

## Wisconsin DPI Testimony on 2021 SB454 (Machine Generated Transcript)

[00:00:00] I would like to just mention about money and Wisconsin, we are getting over \$2.5 billion in federal funding, and we don't know how that's going to be used. So we need to, to look at that that's done by the governor also, or, uh, where we put in more than 13 billion in K-12. It's our biggest investment and our goal over the next couple of days and months will be to look at the money we have and figure out where we want.

[00:00:35] Wouldn't, you know, I said, DPI's money (Taxpayers?), but we have to figure out if our investment is going where it needs to go. And we need to know where the federal money is going. So I'd like to go on to the next speaker, which will be, uh, Tom, who from the VP. Well, [00:01:00]

[00:01:04] thanks for having us. And I am actually joined by Dr. Barbara Novak here with me as well from the department of public instruction technology, not my strong suit on those laptop machines, getting two people in, in the same spot. So apologies for that. Okay. Yeah, for sure. Um, and I believe we've got some testimony whipping around, um, having sat up on that bench before I do not plan to read through our testimony for you all.

[00:01:23] It's also a bit of a rehash from the same stuff that we provided on the assembly side on this same legislation. So I'm here with you today. Dr. Novak is here with you today to kind of talk some big picture pieces and answer technical questions. And I think the couple of big picture things I want to leave you with is that this new administration under Dr.

[00:01:42] Joel underlay. Deeply committed to advancing literacy in the state of Wisconsin. The testimony that we've already heard today, paints a picture, a realistic picture of the fact that we need to do something in the state around literacy initiatives at the K-12 space, we need to support our districts. We need to support our educators [00:02:00] and most importantly, support our kiddos as they're going through that exercise.

[00:02:04] Um, I do think some of the things that we've touched on already, I don't want to rehab. There is a growing importance in a large body of research around how we engage in the early space of lives of our children as the father of the two and a half year old. I can tell you that not every single family comes at that issue.

[00:02:21] Not every single caregiver comes at that issue with the same set of expertise and knowledge. So what my child may receive because I am an engaged and active parent with known capacity in that space is going to be different from a family who does not benefit from the same circumstances that I am stuck in.

[00:02:37] So we have to acknowledge that when we're designing systems. I think the other thing that we talked with Dr. Burke and Zach from Senator Bernina's office about, is making sure that we have true buy-in across the multifaceted issues that are at the table here when we're solving this problem. Um, and I think that is probably the largest reason that you're going to see a DPI that is still opposed to this [00:03:00] legislation is not because we disagree on some of the principles, but because we are disagreeing with how we are.

[00:03:06] From the approach of legislating some of these issues instead of giving the department space in a new administration to approach this problem in novel ways. Um, so I think what I really want to do is also turn this over to Dr. Novak so that she can talk a little bit too from her level on some of the things that we've probably already heard, that maybe we want to adjust from the department space and then also open ourselves up to.

[00:03:30] And be available to you, um, and walking through this very complicated problem that we are committed to working with you to solve, um, Tom, um, and thanks to the committee for the opportunity to appear today. Um, as Tom has said, we have, um, a great opportunity with Dr. Underly and a new administration. To utilize the statutes that are in place to support schools and districts, not just in following the letter of the law, but following, um, following the spirit of [00:04:00] the law.

[00:04:00] And one of the things that, um, I'm particularly excited about, um, from hearing from Dr. Burke is how are we engaging families and caregivers, um, from. Through well through school age, how are we engaging them as true partners? Both the bill that we're looking at today and the existing statute require notification notification is a technicality.

[00:04:28] That's not a true partnership or a collaboration it's providing information. So we're interested in. Working with many different individuals and agencies and stakeholder groups around what can true community and family and caregiver collaboration around this issue look like. Um, So even going beyond what's in existing statute or what's in the proposed law, [00:05:00] um, we've talked to at length, um, both here and in the assembly about how the money provided for screening and diagnostic assessment is ample.

[00:05:10] Um, and I guess the question I, as a department, since the initiation of a screening assessment in, after read to lead. In 2012, we have been in support of screening. Um, uh, when we were initially empowered to select a statewide screener, we selected a screener that included tools to support teachers in teaching, because then we were able to use the money that we were provided with to also provide teaching tools.

[00:05:40] Um, so I asked you to think about. The side effects, both the potential positive side effects and the potential negative side effects of increasing screening and, or continuing to screen without providing continued financial support [00:06:00] for intervention. We have. Um, as her three and ARPA money schools will have that in their hands.

[00:06:08] Soon, once they write their plans, there is without a doubt, a requirement for them to spend the funds on evidence-based instructional strategies, that money runs out after. So, what the heck are we going to do after that? Um, I love the conversation about the potential of money, but as schools are making plans for, long-term what it's going to look like to engage teachers and professional learning and engage families.

