



BARBARA DITTRICH

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 38th ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

December 5, 2023

Rep. Barbara Dittrich Testimony on AB 640 – a license to teach based on working as a paraprofessional in a school district

Assembly Committee on Education

Thank you Chairman Kitchens and committee for taking up Assembly Bill 640 in committee today. I want to express my gratitude to Senator Knodl as well, who is here testifying with me on this bill.

The intent behind this bill is to help with the recruitment, retention, and placement of teachers by creating a licensure pipeline for paraprofessionals who are recognized as exceptional by their school districts, but who often cannot afford to follow the traditional pathway to licensure. The bill would create a provisional license contingent on approval, on an individual basis, from the school's principal, the school district's administrator (or his/her designee) and Director of Teaching and Learning, and the Department of Public Instruction. The paraprofessional would be paired with a "mentor teacher" who has at least 3 years of experience in the school district. Being paired with a "mentor teacher" allows for guidance and correction to ensure the best outcomes and quality teachers are in our classrooms.

An important point to keep in mind is implementation of this provisional license will be optional for school districts. This legislation simply creates another recruitment and retention tool that districts may use to attract quality teachers. School districts would have discretion in implementation and availability based on need/desire to participate in the program.

I appreciate the committee considering this legislation and hope we can agree this straightforward concept will go a long way for the benefit of our schools and workforce.



WISCONSIN STATE SENATE

DAN KNODL

STATE SENATOR • 8TH DISTRICT

Assembly Bill 640

Public Testimony

Assembly Committee on Education

December 5, 2023

Thank you Chairman Kitchens and members of the committee for holding this public hearing on Assembly Bill 640.

Education is not immune to the tight labor market, and our traditional standards for entry into the teaching profession have unfortunately fenced out many worthy candidates. Among those are hundreds of high-performing paraprofessionals already working in classrooms in our state.

Paraprofessionals are not highly paid, and consequently their ability to follow the traditional pathway to securing a teaching degree is limited. This bill gives them the means to follow their potential.

This bill would create a provisional teaching license for a paraprofessional upon the endorsement from the school's principal, the school district's administrator and Director of Teaching and Learning, and the Department of Public Instruction. The paraprofessional would need at least a year of classroom experience in the sponsoring school district, and the school district would be responsible for pairing the individual with an experienced teacher with at least three years of experience in the district.

On a final note, it is important to recognize that this bill does not mandate this pathway. School districts may choose to employ this method, or not, and will have full discretion over which paraprofessionals they endorse for licensure. Furthermore, the license issued under this proposal would only authorize the holder to teach in the sponsoring school district.

Thank you for your time, and we would be happy to answer any questions you may have.



December 5, 2023

Assembly Committee on Education Committee

**Department of Public Instruction Testimony
2023 Assembly Bill 640**

Thank you, Chairperson Kitchens, and members of the committee, for the opportunity to testify before you today. My name is Jennifer Kammerud, and I am the Director of the Licensing, Educator Advancement, and Development Team at the Department of Public Instruction (DPI). With me today is Tom McCarthy, the Deputy State Superintendent at DPI. We are here to testify in opposition to 2023 Assembly Bill 640 (AB 640).

AB 640 provides that every paraprofessional who has three years of work experience and is recommended by their school district shall receive a Tier II license to teach in any subject requested in their district, regardless of the paraprofessional's background. A Tier II license is a full license, the same license teachers receive upon completing an approved program with their bachelor's degree. The bill further requires the DPI to issue a lifetime license with no restrictions after six semesters of experience.

