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Details:

(FORM UPDATED: 08/11/2010)

WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE ... PUBLIC HEARING - COMMITTEE RECORDS

2009-10

(session year)

Senate

(Assembly, Senate or Joint)

Committee on ... Education (SC-Ed)

COMMITTEE NOTICES ...

- Committee Reports ... **CR**
- Executive Sessions ... **ES**
- Public Hearings ... **PH**

INFORMATION COLLECTED BY COMMITTEE FOR AND AGAINST PROPOSAL

- Appointments ... **Appt** (w/Record of Comm. Proceedings)
- Clearinghouse Rules ... **CRule** (w/Record of Comm. Proceedings)
- Hearing Records ... bills and resolutions (w/Record of Comm. Proceedings)
 - (**ab** = Assembly Bill) (**ar** = Assembly Resolution) (**ajr** = Assembly Joint Resolution)
 - (**sb** = Senate Bill) (**sr** = Senate Resolution) (**sjr** = Senate Joint Resolution)
- Miscellaneous ... **Misc**

* Contents organized for archiving by: Gigi Godwin (LRB) (August/2011)

Senate

Record of Committee Proceedings

Committee on Education

Senate Bill 437

Relating to: authorizing the state superintendent of public instruction to direct a school district to implement a new curriculum or instructional design, make personnel changes, or adopt accountability measures, and requiring the exercise of rule-making authority.

By Committee on Education.

December 22, 2009 Referred to Committee on Education.

January 5, 2010 **PUBLIC HEARING HELD**

Present: (7) Senators Lehman, Jauch, Erpenbach, Hansen, Olsen, Grothman and Hopper.

Absent: (0) None.

Appearances For

- Tony Evers, Madison — State Superintendent, Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction
- Polly Williams, Milwaukee — Rep., 10th Assembly District
- Ms. Rose, Milwaukee
- Michael Bonds, Milwaukee — MPS Board President
- Anthony Baldwin, Milwaukee
- Katy Venskus, Oconomowoc — Education Reform Now, Democrats for Education Reform
- Tom Phillipson, Milwaukee — Wisconsin Exceptional Children Advocacy Network
- Mike Langyel, Milwaukee — Milwaukee Teachers Education Association
- Vernal Switzer, Milwaukee
- Raymond Mess, Milwaukee
- Sandra Small, Milwaukee
- Robin Reese, Milwaukee
- Joe Davis, Milwaukee — Ald., Common Council, 2nd District
- Spencer Coggs, Milwaukee — Sen., 6th Senate District

Appearances Against

- Mary Glass, Milwaukee — Milwaukee Professionals Association (LEAs)
- Gerald Glazer, Milwaukee
- Diana Phetsarath, Milwaukee
- Teasha Banister, Milwaukee
- Nathan Zetting, Milwaukee

- Samantha Sayavong, Milwaukee
- Linda Mistele, Milwaukee
- Dave Bradford, Milwaukee
- Lawrence Hoffman, Milwaukee — Coalition to Stop the MPS Takeover, Educators Network for Social Justice
- Tina Owen, Milwaukee — The Alliance School, MPS
- David Guran, Milwaukee
- Amy Gutowski, Milwaukee
- Rick Lerche, Milwaukee — Milwaukee Teachers Education Association
- Katherine Geiger, Milwaukee
- Laura Manriquez, Milwaukee
- Jacquleen Ivy, Milwaukee

Appearances for Information Only

- Peggy Krusick, Milwaukee — Rep., 7th Assembly District
- David Weingard, Shorewood
- LaMonte Harris, Milwaukee — PUMPS

Registrations For

- Rosie Caradine Lewis, Milwaukee — NAACP
- Tarzan Sims, Milwaukee
- Adrian Wade, Milwaukee
- Makindte Adredaro, Milwaukee

