



DUEY STROEBEL

STATE SENATOR • 20TH DISTRICT

Testimony on SB 990

February 6, 2024

Thank you Chairman Jagler for a hearing on Senate Bill 990. SB 990 is a bill that expands who is deemed qualified to provide certain professional development mandated as part of Act 20.

Among the many provisions of Act 20 was a requirement that early literacy instructors and a variety of administrators undertake professional development training by July 1, 2025. That training must be received from a person or group who demonstrates qualifications outlined in Act 20.

After Act 20 was signed into law, I was approached by CESA 6 requesting a change. CESA 6 believed it had been conducting training for school principals, administrators and literacy teams of the sort the Legislature intended in Act 20. The wording of the Act meant these trainings would not qualify as satisfying the legislative mandate.

I agreed to author this bill to give CESA 6, and the couple other CESAs that might qualify, the opportunity to make the case that they could provide another source for the Act 20 trainings for a subset of those effected. Thank you.



MICHAEL SCHRAA

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 53RD ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

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Senate Bill 990

Thank you, Chairman Jagler and Members of the Senate Committee on Education for the opportunity to testify in favor of Senate Bill 990.

First of all, thank you for your work on 2023 Act 20, which requires educators to be trained in science-based literacy instruction. This will certainly have a significant effect on increasing skills of our students across the state.

This bill is a minor adjustment to Act 20, at the request of our local Cooperative Educational Service Agency (CESA). As you are aware, CESAs across the state provide resources to local schools, including professional development opportunities. I attend almost all of the CESA 6 meetings. It's a valuable opportunity to stay connected with school officials as well as the work of the CESA.

As it stands, Act 20 requires that kindergarten through third grade educators are trained by an approved program with 5 years of experience in this specific area of professional development.

This bill would make CESAs eligible to provide this training. The bill only requires that the CESA have 2 years' experience in this literacy training. Of course, they would meet the same statutory criteria as current providers.

In closing, I appreciate the painstaking work you did in passing this legislation and hope that this bill will make it even more effective.



February 5, 2024

Dear Education Committee Members:

I am writing on behalf of the Appleton Area School District (AASD) to offer my full support of the proposed amendment which would allow the CESA 6 Teacher Institute to meet the training requirements within ACT 20. Continuing to work with CESA 6 through the implementation of ACT 20 is critical for our district's success in implementing the necessary instructional shifts in early literacy for a number of reasons. First, there are significant financial challenges associated with providing cost-effective professional development necessary to build staff capacity within a large district such as the AASD. Since Title IIa dollars cannot be used for supporting the implementation of a state mandate, districts that are already stretched financially must find the means for building additional professional development into their budgets. **CESA 6 continues to be a leader in providing high-quality professional development at a reasonable cost.**

Secondly, as the AASD started its work in shifting from balanced literacy to science of reading based instruction, a partnership has already been well established for providing our administrators and staff with professional development. Specifically, we have been fortunate to be working with CESA 6 staff members Dianna Kresovic and Sarah Doerr for the past two school years in implementing the action steps established through our ELA program evaluation. Throughout this process, we have continued to receive very positive feedback from both administrators and educators in the professional development that CESA 6 has been providing our district. **Shifting to a new source of professional development outside of CESA 6 at this time would be a significant disruption to the capacity building that has been taking place.**

Knowing the many challenges associated with implementing complex change such as ACT 20, I strongly recommend that the CESA 6 Teacher Institute be approved for meeting the requirement of educator staff development so that districts are put into the best position possible for moving forward with fidelity.

Sincerely,

Steve J. Harrison, Ph.D.

Assistant Superintendent - Assessment, Curriculum & Instruction

WINNECONNE COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT



Learning Today...
Leading Tomorrow

February 5, 2024

Dear Education Committee Members,

We are contacting you in regards to the implementation of Act 20, specifically the training and financial concerns we have for our district. As the Director of Learning & Business Manager, we are concerned with the training options we currently have for ACT 20. We are asking you to approve CESA 6 to train our staff face to face. Training teachers face to face will be much more effective for our teachers, allowing our teachers to ask questions and participate in dialogue with their peers. The relationship and trust that our teachers have with CESA 6 will also promote success and open-mindedness for our staff. These training sessions would happen during our PD days and not "be another thing" we need to add to our teachers' plates. If these trainings do not get approved, it will cost our district approximately \$82,000 to train the same teachers as CESA 6 would train for us. This cost includes the price per teacher training and the 36 hours that staff would need to do outside of school - as we would not want staff to train on a computer for 8 hours a day during our PD days. Allowing CESA 6 to train our teachers for Act 20 will 1). provide engaging professional development for our staff and 2). save our district tens of thousands of dollars.

