

Rep. Callahan: Assembly passes Right to Read Act

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[Madison, WI] – During this afternoon’s State Assembly Floor Session, State Representative Calvin Callahan (R-Tomahawk) [voted](#) in favor of [Assembly Bill \(AB\) 321](#), known as the Right to Read Act. AB 321 addresses literacy outcomes in teaching and will improve reading skills among Wisconsin students.

“The later in life students learn how to read, the less likely they will be to lead productive lives,” stated Rep. Callahan. “Two-thirds of children who cannot read at grade level by 3rd grade will end up in prison or on welfare. Unfortunately, Wisconsin has fallen behind and we need to get our students back on track. The Right to Read Act is modeled after states like Mississippi, which improved 4th graders’ reading scores from last to 29th in the national rankings and tied the national average for the first time.”

The Act, [supported by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction](#) (DPI), will do the following:

- Create an Office of Literacy under the DPI,
- Provide one-time funding to retrain teachers in the Science of Reading, since many were not trained properly while in school,
- Provide up to 64 reading coaches (half for schools with lowest reading scores/half for schools that apply),
- Create a Council on Early Literacy to review and recommend curricula,
- Require DPI to report how many students are not reading at grade level in 3rd grade on the State Report Cards, and

- Require schools to provide intensive reading intervention for students reading below grade level.

“Students who drop out of school make up 90% of Americans on welfare and 75% of food stamp recipients,” continued Rep. Callahan. “This legislation will not only benefit our kids, but also help to keep people off of welfare and out of the criminal justice system in the years to come.”

The bill is now headed to the State Senate for their consideration.