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# JOEL KITCHENS

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 1<sup>ST</sup> ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

## Testimony on Assembly Bill 446

Assembly Committee on Education

Sept. 14, 2021

Thank you Chairman Thiesfeldt and committee members, for holding a public hearing and allowing me to testify on Assembly Bill 446. This bill strengthens state reading screening standards, provides more transparency and ensures teachers have the framework and tools needed to help every student reach reading proficiency.

Reading proficiency is one of the most important aspects of future success. Research shows that children who are poor readers by the end of third grade are likely to remain so for the rest of their lives and fall behind in other subjects. Altogether, poor readers are more likely to be high school dropouts, impoverished or end up in the criminal justice system. Approximately 90 percent of students who fail to graduate high school had trouble reading in third grade. Seven in 10 prison inmates are unable to read above a fourth-grade level

Wisconsin was once a national leader in literacy, but now our students are falling dangerously behind. According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress, 64% of Wisconsin fourth-graders are not proficient readers and 34 percent fail to meet the test's basic standard. Wisconsin ranks 42<sup>nd</sup> in reading achievement for black students, 27<sup>th</sup> for white students and 28<sup>th</sup> for Hispanic children. That is down from 11<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup>, respectively, in 1992.

Research also shows the importance of catching and intervening in situations where a student has reading difficulty. AB 446 strengthens state screening standards and provides the framework for helping every child learn to read. These provisions include:

1. Expanding required reading screening components from two to five
2. Increasing literacy assessment frequency from annually to three times per year
3. Requiring schools to notify parents of screener results within 15 days, including their score, percentile rank and if the child is identified as "at-risk", as well as if they have begun a reading intervention plan
4. Mandating that schools provide additional screening for students scoring below the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile or if a parent or teacher suspects the child has difficulty reading
5. Increasing transparency and accountability by requiring schools to report the number of students identified as at-risk at each assessment level as well as the number of students provided with literacy interventions

In short, AB 446 strengthens current literacy screening requirements and frequency to help identify struggling readers and get them the help they need early.

Once again, I appreciate the opportunity to testify today on Assembly Bill 446 and hope for your support of this proposal to assist our students in learning to read.

**STATE SENATOR KATHY BERNIER**  
TWENTY-THIRD SENATE DISTRICT



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**From: Senator Kathy Bernier**  
**To: Assembly Committee on Education**  
**Re: Testimony on Assembly Bill 446**  
**Relating to: Reading Readiness Assessments & Granting Rule-Making Authority**  
**Date: September 14, 2021**

Thank you Chairman Thiesfeldt and committee members for holding a hearing on Assembly Bill 446 today.

In Wisconsin, 64% of fourth graders are not proficient readers, according to the National Assessment of Educational Progress, with 34% failing to meet even the test's basic standard. Nationally, Wisconsin ranks dead last in reading achievement among black students, falling 31 places since 1992. In the same timeframe, reading achievement for Wisconsin white students has fallen from 6th to 27th, and Hispanic students from 1st to 28th. Wisconsin has a dire reading problem.

Reading is critical to future success. Children who don't learn to read by the end of third grade are likely to fall behind in other subjects and remain poor readers for the rest of their lives. Poor readers are more likely to drop out of high school, live in poverty, and end up in the criminal justice system. Of those who fail to gain a high school diploma, almost 90 percent experienced trouble reading in the third grade and seven in 10 prison inmates cannot read above a fourth-grade level.

Although Wisconsin was once a leader in literacy, our students now lag behind states where evidence-based approaches to early literacy have been adopted. Thankfully, over the past two decades, neuroscience – including groundbreaking research at UW-Madison - has allowed us to move beyond theory and guesswork, to identify exactly how children become skilled readers AND what effective literacy interventions look like for a child struggling to read. AB 446 aligns Wisconsin law with this growing body of research by strengthening state literacy screening standards, providing more transparency and ensuring teachers have the framework and tools needed to help every child become a proficient reader.

Under current law, Wisconsin schools are required to select and administer an annual literacy assessment to students in four-year-old kindergarten through 2nd grade. Screening assessments are typically only a few minutes in length, and consist of a teacher or volunteer using a flipchart or tablet to guide a child through a handful of exercises. Costs of these assessments are reimbursed by the state. Assembly Bill 446 strengthens these existing state screening standards and provides the framework and tools to help every child learn to read in five major ways:

- **Broadens Screening Components to Reflect Evidence-Based Best Practices:**  
Dozens of literacy screeners are available to schools, but not all assess what research

shows are the most critical components for reading. This bill expands the required screening components from two to five components to ensure schools are using high quality, evidence-based screeners. This helps teachers more easily identify reading difficulties AND select effective intervention strategies to help children overcome reading difficulties as early as possible.

- **Increases Assessment Frequency** from annually to three times per year to better evaluate student progress, build a baseline for each student, and catch reading difficulties earlier.
- **Keeps Parents Involved and Informed:** Too many parents do not find out their child is struggling to read until third grade (!) when they receive their child's Forward Exam results. AB 446 requires schools to notify parents of screener results within 15 days, including plain language about the child's score, percentile rank and if the child is identified as "at-risk". The bill also requires schools to inform parents if a child begins a reading intervention plan, and detail the interventions that will be used.
- **Creates Clear Direction to Get Kids Back on Track:** There are currently no requirements for when schools must provide additional literacy screening, and there are minimal requirements regarding reading interventions for students. This bill requires students who score below the 25th percentile on a literacy screener be given a more comprehensive screener to inform targeted, evidence-aligned interventions.
- **Increases Transparency and Accountability:** Under the bill, schools must annually report the number of students identified as at-risk at each assessment level and the number of students provided with literacy interventions. Statewide consistency across screening components, testing frequency and reporting will give districts, DPI and the legislature critical information to help us all make better informed policy decisions.

The bottom line is that research shows that the earlier we catch reading difficulties and begin simple interventions, the more successful those interventions will be. Strengthening our existing literacy screening laws will ensure that every struggling reader gets the help they need before they've fallen behind, lost self-esteem, and disengage from school and learning.

Lastly, it's important for me to note that Assembly Bill 446 isn't speculative, wishful thinking about what might work. In AB 446 we have drawn together the best of evidence-based screening practices from around the country that are being employed today to close achievement gaps and raise the bar for literacy achievement across the board. Diverse states like Mississippi are using high quality screeners and simple interventions as the foundation for going from nearly last in the nation in reading achievement to outperforming Wisconsin students in each and every demographic group. But you don't have to just take my word for it. We've brought with us today change makers from around the country and across our state who will speak to Wisconsin's dire literacy situation and the immense opportunity that this bill represents for our kids.

Thank you again for hearing this bill and I would be happy to take any questions.

## Wisconsin vs. Mississippi:

### 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Reading Scores-The National Assessment of Educational Progress

Rankings include all 50 states plus The District of Columbia and DoDEA. Not all states have data for different ethnicities.

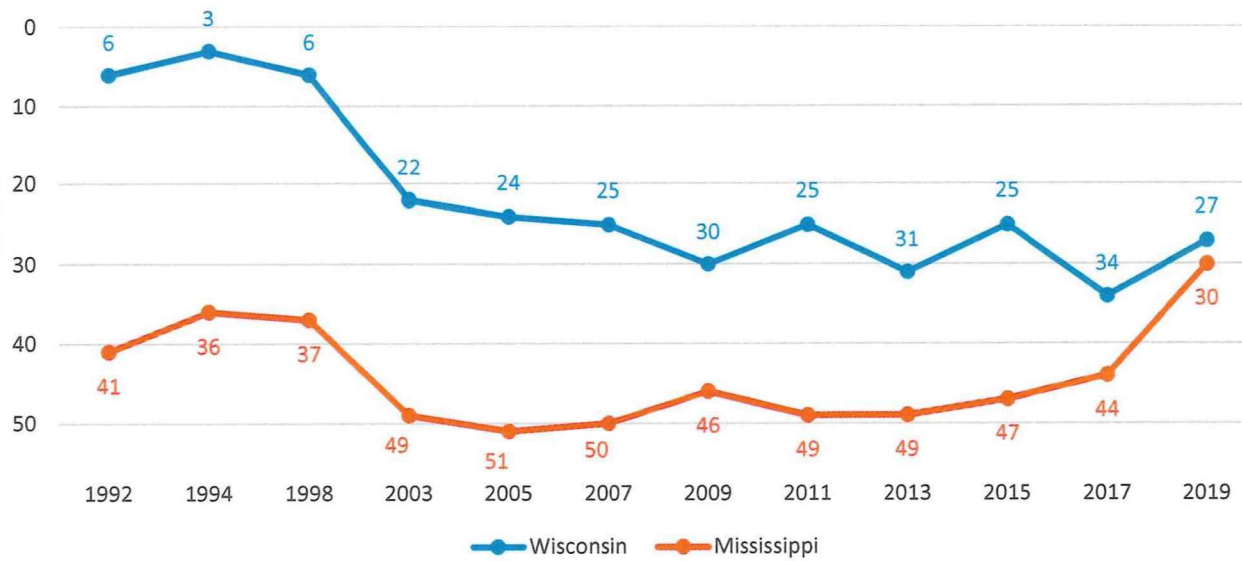
Ethnicity	Wisconsin 1992 NAEP Reading Scores State Rank	Mississippi 1992 NAEP Reading Scores State Rank	Ethnicity	Wisconsin 2019 NAEP Reading Scores State Rank	Mississippi 2019 NAEP Reading Scores State Rank
All Students	6th (42 reporting)	41st (42 reporting)	All Students	27th (52 reporting)	30th (52 reporting)
White	8th (42 reporting)	37th (42 reporting)	White	34th (52 reporting)	20th (52 reporting)
Black	11th (35 reporting)	32nd (35 reporting)	Black	42nd (42 reporting)	8th (42 reporting)
Hispanic	1st (21 reporting)	N/A	Hispanic	28th (49 reporting)	3rd (49 reporting)

### All Students Scale Score

Wisconsin's scale score is trending downward - we've fallen from 6th in the nation to 27th.

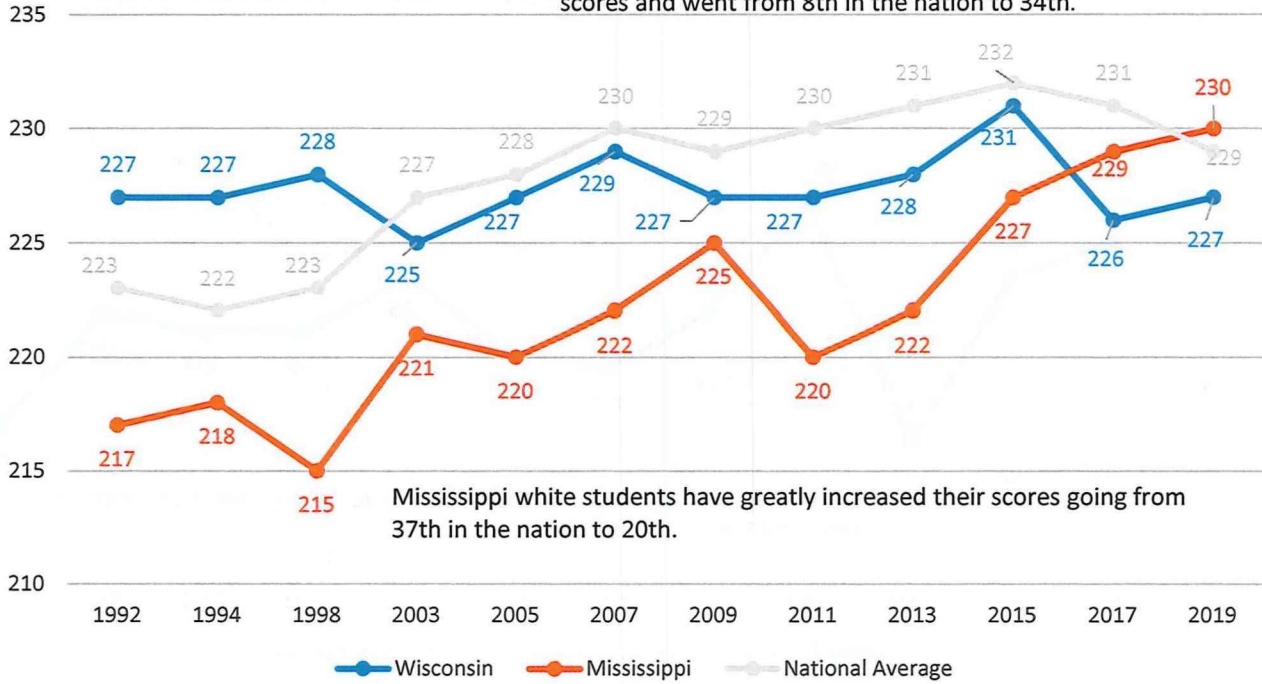


### All Students Rank out of 52 Reporting Districts

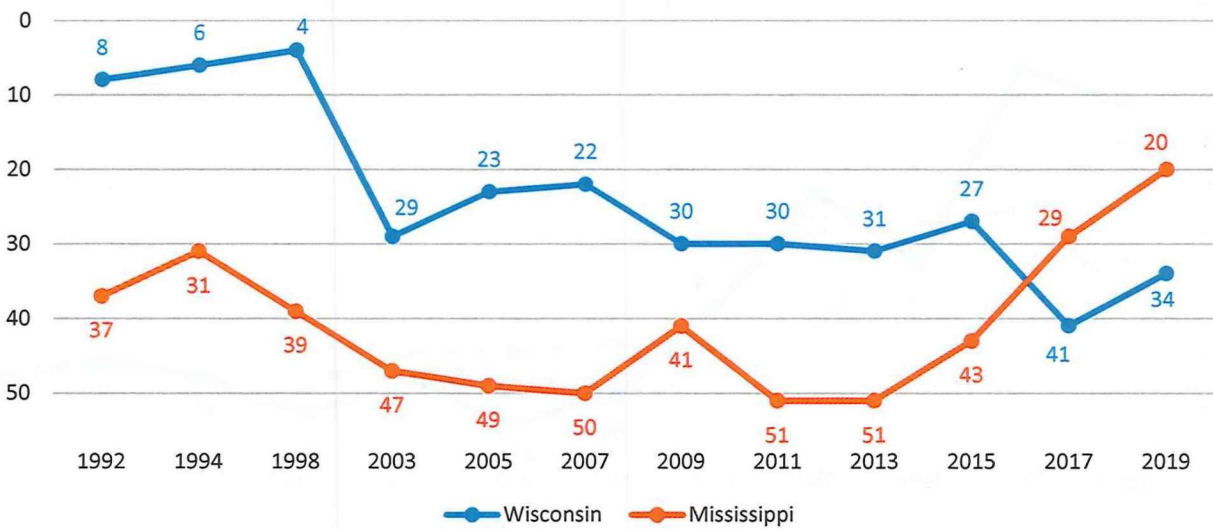


### White Students Scale Score

Wisconsin white students overall have not increased their scores and went from 8th in the nation to 34th.

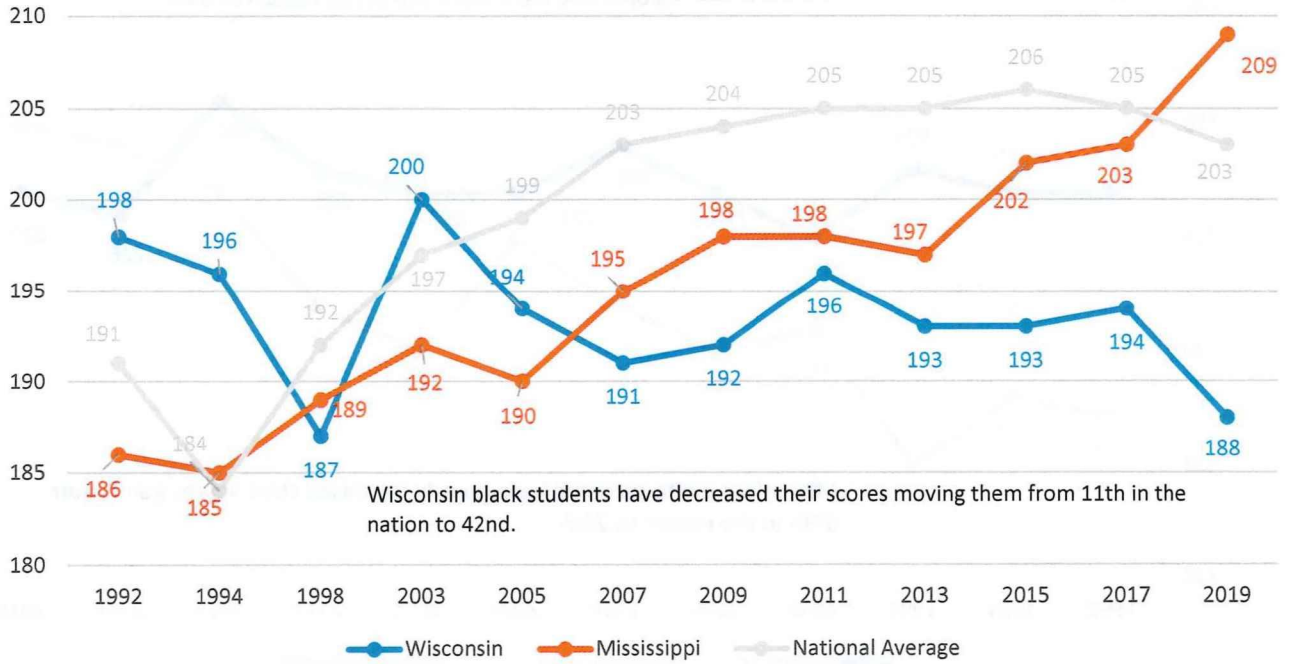


### White Students Rank out of 52 Reporting Districts

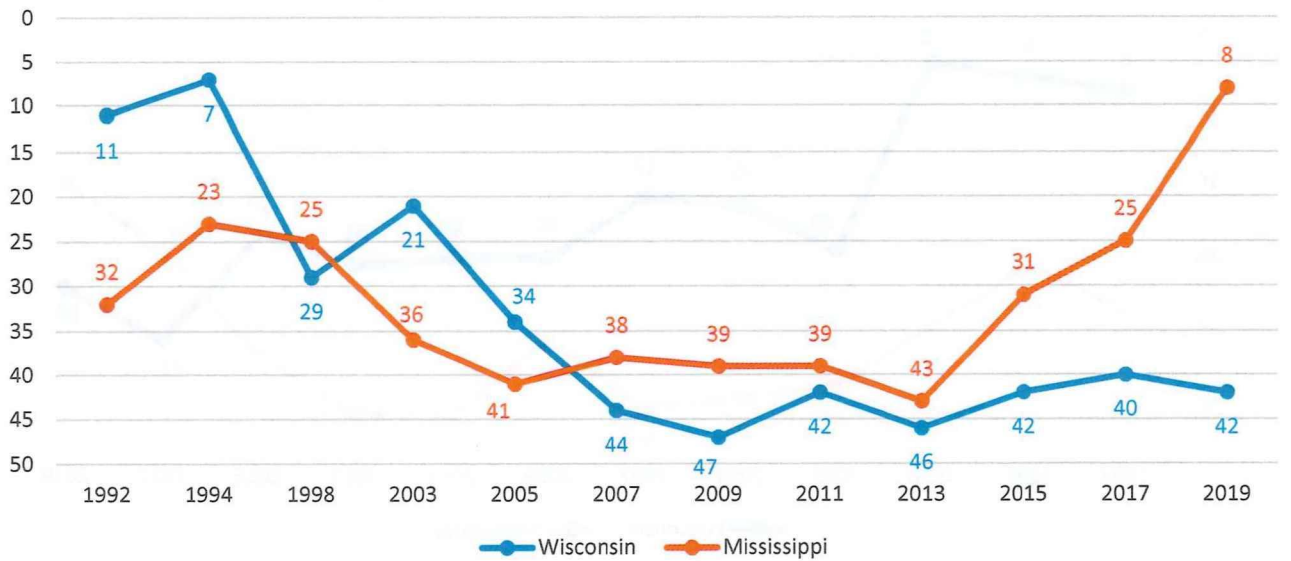


### Black Students Scale Score

Mississippi black students have greatly increased their scores and went from 32nd in the nation to 8th.



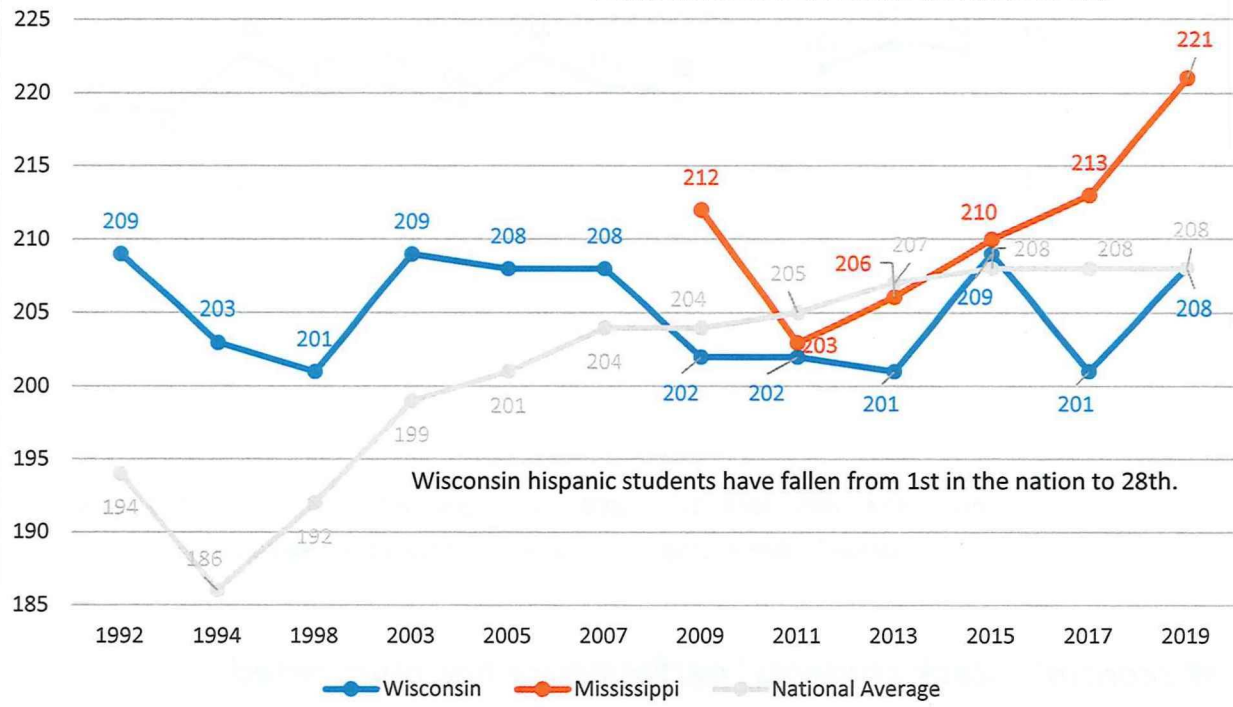
### Black Students Rank out of 52 Reporting Districts



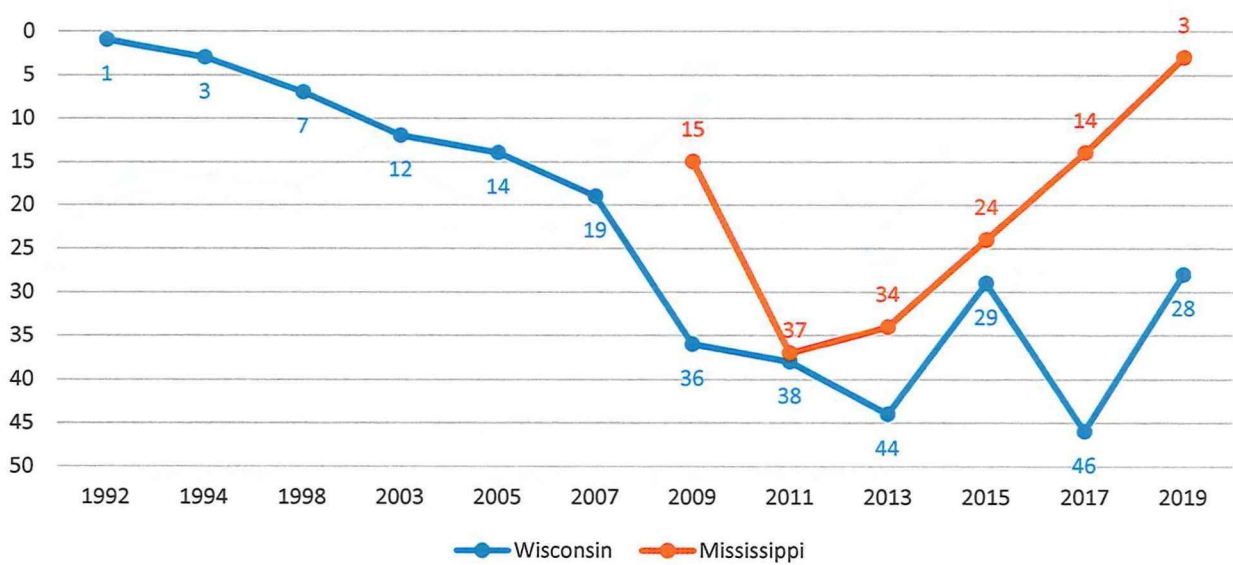


### Hispanic Students Scale Score

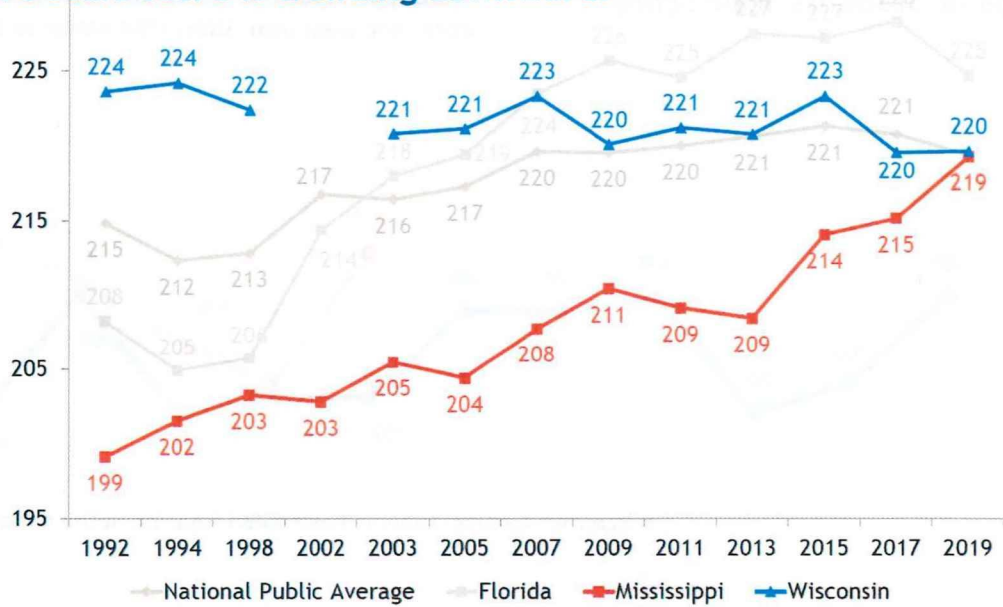
Mississippi hispanic students have increased their overall scores and went from 15th in the nation to 3rd.