The bill eliminates all state requirements for becoming a teacher in all subject areas in which an initial license can be obtained for those using this pathway to a license. It eliminates the requirement to hold a bachelor's degree, the requirement for passage of the Foundations of Reading Test (FORT), and requirements of reading knowledge that just passed in 2023 Wisconsin Act 20. It eliminates the requirement for training in teaching students with disabilities, impacting required knowledge on how to provide a free appropriate public education required under the law. It eliminates all required knowledge, skills, and dispositions that are acquired and demonstrated through completion of an approved preparation program, which includes learning aligned to standards for each subject area and the Wisconsin teaching standards. The Wisconsin standards address pupil development, learning differences, learning environments, content knowledge, application of content, assessment methods, planning for instruction (connecting content knowledge, curriculum, cross-disciplinary skills, pedagogy, and students), instructional strategies, professional learning and ethical practice, and leadership and collaboration.

Under the bill, all common state requirements and expectations for a license are replaced with whatever standards or expectations any one school district may have for the teacher who receives a license under the provisions of this bill. Minimum licensure requirements for those licensed under this bill would be lower than what the state requires of private school teachers in the choice program.

Under current law, all those completing educator preparation programs are required to receive a certain number of clinical experiences across the breadth of the license for which they are preparing. Licenses are issued in grade ranges of birth to grade 3, K-9, K-12, and 4-12. Students are required to complete student teaching and are supported and evaluated based on standards by both their approved preparation program and the trained cooperating teacher, who is required to have a license in the same area and at least three years of experience. This is all eliminated under the provisions of AB 640 and replaced with the offer of an experienced educator mentor who is any educator in any subject with three years of experience. There are no requirements around any knowledge or skills specific to being a mentor under the bill. No specific training or other support is required to be provided to the teacher. The paraprofessional may have been recommended for the license by someone who has no background in the specific license, and the day-to-day reality of how stretched educators are makes it unlikely schools will have the additional staff and expertise to provide teachers licensed under this bill with the full-time support and training they would need in the license area.

If AB 640 were to become law, the licenses issued under it would be indistinguishable to parents, the public, and other hiring agencies from licenses issued to those who have bachelor's degrees and completed an approved educator preparation program. The department would have no way to determine in real time if someone who received a Tier II license under this provision changed employment, and there is no revocation option even if the department were to be notified, as the bill simply states that the license is no longer valid. The license would transition to a portable one after six semesters and the acquisition of the lifetime license.

Absent transparency, many school districts will not know that some licensed teachers are ineligible for special education aid and not allowed to teach students under the federal Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act (IDEA). All special education teachers are required to have a minimum of a bachelor's degree under 34 CFR 300.156(c)(1)(iii).

The committee should be aware of the significant steps the department has taken and is taking to address the shortage in a manner that honors standards in Wisconsin law and the fact that teaching is a skilled profession requiring significant training, information, and support. For instance, the department repealed and recreated the entire rule chapter governing licensure in 2018 to create broader grade spans and subject areas to provide districts with more flexibility in assignments and to make it easier for people to teach and train while they become licensed. An example of this moved the state from licensing in discrete subject areas in science to a grade 4-12 science license. Another example is anyone with a bachelor's degree is eligible for a one-year license with stipulations, which allows them to teach while they make progress in an approved preparation program and work to a full Tier II license upon completion. Wisconsin now has one of the most flexible licensing systems in the country.

At the same time, the department has worked with technical colleges on foundations of teacher education and two plus two programs, and all technical colleges offer associate degrees in either early childhood or foundations of teacher education that transfer to four-year approved educator preparation programs. Looking ahead, the department is discussing apprenticeships and changes in rules such as creating flexibility to establish equivalencies to student teaching requirements.

There is a shortage of teachers, and while this bill represents one thought on how to address that shortage, it comes with significant consequences to students and the workforce. Teachers who come into the classroom unprepared can harm students.¹ Our students who are struggling the most or need the most support will be disproportionately impacted. Teachers who feel unprepared are more likely to leave the profession, exacerbating the retention problem we have in Wisconsin, which is the major cause of the state's shortage.

