



**Assembly Bill 122/Senate Bill 201 – Creation of Micro Education Pods  
As Amended By ASA 1 and SSA 1  
Testimony for the Senate Education Committee**

Thank you Chair Darling and members of the Senate Education Committee for the opportunity to share testimony regarding AB 122/SB 201 creating a new educational option for families in Wisconsin. The legislation before you today would provide statutory authorization for an additional type of educational program to be known as “microschools” in the original version of the bill, but under the substitute amendment to be called “micro education pods.”

Currently, parents in our state have the following options for providing their children an education that complies with Wisconsin’s compulsory school attendance law for children age 6 to 18 years old:

- 1.) A public school.
- 2.) A private school.
- 3.) A tribal school.
- 4.) A home-based private educational program (home schooling).

Each of these options is separately defined in state law. State law also places varying levels of requirements on each of these educational options.

Under AB 122/SB 201, as amended by substitute amendment 1 and senate amendment 2, a micro education pod would be an instructional program provided to a child by the child’s parent, or a person designated by the parent that must include children from other family units with the following requirements:

- Must have a minimum of two family units participating, but not more than 10 family units.
- A microschool may not serve more than 20 children.
- The microschool must have the children participating in the instructional program at a physical location.

Additionally, senate amendment 2 to substitute amendment 1, would create a sunset on the micro education pods option under state law of the end of the 2023-24 school year. This would

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allow for a review of this concept in practice and another discussion in the legislature regarding the continuing authorization for micro education pods.

By comparison, Wisconsin's law on home schooling applies to a single family unit only. **The bill before you today makes no changes to the existing law covering home schooling.** This bill also makes no changes to the statutory requirements covering or defining a public school, a private school or a tribal school.

The educational concept defined as "microschools" or "micro education pods" is not really new, since some families have been doing this in various ways for years and with different names (i.e., podding, family co-oping...). Interest in this type of educational model certainly increased in 2020 and continues into 2021, both in Wisconsin and nationally, as a result of Covid-19 and many more families needing to take on educational duties at home due to the closure of public schools to in-person classes along with the negative impacts on children of poorly performing remote learning instructional models.

The goal of AB 122/ SB 201, as amended by substitute amendment 1, is simply to make legal a reasonable educational program that some parents have already chosen for their children and other families may seek to adopt once this bill becomes law. Over the last year, we have all been reminded that in the end only a parent can insure that a child will receive a proper educational program. Covid-19 and the overreaction of government officials to close schools to in person classes and the ongoing struggle in our public schools over various issues, should inspire all of us to empower parents to meet their fundamental duty of making educational choices for their children.

Education as a policy is far too often, particularly in the public sector, focused on children as a source to qualify for funding. The most basic definition of the process of education is: "*both the act of teaching knowledge to others and the act of receiving knowledge from someone else.*"

I believe that AB 122/SB 201, as amended by substitute amendment 1, is another step in removing the governmental barriers to the process of parents teaching knowledge and children receiving knowledge in a way that will produce positive outcomes, most importantly, for the future success of those children.



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# SHAE SORTWELL

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 2<sup>nd</sup> ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

**Hearing Testimony**  
**Senate Committee on Education**  
**February 23, 2022**  
**Senate Bill 201**

Chair-woman Darling and members of the Senate Education Committee – thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak on Substitute Amendment 1 to SB 122, relating to micro-education pods.

Parents have full responsibility and right to choose the education for their children. However, this is difficult to undertake when limited by government barriers. That is why parental-choice is essential to an actual “free” education.

There are certainly options for parents to educate their children, such as public, private, or home schools. However, the options are still limited.

During the last couple of years, this lack of choices became more problematic and obvious to people. Many school children were forced into virtual schooling, which we know has been a disaster for many kids. And so many people looked into other options but were faced with minimal choices. If they couldn’t afford a private school or find a school open, their only other decision was to homeschool. But homeschooling is not workable for all people in all situations. Maybe both parents needed to work or you had a single parent. No two people’s lives are the same, and many parents had no practicable, legal options to pursue and their children suffered for it.

SB 201 (Sub Amendment 1) would eliminate a restriction on parents by creating another school-choice option: micro-education pods. **Explicitly and intentionally kept separate from the homeschooling statute in s. 115.001 (3g)**, micro-education pods would operate in a similar manner, except it would have up to ten family units and up to twenty children.

This bill was purposely left open-ended to be as flexible for parents as possible, so a micro-education pod could take several different forms.

A micro-education pod could be created by multiple parents working together every day.  
Or it could be several parents taking turns on different days to oversee the children’s education.  
Or it could involve several parents hiring a teacher to teach their kids together.  
Or maybe it could just be a friend or family member offering to teach both his own children as well as yours full-time. This last option could have been amazing for a lot of parents in 2020.

Additionally, a micro-education pod could be an opportunity for a future private school to start out at an introductory phase.

The opportunity and freedom of choice from this new option for parents and children is imperative. While the last couple of years brought this lack of options to light, they always existed and we should be looking



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# SHAE SORTWELL

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STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 2<sup>nd</sup> ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

to give more options to parents, even if we don't think our own families would use that choice currently, because you never know how life circumstances may change for you.

Lastly, please note that the Sub Amendment with Senate Amendment 2 would sunset the bill in July 2024, increase the allowable amount of family units from five to ten, and require a micro-education pod to have a designated administrator.

I want to thank the committee for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions members of the committee may have.

# ‘Micro-Schools’ Grow in Popularity Amid Student Exodus From Public Schools

By [Allan Stein](#) | February 7, 2022 Updated: February 10, 2022

  Print

The romantic image of a one-room schoolhouse nestled on the Midwestern prairie has in its modern equivalent today’s micro-school, or “pandemic pod.”

Born amid the COVID-19 pandemic, minimalist by design, their founders say these mini-schools may be small in size but they’re large in curriculum scope, offering individualized instruction in a safe, politics-free environment.

“A micro-school takes the best of different educational formats and brings them together,” said Corey Owens, spokesperson for Prenda micro-schools in Arizona.

“In groups of 5 to 10 students led by a guide, learners engage with a personalized, adaptable curriculum, while getting healthy social interaction and opportunities to learn from one another.”

The first Prenda micro-school opened in Arizona in 2018 with seven students.

Four years later, the organization operates micro-schools in hundreds of communities in a dozen states with more than 3,000 students, 300 guides, and nine school partners that include both charter schools and community groups.

“From our vantage point, the interest in micro-schools transcends politics and geographics,” said Owens, who attributed the phenomenal growth in micro-schools to parents who are looking for an educational setting that “lets their child develop a love of learning.”

“We’ve seen kids that have struggled with bullying, kids that were having trouble keeping up, and kids that excelled but were bored, but thrive in a micro-school environment,” Owens told The Epoch Times.

“The COVID-19 pandemic has, of course, forced lots of families to consider what format works for them and their child in uncertain times, and many of them are turning to micro-schools.”