### Hispanic Students Rank out of 52 Reporting Districts



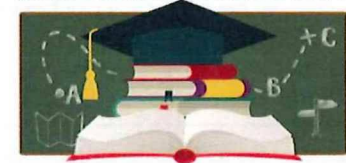
**Wisconsin's scale score is trending downward.**



**Wisconsin's black students' performance has plummeted.**



# ROADMAP TO READING SUCCESS ACT



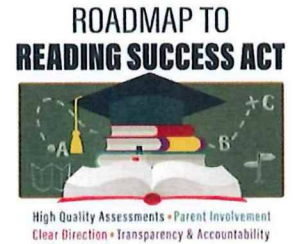
High Quality Assessments • Parent Involvement  
Clear Direction • Transparency & Accountability

## Current Law vs. Roadmap to Reading Success Act Early Literacy Screening Assessments, Intervention, Parental Notification and Reporting

	<u>Current Law Grades 4K-2</u>	<u>Universal Screener</u>	<u>Level 1 Screener</u>	<u>Level 2 Screener</u>	<u>Fundamental Skills Screening (4K)</u>
<b>Screening Components:</b>	The screening must include: 1. Phonemic awareness 2. Letter sound knowledge	The screening must include: 1. Phonemic awareness 2. Letter sound knowledge 3. Decoding (real and nonsense words) 4. Alphabet knowledge 5. Rapid Naming	The screening must include: 1. Phonemic awareness 2. Sound symbol recognition 3. Alphabet knowledge 4. Decoding skills 5. Rapid naming skills 6. Phonological awareness 7. Encoding 8. Family history survey	The screener must include: Standardized and norm referenced assessments 1. Phonemic awareness 2. Letter sound knowledge 3. Decoding 4. Rapid Naming 5. Alphabet knowledge 6. Phonological awareness 7. Word Recognition 8. Fluency 9. Spelling 10. Reading Comprehension 11. Listening comprehension 12. Family history survey	The screening must include: 1. Phonemic awareness 2. Letter sound knowledge
<b>Other states with same screening requirements:</b>	11 states: AR, IN, ME, MS, MO, NV, OR, PA, SC, RI, TN	9 states: AR, IN, ME, MS, MO, NV, OR, SC, TN	9 states: AR, IN, ME, MS, MO, NV, OR, SC, TN	AR, IN, MS (components may vary by state for level 3)	Most states do not screen in 4K
<b>Parent/Guardian Notification:</b>	Parent notification <a href="#">Wis. Stats. 118.016</a>	Parent notification to all parents within 15 days including percentile if available.	Parent notification to all parents within 15 days including percentile if available.	Parent notification to all parents within 15 days including percentile if available.	Parent notification to all parents within 15 days including percentile.

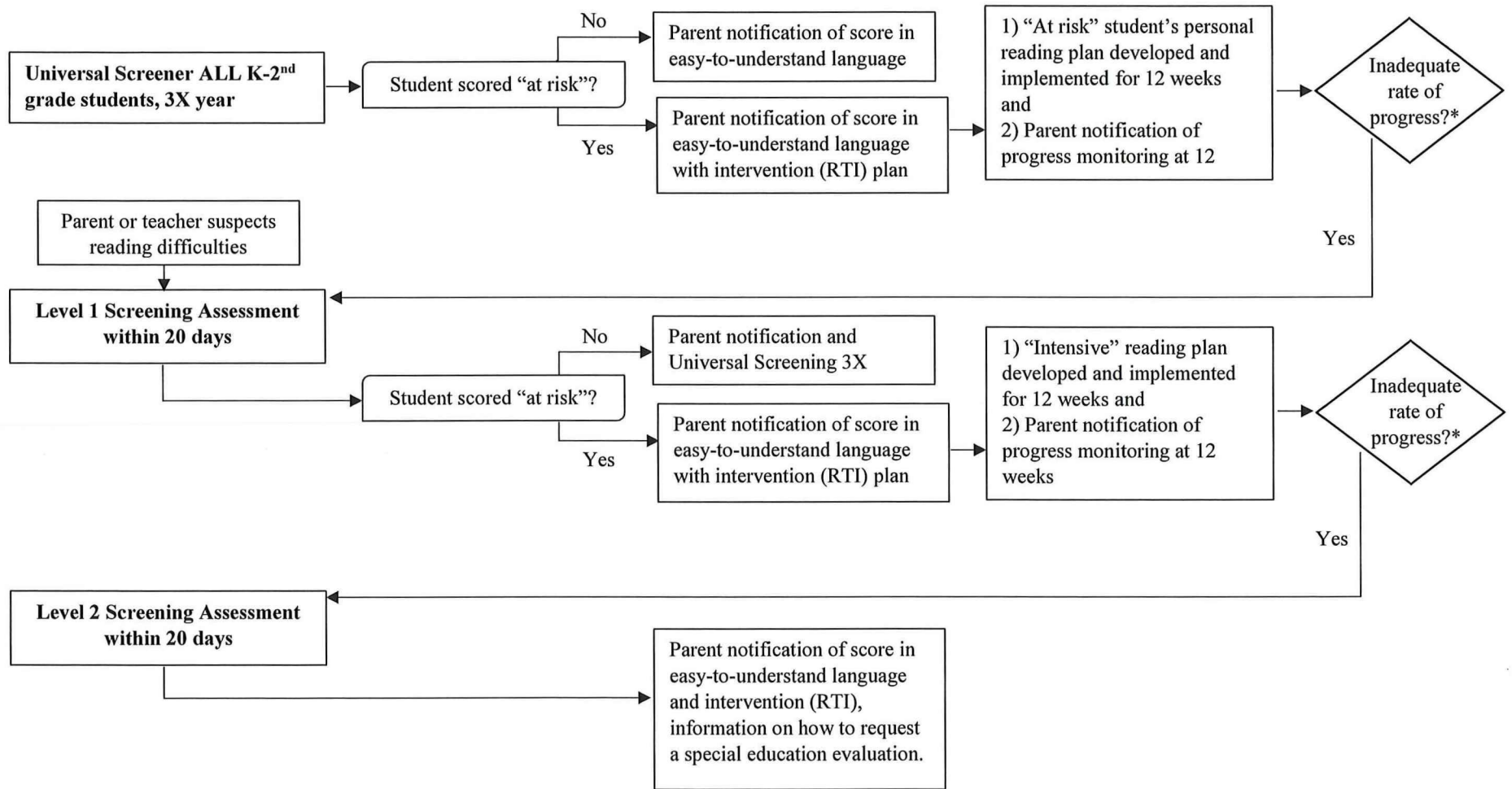
	<u>Current Law Grades 4K-2</u>	<u>Universal Screener</u>	<u>Level 1 Screener</u>	<u>Level 2 Screener</u>	<u>Fundamental Skills Screening (4K)</u>
<b>Other States with Parental Notification</b>		IN, MS, AR, TN, CO	AR, IN, MS	AR, IN, MS	
<b>Intervention requirements:</b> <a href="#">Wis. Stats. 121.02(1)(c)</a>	WI state statute requires intervention when determined to be "at risk". "At risk" is not defined.	At risk defined with parent notification. When a student is at risk: 1) Intervention 2) Personal Reading Plan	At risk defined with parent notification. When a student is at risk: 1) Intervention 2) Personal Reading Plan		
<b>Other states:</b>	IN, MS, CO	MS, CO	MS	MS	
<b>Personal Reading Plan</b>	Not required	<p>Details: Must include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specific early literacy deficiencies</li> <li>• Interventions used</li> <li>• How progress will be monitored</li> <li>• Strategies the parents are encouraged to use to help achieve grade level skills</li> </ul> <p>District must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide the interventions in the plan</li> <li>• Monitor the progress at least weekly</li> <li>• Provide a copy of plan to parent</li> <li>• Parent progress notification After 12 weeks</li> </ul>	<p>Details: Must include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specific early literacy deficiencies in the level 1 screener</li> <li>• Interventions used</li> <li>• How progress will be monitored</li> <li>• Strategies the parents are encouraged to use to help achieve grade level skills</li> </ul> <p>District must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide "intensive intervention" based on literacy deficiencies identified in the level 1</li> <li>• Provide the interventions in the plan</li> <li>• Monitor the progress at least weekly</li> <li>• Provide a copy of plan to parent</li> <li>• Parent progress notification After 12 weeks</li> </ul>		Not required

	<u>Current Law Grades 4K-2</u>	<u>Universal Screener</u>	<u>Level 1 Screener</u>	<u>Level 2 Screener</u>	<u>Fundamental Skills Screening (4K)</u>
<b>Other states with Reading Plans:</b>		MS, CO (CO only has a universal screener with no levels)	MS	MS	
<b>Move to next screener level:</b>	N/A	Level 1 given if the student has an inadequate rate of progress after 12 weeks of intervention.	Level 2 given if the student's teacher or parent suspects the student has characteristics of dyslexia or inadequate rate of progress after 12 weeks of intervention.	Level 3 given if the student's teacher or parent suspects the student has characteristics of dyslexia or inadequate rate of progress after 12 weeks of intervention.	N/A
<b>Possible screening assessments:</b>	WI frequently used: PALS, MAP, Star Early Literacy, iReady, District choice	DIBELS, Acadience, FastBridge, Lexercise, Star Early Literacy	Other states: AIMSweb, CBM, DIBELS, Fast, Lexercise, & Star Early Literacy	TILLS, WJ 4, GORT, CTOPP, WIAT 4, TOWRE (schools will have access to different comparable assessments/tests)	PALS, MAP, Star Early Literacy, iReady, District choice
<b>Reporting to WI DPI/ legislature</b>	Not required	Each School Board must annually report: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of students identified at risk</li> <li>• Number of students by grade who received interventions</li> <li>• Total number of students who received interventions</li> <li>• Name of assessments used for screening</li> </ul>	Each School Board must annually report: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of students identified at risk</li> <li>• Number of students by grade who received interventions</li> <li>• Total number of students who received interventions</li> <li>• Name of assessments used for screening</li> </ul>	Each School Board must annually report: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of students identified at risk</li> <li>• Number of students by grade who received interventions</li> <li>• Total number of students who received interventions</li> <li>• Name of assessments used for screening</li> </ul>	Must annually report: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of students identified at risk</li> </ul>
<b>Screening Reimbursement</b>	WI Schools were <u>reimbursed</u> \$1.7 million of \$2 million allocated in 2018.	Reimbursement when the district uses an approved screener and reporting requirements are met.			Reimbursement when the district uses an approved screener and reporting requirements are met.



# Roadmap to Reading Success Flow Chart

## Kindergarten – 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade



\*If students demonstrate an adequate rate of progress, parents are notified of scores and students resume the regular universal screening schedule.

Note: 4K students take a fundamental skills screener twice a year. Parents are notified in plain language of pupil's score, score by assessment category, percentile rank, and description of skills assessed.

Annual report submitted to WI DPI and WI Legislature:

- Number of at-risk students
- Number of students undergoing intervention
- The assessment used for screening

September 10, 2021  
Steven P. Dykstra, PhD  
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stevedykstra@sbcglobal.net

Dear Chairman Thiesfeldt and members of the Committee,

Had my schedule allowed I would have appeared in person at the hearing for AB 446. I have been involved in the effort to improve early reading achievement for many years. I served on the Read to Lead Task Force, the Dyslexia Study Committee, and have testified on past legislation. Only long-planned travel keeps me away, now. Please accept these written comments in my absence.

Rather than commenting on the particulars of AB 446, I will instead do my best to briefly explain why we need legislation and then attempt to inoculate you against the various false arguments you are likely to hear in opposition to this bill.

**We need this legislation because:**

- Wisconsin 4<sup>th</sup> graders read very poorly compared to their peers. In the early 90's we ranked as high as 3<sup>rd</sup> in the nation. Since then, our ranking has plummeted. We aren't doing any worse, but dozens of states have passed us by. Those states have paid more attention to the science of reading than we have.
  - Our poor performance at 4<sup>th</sup> grade is across the board, not limited to one demographic group. In fact, in many recent years every group (white, black, poor, male, etc) and subgroup (poor white males, non-poor black females, etc) performed below the national average for that group. On a few occasions, one group has barely exceeded their average for a year, only to fall back on the next biannual exam. Very few states do so poorly, and if we balance our relative demographic advantages (racial make-up, poverty, etc) with the rest of the country we see that our true ranking is probably in the low 40's, the bottom 20%, and has been for some time.
  - Every state that has passed us, and particularly those that have made the greatest gains, have done so by embracing the science of reading that is the foundation of AB 446, and stepping away from discredited theories and philosophies that are deeply entrenched in Wisconsin. No state has climbed to the top by doing some version of what we've done for 40 years, and neither will we.
  - This isn't going to solve itself. Whether you believe in protecting public schools and letting them each decide what is best, or school choice and relying on free markets to find the best answer, on this issue at least, both have failed. We need to act.
  - The financial cost of our failures is in the many billions of dollars.
  - The human cost of our failures is incalculable.
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## What you are likely to hear, and what you need to know:

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- *We are following the science/We've got a different science/The science is too incomplete:* These arguments are all a smoke screen to hide the fact that while no one has all the answers, and yes, the science is always incomplete, one general approach to reading fits the large body of science we do have a lot better than what we've been doing and, not surprisingly, gets better results. You should also know that while the WSRA, a major group opposing this legislation, is modestly more accepting of the science than they were 20 years ago, they are still far behind that science. Only a few years ago, during a public meeting of the dyslexia study committee, I asked leaders of the WSRA if they would step away from their past positions that phoneme awareness is unimportant and screening for it is a waste of time that can actually do harm. They refused. To put that in some context for those of you less familiar with the science of reading, it would be like the leading science educators suggesting the Earth may indeed be flat and our sun orbits it. That position and others from the WSRA are a big reason we do so poorly. Even if they reluctantly step away from them now, you must keep those recent positions in mind as you consider their current advice. You can follow them and their record of positions, or you can abide the National Reading Panel, the National Academy of Sciences, and the collected wisdom of hundreds of top scientists.
  - *Sounds and letters are just part of how children learn to read:* True, but they are an important and often neglected part, especially in Wisconsin. And be careful, this truism is often used to cloak a falsehood, the claim that there are multiple systems and cues children use to decode or solve unknown words. Know this: sounds and letters are a necessary part of a complex process known as orthographic mapping by which new and unfamiliar words become familiar and automatic. Hundreds of studies have shown that teaching phonics, phonology, and other skills explicitly and systematically improves automaticity and reading success. No published study ever showed that teaching those other cues for word recognition improves anything. In fact, teaching those other cues for word recognition has never been a studied variable in any published research. Teaching them is based solely on a theory that has been discredited for well over 40 years.
  - *We may lag in 4<sup>th</sup> grade, but we do better later (when it matters most):* Our ranking does improve later, in 8<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade. After digging ourselves into a hole, our advantageous demographics help us climb out, but at what cost? More challenged states like Mississippi, states that have been at this only a short while, feel the weight of their demographic disadvantages as children grow older. Is that our plan, to rely on crippling poverty and racism elsewhere to improve our position? And what about states like Massachusetts who get ahead of us and stay there? Finally, ask yourself, where would our 8<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> graders be if we got them off to a better start?
  - *We must be careful to apply these reforms only to the relatively few children who need them. This isn't for everyone:* Every state that has embraced the science of reading in the hope of raising up kids at the bottom, has seen an explosion of performance at the top where the number of children at the advanced level more than doubles. The same science that gets a non-reader reading, turns good readers into great readers.
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- *This is all an illusion. It isn't the science, they're just holding kids back in third grade:* A very few states (Mississippi, Florida, maybe one or two more) have mandatory retention laws. But very few students are retained, too few to account for the improved performance, and retention rates decline as the science is implemented because kids read better. And what about the explosion of advanced readers, or the millions of improved readers in states that don't have mandatory retention? This isn't an illusion.
- *This approach is a scheme to favor one school of thought over another as a way of funneling money to certain publishers and organizations:* This legislation favors proven theories and approaches over failed and discredited ones. It favors data over guesswork. It favors science over philosophy. That's the kind of decision making that put astronauts on the moon, eliminated many diseases, and continues to advance healthcare every day. As for who may profit, someone always profits. Groups and corporations have profited from our failures. They are profiting now. They will speak against this bill and their lobbyists will visit your offices. I suggest you ignore them. So long as no one puts their thumb on the scale to improperly shape the decision for the purpose of funneling money to favored groups, so long as we make these decisions based on merit and not influence, the profits will go where they should.
- *This is yet another disrespectful slap in the face for teachers:* Nothing could be further from the truth. Teachers want to be effective. They want their students to succeed. Most teachers have no idea that the way they teach reading has been heavily influenced by discredited philosophies, and for the most part they don't care. They just want the tools and training that work best. Expecting every teacher, school, and district to figure this out for themselves is disrespectful and unrealistic. They don't have the time or resources. Well-founded regulations and guidance take some of that burden off teachers and schools, leaving them more time and resources for other things. It is how we treat medicine, engineering, the building trades and many other professions. Doctors don't each decide their own criteria for diabetes or hypertension. Engineers don't each decide their own standards for the thickness of a concrete roadway or the size of a steel beam. Plumbers and electricians don't make up their own rules for the size of a pipe or the gauge of a wire. Standards of practice relieve professionals of certain decisions and the research they would require, freeing them to apply their experience and expertise to the task of executing those standards. Far too often, we have disrespectfully expected teachers and schools to answer questions and solve problems we should have handled for them, as we do for other professions.
- *There are other ways to assess early reading that are just as, or even more effective than the approach mandated by this legislation:* This claim is a reference to various forms of running records, subjective assessments of reading performance that are closely linked to ineffective instructional philosophies. Trying to find essential reliability and validity data on running records can be like hunting unicorns, and a recent review of those assessments found that using them to identify struggling students and plan intervention is about as effective as flipping a coin. Enough said.
- *This is all political:* Maybe it is, but it shouldn't be. I am a liberal, probably a socialist in many ways. I was appointed to Read to Lead by former Governor Walker, for whom I never voted. Pictures of me with Barrack Obama and his personal letter to me hang in

my home office, over the computer I used to do work for the dyslexia study committee, to which I was appointed by the majority party, with whom I often work on this issue while opposing them on nearly all others. This issue is only political if we make it so. Let's not, and to the extent we already have, let's stop.

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Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns you may have about this bill or the many wider issues it attempts to address. If I can't answer your questions, I'll get you to the people who can.

Sincerely,

Steven P. Dykstra, PhD  
Licensed Psychologist  
Advisory Board Member, CORELearn  
Advisory Board Member, International Foundation for Effective Reading Instruction

Date: 9/13,2021

Re: Support of AB 446

To: Rep. Thiesfeldt, Rep. Kitchens, Rep. Jagler, Rep. Wittke, Rep. Ramthun, Rep. Wichgers, Rep. Mursau, Rep. Duchow, Rep. Rozar, Rep. Pope, Rep. Hebl, Rep. Considine, Rep. Vruwink, Rep. Myers

Dear Representatives:

My name is Shawn Anthony Robinson PhD and I have dyslexia. I was not identified until my junior year of high school and graduated reading at an elementary level. I am not a 4k-2 parent or educator, but I teach adult learners at Madison College who exhibit many characteristics of dyslexia. These adults were never identified or screened by the educational system and just passed through a system that eventually failed them. Thus, as many as 40 million students leave high school without all the reading skills, they need to pursue post-secondary education.

At Madison College, we have created and launched a Word analysis course that offers students a rare opportunity to improve decoding and encoding skills and uses a simultaneous multi-sensory approach to teach word meaning. The course objectives are to improve word recognition and decoding, vocabulary, and morphology. The course is appropriate for students with reading difficulties, diagnosed learning disabilities, who speak English as a Second Language, and High School Completion students. It is also appropriate for anyone who self identifies that they need support with improving their reading skills.

We are also using the SARA (Study Aid & Reading Assessment) to screen adults for characteristics of dyslexia and provide them with evidence base reading instruction that is grounded in the Science of Reading. This course is currently free and first in the State of Wisconsin at a 2-year college.

The demand for the class is high and we ended opening another section and now are going to offer the course to other institutions across the state. We are providing access to high quality decoding and encoding instruction that these students would not otherwise have within the Wisconsin Prek-12 educational system.

To avoid the wait and fail model and addressing their learning needs later in life, screening students sooner would avoid many later problems as they navigate the educational system, and potentially narrow the various disparities we face in Wisconsin that include, but are not limited to unemployment, incarceration, health, and academic rates.

Passing this bill will eliminate the many issues listed previously as well as provide the necessary reading skills these students need. All the components of the Screening Assessments and Interventions Bill will help students across the entire state of Wisconsin and move us forward in the right direction!

*I am asking all the assembly members to support and vote YES on AB 446!*

Shawn Anthony Robinson PhD  
1701 Wright St, Madison, WI 53704  
Madison Area Technical College, Address  
sarobinson1@madisoncollege.edu



WE ARE:  
**GRACE.**

**To:** Assembly Committee on Education  
**From:** Kimberly Desotell, President, Green Bay Area Catholic Education (GRACE) and Leadership Team Members of GRACE  
**Date:** September 10, 2021  
**Re:** Support for Assembly Bill 446 related to Reading Achievement and Assessment

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Dear Members of the Committee,

We are contacting you as professionals with the Green Bay Area Catholic Education (GRACE) School System, the second largest private school system in the State of Wisconsin. We are committed to education in our fine state and felt the need to advocate for support of Assembly Bill 446 related to Reading Achievement and Assessment. Thank you for taking the time to read our testimony as we have a vested interest in education throughout our state. We need strong public and strong private schools in our state!

Preparing young students for tomorrow is of great urgency - this begins with reading development! Assembly Bill 446 merely outlines practices of good teaching and principles of strong learning pedagogy that should be present in each and every school throughout our state.

The Bill outlines the need for:


- 1) Tighter guidelines and parameters on measuring reading readiness, fluency and growth
- 2) Educational practices that require communication and partnership with parents and
- 3) Time bound progress monitoring and reports to ensure learning gaps are closed in our youngest readers


All of these practices have been common components of private education for decades and beyond. They are not asking for procedures that require extraneous work, tasks or even funding. Private schools, such as our Catholic schools, lean heavily on parental partnership and engagement, regular progress monitoring and the utilization of strong assessment tools to direct and alter instruction as we work toward learning mastery for each and every child. These are all practices and principles of good, solid teaching - it's that simple!


Bill 446 merely supports good practices that are currently happening in the best classrooms across our state. When you review progress in high performing schools and dynamic classrooms involving our best and brightest teachers, these practices are already being conducted regularly.

GRACE Schools firmly support Bill 446 because of the potential impact it can have on raising the tide for each and every young reader in every public and charter school in Wisconsin. Please join us by supporting this Bill to ensure good, quality education is occurring consistently and with fidelity in every classroom.


Thank you for consideration of our testimony.

  
Kimberly A. Desotell  
President, GRACE

  
Crystal Blahnik  
Principal, GRACE St. Bernard Catholic School

  
Laura Blicharz  
Curriculum Coordinator, GRACE

  
James Cullen  
Director of Student Services, GRACE

  
Kay Franz  
Director of Teaching & Learning, GRACE  
Principal, GRACE Father Allouez Catholic School

#### **ABOUT GRACE**

*GRACE stands for Green Bay Area Catholic Education and is a nine-school system that provides excellence in preschool through eighth-grade education and serves the 23 Catholic parishes within the Greater Green Bay community. GRACE schools range in offerings and locations, and each has its own distinct history, focus and parish connections. GRACE is among the largest Catholic school systems in the state of Wisconsin. To learn more, visit [www.gracesystem.org](http://www.gracesystem.org).*



Joshua Aaron King  
150 Jwana Circle Oregon, WI. 53575  
September 11, 2021

Re: Support of AB 446

To: Rep. Thiesfeldt, Rep. Kitchens, Rep. Jagler, Rep. Wittke, Rep. Ramthun, Rep. Wichgers, Rep. Mursau, Rep. Duchow, Rep. Rozar, Rep. Pope, Rep. Hebl, Rep. Considine, Rep. Vruwink, Rep. Myers

Dear Representatives,

It was my pleasure recently to organize and host a celebration for all first responders and corrections personnel who reside in the Town and Village of Oregon, WI. These women and men go above and beyond to keep our community safe, serving in ways that allow our community to fully pursue family and work. While the event was a unanimous success, I was shocked and more than concerned to hear the unconscionable real-world facts regarding abysmal literacy rates in our community's population that are housed in our corrections facilities. In conversations with the wardens at the Oakhill Corrections Institution in Oregon, WI., Clinton Bryant, Warden, and Deputy Warden Paul Ninnemann, each Warden shared with me the wonderful work they provide in trying to rehabilitate and educate those in our community that are incarcerated so that upon completion of their sentence they are enabled to re-enter our community in a productive and successful role. When I asked what, in their years of experience in criminal justice, was driving the population of youth to get involved in crime the answer they provided shocked me. "The average reading level for our incarcerated population is 4<sup>th</sup> grade", reported by both Wardens. What this fact translates into is that most of those committing crimes who become jailed in Oregon cannot read for comprehension and therefore cannot keep pace with their peers through elementary school or beyond. Inability to move along with their age cohort through school creates near unsurmountable challenges for those students to succeed in our school system. However, when these inmates were children there were years of opportunities to address the most fundamental aspect of maturing into a contributing, productive citizen...the ability to read, comprehend written information and then act on the information they have read. It is not surprising to know that the overwhelming common thread in our local corrections facility is the inability of inmates to read, and presumably the missed opportunity and action to assess reading disabilities early in their lives.

