

Sen. Darling: Statement State of Education Address

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Madison – On Thursday, the Secretary of the Department of Public Instruction, Jill Underly, gave her “State of Education in Wisconsin” address. The chair of the Senate Education Committee, Senator Alberta Darling, released the following statement in response:

“The DPI Secretary refuses to acknowledge failure. Under her watch, too many children in our schools are failing. There was not a single acknowledgment that less than one-third of students are proficient in English or Math. Instead of accepting we have the largest achievement gap in the country, she’d rather change the definition.

Despite historic funding for public education, less than one-third of students are proficient in English or math. 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.

Spotting reading problems sooner dramatically increases the chance that a child will succeed in school and life. Republicans tried to give teachers help to bring test scores back up and improve outcomes. Twice we sent a bill that would 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. Twice, Governor Evers vetoed it. Our Superintendent provided no reading solutions and our Governor refuses to help.

The bill is based on successful models in other states, including Mississippi, which dramatically increased reading levels after passing similar legislation. Even the

Milwaukee Journal Sentinel noticed that Mississippi is making huge strides in reading comprehension.

After over a decade of Tony Evers refusing to reform education in Wisconsin, it is clear the new Superintendent intends to follow his lead.”

Senator Darling represents portions of Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Washington, and Waukesha Counties.