Being a teacher means being challenged to think beyond one's own experiences and expectations, inspiring students to dream bigger, pursue learning opportunities, and strive for a bright future. Any path to teacher licensure should build on a necessary, required foundation and actively ensure that candidates are able to see a bigger picture of education for students, beyond their own classroom and district walls.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. We would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

¹ Darling-Hammond, L., Holtzman, D. J., Gatlin, S. J., & Heilig, J. V. (2005). Does teacher preparation matter? Evidence about teacher certification, Teach for America, and teacher effectiveness. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 13(42), 1-48. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ846746>

From the ERIC abstract: "Recent debates about the utility of teacher education have raised questions about whether certified teachers are, in general, more effective than those who have not met the testing and training requirements for certification, and whether some candidates with strong liberal arts backgrounds might be at least as effective as teacher education graduates. This study examines these questions with a large student-level data set from Houston, Texas that links student characteristics and achievement with data about their teachers' certification status, experience, and degree levels from 1995-2002. The data set also allows an examination of whether Teach for America (TFA) candidates—recruits from selective universities who receive a few weeks of training before they begin teaching—are as effective as similarly experienced certified teachers. In a series of regression analyses looking at 4th and 5th grade student achievement gains on six different reading and mathematics tests over a six-year period, we find that certified teachers consistently produce stronger student achievement gains than do uncertified teachers. These findings hold for TFA recruits as well as others. Controlling for teacher experience, degrees, and student characteristics, uncertified TFA recruits are less effective than certified teachers, and perform about as well as other uncertified teachers. TFA recruits who become certified after 2 or 3 years do about as well as other certified teachers in supporting student achievement gains; however, nearly all of them leave within three years. Teachers' effectiveness appears strongly related to the preparation they have received for teaching."

SCHOOL DISTRICT OF BROWN DEER

December 5, 2023

To: Members of the Assembly Committee on Education

From: Dr. Monica Kelsey-Brown, Superintendent of the School District of Brown Deer

Re: Testimony in support of Assembly Bill 640

Chairman Kitchens and Members of the Assembly Committee on Education,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak before you today. My name is Dr. Monica Kelsey-Brown, the proud superintendent of the School District of Brown Deer. I come before you as a concerned citizen and a concerned 34-year educator for the advancement of education in our great state of Wisconsin. Today, I urge you to consider a progressive step that has the potential to positively impact our K-12 education system—providing provisional licensing for paraprofessionals to teach full-time in our schools.

First and foremost, let us acknowledge the critical role that teachers play in shaping the future of our children. They are the architects of knowledge, the mentors who inspire and guide our youth. However, we find ourselves facing a challenge—an increasing demand for qualified educators. Our schools are struggling to fill teaching positions, and the shortage is particularly acute in certain subjects and geographical areas.

Enter the paraprofessionals—the dedicated individuals who already work within our schools, often providing invaluable support to teachers and students. These individuals have a deep understanding of the school environment, the students, and the community. They are committed, passionate, and possess a wealth of experience that can be harnessed for the betterment of our education system.

Providing paraprofessionals with an apprenticeship-like opportunity to teach full time is not a compromise on the quality of education. On the contrary, it is a recognition of the untapped potential within our schools. These professionals can undergo targeted training and development programs, ensuring they meet the same high standards we expect from our traditional educators. By doing so, we not only address the shortage of teachers but also empower a group of committed individuals who are already invested in the success of our students.

One week prior to the start of school this year, the School District of Brown Deer started school without a highly qualified teacher in Chemistry and Math at the high school. The amount of time that it takes for principals to simply find names of individuals who might have an interest even when the application pool is one or two people is taxing. Fast forward one more week, we had to make the decision to eliminate higher level math courses because the pool to pull from was limited. In addition to hiring practices, teachers are taxed daily with giving up their prep periods to sub for an absent colleague. Contracting with substitute teacher companies has not proven to be beneficial. If anything it has been hit or miss. Principals are dividing up classrooms for coverage when needed which in turn impacts classroom size for one teacher. It also interrupts the consistency and continuity that students need regarding routines in the classroom. While we are working to increase the teacher pipeline, let us all be mindful of retaining the great teachers that we do have without the thought of losing them due to an increased workload in a job that can already be highly stressful.