In speaking with dyslexia and literacy experts it's widely known that beyond 4<sup>th</sup> grade reading lies a world where comprehension and interpretation are required to advance in our society and when we are not applying proven phonics-based education or reading disability testing, ex. dyslexia, we are assigning our most vulnerable youth a future of resorting to crime or mayhem to provide for themselves. If we are not investing purposefully in addressing these literacy issues in Oregon and

beyond then we will continue to keep our corrections facilities full when that need not be a pre-determined fate.

“We work in a profession that would love to one day shut our doors because we don’t have enough inmates to justify our being here”, Warden Bryant also said to me at the recent first responder and corrections celebration. Young men and women in our area are being failed by an apathetic literacy and dyslexia testing regimen. This is not new information to those pursuing worthwhile changes to our testing and mitigation strategies, however the active barriers put in place by education agencies and politically minded actors are shepherding youth into the correctional system and therefore earmarking them mentally as inferior, and societally as non-contributors. This is a disgrace, and it is in all of our best interest for you to address the education literacy program with a passion to not only correct a poorly run and organized program in our state, but also to prevent every child from following a preventable path to incarceration. “The average literacy level in Oakhill Correctional Institute is 4<sup>th</sup> grade”. Act now, use your moral and political strength to implement proven testing and educational steps that will impact your community, your county, and your state for the positive.

Our community unanimously supports AB 446 because it represents a necessary action to identify those with literacy challenges at the earliest and most appropriate time where reading comprehension development can be impacted. Please support AB 446 with your vote to help our community’s children reach their true potential.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Josh King". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Joshua Aaron King

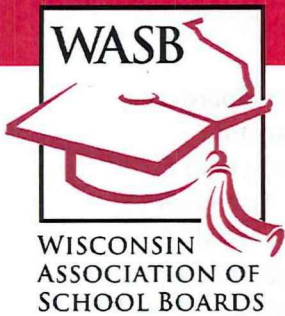
Dear Rep/Senator ...

Please vote for Bill 446 in order to help children who struggle to read. As you know, reading is critical for succeeding in school and obtaining a meaningful job in the future in order to be a productive member of society. As a pediatrician, I often see the results of improper education and delayed identification of early learners who struggle to read. It is difficult to maintain high self-esteem and motivation when you are not successful in elementary school and success requires reading. Early identification and science based education of dyslexic readers is required in order to help them obtain reading and spelling skills. Currently, this is not being done in most school districts. Students are not identified until at least 3rd or 4th grade. By that time, it is very difficult if not impossible to rebuild the pathways in the brain to become a fluent reader. This handicaps students for life and they rarely perform to their abilities. Please do not let this continue happening. Please vote for Bill 446.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Catherine F. Reuter, MD, FAAP.  
Medford, WI





122 W. WASHINGTON AVENUE, MADISON, WI 53703  
PHONE: 608-257-2622 • TOLL-FREE: 877-705-4422  
FAX: 608-257-8386 • WEBSITE: WWW.WASB.ORG

JOHN H. ASHLEY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

TO: Members, Assembly Committee on Education  
FROM: Dan Rossmiller, WASB Government Relations Director  
DATE: September 14, 2021  
RE: Opposition to Assembly Bill 446

We want to begin by being clear that the WASB believes that: a) this bill is a well-intentioned effort to improve reading instruction in our schools and b) improvements are, in fact, needed. We also want to be clear that WASB members have adopted no resolutions addressing specific strategies for reading instruction or how best to address reading difficulties other than supporting the creation of a dyslexia guidebook.

Our concerns with Assembly Bill 446 are based in large part on local control arguments, including our members' directive to oppose unfunded state mandates and their preference for local control and flexibility. This bill is a massive overhaul of the reading readiness program, including a laundry list of stringent and prescriptive new state mandates relating to screening, assessments, interventions, parental notifications and reporting requirements. These new mandates are not only likely to be costly but are very specific, even dictating what companies and products must be approved for use. No funding is provided to address the additional testing, staffing and notice requirements imposed by the bill. Of equal concern, no funding is provided to address professional development, instructional coaching or curricular/instructional materials that are needed to really move the needle on reading performance.

We thank Sen. Bernier and her staff for allowing us the opportunity to meet with a representative from Excellence in Education National, Inc. out of Tallahassee, FL and hear arguments for supporting this approach. One of the primary arguments was that this approach was adopted in Mississippi and their reading test scores have improved significantly.

The problem with comparing states in the K-12 realm is that everything else is not equal. States fund K-12 education differently, have different demographics, and different approaches to students failure to perform at grade level, etc. As an example, Mississippi retains (holds back) kids in third grade if they do not score sufficiently on a reading exit exam and, in fact, holds back more students than any other state [according to the Fordham Institute](#). Would Wisconsin have to do the same to see similar improvement?

Another key takeaway from our meeting was that for these initiatives to be successful, the education community down to the teachers in the classroom must buy into the approach being adopted. We couldn't agree more but fail to see how a legislative mandate lacking bipartisan support would accomplish this. It is our understanding that the strategies mandated in this proposal are not currently supported by all reading experts, specialists, and associations in the state. Given that reality, and despite the moral imperative to improve reading proficiency in Wisconsin, it is hard to see how this proposal, in its current form, will achieve the kind of buy-in needed for this initiative to succeed.

Wisconsin has adopted two major reading proposals in the recent past that came out of the bipartisan Read to Lead task force led by former Gov. Scott Walker and current Gov. Tony Evers (as state superintendent). Reading readiness assessments were mandated by legislation in 2011 along with a requirement, starting in 2014, that aspiring teachers pass the Fundamentals of Reading Test (FoRT) as a way to demonstrate they know how to teach reading before they get a teaching license. At that time, the state we were trying to emulate with those requirements was Massachusetts. Regrettably, neither of these mandates has had the impact that was hoped for, or we wouldn't be here today. It leads us to question if we would want to "triple-down" on this approach.

Wis. Stats., [section 118.016](#), currently requires each pupil enrolled in 4-year-old kindergarten to 2nd grade in a school district or in a charter school to be annually assessed for reading readiness utilizing a screener selected locally that must evaluate whether a pupil possesses phonemic awareness and letter sound knowledge.

Since the reading readiness assessments were mandated on school districts, the statutes that were originally written to direct schools to a certain provider's assessment have changed several times. First, the statutory requirements were worded to require districts to use the Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS) assessment. Then, they were expanded to allow more flexibility to use other assessments in addition to PALS. Last session, opinion shifted to yet another assessment, Predictive Assessment of Reading (PAR) and legislation was introduced to require that screener. This bill again would change the definition for an approved screener as well as adding two new screeners (level 1 & 2) with different definitions. The bill also mandates that certain testing products be approved by the DPI for use in schools.

We are concerned with the staff time required to administer up to triple the number of assessments and the disruptive nature of continually changing assessments. We are interested in knowing whether and to what extent schools would be able to continue using their current assessments. If schools have to scrap their current reading readiness assessments, valuable longitudinal data could be lost, making it harder for schools to evaluate their reading curriculum and instructional practices.

More testing equates to less time spent on instructing students. Current reading assessments already identify which students are struggling readers and teachers know who these students are. These students need more time from teachers on direct reading interventions, and teachers need the time to create intervening strategies, personalized, for different students. More time devoted to test administration has the unintended consequence of adversely impacting instruction in reading and other content areas for *all* students, as teachers simply have less time to prepare for, and to deliver, instruction when more time is committed to testing.

We note that there is growing skepticism about the value or worth of the FoRT exam as an indicator of actual teacher performance in teaching reading and little credible evidence that passing the FoRT exam, by itself, improves teacher performance or produces any positive impact on students' literacy skills or reading achievement. There is also recognition that the FoRT exam is likely culturally biased and creates a barrier to teachers of color entering the profession. This unintended consequence is in direct conflict with one of the key strategies for addressing our racial achievement gap.

Attesting to skepticism about the effectiveness of the FoRT exam, there have been bipartisan bills passed and introduced to eliminate the FoRT test requirement in certain circumstances. Last session, 2019 Act 44 created an alternative to the requirement for special education teachers and this session, 2021 SB 114 would waive the requirement during a public health emergency.

We bring up these examples only to illustrate that “cherry picking” certain requirements from other states that have shown improvement in their reading scores will not necessarily translate to success in Wisconsin. More than additional testing is needed.

It is important to note that that local school districts have not just been sitting on their hands, they've been reevaluating their curricula and instruction and trying new strategies to improve reading. They are doing their best to equip teachers to address the problems via professional development, instructional coaches, evaluating what is working (or isn't working) with particular children and adjusting accordingly.

We **do** applaud the legislative authors of the proposal for their desire to improve literacy among students in Wisconsin's schools. We also empathize with the desire to do *something* via legislation. That being said, there are no magic wands or easy answers, or we would have done it already.

We encourage further conversations about what we can do in our schools to improve reading readiness. Realistically, those conversations need to address targeting resources and developing strategic interventions beyond simply mandating additional testing. We agree that something needs to be done but we also need to do the hard work getting buy-in to approaches that have shown promise with a broad array of stakeholders including teachers, reading specialists, administrators and school board members, and parents. So far, that consensus has eluded us in Wisconsin, yet we need to continue to try to find common ground and be willing to compromise to find a plan for change that we can all get behind.



Decoding Dyslexia WI

<https://www.decodingdyslexiawi.org/>

[decodingdyslexiawi@gmail.com](mailto:decodingdyslexiawi@gmail.com)

Date: September 12, 2021

Re: Support of AB 446 An Act to amend 115.38 (1) (a) and 121.02 (1) (c) 3.; to repeal and recreate 118.016; and to create 119.44 (2) (bm) of the statutes; Relating to: reading readiness assessments and granting rule-making authority. (FE)

To: Rep. Thiesfeldt, Rep. Kitchens, Rep. Jagler, Rep. Wittke, Rep. Ramthun, Rep. Wichgers, Rep. Mursau, Rep. Duchow, Rep. Rozar, Rep. Pope, Rep. Hebl, Rep. Considine, Rep. Vruwink, Rep. Myers

Dear Representatives:

Decoding Dyslexia WI is a grassroots, volunteer organization dedicated to supporting families with dyslexia. We have over 1,000 members across WI working to help students who struggle to learn to read. Parents are often told to wait and trust the school because all the students in that class are struggling. It is difficult to spot the students with dyslexia and a possible reading disability in the general classroom because overall literacy skills including reading, writing and spelling are so poor. We often have parents reach out to us concerned about dyslexia when their student is struggling to read, but not all of these students have dyslexia. Some have just not been taught literacy in an effective, direct and explicit way.

The fact is that students who are identified as at risk for reading failure early and receive quality intervention are more likely to make substantial gains and stay out of special education. This bill is not a special education bill. This bill is to get students help as quickly as possible to build reading skills and keep them from a reading disability. We aim to stop the continued cycle of schools collecting data through the reading readiness screening and failing to act. Failing to notify parents in a timely manner. Failing to give parents scores in a way they can understand. Failing to provide the proper intervention, as required by WI law. Failing to provide parents intervention data.

As an organization, we still have parents who don't know about the required reporting of the reading readiness data or who cannot access their student's data. As an example, our daughter was screened using the PALS in 2013. I have attached samples of her writing and PALS scores showing she never reached benchmark. This is after she had gone through 4k with all the added help the teacher had time to give her, summer reading

program between 4K and Kindergarten and months of “extra help” or intervention after the initial screening fall of Kindergarten. We were told she was “fine” and there wasn’t anything extra we could do at home to help. We were unaware of the PALS screening scores until 8 years after the assessments when I requested ALL of my daughter’s records. We would have taken stronger action if we had seen these scores immediately instead of being told she was “fine and getting extra help”. Does that writing sample look like this student is “fine” January of Kindergarten year?

We are asking for 1) transparency through parent involvement and notification at every level, 2) consistently through data collection and consistent quality literacy screenings and 3) accountability through data reporting to the WI DPI and WI legislature. The schools who are doing well are already doing the things laid out in this bill. Don't ALL Wisconsin students deserve the same chance to read?

Please vote YES on AB 446 to get ALL students on the road to reading.

Sincerely,

Katie Kasubaski, Decoding Dyslexia WI State Lead/Legislative Coordinator

[decodingdyslexiawi@gmail.com](mailto:decodingdyslexiawi@gmail.com)

**Part A: Group Rhyme Awareness**

				+/-
1. fan	door	pan	shoe	-
2. cake	rake	swim	ball	-
3. soap	cat	leaf	rope	+
4. gum	watch	drum	house	-
5. dog	run	pie	log	-
6. bell	well	deer	gas	+
7. hat	nose	mat	cup	+
8. rock	mouse	clock	bee	-
9. kite	night	bus	wall	-
10. wig	seal	tree	pig	+

Benchmark: 5      Score: 4 /10

**STOP** If student scores below the benchmark:  
Administer Individual Rhyme Awareness and include only the individual score in Summed Score.  
Record both scores on Class Summary Sheet.

**Part C: Individual Rhyme Awareness**

				+/-
1. bell	deer	gas	well	+
2. clock	rock	mouse	rain	-
3. dog	run	log	pic	-
4. mat	nose	cup	hat	-
5. drum	watch	gum	house	+
6. fan	shoe	door	pan	-
7. night	bus	wall	kite	-
8. cake	swim	rake	ball	-
9. pig	wig	sea	tree	-
10. rope	cat	soap	leaf	+

Benchmark: 5      Score: 3 /10












**Section I**  
**Part B: Group Beginning Sound Awareness**

				+/-
1. bed	saw	bug	fan	-
2. road	rug	swim	pie	-
3. sail	five	run	sock	-
4. can	fish	cow	doll	+
5. house	girl	hand	bee	+
6. five	car	house	foot	-
7. door	duck	nose	well	-
8. shirt	ball	hay	shark	-
9. wall	mouse	wig	hat	+
10. pig	pot	run	shoe	-

Benchmark: 5      Score: 3 /10

**STOP** If student scores below the benchmark:  
Administer Individual Beginning Sound Awareness and include only the individual score in Summed Score.

**Section I**  
**Part D: Individual Beginning Sound Awareness**

Benchmark: 5      Score: 2 /10

Section II: Alphabet Knowledge  
Lower-Case Alphabet Recognition

a	g	i	z	f
h	h	l	w	e
x	f	s	d	n
o	j	u	t	q
p	p	k	p	o
y				

Benchmark: 12

Score: 9 / 26

Section III: Letter-Sound Knowledge  
A: Letter Sounds

B	S	Y	W
T	o	A	H
K	X	Y	P
Z	L	W	V
E	D	o	M
q			

Benchmark: 4

Score: 3 / 26

Section III: Letter-Sound Knowledge  
B: Spelling

1. sad	s	a	d	<input type="checkbox"/>	# Checked	Bonus Point
	c	e	t			
2. hug	h	u	g	<input type="checkbox"/>	# Checked	Bonus Point
	o	k				
3. lip	l	i	p	<input type="checkbox"/>	# Checked	Bonus Point
	e	b				
4. net	n	e	t	<input type="checkbox"/>	# Checked	Bonus Point
	a	d				
5. job	j	o	b	<input type="checkbox"/>	# Checked	Bonus Point
	h	i	p			
	g	u				
	ch					

Benchmark: 2

Score: 0 / 20

Section IV: Concept of Word

	Pointing	Word ID	COW Word List
There was a little turtle.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> (1)	<input type="checkbox"/> (2)	in
He lived in a box.	<input type="checkbox"/> (1)	<input type="checkbox"/> (2)	turtle
He swam in a puddle.	<input type="checkbox"/> (1)	<input type="checkbox"/> (2)	box
He climbed on the rocks.	<input type="checkbox"/> (1)	<input type="checkbox"/> (2)	puddle
Score:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> / 4	<input type="checkbox"/> / 8	he
Pointing	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> +	<input type="checkbox"/> +	little
Word ID	<input type="checkbox"/> +	<input type="checkbox"/> +	was
COW Word List	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> =	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> =	climbed
COW Total Score			swam
Pointing Benchmark: 2			rocks
Word ID Benchmark: 2			
COW Word List Benchmark: 0			
			0 / 10

Section V: Word Recognition in Isolation (optional)

Preprimer	Primer	First Grade
and	away	happy
see	blue	share
to	mother	began
like	stop	hot
the	jump	then
for	little	cheeks
my	play	pony
go	find	came
is	take	running
red	very	smile
not	around	black
did	may	hand
me	ride	birthday
get	work	feeding
with	fish	ball
in	after	steps
big	help	baby
do	bird	dark
he	new	girl
can	duck	beat
Score: / 20	Score: / 20	Score: / 20

Summed Score

Preprimer Awareness + Beginning Sound Awareness + Alphabet Recognition  
+ Letter Sounds + Spelling + COW Word List

Score: / 10

JANUARY DICTATED WRITING SAMPLE

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## **School Administrators Alliance**

*Representing the Interests of Wisconsin School Children*

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**TO:** Assembly Committee on Education  
**FROM:** John Forester, Executive Director  
**DATE:** September 14, 2021  
**RE:** Opposition to Assembly Bill 446

Chairman Thiesfeldt and members of the Assembly Committee on Education, thank you very much for the opportunity to submit testimony on this important legislation. My name is John Forester. I'm the Executive Director of the Wisconsin School Administrators Alliance (SAA). In that capacity, I represent the combined memberships of five professional associations of public school administrators: the Association of Wisconsin School Administrators (AWSA), the Wisconsin Association of School Business Officials (WASBO), the Wisconsin Association of School District Administrators (WASDA), the Wisconsin Association of School Personnel Administrators (WASPA), and the Wisconsin Council for Administrators of Special Services (WCASS). The SAA also represents the 10,000 members of the Wisconsin Retired Educators Association (WREA).

The SAA, and WREA, opposes Assembly Bill 446, relating to reading readiness assessments. Please consider the following in support of our position:

- Our members throughout Wisconsin share the concerns expressed by the authors of AB 446 regarding Wisconsin's disappointing reading outcomes. However, districts have not been waiting for legislation to address this issue. In the past few years, school leaders have been identifying and evaluating best practices in literacy instruction throughout the country and implementing promising new initiatives. Many of our members have expressed concern that the requirements of AB 446 would draw the focus away from the work they are doing to improve reading outcomes in their districts, draining time and resources away from critical interventions and support for students.
- How will this bill, with its focus on additional testing, affect reading outcomes? Comprehensive early literacy programs include multiple components in addition to assessment, including interventions, staff pre-service, and professional development for teaching staff. Wisconsin school leaders see enormous needs for professional development in the science of reading for teachers and administrators. It is our understanding that Mississippi saw a similar need and addressed professional development first on their journey to a comprehensive early literacy program. Why are we focusing first on assessment?

- Our members support development of a comprehensive early literacy program in consultation with school leaders, teachers and other education experts, as opposed to a disjointed, piecemeal approach developed with limited input from educators in the field.
- Simply put, this bill is an unfunded mandate. Our members believe this bill will increase costs for school districts due to increased staff time and resources necessary to administer an increased number and frequency of required assessments, development of remediation plans and compliance with new reporting and parental notification requirements. School districts that already collectively transfer \$1.15 billion from their district general funds to cover the funding gap between required special education costs and current state funding will be forced to make difficult cuts in program areas outside of early literacy to comply with this legislation. Finally, it is our understanding that federal funds cannot be used to pay for activities required by state statutes. Therefore, the cost of this mandate must be covered by state and local funds.
- Many of our members find it disturbing and inappropriate that the legislation would advantage certain private companies by specifically naming certain assessments. Is this best practice in legislative drafting or state policy development? We don't really know what will happen to those preferred companies and their assessments in the future, and yet, they could be specifically named in statute.
- Why do the provisions of AB 446 not apply to private schools participating in the parental choice program?
- There is evidence that Wisconsin is making progress with Multi-level System of Support (MLSS). According to the 2019-20 Wisconsin RtI Annual Report, students performing in the lowest 5 percent on the Forward English Language Arts (ELA) exam show statistically significant improvements in outcomes after they have attended a high-implementing school for 3 or more years. If adopted, what impact will AB 446 have on Wisconsin's MLSS?

Thank you for your consideration of our views. If you should have any questions regarding our thoughts on AB 446, please call me at 608-242-1370.



## **Wisconsin State Reading Association**

*WSRA... providing leadership, advocacy, and expertise*

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Debra Zarling and I am the current president of the Wisconsin State Reading Association, a professional organization representing literacy educators throughout the state.

The Wisconsin State Reading Association does not support AB446 for the following reasons:

- It raises significant issues of equity for ALL students but especially for diverse populations
- It creates an additional financial burden on school districts by increasing the time and resources needed for testing in lieu of instruction
- It unnecessarily increases the amount of testing for ALL students and misdirects the type of testing needed for students exhibiting difficulty

First, this bill raises significant issues of equity by treating normal differences in student learning patterns as something abnormal. It ignores the multidimensional and networked nature of literacy development by focusing exclusively on a narrow set of foundational skills while ignoring other significant factors. For example, screeners do not identify or acknowledge what Milner refers to as the “language and literacy assets, strengths, skills, dispositions, mind-sets, and practices” that Black students already possess and bring into a classroom. This is also true for students

from other diverse backgrounds. While these foundational skills are critical and all students need to learn to read, the idea that there is a specific path that includes only the identified foundational skills that all students will follow without deviation is simply untrue. As with any other issue of human development, individuals vary.

Secondly, it creates an additional financial burden on schools by increasing the amount of testing required for ALL students regardless of need. While the bill accounts for the cost of one type of screener at each grade level, the Fundamental skills screening assessment at four-year old kindergarten and Universal screening assessments for kindergarten, grade one, and grade two, it does not seem to cover all of the required screeners, including Level 1 screening assessments and Level 2 screening assessments.

Those working in schools understand that this bill will also result in increased costs for staffing and additional training in administering, scoring, and analyzing multiple screeners; costs which are not covered in this bill. The criteria for screening in this bill is highly prescriptive and unnecessary for the selection of universal screening tools. Legislatively prescribing specific timelines, screeners/assessments, and other specific processes is not responsive to the needs of the child, and is ignoring the power and responsibility specifically intended to be carried out by a multidisciplinary team who has direct knowledge of the child and their needs. Additionally, when the amount of required testing increases, the amount of time available for instruction is decreased.

Finally, in addition to increasing the amount of testing, this bill misdirects the type of testing that is needed. Focusing exclusively on screening is likely to result in large numbers of false positives and false negatives. In a 2017 piece written for the National Association of School Psychologists, VanDerHeyden and Burns indicate that research shows that the error rate for screeners can range from 50-60%, meaning that this process will miss students who need additional support and identify others as needing support when they do not. VandDerHeyden and Burns also indicate that

”one of the ways to improve screening accuracy is to screen only those students who cannot be ruled out based on other information. Use what is known about the risk of students to filter students into the “screening” and “no screening” groups. Somehow, decision makers must begin to understand the real harm that arises from screening children who have no signs of having dyslexia or a learning disability in reading. Giving a child a screening that the child does not need either confirms what we already knew (i.e., child is not at risk) or gives us bad information (i.e., as in the case of a false-positive error). Children who have shown no risk for reading failure should not be screened. Children who carry external risk factors (e.g., recently moving into a district, receiving special education services under any label, failing the preceding year’s year-end test) should be screened. Furthermore, if a child’s risk of reading failure remains high (even if they pass the screening), the child should be provided with intervention.”

This bill inappropriately uses screeners to identify students as needing further support. Screeners are intended to do no more than alert educators to those students who MIGHT need additional testing and support, not

September 14, 2021

identify students. What is needed for those students scoring lower on a screener, is diagnostic testing, conducted by a knowledgeable, expert teacher, to verify whether students need support and what that support should encompass.

These are just a few of the many reasons that the Wisconsin State Reading Association does not support this bill. Thank you.

Debra A. Zarling  
President, Wisconsin State Reading Association

*Milner, H. R. (2020). Disrupting Racism and Whiteness in Researching a Science of Reading. Reading Research Quarterly, 55 (S1), S249-S253.*

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Assembly Committee on Education

September 14, 2021

Department of Public Instruction

**Statement in Opposition to Assembly Bill 446**

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**Background:**

The last decade has brought a number of significant changes to how districts operationalize reading instruction and intervention. A large component of that reform comes by way of a required reading readiness assessment, which has also seen significant change over the years.

In 2011, Governor Walker's Read to Lead Task Force recommended legislation that became Wisconsin Act 166. That law required each school board and the governing body of each independent charter school to administer an appropriate, valid, and reliable assessment of literacy fundamentals. The act required the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) to select an assessment to screen the reading readiness of kindergartners beginning in the 2012-13 school year. Furthermore, the assessment was required to measure whether a pupil possessed phonemic awareness and letter sound knowledge. Results of the assessment were required to be shared with parents.

Using this assessment, if a student was found to be at risk of reading difficulty they were required to be provided with interventions or remedial reading services. Wisconsin Statute 121.02 (1)(c) requires that the interventions or services provided shall be scientifically based and shall address all areas in which the pupil is deficient in a manner consistent with the state standards in reading and language arts. The parent must agree that the assessment score is accurate in order for the student to be engaged in interventions or remedial reading services. No funding is provided related to this statute.

DPI was appropriated \$800,000 for the 2013-14 school year to cover the costs of the reading assessment. The Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS) was chosen as the statewide assessment. PALS was chosen as a research-based screening, diagnostic, and progress monitoring tool. Wisconsin teachers used PALS to identify students at risk of developing reading difficulties, diagnose students' knowledge of literacy fundamentals, monitor progress, and plan instruction that targeted students' needs. Student data collected from PALS provided a direct means of matching literacy instruction to specific literacy needs.

The 2013 biennial budget provided additional funding for the assessment and expanded the reading readiness assessment chosen by the DPI to grades 4K - 1 in the 2013-14 school year and 4K - 2 in the 2014-15 school year. The three main PALS assessments used are described below.

- PALS-PreK - Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening for Preschool measured:

- name writing,
- alphabet knowledge,
- beginning sound awareness,
- print and word awareness, and
- rhyme awareness.
- PALS-K (for 5K students) - Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening for Kindergarten measured:
  - phonological awareness,
  - alphabet knowledge,
  - knowledge of letter sounds,
  - spelling,
  - concept of word, and
  - word recognition in isolation.
- PALS 1-3 (for grades 1 and 2) - Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening for first through third grades measured:
  - spelling,
  - word knowledge,
  - letter sounds,
  - oral reading in context,
  - alphabet knowledge, and
  - phonemic awareness.