[00:06:36] There needs to be a guarantee that that money is going to continue. And I believe we heard that in Dr. Birx testimony as well, that Mississippi made a long-term investment in this, including the investment in coaching. And specific personnel at their state department. The other issue that is not addressed, um, in this bill that we have a [00:07:00] real opportunity to address at the department is the strengthening of universal instruction.

[00:07:06] So universal instruction is the instruction that's available to every child. It's the instruction that's designed intentionally to ensure that every child can move to and hopefully beyond. Grade level standards that universal instruction is our first line of defense and intervention is something that happens in addition to universal instruction.

[00:07:30] So we have an opportunity at the, uh, at the department to continue our work around strengthening universal instruction. What have we done? All right. We revised Wisconsin's academic standards for English language arts, which included convening a group of educators to focus specifically on reading foundational skills.

[00:07:52] And they made a couple of substantial revisions to those standards, to the foundational skills standards. [00:08:00] I don't think there was a single argument, which was one of the parts that

I appreciated most about the process that we convened a group of educators with varied perspectives. Who worked directly in classrooms who were able to say, here are the grade level expectations.

[00:08:19] We adopted those standards. We made the recommendation to the state superintendent to adopt those standards the day the state shut down. So as you can imagine, our implementation of those standards has been greatly impacted by COVID. In addition to strengthening the reading foundational skills standards, the standards also recognize the connection between.

[00:08:42] Early language development and foundational skills, development, vocabulary development, and foundational skills development, writing development, and foundational skills development. So as we're talking about universal instruction, it's a very comprehensive way of looking at [00:09:00] literacy and all the ways that our students are.

[00:09:04] The final possible side effect that I'd like you to think about when we talk about screening without long-term funding for intervention, um, I have to call your attention to our students who are English language learners, and our students who have already been identified with disabilities before 4k, often students with speech and language struggles, possibly students with autism students with intellectual disabilities.

[00:09:32] Are there nuances. Um, are there things that could be changed about this bill that would better support the differences for. The students that we serve and better respect who those students are at an early age. I don't want to lower the standards. I don't want to change the standards. I just want to recognize that when a student enters 4k and has spoken Spanish all of their lives, and within [00:10:00] 46 days of the first day of 4k are screened in English.

[00:10:05] What. What does that say about what we value about that student's family that students put to great potential as a bilingual citizen? Um, and what is it really telling us, um, about our instruction, especially if that student is in a bilingual school where the language of instruction is Spanish, um, and same with our students for IPS.

[00:10:28] Um, one of the, one of the kiddos that I know and love is, um, pretty close to nonverbal and he. I've had many conversations with his parents about why, why is he screened and what does that mean for him? And what could, how could the screener be a more meaningful experience for him? So, do ask you to think about the possible side effects, um, for populations that have been historically underserved.

[00:10:57] I just kind of want to, before we jump into questions, just really [00:11:00] kind of hammer home, a few points to, um, and I apologize for jumping in, sorry, Senator. Um, I, I think I want to just, again, commit to the idea that the department is ready to lead on this and we want to assemble a task force that will dive in and bring the diverse stakeholders together to make immediate action and start walking this problem back and getting us on the right.

[00:11:22] I think you heard something else in the testimony that I neglected the highlight around the idea that this is likely the imperative in education of our current moment or possibly even generation. I also want to note that it is arguably one of the most inequitable moments in time, too, for our learners.

[00:11:40] As you heard Dr. Novak talking about specifically for language learners, but also for the different races, ethnicities that exist in the state of Wisconsin and our part of our ecosystem, our K-12. They do not achieve at the same levels. And we need to come to terms with, and acknowledge that Wisconsin has the largest black, white achievement gap in the nation.

[00:11:57] And we have been engaged on the idea of [00:12:00] literacy being an important foundational component of that since three delete task force and we have not moved the needle. So I think we need to come to terms with that and figure out how to fix that problem. And I think that is one of the bigger charges that we're going to have to face.

[00:12:13] And part of that is understanding that there are cultural components to education. We're probably neglecting and not doing well enough in our schools. And that's an, that's a tough conversation. It's tough because it requires us as people who largely look like white folks of Wisconsin to come to the table and give and take with people who are not like us and who are more making up more of the majority in our schools these days.

[00:12:39] So it's tricky, right? Not a problem that I've got the easy solution for the magic bullet for. Many other states do. This is something that is a national issue that we're facing. I think the other thing that we want to be cognizant of and careful of is that when we not just legislate, but when we approach problems like this and we don't stick them with fidelity, we're doing a [00:13:00] disservice to kids in the classroom.