Sincerely,

Peg Mischler
Director of Learning

Monika Knapp
Business Manager



All Learners Thriving, Contributing & Belonging

Mark Schwartz
Director Curriculum & Instruction
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Dear Education Committee Members,

I am writing to advocate for your support of the Act 20 amendment naming the CESA 6 *Teacher Institute* as meeting the teacher training requirement in the law.

Having been through *Leader Training* at CESA 6, focusing on best instructional practice in the Science of Reading, the literacy leaders in the Evansville Community School District (ECSD) have gained great knowledge in a very collaborative and supportive environment. This has led to great follow up sessions as our literacy leaders have brought back their learnings to all teachers of literacy in the ECSD. Having the opportunity for all teachers of literacy in grades K-5 to be a part of collaborative, interactive and engaging *Teacher Training* would truly set our students and staff up for success with best practices in literacy instruction noted in Act 20.

The manner in which CESA 6 structures their literacy trainings is what sets them apart from other online and less learner-centered trainings. Allowing teachers to obtain new information, process together and ultimately place the focus of putting new learnings into practice is the mindset behind CESA 6's planning for their literacy trainings. This is a much more authentic approach than individual teacher trainings that take place through screens.

Feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns. I would be happy to share my input on the importance of your committee's decision around supporting the CESA 6 *Teacher Institute* in the amendment to Act 20.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Schwartz".

Mark Schwartz

Director of Curriculum and Instruction
Evansville Community School District

February 4th, 2024

Dear education committee members,

My name is John Flannery and I have the privilege of serving the Oconomowoc Area School District as the Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning. We are appreciative of your committee's efforts to improve literacy outcomes for students across Wisconsin and continue to align our District's improvement efforts to WI ACT 20.

On behalf of our District's board, administration, and educational staff, I am writing to express our support of CESA 6's Early Literacy Academy as an approved training to meet the requirements outlined in WI ACT 20. In 2021, our District began investing time evaluating the Science of Reading body of research. From that evaluation, we recognized a gap in our explicit teaching of phonological awareness and phonics. As we studied evidenced-based professional development models for our teachers, we entered into a partnership with CESA 6 in the fall of 2022 to train our administrators, literacy coaches, and a group of teacher leaders in essential practices outlined in the science of reading research: Those strategies include, but are not limited to:

- Phonological Awareness, Explicit Phonics Instruction, Orthographic Mapping, Decoding and Encoding, & The Alphabetic Principle

Following the 2022-2023 leadership training, we felt strongly that all educators in our system would benefit from this learning. We decided to extend our contract with CESA 6. All primary teachers, special educators, literacy paraprofessionals, and speech/language pathologists have participated in this multi-day training, beginning in early June and continuing through this school year. I can speak for our principals when I explain to this committee that we have not had a more impactful series of professional development in my ten-year tenure in this role.

CESA 6's multi-day training provides the very best of what professional development in the science of reading should look like. Sessions are established to bring educators into the key elements of foundational literacy as outlined in WI ACT 20, but also extend that learning to the construction of classroom look-fors. These strategy look-fors ensure that teachers and administrators develop classroom routines aligned to the learning. We all know that in order for professional development to have an impact, the learning needs to be applied immediately. CESA 6's academy not only ensures teacher practices in areas outlined in WI ACT 20 are prominent, their training embeds the follow-through necessary to experience systems-change.

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John Flannery
ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT
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As mentioned previously, Oconomowoc supports the focus on foundational skills instruction outlined in WI ACT 20. Our challenge centered on the timing of the approved bill in relation to our professional development needs. As outlined above, we felt we'd be doing our students a disservice if we waited any longer to improve foundational skills instruction across our system. As we now study the professional development requirements in Section 27 of WI ACT 20, we feel very strongly that the CESA 6 Early Literacy Academy meets or exceeds all requirements. If the CESA 6 model is not approved, Oconomowoc will be forced to choose another online-based training to meet the requirements. That will cost precious resources, yet will only mirror the evidence-based learning we've already conducted within our system.

We strongly urge this committee to approve the CESA 6 Early Literacy Academy as a WI ACT 20 training model.

Respectfully,

John Flannery
Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning

Declaracion de Traducción: Estamos trabajando diligentemente para traducir nuestros documentos al español. Por favor comuníquese con la escuela de su hijo para aclaración. Si todavía necesitas aclaración, por favor comuníquese con Translate@oasd.org.

Nondiscrimination: The Oconomowoc Area School District provides assurance that no student is discriminated against because of the student's sex, race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, creed, pregnancy, marital or parental status, sexual orientation, or physical, mental, emotional, or learning disability.

February 5, 2024

Dear members of the Wisconsin State Education Committee,

I hope this letter finds you well. My name is Kristi Brooks, Assistant Superintendent for the Slinger School District, and I am writing to express my concern and request your support for the critical matter of providing districts in Wisconsin with the ability to coordinate ACT 20 Reading Training for their teachers through CESA 6.