Registrations Against

- Mark Makaila, Milwaukee
- Shanina Henderson, Milwaukee
- Ervin Weatherby, Jr., Milwaukee
- Clara New, Milwaukee — Dr.
- Kathleen Hart, Greendale
- Katie Quarles, Milwaukee
- Sangita Nayak, Milwaukee
- Wendeline Herndon, Milwaukee
- Shawnee Daniels-Sykes, Milwaukee
- Jean Goedel, Milwaukee
- Albert Siemsen, Milwaukee
- Jean Leonard, Shorewood
- Royal Bonde-Griggs, Milwaukee
- Lee Abbott, Milwaukee
- Jean Williams, Milwaukee
- Michelle Trevino, Milwaukee
- Deb Krether, Milwaukee
- Leila Friedrich, Milwaukee
- Patricia Sittle, Milwaukee
- Gerhard Friedrich, Milwaukee
- Lori Hendrickson, Milwaukee

- Phyllis Deal, Milwaukee — MTEA
- Shakenna Allen, Milwaukee — Mothers of the Struggle
- LaSerrica James, Milwaukee — Mothers of the Struggle
- Sharon Green, Milwaukee
- Lisa Gladney, Milwaukee — MPS
- Suzanne Green, Milwaukee — MTEA
- Laura Rice, Milwaukee
- Lisa Schultz, Milwaukee
- Ann Cirillo, Milwaukee
- Lydia Burton, Milwaukee
- Earnestine Allen-Miliken, Milwaukee
- Patricia Dawson, Milwaukee
- Stephen Neubauer, Milwaukee
- Michelle Allison, Milwaukee
- Stephan Gribble, Milwaukee — Gilbert Stuart Elementary
- Debby Rubin, Milwaukee
- Paul Sickel, Milwaukee
- Jeffery Johnson, Milwaukee
- Kristofer Koneazny, Milwaukee
- Henry Hamilton III, Brown Deer
- Marilyn Diaz, Milwaukee
- Rachel Schlueter, Milwaukee
- Duane Moss, Sr., Milwaukee
- Erica Johnson, Milwaukee
- Melissa Hall, Milwaukee
- LaRon Glover, Milwaukee
- Alice Darnell, South Milwaukee
- Lequandrea Crumble, Milwaukee
- Sharon Pork, Milwaukee
- Gayle Griffin, Milwaukee
- Anne Ziegler, Milwaukee
- Kathy Xiong, Milwaukee
- Francine McNeil-Harris, Milwaukee
- Jean Crandall Jacobs, Milwaukee — New School for Community Service
- Tamela Perushek, Milwaukee
- Angelia Lalich, Milwaukee
- Lee Henderson, Milwaukee
- Cheryl Ford, Milwaukee
- Amy Johnson, Milwaukee
- Jeri Thorp, Milwaukee
- Willa Lee, Milwaukee
- Carolyn Arrington, Milwaukee — Mothers of the Struggle
- Nancy Mueller, Milwaukee
- Barbara Eisenberg, Milwaukee — Greater Milwaukee Green Party

- Sheri Krause, Madison — Wisconsin Association of School Boards

Registrations for Information Only

- Barbara Sprewer, Milwaukee
- Kristina Finnel, Milwaukee
- Orlando Butler, Milwaukee
- Michael Harper, Milwaukee

April 14, 2010

EXECUTIVE SESSION HELD

Present: (7) Senators Lehman, Jauch, Erpenbach, Hansen, Olsen, Grothman and Hopper.

Absent: (0) None.

Moved by Senator Jauch, seconded by Senator Hansen that **Senate Substitute Amendment LRB-s0386** be recommended for introduction and adoption.

Ayes: (5) Senators Lehman, Jauch, Erpenbach, Hansen and Olsen.

Noes: (2) Senators Grothman and Hopper.

INTRODUCTION AND ADOPTION OF SENATE SUBSTITUTE AMENDMENT LRB-S0386 RECOMMENDED, Ayes 5, Noes 2

Moved by Senator Jauch, seconded by Senator Hansen that **Senate Bill 437** be recommended for passage as amended.

Ayes: (5) Senators Lehman, Jauch, Erpenbach, Hansen and Olsen.

Noes: (2) Senators Grothman and Hopper.

PASSAGE AS AMENDED RECOMMENDED, Ayes 5, Noes 2

Sara Dauscher
Committee Clerk

Senate

Record of Committee Proceedings

Committee on Education

LRB-3853/1 → (became SB 437)

Relating to: authorizing the state superintendent of public instruction to direct a school district to implement a new curriculum or instructional design, make personnel changes, or adopt accountability measures, and requiring the exercise of rule-making authority.

