



Co-chair

STATE SENATOR
ERIC WIMBERGER

Co-chair

WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE

STATE REPRESENTATIVE
ROBERT WITTK

February 10, 2026

Dr. Jill Underly, State Superintendent
Department of Public Instruction
201 West Washington Avenue
Madison, Wisconsin 53703

Dear Dr. Underly:

2023 Wisconsin Act 20 created several requirements for the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) related to literacy. In DPI's report on the 2024-25 universal reading assessment results, 42.6 percent of Wisconsin students in kindergarten through grade three scored below the 25th percentile. The report also indicated that 93,545 students required personal reading plans during the last school year. We write today to request background information related to DPI's literacy activities and its compliance with Act 20 requirements.

Act 20 created the Office of Literacy within DPI. The Office is required to establish and supervise an early literacy coaching program throughout the State by contracting up to 64 full-time equivalent individuals with demonstrable knowledge and instructional experience to serve as literacy coaches. The Office is also required to provide literacy coaches with ongoing training and supervision.

1. With how many individuals has DPI contracted to serve as literacy coaches? Please provide copies of all such contracts executed with literacy coaches since the Office was created.
2. How many training sessions has DPI provided to the literacy coaches? Please provide training dates, the names of the coaches in attendance at each session, and a copy of the training materials provided in each session.
3. The Director of the Office of Literacy would be expected to perform work chiefly related to DPI's compliance with Act 20 requirements. Does the Director work on any other assignments in DPI that are unrelated to Act 20 requirements? If so, please specify the assignments and describe the amount of the Director's time spent on such assignments since hire.

DPI's report on assessment data indicates that a number of students below the 25th percentile did not receive a personal reading plan, as required. Some districts reported initiating no personal reading plans despite having eligible students for whom such a plan is required.

4. Please describe the steps DPI has taken to date to ensure the implementation of a personal reading plan for every student below the 25th percentile and provide evidence to demonstrate each indicated step DPI has taken.

Act 20 expressly prohibits 3-cueing instruction.

5. Please provide copies of training provided by DPI in which this prohibition is declared.

SENATOR WIMBERGER

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6. Please provide a list of all curriculum reimbursement grants to date that shows the receiving district, the grant amount, and the specific curricula approved for each district receiving a grant.

DPI was required to select a fundamental skills screening assessment and a universal screening assessment that meet the criteria prescribed by Act 20. Specifically, the DPI-approved universal screener (aimswebPlus) is required to assess all five literacy skills (phonemic awareness, decoding, alphabet knowledge, letter-sound knowledge, and oral vocabulary). However, we have learned that some schools are purchasing additional assessments at local expense to fully comply, which is noncompliant with the requirement of Act 20 that the universal screener will be provided to schools at no cost.

7. Please affirm that aimswebPlus assesses all five literacy skills and provide evidence to support that affirmation. If this assessment does not, in fact, assess all five literacy skills, then please provide a detailed explanation of why DPI chose to use this particular assessment.
8. Act 20 requires a composite score based on the five literacy skills. However, we understand that DPI has approved the use of oral reading fluency to determine at-risk status for students in grades 1 through 3. Why and with what authority has DPI made this decision?

We look forward to receiving this information not later than February 20, 2026. Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eric Wimberger".

Eric Wimberger
Senate Chair

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert Wittke".

Robert Wittke
Assembly Chair

- c. Joe Chrisman
State Auditor