Allowing paraprofessionals to earn a provisional license at the discretion of district/building administrators while earning more money than they would otherwise make would serve as the impetus for them to afford being able to go back to school to earn a license. Taking out a loan is not an option in many cases as they cannot afford to pay it back in addition to all other requirements that are indicative to the cost of living (e.g. childcare, transportation, food, rent/mortgage, etc.)

This move aligns with the principles of inclusivity and diversity. Many paraprofessionals come from our local communities, bringing with them a deep understanding of the cultural nuances and

challenges faced by our students. By providing them with a pathway to full-time teaching, we enhance the representation of our diverse society within the education system, creating an environment that is more relatable and supportive for our students.

I understand that change can be met with skepticism, but let us view this as an opportunity—an opportunity to innovate, to address the needs of our schools, and to invest in the future of our children. Licensing paraprofessionals as teachers is a forward-thinking solution that has the potential to strengthen our education system and, by extension, our communities.

In conclusion, I implore you, esteemed members of the State Legislature, to consider and support offering provisional licensing of paraprofessionals to teach full time with the support of a master teacher in our K-12 schools. Let us embrace this opportunity to not only alleviate the teacher shortage but also to foster a more inclusive, diverse, and resilient education system for the benefit of generations to come. If not now, then when will we truly become serious about increasing the teacher pipeline? If not us, then who will elevate the status of this esteemed profession by making sure we put a pipeline in place that will be equitable, predictable and sustainable for the future of the state of Wisconsin?

Thank you for your time and consideration



**Testimony to the Assembly Education Committee
Assembly Bill 640
Wisconsin Education Association Council**

December 5, 2023

The Wisconsin Education Association Council is opposed to Assembly Bill 640.

Wisconsin Public School students need and deserve to have highly qualified teachers and education support professionals in all positions at their schools. Teachers who complete rigorous preparation programs, including mentoring and support as they begin their careers, say they feel more prepared and are more likely to stay in the profession.

Equated to the nursing profession, this bill would allow a part-time CNA to become a nurse based on their supervisor's recommendation.

Rebuilding a highly qualified education workforce will take intention and resources, not one-off attempts in desperation to fill vacancies that will cause more confusion and undermine the professionalism of teaching by bypassing the coursework, clinical experiences and student teaching a person with a degree in education must complete. This bill puts the quest for excellence in the profession at risk by allowing unprepared individuals to obtain a teaching license--the same tier of license a person would receive after graduating from college.

This bill not only misses the mark when it comes to what students need, but also puts our dedicated and outstanding paraprofessionals in a difficult position, as they would enter the teaching profession without the preparation and support to make them as successful as possible.

The staffing problem in Wisconsin schools has hit crisis levels as the result of state cuts to public schools coupled with expansion of school tax funding used to fund private school vouchers. The solution is to stabilize public education, provide clear and predictable compensation for educators, and create sustainable mental health resources for students and educators. Carving out exceptions to teacher licensure will not strengthen neighborhood public schools, and educators impacted by this bill would not meet federal standards to teach special needs students under IDEA, nor in Title 1 programs.

Educators support financial assistance and other grants, grow-your-own programs and apprenticeships that encourage paraprofessionals who are called to teach to complete their teaching degrees, not fast-tracked attempts that allow administrators to bestow a license on staff with limited requirements.

WEAC, representing teachers, paraprofessionals and other education support professionals, urge the committee to reject this proposal and instead partner to advance the solutions classroom educators support, including statewide salary schedules that pay professional wages to school support staff and teachers, affordable health care, and a voice in decisions that directly impact the students we work with every day. We urge you to join Wisconsin Public School teachers in opposing Assembly Bill 640.