December 15, 2009 **EXECUTIVE SESSION HELD**

Present: (7) Senators Lehman, Jauch, Erpenbach, Hansen, Olsen, Grothman and Hopper.

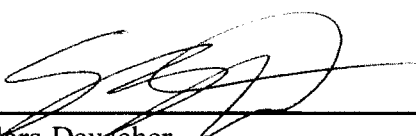
Absent: (0) None.

Moved by Senator Hansen, seconded by Senator Jauch that **LRB-3853/1** be recommended for for introduction.

Ayes: (6) Senators Lehman, Jauch, Erpenbach, Hansen, Olsen and Hopper.

Noes: (1) Senator Grothman.

FOR INTRODUCTION RECOMMENDED, Ayes 6, Noes 1



Sara Dauscher
Committee Clerk

Dave Bradford
3724 West Florist Ave.
Milwaukee, WI. 53209

JAN 13 2010

Senator John Lehman
Room 310 South, State Capitol
PO Box 7882
Madison WI. 53707

Comments before senate committee 1/05/10

I stand here in opposition to SB 405, 437 and any other numbered, lettered or otherwise enumerated bill.

In the early 1800's, Reverend Matthias Burnnett remarked; "To God and posterity you are responsible for your rights and rulers. Give not your children reason to curse you for giving up those rights and prostrating those institutions which your fathers delivered to you."

As opposed to a democracy, instructions for the proper use of the representative republic in which we live, found in the Declaration of Independence, state that "governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed." Yet through this proposal, you will further erode personal responsibility, by law, from the owners and financiers of our system of self governance.

It is important to note at this point that no government at any level, has money to give or spend that it has not first taken from we, the taxpayer!

Through this short sighted effort to correct the financial and moral morass of mismanagement within MPS, I'm being asked to substitute the villainy of 9 tyrants 7miles away, with the villainy of hundreds of tyrants 70 miles away! Actions by both groups within the last few months have not demonstrated any form of moral compass.

The Bible tells us that "we reap what we sow." We have been here over 7 hours now discussing what to do about this truth. The Bible further tells us that "no man can serve two masters." Proponents of these competing bills leave no doubt where their allegiance lies! We can get federal money through the 'race to the top" program. As members of a government body, you are well aware of the fact that monies you disburse come with

strings attached. No great study is needed to see the correlation between government involvement in education and declining student proficiency.

While I believe each and every member of the MPS school board deserves dismissal, it is not your prerogative to remove this level of control from the parents whose children are being indoctrinated within this system.

Inquiry has been made as to the beginning of the decline in our schools. Twenty years ago, thirty? I believe it was the Engle vs. Vitale decision of the Supreme Court in 1962 that removed prayer from school which precipitated this ruinous decline and produced the multitude of maladies we now face. We have not arrived at this point overnight.

Might I suggest that once you return home, you dig out your copy of the United States Constitution, which you must by "oath or affirmation support and uphold" before assuming your office, and read the first line. Not the first line in the preamble, the first line in the constitution itself. "All legislative power herein granted, shall be vested in the Congress.... As a result of this revelation, consider the erroneous assertion that the Supreme Court makes the law of the land. Reading the entire document will leave you without the phrase "separation of church and state." You should then dust off the 10th amendment, which pertains to states rights, grab your bootstraps, stand tall, represent the state of Wisconsin properly, and demand that the Bible be taught in our schools. I submit to you that the ills within all of Wisconsin's public schools will be rectified!

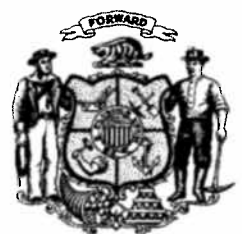
Consider the reason your children will have to curse you!

Jesus be with you!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dave Bradford". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a prominent loop at the end of the last name.



WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE



Solving Problems in the Milwaukee Public School System

Prepared for the Senate Education Committee January 5, 2010

Senate Bill 437

Generally this is a good bill. But it needs strengthening to successfully address the grave problems in so many MPS classrooms. Many classroom problems can be traced to Vliet Street.

