

Assembly OK's bill giving lawmakers direct oversight of education plan

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The state Assembly today passed a bill that would give lawmakers direct oversight on how the state plans to comply with the federal Every Student Succeeds Act, an education policy overhaul that Congress passed in 2015.

The chamber passed the bill, AB 233, on a voice vote, though Dems said it was an unnecessary attack on the Department of Public Instruction.

State Superintendent Tony Evers released a draft of the plan on Friday and is testifying at the Capitol tomorrow on it. Some GOP lawmakers say they need greater input in the process, but Sen. Luther Olsen, R-Ripon, who chairs the Senate's education committee, previously said lawmakers have had plenty of changes to weigh in.

Olsen and Rep. Sondy Pope, D-Mt. Horeb, were part of a council that advised DPI in crafting the plan. Pope said that council had a wide range of stakeholders, including lawmakers, and that DPI was always open to input from legislators.

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"To imply that the Legislature has not had opportunities to be involved in this report I would have to call an alternative fact," she said.

But the bill's author, Rep. Ron Tusler, R-Harrison, said states like Minnesota have had lawmakers vote on their plans and that his bill is narrower, only calling for more input from the Legislature's education committees.

"We would like to do our part," he said.