[00:13:01] So I think there was a real moment in time around that taskforce, where we seem to have the ball rolling in the right direction. We had the right people at the table and you're engaged. And then for whatever reason, political, otherwise we lost focus. When we lose focus on issues like this, it is damaging to kids.

[00:13:17] It's, it's hard on educators, but it's, it's, it's damaging to kids and we can't undo that damage. You only get one chance at first grade, you only get one chance and kindergarten, you know, we talked about retention as an issue too, but those kids are only that age for a moment in time. And so I like it. I want to wrap up with a metaphor goofy, right.

[00:13:35] Um, cause I'm in Wisconsin. You got to imagine a teacher is like somebody who's going to a grocery store. Right. And they've got a list of items that they know that they want to get. I want us to think about literacy like cheese, right? When I go to the grocery store and cheeses on my list, I stop at the station and I picked through, I look at the different.

[00:13:53] I make the right selection for me in the moment, because I know that's what I like. That's what I want. It's going to be successful for my stomach. Cause I'm hungry. [00:14:00] Right? I shop when I'm hungry a lot. I don't want literacy to be 2% milk for educators where they walk through the store, they grab the gallon of milk, they know what they've done.

[00:14:08] It's a performer sort of exercise. And I think it's a stupid, silly story, but it's a realization that we are burdening our teachers with a lot of different activities. Let's set funding aside for. They have a laundry list of things that they need to get done in their day. And they know that kids don't always come prepared and ready to soak up the knowledge.

[00:14:25] How do we get them to fixate on this as being an issue? We have to support them and show them that that is the case. So that is sort of the paradigm that I'm asking that we work to shift. And I'm asking that you give this administration a little bit of grace to engage and dig in on this. So I'm really happy to answer questions, technical or otherwise about this bill, but sorry for a silly start.

[00:14:44] It just popped into my brain. And I'm glad that you mentioned those. Our goal is to look at what our priorities and mission is to, to really, we need to dig in and figure out what we need to do different and differently. I'm glad [00:15:00] that you're saying we can't stick with the same old, same old, and we really applied you for saying that we need to do something bold.

[00:15:08] We need to be together. And I think this, your initiatives are going to be very important and we need to work together as. 'cause like then the money then the \$90 million that the government gave us the federal government. We don't know, we know something about it, but we don't know the details about it.

[00:15:29] And we need to know how that fits into your priorities and ours. And so I would say, please put us as partners with you because we are the policy makers. We need to work with you. And long-term, if we have a long-term vision and we can put that before. If we have a long-term vision, we will put the funding behind that.

[00:15:50] I would hope and we'll work together to do that right now. We don't really know how you invest your money in terms of this issue. And we'll be talking about that [00:16:00] later. Okay. Questions from, uh, Senator burner so much in I'll piggyback on, um, the Senator, uh, cheer woman's. Uh, point that we are a team and we work together.

[00:16:14] Um, we, our policymakers, your kind of the executives that carry everything out. And I understand the eagerness of a new, uh, superintendent to want to, uh, be a part of the process and the task force. But I would like to point out, um, number one, when we talked about burdening our teachers, um, Oh, I work with a lot of teachers as a professional and as a mother of three and a grandmother of six.

[00:16:43] Um, and I don't think our teachers consider teaching reading from K to three, a burden, uh, you know, th that's, um, that's, their main focus is, is teaching, reading at those grade levels. And [00:17:00] so, um, I have never wanted to, um, To give them the impression that, that their job as teaching reading, um, is a burden or should be a burden.

[00:17:11] Um, it's, it's a very important aspect of, of their job. And I know they have, um, challenges we're trying to help with that. We're trying to help with, um, training and education and, and, um, a process for them to be able to reach all patients. Um, whether black, white, Hispanic, um, whatever, um, that is our goal.

[00:17:36] And we're not trying to divide in any way, shape or form. I also would like to point out and maybe you're aware, um, that I would encourage the new superintendent to look back at. Um, the 2008 adolescents literacy taskforce to look back at just 2014, where they had the superintendents task. Um, Wisconsin achievement gap [00:18:00] and nothing came from those taskforce.

[00:18:03] Nothing came of it and our children can't wait another two years for the task force to meet and have it out and battle over the, the specifics and come up with no recommendations. Um, that is just, uh, we lose children that way. And it's about the children and their ability to learn how to read. And very basic scientific methods that have been proven for the last 20 years.

[00:18:33] So I appreciate, um, you know, the challenges that you have, um, in your position. Um, but to just be against a bill that actually addresses some of the issues that we know, um, work, um, nationwide and statewide. Um, is, um, doesn't make a lot of sense to me. Um, and I think that we can work together [00:19:00] on what comes next and maybe have a task force or, uh, you know, alleged council study or whatever, to, to how we can move forward.