The State Superintendent must be able to identify positions in the central administration to be eliminated so that the money can be redirected to the classroom.

The State Superintendent must be able to identify particular administrators at Vliet Street who should be transferred to another job to open the position for new leadership. For any position identified for this action, the State Superintendent must approve the person selected for the position and the new job for the person moved out of the job

The State Superintendent must have the power to force all schools that receive any state funds to transfer student records to MPS when the student transfers back to MPS.

The State Superintendent has stated at public meetings that about the only authority he has over MPS is to withhold funding which harms children. He must have a whole range of sanctions that he can use to bring MPS up to speed.

One of the reasons that charter and voucher schools avoid serving difficult children is the cost of the services. This overloads MPS. The State Superintendent must work with MPS Board members who understand the need to address this problem, with changes in state law and funding as needed.

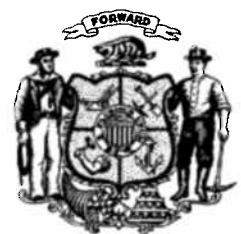
In response to the federal law suit DPI emphasizes compliance with Individual Education Plans. (Compliance means procedural safeguards and commas and periods. It does not extend to if the school is really delivering the services listed in the IEP.) Bill 437 should include any powers needed so that MPS can be forced to deliver the services that they have written into the IEP.

In Beth Fertig's new book, *Why Cant u teach me 2 read*, we learn that a court in New York has ordered the school district to provide compensatory services where services listed in the IEP were not delivered in a timely way. Bill 437 should empower DPI to enforce IEPs "in the now" rather than "maybe sometime in the future."

MPS is dragging their feet in following the Federal Court orders in the Jamie S case which DPI is supposed to enforce. Bill 437 should empower DPI to enforce the court decision without having to go back to Federal Court.



WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE



Senate Committee on Education

**Testimony of State Superintendent Tony Evers
on 2009 Senate Bill 437**

January 5, 2010

Thank you to Chairperson Lehman and members of the committee for the opportunity to testify in front of you today in support of the ability of the state superintendent to turn around struggling schools.

Every child a graduate. This statement is the principle around which I have focused the department's work, and while there is much to be done across Wisconsin to make this a reality, I am committed to ensuring all schools provide the necessary opportunities for all children to succeed.

I believe it is critical that the state superintendent have the authority to work with schools and districts that are struggling the most; places where student achievement levels are simply unacceptable over time. The department drafted this proposal with that in mind.

This is the case in Milwaukee. I have been in education for over 34 years and have seen MPS go through a number of well-intentioned reforms. The powers contained in SB 437 are focused on building capacity and providing resources for MPS, creating a steady shift that will provide demonstrated results over time. In order to improve student achievement, close achievement gaps, and increase the graduation rate, we must target the state and federal resources flowing into MPS and move forward with a sense of purpose. Students in MPS are highly mobile, almost half are habitually truant, and 30 percent were suspended. To serve these kids well, MPS needs to get at a point of consistency and become a school system instead of a fragmented system of schools. This bill will help to accomplish those goals.

This is also a stated goal by President Obama who has linked federal funds under Race to the Top to a state's legal, statutory, or regulatory authority to turn around struggling schools. This legislation would support that application requirement.

As President Obama said in his speech to Wright Middle School in Madison in November, "Here's what we know: over the course of a lifetime, those with a college degree earn over 60 percent more than those with only a high school diploma. Many of the fastest growing jobs require a Bachelors degree or more. And four of every ten new jobs will require at least some advanced education or training within the next decade. Put simply, the right education is a prerequisite to success. It is the currency of our knowledge economy."

The state of Wisconsin through the state superintendent needs increased and targeted authority to work with schools and districts as outlined under this bill. Under federal law, a school that has been identified for improvement for five consecutive years must restructure, and a school district that has been identified for four consecutive years faces corrective action. As a condition of receiving federal education dollars, federal law already requires Wisconsin to take corrective action and lists a number of possible actions. However, Wisconsin law currently limits the state superintendent to one of those possible actions – the withholding of federal funds from a district. Chronically struggling schools will not improve if our only remedy is withholding funds. This legislation lets us work with local district and community leaders to support school districts as they implement improvement strategies.