As you are undoubtedly aware, effective teacher training is paramount to the success of our education system. The ability to enhance educators' skills, particularly in the realm of reading instruction, is crucial for the overall academic development of our students. Therefore, I urge your committee to consider the following reasons for enabling districts to avail themselves of ACT 20 Reading Training through CESA 6:

Cost Efficiency and Responsible Tax Spending: Coordinating training through CESA 6 provides a cost-effective solution for districts. By leveraging existing resources and infrastructure, we can ensure responsible tax spending, maximizing the impact of allocated funds on teacher development. Please note: The alternative training options named in ACT 20 will cost our school district over \$100,000 more than working directly with CESA-6 due to the number of teachers needing this training in our district.

Flexibility within Contracted Hours: Districts need the flexibility to integrate professional development opportunities into teachers' contracted hours, and if we cannot accomplish this, providing additional stipends will only increase the cost to implement the unfunded, mandated training. By working with CESA 6, districts can design training schedules that align with teachers' existing commitments, fostering a more productive, positive, and efficient learning environment.

On-Site and In-Person Training Options: Recognizing the diverse needs of districts, it is imperative to provide options for on-site and in-person training. This ensures that teachers have access to hands-on, interactive learning experiences that may not be as effectively delivered through virtual or asynchronous methods.

Ensuring Quality and Personalized Learning: In-person training facilitates real-time interaction, personalized feedback, and collaborative learning experiences. These aspects are essential for teachers to grasp the nuances of ACT 20 Reading Training and implement effective strategies in their classrooms.

I sincerely believe that by supporting the coordination of ACT 20 Reading Training through CESA 6, we can make a substantial impact on the professional development of our teachers and, consequently, the academic success of our students. I kindly request your advocacy and support for this important initiative.

Thank you for your time, consideration, and dedication to the improvement of our education system in Wisconsin. I am hopeful that, together, we can make a positive difference in the lives of our students.

Sincerely,



Kristi Brooks

Assistant Superintendent, Slinger School District



Date: February 4, 2024

Dear Education Committee Members:

We are writing in support of an amendment, which would allow the Cesa 6 Teacher Institute to meet the teacher training requirement in the law for Act 20. It is critical to our plan that the Cesa 6 Teacher Institute is identified as an approved program. For the past several months our district team has been researching the programs on the approved list and have found that the options would be extremely difficult to implement given the size of our district as well as what we know to be best practice for training and professional development for our staff.

For a large district facing significant financial challenges, these programs include high price tags. With ESSR funding phasing out, we are hard pressed to find the financial resources to cover the components of these trainings, such as individual licenses for online training. Moreover, with some of the programs, the more support the district needs for facilitating the training, the higher the cost. For a district that is trying *not* to reduce personnel and programs, most of the programs on the approved list present large burdens on both time and finances. Cesa 6 has proposed an affordable Teacher Institute that would allow us to complete the training in one year. With CESA 6 providing high-quality training for all staff, our district literacy leadership will be able to focus on learning alongside staff while creating sustainable plans for implementation and adjustments to our practice.

Another challenge is the actual professional development. Based on previous experience, we feel an in-person model where teachers and leaders can learn together, engage in collaborative conversation, and apply learning through the lens of their schools would be most impactful. Cesa 6 has created an affordable model to provide in-person professional learning on a large scale while also being cost effective.

Cesa 6 has long been respected for the professional learning they provide. We have personally attended many offerings and always felt they were of high quality and immediately transferable to our day to day work. That is what teachers need! They must feel that the commitment of time for learning is worthwhile.

As district leaders, and reading specialists, we are in favor of the training that is required in Act 20; however, there must be considerations and flexibility in the options for delivery in order to accommodate all districts. We embrace this opportunity to build the capacity of our teachers through collective study of early literacy skills. With the CESA 6 model, our teachers and leaders will come together to commit to learning and growing our



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efficacy as literacy teachers. It is the commitment to student learning outcome that we seek to grow, rather than simple compliance to a mandate. For that reason, we urge you to consider this amendment, which will help so many districts not only meet the requirements of the law, but allow them to take advantage of this opportunity in a meaningful way.

Sincerely,

Julie Housaman, Chief Academic Officer

Mary L. Hoover, Coordinator of Reading and Social Studies K-5

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"Inspiring learners, engaging community, enriching the world."

February 5, 2024

Dear Education Committee Members:

This letter is being written to ask you to support the ACT 20 amendment that would allow for the Cesa 6 Teacher Institute to meet the teacher training requirement in the law.

CESA 6 has proven to be an invaluable resource as the Ripon Area School District makes its shift to science aligned literacy instruction. What began as a curriculum audit to review instructional practices and resources has evolved into a partnership of learning about the research and best practices of literacy development and the science of reading. We have benefited immensely from the various literacy academies that our CESA 6 partners have provided over the past couple of years. The combination of in-person learning and coaching support has given us the tools we need to provide professional learning to our elementary staff around literacy and the alignment to the science of reading. CESA's personalized and ongoing support to ensure practice changes are being implemented has been vital to our leadership team.