The 2015 biennial budget moved the state away from a single statewide screener. It changed the reading readiness assessment requirement so school districts and independent charter schools could choose their own reading screener to annually assess the reading readiness of students in grades 4K - 2. Whichever assessment is chosen, students must still be evaluated for phonemic awareness and letter sound knowledge, and the assessment must be valid and reliable. The budget further required DPI to reimburse school districts for the assessment chosen and prorate payments if costs exceeded the funds available.

Last year school districts and independent charter schools received reimbursement for \$1,609,176. The most frequently used assessments used were PALS, MAP, STAR, Aimsweb, and Fastbridge. PALS, MAP, and STAR are the most common assessments.

### **Assembly Bill 446**

DPI welcomes the opportunity to engage with the Legislature around the best resources and support we can provide to our school districts so they can further advance the literacy success of all students in the state. Strengthening the instruction all students are engaged in - particularly reading foundational skills instruction including phonemic awareness and phonics - is an important first step. Developing educator expertise, particularly in teaching reading foundational skills such as phonemic awareness and phonics, allows educators to respond to student's unique needs, including students with characteristics of dyslexia. In addition, schools can utilize universal screening to understand which students might need additional systems. Further, schools can build a system of interventions to ensure that interventions are available that match student needs. Strong universal instruction and intervention depend upon professional knowledge and are supported by literacy coaches.



It is important that we recognize the frustrations some students and parents feel when looking at appropriate solutions and supports to create a learning environment that serves all students regardless of what skills they enter our schools with. Along with our partners at CESAs and the Wisconsin RtI Center, DPI continues to support schools/districts in continually improving their equitable multi-level systems of support to best utilize screening, universal instruction, intervention, formative assessment, and communication with families to meet the needs of every student.

In addition, in 2020, DPI worked with educators and sought public comment about revising our standards for ELA, including the standards for reading foundation skills. Wisconsin educators have revised standards which emphasize phonemic awareness, encoding, and fluency and corresponding professional learning from DPI. In 2022, Wisconsin's Standards for Early Learning will be revised; for reading, these standards apply from birth to 5K. Finally, in compliance with Wisconsin 2019 Act 86, DPI worked with an advisory committee and public comment to create an informational guidebook on dyslexia and related conditions. This guidebook includes information about screening, universal instruction, intervention, and resources specific to individuals with characteristics of dyslexia.

DPI looks forward to engaging in conversations to advance literacy it does not agree with the pathway forward provided in AB 446 due to concerns which include:

- AB 446, like the existing statute, requires intervention for students who are not yet meeting expectations on the reading screening (those scoring below the 25th percentile). No funding is provided for this intervention; arguably, schools/districts would have to use existing local funds to pay for certified reading teachers to teach reading intervention. The majority of federal funds (including reading teachers paid with funds from Title I) cannot be used to comply with this state statute.
- AB 446 has very specific requirements about the qualities of screening tools. There are a limited number of screening tools that meet the requirements in AB 446 which could greatly limit schools'/districts' options. The original requirement for an assessment of reading readiness began, schools/districts all used the assessment selected by DPI (PALS). The statute was revised by the legislature to allow for school/district choice in assessment, in part because schools/districts asked for choice.
- AB 446 provides a specific definition of "intensive intervention", this intervention addresses the alphabetic principle, which is one component of reading. It does not address comprehension - reading or listening. It does not address vocabulary. This type of intervention may not be appropriate for every student who is in need of intervention.
- Screening is a specific type of assessment used to quickly determine which students might be lacking skills predictive of later success. AB 446 increases the amount of screening our youngest students will experience. Currently, students are screening annually. Under AB 446, students in 4K are screened twice per year, and students in 5K through grade 2 are screened three times per year. This applies to all students - even those far above grade level expectations.

Page 4

Again, DPI looks forward to engaging with schools, educators, parents and legislators around the discussion and advancement of literacy in our state and thanks the committee for the opportunity to share these concerns with you today.

Good Day. My name is Donna Hejtmanek and I am a retired reading specialist and special educator of 41 years. I served on the 2018 Dyslexia Legislative study committee and the Read to Lead Council for 3 years. I am a reading consultant for school districts and the current President of the Literacy Task Force of Northern Wisconsin, a non-profit organization that provides reading training and resources for parents and teachers. I also serve as the legislative chair for Wisconsin's International Dyslexia Association.

Wisconsin's current reading readiness assessment law is a simple; just three sentences describing the use of a choose your own literacy fundamentals assessment, focusing on phonemic awareness and letter sound knowledge, and intervention or remedial reading for at-risk students. At risk is NOT defined.

Three simple sentences, with no specifics, is left up to the discretion of school districts. The results of this hands-off approach has resulted in 4th grade NAEP scores indicating that 1 out of 3, (34%) of students in Wisconsin have below basic literacy skills and children of color have the lowest scores in the nation. This is not a result of the ongoing 18 month pandemic, but Wisconsin scores have shown a steady decline since 1993 when we were 3rd in the nation and have now dropped to 27th in 2019. Research shows that 95% of the students in K-1 classrooms can be normalized with evidenced based practices and interventions. However, many Wisconsin teachers and reading specialists do not have the expertise given their current training limitations.

Assembly Bill 446 will provide explicit and systematic guidance for helping all students at risk of reading difficulties. By including choices for universal screening that are vetted for specificity and sensitivity for early identification, defining what "at risk" is and providing each at risk student a personal reading plan, notifying parents of their child's performance, full disclosure by school districts of what they are doing for struggling readers, and data collection by WI DPI to the WI Legislature we can hold school districts accountable. Currently, school districts are not required to report student scores to DPI until 3rd grade. By delaying that reporting, students will continue to slip through the cracks and no one is the wiser. And as a reminder, ALL school districts receive a per pupil reimbursement for all early reading testing purchased. Districts need to purchase assessments designed for specific early reading skills with sensitivity in order to identify the maximum number of students at risk for failure. (Early Screening Is At the Heart of Prevention)

As a reading specialist, I have witnessed the process of identifying students early in kindergarten and many of those same students continued to receive interventions in Gr. 4, 5 6 and beyond. Researcher, Dr. Pat Mathes states, "a student who fails to learn to read adequately in first grade has a 90 percent probability of remaining a poor reader by Grade 4 and a 75 percent probability of being a poor reader in high school." We can change the perpetual at-risk trajectory so many of our students experience in Wisconsin if we identify and intervene early.

In closing, Wisconsin teachers are asking for more. On my Wisconsin social media Facebook group over 1,200 teachers and parents have joined in desperation to piece together what to

do. Our teachers inadequate training and ineffective practices leaves one third of their students behind. Wisconsin students deserve better. Thank you.

Donna Hejtmanek  
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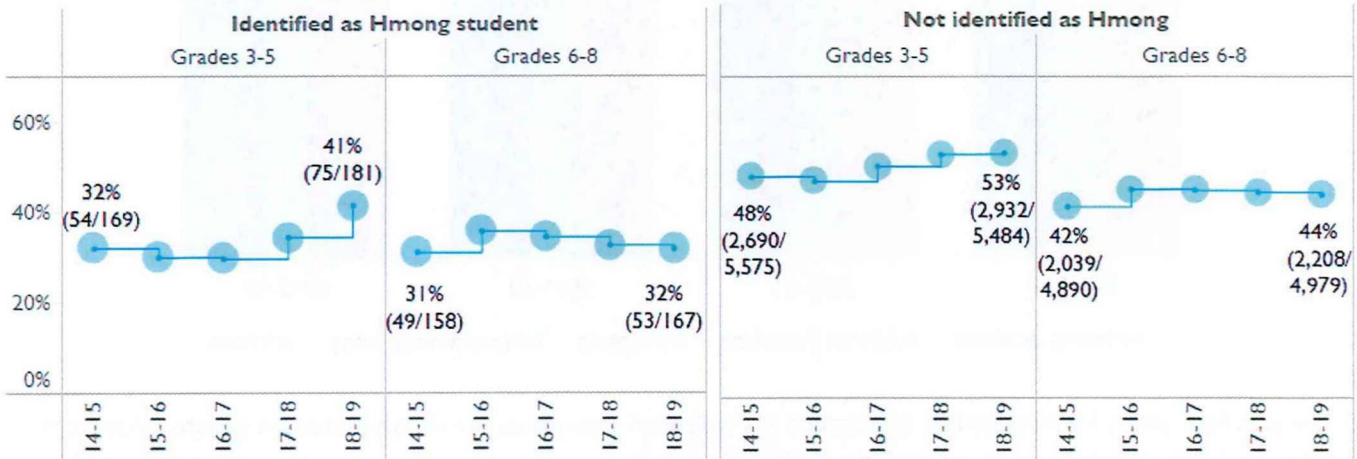
**Wisconsin Science of Reading WISoR & Literacy Task Force of Wisconsin Facebook**  
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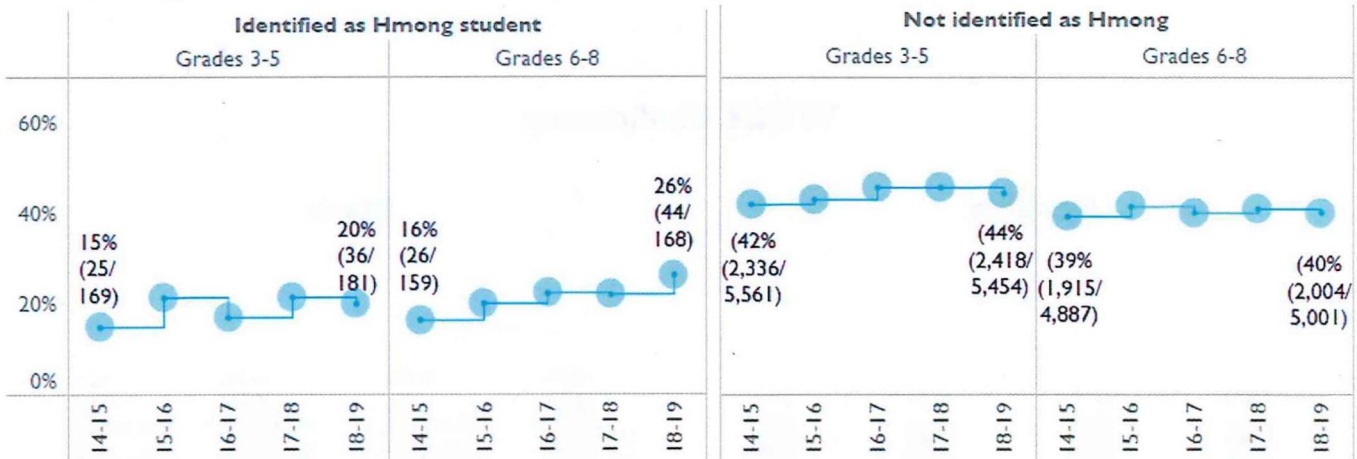
### Proficiency on MAP Assessment 2014-15 through 2018-19

In each of the last five years, students identified as Hmong have had lower proficiency rates on the MAP Math and MAP Reading assessments, compared to non-Hmong students. However, Hmong students have seen substantial increases in proficiency on both the MAP Reading and Math tests over the past five school years.

#### MAP Math Proficiency

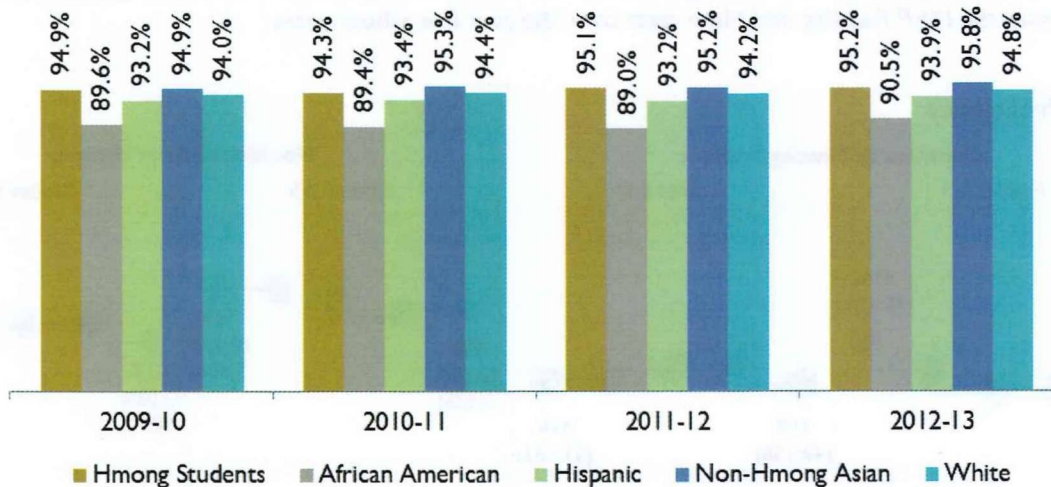


#### MAP Reading Proficiency





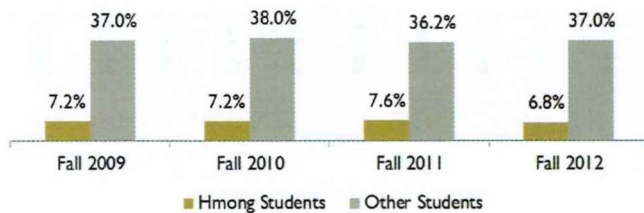
### Attendance



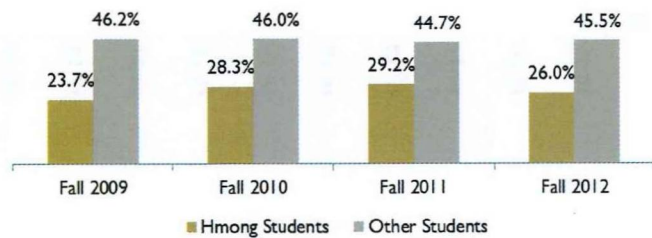
For the past four years, Hmong student attendance has outpaced attendance for all other student groups aside from non-Hmong Asian students and white students (2011-12 only). The attendance gap between Hmong students and African American students for 2012-13 corresponds to more than eight additional days of school.

### WKCE Proficiency

#### Reading



#### Math



For the Fall 2009 through Fall 2012 administrations of the WKCE, Hmong student performance lagged behind other non-Hmong students.

These WKCE proficiency rates are aligned to the new, rigorous standards implemented in Fall 2012. Students are considered Hmong in the WKCE data if they identified Hmong as a first language at any point during the three years covered by this graph.

September 14, 2021

Dear Members of the Assembly Committee on Education:

My name is Kathy Kline, and I live in Madison. I am urging you to support AB 446 relating to reading readiness assessments and granting rule-making authority.

My son just started sixth grade in the Madison Metropolitan School District. Three years ago, we paid to have him tested, and we learned that he has dyslexia. That year was a very traumatic one for my family as we struggled to find a way for my son to learn how to read. Research has shown that by the end of third grade, 74% of struggling readers will never catch up. At that time, my son was an illiterate third grader, and that statistic kept me awake at night, worrying about his future.

After much time and research, I learned that to have any chance of becoming a proficient reader, my son needed intensive, immediate help. To provide that, I quit my job and pulled him out of his reading block at school. I tutored him at home using a structured literacy program that is designed for children with dyslexia. We worked on reading for an hour a day, every day. That's what it takes to teach a 3<sup>rd</sup> grader with dyslexia to read.

I am happy to share with you that three years later, my son now reads and comprehends above grade level. In Spring of 2019, he scored in the third percentile for the MAP Growth Reading assessment. In Spring of 2021, he scored in the 92<sup>nd</sup> percentile.

It was a lot of work, but I am extremely fortunate that I was able to provide one-on-one instruction in structured literacy to my son. So many other parents can't, and they are depending on their schools to teach their children to read. In order to do this, we need to make sure that reading difficulties are identified early, because schools are unable to provide the intensive remediation that is needed for children who have been struggling to read for several years. I spent half a year just trying to undo the guessing strategies that my son had been taught in school.

Everyone in this room should find our state's reading scores unacceptable. Literacy should not be a partisan issue. So many of the young people in Wisconsin are disenfranchised because they do not have access to becoming proficient readers. An equitable society depends on equal access to literacy.

This bill is just one step—other states have done so much more. But we all need to work together in order to fix this problem. Every single child in our state deserves better.

Thank you for your time.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kathleen S. Kline". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name and address.

Kathy Kline  
466 Clifden Drive  
Madison, WI 53711

To: Senate Education Committee Members

From: Ryanne E. Deschane, First Grade Teacher/Reading Specialist

Date: Tuesday, September 14, 2021

**Re: Concerns with Assembly Bill AB446**

Good morning,

My name is Ryanne E. Deschane and although I would very much have liked to be with you in person to testify today, that was virtually impossible. You see, it is literally the 8th day of school in my district, and I teach 5 & 6 year olds. We have a substitute teacher shortage, and I live over 3 ½ hours north of Madison. This is my 26 year as an educator. During those years, all of my teaching has been at 3rd grade or below, with the majority of my teaching at the kindergarten and first grade level. You might say I know a little bit about the complexities of teaching reading. Not that I know everything of course, as we are all still learning and growing, each and every day, but my years of experience have taught me that there is no simple, quick fix, one size fits all, ANYTHING, that fits the needs of all students. You see, each child is a unique human being, and each child deserves to be taught in a way that best suits their learning needs. My job is to meet them wherever they are when they arrive at my classroom door, and progress their learning so that they can work toward becoming fully literate human beings. There are so many things within AB446 that would prevent me from doing so.

Had I been able to attend in person, you would have been able to look into my eyes to see the passion to do right by every single child that enters my classroom. AB446 will not allow me to do that. It asks that I test students before they have even had the opportunity to get to know me as their teacher, before they have even had the chance to learn the ins and outs, nuances of a classroom. And then I am asked to test them again, not once, but twice within the school year. Precious time that I should be spending actually "teaching" them how to read and write. You see, testing each child in a prescriptive manner, in a 1:1 setting, takes days...sometimes weeks. And what are the others to do while I am testing?

The above is merely one concern. I am also concerned about the financial burden AB446 would have on my already financially stressed district. In addition I am concerned because I know the type of testing this bill requires will not provide information that I, as a classroom teacher, need in order to move more students forward in their learning.

Please pause and consider what I am saying.

Wisconsin students deserve a bill that will ensure all students are able to access the quality education they deserve. AB446 is not that bill.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Ryanne E. Deschane



## Testimony against AB 446 for Assembly Education Committee Hearing

Good morning. My name is Deborah Cromer, and I am the Past President of the Wisconsin State Reading Association. I appreciate the opportunity to testify today in opposition to AB 446 because I am deeply concerned about what passage of this bill would mean for Wisconsin students and their teachers.

Recommendations by professional organizations, including the American Educational Research Association (AERA) together with the American Psychological Association (APA) and the National Council on Measurement in Education (NCME), caution against the use of one single assessment in making high stakes decisions for students. The reauthorization of the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act states that Local Education Authorities (LEAs) not use a single measure and that any instruments used “assess the relative contribution of cognitive and behavioral factors, in addition to physical or developmental factors”.

AB 446 would directly counter effective, appropriate literacy learning and instruction as well as the federal IDEA guidelines by doing the following:

- Requiring the use of a single test to identify students at risk of reading difficulty
- Limiting the information on which to base instructional decisions to a narrow range of skills
- Privileging standardized assessments over continuous observation, monitoring, and instructional decision-making to meet the current needs of individual students
- Increasing testing time which will decrease instructional time; research does not support more testing to increase student achievement but does support instruction by expert teachers of literacy

- Mandating the inappropriate use of screeners to guide instructional decisions
- Interfering with the ability of expert teachers to be able to provide what students need, when they need it, in ways that benefit each individual student
- Treating normal human differences in literacy development as abnormal
- Focusing on student deficits without acknowledging and identifying student language and literacy assets
- Using a special education lens, which focuses on student deficits rather than student strengths in a universal education context

WSRA agrees with the statement made by the National Association of School Psychologists that “All of the focus on selecting a new screener for dyslexia is a red herring that distracts us from the real work of making sure every child has stable access to effective early reading instruction and more intensive intervention when they are struggling to learn to read.” The prescriptive nature of AB 446 will do nothing to ensure that students with reading difficulties get the help they need when they need it. For these reasons, I oppose AB 446.

Deborah Cromer



## Wisconsin State Reading Association

*WSRA... providing leadership, advocacy, and expertise*

September 14, 2021

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today on AB 446. WSRA is on record as opposing this proposed bill.

Comparison of state results on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) is often used to draft prescriptive literacy legislation at our primary levels to improve literacy levels at grade 4. What is seldom reported is that Wisconsin ranks 8<sup>th</sup> in the nation for reading at grade 8. In fact, the trend is that Wisconsin has consistently ranked in the top quartile in 2015, 2017, and 2019, ranking 9<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> respectively, while states with more prescriptive policies such as Mississippi and Texas either score last at the 8<sup>th</sup> grade level or no higher than 46<sup>th</sup>. Our 4th grade NAEP scores in reading are not predictors of how well students do in 8th grade. While we are always looking to improve at all grade levels, it is critical that we look at our literacy achievement as a system. WSRA suggests that instead of looking to other states who may not achieve as well as a system, we look to those districts and schools in our own state who are doing well across grade levels and with diverse student populations.

The WSRA agrees with this statement from the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP), "There is almost an insatiable appetite for screening in school, and many school leaders believe that more screening can only return positive benefits for students." This is not true. Our concerns about the overly prescriptive nature of the testing requirements of this bill continue to be mirrored by NASP's comments in their May, 2017 newsletter:

- A. more screening does not improve correct identification of students with reading difficulties, including dyslexia,
- B. screening does not improve reading performance and,
- C. screening accuracy and screening measures are inherently unstable across settings.

In addition, the collateral damage of prescriptive legislation only exacerbates our teacher shortage. To address our teacher shortage, licensure changes have been enacted. Even if you are not a teacher, reading through this legislation you get a picture of how constraining AB-446 is. As WSRA has pointed out, the proposed bill has no added benefit to current screening legislation and would be harmful to students. In our schools, expert teachers continue to leave the profession because of the increased demands and prescriptions from the federal, state, and local levels. Overly prescriptive legislation prevents teachers from using their professional expertise to make good decisions for students. From my experience, teachers sometimes feel they should leave the profession when they can no longer meet the needs of their students because of the constraints put upon them. These are real issues of concern.

To improve literacy learning for Wisconsin students, WSRA suggests increasing equitable instructional opportunities for all our Wisconsin students instead of increasing testing. This can be accomplished by providing funding for districts to hire enough district reading specialists to support students, teachers,

and administrators and providing adequate numbers of reading teachers in schools to work with our neediest students. District reading specialists are mandated under current law, but the spirit of the law is not necessarily followed. Often, school districts identify a reading specialist, but that specialist may not be given the time to implement the duties of their position. In addition, to be equitable, more support is needed for our lowest socio-economic districts who lack the resources to hire enough reading teachers to meet the diverse needs of their students. The WSRA also suggests that current state literacy legislation should be posted on every school district's website so that all stakeholders are aware of the requirements already in place in our state.

Thank you for your time,

Kathy Champeau  
WSRA Legislative Committee Chair

John Humphries Testimony on AB446, Roadmap to Reading Success  
September 14, 2021

My name is John Humphries. I am a licensed School Psychologist, Director of Special Education, and Superintendent. I have served in each of those roles in Wisconsin and was president of the WI School Psychologists Association for two years. I had the great honor of being the DPI School Psychologist from 2004-2011, when I was a lead author of the rule to identify learning disabilities using a system called Response to Intervention. I am here to testify in favor of AB446, a long-awaited and much-needed improvement to reading instruction in our state. The data I cite today are from the National Assessment of Educational Progress or NAEP, mainly for 4th grade students, as well as some from the WI Forward Exam.

I want to make it clear that I have a simple premise today: reading is the most important skill we teach in schools. If you can't read well, you will always struggle to learn. **Please let that sink in--there is NOTHING more important for schools than teaching children to read.**

I am appearing today in my individual capacity. However, I would like to note that I work for a company that offers teacher training and leadership coaching for schools that seek to improve their reading outcomes. Our work would be completely unnecessary if DPI, the Wisconsin Rtl Center and organizations like WSRA, WASDA and the school administrators, and even the WI School Psychologists Association had been doing their jobs for the last decade or more. If this bill causes them to begin training and advocating for improved instruction, that would be great. **This is one reason why it's time for the legislature to intervene--there is no leadership organization focused on improving reading instruction in our state.** Allow me to explain.

As I mentioned, I was a lead author of the rule to identify specific learning disabilities. That rule required the use of data to identify children in need of academic support, the provision of high-quality interventions, and parental involvement in decisions. I hope that sounds familiar, because it's very much like the bill you have in front of you today. I remember the intense arguments in 2010 surrounding the proposed rule. Some groups, including numerous WSRA representatives, argued that the rule would require all kinds of changes in regular education programs. After the rule was passed however, they worked with administrative organizations behind the scenes to minimize any impact the rule would have on classrooms. They lobbied DPI leadership, including Tony Evers, to ensure that they would not have to change their classroom practices. Many people, both inside and outside of DPI were hopeful that schools WOULD have to change practices.

You see, we knew then as well as we know now, our reading outcomes are terrible. Our black and brown students read among the worst in the NATION! Children from low income homes also do very poorly. Other speakers today will have shared a good deal of data, but the one thing many people don't discuss is the fact that our MOST privileged students, white children with NO disability and who are NOT low from income homes rank 42nd in the nation with about 50% reading proficiency. That's right, only about half of our most advantaged readers are proficient. Our BEST elementary schools have about one in four children who do not read at

grade level. This has been going on for DECADES! **This is another reason why it's time for the legislature to intervene--DPI allowed the opportunity for systemic change following the SLD rule to pass by.** In 2013, they issued guidance saying that schools should not abandon old practices simply because they "didn't meet the standard set by the SLD rule." They also wrote, "...districts do not need to have a(n) Rtl process for all students. A comprehensive/school-wide Rtl system is not required in Wisconsin." This bill would establish these systems, a necessary step because DPI failed to use the opportunity to do so in the past.

It didn't need to be this way. Other states, including Florida starting over 20 years ago, and now including Mississippi have implemented systems like the one described in AB446. After a few years of this work in Florida, the average Hispanic student was outperforming the average of all students in Wisconsin and 31 other states. Mississippi's students now score at a level statistically indistinguishable from Wisconsin's.