SB 437 would allow the State Superintendent to direct school boards that have schools identified for improvement for five consecutive years, or have their district identified for improvement for four consecutive years, to do one or more of five improvement initiatives. They are: to implement a new curriculum, new instructional design, or professional development focused on student or school improvement, make personnel changes consistent with collective bargaining agreements, and establish accountability measures related to the district's finances or monitoring of recommendations. This authority would only apply to schools and districts during the time they are identified for improvement.

The bill also provides for a rulemaking process to define a school or district identified for improvement. I plan to put forward a rule that codifies the definition we currently have under federal law defining schools and districts identified for improvement. My aim is to focus only on those places that are struggling the most, places where student achievement levels are simply unacceptable over time. This bill provides a tremendous opportunity to act on the sense to turn around our neediest schools by targeting resources, technical assistance, and direction.

In Milwaukee that sense of urgency is loud and clear. I have personally spent a lot of time in classrooms, meetings, hearings, and holding office hours in this great city talking with Milwaukee community members, businesses, parents, educators, and students about the educational system here and their concerns and expectations. The department's corrective action requirements for MPS under the federal No Child Left Behind legislation reflects some of what I have heard as well research-based best practice, but there is more I believe we can do together to improve MPS should SB 437 become law. Turning around student achievement in struggling schools will be difficult and it will take time, but it can and must be done. We need to take these schools and turn them into good schools that utilize high quality instruction, have effective leadership, and use excellent data systems to know where students are at and the effective interventions needed for those students.

I value and respect our history of local control of public education. Clearly, though, all of Wisconsin has a great stake in improving our few chronically struggling schools. We must do more for the students, parents, and educators at these schools.

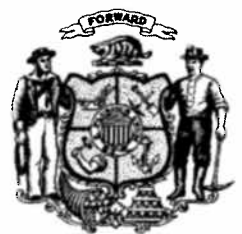
The educational success of the children in these chronically underperforming schools is vital to the future of Wisconsin. There is urgency to this work. Children must know from every adult in

their lives that their education is important. We must ensure that all schools deliver the opportunity for our children to the best they can be and to reach their goals.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak before you today and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.



WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE



SB437?

Fundamental Problems in the Milwaukee Public School System

Prepared for the Senate Education Committee January 5, 2010

MPS Is A Brand That Has Failed

Much attention is currently paid to how poorly MPS students perform on tests for reading and math. These dismal scores are grist for the punditocracy, editorial writers, and reformers. But an equally significant indicator of failure is how our parents are voting with their children. Each year MPS loses as many students as the entire enrollment of the Shorewood School District. And the response by the leadership at Vliet Street is to close more schools. Alan Borsuk wrote in a recent article that:

A third of all Milwaukee children who are receiving publicly funded education are doing so outside the traditional MPS system. This includes more than 20,000 students in private schools, most of them religious, which take part in the voucher program.

In the same article Borsuk highlighted the academic failures of MPS. These failures must be addressed immediately so that we do not lose another generation of students still enrolled in MPS. DPI is finally addressing some of these flaws in Senate Bill 437. This bill will be discussed separately.

How do we re-brand MPS so that parents stop their flight from the system? This will take at least five years and can be worked on in parallel with academic reform in the classroom. The goal should be to present to parents an educational opportunity for their children in MPS that is not overwhelming in its complexity and opaque in its operation. Most parents who have the courage to encounter the vast complexity of Vliet Street come away with the conclusion that, "nobody's in charge." Professor Kenneth K. Wong of Brown University discusses this issue in his 2007 book "The Education Mayor: Improving America's Schools." He calls it the "nobody's in charge culture."

No one is in charge of MPS for day to day operations. The Superintendent is busy with long range problems, policy concerns, and important ceremonial responsibilities. There is no deputy to keep the trains running. One result is that the various departments at Central Office operate as individual fiefdoms with little regard for the rest of the system. This is called the silo system. Individual departments publish reports, directives and forms without checking with other departments. *

A grave example of the MPS silo system is Human Resources. People at the school level have been complaining for more than ten years about HR. A review of that department was done by the Council of Great City Schools in the spring of 2009. The 48 page report concludes that HR is, "risk averse and was marked by a weak sense of urgency to improve and little functional concern for customers and stakeholders." The report essentially recommends a complete overhaul of HR and that department leadership be composed only of persons with the willingness and capacity to make the required changes. When the report was reviewed by a School Board Committee the Superintendent defended HR. No board member asked probing questions.