We have already invested in CESA 6 for the leadership training component of ACT 20 through the Early Literacy K-3 Academy. This has been an impactful and highly cost-effective way to build our leadership capacity to guide our staff through the various shifts in early literacy. We are continuing our learning at the intermediate level by participating in the Intermediate Literacy 3-5 Academy as well the Structured Literacy Intervention Academy.

As we plan for the required teacher training as outlined in ACT 20, we urge you to accept that the CESA 6 Teacher Institute be added as a viable option for in-person training of our staff. The Ripon Area School District has already benefited from the personal connections and cost-effective model that the CESA 6 Literacy Center has provided. This trusted partnership provides districts like ours the greatest leverage for literacy success. Thank you for your consideration.

Your Partner in Education,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Christine Damm".

Christine Damm
Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment
dammc@ripon.k12.wi.us

WAUPUN AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

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February 4, 2024

Dear Education Committee Members:

This letter is a testimony to bring your attention to the importance of allowing CESA 6 Literacy Center the opportunity to train our Wisconsin teachers in the Science of Reading to help improve reading education in our state. As an advocate for strong literacy instruction, I am reaching out to request your support for an amendment to Act 20 Wisconsin Reading Law.

I would like to draw your attention to the outstanding work and invaluable contributions made by the CESA 6 Literacy Center. This institution has demonstrated exceptional knowledge and unwavering commitment to providing science of reading training, making them the ideal partner for enhancing the literacy capabilities of educators in our districts.

The Waupun Area School District has experienced firsthand the positive impact of the CESA 6 Literacy Center's expertise in the science of reading. A small team of administrators, instructional coaches and teachers participated in the comprehensive two-year training program offered by the center. We benefited from face-to-face science of reading training along with on-site coaching based on our district's needs. The immediate face-to-face training and on-site coaching provided by the CESA 6 Literacy Center has proven to be instrumental in the successful implementation of evidence-based reading practices. Their personalized coaching, aligned with the practices of the science of reading, has enabled our educators to bridge the gap between theory and practice, fostering a deeper understanding of the science of reading within our district.

This training has played a pivotal role in empowering our educators to align our curriculum with the science of reading principles and has placed us in a great position that already aligns with Act 20. Our students are benefiting from this training and we have seen tremendous growth already this year. I am confident that after all our teachers receive the training next year, more of our students will be positively impacted because our teachers will have a strong capacity to implement the principles of the science of reading.

In light of these accomplishments, I kindly request that you consider an amendment to Act 20 of the Wisconsin Reading Law, specifically recognizing and authorizing the CESA 6 Literacy Center to provide necessary reading training to Wisconsin school districts. This amendment would formalize their role as a key partner in building the capacity of teachers across the state to deliver high-quality reading instruction.

I am confident that such an amendment would not only strengthen our commitment to evidence-based reading practices but also contribute to the overall improvement of literacy outcomes for the students in Wisconsin.

Thank you for your time and consideration of the urgent and important matter. I am more than willing to provide any additional information or answer any questions you may have regarding the proposed amendment.

Your partner in education,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tara Jaeger". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping tail on the "g".

Tara Jaeger

Director of Teaching and Learning

Waupun Area School District

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February 5, 2024

Dear Education Committee Members:

We would like to take this opportunity to highlight the critical importance of our collaboration with CESA 6 through Act 20 implementation, particularly in the context of our district's success in early literacy.

Our district has assembled a team of educators, including elementary literacy specialists, building principals, teacher representatives from grades 5K to 2, special education teachers, and district administrators. This team has embarked on the CESA 6 Literacy Center's Early Literacy Academy, a 2-year cohort program designed to elevate our early literacy instruction.

The primary goals of our collaboration with CESA 6 for this training are twofold: to deepen our understanding of early literacy instruction and its effective implementation and to strategically align our district with the directives of ACT 20. The key outcome of this work is the potential to significantly enhance student learning, particularly in the domain of reading.

While the academy places a primary focus on early literacy, we understand that literacy proficiency is a continuum across the entire K-12 system. Partnering with CESA 6 allows us to gain critical training for our staff that will positively impact all K-5 classrooms. The knowledge and practices acquired from the CESA 6 training will serve as a catalyst for ongoing growth and excellence in instructional strategies, benefiting both our teachers and students.

We feel strongly that our collaboration with CESA 6 has already proven to be effective in advancing our district's educational goals and their Teacher Institute should be considered to align with legislative mandates surrounding Act 20.