According to Prenda’s website, a micro-school is a new kind of entity that connects parents with guides who run micro-schools in communities. Prenda’s tuition-free micro-schools for pupils in K-8 are small in size and offer both individualized and group learning in a safe and flexible environment.

Some micro-schools are free, some are tuition-based, and some receive funding through various state tax credits and “empowerment scholarships.”

Many parents are referred to the micro-school that best fits their child’s needs through school “hubs” such as Love Your School, an Arizona-based nonprofit that launched three years ago.

Epochs From Public Schools

Micro-Schools, Grow in Popularity and Student





Students follow along remotely with their regular school teacher's online live lesson separated by plastic barriers at STAR Eco Station Tutoring and Enrichment Center on Sept. 10, 2020, in Culver City, Calif. (Robyn Beck/AFP via Getty Images)

“Depending on what they choose, we walk them through that process,” said spokeswoman Jenny Clark. “All of a sudden we had all these families coming to us initially. I think that there are a variety of issues [driving the trend]—a crazy storm of issues.”

Most importantly, parents “want choices, variety, and a trusted education environment that suits kids’ needs,” Clark told The Epoch Times.

“I think the more parents demand these different options, the more you’ll see public and private schools responding. Parents know what’s best for their kids. I think parents are right: No one knows their child better than them.”

Adamo Education is another Arizona micro-school, which veteran educator Tamara Becker launched in January 2021 during the height of the pandemic, when micro-schools started spreading like “wildfire.”

“Parents are not satisfied” with public education models, Becker told The Epoch Times. “They’re not happy with their kids in classrooms of 25 to 30 [students]. They’re looking for an environment that is safer.”

Adamo Education meets the needs of its students through a combination of traditional, digital, and at-home learning opportunities with certified teachers in grades K–8, she said.

“My program is different in that I only use certified teachers,” Becker said. “The power and the role of the teacher is so key,” as is the goal of helping students “fall in love” with education.



In learning pods, or micro-schools, small groups of families take turns teaching children, or pool resources to hire a teacher. (Andrii Medvednikov/Shutterstock)



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“I really want kids to love learning and to foster that love of learning,” she said. “You can do so much more academically and socially. You know your parents and students much more intimately.”

While the exact number of micro-schools in the United States isn't currently known, they're estimated to be in the hundreds. Like their public school counterparts, micro-schools—“alt-schools” in some circles—pride themselves on their individualized, project-based programs of instruction.

Some micro-schools are home-based; others provide stand-alone facilities where learning takes place.

“It's so much more personalized and such a tighter-knit kind of learning environment. We need to disrupt the educational status quo, and micro-schools are going to be the tools to do that,” Becker said.

At Acton Academy in Laconia, New Hampshire, school administrator Mary MacIntosh launched the micro-school with four students in the fall of 2019 because there was “nothing like it in the area.”

Now in its second year of operation, the micro-school has grown to 20 elementary school age pupils and recently opened a middle school program with seven students.

“I do think COVID was a factor for a lot of people” to choose Acton Academy, MacIntosh told The Epoch Times. “They didn't want their children to be remote, and it was safer than sending them to [regular] class.”

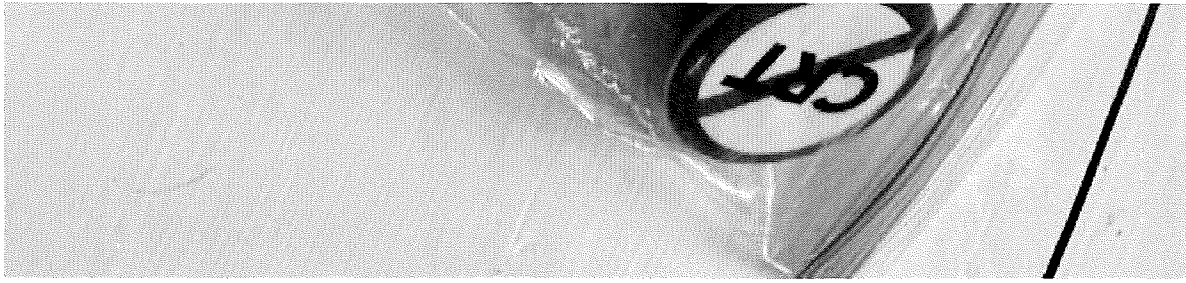
What parents like most about Acton Academy, she said, is the individualized hands-on instruction.

Students not only learn about math concepts, they also study physics and gravity in project-based workshops, such as Newton's Toy House.

“Children can go as far as they need to go in a subject or as slow as they need to go,” she said.

MacIntosh said the problem with modern public education is that it's a "gigantic system that just can't keep up" with the latest innovations in classroom teaching. "It's just too hard the way it's set up."





Parents concerned about critical race theory took home these buttons from a school board activist training session on Jan. 19 in Sarasota, Florida. (Alexis Spiegelman)

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Controversial topics such as critical race theory aren't taught at Acton Academy, she said.

Which isn't to say micro-schools don't have their critics.

In August 2020, the National Education Association, the nation's largest teachers union, published a report titled "The Proliferation of Pandemic Pods, Micro-Schools, and Home Education."

The report concluded that alternative forms of education serve to widen the opportunity gap for minority students and "worsen school segregation as well-resourced families will disproportionately benefit."

"Just like any private school, pandemic pods do not guarantee students or educators the same civil rights protections that are required in public schools. Furthermore, pandemic pods will likely not provide the necessary supports for students with disabilities as required under state and federal legislation," the NEA stated in its findings.

The NEA also stated that in nonpublic school programs, students aren't held accountable to state standards of learning, and educators aren't required to be credentialed.

"Credentialed educators who teach in a pandemic pod have no guaranteed protections or benefits like those secured under contracts working for school districts," the NEA wrote.

“Private funders have invested approximately \$1.7 billion in 2019 in education technology firms. They now see ‘pandemic pods’ as the way of the future, pushing talking points that traditional public schools are outdated.

“The National Education Association (NEA) encourages innovative solutions that will allow students to have in-person instruction and important opportunities for socialization with peers; however, the NEA believes that such cohort-style learning arrangements should be organized, implemented, and monitored under the authority of state and district education agencies.”

It’s the sense of parents being disenfranchised by the public education system, however, that has spurred growth in micro-schools, said Rep. Mark Finchem (R-Ariz.).

“I would say that parents are dissatisfied with public schools. Between material being presented, and the petite tyranny exhibited by ‘leadership’ in public schools, it is clear that political science now rules over real science and medical science,” Finchem told The Epoch Times.

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## Testimony in Favor of SB201 for “Micro Educational Pods”

Given by Lisa Dettinger to the Senate Committee on Education

February 23, 2022

My name is Lisa Dettinger and I’m currently running a small private school in Sun Prairie called “PowerHouse Christian School.” We’re here to emphatically support Senate Bill 201. Thank you for hearing what we have to say.