What WSRA and others who oppose this bill want is more of the same--and it's not working! I have seen very little in the way of meaningful leadership on this issue in Wisconsin. You may recall that former Wisconsin State Senator Luther Olson made a big push five years ago for the National Conference of State Legislatures' "No Time to Lose: How to Build a World-Class Education System State by State." The School Administrator's Association also got on board and there was much fanfare. They wrote, "To realize our vision of preparing all students to be college and career-ready, it is imperative that we continue to raise the academic bar for all students and close gaps for lower-performing groups. Wisconsin's educators can and will meet this imperative, but only if the state's policymakers **commit to evidence-based policies that are proven to drive whole-system improvement** at the classroom, school, district, and state levels." While they seem to want to put the burden on the legislature to act, they themselves have made no effort to lead in the critical area of literacy instruction.

Meanwhile, DPI and the WI Rtl Center have made mistake after mistake, erecting barriers to improvement along the way. When they issued new standards for literacy, they tucked the foundational reading skills standards into an appendix, minimizing the role of teaching children to decode words. The Rtl Center offers vague guidance and general ideas about how to improve. I have many former colleagues who joined the Rtl Center with great hope for change, only to later tell story after story of what amounted to professional "gag orders," where they were prohibited from offering specific, actionable technical assistance to teachers and school leaders. It's almost unconscionable that the best ideas on reading were being kept from our hardworking educators who simply do not have the time or expertise to glean the best research from many sources. **This is another reason why it's time for the legislature to intervene--the efforts of the past 5-10 years have failed.**

Instead, DPI has offered support for "balanced literacy" systems which offer no real balance at all. They say they want schools to "discover" the best tools for their own purposes. They suggest that if they give a list of the most effective tools, the school leaders will somehow be less engaged, won't "own" their learning. It's a bunch of nonsense and it DOES NOT WORK! The reality is that there is a right way to teach reading—we know what it is. It's explicit. It

doesn't let students "discover" how to read, it shows them through clear teaching. It's systematic. It requires teaching of letter-sound relationships, phonemic awareness, and phonics in a specific scope and sequence. It provides specific feedback for readers, correcting errors, and providing guided practice not just lots of exposure to books and opportunities to guess at words. We should NEVER teach children to guess at words like they do in most balanced literacy programs.

One professional put it this way. She was tired of reading "the fallacy that 'There is no quick fix, nor is there one way that all children must learn.' Time and again I've seen this argument put forth as fact, and it's been proven wrong. Structured literacy is not a quick fix, but structured explicit sequential literacy works fastest. ...The Science of Reading has demonstrated for more than 40 years, there is only one way in which humans learn to read. Reading, based on the alphabet, is a human (invention), and the connection between letters and sounds... and (fluency) is learned in one way. The METHOD of delivery may differ (in) the ways that it's taught...but **there are not multiple ways to learn to read.** There is one way that sound/symbol knowledge is taken in and processed. And the fastest way to teach reading is the way that recognizes this pathway and capitalizes on it." **This is another reason why it's time for the legislature to intervene--the research is clear and unequivocal.**

DPI has invested tens if not hundreds of thousands of dollars addressing racial inequities NOT with specific guidance for improved teaching, but asking teachers to "shift their mindset," as if that was some miracle cure for the terrible achievement gaps that have plagued our state for decades. **This is another reason why it's time for the legislature to intervene--we continue to waste time.**

AB446 is a start to putting all of that nonsense to rest. If the bill is passed AND implemented, it holds great promise for improving outcomes across the state. I've seen this work in my former district and it's starting to work in others. Simply put, this legislates what should be happening anyway--reading development should be monitored closely, parents should be informed, and effective interventions should be used. Where implemented, these practices have raised achievement for all students and closed achievement gaps.

Democrats, you tell people you want to "follow the science." You say that you are the party working for educational equity. Well this bill does both. This bill is based on solid research and clear demonstrations of success for students of color. When systems like this were used in other states, they raised achievement for ALL students AND closed achievement gaps. What more could you ask for?

This bill is an opportunity to move Wisconsin forward. I call on this committee to unanimously approve this bill and send it to the full legislature. There are a handful of amendments I would recommend that would strengthen the bill, especially in light of the significant rules that will come later. I have included those with my testimony.

I also want to encourage you to consider a timeline for implementation of the bill that will allow districts time to begin making the significant changes that will be necessary for them to be successful. I know from experience and from research that this type of change can take 3-5 years to implement. You accomplished a great deal in this last biennial budget and I appreciate the political pressure many of you were under to hold down education spending in light of the federal funds that were available. However, the changes proposed in this bill will take time as well as money. I was Superintendent in a low revenue, high aid and moderately low income district. I did everything I could to build the type of system envisioned in AB446 and it worked, but I had to be very creative in my fiscal problem-solving.

Please recognize that most school administrators want to do the right thing and many are embarrassed at the terrible reading outcomes in their schools. They will be looking for opportunities to implement these types of programs. I want to encourage you to take more steps like the ones you already have: you provide funds for early literacy assessments and the recent Joint Finance Motion 57 was a great down payment on getting this work started. It will take more and I encourage you to get the ball rolling now for the next budget cycle. I know that many districts got a great deal of federal funds, but not all of them did, and there are many schools serving high income populations that got smaller amounts of federal funds. They need help too.

In summary, AB446 is a great step. The rulemaking process will probably be very difficult and there will be a need for funding and support. **It's time for the legislature to intervene where others have not.**

**Thank you!**



## Reading Roadmap Bill Amendment Recommendations, John Humphries

- **Children at-risk** fall below the 25th %ile, but the bill doesn't specify whether that's in comparison to the school, the district, or the nation. That issue should be clarified. An amendment could setup a system in which schools start intervening with the lowest 25% of their students and then, as the overall system improves and fewer children fail, they intervene with only those children below the 25th national percentile.
- **A lack of a diagnostic assessment requirement prior to intensive intervention.** Screening is just that--it's quick and not too accurate. It's intended to identify if a child is at-risk of reading failure. It's like blood pressure--good way to get a clue about what's going on but you wouldn't start intensive intervention for heart disease without a diagnostic cardiovascular assessment, just as you shouldn't start intensive reading interventions before diagnostic reading assessment. The Level I and Level II screening assessments should be diagnostic, not screening since they lead to intervention.
- Strike the language in the definition of "Intervention:" **"Any other instructional approach** that is...determined by the School Board" to be appropriate. That clause will allow ineffective interventions to continue. (Page 7, Section 2, Line 14).
- All assessments should be required to have **"adequate technical properties for the purpose for which they are used** including generally accepted levels of reliability, validity, and 'Area Under the Curve' in order to accurately identify children at-risk." This was a huge miss in the SLD rule and has allowed a lot of junk assessments. You could also include specific levels of those statistical variables (i.e. reliability of at least 0.8 for example). This would ideally apply to all assessments required under the Act and could be added as a criterion under the definitions of each of the assessments.
- Parents should get **notification of screening results within 15 days of administration**, not within 15 days of scoring. I worry that schools would collect data but not score it, thus not notify parents. This change would not be burdensome.
- All notifications using percentile ranks should specify both "local percentiles" for information from the school or district, as well as **"national percentiles."** In other words, parents need to know how their children compare to the nation and the local school.
- The **parental notification of interventions for dyslexia** should specify that the district is using those interventions, and with how many students. Let's nail them down on exactly what they are doing.
- In addition to posting their early literacy remediation plans, districts should be required to **post their screening results** in an easily understood format, including the number and percent of students who screened below the 25th national percentile.
- Page 6 Line 25--**Inadequate progress** should include that they are unlikely to demonstrate grade-level skills by the end of the school year "in which the child was provided with intervention." Otherwise they will use the end of the following year.
- Page 11 Line 23--**goals and benchmarks must be "measurable."** Use the same language as IDEA here to ensure that these are as rigorous as an IEP for children with disabilities.
- Page 11 Line 25--you should **define progress monitoring** and it should be consistent with SLD rule or better.

Testimony before the Wisconsin Senate Education Committee

14 September 2021

Thank you for your attention to this important statewide but community level issue. The debate is very familiar to me, and I fully recognize the challenges that implementing something new poses...for systems and the adults in them. I'm not here to preach to the choir but to speak some hard truths about what it takes to lift a state off the bottom, and to try and address some of the concerns frequently expressed about these types of initiatives.

What you have before you will be good for Wisconsin kids and their path to learning to read. AND to learn to read WELL, more efficiently, and on time—meaning *before* the next NAEP scores expose otherwise. I know one of the concerns is that rigorous screening will take too much time and only result in overidentification of students for special education. This is exactly what accurate and regular screening in specific, targeted skills that predict reading outcomes *will prevent*. Here's how: **First**, it is more accurate by catching preventable deficits early and providing clear protocols for remediating them, thus maximizing the critical period of K-2 instruction when learning how to read is the focus. **Second**, it systematically monitors progress so instruction can be adapted at the right time and prevent unnecessary failure. And **third**, it can be a useful onramp for introducing teachers and school leaders to some of the fundamental frameworks based on the cognitive science that help explain the reading process and inform instruction.

While screeners take some teacher time, they ultimately save students time. I've tested thousands of students across all grades in Mississippi during my tenure at the Reading Institute and it is heartbreaking to discover middle and high school students who have lingering deficits in something as basic as phonemic awareness, these unremedied deficits impede decoding unfamiliar words, seriously compromise writing, and hijack the development of vocabulary and background knowledge. Good screeners predict who is at-risk of failure in reading. This prediction is needed at the beginning of schooling.

As for naming specific screeners, it appears that some good homework has been done relative to identifying reliable instruments that have been scrutinized and validated. While I get that local control has been a cornerstone of public education in making decisions...the biggest lesson from Mississippi I can leave with you is that lifting reading scores for a whole state requires some wholesale approaches. That means doing what works and doing it everywhere. It is to Wisconsin's advantage to use these nationally recognized instruments and use them uniformly because they are aligned to the specific skills that predict reading performance in the future. Furthermore, having such a clear framework for all K-3 students might provide some welcome stability and structure (instead of viewing as a distraction) in the midst of the pandemic.

Many aspects of teaching *should* be left to the individual educator in his or her own classroom, but when it comes to reading assessment and intervention, the science should point the way. We know too much now. Substantial gold-standard research has gone into the development and validation of the screeners that have been

named. So save the debate for other issues. Don't shy away from some mandates. Mississippi followed the science and required all adults to change what they were doing....and that yielded different outcomes for their students....especially poor kids and kids of color.

No one is more eloquent or credible about this science than Wisconsin's own Mark Seidenberg. He and his occasional loquacious and brilliant side kick, Steve Dykstra (who has also provided written testimony), are powerhouses in the reading world. Mark spent a whole day in Mississippi addressing our state literacy coaches, our higher education faculty, and our legislative education committees. Why? Because he has deep knowledge about the brain and how it processes language for reading. Educators don't need to be neuroscientists, but they do need to understand how human beings process language, especially young ones who need to be explicitly taught how to extract language from the printed page.

And so, I'll yield the microphone to my friend and a prophet in your own land, Dr. Mark Seidenberg, who understands "how we read, why so many can't, and what can be done about it."

But I'll leave you with this....the proposal you are entertaining to replace the current reading readiness assessment program with a three-tiered early literacy screening process is based on sound science. There are plenty of other states who have already done this. That may not be a reason to do it, but I'm from one of them and it's made all the difference.

Thanks for your attention.



September 14, 2021

Dear Chairman Thiesfeldt and members of the Committee,

Had my schedule allowed I would have appeared via Zoom at the hearing for AB 446. In my absence, I thank you for the opportunity to provide you with these brief written notes.

I am currently the National Director at The Reading League. The Reading League is a nonprofit organization with the mission to advance the awareness, understanding, and use of evidence-aligned reading instruction. We are over 30,000 members strong, nationally and internationally, with 17 state chapters, including Wisconsin. In addition to my work at The Reading League, I personally have over 30 years of experience in the field of education, serving as a teacher, administrator, adjunct professor, author, organizational leader, and professional development provider throughout the country, including working with the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction during the Reading First years. The through line of all my work is early literacy.

The Reading League has become a well-respected and prominent organization promoting the evidence around effective reading instruction, known as the Science of Reading. The Science of Reading is a vast, interdisciplinary body of *scientifically-based research* about reading and issues related to reading and writing. This research has been conducted over the last five decades across the world, and it is derived from thousands of studies conducted in multiple languages. The science of reading has culminated in a preponderance of evidence to inform how proficient reading and writing develop; why some have difficulty; and how we can most effectively assess and teach and, therefore, improve student outcomes through prevention of and intervention for reading difficulties.

In my own work personally and in our collective work at The Reading League, we find that teachers are hungry to know what works in teaching reading and are eager to learn about these scientific principles and practices. Educators primarily want to answer these questions: How do children learn to read? How can instruction most effectively match that process? Why do some children struggle? What can be done about it?

Our focus at The Reading League is to provide that all-important link from research-to-practice, to ensure that early first instruction is maximized so that reading difficulties are prevented; this is critically important. It is also critically important that reading difficulties are identified early on before the downward trajectory of growth leaves children further and further behind, requiring intervention beyond the primary grades, when the gap between their achievement and that of their normally progressing peers is nearly insurmountable. There are countless stories of children who are not identified early and therefore do not receive intensive instruction in those crucially important early years, and are essentially caught up in a “wait to fail” model. While some of those children may be diagnosed as dyslexic, the issues are the same for all struggling readers: How do we identify those children early on so that we can provide the most effective instruction at the most opportune time?

We work with educators nationwide so we have a pulse on the day-to-day needs and wants of teachers. In addition to the knowledge of the science of reading and effective instructional practices, teachers' greatest identified needs are around effective and useful tools for screening and diagnosing children's reading: How do I assess children? What do I do with the data? How can this data inform my instruction? Teachers and educational leaders want valid and reliable early benchmark screeners, "check engine lights," if you will, to inform them if a child is at risk. They want valid and reliable diagnostic tools to help them "drill down" to determine gaps in skill areas and to subsequently pinpoint instruction. Not all tools are created equal; it is essential that teachers are provided with the best proven instruments for assessing children. In addition to these tools, teachers want parents to be integral partners in the process and they want leaders and stakeholders to support them in these efforts.

If we can identify children early on with valid and reliable measures, we can prevent children from becoming enmeshed in that downward spiral of reading failure, and we can prevent unmanageable numbers of children from needing special services when our personnel and instructional resources are stretched thin. Imagine a world where a multi-tiered system of support model is effective for ALL children; where Tier 1 instruction, first instruction delivered to all, teaches at least 85% of our children to read, and those who need additional intensive support are identified early and can receive the services they need. Imagine a world where at least 95% of Wisconsin's children learn to read and can thrive as literate citizens of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It can be done and it is being done elsewhere. It is possible.

Whether it is through legislation, policy, advocacy, or leadership, we are all stakeholders in our children's right to be taught to read. Make no mistake, this is a civil rights issue and a social justice issue. All of our children deserve the best instruction and all teachers deserve our support. ALL means ALL. We know what needs to be done. We can empower teachers with the knowledge and tools they need and want.

We at The Reading League believe in a future where a collective focus on applying the Science of Reading through teacher and leader preparation, classroom application, and community engagement will elevate and transform every community and every nation, through the power of literacy.

Thank you.

Laura Stewart  
National Director, The Reading League

September 14, 2021

RE: AB446 - Relating to: reading readiness assessments and granting rule-making authority.

Representatives and Assembly Education Committee Members,

I support AB446 as an educator, parent, taxpayer, and previous school board member. Additional, legislative guidance and accountability is necessary to improve reading achievement for all learners and provide equitable education for dyslexic learners. Our state's current reading achievement scores reflect the implicit bias of leaders within WI colleges of education, the Department of Public Instruction, and the Wisconsin School Reading Association who have historically ignored, dismissed, and downplayed dyslexia and the importance of foundational word-level reading skills for all learners.

It is a challenging time to be a teacher or a parent of school age children. During my 20 years of experience in various instructional and leadership roles within WI K-12 public schools, I regularly observed learners, teachers, administrators and parents who are overwhelmed, frustrated, concerned, and confused about how to improve learning, address student behavior, alleviate youth mental health struggles and improve academic achievement. At the center of all of these struggles -- from the lens of all stakeholders -- is reading.

I am also a mother of 3 children, two of whom are dyslexic. I began learning about dyslexia when my daughter's optometrist confirmed that her eyesight was not contributing to her reading difficulties and recommended the book *Overcoming Dyslexia* by Dr. Sally Shaywitz.

This is also when the dissonance between my training as a WI educator and experience as a parent began. Dyslexia was only briefly mentioned in one of my courses while obtaining my bachelor's degree, master's degree, principal, and director of curriculum & instruction licensure from WI institutions. I assumed that reading specialists, special education teachers, and school leaders must have more knowledge of dyslexia than I did. Yet, we spent years attempting to navigate multi-tiered systems of support which continually either did not assess, or disregarded assessments of phonological awareness, word recognition, reading fluency, spelling, and family history in favor of reading comprehension scores. As a result, either no reading intervention or mismatched inadequate intervention was provided -- for years.

As our oldest and youngest children's interest in learning decreased and their frustration and anxiety about school grew, we were left with no choice but to seek a private evaluation. With confirmation of their dyslexia and an insider's understanding of reading assessments and reading interventions currently, I chose to leave a job that I loved and retire from teaching so I could learn how to provide the direct, explicit, systematic, sequential, and cumulative multimodal instruction they need, but currently do not have access to.

Last year, in 5th grade, my youngest child was identified for reading intervention for the first time. His school district started using FastBridge, one of the approved reading assessments mentioned in AB446. With less than 10 hours of a phonics reading intervention with his online teacher and only 20 hours of



instruction at home with a complete structured literacy intervention which addressed all the essential components of reading including phonemic awareness, phonics, spelling, reading fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension, my son attained the highest level of growth in his entire grade on the school's reading assessment. Most importantly, his engagement and confidence grew.

Currently in 6th and 11th grade, my two dyslexic children, for the first time, have 504 plans which include the name of their learning difference -- dyslexia -- and appropriate equitable accommodations. This is not the norm for the majority of dyslexic students in Wisconsin who represent 20% of all learners.

The requirements and timelines for reading screeners, parent notification, personal reading remediation plans and annual reporting, along with a definition of and information about dyslexia in AB446 would have accelerated positive outcomes for my children.

Without further guidance and accountability regarding the assessment, intervention, and progress monitoring of foundational early literacy skills, school systems will not evolve their reading practices to appropriately and equitably address all the components of reading for all students, including students with dyslexia.

I ask that you support AB446.

Thank you for your consideration,

Nancy Dressel  
985 198th Ave  
Somerset, WI 54025  
[ncdressel@gmail.com](mailto:ncdressel@gmail.com)

To Whom it May Concern:

My son is 10 years old and dyslexic. My family has a strong history of dyslexia with both my Dad and brother also being dyslexic. I had suspicions very early on. My son's speech was delayed but always progressing. We were told that once my son was out of birth to 3 there was nothing that the doctor's office could do. We relied on school. School said that he is behind but progressing. That was the beginning.

My son D did ok with letters, we were told his PALS testing was within normal limits. No concerns. By Kindergarten I noted his difficulty with short early readers and how frustrated he would become. This grew in 1<sup>st</sup> grade. Every discussion with school we were told he is progressing and doing fine. He was memorizing pages, looking at pictures, but NOT reading. It was easy for him to disguise this with super repetitive, early reading books. He would do anything to avoid reading.

By 2<sup>nd</sup> grade we asked to meet with the reading interventionist since he was starting to fall behind. They had him in a group already that was getting extra help (unbeknownst) to me. After inquiring he VERY quickly caught right up. He was back at grade level.

In 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, it was evident there was bigger issues happening. He was struggling in reading, writing, and math. He was frustrated and cried every night when he came home. Homework was atrocious and affecting our home life. I reached out to friends (since school and MD were unhelpful) and found a wonderful tutor. She specializes in kiddos with dyslexia. She gave D an assessment and suspected that he did have large gaps in his education and she was willing to tutor him. We met with school—the principal and teacher. No real changes occurred, then Covid hit.

During summer heading into 4<sup>th</sup> grade we had our own testing done to confirm his diagnosis: Dyslexia, Dysgraphia, Dyscalculia, Auditory Processing Disorder. I cried knowing the struggle that he had ahead of him. I requested in writing for a Special Education Eval. Extensions were added d/t covid and summer. RTI wasn't completed. Delay. Delay. Delay. We finally had our meeting December 2020—4<sup>th</sup> grade. He did not qualify for SLD as he "isn't bad enough". But they qualified him under OHI "for lack of resilience, lack of confidence, lack of attention, etc..." He receives accommodations. He receives 15 min 2X/wk for executive functioning assistance. We, on our own, send him to an outside tutor for reading/writing 2X/wk for 1 hour each. In 4<sup>th</sup> grade we also had a math tutor 1X/wk for 1 hr each session.

My son started 5<sup>th</sup> grade this year. It's a new school—middle school. I spoke with his case manager to discuss what the plan was for the year. She sent me his IEP. We discussed D and his dyslexia. She stopped me and questioned me—his dyslexia? Nowhere in any of the documentation that she could find was it noted that he has dyslexia. How can this be?! So I resent her our independent eval for her records. She asked if school did the eval—I let her know, I didn't know that was an option as it was never offered.

So instead of getting to decide if my child gets to do band, sports, or a club...our nights are filled with filling the gaps that school is missing and rebuilding his confidence that has been destroyed by our education system. My son thinks he isn't smart. And that is unacceptable. Instead of spending money on family vacations, we spend money on tutors and technology for our son. So that he has equal access

and opportunities as everyone else. So that he isn't limited when he graduates high school and can do and be anything he wants to be.

I believe in my son. I wish school and our state would too. Please pass this bill. It is SO important.

**Sarah Berger RN, BSN**

Date:09/13/2021

Re: Support of AB 446

To: Rep. Thiesfeldt, Rep. Kitchens, Rep. Jagler, Rep. Wittke, Rep. Ramthun, Rep. Wichgers, Rep. Mursau, Rep. Duchow, Rep. Rozar, Rep. Pope, Rep. Hebl, Rep. Considine, Rep. Vruwink, Rep. Myers

Dear Representatives:

My name is Shawn Anthony Robinson PhD and I have dyslexia. I was not identified until my junior year of high school and graduated reading at an elementary level. I am not a 4k-2 parent or educator, but I teach adult learners at Madison College who exhibit many characteristics of dyslexia. These adults were never identified or screened by the educational system and just passed through a system that eventually failed them. Thus, as many as 40 million students leave high school without all the reading skills, they need to pursue post-secondary education.

At Madison College, we have created and launched a Word analysis course that offers students a rare opportunity to improve decoding and encoding skills and uses a simultaneous multi-sensory approach to teach word meaning. The course objectives are to improve word recognition and decoding, vocabulary, and morphology. The course is appropriate for students with reading difficulties, diagnosed learning disabilities, who speak English as a Second Language, and High School Completion students. It is also appropriate for anyone who self identifies that they need support with improving their reading skills.

We are also using the SARA (Study Aid & Reading Assessment) to screen adults for characteristics of dyslexia and provide them with evidence base reading instruction that is grounded in the Science of Reading. This course is currently free and first in the State of Wisconsin at a 2-year college.

The demand for the class is high and we ended opening another section and now are going to offer the course to other institutions across the state. We are providing access to high quality decoding and encoding instruction that these students would not otherwise have within the Wisconsin Prek-12 educational system.

To avoid the wait and fail model and addressing their learning needs later in life, screening students sooner would avoid many later problems as they navigate the educational system, and potentially narrow the various disparities we face in Wisconsin that include, but are not limited to unemployment, incarceration, health, and academic rates.

Passing this bill will eliminate the many issues listed previously as well as provide the necessary reading skills these students need. All the components of the Screening Assessments and Interventions Bill will help students across the entire state of Wisconsin and move us forward in the right direction!

*I am asking all the assembly members to support and vote YES on AB 446!*

Shawn Anthony Robinson PhD  
1701 Wright St, Madison, WI 53704  
Madison Area Technical College, Address  
sarobinson1@madisoncollege.edu

Joshua Aaron King  
150 Jwana Circle Oregon, WI. 53575  
September 11, 2021

Re: Support of AB 446

To: Rep. Thiesfeldt, Rep. Kitchens, Rep. Jagler, Rep. Wittke, Rep. Ramthun, Rep. Wichgers, Rep. Mursau, Rep. Duchow, Rep. Rozar, Rep. Pope, Rep. Hebl, Rep. Considine, Rep. Vruwink, Rep. Myers

Dear Representatives,

It was my pleasure recently to organize and host a celebration for all first responders and corrections personnel who reside in the Town and Village of Oregon, WI. These women and men go above and beyond to keep our community safe, serving in ways that allow our community to fully pursue family and work. While the event was a unanimous success, I was shocked and more than concerned to hear the unconscionable real-world facts regarding abysmal literacy rates in our community's population that are housed in our corrections facilities. In conversations with the wardens at the Oakhill Corrections Institution in Oregon, WI., Clinton Bryant, Warden, and Deputy Warden Paul Ninnemann, each Warden shared with me the wonderful work they provide in trying to rehabilitate and educate those in our community that are incarcerated so that upon completion of their sentence they are enabled to re-enter our community in a productive and successful role. When I asked what, in their years of experience in criminal justice, was driving the population of youth to get involved in crime the answer they provided shocked me. "The average reading level for our incarcerated population is 4<sup>th</sup> grade", reported by both Wardens. What this fact translates into is that most of those committing crimes who become jailed in Oregon cannot read for comprehension and therefore cannot keep pace with their peers through elementary school or beyond. Inability to move along with their age cohort through school creates near unsurmountable challenges for those students to succeed in our school system. However, when these inmates were children there were years of opportunities to address the most fundamental aspect of maturing into a contributing, productive citizen...the ability to read, comprehend written information and then act on the information they have read. It is not surprising to know that the overwhelming common thread in our local corrections facility is the inability of inmates to read, and presumably the missed opportunity and action to assess reading disabilities early in their lives.

*In speaking with dyslexia and literacy experts it's widely known that beyond 4<sup>th</sup> grade reading lies a world where comprehension and interpretation are required to advance in our society and when we are not applying proven phonics-based education or reading disability testing, ex. dyslexia, we are assigning our most vulnerable youth a future of resorting to crime or mayhem to provide for themselves. If we are not investing purposefully in addressing these literacy issues in Oregon and*

beyond then we will continue to keep our corrections facilities full when that need not be a pre-determined fate.

