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February 13, 2020

Good Morning Chairman Schraa and Committee Members,

I want to thank you all for hearing this important piece of legislation today relating to measuring a school district's improvement based on accountability reports.

Assembly Bill 908 was drafted to bring to light an issue with school districts that have juvenile correctional facilities nearby. Currently the Department of Public Instruction is required by state statute to publish a report based on each school and school district's numbers annually by November 30th. Those reports are not based on the performance of the school, but based on attendance, absenteeism, and dropouts at that point in the school year. Students at juvenile correctional facilities are part of the local school districts numbers, and account for the high number of dropouts listed.

However when that student leaves the correctional facility and does not re register in school they are considered a drop out for that school district. Therefore, lowering the score in the report card for the school district. For example, Franklin School district's overall score for the 2018-2019 school year would increase from a 79.5 to an 83.6. This is a difference of 4.1 in points which takes the school from exceeding expectations to significantly exceeding expectations. The purpose of the accountability report card is to give an accurate impression of the district so parents can decide which schools to send their children to. Assembly Bill 908 will exempt attendance data if 50% or more of the pupils at a juvenile facility do not attend for the full academic year. Adjusting the reports for the schools and giving a more accurate report of the school.

Thank you for hearing my testimony today,

Ken Skowronski



DAVID CRAIG

STATE SENATOR

Assembly Committee on Corrections
Public Hearing, February 13, 2020
Assembly Bill 908
Senator David Craig, 28th Senate District

Chairman Schraa and Committee members:

Thank you for taking my testimony on Assembly Bill 908 relating to measuring a school district's improvement for the school and school district accountability report.

As you may be aware, current law requires the Department of Public Instruction to publish a school and school district accountability report, commonly referred to as school and school district report cards annually by November 30th. This report in part is based upon certain measures, including attendance which occurs during the academic year. Unfortunately, school districts that have as part of their charge a juvenile detention facility or a secured residential care center for children, where a large number of students leave before the full academic year is completed are unduly penalized because they are held responsible for those students attendance if the student does not re-enroll once back at their primary residence.

In *State ex rel. School District No. 1 of Waukesha v. Thayer*, 74 Wis 48 (1889), the Wisconsin Supreme Court ruled that for school purposes, the child who resides away from his or her parents' home is considered a resident of the school district in which the child actually resides rather than the one in which the parents live, so long as the child's primary purpose for residing away from their parents is other than to attend the school for which the child actually resides.

This legislation brings clarity and a more accurate accounting of the performance measures within school districts that have as part of their overall responsibility to educate students, those students from outside their district housed at a juvenile detention facility or a secured residential care center for children and youth to exempt data if 50% percent or more of the pupils at the juvenile facility school do not attend for the full academic year.



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JOHN H. ASHLEY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

TO: Members, Assembly Committee on Corrections
FROM: Dan Rossmiller, WASB Government Relations Director
DATE: February 13, 2020
RE: SUPPORT for ASSEMBLY BILL 908, relating to measuring a school district's improvement for the school and school district accountability report.

The Wisconsin Association of School Boards (WASB), a voluntary membership association representing all 421 of Wisconsin's locally elected public school boards.

Assembly Bill 908 is a simple, straightforward bill meant to address a situation that causes a distortion in the way the School District of Franklin's report cards are calculated. The bill requires the DPI, for purposes of measuring a school district's improvement, to exclude data derived from a juvenile detention facility or secured residential care center for children and youth if 50 percent or more of the pupils residing at the facility do not reside there for the entire school term.

The WASB supports Assembly Bill 908. Our support is based on a resolution adopted by our membership at our 2020 Delegate Assembly on January 22, 2020.

When school report card scores are calculated, the components of a school's or district's score that are based on state assessment results (i.e., standardized test results) are calculated using full academic year students. However, full academic year student status *is not* used in the calculations of attendance, absenteeism, dropout, and graduation rates; these measures apply to all students. Thus, even students who attend school within a district for a relatively short period of time may strongly affect a district's report card score if they drop out or fail to graduate.

The Franklin School District's overall district dropout rate and overall district graduation rate and ultimately its overall score as a district is significantly negatively impacted because the district operates a school for students in the Milwaukee County House of Corrections. Too often, these students are only enrolled in the school Franklin operates for a short period of time while they are detained in the House of Corrections. Once they leave that juvenile facility and return to their home school districts, the Franklin School District has no jurisdiction over those students. Unfortunately, many of the juvenile offenders Franklin serves through the school it operates within the juvenile facility do not enroll in another school district after they leave that juvenile facility. This causes those students to count as a dropouts and non-graduates on the Franklin's report card.

There is a precedent in state law for the approach called for by this bill. In 2015, for similar reasons, the Legislature changed the report card law so that data for all students in virtual charter schools in which at least 50 percent of the students are attending under full-time open enrollment are excluded from the district report card calculation of the district that is home to the virtual charter school.



February 13, 2020

Honorable Assembly Corrections Committee Members,

As elected officials, you may find your constituents view perception as reality more often than not. The same holds true for the Franklin Board of Education as it relates to our educational community, especially when we're speaking about accountability. That is why I encourage you to vote in favor of Assembly Bill 908.

Ongoing confusion has been generated within our community by perceptions resulting from data reported to DPI that is inconsistent with our neighboring districts, making us appear subpar. This spurred our Board to work together with our administration to submit the following resolution to the Wisconsin Association of School Boards Delegate Assembly, which passed in January 2020. We also reached out to our legislators to seek constructive change, which led us here today.

"The WASB supports legislation to provide that for purposes of measuring a school district's or high school's improvement, the DPI may not include data derived from a public school located in a juvenile detention center, jail, or other court-ordered residential placement that is located within and operated by the school district, if at least 50% of the pupils attending the school are not enrolled for the entire academic year."

Great schools make great communities. When a family is looking to buy or build a home, one of the first questions they have is, "How good are the schools?" When they look up school report card data, they deserve an accurate accounting of our performance as a district.

The Franklin Board of Education respectfully asks for your vote in favor of Assembly Bill 908. Your support will mitigate those factors that are outside of the direct control of our district by excluding data from a juvenile detention facility, if a majority of the students are there for less than a full academic year.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Janet M. Evans".

Janet M. Evans
Franklin Board of Education, President
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