I’ll give you a summary of my background in education since it incorporates each educational option we have here in WI. My education degree from UW Eau Claire spans grades PK-12. I taught in the Eau Claire public schools for three years, then moved to Los Angeles where I taught in wealthy public and private schools for 5 years and even in a university-model school. While in L.A., I was also hired to write curriculum for K12.com (championed by former Secretary of Education William Bennett), which is the curriculum the WI Virtual Academy (known as WIVA) uses. After moving back to WI, I homeschooled our children K-12; a commitment that spanned 17 years. During that time I also worked with public school staff at Horizon Elementary School in Sun Prairie while I tutored one of their students. In addition, I created writing curriculum and taught it for 8 years to about a thousand students in grades 4-12 who all lived within about a half hour of Madison. During that time I also worked with Bridges Virtual Academy in WI as one of their approved writing courses for their virtual school. After converting my writing curriculum into e-courses a few years ago, I have been exhibiting and speaking at homeschool conventions across the country. I have a homeschool blog, created a homeschool coaching e-course for moms (I’m also a certified, practicing life coach), and have authored books, curriculum, and educational articles. And as I mentioned previously, I am now running a private school and teaching 12 students aged 11-15.

As you can see, my education background is relevant here because I’ve been personally and professionally invested in each educational option we have in the state of WI: public schools, virtual charter schools, homeschools, and private schools.

I want you to know we are doing a disservice to WI families and children by not allowing microschoools in WI. This bill for micro educational pods *needs* to pass. States all over our country are already reaping the benefits they provide, and our state is lagging behind. We need to get with the program and take advantage of these benefits.

I myself could give a myriad of reasons why students thrive in a microschoool setting, but I’ll let you hear it in their words. I told my students I wanted to give them a voice today, since this bill directly impacts them and they are representing students from all over our state who would also be impacted by it. (By the way, they are here today. Students, would you stand up for a moment so we can see who you are?) Two days ago I asked these students what *they* think are the benefits of microschoools and here are the six reasons *they* listed, in order (completely on their own):



1. "You can go at your own pace."
  - a. I believe they said this because in public and private schools, all the students in the class need to move through the curriculum at the same time, regardless of whether the concepts are mastered. We get to teach for individual mastery here, whether it takes a student an hour or a month to grasp a concept. Students have told me repeatedly they feel less anxiety and pressure when they can learn at their own pace.
2. "You get to have one-on-one with your teacher."
  - a. Our students know that my assistant and I are there because our number one goal is their individual, personal success, and we have the time and the capacity to support them in that due to the small class size.
3. "You get a personalized curriculum."
  - a. Before school starts in the fall, I have a one-on-one meeting with each student where I ask them what they're interested in, how they think they best learn, and what they want to explore. I give them options in their curriculum and electives and can completely tailor their education. This empowers them with ownership over their education and is highly motivating.
4. "If both parents work, the child can still have the education they want."
  - a. I think they said this because for most of my students, public schooling and private schooling, for whatever reasons, was just NOT WORKING for them, and for *all* my students, homeschooling was not a viable option for their family this year either. This academic scenario is WORKING for them - it's what they want, and families (and students) are grateful.
5. "You get to have close relationships with the other kids and with the teacher."
  - a. I love that they said this. The kids at this school have come from highly diverse family backgrounds and school experiences. Some have dealt with extreme grief and loss, some with devastating bullying, some with various diagnoses, and some have been held back for learning "too slow" OR learning "too fast." They know that at this school, they are brothers and sisters. We're a family. These kids cheer each other on (it's a joy to witness this!), and they learn how to solve differences in healthy, mature ways. (If only our current culture could behave this way!) We all get to know each other very well after working closely together each day. We accept

each other. We pray for each other. We laugh together. My students know I love them and that I pray for them (because I tell them).

6. "You can do a lot more in a shorter time."
  - a. Our school day is just 8:30 to 2:00 Monday through Friday and we have a half hour break for lunch, socializing, and getting our wiggles out. I do not give homework. We pack a lot into each day and it works. We've seen standardized test scores go up in just one school year, we've seen students complete more than two years of math in one year - because they can. We've seen students with learning difficulties gain confidence and strategies to succeed. We've also had parties, field trips, and other celebrations during school hours. Every moment of every day is intentional. It serves a purpose. These kids know they are capable of a *lot* and their education doesn't need to look like sitting in rows of desks for 6-8 hours a day with a different teacher for each class and then doing homework at home for another 1-2 hours. Instead, it can look like studying with intense focus in a bean bag chair with earbuds in for two hours, then facilitating a biology lab with four peers for an hour, then hunkering down at a table for a math test with all the time they need, followed by practicing Spanish *while* walking around in circles for about 20 minutes. It could look like a small-group ukulele lesson and a large-group PE class taught in-person by a PE teacher who has trained Olympic athletes. You get the idea. I'm telling you, micro schooling works.

Opponents say that SB201 is unnecessary because small private schools in WI already exist. Let me assure you, small private schools like ours do NOT have the same opportunities other private schools, public schools, and homeschoolers have. Because we have to be considered a private school in WI, my students are NOT allowed to participate in school sports, special-interest school clubs, academic teams, band, orchestra, choir, forensics, drama productions, and the list goes on. These are all activities that the homeschool community CAN legally participate in with the public schools in WI and *our* students cannot. Trust me, I've pursued these opportunities on behalf of these students, and so have their parents. In addition, larger private schools that provide those activities want their participants to be enrolled at *their* school, and therefore are not welcoming students from other private schools. My students have heard a LOT of "no" this year. They have felt the injustice of this situation first-hand. Yes, there IS red tape for children in small private schools in WI. We need our own category called "micro educational pods" - and *not* to be considered just another "typical private school" but smaller, because we're anything but typical. Look at these kids. They

represent a larger population of students across WI. When you (our elected officials) and when affiliates from the Wisconsin Homeschool Parents Association say “NO” to micro educational pods, they’re telling *these* students and others like them, “No, you can’t have the same freedoms and opportunities that homeschoolers or public schoolers or other larger private school students have. We don’t value what’s best for *you* and *your* family because we are too afraid of how it might impact the freedoms *we already have.*”

To complicate matters further for the very small private school (like ours) that wants to operate legally in WI, because private schools are considered an “institution” in city ordinances, we do NOT have the freedom to meet where it is most conducive to the style of learning that fits with our school’s philosophies. For example, even though my husband and I are empty-nesters and our home was built by a family with 9 children, has 6 bedrooms, 4 bathrooms, a large basement, a kitchen that has seated 21 people at one time, has a driveway that can accommodate 7 cars and about another 10-12 cars that could parallel park in front of *just our house* on our side of the street, is on a dead end, and is adjacent to a large neighborhood park complete with a baseball diamond, pavilion, and a playground, it is illegal for us to meet there. To meet legally in our home, Sun Prairie had to call us a “daycare.” I am not *babysitting* these kids. As soon as 9 students were on the roster, our “daycare” had to be approved for commercial, institutional use, whether we were still considered a daycare or a private school. That meant installing an elevator, an indoor sprinkler system, 2nd-story exits, stairways that were exactly a certain number of inches high, a commercial-grade fire alarm system, an off-street student drop-off and pick up area, designated handicap parking, etc. (Imagine if a homeschool family with 9 children were faced with the same requirements in order to do school in their home!) Needless to say, we uprooted and were forced to move into a commercial building by January 1st of this year (after filing more paperwork and receiving approval by our city council, of course). We are now renting two classrooms at a local church, where we have four locked cupboards storing our school materials and we make sure we “leave no trace behind” of our existence there each day. Although I am grateful for the space that has been approved for us, I’m disheartened by our lack of freedom to do school where we all felt at home and in the space where all the parents agreed their child would thrive.