“We work in a profession that would love to one day shut our doors because we don’t have enough inmates to justify our being here”, Warden Bryant also said to me at the recent first responder and corrections celebration. Young men and women in our area are being failed by an apathetic literacy and dyslexia testing regimen. This is not new information to those pursuing worthwhile changes to our testing and mitigation strategies, however the active barriers put in place by education agencies and politically minded actors are shepherding youth into the correctional system and therefore earmarking them mentally as inferior, and societally as non-contributors. This is a disgrace, and it is in all of our best interest for you to address the education literacy program with a passion to not only correct a poorly run and organized program in our state, but also to prevent every child from following a preventable path to incarceration. “The average literacy level in Oakhill Correctional Institute is 4<sup>th</sup> grade”. Act now, use your moral and political strength to implement proven testing and educational steps that will impact your community, your county, and your state for the positive.

Our community unanimously supports AB 446 because it represents a necessary action to identify those with literacy challenges at the earliest and most appropriate time where reading comprehension development can be impacted. Please support AB 446 with your vote to help our community’s children reach their true potential.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Josh King". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Joshua Aaron King

From: Berger, Nick nberger@augustwinter.com  
Subject: Testimony - 5/14  
Date: Sep 13, 2021 at 4:00:45 PM  
To: decodingdyslexiawi@gmail.com

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To Whom it May Concern:

My son is 10 years old and dyslexic. My wife's family has a strong history of dyslexia with both her Dad and brother also being dyslexic. We had suspicions very early on about our son due to delayed speech and other signs. We relied on the school system and the doctors. School said that he is behind but progressing. That was the beginning.

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resent her our independent eval for her records. She asked if school did the eval—we let her know, we didn't know that was an option as it was never offered.

So instead of getting to decide if my child gets to do band, sports, or a club...our nights are filled with filling the gaps that school is missing and rebuilding his confidence that has been destroyed by our education system. My son thinks he isn't smart. And that is unacceptable. Instead of spending money on family vacations, we spend money on tutors and technology for our son. So that he has equal access and opportunities as everyone else. So that he isn't limited when he graduates high school and can do and be anything he wants to be.

Having spent over 17 years on the United States Army, 15 in the Wisconsin National Guard and the rest in the Army Reserve, I have been taught about resiliency. I have been challenged both mentally and physically. I have been trained to identify risks, how to mitigate them, and to lead Soldiers in combat. However, I have no tools to help my son understand these challenges that he is facing when the educational system does not see, nor wants to agree with his parents, on what my child needs in school. We relied on the school system because they were the "experts" in how my son was developing in class. We were "told" that he is "progressing" and that he is "in-line" with his growth charts. What we have come to find out is that this educational system has failed my son because he is an outlier.

Our school system is designed to teach the masses, instead of teaching to each student. School districts are focused on matrixes and how the grades are doing as a whole. Allowing a child here and there to fall to the wayside. When your school district does not even acknowledge that Dyslexia is real, how are they supposed to educate my child? How am I supposed to teach my son resiliency, when he has no energy left at home because he has used every ounce to keep it together at school and act like he is fully understanding everything? How, as his parents, do you prove to your child that he is just as gifted and talented as the rest of his grade, when he is too busy with tutoring and private classes after school; while his friends are all in football, basketball, and baseball? How do you correct 4 years of the school system ignoring that there is anything wrong with your son?

I believe in my son. He has potential that will change this world, if only the school would understand how he learns and the accommodations that he needs. Please pass this bill. It is vitally important for my son and countless other children for this state.

**Nicholas**

**Nicholas A. Berger, MPH**  
**MAJ, CA, USAR**



Bill AB 446 – Andrea Hedquist Testimony.

My son Matthew spent K-3 in our home district of Oregon struggling to read and write and received extra help in the form of reading intervention and speech therapy for articulation issues. However, we were not aware this extra help was an intervention plan until the beginning of 2<sup>nd</sup> grade.

In 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, we were told Matthew was reading at grade level and needed no further intervention other than speech services. We strongly disagreed, as Matthew was reversing words, letters and numbers and was unable to decode words. His writing consisted of no more than 3 letter words, and sentences of 3 words or less.

Suspecting Dyslexia, knowing early detection is key, we opted to test at WI Institute for Learning Disabilities & Dyslexia (WILDD). Matthew was diagnosed with Dyslexia, working memory deficiency and processing speed disorder. An IEP was recommended and reading remediation, and Matthew began private WILDD tutoring immediately. Testing and tutoring have cost us \$10,000 so far, and we anticipate spending \$10,000 more to complete the course.

At the same time, and the start of remote learning as the Pandemic hit, Matthew struggled and cried daily and was unable to complete many of the online assignments without a lot of help.

We were forced to leave Oregon district and open enroll in Evansville for 4<sup>th</sup> grade to get Matthew the in-person learning he needs. He was evaluated immediately and they advised he was 12-18 months behind grade level in reading. He is currently in 5<sup>th</sup> grade at Evansville.

We were told the K-2 screening is not sensitive enough or designed to detect dyslexia. We saw no test scores until I requested his complete academic file to facilitate the move out of District, which they were very reluctant to send and took a month and several requests to get. I was shocked at the results. Had we been given scores and open dialogue I would have raised questions much earlier in his schooling.

Reading intervention consisted of re-reading, more at-home reading and little else which in my opinion failed to help Matthew learn to read. The intervention plan was never discussed, how the plan was designed to help or how they were measuring success and improvement. If we had known sooner, we would have tested sooner.

Although Matthew is improving, everyday is a struggle and his confidence and mental state have suffered severely as a result of non-detection in those early years. It cost us valuable years getting him the help he needs, which the school system fails to offer. Although too late for Matthew, I hope my testimony will convince you to make the necessary and overdue changes which will help future children get the early detection they need to become successful readers.

**Student Information**

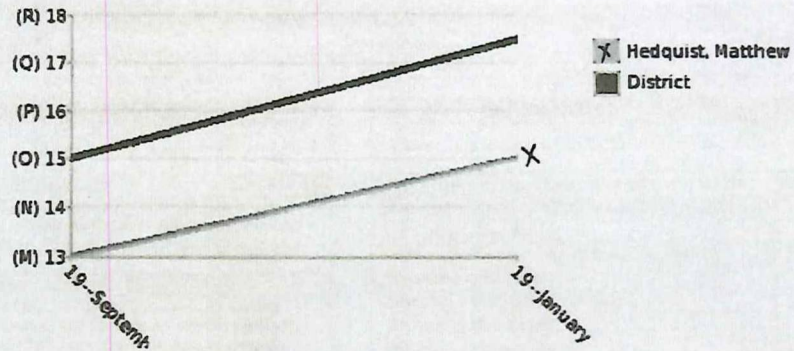
Student First Name: Matthew  
DOB: 2010-12-23  
School: Brooklyn Elementary

Student Last Name: Hedquist  
Gender: M  
Grade: 4th

**Literacy**

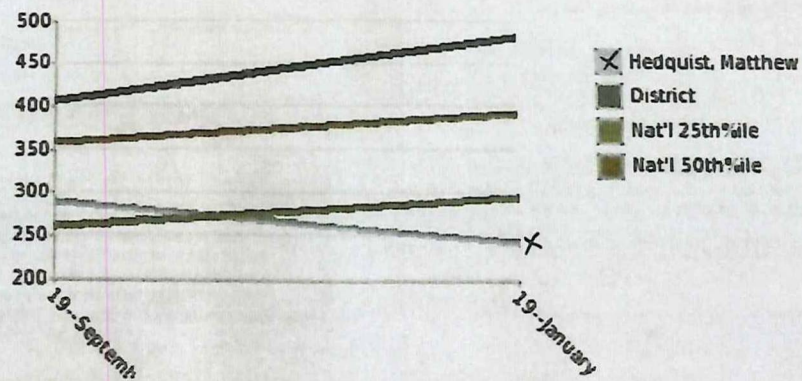
**Fountas and Pinnell Fountas and Pinnell Reading**

**Fountas and Pinnell Reading**  
Winter  
○  
Meets Expectations



**STAR STAR Reading**

**STAR Reading**  
Winter  
**242.000**  
■ 11-25thile  
PercentileRank (14)



**Math**

Matthew Hedquist

Tested Jan 2020

3rd grade

Applied Problems	115	84	High Average
Spelling	72	3	Low
Passage Comprehension	92	31	Average
Calculation	92	29	Average
Writing Samples	92	29	Average
Word Attack	79	8	Low
Oral Reading	71	3	Low
Sentence Reading Fluency	87	20	Low Average
Math Facts Fluency	83	13	Low Average
Sentence Writing Fluency	78	7	Low
Number Matrices	40	<1	Very Low
Editing	79	8	Low
Word Reading Fluency	83	14	Low Average
Spelling of Sounds	58	<1	Very Low
Reading Vocabulary	84	15	Low Average

Reading: The Reading cluster is a general measure of reading achievement. Matthew earned a score of 82, placing him at the 12<sup>th</sup> percentile and within the Low Average range of functioning for an individual his age.

Broad Reading: The Broad Reading cluster measures decoding skills, reading fluency, and comprehension of short passages. Matthew earned a score of 85 placing him at the 17<sup>th</sup> percentile and within the Low Average range of functioning for an individual his age.

Basic Reading: The Basic Reading Skills cluster measures skills in sight words, phonics, and structural analysis. Matthew earned a score of 78, placing him at the 7<sup>th</sup> percentile and within the Low range of functioning for an individual his age.

Reading Comprehension: The Reading Comprehension cluster represents a child's ability to understand and remember what they have read, as well as their reasoning abilities with what they have read. Matthew earned a score of 91, placing him at the 27<sup>th</sup> percentile and within the Average range of functioning for an individual his age.

Reading Fluency: The Reading Fluency cluster measures skills in reading automaticity and accuracy. Matthew earned a score of 80, placing him at the 9<sup>th</sup> percentile and within the Low Average range of functioning for an individual his age.

Reading Rate: The Reading Rate cluster measures the rate of reading. Matthew's performance earned a score of 85, placing him at the 16<sup>th</sup> percentile and within the Low Average range of functioning for an individual his age.

**Academic Applications:** The Academic Applications cluster provides a measure of how well students are able to apply what they have learned to novel problems. Matthew earned a score of 98, placing him at the 44<sup>th</sup> percentile and within the Average range of functioning for an individual his age.

**Phoneme-Grapheme Knowledge:** The Phoneme-Grapheme Knowledge cluster provides an understanding of how well individuals are able to apply their phoneme-grapheme awareness to novel words. Matthew earned a score of 68, placing him at the 2<sup>nd</sup> percentile and within the Very Low range of functioning for an individual his age.

**Brief Achievement:** The Brief Achievement cluster screens an individual’s abilities in reading, writing, and math. Matthew earned a score of 85, placing him at the 15<sup>th</sup> percentile and within the Low Average range of functioning for an individual his age.

**Broad Achievement:** The Broad Achievement cluster provides a broader screening of an individual’s abilities in reading, writing, and math. Matthew earned a score of 84, placing him at the 15<sup>th</sup> percentile and within the Low Average range of functioning for an individual his age.

Matthew’s subtest scores range from the Very Low to High Average range, with most achievement areas having a Low rating. Based on his performance on the WJ IV ACH, Matthew has difficulties in the areas of reading and writing compared to other students his same age; overall, he has the math skills necessary to be a successful student in this area for his age.

Comprehensive Test of Phonological Processing – 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition

Given the concern about Matthew’s phonological analysis skills, his ability to sound out words correctly, and his reading fluency the *Comprehensive Test of Phonological Processing – 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition* (CTOPP-2) was administered to further investigate the specific skills at which Matthew may excel or find difficult related to phonological processing. The CTOPP-2 assesses phonological processing in three broad composite areas. For the purpose of this assessment, Matthew was only evaluated on the subtests comprising the Phonological Awareness Composite (Elision, Blending Words, Phoneme Isolation). Phonological Awareness is the awareness of and ability to access the phonological structure of oral language.

A standard score for the Phonological Awareness Composite is provided. A standard score has an average of 100 and standard deviation of 15, thus, an average score generally falls between 85 and 115. The composite score for the Phonological Awareness Composite and its accompanying percentile rank is provided below. Scaled scores with a mean of 10 and standard deviation of 3 are provided for each individual subtest. An average scaled score falls between 7 and 13.

CTOPP-2	Composite Score	Percentile Rank	Qualitative Descriptor
---------	-----------------	-----------------	------------------------

Date: 09/13/2021

Re: Support of AB 446

To: Rep. Thiesfeldt, Rep. Kitchens, Rep. Jagler, Rep. [redacted], Rep. Wichgers, Rep. Mursau, Rep. Duchow, Rep. Rozar, Rep. Pope, Rep. [redacted], Rep. Vruwink, Rep. Myers

Kari  
Baumann

Dear Representatives:

Today I am here to testify in support of AB 446. It would have been different if he was given a chance earlier in his reading readiness instruction. This bill would have been a chance for him to be identified as a struggling reader and would have given me an opportunity to know the struggles he had early on. I began as a mom that was excited to send my son to a school in which I believed to be filled with opportunities that many schools don't have, as we reside in a high property taxed school district with money. I knew at the time when my son started Kindergarten that he was behind his peers but I did not know the true extent.

While he was in school, I was given the normal parent teacher conferences that stated he was struggling but he would just need time and we would watch and see. I thought to myself good they got this. Little did I know they didn't have his needs in check. I was never shown any standardized testing results, only teacher comments that we are watching him. I was informed he had behavioral issues especially during core instruction time, it was suggested he be tested for ADHD and maybe medical intervention would benefit.

Fast forward to Grade 2, my child was diagnosed and put on medication and his behavior changed for the better, but his academic level fell farther behind. He was given an IEP for behavioral purposes, and I was told reading and math goals could not be provided at this time.

Fast forward to Grade 4, I as his parent grew concerned at his reading and math level and paid to have an outside provider test him. I was completely shocked with the results; my son was not even reading at pre-kindergarten level and was going into the 4<sup>th</sup> grade. The school was informing me he was making slow progress, but this was not correct. I knew I had no choice and began to search for outside support because my son was now emotionally giving up and became depressed with himself. I could not find anything that didn't already have a waitlist of more than a year.

I was desperate, so I found a program in IL that was willing to open a summer clinic in Door County, the catch was it would cost \$26,000 for 8 weeks. I had no other choice, so I did a community-based fundraiser with my sons story and our journey. We were able to raise the money and in 8 weeks my son's ability to read grew one and half grade levels because the instruction was exactly what he needed. It was science of reading based. We were sold and decided to pull from our district and go to IL for 18 more weeks; but this meant more expense and our family had to separate. My husband and my younger son stay in door county and myself and my oldest son drove to IL every Sunday, stay in an apartment, and drive back to Door County every Friday for 18 weeks. Again, at a huge expense and loss of work for myself. The total cost was \$56,000.

What we gained was more than just reading levels, my son gained confidence and joy of life again. Medication didn't fix that, a reading program that was tailored to my son did! The last week we were in IL we were at a red light, and he read the road sign all by himself and said to me "mom, now that I can read, I might be able to get my license." To which I said, son you can do anything. I feel this bill would have prevented that time in my son's life if I as a parent would have known the true extent of his struggles. Wisconsin, is failing so many kids and my story is only one of many.

Please help our youngest children and give them and their parents a chance to fight a fair fight an advocate what is best for their children. Please pass AB 446. Thank you to Rep. Kitchens for listening to me and my son's story to hopefully help so many more. In closing along with my written testimony I have

enclosed all the documents showing the difference between what I was not shown in public school to the gains he made in the outside services.

Kari Baumann

2231 County Road Q

Bailey's Harbor, WI 54202

# Forms from G. Bradford Schools (Public School)

STUDENT SUMMARY - SPRING 2015

Page 1

## STUDENT SUMMARY - SPRING 2015 pals™

This report lists all scores entered for the student in the Fall and Spring columns. Task benchmarks or a Summed Score benchmark is in parentheses following selected task scores. In the Mid-Year column, Mid-Year ranges are in parentheses following selected task scores. Benchmarks and Mid-Year ranges are only valid for students who were given the assessment using Standard Administration.

• Student: GRADY BAUMANN 9

• Grade: Kindergarten

• School: Gibraltar EI

• Assessment Date: May 6, 2015

ALL PALS TASK		SCORES	PERCENTILE	SCORES	PERCENTILE
Group Rhyme	2 (5)	5 (8-10)	4 (9)	10	
Group Beginning Sound	5 (5)	3 (8-10)	4 (9)	10	
Individual Rhyme	3 (5)	5 (8-10)	6 (9)	10	
Individual Beginning Sound	3 (5)	3 (8-10)	4 (9)	10	
Letter-Case Alphabet	12 (12)	19 (23-25)	21 (24)	25	
Letter Sounds	9 (9)	15 (17-25)	17 (20)	25	
Spelling	1 (2)	3 (10-10)	4 (12)	20	
Concepts of Word	0 (2)	1	0 (3)	5	
	0 (2)	2	2 (9)	10	
	0 (0)	2 (3-10)	1 (7)	10	
Summed Score		N/A	62 (81)	122	
Prerequisite Word List					
Final Word List					
First Grade Word List					

# STUDENT SUMMARY - MID-YEAR 2016 **pals**

The report lists all scores entered for the student. In the Fall and Spring columns, task benchmarks or a Summed State Benchmark is represented following selected task scores. In the Mid-Year column, Mid-Year targets are in purple and following selected task scores. Benchmarking and Mid-Year targets are only generated for students who were a part of an assessment using Summa's Administration.

• Student: **GRADY BAUBRAN II**  
 • Teacher: **Michelle D'Amico**

• Grade: **Fifth Grade**  
 • School: **Gabrielzari E1**

• Assessment Date: **January 16, 2016**

SPALS SECTION	SPALS TASK	Fall 2015	Mid-Year 2016	Spring 2016
SPELLING, WORD LISTS AND LETTER SOUNDS	Total Spelling Score	19 (24-44)	22	20
	Preprimer Word List	2 (10)		
	Primer Word List			
	First Grade Word List			
	Second Grade Word List			
	Third Grade Word List			
	Fourth Grade Word List			
	Fifth Grade Word List			
	Sixth Grade Word List			
	Seventh Grade Word List			
Eight Grade Word List				
Letter Sounds				
<b>ENTRY LEVEL SUMMED SCORE</b>		<b>19 (24)</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>RD (SD)</b>		<b>47%</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>100%</b>

## ORAL READING IN CONTEXT

Readiness Agency

• **DISTRIBUTIONAL ORAL READING LEVEL (ORL)**

LEVEL	Count	Percentage	Target
Level B	2	1%	5
Level C	0	0%	10
Level D	0	0%	10
Level E	2 (27)	10%	21
Level F	18 (22)	75%	20
Level G	18 (24)	75%	25
Level H	30 (35)	100%	27
Level I			
Level J			
Level K			
Level L			
Level M			
Level N			
Level O			
Level P			
Level Q			
Level R			
Level S			
Level T			
Level U			
Level V			
Level W			
Level X			
Level Y			
Level Z			

## LEVEL C

Readiness Agency

• **LEVEL C TOTAL SCORE**

Feature	Count	Percentage	Target
Beginning Sounds	0	0%	4
Ending Sounds	0	0%	4
Beginning Sounds	0	0%	4
Ending Sounds	0	0%	4
Diagrams	0	0%	4
Blends	0	0%	4
Short Vowels (CVC)	0	0%	4
Initials	0	0%	4



### STUDENT SUMMARY - SPRING 2017 **pols**

This report lists all scores obtained for the student in the Fall and Spring columns. Each designation on a Scored Score Designation is a percentage following a selected task name. In the Mid-Year column, Mid-Year ranges are in parentheses following selected task names. Designations and Mid-Year ranges are only generated for students who are a member of the assessment being scored.

Student: **GRADY BAUMANN**  
 Teacher: **Kyle Knechtz**

Grade: **Second Grade**  
 School: **Gilshaber El**

Assessment Date: **May 1, 2017**

B-PALS SECTION	B-PALS TASK	FALL SCORES		SPRING SCORES	
		Score	Level	Score	Level
SPELLING AND WORD LISTS	Total Spelling Score	3,120	5 (28-56)	12 (24)	56
	Primer Word List	13	10 (20)	13	20
	First Grade Word List	1	4 (18-20)	5	20
	Second Grade Word List	0 (15)	0 (16-20)	1	20
	Third Grade Word List		0 (13-20)	0 (15)	20
	Fourth Grade Word List				
	Fifth Grade Word List				
	Sixth Grade Word List				
	Seventh Grade Word List				
	Eighth Grade Word List				
<b>ENTRY LEVEL SKILLED SCORE</b>		<b>3,134</b>		<b>72 (54)</b>	<b>76</b>
Concept of Word - Phonics		5		5	5
Concept of Word - Word ID		7		9	10
Concept of Word - Word List		3		5	10
<b>CONTROL SCORE</b>		<b>19 (25)</b>		<b>18 (23)</b>	<b>25</b>
Lower-Case Alphabet Recognition		21 (26)		24 (26)	26
Letter Sounds		18 (24)		20 (26)	26
<b>LEVEL B TOTAL SCORE</b>		<b>33 (74)</b>		<b>58 (77)</b>	<b>77</b>
Blending		13 (12)		77 (14)	26
Sound-Substit		14 (21)		34 (24)	43
<b>LEVEL C TOTAL SCORE</b>		<b>27 (40)</b>		<b>0 (15)</b>	<b>0</b>
Beginning Sounds					
Ending Sounds					
Beginning Sounds		2	1	3	4
Digraphs		0	0	2	4
Blends		0	0	0	4
Syllable		7	1	3	4
Word		0	0	2	4
CVC		0	0	0	4
Long Vowel		0	0	0	4
R and L		0	0	0	4
Analogous Words					4

#### SPELLING FEATURES

I requested all assessments on 5/20/21

I had never seen these reports until then

Kari Bowman

Assessment Date: 10-11-17

Step 1: Calculate Fall Entry Level Summed Score **Did NOT meet benchmark!**

<b>First Grade Entry Level Sum</b> Total Spelling Score + Phonics Word List + Letter Sounds	<b>Second Grade Entry Level Sum</b> Total Spelling Score + Phonics Word List + Entry Level Summed Score	<b>Third Grade Entry Level Sum</b> Total Spelling Score + Second Grade Word List + Entry Level Summed Score
--	--	--

Did not meet BM!

**pals** Phonological Awareness Inventory Screening  
Student Name: Grady / Schiff / Grady  
Teacher: Schiff / Grady  
Assessment Date: 1-16-18

FORM C (Mid-Year) Student Summary Sheet

Step 1: Record Recommended Entry Level Tasks

<b>First Grade Entry Level</b> Top Spelling Score Phonics Word List Phonics Word List	<b>Second Grade Entry Level</b> Total Spelling Score First Grade Word List Second Grade Word List	<b>Third Grade Entry Level</b> Total Spelling Score Second Grade Word List Third Grade Word List
--	--	---

11/77  
5/5

Teacher: Schiff / Grady / Grady  
Assessment Date: 5-18-21

FORM A Student Summary Sheet

Step 1: Calculate Spring Entry Level Summed Score

<b>First Grade Entry Level Sum</b> Total Spelling Score + First Grade Word List = <u>1</u> Entry Level Summed Score	<b>Second Grade Entry Level Sum</b> Total Spelling Score + Second Grade Word List = <u>1</u> Entry Level Summed Score	<b>Third Grade Entry Level Sum</b> Total Spelling Score + Third Grade Word List = <u>7</u> Entry Level Summed Score
--	--	--

7/65  
BM

# Gibraltar Area Elementary School

3924 Hwy. 42, Fish Creek, WI 54212-9755

Phone: 920-868-3284

Fax: 920-868-2714

[www.gibraltar.k12.wi.us](http://www.gibraltar.k12.wi.us)

## Multi-Age Progress Report Mid-Trimester 3 2018-2019

To the Parents/Guardians of: Grady Baumann

Teacher: Jeannie Hoffman/Robin Warecki

Behaviors Follows the Viking Way	Not Yet	Sometimes	Usually
Uses best effort and stays on task		X	
Respects classroom expectations			X
Listens to and follows directions		X	
Considers feelings of others			X
Demonstrates safety in the school			X
Organized with necessary materials			X

Academics	Below Expectations	Approaching Expectations	Meets Expectations	Beyond Expectations
Reading	X			
Writing	X			
Math	X			

Please be aware that formal assessments are only administered in October, January, and May. For the third trimester, the academic progress described on this report is based on informal assessments only.

If you have any questions please contact your child's teacher.

Mrs. Heidler ext 274  
[heidler@gibraltar.k12.wi.us](mailto:heidler@gibraltar.k12.wi.us)

Ms. Daubner ext 251  
[mdaubner@gibraltar.k12.wi.us](mailto:mdaubner@gibraltar.k12.wi.us)

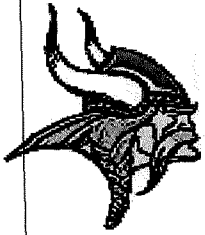
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Mrs. Warecki ext 101  
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Profe Thomas ext 214  
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Mrs. Hoffman ext 212  
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**GIBRALTAR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**  
**REPORT CARD**  
**2018-2019**

*Parent or Guardian of:*  
*Grady L. Baumann*  
*2231 County Q*  
*Baileys Harbor, WI 54202*

**Grady L. Baumann**

Grade: 04

TRIMESTER 3 2018-19

	Tr1	Tr2	Tr3
<b>ART 4</b> <i>Donohue</i>	3	3	3
	PLEASURE TO HAVE		
<b>MATHEMATICS</b> <i>Hoffman</i>	1	1	1
<b>MUSIC</b> <i>Free</i>	3	3	3
	DOES NOT USE WORK TIME WISELY		
<b>PHYSICAL EDUCATION</b> <i>Peck</i>	3	3	3
	GOOD PARTICIPATION EXTREMELY COOPERATIVE PLEASURE TO HAVE		
<b>READING</b> <i>Hoffman</i>	1	1	1
<b>SCIENCE/HEALTH</b> <i>Hoffman</i>	3	1	2
<b>SOCIAL STUDIES</b> <i>Hoffman</i>	2	1	1
<b>SPANISH 4</b> <i>G. Thomas</i>	2	2	2
	GAINING SELF-CONFIDENCE Working on improving confidence with language.		
<b>WRITING 4</b> <i>Hoffman</i>	1	1	1

Continued on page 2.



## Current Evaluation Results

### The Phonological Awareness Test 2

When interpreting this test, it is to be noted that 100 is an average score and scores from 85-115 are considered to be within the average range.