Sincerely,

Trina Hayden
Director of Curriculum & Instruction



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February 4, 2024

Dear Education Committee Members:

This letter is in regards to the ACT 20 amendment that would allow for the CESA 6 Teacher Institute to provide on-site instruction that would meet the teacher training requirement in the Act 20 law.

The Elkhorn Area School District has had a long standing relationship with CESA 6 and both our educators and students have benefited greatly from the outstanding ongoing professional development they have provided in the area of Reading / Language Arts for the past eight years. Most recently, we have worked with CESA 6 to expand our understanding of the Science of Reading by attending various webinars and hosting on-site professional development for our K-5 educators, reading specialists and administrative team.

Like many districts, we are making plans to be in full compliance with the ACT 20 stipulations and have explored a number of approved courses to meet the stringent requirements for teacher training for our K-3 elementary teachers, special education teacher, EL teachers, Speech / Language Teachers, Reading Specialists and administrators. We are looking for an engaging and cost effective way to train over 80 employees.

While there are various on-line options available that will meet the Accredited Independent Teacher Training Programs, we do not feel these will provide the best educational experience for our staff or work with our 2024-25 professional development calendar without providing unnecessary breaks to our student learning with additional in-service time scheduled during the school year. The cost to enroll over 80 participants will also be a financial burden to our district as we prepare for an operational referendum in fall 2024 and are working to cut 1.5 million dollars from next year's budget.

Upon learning that the CESA 6 Teacher Institute was seeking approval to provide a face-to-face training that would meet the requirements for both teachers and administrators, we immediately reached out to CESA 6 and requested to be added to the waitlist of districts. Just as virtual learning is not for all students, our district feels strongly that we would like to offer our educators and administrators an opportunity to complete this reading requirement in a face to face, collaborative setting. Deeper, more impactful learning and discussions will only provide a better experience for our staff - and thus our students.

In addition to being a far better learning experience, the CESA 6 Teacher Institute training costs would be budget friendly and would work with our 2024-25 calendar in a manner that won't impact our students adding additional release days or utilizing classroom substitutes. The CESA 6 learning coaches and trainers are some of the best in the state. This is the type of experience we want for our educators.

On behalf of the Elkhorn Area School District, I implore you to approve the Act 20 amendment that would allow the CESA 6 Teacher Institute to meet the teacher training requirement in Act 20. I would be happy to provide any additional information in regards to this request. Please feel free to reach out to me.

Sincerely -

Amy R. Gee

K-5 Director of Instruction

Elkhorn Area School District

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SCHOOL DISTRICT OF HARTFORD JOINT NO. 1

DEDICATED TO THE SUCCESS OF EACH STUDENT

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HARTFORD, WISCONSIN 53027

Dear Education Committee Members:

The CESA 6 team is *credible* in professional development. Honoring the credibility of this team is something that needs to be acted on quickly. This is vital as we continue to plan for the professional development of our district team, as we do not have the capacity to do this on our own. The CESA 6 team members, many of whom are former educators, are thoughtful and reliable partners, which provides necessary fidelity in implementation. We have been very pleased in working with CESA 6 and would expect alignment with continued partnering work as well. We have established relationships with the members of this team and look forward to a continued partnership.

Thank you,



Katie Malterer
Director of Curriculum & Instruction
School District of Hartford Jt. 1

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Seymour Community School District

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*Jennifer Pierre, Director of Teaching and Learning
Assistant*

Tara Walters, Teaching and Learning Administrative

February 4, 2024

Dear Education Committee members,

This letter is to support the amendment to approve the CESA 6 early literacy teacher training for the Act 20 training requirement. I am a veteran director of curriculum with 15 years of experience in administration and 30 years of education overall. Our district is a small rural district that is committed to success for each of our students as readers and learners. Based on our district's experience with the CESA 6 early literacy training, I can wholeheartedly say that the training impacts our staff and students in a positive way!

Our district's early literacy committee has participated in the CESA 6 early literacy trainings as one of the first districts in the academy. This training has been very impactful for the growth and development of our teachers and ultimately for our students' growth as readers. Due to our district's participation in the CESA 6 early literacy trainings, we had an improvement in our 4K-2nd grade students' literacy achievement. Because the training is teacher friendly and based on the science of reading best practices, our teachers were able to apply their learning in the classroom right away.

As a district lead, I am looking for a budget friendly option that would allow for in person training. The current approved trainings for the Act 20 requirement do not allow for that. The CESA 6 training is a fraction of the costs of the current approved trainings and allows for an in person option. Adult learning theory shows that learning and application comes from collaboration and discussion around the learning, which is not part of the current approved trainings.

In conclusion, approving the CESA 6 early literacy training to meet the Act 20 requirements would have a positive impact for Wisconsin teachers' early literacy learning, students' literacy development and the district's budget. Thank you for your consideration!