Peggy Wirtz-Olsen, President
Bob Baxter, Executive Director

December 5, 2023

To: Members of the Assembly Committee on Education

From: Faith M. VanderHorst, Executive Director, Southeastern Wisconsin Schools Alliance (SWSA)

Re: Testimony in support of AB 640

Chairman Kitchens and Members of the Assembly Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak before you today. Thank you Representative Dittrich for introducing this legislation. I would also like to thank Senator Dan Knodl and his staff.

My name is Faith VanderHorst. I am the Executive Director for the Southeastern Wisconsin Schools Alliance (SWSA). The **Southeastern Wisconsin Schools Alliance (SWSA)** provides school leaders with objective, non-partisan information and training they need to be strong advocates for educational excellence. SWSA serves 27 urban and suburban public school districts with a combined enrollment of more than 200,000 students (approximately 25% of Wisconsin's public school students).

I am here today to speak in support of AB 640 which creates a pathway for a provisional licensure for paraprofessionals to teach full-time in our schools. As you are aware, there is a teacher shortage today not only in Wisconsin but around the country. Passage of this legislation will allow Districts the opportunity to develop and train those Paraprofessionals that have been working in the District, that know the students, understand the school environment and community culture. These individuals are committed in a time when few are entering and many are leaving the field of teaching; they are passionate about working with students.

Providing provisional licensure for these dedicated paraprofessionals will allow them the added economic opportunity to work toward their degree either on-line, in person or through a portfolio program such as BloomBoard. While they are teaching they will be mentored by veteran teachers. Their progress and success will be monitored by their local Superintendent.

Giving paraprofessionals an apprenticeship-like opportunity will not compromise the quality of education. It is not unlike the student teacher experience, yet with the added benefit that the paraprofessional is already familiar with the students, the staff and district teaching techniques and expectations.

We acknowledge this legislation provides only one small solution toward filling the pipeline. As Dr. Kelsey-Brown indicated there are teacher subject areas that are growing increasingly hard to fill, including Special Education, higher Math, English and Sciences. While the hard decision can be made to not offer certain higher math and science classes, discontinuing Special Education support is not an option and presents added stress on Districts due to state and federal mandated requirements. This Bill

is an innovative way to address the needs of our schools. I want to also encourage the legislature to start thinking about how to grow and fund teacher pledge and apprenticeship programs. We need your help to grow the teacher pipeline.

Teaching is an essential profession for the future of our children, state and nation. Workforce competition is no longer local, statewide or even nationwide. It is global. It is imperative that we support all students, providing them with as many opportunities for success including preparation in the trades, service industries and college readiness, as Districts' budgets will allow. Well qualified, PASSIONATE teachers are the key to their success.

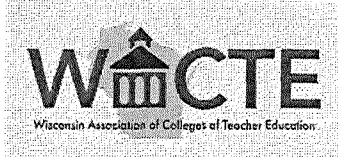
We respectfully ask that you support this Bill as a step to fulfilling our teacher needs. We are willing to work with anyone who is interested in finding a solution to the teacher pipeline challenge.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Faith VanderHorst
Executive Director, SWSA
swsaexecdirector4@gmail.com

www.schoolsalliance.com



Written Testimony – Wisconsin Association of Colleges of Teacher Education

Assembly Committee on Education

December 5, 2023

Dear Chair Kitchens and Members of the Committee:

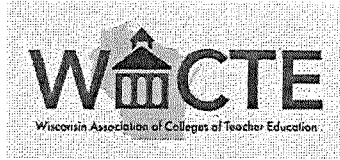
The **Wisconsin Association of Colleges of Teacher Education** represents thirty educator preparation programs across the state of Wisconsin. As an organization, we strive to ensure that every preservice educator has the tools and resources necessary to thrive in today's educational landscape. **WACTE** also provide opportunities for practicing educators and professionals in teacher preparation to reach their full potential.

The WACTE Government Relations Committee is submitting this testimony to express our strong opposition to the proposed AB 640, licensing paraprofessionals based on time in classroom and administrator nomination.

