

Rep. Kitchens: Assembly approves Right to Read Act

Posted on Thursday, Jun 22, 2023

>> WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)

(Madison) – Wisconsin’s schools are a step closer to improving the way students learn to read. On Wednesday, the Wisconsin State Assembly approved the Right to Read Act, authored by Representative Joel Kitchens. The bill will help reverse years of falling reading scores.

“Schools are supposed to teach the 3 R’s. Reading, ‘Riting, and ‘Rithmitic. But if they can’t get the first “R” right, how can kids learn the other two?” Kitchens said, “For too long we have failed kids by not teaching them to read correctly. The Right to Read Act will return our state back to a proven way that works, by using the Science of Reading to teach students.”

Our state is facing a reading crisis. Sixty-four percent of fourth-graders are not proficient at reading. We are dead last in reading achievement among black students – falling 31 spots since 1992. Hispanic students dropped from 1st in the nation to 28th while white students fell from 6th to 28th.

States like Mississippi turned their reading scores around by focusing on teaching the Science of Reading and screening young readers. Mississippi’s 4th graders improved to 29th in the national rankings and tied the national average for the first time.

“Wisconsin students will succeed again by returning to the way most of us learned to read, catching struggling readers sooner, and getting them the help they need. This is a proven pathway to improving test scores,” Kitchens said, “The Right to Read Act was developed after months of discussion with the Department of Public Instruction. I believe we have arrived at a true bipartisan solution to our reading crisis.”

[Department of Public Instruction Secretary Jill Underly also issued a statement supporting the Right to Read Act.](#)

The Right to Read Act was approved by a bipartisan vote of 67-27. It now moves to the State Senate for further consideration.