Sincerely,

Jennifer Pierre
Jennifer Pierre
Director of Teaching and Learning
Seymour Community School District



February 6, 2024

**Senate Committee on Education
Department of Public Instruction Testimony
2023 Senate Bill 990**

Thank you, Chairman Jagler and members of the committee, for the opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill 990 (SB 990) and to request an additional change be added to this proposal that delays the first administration of the universal screener required under 2023 Act 20.

The Department of Public Instruction (DPI) appreciates the partnership of members of this committee in our shared efforts to improve early reading for Wisconsin students. As we progress through the implementation of 2023 Act 20, there are two main issues we are asking the legislature to address: additional opportunities for educators to gain high-quality training in science-based early reading and additional time to adapt to the universal screening requirement.

2023 Act 20 requires all teachers and principals serving children in grades kindergarten through third grade, as well as all reading specialists, to receive professional development aligned with science-based early reading. The act further defines who can provide the training, replicating language found in Motion 57 as passed by the Joint Finance Committee (JFC). SB 990 allows Cooperative Educational Service Agencies (CESAs) with at least two years of experience providing training in science-based early reading (as defined in 118.015 (1c) (b)) to be included in the entities qualified to provide training to teachers, principals, and reading specialists.

DPI believes this change is consistent with the intent of the policymakers and stakeholders who advocated for 2023 Act 20. As schools have worked to bring staff into compliance and states around the country pass similar legislation, opportunities to find training have become scarce. CESAs have worked to bring on staff who are trained in science-based reading and have dedicated resources to having existing staff trained to support this need. Legislators previously provided federal funding to CESAs through Motion 57 to build the capacity of CESAs to provide science-based early literacy training. Many of our CESAs have done so and have already provided such training to hundreds of Wisconsin educators and administrators. We ask that legislators honor the work that has already occurred to position those CESAs that accepted the Motion 57 funds and provided accredited training. The department anticipates that a handful of CESAs will meet this requirement and add to the options districts can leverage to comply with the law.

Additionally, DPI is asking the committee to consider an amendment to SB 990 that would remove the first screening date (as specified in 118.016(3)(a)1.) for the 2024-25 school year to allow schools time to prepare for the change required by 2023 Act 20. Moving to a universal screener will provide great benefit to Wisconsin learners. It will also require a change for many of our districts. Currently, districts are allowed to select their own early literacy screeners and are only required to administer the screener once a year. The department anticipates meeting its legal deadline to select the universal screener by July 1, 2024.

Given contract timing, training on the reading screener would not be able to occur until August. Schools will also be working to implement science-based early literacy instruction and new reading intervention systems and structures at the same time. DPI wants to ensure that the first administration of the screener is successful. Successful administration

requires educators and schools to have adequate time for training. We believe that giving districts additional time to train staff on the use of the screener and on how to use the screener to create personal reading plans will amount to better service and support for our learners. That is the goal we all share.

If you have questions or want additional information, please contact Kevyn Radcliffe, Legislative Liaison, at kevyn.radcliffe@dpi.wi.gov or (608) 264-6716.

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David Honish, Administrator



Everyone Engaged in Educational Excellence

My name is David Honish, I am the Executive Director of Cooperative Education Service Agency 8 (CESA 8). CESA 8 has 27 member districts located in Northeastern Wisconsin.

I am here to request that CESAs meeting the requirements of **ACT 20** to provide the required teacher training be identified in the statutory language. As you are well aware, teachers must receive the proper training using the evidence-based practices of literacy instruction based on the science of reading.

The CESA 8 has been using the Science of Reading approach for over eight years. Most recently we were provided state funds via **Motion 57** to expand on this evidence-based practice. The additional page provides a summary of instruction, the link between **Motion 57** and **ACT 20**, and a summary of the financial investment from our member school districts.

Thank you for your consideration.

David Honish

CESA 8, Executive Director

Cooperative Educational Service Agency 8

223 West Park Street - Gillett, WI 54124
 920.855.2114 - 920.855.2299 (fax)
 www.cesa8.org
 David Honish, Administrator



Everyone Engaged in Educational Excellence

The **CESA 8 Language & Literacy Academy** was supported through Motion 57c with a \$75,000 grant. The seven-day training encompasses evidenced based practice in literacy instruction based on the science of reading, including the following:

- Oral language
- Language comprehension/Interactive Read Alouds
- Vocabulary
- Background knowledge
- Phonological and Phonemic Awareness
- Phonics and Spelling
- Advanced Word Study and Morphology
- Fluency
- Reading comprehension
- Literacy Assessment

Motion 57c:

The Literacy Instruction - Training Expansion of Evidence-based Practices (CESAs 8 & 9 only)

Allocate \$150,000 for grants of \$75,000 each to the Literacy Center housed at CESA 8 and the Academy of Foundational Literacy housed within CESA 9 by July 31, 2021 for expanding training in evidence based practices in literacy instruction aligning with the National Reading Panel Report and subsequent updates of the research by the institute for Education Sciences, English language arts program adoption and implementation support, literacy intervention systems and coaching for sustainable implementation, and collaborative team coaching through continuous improvement cycles.

