of their criteria.

[00:47:33] Um, state agencies do not have any. Okay. Uh, I guess, I guess so. It's not really an app. We don't, it's not really, yeah. In apples to apples because if, if, of course, the students who went through it twice, that would improve your score if they're included. You know what I'm saying? Hope so. . Well, you hope that they didn't just, uh, they just weren't retained in third grade and didn't get more knowledge.

[00:47:55] Um, but I, I think what you're trying to say, you know, around taking students [00:48:00] out, I've, I've had this conversation before, respectfully, I've, I've had this conversation before and no matter how we say it, no matter how I say that group that in 2019 scored the, you know, the, this group, the Greatest Gains or the, the, you know, that group included 95% of those third graders, which means that only 5% of those students were retained.

[00:48:24] So you had almost an entire cohort of kids who went on and who were a part of those students who were chosen to take this assessment. So there, the notion that kids from that cohort were held back or not included, and that's why, uh, then I, then it's just, you know, respectfully it, okay, it's wrong. Okay.

[00:48:45] You know, and if we want to believe NAEP, in saying that Massachusetts is first. Did we have to believe Nate in saying that Mississippi is 21st? I mean, I don't, you know, again, it just goes around the [00:49:00] conversation of saying we have not only been able to make gains not just 2019, but since 2013 when kids were, you know, 2015, the first time when kids were not retained.

[00:49:15] We have not only been able to make gains, we've been able to increase those gains over time. And so I think that the conversation around which students were left back, which students did those things, I think that

it's just kind of, um, takes us away from the real issue, which is how can we ensure that children everywhere, in every classroom, regardless of your state, whether you're poor, whether you're black, brown, whether you're whatever are being taught to read, and that those teachers who are standing in front of kids every day are prepared to do that.

[00:49:51] Uh, *Senator Duey Stroebel* follow up. I just wanted to follow up on that. I think the most powerful point you made, I thought was [00:50:00] after two years of implementation of the program, even before anyone had ever been re retained in the, from the prior class, your results actually were better than anything you've even seen since.

[00:50:13] So, factoring out the retention component when you teach the correct curriculum these students, students can achieve. That's I guess what I got from the discussion. Thanks. Yeah, and I mean, we were, like I said, for the first time in the state, everyone had their focus on literacy. That was the first time state.

[00:50:33] We had pilots in different places. Of course, they would, you know, be successful as long as either the , the funder was in there or the, the initiative. Uh, but once the initiative was over, We saw that those scores, especially in our lower income areas, would go back to where they were, um, before the pilot program had even begun.

[00:50:53] Um, so when you think about moving a state, not a district, not, you know, a few [00:51:00] districts here who have, you know, this privilege or they have this opportunity or this part, you know, this grant or, or whatever it is. But when you think about leading a state, understand, the first year I drove to 50 schools myself as a state literacy director.

[00:51:16] We had parent nights across the state where school districts had to pick up parents on school buses to bring them to parent nights. This is not something that we give a checklist to states and say, oh yeah, you can do this. And guess what? There's a miracle there too. It's not that. So all the things that I can't talk about in a c.

[00:51:37] Is the work, is the communications strategy where we put literacy in front of our state board of education almost every meeting. You know, all of those things that you won't see in a checklist, but have to be done by those. And that's why it takes a dedicated office. That's why it

takes, you know, your, your edu your leaders at the state agency to [00:52:00] really be very supportive of those who are responsible for implementing this work.

[00:52:04] If Wisconsin decides to pass a law around it, uh, representative Hong. Okay, *Senator LaTonya Johnson*, first of all, I just wanna commend Mississippi on your hard work and your achievement. Um, you raising those scores is not a laughing matter. Um, and, and it's something that we would like to do here. I just have a couple of clarifications, um, regarding some things that you said.

[00:52:36] I know you said that you started out first with nine and a half million dollars to put toward the initiative, and the efforts have grown 15 million each year. Yes. So, so no, 15 million is the appropriation each year. Okay. It's, it's been a flat 15 million every year [00:53:00] since the first year. Okay. Since the first year, since the second year.

[00:53:03] I'm sorry. Mm-hmm. . So for a total of about 70 million since its implementation in 2013 for the early learning initiative. Right. Well, maybe a little more than that. Um, a little more than it was nine and a half million the first year, and there's been 15 million for the last nine years, so I'm literacy not mad.

[00:53:27] you by yourself, girls. So that addition is, I'm sorry, , say it again? I said you're not by yourself. So, yes. Five one, a hundred and forty four 0.5 million . Wow. Over 144 million over 10 years. Oh, wow. So then the question is, is that on top of your regular allocation for education or is that just the total for everything?

[00:53:56] No, that's an additional appropriation. Um, it's not in [00:54:00] our, um, funding formula for our students. Uh, you may know about Mississippi hasn't fully funded education in probably just as long, um, which was why it was extremely important for this initiative and its efforts to be funded, um, and not built into a funding formula just to make sure that, um, our educators had what they needed and we at the state agency had what we needed in order to support them.