[00:19:10] And as, um, uh, Senator darling pointed out where the funds, all of the federal funds that are, are sitting out here, how we can utilize. Um, for this initiative and I'm eager to work with you on that. Thank you very much to Senator knives. Uh, two questions. You mentioned, uh, the department having a time without this legislation, having time for novel ways of attacking this problem.

[00:19:42] How far out do you think that is? A novel way, sir? Uh, they have been thinking of that. And it's not just a change in the superintendency because as we know, DPI is one of the agencies that, uh, the employees are there from one superintendent to the next, to the next to the [00:20:00] next. And so certainly there's continuity there.

[00:20:03] So how far out are we on these novel ways of attacking this? One of the things that I really appreciate about Dr. Burke's experience is that she speaks strongly about the importance of, um, in Mississippi. I think it's called the chief in Wisconsin. It's called a state superintendent and the role of the governor.

[00:20:23] And I think both those individuals, I don't want to, I shouldn't speak on behalf of the governor's office. I can speak on behalf of Dr. Underly, um, and her state. A big part of what happened in Mississippi was the chief who was willing to say we have laws in place. And here's what it can look like to follow those laws that doesn't cost any money that doesn't take it.

[00:20:45] Doesn't take time, um, a huge amount of time to put that together. So I think Dr. Underline. Willing in the near future to make strong statements about what it looks like to follow the existing laws, particularly to school [00:21:00] leadership, so that they have an understanding of what those laws are, um, which is actually something that we've already been working on with superintendents.

[00:21:08] Um, and then from there, the work of convening, the task force will take some time, but we do have immediate steps that we can take without a task force. Particularly around professional learning for reading professionals and curriculum professionals about what it looks like to follow the existing statute and how that can serve students and families.

[00:21:28] So we don't know, uh, in short, we don't know, uh, the other question I have, you mentioned a continuity or a long-term financial assistance to school districts beyond 2023. I think you. So, since this has been looked at to some extent, these novel ways and so forth, how much money, what, what type of dollars are we talking beyond 20, 23?

[00:21:54] Cause certainly if you're looking at novel ways of attacking this [00:22:00] problem, you w unless you're off the. You've alongside that just as we do with legislation and we look at how much money is needed. So going out into the future, how much will be needed beyond 20, 23 to attack this problem? I think one of the biggest investments, um, that Mississippi and many other states have made, including Tennessee, our cultures, um, Coaches are individuals who support teachers in improving their practice.

[00:22:36] Um, not by telling them what to do by, but by supporting them in making decisions about what to do. So there might be some kind of district wide or school wide PD, professional development that happens. And the coach supports, um, the teacher in implementing that in the classroom. It makes an astronomical difference in the life.

[00:22:56] The teacher will implement and the likelihood that the teacher will [00:23:00] implement successfully that those individuals costs money. So when we're talking about a long-term commitment and examples from other states, benefits and salary for coaches in schools, Um, is, uh, is a tremendous expense, a tremendous long-term expense, currently schools and districts that have coaches carve them out of one way to do it is to carve out the money from existing FTEs.

[00:23:27] Sometimes that means increasing class sizes. Um, sometimes that means not offering certain services, but districts who utilize that without funding sacrifice other things to find the. So again, how much the department must've looked, are we talking 10 million, 20 million, 50 million, 2 million, 2 million, 2.1 is with the legislation here.

[00:23:50] So you're looking at long-term you must have looked at this. Somebody in the department must have some idea of what it's going to take because you allude to continuing funding [00:24:00] beyond 2023. So the question becomes certainly in the next budget. Uh, what, what are we looking at for continuing funding? I mean, I think that let's, let's parse this out a little bit.

[00:24:11] If we want to get down in the weeds on this, what type of success measure are you trying to drive and how fast do you want to drive in? I mean, I think that is by and large, how you're going to govern the funding piece. You want a reading coach at every school. There's over 2000 schools. Reading coach is going to cost you about 60 to 80 K at the bare minimum.

[00:24:29] That's how you do the math. How fast do you want to move it? Add more codes. Add more PD time for the people that are in those schools. If we can set the algebra equation up for you and you can move the variables as you see fit, I think it's a, it's a question from our perspective, how, how much do you want to go in for, because I think we would support setting you up with the algebra equation and letting you kick the tires to figure out how to get there.

[00:24:52] That's not something we're afraid of doing this federal funding question that I think we keep wrapping around. I think all of us need to write. In the same way. This is, [00:25:00] we're not talking about CRF money. Like the kroner relief funds that the governor had unilateral control over and could like bop around and support things.