CESA 8 Language & Literacy Training Funded through Motion 567c

CESA 8 Literacy Academy	Districts	Participants Trained
Summer 2022 5 days	Bonduel, Bowler, Coleman, Laona, Marion, Menominee Tribal, Oconto Falls	17
Winter/Spring 2023 6 days	Beecher-Dunbar-Pembine, Bowler, Coleman, Denmark, Gillett, Marinette, Oconto Falls, Oconto, Peshtigo, Tigerton, Wittenberg-Biramwood	23
Summer/Fall 2023 7 days	Bonduel, Bowler, Coleman, College of Menominee Indian, Gresham, Marinette, Menominee Tribal, Oconto, Wabeno, White Lake	24
Winter/Spring 2024 7 days	Bonduel, Bowler, Gresham, Lena, Marinette, Marion, Oconto, Shawano, Suring, Wittenberg-Biramwood	26
Totals	19 Districts	90

**Estimated cost for training 90 participants \$33,750
 (reduced tuition and sub costs, not including travel expenses)**

With Motion 57 funding, we have trained 90 teachers in 19 of our districts. We have been conducting evidenced based early literacy training since the summer of 2014, so many more of our teachers have attended early literacy training. In fact, several have attended more than once. We were awarded grant money because we have been providing this instruction and supporting implementation of this work in districts for 10 years. This is also the reason that CESA 8 is allowed to also provide the ACT 20 required leadership training for principals and reading specialists.

ACT 20 and Motion 57 support the same mission. The districts who participated in this training are, in a sense, being penalized for participating in the training funded through Motion 57, as they now have to resource a second training. This is a heavy lift in small school districts. These districts are ahead of the game. Their resources should be used for deeper implementation of all that is required to lift their systems to higher levels rather than spending more time and money repeating work they've already done.

CESA 8 Language & Literacy Training Funded through Motion 57

Year	Districts	Participants
2014	Adrian, Algonquin, Appleton, Aurora, Beloit, Burlington, Canton, Channahon, DeKalb, Dixon, Elmhurst, Fox Lake, Geneva, Graysville, Joliet, Lake Park, Libertyville, Macomb, Moline, Morris, Mount Pleasant, North Moline, Rock Island, Rockton, St. Charles, Union, Woodstock	100
2015	Adrian, Algonquin, Appleton, Aurora, Beloit, Burlington, Canton, Channahon, DeKalb, Dixon, Elmhurst, Fox Lake, Geneva, Graysville, Joliet, Lake Park, Libertyville, Macomb, Moline, Morris, Mount Pleasant, North Moline, Rock Island, Rockton, St. Charles, Union, Woodstock	100
2016	Adrian, Algonquin, Appleton, Aurora, Beloit, Burlington, Canton, Channahon, DeKalb, Dixon, Elmhurst, Fox Lake, Geneva, Graysville, Joliet, Lake Park, Libertyville, Macomb, Moline, Morris, Mount Pleasant, North Moline, Rock Island, Rockton, St. Charles, Union, Woodstock	100
2017	Adrian, Algonquin, Appleton, Aurora, Beloit, Burlington, Canton, Channahon, DeKalb, Dixon, Elmhurst, Fox Lake, Geneva, Graysville, Joliet, Lake Park, Libertyville, Macomb, Moline, Morris, Mount Pleasant, North Moline, Rock Island, Rockton, St. Charles, Union, Woodstock	100
2018	Adrian, Algonquin, Appleton, Aurora, Beloit, Burlington, Canton, Channahon, DeKalb, Dixon, Elmhurst, Fox Lake, Geneva, Graysville, Joliet, Lake Park, Libertyville, Macomb, Moline, Morris, Mount Pleasant, North Moline, Rock Island, Rockton, St. Charles, Union, Woodstock	100
2019	Adrian, Algonquin, Appleton, Aurora, Beloit, Burlington, Canton, Channahon, DeKalb, Dixon, Elmhurst, Fox Lake, Geneva, Graysville, Joliet, Lake Park, Libertyville, Macomb, Moline, Morris, Mount Pleasant, North Moline, Rock Island, Rockton, St. Charles, Union, Woodstock	100
2020	Adrian, Algonquin, Appleton, Aurora, Beloit, Burlington, Canton, Channahon, DeKalb, Dixon, Elmhurst, Fox Lake, Geneva, Graysville, Joliet, Lake Park, Libertyville, Macomb, Moline, Morris, Mount Pleasant, North Moline, Rock Island, Rockton, St. Charles, Union, Woodstock	100
2021	Adrian, Algonquin, Appleton, Aurora, Beloit, Burlington, Canton, Channahon, DeKalb, Dixon, Elmhurst, Fox Lake, Geneva, Graysville, Joliet, Lake Park, Libertyville, Macomb, Moline, Morris, Mount Pleasant, North Moline, Rock Island, Rockton, St. Charles, Union, Woodstock	100
2022	Adrian, Algonquin, Appleton, Aurora, Beloit, Burlington, Canton, Channahon, DeKalb, Dixon, Elmhurst, Fox Lake, Geneva, Graysville, Joliet, Lake Park, Libertyville, Macomb, Moline, Morris, Mount Pleasant, North Moline, Rock Island, Rockton, St. Charles, Union, Woodstock	100
2023	Adrian, Algonquin, Appleton, Aurora, Beloit, Burlington, Canton, Channahon, DeKalb, Dixon, Elmhurst, Fox Lake, Geneva, Graysville, Joliet, Lake Park, Libertyville, Macomb, Moline, Morris, Mount Pleasant, North Moline, Rock Island, Rockton, St. Charles, Union, Woodstock	100





