



JOEL KITCHENS

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 1ST ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

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Rep. Kitchens pleased with passage of report card bill

MADISON, Wis. – Rep. Joel Kitchens, R-Sturgeon Bay, is pleased that the Wisconsin State Assembly passed his bill today that requires the Department of Public Instruction to include the percentage of students participating in the arts on the annual school and school district accountability report cards.

“Study after study has proven that students who participate in the arts in school experience better pupil attendance and greater achievements in other subjects,” Kitchens said. “Because I represent a district that has one of the most active arts communities in Wisconsin, I have seen firsthand how much of an impact this industry has on tourism and a region’s quality of life.”

Assembly Bill 67 will help promote the arts by requiring the annual school and school district accountability report cards to list the percentage of students taking part in courses that feature music, dance, drama and visual arts.

The arts data will be included on the report cards for informational purposes only and not be considered in a district’s accountability calculations. However, Kitchens believes it is extremely important for the state to provide this transparency so local communities will be more inclined to better understand and support what their schools are offering.

When school districts face budget challenges, the arts are frequently the first courses to be cut. Kitchens is hoping that school districts will use the report card data internally so they may compare their participation with other districts and make appropriate decisions.

“If our students begin to lose interest in the arts, we risk the chance of negatively impacting our economy, as well as our state’s culture and creativity,” Kitchens said.

According to the latest available statistics, the state’s nonprofit arts and cultural sector generates nearly \$555 million annually in residential household income and \$40.5 million in state government revenue and helps support 27,000 full-time jobs.

Kitchens’ DPI Report Card Bill still needs to be passed by the Senate and signed by the governor before it can become state law.

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