[00:25:07] This money comes with strings attached and it's tied to local districts. And we plan as the department of public instruction to encourage them to spend money on particular activities. But the districts are in the driver's seat for how they're going to spend those monies. And if we break it down across the different expenditure programs, so our Sr one.

[00:25:27] First version or to the second version. Those first two programs were targeted at getting through COVID. The third program is targeted at how do we operate in a new normal? So whether it's we talked about instructional methodologies and modalities, but it's also a conversation. Um, I don't like to use the term learning loss.

[00:25:43] Cause I think we all learned something in the middle of this pandemic in some way, shape or form how we measure it is that question. What is the new education system look like now that we have sort of been upended by a pandemic global pandemic and how are we getting out the other side? Let's say we learned some lessons in [00:26:00] the positive space about literacy in three years.

[00:26:03] If we don't commit to that and whatever format you're willing to, all of that goes away. And that's what we're talking about. When we say that in that three-year period, once a district has decided, Hey, I love this doctor. And really lady I'm bought in on the literacy thing that this legislature has committed.

[00:26:20] There's a big fiscal cliff at the end of that. And I think the question mark is how far do we want to push into that space? How far are you all in the game for we'll set you up with the math? Well, the problem is, uh, whether legislators or parents, we count on a department of public instruction to put forward plans in various areas to attack problems, educational problems.

[00:26:42] So we will wait and see, because the answer is we don't. So we will wait for the department to come forward so that we can take a look at what the cost is going to be on. Any legislation we take up, we look at the cost and we will look to the experts, whether it's [00:27:00] natural resources, revenue. And so we will have to it's we're in a wait and see mode right now to the future, to what, what these novel ways are and how much it's going to cost.

[00:27:11] And then we will have to review it just as we are with this legislation. I like that paradigm. I welcome that opportunity and I would love to come back with recommendations for you and let you play with the math. I think that is, I did not realize that was on the table. There was, I would have done something for you and I have is, it will be a long time.

[00:27:29] You're looking at a task force and the public. When they hear taskforces, it's almost a way to push it off onto the shelf to collect dust. I couldn't agree more and that's not what. Eh, so we have next Senator Jaguar, Senator Larson. Uh, thank you, Madam chair. Um, I appreciate the work of a DPI and pointing out some of the specifics around English language learners, [00:28:00] those who learn differently and the keys to being able to address.

[00:28:06] Um, and I, I, I agree that we need to be addressing this as quick as possible. Obviously, this legislation doesn't do that. It just adds warning lights for the next budget cycle that says, okay, we're going to add some more warning lights where we already know that there are problems, but it doesn't actually invest or, um, profess to invest longterm.

[00:28:28] Uh, which it sounds like is the consensus that DPI was the consensus from the previous speakers of saying. There needs to be sustained investment. Uh, if we're going to start addressing some of these problems. Um, so I would argue that this, the, the, the task force is probably gonna move faster than just saying let's, let's, let's study this or the, the current path that we're on.

[00:28:53] Um, the current policy, which seems to be the, the beatings will continue until morale improves. [00:29:00] Um, so I'm, I'm curious about the, the literacy task force. That DPI, uh, the DPI superintendent outlined in her state of education, uh, two weeks ago and, uh, know members timeline. And, um, obviously how that will take into account those students who, you know, might just appear as a fail or might just appear as up this person, uh, needs attention with just a red light flashing.

[00:29:30] Um, whereas the individual obviously, you know, is, is very different, um, than, than just, uh, a stack of statistics. I'm gonna start and then I'm gonna let Dr. Novak go on the, some of the technical pieces. Cause I think the membership question is still up for debate in terms of how big do we want this? But we have to make a hard look in the mirror at when we put too many people into a taskforce, it becomes unwieldy and then we can't move at the pace that we need to move.

[00:29:58] But I think the one thing that we learned, and I'm [00:30:00] glad Senator being here, you brought this up, the promoting excellence for all taskforce. The governor Evers did, uh, taking a look at the achievement gap. I was at the department of my first time at that point. And we learned a real hard lesson about doing data research before you jump into a problem, because everybody at that moment in time, think back in this, when we were talking about achievement gaps, that we now call many different things, but I prefer the opportunity gap or just just general.

[00:30:24] We thought that we were dealing with a problem that was largely situated in the economic status of our kids. So if I measure economic status, I can tell you where the gaps are. Right? So we took a second. We did a data research, Paul, and you know, what we found out that is not case we found out that there were gaps that existed beyond economic status that had more to do with race and ethnicity in the state of Wisconsin.