Subtest	Standard Score	% Rank	Subtest	Standard Score	% Rank
Rhyming - Discrimination	90	26	Graphemes - Consonants	83	13
Rhyming - Production	<69	<2	Graphemes - Long and Short Vowels	96	39
Total Rhyming	66	1	Graphemes - Consonant Blends	69	2
Segmentation - Sentences	—	—	Graphemes - Consonant Digraphs	104	61
Segmentation - Syllables	81	10	Graphemes - R-Controlled Vowels	66	1
Segmentation - Phonemes	85	15	Graphemes - Vowel Digraphs	82	11
Total Segmentation	<66	<1	Graphemes - Diphthongs	—	—
Isolation - Initial	96	38	Total Graphemes	74	4
Isolation - Final	79	8	Decoding - VC Words	75	5
Isolation - Medial	—	—	Decoding - CVC Words	66	1
Total Isolation	67	1	Decoding - Consonant Digraphs	—	—
Deletion - Compounds and Syllables	<71	<3	Decoding - Consonant Blends	—	—
Deletion - Phonemes	—	—	Decoding - Vowel Digraphs	—	—
Total Deletion	—	—	Decoding - R-Controlled Vowels	—	—
Substitution - With Manipulatives	72	3	Decoding CVCe Words	—	—
Blending - Syllables	107	68	Decoding - Diphthongs	—	—
Blending - Phonemes	83	12	Total Decoding	—	—
Total Blending	89	24	Phoneme-Grapheme Total	—	—
Phonological Awareness Total	—	—	Total Test	—	—

Results of this test indicate that Grady never learned the most foundational phonological awareness skills needed before being taught to read. Without these skills intact, it is no wonder why he is struggling with reading. Although he could identify rhyming words, he was unable to independently produce rhyming words. He was also unable to count the number of words in a given sentence and scored poorly counting syllables and

phonemes in words. He was able to identify the initial sound in a word, but not the medial or final sounds. He was unable to successfully manipulate sounds within words. He was able to blend syllables nicely and knew the sounds of long and short vowels and the majority of consonants. He was unable to successfully read any nonsense words beyond VC words.

**Test of Orthographic Competence - (TOC)** is a norm-referenced test built to measure orthographic abilities involved in reading and writing. Orthography is the arbitrary system of marks and other conventions that people use to write down their speech and thoughts. In English, it includes upper and lower case letters, numbers, and punctuation. Average scores on this test are between 90-110.

	Standard Score	Percentile Rank	Descriptive Terms
<b>Punctuation</b>	85	16	Below Average
<b>Abbreviations</b>	65	1	Very Poor
<b>Letter Choice</b>	100	50	Average
<b>Word Scramble</b>	85	16	Below Average
<b>Sight Spelling</b>	75	5	Poor
<b>Homophone Choice</b>	75	5	Poor
<b>Orthographic Ability</b>	70	2	Poor

*Punctuation* measures the ability to apply the special signs (usually referred to as punctuation marks) and to indicate upper- and lowercase letters in accordance with today's standards of English usage. On the Punctuation subtest, Grady obtained a standard score of 85, which falls in the below average range. He did not consistently use capitalization or correct punctuation.

*Abbreviations* measures knowledge of the ways that words and phrases are shortened but still convey meaning, including abbreviations (e.g., "hr." for "hour"), acronyms (e.g., "USA" for "United States of America"). Grady obtained a standard score of 65, which falls in the very poor range. He was unable to name any of the listed abbreviations.

*Letter Choice* measures the ability to quickly select one of the four easily confused letters (b, d, p, and q) to complete common words (e.g., u\_, \_y for up and by). He was given 2 minutes to complete as many words as he could. Although Grady obtained a standard score of 100, which falls in the average range, it is to be noted that he was randomly writing letters without reading the words as he talked through the subtest. This subtest is not considered an accurate representation of his skills.

*Word Scramble* measures how quickly a person can reorder a series of letters into a common word. This test requires considerable knowledge of spelling patterns and permissible sequences for the order of letters within words. He was given 3 minutes to unscramble as many words as he could. On this subtest, Grady obtained a standard score of 85, which falls in the below average range. He was able to unscramble a few

three and four letter words accurately, but in contrast to the previous subtest, he actively tried to unscramble the words.

*Sight Spelling* measures the ability to write the irregular element missing in a real word. Because phonics is of no help here, the student must rely solely on visual memory of the missing letters to spell the word correctly. On this subtest, Grady obtained a standard score of 75, which falls in the poor range meaning he does not have the ability to spell words that are not phonetically represented.

*Homophone Choice* measures the ability to recognize that words that are pronounced the same can have different meanings and spellings (eg. deer and dear). Grady obtained a standard score of 75, which falls in the poor range.

The **Orthographic Ability Index** is created by combining the results of all of the subtests administered. Grady's obtained standard score of 70 falls in the poor range.

In addition to the TOC, Grady was asked to write his name, the alphabet and the numbers 0-9. He continually needed to return to the beginning of the alphabet to know what letter to write next. In addition, he used both capital and lower case letters to help with directionality. He "drew" most of his letters, meaning he did not use a single fluent movement to produce the letters but rather used as many as 4 separate strokes per letter, indicating that he most definitely does not have fluent writing skills.

#### **SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS:**

Grady is a 9 year, 7 month old boy who was referred to me by his human services case manager to receive services through the Childhood Long Term Support program for dyslexia. He was previously diagnosed with a learning disability, dyslexia, dysgraphia, ADHD, anxiety and depression. He recently was evaluated by the Lindamood Bell Program (LMB), who recommended an extensive summer program. I have collaborated with LMB and we have shared data and recommendations. My current testing revealed that Grady has never learned the foundational phonological awareness skills that are a pre-requisite to learning to read. He needs intensive, direct, multi sensory teaching of these skills prior to introducing reading tasks. Grady's dysgraphia is also quite severe, making his writing illegible most of the time.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. **Dyslexia Therapy:** Grady would benefit from therapy focusing on the foundational phonological awareness activities which are a pre-requisite to reading, then working up to letters and actual reading.
2. **Writing:** Grady would benefit from a writing program where he is explicitly taught correct letter and number formation to eventually write words and sentences.
3. **Accommodations:** To allow Grady to learn the same curriculum as everyone in his class and be able to prove his knowledge despite his disability, making certain all of his teachers are informed of said accommodations.
  - Do not make Grady copy from the board, an overhead projector or from the book. Use a peer note taker or the teacher should provide a copy of the notes for him, prior to class. He can highlight and add to the notes as he follows along.
  - Do not count off for spelling errors if you are not grading for spelling. When handwritten assignments are necessary, grade them on content only.
  - Allow Grady to take tests in an alternate location, free from distractions, if needed.
  - Because of Grady's dysgraphia, it is recommended that answers requiring more than a few words be dictated to a scribe.



- Grady should be allowed use of assistive technology in the form of dictation apps for writing/ getting his thoughts on paper, phone/camera to take pictures of overheads or diagrams, if needed, recording devices for lectures, a kindle or the like for audio books.
- Accommodations should be updated at least annually and be adjusted as needed as classes change.

Please feel free to contact me with any further questions or concerns you may have.

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Kristina Bohn M.Ed., CCC/SLP  
State of Wisconsin Professional License #3844-154  
WI DPI # 719432  
ASHA # 09130062

## Learning Ability Evaluation Summary

Name: Grady Baumann

Birth Date: 6/4/2009

Gender: Male

	Pre-eval	Pre-eval
Chrono Age:	9-6	10-2
Grade:	4.4	5.0

Hours of Instruction:

Seeing Stars® 160 hours

Total 160 hours

Pre-eval Date Pre-eval Date

12/28/2018 8/19/2019

Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test - IV, Form A

128	145 Raw
87	95 Standard Score
19th	→ 37th Percentile
8:0	9:4 Age Equivalent
2.4	<u>3.7 Grade Equiv.</u>

*+ 1 year of growth*

Detroit Tests of Learning Aptitude - 5

Word Opposites	11 Raw
	5 Standard Score
	5th Percentile
	6-6 Age Equivalent

Detroit Tests of Learning Aptitude - 4

Word Opposites	15 Raw
	5 Standard Score
	5th Percentile
	6-6 Age Equivalent

Woodcock Reading Mastery Tests - III, Form A

Word Attack	0	→ 7 Raw
	57	72 Standard Score
	0.2nd	3rd Percentile
	6:0	7:0 Mental Age
	<1.0	1.5 Grade Equiv.

Pretest

Post test

cab = "did"	bab = +
ip = "pluh"	op = +
ee = "blee"	dee = + shum = +
im = "blen"	bim = + plip = +
num = "shra/um"	

*+ 1.5 years of growth!!*

740 North Waukegan Road, Suite 207, Deerfield, IL 60015

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 deerfield.center@lindamoodbell.com  
 LindamoodBell.com



Pre-eval Date 12/28/2018 Pre-eval Date 8/19/2019

Slosson Oral Reading Test - R3

(sight words)	19	38 Raw
	58	64 Standard Score
	<1st	1st Percentile
	6.2	6.7 Age Equivalent
	0.5	→ 1.4 Grade Equiv.

+1 year of growth!

Wide Range Achievement Test - 4, Form Blue

Spelling	17	13 Raw
	68	55 Standard Score
	2nd	0.1th Percentile
	K.9	K.0 Grade Equiv.
Math Computation	13	15 Raw
	56	57 Standard Score
	0.2th	0.2th Percentile
	K.5	K.8 Grade Equiv.

lost points due to poor handwriting & not completing some letters fully

‡Gray Oral Reading Test, Form A

Paragraph Reading	6	4 Raw
	1.4	1.3 Grade Equiv.
Recall per passage:		
pssg#1, pre-primer	0.5	3 Raw
	13	→ 75 Percent
pssg#2, primer	1	3 Raw
	25	→ 75 Percent
pssg#3, first grade	0	3 Raw
	0	→ 75 Percent
pssg#4, second grade		2.5 Raw
		→ 63 Percent

lost points due to slowing down but overall much more accurate, which is why his comprehension increased on every passage!

Comprehension questions.

Pre-eval Date 12/28/2018 Pre-eval Date 8/19/2019

Gray Oral Reading Tests 4, Form A

Rate	28	3 Raw
	2	2 Standard Score
	<1st	<1st Percentile
	<6.0	<6.0 Age Equivalent
	<1.0	<1.0 Grade Equiv.
Accuracy	98	3 Raw
	1	1 Standard Score
	<1st	<1st Percentile
	<6.0	<6.0 Age Equivalent
	<1.0	<1.0 Grade Equiv.
Fluency	28	6 Raw
	1	1 Standard Score
	<1st	<1st Percentile
	<6.0	<6.0 Age Equivalent
	<1.0	<1.0 Grade Equiv.

Grady was unable to complete this test back in December.

Comprehension	21	12 Raw
	8	5 Standard Score
	25th	5th Percentile
	8.6	6.6 Age Equivalent
	3.4	1.4 Grade Equiv.

Grady was more successful w/ guessing answers for comp questions last time. Several of the passages he couldn't read but still guessed correctly.

Lindamood Auditory Conceptualization Test - 3

Ia	3	7 Raw
Ib	1	2 Raw
II	1	3 Raw
III	2	7 Raw
IV	0	1 Raw
Total	7	20 Raw
	58	72 Standard Score
	<1st	3rd Percentile
	<5-0	6-0 Age Equivalent
	PreK.4	1.2 Grade Equiv.

phonemic Awareness

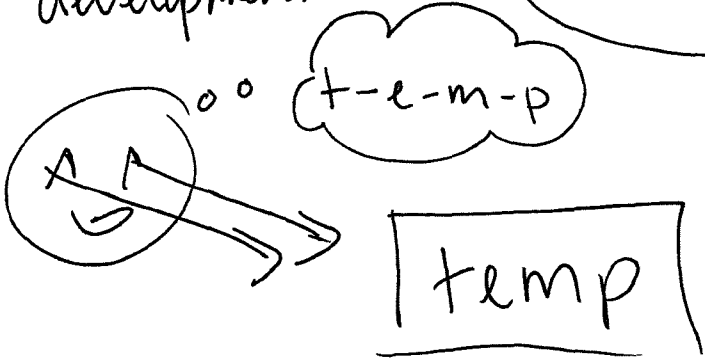
"Am" "If"

+1 year of growth!

Symbol Imagery Test

	11/50	11/50 Raw
	62	66 Standard Score
	<1st	1st Percentile
	6-0	6-7 Age Equivalent

- made growth here but this is still a primary function that needs more development.



Pre-eval Date    Pre-eval Date  
12/28/2018    8/19/2019

Informal Tests of Writing

Symbol to Sound	31/50	→	46/50 Raw
Nonsense Spelling	1/3		0/3 Raw

‡ - Measure administered for instructional planning purposes.

§ - Unable to complete

Grady can now correctly produce the sounds for more complex vowels (ie. ou/oi/au)

## Recommendations

Grady Baumann benefited from sensory-cognitive instruction at Lindamood-Bell. As evidenced by his performance on the re-evaluation administered on August 19, 2019, his rate of learning increased in a short period of time.

While these initial gains are positive, we recommend further instruction—4 hours per day, 5 days per week—for 10 - 12 weeks, to continue to develop the language and literacy skills that have begun to develop for Grady. The amount and range of instruction is broad due to many variables and individual responses to sensory input during the instruction period. *It should be noted that given Grady's substantial weakness on multiple measures there may necessarily be multiple rounds of instruction.*

Due to the cognitive nature of instruction and individual responses to sensory input, progress updates will be provided regularly during instruction to provide insight into the amount of intervention necessary and/or program focus. In addition, a retest should be administered at regular intervals to assess progress and provide additional recommendations, as needed.

The sensory-cognitive instruction at Lindamood-Bell aligns with the Dual Coding Theory of cognition to develop the imagery-language foundation for learning.

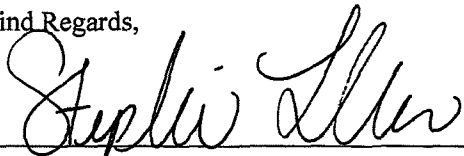
Our recommendation for instruction is as follows:

1. Seeing Stars® —This program provides sensory-cognitive development of symbol imagery—the ability to visually image sounds and letters within words. Dual coding with imagery and language supports the development of phonemic awareness through the multisyllable level, visual memory, word attack, word recognition, spelling, contextual reading (both accuracy and fluency), and reading comprehension. The program develops the imagery-language connection for spontaneous self-correction and accurate, fluent contextual reading.

Additionally, Grady may also benefit from differentiated curriculum and content with the support of sensory-cognitive instruction and language. Lindamood-Bell Academy, an accredited private school, develops the imagery-language foundation for language and literacy skills and applies those skills to all curriculum and content. Students in K-12th grade enroll in a Partial or Full day for a mix of Lindamood-Bell instruction and curriculum.

We welcome the opportunity to continue to enhance Grady's learning.

Kind Regards,



Stephanie Lobraco  
Center Director

## Learning Ability Evaluation Summary

Name: Grady Baumann  
 Birth Date: 6/4/2009  
 Gender: Male

	Pre-eval	Pre-eval	Re-eval
Chrono Age:	9-6	10-2	10-7
Grade:	4.4	5.0	5.5

Hours of Instruction:

Seeing Stars® 520 hours  
 Total 520 hours

Pre-eval Date	Pre-eval Date	Re-eval Date
12/28/2018	8/19/2019	1/28/2020

Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test - IV, Form A

	128	145	156 Raw
	87	95	100 Standard Score
<i>receptive</i>	19th	37th	50th Percentile
	8:0	9:4	10:7 Age Equivalent
	2.4	3.7	4.8 Grade Equiv.

Detroit Tests of Learning Aptitude - 5

Word Opposites	11	22 Raw
<i>expressive</i>	5	8 Standard Score
	5th	25th Percentile
	6-6	10-3 Age Equivalent

*(opposites)*

Detroit Tests of Learning Aptitude - 4

Word Opposites	15	Raw
	5	Standard Score
	5th	Percentile
	6-6	Age Equivalent

†Detroit Tests of Learning Aptitude

Verbal Absurdities	3	Raw
	5-9	Mental Age

Pre-eval Date 12/28/2018    Pre-eval Date 8/19/2019    Re-eval Date 1/28/2020

‡Detroit Tests of Learning Aptitude - 2

Oral Directions	17	Raw
	2	Standard Score
	<1st	Percentile

Woodcock Reading Mastery Tests - III, Form A

Word Attack	0	7	8 Raw
	57	72	73 Standard Score
<i>nonsense words</i>	0.2nd	3rd	4th Percentile
	6:0	7:0	7:2 Mental Age
<i>inconsistent w/prev test</i>	<1.0	1.5	1.7 Grade Equiv.

Slosson Oral Reading Test - R3

	19	38	54 Raw
	58	64	68 Standard Score
<i>Sight words</i>	<1st	1st	2nd Percentile
	6.2	6.7	7.1 Age Equivalent
<i>(real word decoding)</i>	0.5	1.4	2.0 Grade Equiv.

Wide Range Achievement Test - 4, Form Blue

Spelling	17	13	16 Raw
	68	55	62 Standard Score
	2nd	0.1th	1st Percentile
	K.9	K.0	K.6 Grade Equiv.
Math Computation	13	15	20 Raw
	56	57	66 Standard Score
	0.2th	0.2th	1st Percentile
	K.5	K.8	1.7 Grade Equiv.



Bill AB 446 – Chad Hedquist testimony

My name is Chad Hedquist and I am the father of Matthew Hedquist, and I have dyslexia.

I attended school in the 1970's and 80's and at that time there was no help or testing or even diagnosis for dyslexia. I struggled through my school years.

Watching my son struggle to read and write is very painful to watch, struggling with the same things I did as a child. I would hope that in 50 years, improvements had been made in testing and screening in those early school years to help individuals with dyslexia and reading disabilities become good readers. I'm saddened to see it has not.

I know very well from experience the problems that having dyslexia can cause. It meant I was teased at school, it took hours and hours to complete homework, it prevented me from joining the military, playing games and even from reading to my son.

It affects me every day in my job. Dyslexia is not something you grow out of, recover from or are cured of. It is debilitating and has affected every part of my life. I have tried to hide it, avoiding reading or writing situations whenever possible, and I am deeply embarrassed and ashamed at not being able to read well. I have never read a book for fun.

Reading aloud is terrifying, and I am sure you have no idea how hard it is for a dyslexic to read this in person. But, I hope that you will make the changes needed to stop the cycle of poor reading in schools and detect at risk students early.

Good morning. My name is Mary Newton. I am a certified academic language practitioner and trainer from Wauwatosa, a founding member of Wisconsin Reading Coalition, and president of The Reading League Wisconsin.

There is a small window of opportunity from approximately 4K to 2<sup>nd</sup> grade for teaching children to read and spell words so they have the foundational skills to become proficient readers. Students who have not mastered these skills during that window rarely catch up later. The goal of the Response to Intervention (RTI) or Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) model that most Wisconsin districts ascribe to is to accurately identify struggling readers in those early grades, determine what skills are lagging, provide targeted, effective intervention, and monitor progress to see if the student is indeed on track to grade level reading. Most students should make satisfactory progress and be exited from intervention. Others will need more intensive intervention before reaching that goal, while a small number may ultimately be identified as needing ongoing special education services due to learning disabilities.

In far too many instances, we are missing that window of opportunity because of the way we implement RTI or MTSS. Often, the screeners that are used do not look for all of the predictors of reading failure. When students are identified as struggling, we often fail to provide evidence-based interventions that are targeted to the specific problem. And when we are providing interventions, we often fail to monitor progress frequently enough. The result is children who reach 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> grade with obvious reading struggles and often an outside diagnosis of reading disability. Those students need to receive special education services as soon as possible, because they are already outside the window of opportunity. However, they often need to start another round of interventions, taking 1 to 2 more years, because the quality of earlier intervention or the frequency of progress monitoring did not meet the requirements for a specific learning disability identification.

AB 446 provides much needed guidance as to what should be included in a screener, how often screeners should be given, how to identify the specific areas of difficulty, what targeted intervention looks like, and how to progress monitor. It has been 10 years since the Read to Lead legislation mandated early screening. We have seen that without additional guidance on screening and intervention, we are not getting the results that we need in order to keep our students on track for grade level reading. It's time to assist our students and our districts by providing the guidance that is set out in AB 446.

Nichole McLaughlin, Waunakee

9/14/21

AB 446

- Kinder (MMSD) - My child had a reading problem, but no teacher identification of problem. "He'll pick it up." I knew he couldn't read. He was in Dual Language Immersion, too, which the principal and teachers said meant that kids sometimes fall behind for a while but catch up by 6th grade.
- 1st grade - Still not reading. I reported suspected dyslexia and family history, was told we'd have to wait until he was demonstrated behind grade level to do anything. School said could not diagnose or even assess for dyslexia. We pulled him out of DLI into English-only classrooms, which helped immediately.
- Researched a dyslexia diagnosis - Would cost around \$2,000 through medical channels and there was at least a one-year wait for tutoring through the children's dyslexia center of Madison.
- Decided to learn to do it myself. With structured intervention he got up to grade level in a few months.
- Researched schools, saw Waunakee / Middleton good reading scores on state report card.
  - Waunakee mom friend recommended - Waun. did great for her child with dyslexia.
- Sold house for better reading instruction. Something Rep. Thiesfeldt had written struck me - we should reward schools that are doing the right thing.
- Disappointment: Waunakee also not doing structured literacy. Their 65% proficiency is due to educated, affluent parents in the area who remediate their own kids' reading and pay for tutoring. In the classroom I could see the same balanced literacy, leveled readers, lack of structured phonics instruction as MMSD.
- I learned to tutor with Tattum Reading, a program that is having great success in Detroit high schools. Now I'm certified and tutor area kids who attend MMSD, Waunakee, and Sun Prairie. All the local schools are neglecting the science-based strategies that other states know work.
- Open enrolled to Merrill's Bridges Virtual, a public school that uses structured literacy. Continue wanting to support public schools if possible.
- My child now reading 195 words correct per minute at a 3rd grade level. Expectation is 110 by the end of 3rd grade. The strategies I used to help him work for all kids.
- This bill is a first step toward identifying kiddos who are failing to read in K-2. Waiting for them to be behind in grade level is EXTREMELY too late.
- Thank you to Rep. Thiesfeldt and the other legislators who have set aside funding to study how WI schools of higher ed train teachers. Without updated training, our teachers don't have the tools they need to help more than 65% of our kids to read.
- My son isn't severely dyslexic, but he was on a path to not being able to read well. This screener law will identify kids like him in kindergarten and get them onto a better path.
- I hope one day you turn your attention toward how to remediate all the older kids who won't benefit from K-2 screeners and improved elementary instruction. WI needs a strong tutoring program for middle and HS kids, which United Way's Schools of Hope currently is not. Please watch them as they say they're going to implement the Science of Reading; they haven't demonstrated an understanding of how they'll do that.

September 13, 2021

Dear Assembly Education Committee Members,

My name is Susan Garcia Franz and I have been here before to testify in front of you about the need for early screening and appropriate interventions for students with dyslexia like my daughter Pacha. She graduated from Neenah High School in 2020 and is currently in training in Madison to become a cosmetologist. Her road to graduation was not an easy one. My daughter had a reading specialist starting in second grade but continued to struggle learning to read. In her kindergarten readiness assessment, they said she could sing the Alphabet Song but when asked individually could not tell you the letters that the testers pointed to. Had there been an early assessment for dyslexia my daughter would have been identified. Had my daughter been identified, she would have received the appropriate reading intervention to help her learn to read. Instead, I was told that she will catch up. She'll get there, they would say to me. The reality was that she got further behind. She had report card after report card that said if she just worked harder, she would catch up. The red marks on assignments in the sixth grade along with the feelings of thinking she was dumb and a screw up were more than a parent could handle someday. We didn't know what we didn't know. We didn't know there were assessments and other interventions that we could have asked for. We assumed that the intervention she was getting was not the same version as what she received in class but just in a smaller group. Her teachers showed us that she went up a level in the STAR reading assessment but failed to tell us that many students advance many levels over the course of a year. Ultimately, the system failed her as she continued to guess at words, get chastised when working on group projects and continue to lag her classmates. Our battle became behavioral once my daughter reached middle school. The school never mentioned a general plan to help students like my daughter. Early assessment and intervention would have been life changing for my daughter. Having a proficient reading base at the core of her education journey would have gone a long way giving her so many opportunities around her future career. My daughter will be successful because we have paid for private dyslexia tutoring and encouraged her all the way along. Other children are not as lucky. They do not all have a strong support system to help them succeed. We need to make sure all children are proficient readers in Wisconsin and AB 446 – The Wisconsin Roadmap to Reading Success will be one more step in the process to make that a reality. Please pass AB 446 to ensure all children have a chance at reading success.

Sincerely,

Susan Garcia Franz

1790 Wendy Way

Neenah WI 54956

920-527-8203

September 13, 2021

Education Committee Members

Dear Assembly Members,

My name is Misty Powers and I live in Green Bay Wisconsin, located in Brown County. I am a mother of 4 children. My youngest child, Brooke, has been struggling academically since the 2nd grade. Brooke is now in the 7th grade. For years I've had conferences with the teachers to try and figure out why reading and writing are so difficult for my daughter. Never once was dyslexia mentioned to me by any staff from our school district. I have provided some of Brooke's writing journals from 2nd grade. Starting in the beginning of 5th grade Brooke could not complete any of her homework. So when I started googling her symptoms, dyslexia came up. None of this would have had to happen if a universal reading screening was available or if parents had dyslexia information. Maybe we could have avoided all the mental health damage and anxiety.

I found an organization that would do a screening for dyslexia. It was very pricey but worth trying to figure out why she was not achieving her full potential academically. Brooke's screening demonstrated signs of dyslexia in her reading and writing. Brooke has below average phonemic decoding skills in the 16th percentile (about 84% of her peers decoding at a higher level than she is). I feel if Brooke would have had an assessment to evaluate reading readiness 5 years ago the current gap wouldn't be as wide now. This is why I fully support AB446 universal reading screening, dyslexia definition, parent notification and support.

Brooke is not receiving the proper help in our school district. I have reached out to our school district reading specialist. The reading specialist stated no one has a dyslexia certification. There is no help in our district for dyslexia. I will remind you that I live in Green Bay where 20,000 children go to school, not one dyslexia

specialist. 1 in 5 children have dyslexia .This is why AB446 would of been so beneficial to my daughter's success in education. I support AB446!