If no board member was in close enough touch with the schools in his district to be alert to ask questions it suggests that most board members soon after they are elected enter the cocoon that is Vliet Street. Several silos can co-exist in the same cocoon.

Fundamental Problems in the Milwaukee Public School System

Prepared for the Senate Education Committee January 5, 2010

Another silo is the City of Milwaukee City Attorney's office. As part of its efforts to enforce No Child Left Behind, DPI has adopted a corrective action plan that requires MPS schools to develop plans improve school attendance to take effect for second semester 2009-2010. Several committees were established to meet the goal. One committee reviewed MPS policies and Procedures to update them. It was a big job. To meet the deadline the committee often met twice a week. And one member delayed admittance to the hospital so that the draft could be delivered on time. The draft was sent to the City Attorney for review. They have been sitting on the draft for two months. MPS will miss the deadline because an external silo is not responsive.

Solving this problem (of an external silo) will require an amendment to Wis Stats Chapter 119. MPS by law must use the City Attorney, for legal advice. If we want the School Board to act responsibly we must remove barriers.

Another step in re-branding MPS would be to study the success of another locally elected body, the City of Milwaukee Common Council. Each alderman serves half as many constituents as a member of the school board. Wags suggest that garbage cans are twice as important as school children. House holders are not overwhelmed by City Hall. They simply call their alderman's office. On December 19 this author called a school board member. The call was returned 15 days later. In part to address their work load the School Board is in the process of changing from eight district members to nine. Wis Stats Chapter 119 should be changed to allow the board to increase its size to 15 district members. The board should redraw the district lines to be similar to the administrative clusters by which schools are grouped.

DPI gets credit for pushing MPS to group schools in administrative clusters. Sadly there is no one in charge of each cluster. Perhaps elected board members can assume this role.

With a larger board the elections could be staggered so that even with healthy turnover there would be more stability from year to year. Chapter 119 should be changed so that school board elections would be at times where there is greater voter turn out. And elections should be publicly financed.

This author believes that the Re-Branding of MPS is not well served by Senate Bill 405 which move governance away from forms familiar to the voters of Milwaukee. Most of the re-branding can be done by modifying the current board structure and strengthening the cluster model.

The immediate crisis of low performance should be addressed by a strengthened Senate Bill 437.

* Specific examples will be provided under separate cover.

During the middle third of the 20th century, Americans had impressive faith in their own institutions. It was not because these institutions always worked well. The Congress and the Federal Reserve exacerbated the Great Depression. The military made horrific mistakes during World War II, which led to American planes bombing American troops and American torpedoes sinking ships with American prisoners of war.

But there was a realistic sense that human institutions are necessarily flawed. History is not knowable or controllable. People should be grateful for whatever assistance that government can provide and had better do what they can to be responsible for their own fates.

That mature attitude seems to have largely vanished. Now we seem to expect perfection from government and then throw temper tantrums when it is not achieved. We seem to be in the position of young adolescents — who believe mommy and daddy can take care of everything, and then grow angry and cynical when it becomes clear they can't.

After Sept. 11, we Americans indulged our faith in the god of technocracy. We expanded the country's information-gathering capacities so that the National Security Agency alone now gathers four times more data each day than is contained in the Library of Congress.

We set up protocols to convert that information into a form that can be processed by computers and bureaucracies. We linked agencies and created new of-

fices. We set up a centralized focal point, the National Counterterrorism Center.

All this money and technology seems to have reduced the risk of future attack. But, of course, the system is bound to fail sometimes. Reality is unpredictable, and no amount of computer technology is going to change that. Bureaucracies are always blind because they convert the rich flow of personalities and events into

Overwrought reactions to the underwear bomber.

crude notations that can be filed and collated. Human institutions are always going to miss crucial clues because the information in the universe is infinite and events do not conform to algorithmic regularity.

Resilient societies have a level-headed understanding of the risks inherent in this kind of warfare.

