

Institute for Reforming Government: New: IRG offers K-12 policy solutions

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MADISON, WI - Today, IRG is releasing [the first part](#) of its upcoming state K-12 policy report, *The Classroom Comeback: From Worst to First*, that details solutions to close the nation's worst achievement gap and make Wisconsin the top state in education.

On Monday, the NAEP scores once again showed that Wisconsin is underperforming in reading. Our middle-class students only reach the national average and Milwaukee Black students rank dead last. Some states have solved this problem: Florida prevented pandemic learning loss and Mississippi went from the bottom to top flight in just six years. Wisconsin has been stagnant. Our economic future and quality of life are in jeopardy if we do not solve reading now.

IRG Action has been at the forefront of literacy policy, leading a 2021 reading reform bill vetoed by Governor Evers.

Today, IRG Senior Research Director Quinton Klabon is proud to build on that progress with *Get Right on Reading*, a more comprehensive set of literacy solutions. After discussions with local school leaders, national experts, and policymakers in leading states like Florida and Mississippi, IRG has a K-12 reading agenda that will put Wisconsin back on top:**1. Focus on reading by the 3rd grade**

- Assess 5K through 3rd grade students triennially with high-quality mini-tests to identify problems early.
- When at-risk students are identified, create streamlined reading recovery plans for teachers and parents to address the problems. Plan interventions include during- and after-school tutoring, facilitated small groups, and addressing dyslexia.

- Hold back 3rd graders who test at the very lowest levels and dial up interventions, including 1.5 more hours daily with a reading specialist.

2. Supercharge teachers in reading fundamentals

- Mandate specific hours in all college teaching programs around phonics, phonemic awareness, and vocabulary.
- Invest in 1 year of retraining teachers in phonics-based reading instruction and 2 years of reading coaches to ensure fidelity.

3. Give parents better information

- Recalibrate the state Forward Exam's easy proficiency standards around the national NAEP proficiency standards.
- Require all schools to submit reading and other core curricula to a comprehensive, easily accessible parent database.

[For the full report, please click here.](#)

Get Right on Reading precedes a comprehensive K-12 education reform agenda, *The Classroom Comeback*, coming later this year. Enacted, these policies will put Wisconsin's district schools at the top nationally, create an even more productive school choice environment, and connect more students to careers, stability, and a purpose.