



Legislative Fiscal Bureau

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Joint Committee on Finance

Paper #657

Grants to Nonprofit Organizations (DPI -- Administrative and Other Funding)

[LFB 2023-25 Budget Summary: Pages 511-512, #14, #16, and #17]

CURRENT LAW

State GPR has been provided for the Wisconsin Reading Corps, an AmeriCorps program that provides one-on-one literacy tutoring, since 2017-18. Base level funding is equal to \$2,000,000 GPR annually.

DISCUSSION POINTS

Wisconsin Reading Corps

1. Assembly Bill 43/Senate Bill 70 provides \$1,000,000 GPR in 2023-24 and \$2,000,000 GPR in 2024-25 above base level funding of \$2,000,000 GPR to support literacy tutoring services provided through the Wisconsin Reading Corps. [Alternative A1]
2. Under 2017 Act 59, Wisconsin Reading Corps was provided with one-time funding of \$300,000 GPR in 2017-18 and \$700,000 GPR in 2018-19, with a requirement that the organization provide matching funds of \$250,000 in each year as a condition of receiving the state payment. Under 2019 Act 9, funding was made permanent and the match requirement was eliminated. Funding was further increased to \$1,000,000 GPR in 2021-22 and \$2,000,000 GPR in 2022-23 under 2021 Act 58.
3. The Reading Corps is an AmeriCorps program focusing on providing one-on-one literacy tutoring to pupils in grades K-3. The program began in 2003 in Minnesota, and is currently operating in 14 states and Washington, D.C., with over 2,000 tutors serving 32,000 pupils in 2020-21.
4. Under the program, AmeriCorps tutors commit to serve for at least one year, and spend their time providing daily tutoring in an elementary school. Tutors receive training prior to the start

of the school year, as well as ongoing literacy coaching throughout the year from an on-site supervisor and a master coach, who is a literacy expert who provides tutors and their supervisors with additional support. Pupils are identified using benchmark assessment data to find pupils who are at risk for reading difficulties. Each tutor provides daily 20 minute sessions to approximately 15-18 pupils using standardized activities prescribed by the organization, working on foundational literacy skills such as phonological awareness, letter sound knowledge, decoding skills, and oral reading fluency. Pupils participating in the program complete regular progress monitoring assessments to assess the effectiveness of their current tutoring interventions and whether the pupil is ready to exit the program.

5. Wisconsin Reading Corps started in the 2015-16 school year with tutoring programs in Milwaukee. The program expanded to include Racine in 2018-19, and now operates in public and private schools around the state. In 2021-22, 120 tutors served approximately 2,000 pupils in 148 schools. In addition to state funding, the organization receives support from donors including Northwestern Mutual, American Family Insurance, the Racine Community Foundation, the Greater Watertown Community Health Foundation, and other local organizations and businesses, as well as from individuals.

6. A randomized controlled trial conducted by the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) at the University of Chicago and published in October, 2018, found positive results for pupils receiving tutoring under the program. The study was conducted by randomly assigning 176 kindergarten and first-grade pupils at 10 participating Milwaukee public schools to either receive tutoring under the program or be part of a control group. The study found that kindergarten pupils participating in the program demonstrated significantly higher letter sound fluency scores, and were on track to exceed grade level expectations within one semester. First graders participating in the program did not meet grade level benchmarks after one semester of tutoring, but demonstrated significant improvement on basic literacy skills compared to the control group.

7. If the Committee wishes to provide some additional fund for the Wisconsin Reading Corps but at a reduced ongoing cost, the Committee could consider providing an increase of \$1,000,000 GPR annually. [Alternative A2]

The Literacy Lab

8. AB 43/SB 70 provides \$75,000 GPR in 2023-24 and \$1,370,000 GPR in 2024-25 to The Literacy Lab to provide an evidence-based literacy intervention program in public schools located in the cities of Milwaukee and Racine. [Alternative B1]

9. The Literacy Lab began operating in District of Columbia and Alexandria, Virginia public schools in 2009. In 2012, it was selected as a national replication partner for the Reading Corps model. As a Reading Corps partner, The Literacy Lab implements the evidence-based intervention model developed by Reading Corps.

10. The Literacy Lab serves pupils age three through third grade. The organization places trained full-time literacy tutors in elementary schools. Tutors serving pre-kindergarten pupils are embedded full-time in a single classroom for a school year and provide literacy tutoring one-on-one, in small groups, and to the entire class. Tutors serving grades kindergarten through three work with a caseload of 15-18 pupils at a time and provide twenty minutes of tutoring to each child every day.

Tutors receive approximately 60 hours of training in topics such as foundations of literacy, reading interventions, assessments, progress monitoring, and data-based decision making, and receive ongoing coaching at their school sites from literacy coaches who observe tutors, provide feedback, and convene regular data meetings.