Does SB201 blur the lines between education modes in our state? No, it does not. I’ve filed a PI-1206 as a homeschool parent, a PI-1207 as a private school administrator, and I know the *very best case scenario* for my students and their families - and those across Wisconsin, is to offer a PI-1208 for micro educational pods. It is its OWN entity and it would allow students like mine to have the same educational benefits that every other student in WI has.

This bill is not about funding (there is none required by the state), it's not about numbers (they've fluctuated on their own due to a global pandemic), and it's not about limiting anyone else's freedoms. (It adds freedoms; it doesn't take any away.)

It's about doing what's best for ALL students in Wisconsin.

Saying no to this bill means saying no (yet again) to these children and their freedom to learn and grow in a healthy, personal, go-at-your-own-pace, safe, self-directed, loving, encouraging, intimate, productive environment that they and their parents want for them AND allowing them the same extra-curricular opportunities that every other student in WI benefits from.

Vote yes to SB201 for micro educational pods in WI.

Vote yes for the children's sake.

Feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

*Lisa Dettinger*

**Testimony in Opposition to 2021 SB 201, The Creation of “Microschools” or “Micro Education Pods” in Wisconsin**

Wednesday February 22, 2022, 10:30 AM, Room 412 East

Senator Alberta Darling, Committee Chair  
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Senator LaTonya Johnson  
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**Good morning Chairperson Darling, and Committee members.**

My name is Rebecca Ahl, and I am here to testify in opposition of SB 201 / AB 122, which would create “micro education pods” in Wisconsin. I am a member of the Wisconsin Homeschool Parents Association, and I currently sit on their Board of Directors. WHPA is opposed to this bill. I am here to offer my personal testimony in opposition.

I am a homeschooling parent of two children, both now teenagers. With the exception of one experimental year, my kids have always been homeschooled, under Wisconsin law. Our homeschool experience has been profoundly rewarding, and my husband and I are both proud of and encouraged by the compassionate, thoughtful, and well-rounded young people our children are becoming. The fact that homeschooling law works so well is what compels me to oppose the creation of “microschools” in Wisconsin, as proposed.

**I oppose SB 201 because it threatens our long-standing, reasonable homeschooling law, and it is entirely unnecessary.**

Under Wisconsin law, every child between the ages of 6 and 18 must attend school. A school is an institution defined by law, and in Wisconsin we have four kinds of schools: public schools, private schools, tribal schools, and Home Based Educational Programs, or homeschools. If a child is not enrolled in one of these four types of schools, they are not meeting the compulsory attendance law.



Three of those types of schools - public, private, and tribal schools - derive their right to provide education to children that fulfills the compulsory attendance law through the state. The state defines what a school is, and puts reasonable limits on how schools may operate. The fourth kind of school - Home Based Private Educational Programs - derives the right to provide an education to children from an entirely different source. Homeschooling parents have the inherent right to provide an education to their own children, based on their parental relationship and inherent parental rights. This right is well established and well recognized in both state and federal law. Also well recognized in law is the fact that parental rights do not transfer. Just because I have the right to choose what my children eat for lunch, that doesn't mean I have the right to choose what your children eat for lunch. Likewise, just because I have the parental right to educate my children in my legal homeschool, that doesn't mean I have the right to educate your children in my homeschool. These well-established and important legal rights form the basis for our Wisconsin law that allows any parent to establish a homeschool that satisfies the compulsory school attendance requirement and also respects the inherent right of parents to educate their own children, but not the children of other families.

Under this proposal, a new fifth kind of school would be created in Wisconsin: an unregulated private school that is somehow also endowed with parental rights. These so-called "micro-education programs" would allow a parent or any person to educate up to 20 children, from up to 10 different families. Again, any person in the state of Wisconsin who wants to start a school that size right now may already do so under current law. What this bill proposes is that somehow the inherent rights of parents to educate their own children can be magically transformed into a right to educate anyone's children, and for anyone to educate their children, through a "micro-education pod." The suggestion is nonsensical on its face. **It is also a dangerous threat to our parental rights to homeschool our own children.**

Our long-standing, reasonable homeschool law was written through thoughtful communication between homeschooling parents and legislators, ensuring that the difference between homeschools and private schools remains clear and legally sound. **I would like to add that this distinction between private schools and homeschools is so fundamental to our homeschooling law, that some of the original contributors to that 1984 law reached out to WHPA, to express their deep concern over this proposal.**

This bill unnecessarily undoes that long-standing legal structure, and again muddies the waters between the parental right to homeschool and the state-sanctioned business of running a private school. We can be certain this confusion will happen in the future because it is happening now. In the Department of Administration's original Fiscal Estimate for this bill, under "Local Estimate" the Department of Public Instruction wrote:

This bill could lead to increased numbers of students enrolled in home-based private educational programs and potentially reduce the count of pupils enrolled in public schools[.]

This was a clear misunderstanding of the law, and since WHPA reached out to the Department, DPI has since modified the Fiscal Estimate to reflect the fact that if children are enrolled in a "microschool," they cannot simultaneously be enrolled in a Home Based Private Educational Program. Again, this misunderstanding of the law is a logical outcome of the language the bill's cosponsors are using to promote it.

The bill's author, Rep. Sortwell, has publicly stated that under the proposed "microschools" structure, homeschooling parents could legally participate in so-called co-ops, and other extra-legal school

programs. On a public social media page, one parent asked “Will this be an ‘official’ and ‘legal’ homeschooling co-op?” Representative Sortwell replied, “That is one way it can be used, yes.” Another parent asked “So if this bill passes, will I be able to count the co-op hours as homeschooling hours?” Another chimed in, “Yes, that’s clearly the intent.”

**Simply put, there can be no such thing as a hybrid between a homeschool and a private school.** Homeschooling parents exercise their inherent parental rights by taking full responsibility for their own children’s education. They have no inherent right to educate other people’s children. If anyone in Wisconsin wants to legally educate other people’s children, they may already do so by establishing a private school.

Under Wisconsin law, parents may choose to cede their right to educate their own children, by enrolling their children in any legal school, including in-person public school, virtual public school, public charter school, in-person private school, virtual private school, private voucher school, or tribal school. When a child is enrolled in a legal school, the school administrator is responsible for that child’s education. With the exception of specific contracted programs between specific high schools and specific institutions of higher learning, there is no such thing as dual-enrollment in Wisconsin schools.

