

# Sen. Darling: Evers vetoes Reading Readiness Bill, offers no solutions

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Madison – Governor Evers is offering no solution to help struggling readers. On Friday afternoon, the governor vetoed a crucial bill to improve our support and interventions around kids who struggle to become proficient in reading. The Chair of the Senate Committee on Education, Senator Alberta Darling, says she is disappointed the governor wasted no time to veto a proven solution to increase reading scores.

“Kids struggling to read in Wisconsin would have been better off if Governor Evers did nothing – just like he did when he was DPI Secretary – and allow the bill to become law,” Darling said, “Instead his veto offers no solutions, no plan, and no help to improve reading scores in our state.”

[Senate Bill 454](#) was introduced by Senator Kathy Bernier of Chippewa Falls and co-authored by Senator Darling. The bill will screen schoolchildren on their reading abilities earlier and more often, notify parents of concerns, and create a clear direction to get kids back on track to succeed. The bill is based on successful models in other states, including Mississippi which saw their reading levels increase dramatically after passing similar legislation. Spotting reading problems sooner dramatically increases the chance that a child will succeed in school and life.

“Amazingly, Governor Evers said in his veto message that “we must work – and quickly – to address reading proficiency...” yet he declines to act on a bipartisan bill that will do just that,” Darling said, “As Superintendent and now Governor, it’s unfortunate, he’s all talk and no action.”

Sixty-four percent of fourth-graders are not proficient in reading. Our state ranks dead-last in reading achievement among black students. Hispanic students dropped from 1st in the nation to 28th while white students fell from 6th to 27th. [Despite historic funding for public education, less than one-third of students are proficient in English or math.](#)

Senator Darling represents portions of Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Washington, and



Waukesha Counties.