11. A subset of The Literacy Lab tutors are participants in the organization's Leading Men Fellowship, which recruits men of color between the ages of 18 and 24 who have graduated from high school but have not yet finished college. Fellows are placed in a pre-kindergarten classroom to work with three- and four-year-olds, preparing them for kindergarten and providing literacy tutoring. Fellows are paid an hourly wage, and receive an education award of \$2,500 upon successful completion of their service.

12. The Literacy Lab currently operates in metropolitan District of Columbia; central Virginia; Baltimore, Maryland; Kansas City, Missouri; Springfield, Massachusetts; Atlanta, Georgia; Cincinnati, Ohio; Phoenix, Arizona; and Milwaukee. In 2021-22, a total of 365 tutors reached over 5,200 pupils in 142 schools. The Milwaukee program began in the 2018-19 school year through a partnership with Milwaukee Public Schools and Next Door Milwaukee. Currently, 180 pupils in five Milwaukee schools are served by 10 Leading Men Fellows.

13. The Department of Administration indicates that the funding in the bill (\$75,000 GPR in 2023-24 and \$1,370,000 in 2024-25) would be used to support a program manager in Racine starting in 2023-24 to expand the program to that city. Beginning in 2024-25, the funding would be used to expand the number of fellows to 30 in each of Racine and Milwaukee. [Alternative B1]

14. If the Committee wishes to provide some funding for The Literacy Lab but at a reduced cost, the Committee could provide \$500,000 GPR beginning in 2024-25 to expand the number of fellows working in Milwaukee. [Alternative B2]

Reach Out and Read

15. AB 43/SB 70 would provide \$250,000 GPR annually to Reach Out and Read, Inc. for an early literacy program operated in Wisconsin to support integration of books and reading into pediatric care and encourage families to read aloud together. [Alternative C1]

16. Reach Out and Read is a nonprofit organization that partners with pediatric clinicians (including doctors, nurses, and physician assistants) to provide children's books and information about the importance of reading to families at routine checkups for children ages birth through five. Clinicians are trained to provide information to parents such as the benefits of reading out loud to children, looking at board books and naming pictures with infants, rhyme and repetition for gaining phonemic awareness during toddlerhood, and reading interactively when reading with preschoolers. At each visit, children are given a new, developmentally-appropriate book to take home with them, so that by the time a child reaches kindergarten, they have received eight to 10 books through the program. In 2021-22, Reach Out and Read provided 6.6 million books to 4.2 million children through partnerships with 33,000 health care providers at 6,000 sites across the country.

17. Other activities include Reach Out and Read Counts, an early math initiative in which

pediatric clinicians provide parents with suggestions for engaging in counting and early math activities with children; a guide for families and medical providers of children with disabilities with tips and book recommendations for children with various special needs; and specialized training and materials for providers who serve Spanish-speaking families and American Indian/Alaska Native families. Reach Out and Read also has a military initiative to serve military families on bases worldwide.

18. Clinics apply to participate in the Reach Out and Read program. As part of their application, they must certify that they have sufficient funding to provide new books at all well-child visits from six months through five years for at least the first year of the program. The actual costs of books varies, but the organization uses an average cost of \$2.75 per book to estimate the cost of the program. Other costs, such as providing clinician training and support, are incurred by the organization.

19. Reach Out and Read Wisconsin operates at 257 clinics in 55 counties, providing more than 171,000 children with 253,000 books since the Wisconsin chapter began in 2010. Its 2021 impact report indicates that more than 75 clinics, serving an additional 35,000 children, are on the waiting list to join the program. The organization hopes to expand to an additional 50 clinics in 2023, reaching all Wisconsin counties as well as increase participation with tribal clinics and other under-resourced communities.

ALTERNATIVES

A. Wisconsin Reading Corps

1. Provide an increase of \$1,000,000 GPR in 2023-24 and \$2,000,000 GPR in 2024-25 for the Wisconsin Reading Corps.

ALT A1	Change to Base
GPR	\$3,000,000

2. Provide an increase of \$1,000,000 GPR annually for the Wisconsin Reading Corps.

ALT A2	Change to Base
GPR	\$2,000,000

3. Take no action.

B. The Literacy Lab

1. Provide \$75,000 GPR in 2023-24 and \$1,370,000 GPR in 2024-25 to The Literacy Lab to provide an evidence-based literacy intervention program in public schools located in the cities of

Milwaukee and Racine.

ALT B1	Change to Base
GPR	\$1,445,000

2. Provide \$500,000 beginning in 2024-25 to The Literacy Lab to expand the number of fellows working in Milwaukee.

ALT B2	Change to Base
GPR	\$500,000

3. Take no action.

C. Reach Out and Read

1. Provide \$250,000 GPR annually to Reach Out and Read, Inc. for an early literacy program to support integration of books and reading into pediatric care and encourage families to read aloud together.

ALT C1	Change to Base
GPR	\$500,000

2. Take no action.

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