Despite these clear and long standing legal facts, the cosponsors of SB 201 / AB 122 are saying and implying to Wisconsin families that “microschools” will somehow allow children to be simultaneously enrolled in a “microschool” and a homeschool. **There is no legal basis for this claim, and such dual enrollment is entirely unworkable.**

**WHPA does not oppose small private schools. Neither does current Wisconsin law. What we do oppose is dragging Wisconsin families back in time to the legal morass of 1983, when the legal difference between a private school and a homeschool was so vague that parents were being arrested both for homeschooling and for trying to run legitimate private schools. Because the law was so vague, the Supreme Court of Wisconsin nullified it, and Wisconsin legislators worked together with WHPA homeschooling parents and private school advocates to carefully craft our current law. We must protect our parental rights and oppose any bill that erodes and degrades our parental rights by ceding them to others.**

Not only does this bill degrade parental rights, but it is also totally unnecessary. **I have been working on this issue since the bill was drafted. I have spoken at length with the author, Rep. Sortwell. I have personally called 100 members of this legislature to ask questions and to discuss this bill. To date, WHPA has not heard a single justification for transferring the inherent right of parents to educate their own children to anyone else. We have not heard a single reason why Wisconsin needs unregulated private schools that degrade parental rights.**

**Despite asking the bill’s author and sponsors for a specific example of a burdensome regulation that is preventing anyone from starting a small private school, WHPA has not heard a single answer.** Instead, Rep. Sortwell has repeatedly talked about how “difficult it is to register as a private school.” In fact, there is no requirement to “register as a private school” under Wisconsin law.

There are no requirements for licensing for Wisconsin private schools. Approval of a private school by the state superintendent is optional for Wisconsin private schools. Private schools in Wisconsin are not required to employ licensed or certified teachers. Private schools in Wisconsin are not required to meet any regulations regarding textbooks. Private schools in Wisconsin are not required to complete any assessments. Private schools in Wisconsin are not required to provide special education services. Private

schools in Wisconsin are not required to meet any nursing or health regulations. There are no minimums for student enrollment for private schools; if anyone wants to open a very small private school, they are free to do so. There are at least 70 private schools currently operating in Wisconsin with fewer than twenty students, and they are in compliance with Wisconsin law. In fact, in part because it is so easy to start a private school in Wisconsin, we lead the nation in private school enrollment, with a whopping 13.5% of our students attending private schools, putting us in the rank of 48 out of 51 jurisdictions.

There are a few things private schools in Wisconsin must do. They must display the flag during school hours. They must reasonably keep track of their students by maintaining the absolute minimal records required under Wis Stats 115.30(2) and 120.18. They must report to the school board upon request, because public schools are required to provide bus transportation to certain private school students. This report is literally a piece of paper identifying the boundaries of the school. Private schools must meet vaccination requirements. This does not mean kids have to be vaccinated to attend school; the school is only required to know who is vaccinated and who has an exemption. Private schools have to conduct fire drills. They have to report certain conduct by school employees that endangers children or relates to child pornography. Private schools must maintain a first aid kit, and adopt a written policy governing the administration of drugs to pupils.

Let's be serious. **None of those are burdensome regulations.** This list of requirements for Wisconsin private schools is truly a bare minimum of expectations for any person or institution caring for other people's children. SB 201 is not necessary to make it "easy" to open a private school in Wisconsin.

Rep. Sortwell and others have also claimed that so-called "microschools" are necessary because under current homeschooling law, groups of homeschoolers cannot get together for educational activities. As Rep. Sortwell himself clarified to the Assembly Committee on Education, **this is simply not true.** Homeschooling families - including Rep. Sortwell's own children - can and frequently do gather together for educational activities. The key issue is that - as has always been true under Wisconsin law - instruction offered to more than one family at the same time does not count toward the minimum instructional hours required for each homeschooling student. As has been true for almost 38 years, this is not an issue for homeschoolers.

Further, this simple rule is fair because it keeps homeschool, public school, and private school students all on the same legal footing. If a public school student spends the weekend on a scouting trip, they cannot claim to be excused from 48 hours of compulsory school attendance. Likewise, any homeschooler who participates in scouting, or 4H, or community theater, or science camp, or group classes cannot count those hours toward their required **school attendance.** Homeschooling students already can and do participate in a wide variety of enrichment activities that "don't count" toward attendance hours, so **to this end SB 201 is entirely unnecessary.**

Both Rep. Sortwell and Sen. Nass have stated that they are aware of Wisconsin families who currently operate outside the law, by legally attesting to homeschooling while at the same time sending their children to illegal private schools, sometimes called "homeschooling co-ops." They have both suggested that the need to create a new class of schools in Wisconsin to accommodate these families is urgent. However, no one has yet offered an answer to the simple question, "Why don't these illegal private schools just become legitimate private schools?" That simple change would bring all the illegal operators in Wisconsin out of the shadows without anyone having to change a single law. As already discussed, there is virtually nothing standing in the way of anyone who wants to start a private school right now, under the law. Further, if there are folks who are already comfortable operating outside the current

reasonable law, what reason is there to believe they will comply with a new, more restrictive, more convoluted law regarding “microschools”? **To this end, SB 201 is also totally unnecessary.**

Another “need” Rep. Sortwell has suggested so-called “microschools” could fill is that of a business incubator for private schools. First, no one has identified a need for private school incubators, and second, this model is not at all how business incubators work. Legitimate business incubators are not about relieving startups from meeting minimal health and safety protections. Legitimate business incubators are about lowering the costs of startups by offering communal spaces, as well as supportive programming like mentorship and expertise. The proposed “microschools” in fact create an unregulated private marketplace in which unregulated startups can freely compete with legitimate businesses. They offer no mentoring nor expertise; there is no reduction of business expenses; and there is no explicit transition time from the incubator period to the full business period. In no way is this bill like a business incubator, and **SB 201 is unnecessary to this end.**

Rep. Sortwell, Sen. Nass, and others have also suggested “microschools” are needed because they fill a “gap” between private schools and homeschools. In fact, there is no “gap” in Wisconsin’s educational choices. Parents have the right to take full responsibility for their own child’s education, through homeschooling. Anyone has the right to start a private school. The distance between those two things is not a “gap issue” any more than the fact that I have the right to vote but my privately run business does not have the right to vote is a “gap issue.” The alleged ‘gap’ exists because homeschools and private schools are inherently different entities under the law and have different rights. Parents have a certain set of rights that derive from their relationship to their children. Schools have a different set of rights that derive from a different set of facts. That doesn't mean there's a general “gap” in rights. Again, anyone is free to open a small private school anywhere in Wisconsin, using any curriculum, model, philosophy or religious beliefs that they want to. What you cannot do is open a school - a program of instruction to more than one family unit - and call it a homeschool - an entity composed, specifically, of one family unit. **SB 201 does not fill any legal “gap.”**

**SB 201 is a solution in search of a problem, and is entirely unnecessary.**

Again, our homeschooling law and our private school law were created at the explicit instruction of the Supreme Court of Wisconsin, in response to our previously vague, and therefore unconstitutional, education laws. **Undoing the clear legal categories thoughtfully created by these laws puts every family in Wisconsin back in the pre-1984 legal morass the Court specifically struck down.**

As a homeschooling parent, this is a serious concern to me. By confusing private schools and homeschools, this bill may lead to unwanted and unnecessary new regulation of our homeschool. **Our long-standing homeschool law works for Wisconsin families.** As a minority group, we must be protective of our legal status.