[00:30:44] That was the first time that we brought that issue to the forefront is the first superintendent that decided, Hey, we're going to dig in and look. Take the time and space to figure out what is actually going on on the ground. We didn't know about that until we came to and use that model. And that is what we want to do here.



[00:30:59] We want to take a [00:31:00] look at literacy in the state of Wisconsin. This is something that is happening right now with our researchers at the department and figure out at the school level at the district level, who is beating the odds who is doing this the right way and what are they doing? How do we scale that up?

[00:31:13] How do we bring that to different places that are not. And specifically around culturally specific practices for our race, ethnicity, for our students, with disability, for our language learners, for the populations that we know right now, we are failing in the state of Wisconsin that is not acceptable. Dr.

[00:31:29] Novak, please make me look.

[00:31:35] As we're thinking about this task force. I really appreciate what Tom is saying on behalf of Dr. Underly, that this is a task force to lift up and elevate the places where success are happening. And we have statewide data from our third grade test that. Can help us find some of the places that we're doing that are, um, Eric experiencing success, [00:32:00] schools and districts also have their own data from 4k through second grade.

[00:32:05] That also allows us to see how students are experiencing success. I heard that on the DPI Twitter feed today, we're featuring young poets throughout the state of Wisconsin. So. We can also look at, we can also support our schools and districts at looking at student work and looking at local data. In addition to the statewide data, to identify places where success is happening.

[00:32:28] And to have the task force learn about those successes and be thought partners with us as a department about how to spread, not just those practices, but also the systems and structures that districts have in place to support those practices. As many of you have pointed out and as Dr. Berg pointed out as well, there is a sense of urgency around this every year that we don't make an improvement, we are losing.

[00:32:59] [00:33:00] So working with the task force to create the details of a plan is something that is quite frankly going to take too long, but working with the task force around the specific details of how to identify and elevate practices and systems along with steps that we, as a department can take on our own. Such as Dr.

[00:33:20] Underly talking with superintendents and school boards, such as my colleague and I offering a series of webinars for reading specialists throughout the state about what the existing laws are. Those things can all start and continue throughout the course of the school year. We're not looking for the task force who advise us on those kinds of things, but instead to help us with this more complicated process and.

[00:33:49] I think it's not just about finding the practices. We've alluded to science and research many times in this hearing, but it's also learning about the systems and [00:34:00] structures that schools have found to make those practices work. How do you carve time out of your schedule for professional learning? One of the things that Mississippi and Tennessee haven't really dealt with because of the timing of their initiatives, how the heck do you do.

[00:34:18] During a global pandemic when schools are having to shut down because they have too many COVID exposures for teachers, or they're having to use their coaches as salvages in classrooms, or they're having their administrators teach because some teachers have chosen not to get vaccinated yet. So I think the task force can also help us think through the logistics of where do you find the time and money for people.

[00:34:41] What are you doing to engage families, diverse families, and how is it working so that we can then use those to work on, um, later aspects of the plan to be clear, there are steps to be taken immediately, um, in addition to convening the task force. Thank you [00:35:00] very much. I appreciate that. Okay. The next is Senator Smith.

[00:35:06] Thank you. Um, appreciate you being here today and thank you. Answered many of the questions I'd have, but I want to get back to the statement that I'm a burden on the teachers. And I know you never, ever meant that teaching was a burden to teachers. It's a testing and assessing that would continue to pile on teachers married to a kindergarten teacher.

[00:35:33] I can tell you that, uh, the heartbreaking stories that I have had heard over the. It isn't the classroom necessarily that we're a teacher struggles. It's sending them home to situ to settings often that are not, um, particularly helpful when they come back and haven't been able to keep up whether it be during the summer, whether it be during the weekend, [00:36:00] whatever it may be.

[00:36:01] There's so many elements that go into this and, um, Um, you know, we have all these charts that, uh, Sandra veneer provided for us. And I appreciate that. Um, very first chart by the way, shows that we've kind of hovered at like the two to 23 to 21 to 20 number we've been over the last 30 years while Mississippi has caught up and they're at two 19, um, they have not surpassed us overall.

[00:36:28] Um, but the, but the real charter is to look at is how we are failing. Uh, Um, students from minority groups, but I don't see a chart, for instance, though, for our tribes. I don't see that chart. And I think the real, um, elephant in the room, going back to the original, uh, analogy I heard today, um, maybe, um, that poverty and I don't, and I don't, and I know that we've sort of danced around that and address that in different ways, but [00:37:00] it seems to me that, to be that the real issue here.

[00:37:03] So I'm curious as to how does poverty come into play in all of the studies and all of the, um, solutions that we're working towards, um, and when it comes to our schools and then the other part is by the way, is it back to funding at the state level? And I know that the shortage of when, uh, when my, my, a spouse is teaching 26 kids in kindergarten and doesn't have the support of the reading specialist when she needs.