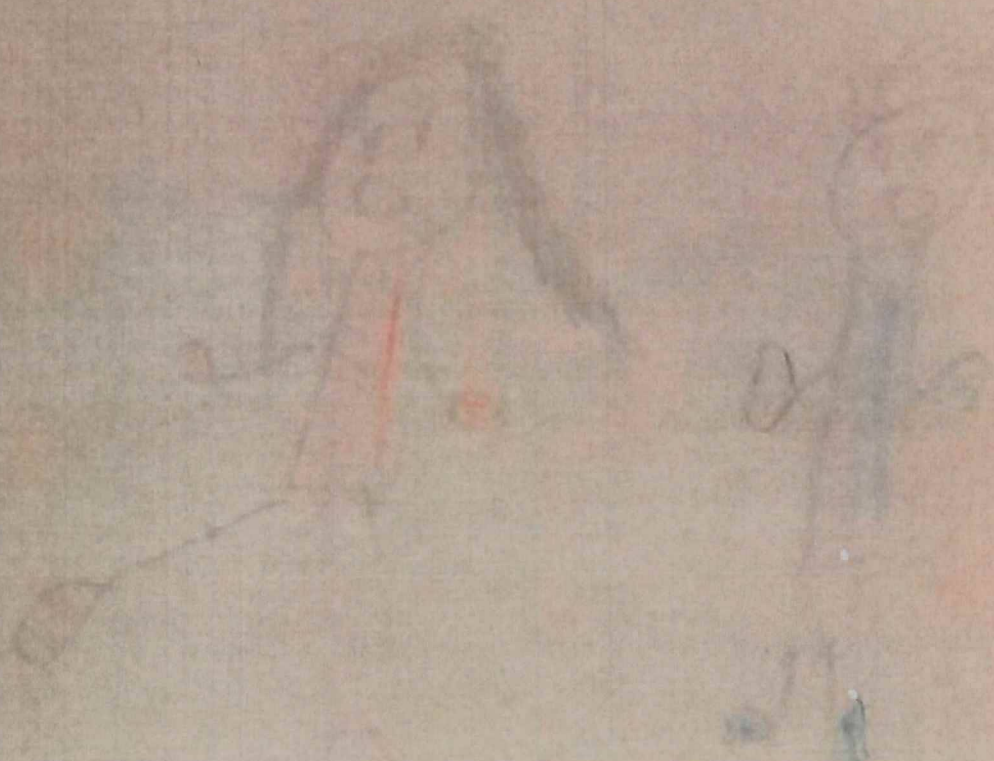
We have been tutoring for 2 years using a scientific evidenced based program (Barton Reading) which is costing my family over \$600.00 a month. We have spent \$14,400 in tutoring cost so far. I've had to get a 2nd job to help support the cost. Please move these bills forward to help bring our youngest learners to a higher level of achievement and help guide our public schools in the appropriate direction.

Thank you so much for your time.

Sincerely yours,

Misty Powers  
1712 Valorane BLVD  
Green Bay, WI

[mistypowers4@yahoo.com](mailto:mistypowers4@yahoo.com)



DO NOT FORGET

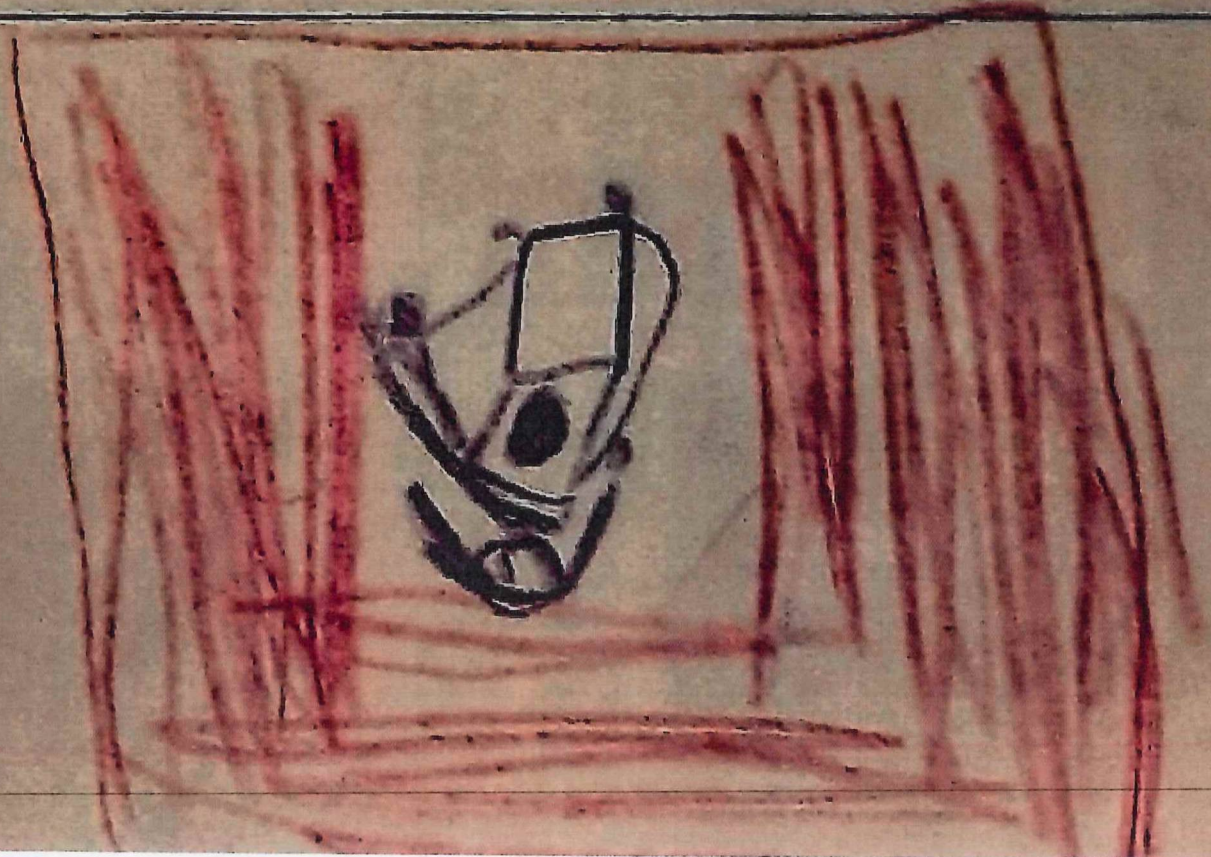
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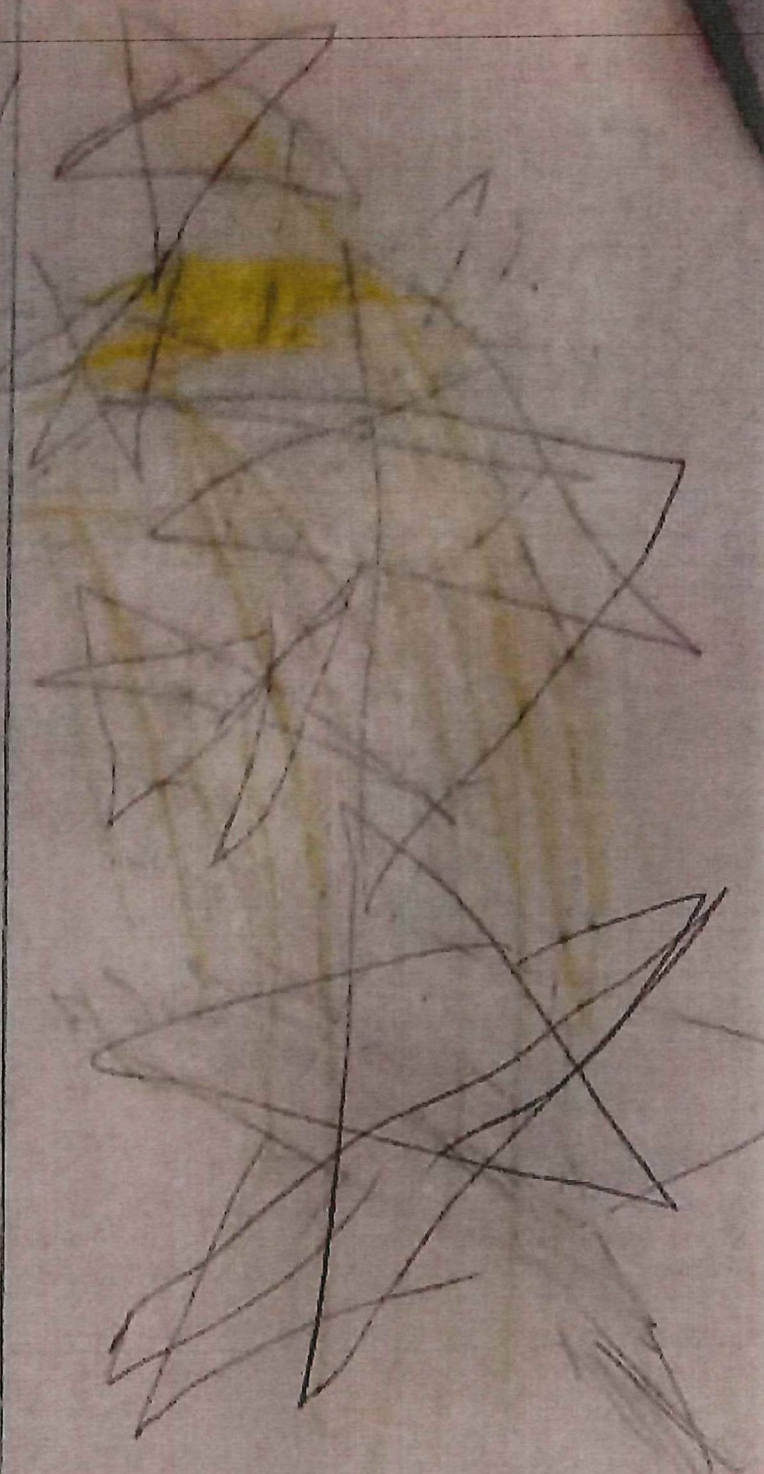
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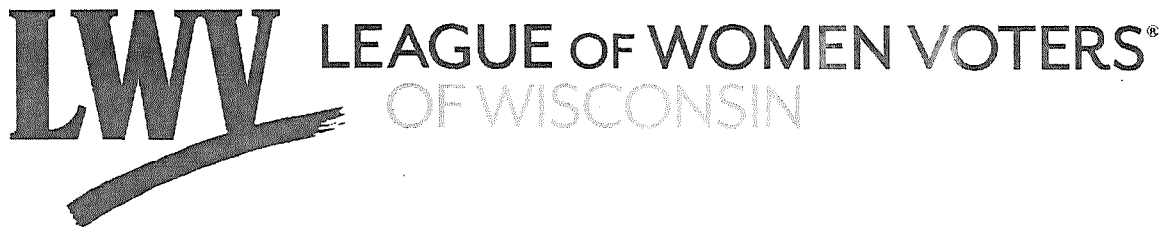




I LOVE STIG

SO MUCH IT IS

SO BEOPFL



612 W. Main Street, #200  
Madison, WI 53703

Phone: (608) 256-0827  
[www.lwwwi.org](http://www.lwwwi.org)



September 14, 2021

To: Assembly and Senate Committees on Education

Re: Statement Opposing Reading Assessment Assembly Bill 446 and Senate Bill 454

Thank you for this opportunity to provide input on Assembly Bill (A.B.) 446 and Senate Bill (S.B.) 454. After extended study, the League of Women Voters of Wisconsin believes educational bills should promote equal educational opportunity for every child through an equitable state aid formula while retaining substantial program and personnel responsibilities in the local district. Based on this position, the League of Women Voters of Wisconsin opposes A.B. 446 and S.B. 454 regarding reading assessment. Existing statutes more appropriately accomplish the items in this bill and give local school districts more local control in implementation.

The bills are overly prescriptive. They take a unidimensional approach to reading, which is not appropriate for all children. The perspective of reading espoused by these bills drive a curriculum that tends to focus on “drill and kill” phonics. The bills require one particular method of instruction. The time needed in this narrow form of instruction and its follow up would crowd out other forms of reading and other essential instruction. Time must be allocated in the curriculum for other types of intensive reading instruction. Children who would not meet the criteria of the assessments would need increased instructional time and more individualized attention. Time to teach social emotional skills, which have evidence of being essential for the development of young children, needs to be included in this bill as well.

The assessments are funded, but instructional interventions are not funded. Federal funds, such as Title I and Special Education, cannot be used for this purpose. Reading instruction is expensive. Adequate funds for more intensive, individualized instruction to remedy deficits found in intensive assessments are needed.

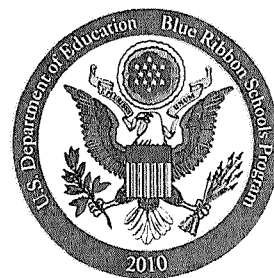
An additional concern is that the bill excludes nonpublic schools from these requirements. The legislature should extend this requirement to all children at all schools, if they believe it is of sufficient importance to enact a requirement.

For these reasons, the League of Women Voters of Wisconsin oppose Assembly Bill 446 and Senate Bill 454. Thank you for your consideration.



## *Cornell School District*

111 S. 4th Street P.O. Box 517  
Cornell, Wisconsin 54732  
(715) 239-6463 Fax: (715) 239-6587  
Cornell Elementary – A National Blue Ribbon School



Statement of Support for AB446 by Dr. Paul M. Schley, Superintendent of the Cornell School District

As superintendent of a small, rural, poverty stricken school district that has provided professional development for only 1 ½ years to the staff on the systematic implementation of the Science of Reading; I can say we have already seen positive results! The teachers and leadership team have been getting trained and have made major revisions to the ways we teach reading. We now provide a good deal of structured phonics lessons, no longer teach students to guess at words they don't know, offer rigorous interventions, and keep parents informed of their children's progress every step of the way. Parents have been very pleased to see these changes, and our teachers are thrilled to be teaching using a much more direct, clear approach. The two most common statement I hear from the teachers are that "I wish we would have learned this when we were in college!" and "I feel bad that my past students weren't taught this way!" Our students are making much better progress to reading proficiency than they had in the past. This includes students from very low-income homes, whom we had struggled to reach in the past. AB446 is an attempt to realize these same gains for children across the state, including students of color. The bill puts into place systems and structures that are necessary for improvements in literacy outcomes. Our district has already begun this process and we believe many more districts like ours exist across the state. This bill will encourage districts that are already engaged in the process to keep going, and all districts to get started on a path to reading improvement. I support AB446.

Thanks for your consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "P.M. Schley", with a long horizontal flourish underneath.

Testimony before the Wisconsin Senate Education Committee  
14 September 2021

Thank you for your attention to this important statewide but community level issue. The debate is very familiar to me and I fully recognize the challenges that implementing something new poses...for systems and the adults in them. I'm not here to preach to the choir but to speak some hard truths about what it takes to lift a state off the bottom, and to try and address some of the concerns frequently expressed about these types of initiatives.

What you have before you will be good for Wisconsin kids and their path to learning to read. AND to learn to read WELL, more efficiently, and on time—meaning *before* the next NAEP scores expose otherwise. I know one of the concerns is that rigorous screening will take too much time and only result in overidentification of students for special education. This is exactly what accurate and regular screening in specific, targeted skills that predict reading outcomes *will prevent*. Here's how: **First**, it is more accurate by catching preventable deficits early and providing clear protocols for remediating them, thus maximizing the critical period of K-2 instruction when learning how to read is the focus. **Second**, it systematically monitors progress so instruction can be adapted at the right time and prevent unnecessary failure. And **third**, it can be a useful onramp for introducing teachers and school leaders to some of the fundamental frameworks based on the cognitive science that help explain the reading process and inform instruction.

While screeners take some teacher time, they ultimately save students time. I've tested thousands of students across all grades in Mississippi during my tenure at the Reading Institute and it is heartbreaking to discover middle and high school students who have lingering deficits in something as basic as phonemic awareness, these unremedied deficits impede decoding unfamiliar words, seriously compromise writing, and hijack the development of vocabulary and background knowledge. Good screeners predict who is at-risk of failure in reading. This prediction is needed at the beginning of schooling.

As for naming specific screeners, it appears that some good homework has been done relative to identifying reliable instruments that have been scrutinized and validated. While I get that local control has been a cornerstone of public education in making decisions...the biggest lesson from Mississippi I can leave with you is that lifting reading scores for a whole state requires some wholesale approaches. That means doing what works and doing it everywhere. It is to Wisconsin's advantage to use these nationally recognized instruments and use them uniformly because they are aligned to the specific skills that predict reading performance in the future. Furthermore, having such a clear framework for all K-3 students might provide some welcome stability and structure (instead of viewed as a distraction) in the midst of the pandemic.

Many aspects of teaching *should* be left to the individual educator in his or her own classroom, but when it comes to reading assessment and intervention, the science should point the way. We know too much now. Substantial gold-standard research has gone into the development and validation of the screeners that have been

named. So save the debate for other issues. Don't shy away from some mandates. Mississippi followed the science and required all adults to change what they were doing....and that yielded different outcomes for their students....especially poor kids and kids of color.

No one is more eloquent or credible about this science than Wisconsin's own Mark Seidenberg. He and his occasional loquacious and brilliant side kick, Steve Dykstra (who has also provided written testimony), are powerhouses in the reading world. Mark spent a whole day in Mississippi addressing our state literacy coaches, our higher education faculty, and our legislative education committees. Why? Because he has deep knowledge about the brain and how it processes language for reading. Educators don't need to be neuroscientists, but they do need to understand how human beings process language, especially young ones who need to be explicitly taught to how to extract language from the printed page.

And so, I'll yield the microphone to my friend and a prophet in your own land, Dr. Mark Seidenberg, who understands "how we read, why so many can't, and what can be done about it."

But I'll leave you with this....the proposal you are entertaining to replace the current reading readiness assessment program with a three-tiered early literacy screening process is based on sound science. There are plenty of other states who have already done this. That may not be a reason to do it, but I'm from one of them and it's made all the difference.

Thanks for your attention.

9/14/2021

Dear Senator Bernier:

I am writing in support of SB 446, the Roadmap to Reading Success Act outlining evidence-based early screening for risk of reading difficulties. The details of the bill are well-thought out, and I believe it would greatly improve the opportunities for ALL Wisconsin students to learn to read. This is particularly important for student with dyslexia, children of historically marginalized backgrounds, and students who receive free and reduced lunch, and students with disabilities. Wisconsin ranks near the bottom for reading skills in black children (National Assessment of Educational Progress, 4<sup>th</sup> grade reading scores, 2019).

As the parent of 2 boys with Dyslexia, I experienced the lack of early intervention first-hand. Our family was fortunate to be able to pay for private evaluation resulting in a diagnosis of dyslexia and evidence-based tutoring. As a pediatrician, I often work with families who struggle to get the appropriate reading instruction and/or remediation for their children. It is not unusual to hear that a family has had concerns for months or years without being able to get help in their child's school. This in turn puts kids at risk for school avoidance, mental health problems, and difficulties educational and vocational goals.

I strongly support SB 446. Please give ALL Wisconsin students the chance for early intervention. An ounce of prevention will most certainly save the state a pound of money in the long run.

Respectfully,

Julie A. Gocey, MD, MS  
Clinical Associate Professor of Pediatrics  
UW School of Medicine & Public Health  
(opinions are my own)

Home Address:  
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Dear Legislators,

I would like to give my strong support and provide comment on the Science of Reading (SOR) Reading Readiness AB 446/ SB 454. My interest is personal as I am a private reading tutor at the North Shore Center, LLC in Mequon, WI for children with dyslexia and most important my experience raising a son with dyslexia who did not benefit from and reading instruction or interventions at his school.

I have certifications in Orton-Gillingham, IMSLEC, ALTA, CERI, and Lively Letters. I am the Past President of the WI Branch of the International Dyslexia Association, past school board member and President of Maple Dale Indian School in Fox Point, WI, founding member of the Wisconsin Reading Coalition, an advisory member of the Wisconsin Branch of the Reading League, and a coach and mentor of teachers seeking certification in instruction for students with dyslexia and Carroll University.

My youngest son, now an adult, has dyslexia. Even though, from first grade on, I paid local reading tutors outside of school, read to him, and worked with him on homework each night, he was still a nonreader in sixth grade! I had to advocate, fight, and take matters into my own hands to help make sure my bright beautiful boy was not another casualty of a school system that did not prepare and cultivate teacher knowledge in how children learn to read. My son, a college graduate, was supported by expert instruction that I paid for, alongside of the public K-12 school system his entire school career. Can the families of other children who struggle all afford what I could? I was blessed that I possessed the grit, the stamina to gain new knowledge, and had the financial wherewithal to give my son the gift of reading, a gift that comes so easily for some.

So, it was not a surprise when his now third-grade son, my grandson, showed the same characteristics of dyslexia in first grade. He has been receiving intensive evidence-based reading instruction outside of school so what happened to my son would not happen to my grandson. We have paid exorbitant amounts of money so that my grandson can read. The expenses for us will continue, the inequalities of instruction among children will continue.

I advocate for my grandson to get the instruction he needs outside of school. The personnel at his school are working with us and fortunately respect our experiences and knowledge, HOWEVER, it is abundantly clear when it comes to teaching a child to read, how much they are strapped by inaccurate and misleading educational policies and procedures. Dyslexia in his school can NOT be used to describe a child's reading performance, despite what Federal law and State memorandum says. Similarly,



advocating for the students I work with, there are many schools and districts where this is also the case.

My son's and grandson's story would be very different if I did not acquire the knowledge to advocate for them.

My son's and grandson's story would be very different if I did not have the financial means to pay for them to learn to read using the SOR.

My son's and grandson's story would be very different if teachers had the knowledge and were supported by administrators and structures that used screening and instructional approaches and methods to identify and remediate the discrete reading weakness skill(s) early and robustly.

AB 446/ SB 454 builds on screening provisions from 2010, but I strongly support the addition of:

- more specificity on discrete reading skills
- requires the DPI to maintain a list of appropriate screeners to be used and requires DPI to collect relevant data of early screening and intervention efforts
- calls for more screening at ages when skills are rapidly developing
- defines "at risk" students
- notifies parents with specifics in a timely way by getting information about the characteristics and indicators of dyslexia, and appropriate interventions and accommodations for students with characteristics of dyslexia. I strongly support getting the pupil's overall score and each literacy skill category and percentile ranking in the parents' hands as soon after assessment
- provides a personal learning plan (without much more teacher knowledge and support will be where things fall apart)
- progress monitoring
- limits the time of intervention and requires additional assessment
- transparency of early literacy remediation plans of a district

Consider-

Many teacher candidates routinely tell me they thought their teacher preparation was very good, however reaching the classroom say they totally unprepared to teach reading, especially to the struggling readers in their classrooms. Older teachers have been taught phonics in elementary school and newer teacher candidates instructed in suspect reading strategies and programs all knew their students needed more than the Balanced Literacy “3 cueing strategy” that basically encourages students to guess unknown words. <http://www.balancedreading.com/3cue.html>

Reading should not be a “guessing game”, which is exactly what Balanced Literacy and Whole Language reduces it to. In fact, 96% of the English language is predictable and decodable if one has been taught the reading and spelling rules that govern our language. Dr. Louisa Moats writes quite succinctly about how and why novice teachers have been left unprepared to teach reading here: <http://www.readingrockets.org/.../why-have-teachers-been...>

Dr. Maryanne Wolf frequently lectures that the Science of Reading is settled science, meaning journals no longer publish articles on the subject because of the voluminous evidence supporting SOR, contrasted by the lack of research supporting Balanced Literacy. With the settled science research readily available, I find it quite alarming to read that Colleges of Education remains entrenched in the antiquated and unsupported belief of the practice of Balanced Literacy. Even more egregious is that their unsubstantiated beliefs are being passed on to WI teacher education students and the school administrators who should be supporting them who also are not receiving the preparation they will need. In 2010 the WI Legislature passed and required teachers of reading to pass the Foundations of Reading Test (FORT) education preparation programs to teach scientific reading instruction. Before new teacher graduates are licensed, they will be required to pass a test demonstrating their knowledge of the SOR. A law that has been chipped at from the beginning.

Here, the International Foundation of Effective Reading Instruction published this summary of research attesting the same: <http://www.iferi.org/.../IFERI-INFORM-No.4-June-2015...>

I find it disheartening and sad that motivated teachers in Facebook groups, chat rooms, and who stumble upon information are more knowledgeable about current research and practices than professors responsible for preparing our teachers, leaders and administrators, and legislators crafting policies and standards. I want to be proud of Wisconsin but as it pertains to teaching effective SOR to students I remain disappointed and concerned for our futures. [Why aren't kids being taught to read?](#)



### **Why aren't kids being taught to read?**

Emily Hanford

Scientific research has shown how children learn to read and how they should be taught. But many educators don't...

For "Pete's Sake", it's 2021, we need to use the SOR to guide us, and provide every child and every teacher with the support they need to be successful readers and teachers.

Respectfully,  
Cheryl Ward

Cheryl Ward MSM, ICALP, CSLDI  
North Shore Center, LLC

[www.northshorecenterllc.com](http://www.northshorecenterllc.com)

Wisconsin Reading Coalition (WRC) Founding Member

[www.wisconsinreadingcoalition.org](http://www.wisconsinreadingcoalition.org)

International Dyslexia Association (IDA) Branch Representative

[www.dyslexiaida.org](http://www.dyslexiaida.org)

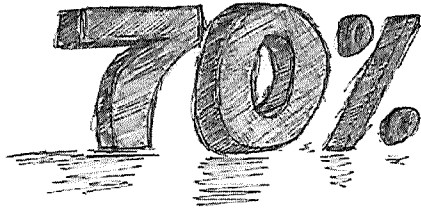
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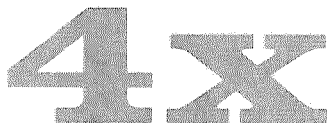
*"To learn to read is to light a fire; every syllable that is spelled out is a spark." — Victor Hugo, Les Miserables*

Good Morning,

I am writing to you to express my support for the Early Literacy Bill. It is so important that legislatures understand this statistic:



70 % of below average readers in 1<sup>st</sup> grade remain below average readers in 8<sup>th</sup> grade (Landerl & Wimmer, 2008). Children with reading difficulties in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade are likely to struggle throughout their entire educational career (Francis et al., 1996).



Struggling readers are four times more likely to drop out of school and African-American and Latinx children who are struggling readers are twice as likely as their white peers drop out before high school (Hernandez, 2011)

See also Juell, 1988; Shaywitz et al., 1999; Torgesen and Burgess, 1998)

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By passing this bill, we can change the lives of so many students. We can improve our state's economy. We can improve our health care. If children can read, they will be productive members of our society. We know the research. We know the numbers. This bill must pass.

Thanks so much.

Mrs. Jeanne Schopf, M.Ed, NBCT  
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