The creation of a new class of private schools is likely to lead to the eventual request that those private schools start submitting to government regulation. By confusing the roles of homeschools and private schools, these bills may also lead to new, unnecessary homeschool regulations.

Further, the creation of a new class of private schools is likely to lead to the eventual seeking of public dollars. Seeking public dollars, through vouchers or tax benefits, is also likely to lead to new, unnecessary homeschool regulations attached to those benefits.

**In closing, the creation of so-called “microschools” in Wisconsin, as written, is dangerous and unnecessary.**

Wisconsin’s long-standing, reasonable homeschool law has worked well for 38 years. Homeschooling families who want to gather and share instruction or resources are already able to do so, and, in fact, do so quite often. The state simply requires that homeschooling parents accumulate 875 hours - or about two and a half hours a day - of direct instruction from one person to one homeschooling family, over the course of the year. This requirement is aligned with the inherent parental right to educate one’s own children. Enrichment activities like group classes, clubs, and camps, are excellent resources for homeschooling families that already exist and are commonly used under our current law.

Likewise, our current law already allows anyone who wants to, to open a private school of any size, and to offer instruction to multiple families at one time.

I ask that the Committee take seriously these important legal issues, to stand up for parental rights, and to table SB 201.

Thank you again for your kind attention.

Rebecca Ahl



Senator Alberta Darling  
Chair, Senate Committee on Education  
Sen.Darling@legis.wisconsin.gov

Senator Kathleen Bernier  
Vice-Chair, Senate Committee on Education  
Sen.Bernier@legis.wisconsin.gov

Senator Stephen Nass  
Sen.Nass@legis.wisconsin.gov

Senator John Jagler  
Sen.Jagler@legis.wisconsin.gov

Senator Chris Larson  
Sen.Larson@legis.wisconsin.gov

Senator Jeff Smith  
Sen.Smith@legis.wisconsin.gov

Senator LaTonya Johnson  
Sen.Johnson@legis.wisconsin.gov

Good morning, Chairperson Darling and members of the Senate Committee on Education. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak at this hearing today.

My name is Jodi Buntin. I am a homeschooling parent and have filed a PI-1206 Homeschool Report each year we have homeschooled. My husband and I have homeschooled our two children since the beginning, and it has been a wonderful blessing to watch them grow and develop their interests and talents, and we are proud of both of them and are eager to see where life takes each of them. As my family nears the end of our homeschooling journey, I am indebted to and grateful for the homeschooling pioneers who worked tirelessly to get our reasonable homeschool law in place in 1984 so that our family could enjoy this freedom.

I have been a member of Wisconsin Homeschooling Parents Association since 2005, and currently serve on their Board as Directors and on their Legislative Watch Committee. WHPA is a state-wide, inclusive, grassroots organization dedicated to protecting the right and freedom of parents to provide an education to their children according to their own principles and beliefs. It has been this way for 38 years, and will continue to be this way. We are nonpartisan, and we have been so for 38 years. WHPA serves all Wisconsin homeschooling families of all backgrounds and from all walks of life. We help all Wisconsin homeschooling families, regardless of their membership status.

WHPA has previously stated its objection to AB 122 and SB 201. I am testifying today to state my own objection to SB 201.

**I oppose 2021 Senate Bill 201 for the following reasons: this bill is unnecessary, it is unworkable, and it threatens our reasonable homeschooling law, which has worked well since 1984.**

**First, it is unnecessary.**

Under our current law, homeschooling families have always been able to get together for activities and learning experiences. It has never been illegal to do so. My family has benefitted from many such activities over the years. This time is simply considered enrichment and is not included in the required 875 instructional hours.

This is no different than any other educational program - for students enrolled in other educational programs, the time spent in outside activities, such as martial arts classes or scouting groups, cannot be included in those programs' instructional hours, and are considered enrichment activities.

We are all on the same legal footing here. There is no "gap" in educational programs. Small private schools already operate legally in Wisconsin. According to the DPI private school statistics for the 2020-21 school year, there are over 70 private schools with enrollments of 20 or fewer students, which is the maximum number of students that AB 122 and SB 201 would allow.

In the March 18, 2021 Assembly Committee on Education public hearing for AB 122, testimony was offered that there are families "operating in the shadows" and "outside of the law." There is no reason why these families can't have a legal private school right now. To date, no reasoning or evidence has been presented as to which regulations are burdensome or what "red tape" exists.

The difference between homeschools and private schools is one family unit vs multiple family units, and the inherent right for parents to direct the education of their own children. This was addressed when 1983 Assembly Bill 887 was being discussed and debated, and the resulting legislation, 1983 Wisconsin Act 512, which was enacted in May 1984, took homeschools and private schools out of the legal morass which existed prior to this time.

Our existing law works and offers flexibility. There are already many options available with which parents can avail themselves, including:

1. Public schools
2. Private schools
3. Charter schools
4. Virtual charter schools
5. Tribal schools
6. Open enrollment
7. Private school choice programs
8. Homeschools

Our law already has the flexibility built into it that schools using innovative models have been able to legally constitute and operate, ranging from schools which employ a part-time-on-campus and a part-time-at-home model, to schools which have a specific focus or utilize a specific educational method, to one school which is constituted as a "semester school," where high school aged students spend one semester at this school for focused topical studies, and then return to their regular school.

Additionally, at least one national company has been hiring and training teachers and accepting enrollments for microschoools they are setting up around Wisconsin. This is a business, which both the Supreme Court of the United States and the Supreme Court of Wisconsin have affirmed the right to exist and operate, and for which the operating parameters are addressed in our current law and private school regulations. According to this company's website, they will operate within the laws of each state they operate in, so in Wisconsin, they will be operating according to our existing private school law.

**Second, it is unworkable.**

The original bill does not specify how children are attached to a microschool, and to date, we have not received a satisfactory answer to that question. Both AB 122 and SB 201 have since included an amendment that there will be an administrator chosen by the families involved, but it now raises the question of why are parents still included in the definition of a "micro education pod" if there is an administrator? A parent cannot be fully responsible while simultaneously fully delegating that responsibility to an administrator.

It still leaves the questions of, who is responsible for a "micro education pod" and who is accountable? If parents and administrators are both involved, who is ultimately responsible for which functions, including making sure Wisconsin's requirements are met? Our current law clearly states that homeschool administrators and private school administrators are responsible for making sure Wisconsin's requirements are met for their respective programs.

**Finally, it threatens our reasonable homeschooling law, which has worked well since 1984.**

Confusion already exists. The terms "homeschool" and "microschool" are used interchangeably.