[00:37:32] Um, we are, we are shortchanging all of our students and all of our teachers. So those are the two main things I wanted to do with. Okay. I would like to just mention, we are here for talking about assessment and, and, um, I think we have to stick to that. Poverty is a very important issue. There's no doubt where you can't assess, but we're going to that point as well made.

[00:37:55] I think that's a point, a good point, but the issue we're talking. And [00:38:00] that's related to what we're talking about, but I don't think it's in this position. We're gonna be able to talk about how do you address poverty. It's I think it's an issue that we need to talk about. Thank you. Next of, if you wouldn't mind, Senator darling, there's one thing in what Senator Smith said that I think is really relevant to this bill.

[00:38:20] And that's the example about how are we engaging our tribes and sovereign nations of Wisconsin. So. When we think about the ways. And Tom has mentioned, um, recognizing the wreck, the relationship between culture and literacy practices. And when we think about communicating with families about data and intervention as sort of their.

[00:38:44] Um, but we also think about communicating with families about what their literacy practices are. I think schools and perhaps the literacy taskforce can learn a lot from, um, tribal

leaders about what the literacy practices are, that are related to [00:39:00] their tribes and their native or first languages. So that's one of the nuances of communicating with families and engaging.

[00:39:08] Families that we could certainly get to, um, through the work of the task force and in a solid example of how communities have literacy practices. And I think also recognizing the way that the tribes are investing in this themselves. I met a great lady who at the movies, who was a retired MPS teacher, who is now running a

[00:39:31] Uh, a language school, a language school for birth to 4k that's teaching students, the students and their families, a language of a tribe, a language that's almost extinct through tribal funds. So I think recognizing the ways that, um, community groups are also contributing to solutions, that's really. Okay.

[00:39:55] You know, I'm, I'm really happy to hear that you guys are saying that [00:40:00] things cannot remain the same. I agree with you because we do need to do something about our children's ability to read, especially increasing that educational gap between our black and our white students. The one thing that concerns me, that you guys also addressed as did the previous speaker, um, was what the costs would actually be to make sure that we could implement a program like this.

[00:40:33] Um, according to cannibals, according to the physical estimate, the prices in determinant for the implementation of this. But we did hear the previous speaker talk about how Mississippi implemented, uh, assessments for pre-K through third grade professional development, the literacy coaches that you were talking about and us having over [00:41:00] 2000 schools to implement those literacy literacy coaches in at 68 to \$70,000 per school.

[00:41:08] Um, she also talked about the parent rental resources for. Which is something that we didn't talk about. She also talks about Tennessee and how Senator we were here for those comments. Could you get to your question? Um, yes, but let me address fairness because you allowed, um, Senator Bernier to talk to our last speaker and there was not one.

[00:41:38] So I'm going to get to my question, but I would appreciate fairness and consistency as well. I would too. Yes. Thank you. Now. Um, Tennessee, um, passed the program earlier, but this year in the summer set aside a hundred million dollars for implementation, I guess, [00:42:00] because the previous implementation of the sporadic.

[00:42:04] Of their bill. It wasn't comprehensive and they set aside a hundred million dollars for that. What I'm concerned about what this bill is that this body is good at passing legislation to address specific issues, but not funding it. And if the price is in determinant and we know Mississippi spent 99.5 million.

[00:42:34] They didn't have 2000 schools to fund comprehensively. Um, and the cost is in determinant with the last speaker. This was what I was trying to get at roughly how much would we be looking at to implement something like this correctly or comprehensively so that we know for sure [00:43:00] that our points would go up?

[00:43:01] I know. In 2014, Mississippi invested nine and a half million dollars. Their scores went up by one point. Then they had to implement an additional \$15 million each year to finally get up to those eight points or whatsoever. So what is the cost that we could be looking at? Because I would hate to see our legislative body pass another bill that they are not willing to fund.

[00:43:30] And we're just throwing money out after cheap fixes. I don't think the GPI is responsible for that. I think that we are responsible for that. Yes. It's a drag. When you were on the finance

committee, you always do a good job and we need to have that debate in the legislature. I agree with. Thank you. Any other points to be made?

[00:43:51] Yes, I would just say to Senator Johnson's point that you started driving it there. I think that is why we want the space to have a task force, to study these things, to figure out and come [00:44:00] back to the point that I was making a Senator and an ass and say, here are the levers that we can pull. How much are you in for and doing that because when we just come in with a printed down, this is the solution.

