

Rep. Kitchens: Right-to-Read Act signed into law

Posted on Wednesday, Jul 19, 2023

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Wisconsin's schoolchildren will now learn to read using science-based, proven methods. On Wednesday, Governor Evers signed the Right-to-Read Act, authored by Representative Joel Kitchens. The new law will help reverse years of falling reading scores.

"I've worked on a lot of important bills, but few will have the impact the Right-to-Read Act will. This is a comprehensive change to the way we teach reading in our state," Kitchens said, "Teachers will be retrained in the science of reading, schools will get new curriculum, struggling students will be caught sooner, they will get the help they need and their parents will be informed. These changes will help make sure more kids are reading at grade level and will succeed in school."

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. The Right-to-Read Act is modeled after changes made in Mississippi.

"I am grateful Governor Evers signed this bipartisan fix to our reading crisis," Kitchens said, "Science-based reading programs are working in blue states and red states. I am confident it will also work in our purple state. It is the same way most of us learned to read in the first place."

The state budget set aside \$50 million for the Right-to-Read Act. That money will be invested in teacher training, teacher coaching, and new curricula for schools.



Representative Kitchens represents Door, Kewaunee, and part of Brown County.