In the Department of Administration's initial fiscal estimate for this bill, under "Local Estimate," the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) and Department of Administration wrote regarding the potential impact of micro education pods:

*This bill could lead to increased numbers of students enrolled in home-based private educational programs and potentially reduce the count of pupils enrolled in public schools[.]*

This is a clear misunderstanding of the law. If children are enrolled in a "micro education pod," they cannot simultaneously be enrolled in a home-based private educational program. Again, this misunderstanding of the law is a direct, foreseeable consequence of both the language of the bill, and the language the bill's co-sponsors are using to promote it. After WHPA contacted DPI, this language was amended.

Likewise, there is already confusion among Wisconsin citizens about the legal status of proposed “micro education pods.” I have witnessed numerous conversations where statements have been made that a family will be able to set up a *microschool* so they can *homeschool* children from other family units.

I have also witnessed equally confusing conversations where parents are being led to believe that they can somehow both homeschool *and* have their child simultaneously enrolled in one or more micro education pods - families have stated how happy they are that they can set up a microschool so the hours spent in group activities can count toward their *homeschooling* hours. It is important to note the language in the definition of a micro education pod - it must be provided to two to five families, meaning that any instruction that takes place only within one’s own family cannot be included in the required 875 hours of instruction; in other words, it would be considered enrichment rather than instructional hours. It is also important to note that except for certain high school students attending program classes at institutions of higher learning, dual enrollment is not an option in Wisconsin.

Families who might depend on this misinformation and attempt to operate a homeschool while having their children also enrolled in one or more micro education pods will be operating outside of the law, and this puts our reasonable law at risk.

While I believe that “microschools” / “micro education pods” can be handled under existing private school law, I am not opposed to the concept, but I am opposed to how they are being defined in SB 201 as almost identical to home-based private educational programs, otherwise known as homeschools. “Microschools” / “micro education pods” have been regularly described as *unregulated private schools*, so their definition should be based on private school definitions, rather than homeschool definitions..

Please register me as OPPOSED to SB 201.

Thank you, Chairperson Darling and the members of the Senate Committee on Education for your time and consideration, and I am happy to take any questions that you may have.

Jodi Buntin

**Testimony in Opposition to SB 201, The Creation of “Microschools” in Wisconsin**  
February 22, 2022, 10:30 AM

Senator Alberta Darling, Committee Chair  
[sen.darling@legis.wisconsin.gov](mailto:sen.darling@legis.wisconsin.gov)

Senator Kathleen Bernier, Committee Vice-Chair  
[sen.bernier@legis.wisconsin.gov](mailto:sen.bernier@legis.wisconsin.gov)

Senator Stephen L. Nass  
[sen.nass@legis.wisconsin.gov](mailto:sen.nass@legis.wisconsin.gov)

Senator John Jagler  
[sen.jagler@legis.wisconsin.gov](mailto:sen.jagler@legis.wisconsin.gov)

Senator Jeff Smith, Minority Caucus Chair  
[sen.smith@legis.wisconsin.gov](mailto:sen.smith@legis.wisconsin.gov)

Senator Chris Larson  
[sen.larson@legis.wisconsin.gov](mailto:sen.larson@legis.wisconsin.gov)

Senator LaTonya Johnson  
[sen.johnson@legis.wisconsin.gov](mailto:sen.johnson@legis.wisconsin.gov)

Good morning, Chairperson Darling, and Committee members.

My name is Dawn Cisler. My husband and I have homeschooled our 7 children, ranging from 21 to 7 years old, successfully under the current homeschool law, filing our PI-1206 each year. Over the years of homeschooling, we have had the greatest privilege of educating our children, watching them grow, and helping them explore the interests that light them up in life. We made the choice to invest our time to the education of our children in the homeschool and farmstead setting. Even though some of our children have graduated, we continue to homeschool our remaining 4 children. We have always understood our current homeschool law to be reasonable and accomplishable. If my children joined in activities with other family groups, these activities can always be reckoned as skills not being counted toward the hours of their “school” day. We view the skills that they learned as our “extra-curricular” activities, much like basketball, forensics, or skiing; skills to “count” to the betterment of the child as a person. We still seem to have above the of hours required by the state of homeschooling in our own family unit.

I serve as a volunteer on the Wisconsin Homeschooling Parents Association’s Board of Directors. We have been members of WHPA for over 15 years. We joined the

organization because WHPA has been a long-standing supporter of our current homeschool law, which has been in place for 38 years. It was and still is the only organization who offered clear, concise, and accurate information on the Wisconsin homeschool law and to what our responsibility as homeschoolers is under that law.

When the current homeschooling law was written up 38 years ago, a clear definition and differentiation was made between private schools and homeschools through painstaking collaboration of legislators and homeschoolers. The creation of "microschools" will erode the solid foundation that we have today in homeschooling, the law that has successfully stood for 38 years.

I, as a long-standing Wisconsin State taxpayer, see no reason to create yet another set of schooling laws for a select few who want the benefit of being defined as a homeschool, and yet act as a private school by true definition. We already have laws that work for both the State and the Homeschooler. Adding another form of schooling laws will only cost the taxpayers more money. Much taxpayer money will need to be spent developing and defining the laws involving "microschools", and re-evaluating the effects of the addition or eliminate the confusion as a result.

"Microschools" will create much confusion for our state schooling laws – public and private. This confusion will then ultimately lead to even more effort required by legislators, again adding more cost to me, the taxpayer.

Why do we want to change something that already works?

For all of these reasons, I and my husband oppose SB201.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Chair, committee members,

My name is Ella Kaseman-Wold. I am 15 years old and I have been homeschooled since age 6. I am speaking in opposition to SB 201 for the following reasons:

- Our current homeschooling law is reasonable, clear, and works for families of all kinds.

- "Micro education pods" undermine our current law by conflating home-based private educational programs (homeschools) and private schools.

Wisconsin homeschooling law differentiates between home-based private educational programs and private schools:

1983 Wisconsin Act 512

WI statute 115.001(3g)

"Home-based private educational program' means a program of educational instruction provided to a child by the child's parent or guardian or by a person designated by the parent or guardian. An instructional program provided to more than one family unit does not constitute a home-based private educational program."

<https://www.homeschooling-wpa.org/wisconsin-homeschool-law/>

- "Micro education pods" are unnecessary. Homeschoolers already can and do gather to share educational and extracurricular activities. If a group of families wish to start a small private school, they already may do so under current law, in fact, there are already over 70 private schools in Wisconsin legally operating with enrollment of 20 or fewer students (according to DPI's private school statistics for the 2020-2021 school year). In addition, under our current law, a homeschool administrator may designate someone to teach their children, provided that person isn't instructing children from other family units. ( WI statute 115.001(3g) "Home-based private educational program' means a program of educational instruction provided to a child by the child's parent or guardian or by a person designated by the parent or guardian. An instructional program provided to more than one family unit does not constitute a home-based private educational program."

<https://www.homeschooling-wpa.org/wisconsin-homeschool-law/> ).