[00:54:26] And I'm so glad that you were able to clarify that. . Mm-hmm. , this money is in addition to the money that would already be allocated to education, which is great. Right. So I'm glad we all hear that. That means

that we have a lot of allocation dollars that we need to put in if we want to be successful. But you also talked about the 24 um, coaches, and now you have 78, and if I'm correct, I think you said that each coach has two schools.

[00:54:58] The mega schools [00:55:00] have one coach, right? Mm-hmm. . Um, so when you started out originally with the 24 coaches, how did you, I, I know you said in there that you guys determined which schools had the most needs, and then you allocated the coaches at that point. So how many schools did those coaches average in the beginning?

[00:55:27] With the \$24 million, because I assume you weren't able to put a coach in every school. Well, it wasn't, it wasn't 24 million. I mean, not 24. The 24 coach. Yeah. Um, so in the beginning we, we had, there were 24 people, including me and my assistant director. We weren't in schools, so we had 22 coaches in schools.

[00:55:48] Um, yes, we have 20, we 22 coaches in schools, and they were serving about 50 schools because there were a couple of our schools that may have been, um, K2 schools or, uh, they were considered a K2 [00:56:00] school and then they went to the intermediate school and served just the third grade. So that's, those are just the different kind of configurations that we have.

[00:56:07] Um, so the first year we served 50 schools. Now we currently do not have 78 coaches. There are about 60 coaches, I believe 60 or 65 coaches. Um, the number decreased after the pandemic. Um, some of our coaches decided to, of course, as you know, all the things, some of our coaches decided to go back to classrooms.

[00:56:28] Some of our coaches were offered other positions in school districts, and that's gonna be the, you know, one of the things that we, uh, we faced where they would go to school districts and support them, school districts would say, oh my gosh, you're great. I wanna hire you full-time. So we would lose coaches sometimes to those types of opportunities, um, for coaches.

[00:56:47] So in the first year, um, even with the nine and a half million dollars, us initially standing up our, um, universal, uh, our, our screening assessment system, um, to support [00:57:00] the kindergarten readiness

assessment, the third grade assessment and those things. Um, also what we did for letters training was that each teacher who attended letters training, and we did that very early on for the first couple of years, they received a kit.

[00:57:13] It was a literacy kit with things that they could use in their classrooms like. Of course, dry erase board, let magnetic letters, um, sand timers, those types of things. So we put a lot of resources in the hands of teachers, but understand, again, with this 15 million, it doesn't go to schools, it goes to the Department of Education to allocate to, um, and, and to implement the literacy law, to support schools in this way.

[00:57:40] One more question. Mm-hmm. . So I know you said that you guys added coaches each year. Do you know on average how many coaches were added? Um, it just depends. We also were able to, the first three years or so, I was able to, um, do mid-year hiring [00:58:00] because we hired, um, we were able to hire retirees at halftime.

[00:58:07] Right? So the retirees were, um, assigned to one school because of the retirement system and those things. So that's also a group, uh, if you want to leverage that group as well. Um, so I'll just say, and then during the spring of every year prior to the upcoming year, we would always have this influx. So I'll say we may have hired 10 to 12 or so, um, each year, and you know, some of those years we have a good year.

[00:58:37] We would hire 15, we may lose five that they're again, you know, getting other opportunities going back to schools. Um, so, so yeah, that's how we initial. Our initial goal was 75. That was always the goal. Um, and so we got to 75, like I said, around year three, um, going into year four. Um, and we've been able to kind of hover around that and we got up to 78.

[00:58:59] [00:59:00] So we were able to support more schools. And then we also created another layer because as our schools began to see success, um, we had to devise this kind of gradual release plan because we needed our coaches to be able to move around to other schools. That needed support. And so some of our schools were saying, well, we don't wanna lose our coach.

[00:59:19] You know, we were saying, well, you, you've, we've seen gains, consistent gains over a couple of years. And, um, we created this other model, um, instead of the full support, then there were some schools that were receiving, um, um, limited support. So we called them limited support schools, where the coach would come, uh, maybe once a month instead of, you know, twice a week.

[00:59:42] And they could still receive, whether it's professional development, PLCs, they could, could work with the coach on what they, the need was for the school. Um, and that was a way we're able to kind of gradually release from those schools to begin to add more schools. Thank you so much for your [01:00:00] information that what you shared was extremely helpful.

[01:00:03] I really like the part about the retired teachers that's in the governor's budget, so I really like that. Thank you. Okay. Well, we, you needed to be out by one, so we're barely getting you outta here. But, um, I did have a request for your slides. Would that be possible for you to send that to us? That'd be great.

[01:00:20] And I'll, uh, pass those to the, uh, to the rest of the committee of course. So again, thank you. Really a pleasure to have you here. Thank you very.

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Published at www.schoolinfosystem.org