We are steadfast in our commitment to prioritizing the education and well-being of children in Wisconsin. To uphold this commitment, it is imperative that we entrust the responsibility of educating our youth to highly qualified and trained individuals.

Addressing the teacher shortage in Wisconsin requires the recruitment of well-prepared and highly qualified licensed teachers. However, the proposed bill deviates from this goal. The bill offers a route to licensure that bypasses educator preparation programs and degrees in related fields or even eliminate the requirement for a bachelor's degree, which is unprecedented in our state. Furthermore, this bill contradicts Act 20 by providing a means to circumvent the necessary literacy training for teacher licensure.

We urge the legislature to consider proposals that strengthen educator preparation and encourages the retention of highly qualified teachers in public schools. Nationally recognized approaches gaining traction include teacher residency programs, supporting pathways to licensure for adults already employed in schools, and teacher apprenticeships, which offer structured education and support for licensure with substantial on-the-job training.



By embracing these pathways, school districts and educator preparation programs can collaboratively build a robust educator workforce without compromising the quality of preparation. Our dedication to safeguarding the quality of education in our state prohibits us from supporting any measure that undermines the qualifications and standards set forth for the benefit of our children's future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Kimberly R White'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping 'K' and a distinct 'R'.

Kimberly White, Ph.D.

President Elect, the Wisconsin Association of Colleges of Teacher Education

kimberlyrwhite@icloud.com



"Where Students Are First"

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Superintendent

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Adrienne McConnel, Member

Testimony in Support of Assembly Bill 640
Committee on Education – Tuesday December 5, 2023

Good morning, Assembly Committee on Education. My name is Dr. Deb Kerr, the Superintendent of the St. Francis Public School District, situated on the south side of Milwaukee County in St. Francis, Wisconsin. It is an honor to present my testimony in support of Wisconsin Assembly Bill 640, which seeks to empower paraprofessionals to become licensed teachers in the state, with the backing of leaders in the school districts who play a pivotal role in staffing decisions.

I represent a diverse community, advocating for the education of 1,100 St. Francis children, 760 families, and a dedicated team of 90 teachers and 50 staff members. Our school community is unique, with over 50% of our students of color, 50% facing economic disadvantages, and 50% joining us for an enhanced education through open enrollment from more than 60 different schools in the Metro Milwaukee area.

Over the past 24 years, I have served as a superintendent in various Wisconsin school districts, ranging from a small K-8 district to a successfully consolidated school district, and larger public schools like Brown Deer and St. Francis. My commitment extends beyond the district level, as I have been elected to represent both state and national associations of superintendent leaders, advocating for public education not only in Wisconsin but across the entire nation.

I stand before you today in strong support of Wisconsin Assembly Bill 640, a legislation that encourages the licensure of paraprofessionals as Wisconsin teachers, with the endorsement of school district leaders who play a pivotal role in shaping our education system.

Paraprofessionals are the backbone of our education system, serving as the glue that holds our schools together, effectively addressing the diverse needs of our students. They establish essential connections with students, offering differentiated support tailored to individual needs. These professionals play a crucial role in helping students reach their full potential by providing vital support and encouragement.

The paraprofessionals I have had the privilege of working with are highly knowledgeable, flexible, and multi-dimensional. They collaborate with classroom teachers to plan and prepare learning resources, strategizing for all learners, particularly those who may be struggling. Their day-to-day experiences mirror that of student-teaching, providing them with a deep understanding of the culture and expectations unique to each district.

Many paraprofessionals aspire to become teachers, but various challenges, such as financial constraints, transportation limitations, or family responsibilities, often cut their dreams short. Assembly Bill 640 aims to create pathways to education, similar to the successful Career and Technical Education licensure based on workforce experiences in the past.

