

Weekly GOP radio address: Reading insufficiencies and racial disparities

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Hi, I'm Representative Joel Kitchens and I represent the 1st district of Door, Kewaunee, and Brown counties in the Wisconsin State Assembly. I also chair the Assembly Education Committee.

I want to take a little bit of your time today to discuss the disappointing results released by the U.S. Department of Education's National Assessment of Educational Progress test. This test is usually referred to as the "Nation's Report Card."

Fourth and Eighth graders are tested based on proficiency in math and reading. According to this study, only 31% of our fourth graders are proficient in reading. That's down from both pre and post-pandemic test results. It's not just reading scores that are troubling. Our fourth graders are only testing at a 42% proficiency in math.

Sadly, our eighth graders are not any better. It was reported that only 31% of eighth graders were proficient in reading and only 37% were proficient in math. Wisconsin has the largest gap in reading and math scores between Black and white students of any state in the United States. The scores are horrific for minority students. Our black students are ranked worst in the nation in 4th-grade reading and math. Only 8% can read and only 5% are proficient in math.

My advice to the State Superintendent of Public Instruction would be to focus on bringing these scores up instead of constantly blaming Republicans for her department's failures. Our children's futures depend on it.

Thank you.