But, of course, this is not how the country has reacted over the past week. There have been outraged calls for Secretary Janet Napolitano of the Department of Homeland Security to resign, as if changing the leader of the bureaucracy would fix the flaws inherent in the bureaucracy. There have been demands for

systemic reform — for more protocols, more layers and more review systems.

Much of the criticism has been contemptuous and hysterical. Various experts have gathered bits of Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab's biography. Since they can string the facts together to accurately predict the past, they thunder, the intelligence services should have been able to connect the dots to predict the future.

Dick Cheney argues that the error was caused by some ideological choice. Arlen Specter screams for more technology — full-body examining devices. "We thought that had been remedied," said Senator Kit Bond, as if omniscience could be accomplished with legislation.

Many people seem to be in the middle of a religious crisis of faith. All the gods they believe in — technology, technocracy, centralized government control — have failed them in this instance.

In a mature nation, President Obama could go on TV and say, "Listen, we're doing the best we can, but some terrorists are bound to get through." But this is apparently a country that must be spoken to in childish ways. The original line out of the White House was that the system worked. Don't worry, little Johnny.

When that didn't work the official line went to the other extreme. "I consider that totally unacceptable," Obama said. I'm really mad, Johnny. But don't worry, I'll make it all better.

Meanwhile, the Transportation Security Administration has to be seen doing

something, so it added another layer to its stage play, "Security Theater" — more baggage regulations, more in-flight restrictions.

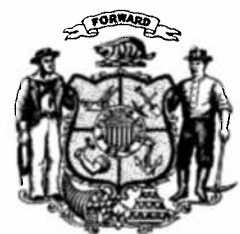
At some point, it's worth pointing out that it wasn't the centralized system that stopped terrorism in this instance. As with the shoe bomber, as with the plane that went down in Shanksville, Pa., it was decentralized citizen action. The plot was foiled by nonexpert civilians who had the advantage of the concrete information right in front of them — and the spirit to take the initiative.

For better or worse, over the past 50 years we have concentrated authority in centralized agencies and reduced the role of decentralized citizen action. We've done this in many spheres of life. Maybe that's wise, maybe it's not. But we shouldn't imagine that these centralized institutions are going to work perfectly or even well most of the time. It would be nice if we reacted to their inevitable failures not with rabid denunciation and cynicism, but with a little resiliency, an awareness that human systems fail and bad things will happen and we don't have to lose our heads every time they do. □

Bureaucracies are always blind because they convert the rich flow of personalities and events into crude notations that can be filed and collated. ... over the past 50 years we have concentrated authority in centralized agencies and reduced the role of decentralized citizen action.



WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE



SB 437?

MTEA/WEAC issue joint statement on proposed legislation to improve low-performing schools

Posted: 4/12/2010 1:05:00

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact:

Kristin Collett, MTEA

414.259.1990

Christina Brey, WEAC

608.298.2519

The Milwaukee Teachers' Education Association (MTEA) and the Wisconsin Education Association Council (WEAC) today expressed their support for proposed legislation aimed at improving low-performing schools. The legislation includes initiatives designed to increase student learning in the classroom, such as using a consistent and rigorous curriculum and meaningful collaboration between school leaders and staff.

Mike Langyel, president of the Milwaukee union, said, "Educators in Milwaukee want a teaching and learning environment where they and their students can be successful. This proposed legislation focuses on real reforms like meaningful professional development and support for school staff, comprehensive wrap-around services, increased educational opportunities for our students, strategic parent outreach and education programs, and robust levels of community and educator engagement in the decisions that impact public education in our city," he said. "These are very positive steps in the right direction."

Mary Bell, president of WEAC, the state's largest union of educators, agreed. "This is an example of what can be accomplished when communities, parents, educators and elected leaders work together on behalf of children," she said. "I am optimistic that this is moving forward and pleased that the process recognizes the importance of engaging educators."

"All along, Wisconsin's educators have embraced the idea of reform – but our students need meaningful, sustainable changes, not quick fixes," Bell added. "We believe this legislation can help all of us work together to achieve the changes our children need."

While the proposed legislation would impact only Milwaukee Public Schools currently, the measures provide a framework for struggling schools everywhere in Wisconsin.