Teacher turnover and staff shortages affect every school district in the state, with the most diverse and rural systems experiencing the greatest challenges. The recently published [September 2023 report by the Wisconsin Policy Forum](#) highlighted a significant increase in teacher turnover, reaching a record 15.8% in the 2022-23 school year. This turnover not only impacts educational continuity but also underscores the urgency to address workforce development in education.

Assembly Bill 640 offers a creative solution to the teacher pipeline problem without compromising the quality of education our students deserve. Filling the pipeline with qualified and diverse educators is crucial for talent development and to remain competitive in the workforce. My students, and those across the state, benefit from seeing staff who represent diverse backgrounds, a characteristic common among many paraprofessionals.

Diversification and change are imperative for the future of education, and Assembly Bill 640 provides the flexibility and opportunities needed for school districts seeking alternatives to the status quo. School leaders and boards remain the gatekeepers for hiring, ensuring that this alternative certification pathway does not compromise the high standards we set for our educators.

This unique approach allows more access to talented professionals from various organizational contexts without imposing a financial burden on these future educators. Let us work collaboratively toward the shared goal of improving existing practices that may not serve us well. Change begins with leadership and a commitment to developing new, effective ways of conducting business. Thank you for engaging in this conversation and for your dedication to better serving all children in Wisconsin.

Yours in Education,

Dr. Deborah Kerr

Dr. Deborah Kerr

Superintendent – St. Francis Public School District

dkerr@sfsd.k12.wi.us



December 1, 2023

Representative Joel Kitchens
Room 314 North
State Capitol
PO Box 8952
Madison, WI 53708

Dear Representative Kitchens:

I am writing in support of AB 640 relating to the granting of a teaching license for paraprofessionals who work within a school district. This is my thirtieth year in public education. In this time, I have witnessed the teacher pipeline dry up firsthand. When I began my career, it was common to substitute teach for a couple of years prior to getting a full-time teaching assignment. There was an unwritten rule at that time to never turn down a substitute assignment out of fear of not being called back to sub or recommended for an interview. Candidate pools numbered into the hundreds if not thousands for highly sought-after positions.

Fast forward to today and the situation couldn't be more different. As of right now, there are over forty teaching positions in Kenosha Unified that are filled with a long-term substitute because of a shortage of licensed staff. There also is a lack of substitute teachers for our district, as well. AB 640 is a common-sense approach to increase the number of quality educators in our school district. Our principals and administrative staff work with our paraprofessionals on a daily basis. Through daily observations and the evaluation process, they know the paraprofessional staff members who would make great teachers. AB 640 has the potential to help bring some of our hidden stars out into leadership roles in our classrooms.

There are only wins contained in AB 640. Please feel free to contact me should you have any questions.

Best regards,

Dr. Jeffrey Weiss, Superintendent
Kenosha Unified School District



262-359-6300



www.kusd.edu



3600 52nd St., Kenosha, WI 53144

Dear State Legislators,

I am writing to file my opposition to AB 640, a bill that proposes to license paraprofessionals to teach in Wisconsin schools. This is completely egregious to the teaching profession. You are deprofessionalizing the teaching profession, and in so doing, harming our K-12 students. This bill must be voted down and removed from any future legislation.

Sincerely,
Dr. Jacqueline Witter-Easley
Professor of Education
Carthage College, Kenosha, WI

As a retired reading specialist/teacher, a member of the Wisconsin State Reading Association, and a volunteer reading tutor in a public elementary school in Wisconsin, I want to register my opposition to WI AB 640. Students in Wisconsin deserve expert teachers that provide comprehensive, responsive instruction to build on student strengths and address their specific needs. This bill would mean that individuals could obtain teaching licenses without having in-depth knowledge of how students learn, of the content they are teaching, of the complexity of being responsive to human variation, and of how to assess students in authentic ways to make sure they are learning what has been taught.

I urge you to vote No on WI AB 640.

With hope that you will do the right thing for Wisconsin's children,
Deborah Cromer
424 22nd Street North
La Crosse, WI 54601