- This bill will not serve homeschoolers for many reasons, yet there seems to be a misconception that this bill would expand homeschooling, it does not, instead, it creates a new and unregulated type of private school. While homeschoolers document enrollment and the 875 hours of instruction required by Wisconsin law by filing the PI-1206 every year, it is unclear how these hours would be documented for children enrolled in "micro education pods" and by whom. If children are enrolled in a "micro education pod," they cannot simultaneously be enrolled in a home-based private educational program.

In conclusion, I oppose SB 201 because it is unnecessary, it threatens Wisconsin homeschooling law (which has worked since its passage in 1984) by mistaking a new form of private school for a home-based private educational program, it leaves a lot of gaps and loopholes for children to fall through, and it raises more legal and logistical questions than it answers.

Thank you very much for your time and attention.

Ella Kaseman-Wold. 4404 Goodland Park Rd, Madison, WI 53711



February 23, 2022

Robin Scharnick  
1111 Stonehaven Drive  
Sun Prairie, WI 53590

To the Wisconsin State Senators and Representatives:

Please vote "Yes" in favor of the Micro Education Pod Bill, AB 122/SB 201.

Our family successfully homeschooled two boys all the way through high school. We were very grateful for the freedom to choose that option, as it was what was best for our family. Now, I am the assistant for PowerHouse Christian School in Sun Prairie, which has twelve students. It is clear to me that schools like PHCS, Micro Education Pods, give parents another excellent choice to assure their child is getting the best education.

Children are unique. Micro Education Pods allow them to move at their own pace and to thrive, whether they are struggling with a subject or are relatively advanced. They don't get left behind when confused, nor do they get stopped in their progression, waiting for others, when they understand.

Not only do all students not learn at the same speed, but also all students do not learn in the same way. Micro Education Pods allow for students and parents to be able to have a choice in the curriculum, catering to the needs of the student.

Micro Education Pods also allow for a close-knit family-like group of students and teachers. Whether a student is quiet or outgoing, they have a chance for their voice to be heard in this smaller setting. It is a place where students can confidently step out and try things as they figure out who they are and what their strengths are.

In conclusion, voting "Yes" on bill AB 122/SB 201 would give students another great way, along with public school, private school and homeschool, to love learning and to learn well.

Sincerely,

Robin Scharnick



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**Fwd: Micro school support**

1 message

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**Brienne Kuhn** <brienneck@hotmail.com>  
To: Lisa Dettinger <phcschool20@gmail.com>

Wed, Feb 23, 2022 at 8:28 AM

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Meghan Brusa <meghanbrusa@gmail.com>  
**Date:** February 23, 2022 at 8:27:56 AM CST  
**To:** Brienne Kuhn <brienneck@hotmail.com>  
**Subject:** Micro school support

To whom it may concern,

I am writing this letter in support of micro schools everywhere.

I am a first year homeschooling mother of two. Up until this point, my son has attended a small, private school. During our short time as a homeschooling family, we have been blessed to experience many different types of education-both traditional and nontraditional. We have been involved in a homeschool co-op comprised of five families, we belong to a homeschooling group through our church comprised of over 100 families and we have many family friends on their own homeschooling journeys who we are in contact with regularly. All this to say, we are experiencing firsthand the beautifully diverse ways in which children are learning. We have witnessed only wonderful and positive things come from the diversification of learning methods. We collaborate and learn from one another.

We have personal experience with a close family member who is attending a micro school. The changes we have seen in this young lady coming from a traditional school setting have been nothing short of a miracle. These changes could not and would not have occurred for her in a home school setting. This has been the missing puzzle piece in her education, and frankly her life. Taking this option away from her would be nothing short of devastating for our family. As a homeschooling parent, I am dumbfounded at the opposition to micro schools. In my experience, micro schools have only enhanced my own children's educational experience.

I beg you to vote in a way that includes every child and his/her specific needs. A rising tide lifts all boats.

Sincerely,

Meghan Brusa

(608)225-9052  
105 Savannah Circle  
Barneveld, WI 53507



**Testimony to the Senate Committee on Education  
Opposition to Senate Bills 201, 962, 966, 964, 965, 974 and 963**  
submitted by the  
**Wisconsin Education Association Council**  
February 23, 2022

The Wisconsin Education Association Council, representing teachers and education support professionals in Wisconsin Public Schools, are opposed to Senate Bills 201, 962, 966, 964, 965, 974 and 963. These bills are circulating at a time when lawmakers should be working with parents and educators to help our students and develop sustainable solutions to the exodus of educators leaving the classroom. The following is a quote from WEAC President and teacher Peggy Wirtz-Olsen:

“Legislators need to stop politicizing our schools and pitting families against each other with divisive proposals. The supporters of these bills are making an already difficult job that much more complicated for educators. These bills are reckless and could cause the destruction of our public school system.

“The people who know best how these proposed laws would impact public schools – educators – can’t even attend the public hearing to give input because they are at work – keeping schools open and teaching students. We have not been consulted nor given time to educate the bills’ sponsors on the consequences of these bills on our students and classrooms. The bills’ sponsors are urged to take time to discuss these proposals with the front-line professionals who teach the children.”

Peggy Wirtz-Olsen, President  
Bob Baxter, Executive Director

Hello, Mr. Ponio,

My name is Kim Kotecki. I am a homeschooling parent from Sheboygan, Wisconsin.

I am unable to attend the public hearing this morning in Madison but would like to officially be registered as opposed to SB 201. My husband and I have been homeschooling for 13 years. We have three kids. We believe strongly from personal experience that Wisconsin's current homeschooling law is reasonable and clear. It works well for our family.

Micro education pods are unnecessary on many levels. Homeschoolers can already gather to share educational activities. If a group of families wish to start a small private school, they already may do so under current law. SB 201 is confusing and raises more legal questions than it answers. Micro education pods undermine our current law by confusing homeschools and private schools.

Thank you for reading and considering our position from first-hand experience.

Kim Kotecki  
704 Weiss Dr.  
Sheboygan, WI 53083  
c. 608-843-9880

Hello, Mr. Ponio,

My name is Jason Kotecki. I am a homeschooling parent from Sheboygan, Wisconsin.

I am unable to attend the public hearing this morning in Madison but would like to officially be registered as opposed to SB 201. My wife and I have been homeschooling for 13 years. We have three kids. We believe strongly from personal experience that Wisconsin's current homeschooling law is reasonable and clear. It works well for our family.

Micro education pods are unnecessary on many levels. Homeschoolers can already gather to share educational activities. If a group of families wish to start a small private school, they already may do so under current law. SB 201 is confusing and raises more legal questions than it answers. Micro education pods undermine our current law by confusing homeschools and private schools.

Thank you for reading and considering our position from first-hand experience.

Jason Kotecki  
Chief Creative Guy @ Escape Adulthood  
Froot Loops Eater. Star Wars Watcher. Batman Admirer.

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- Website: <https://www.EscapeAdulthood.com>
  - Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/escapeadulthood>
  - Instagram: <https://instagram.com/escapeadulthood>
-