[00:44:10] And then the next step is the next solution. It sort of leaves that open-ended loop. What are we going to come back for? What's the fiscal estimate? Is it determinant or indeterminant? How are we actually moving forward? If we can commit to a partnership around this issue and continue to engage on this through its life cycle, until we can put it down and say, look, our neighbor results are, you know, where we want them to be.

[00:44:30] Where is that for you first in the nation, top quadrant? I don't know. I know where I want it to be, but I it's partially an exchange of like, where are we going? How far are we going with. And right now, I think the thing that you've heard a lot about today from our previous speakers, all sort of relates to motion 57, which is a chunk of Sr.

[00:44:48] That's very small. That is cut across a number of different things that if you, if you do the math out on the school level or the actual educator level, it's probably not going to move the needle in the way that I think everybody is [00:45:00] talking about right now, we're talking about sort of a drop in the bucket and it's a first opening salvo at these sorts of things, but it is not going to be the thing that's going to make a statistically significant difference.

[00:45:10] And our neighbor results. If we, if we forward this conversation, five years, 300 bucks, a teacher is going to move our NAPE scores by 10 points. I don't think so. I mean, I could be wrong. I would love it. If that was all. Okay. I appreciate your willingness to be a partner with us. I that's really good because I also hear you saying we're not going to accept the status quo that we have to move forward.

[00:45:34] And I'm very happy to hear that the author of the bill Senator Bernier has. Well, I don't necessarily have a question for you. Well, I do. Is it true that currently DPI has funding of \$2.1 million for assessment reimbursement to each school district? I don't know the number, like perfectly off head, but we have an appropriation for [00:46:00] assessments.

[00:46:00] If that's what you're referring to. And it's a federal and state braided funding. And I know at least in the last time I was at DPI. So I'm starved, still catching up speed that historically that appropriation has not been exhausted. So those are the questions. Then you're asking specifically about the appropriation for the early reading readiness assessment.

[00:46:19] Yes. So, so we can stay focused, um, the premise of this bill, because we're kind of getting off on all sorts of next steps kind of things. So the premise of this bill is to incorporate five very important components in the assessment process and interventions, depending on where that child. Um, assessment comes out and so we're breaking it down to raise an ethnicity and all kinds of other things.

[00:46:51] But the fact of the matter is this bill just creates an assessment for each and every individual child that each [00:47:00] teacher a school district is reimbursed anywhere from six 50 to \$8 per student. And the, and your department has 2.1 million. Um, and \$1.7 million is what was expensed out last, uh, last year, I believe, put it in our testimony or written testimony.

[00:47:21] Yes. So I just, that is why, um, I thought I made that clear in my testimony, but that is why that the fiscal estimate to this bill, um, I'm sure you would agree is indeterminate because there's already. Uh, funding available for assessments. I agree. Senator Bernie or there is funding available for assessments 100%.

[00:47:45] And the question that I ask is when, um, testing alone by itself helps us identify who's struggling in the skills that are assessed the requirement of the [00:48:00] intervention. I guess the question I ask about that is without professional development. About how to successfully intervene. Um, and without examples of systems and structures about how to build intervention into the day, what is the success of that intervention going to be?

[00:48:18] After the S if people choose to use their S3 money after that, Esther three runs out. So the, the part of the bill where I have the largest personal concern is around the intervention, especially since it comes with weekly progress monitoring and very strong parent notification requirements as a school.

[00:48:39] Without providing PD and support for teachers to deliver that intervention while simultaneously sending home weekly progress about a student. I worry that we're putting our schools in a really impossible and our families in a really impossible and frustrating situation where they're continually notified weekly.

[00:48:57] That there's a problem, but there's not [00:49:00] anything happening to support the intervention component of it. Okay. Um, uh, cheer on woman, um, I accept that. Um, we have testimony down the line from school districts, from superintendents, from professionals, so we can address that with them. Well, thank you very much for being here.

[00:49:18] Just want to end with a couple of things. I think it's built on what Senator NAZ said. Um, we've had committees, uh, you know, governor's committee on learning as a priority. Nothing came out of it. You talked about the task force for the achievement gap and nothing came out of it. And you said that. We had a blue ribbon committee with, uh, all, all different legislators.

[00:49:42] We did the legislature and nothing came out of it. So what we're saying is let's work together to have a very bold agenda on reading and literacy and let's work together. I, because I want to make one comment that might sound like. But the past governor [00:50:00] did, I was a part of that achievement gap, task force.

[00:50:03] He was the superintendent and nothing came out of it. So I would hope that we could all work together. Cause we don't want to keep doing these task forces and have nothing come out of it. And the past superintendent, I think, had the achievement gap on, on the table and nothing came out of it. So we look forward to working with you.

[00:50:22] Thank you very much. We have another.