February 6, 2024

To: Members of the Senate Committee on Education

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

Re: SB990- relating to Mandatory Early Literacy professional development

Chairman Jagler and Members of the Senate Education Committee,

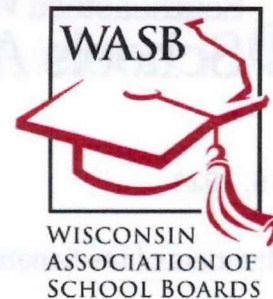
Thank you for the opportunity to speak before you today. My name is Faith VanderHorst. I am the Executive Director for the Southeastern Wisconsin Schools Alliance (SWSA). The **Southeastern Wisconsin Schools Alliance** (SWSA) provides school leaders with objective, non-partisan information and training 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).

We appreciate the work and collaboration it took to enact 2023 ACT 20. And, we are grateful for the State funding the screener. I am here today to respectfully request an amendment to Senate Bill 990 to provide for a longer runway for implementation of Act 20. This will allow districts time to install the screener and train staff. It will allow districts to implement the statewide universal screener with fidelity and accuracy and provide a strong foundation for a positive impact on literacy outcomes for every child. We ask for an extension at this time as the following screener procurement timeline has been shared, by DPI, with SWSA, WIRSA, and WASB:

- February 5, 2024: RFB clears internal process at DPI, submitted to DOA for RFB process
- February, 2024: RFBs solicited from vendors, 90-day window begins for submission
- May, 2024: Vendor recommended to DPI for approval, DPI negotiates contract with vendor
- July, 2024: Vendor contract approved- DPI acquisition and distribution work can begin
- **August 2024: Vendor materials available for training-professional development can begin for schools**

We ask that the technical amendment strike the first screening cycle (45 days after the start of the school year) and allow all districts to begin use of the screener mid-year (approximately January/ February 2025). This provides districts the opportunity to establish a mid year baseline for each student and then follow up with the screener 45 days prior to the end of the school year.

In support of this request I have included a copy of the letter written by SWSA, SAA, WASB and WIRSA, representing all districts and school boards in Wisconsin. The desire to implement the new screener with fidelity and accuracy is so critical to our districts that we felt a joint letter was necessary. We addressed this letter to Dr. Underly, Superintendent, DPI, and shared copies with Rep. Kitchens, ACT 20 author and Education Committee Chair; Sen. Duetz Stroebel, ACT 20 author; Sen. John Jagler, Senate Education Committee Chair and Governor Evers:



January 26, 2024

Honorable Dr. Jill Underly
State Superintendent of Public Instruction
P.O. Box 7841
Madison, Wisconsin 53707-7841

Dear Dr. Underly,

We write to you today after hearing from many of our members. Together we, SWSA (Southeastern Wisconsin Schools Alliance), SAA (School Administrators Alliance), WASB (Wisconsin Association of School Boards) and WIRSA (Wisconsin Rural Schools Alliance) represent the interests of all 421 public school districts in Wisconsin.

As a collective group of public education leaders we understand the importance of 2023 Act 20, and the importance of ensuring that all students, across the state of Wisconsin, are reading at grade level by the time they reach third grade. Act 20 provides a clear definition of the components of strong, evidence-based reading instruction. The work all school districts in the state will be engaging in over the course of the next several years, as the result of ACT 20, has the potential to result in deep, lasting transformational change in every school district which will positively impact literacy outcomes for every child.

There is, however, a deep concern with the specified timelines in the law and what can be realistically implemented in schools and districts. There is a significant need to introduce a trailer bill to adjust the implementation timelines of the requirements of Act 20. Without this trailer bill, school districts across the state will be scrambling to comply with the unrealistic timelines currently outlined, which will result in surface-level implementation, wasting precious resources of time, talent, and budget money, and limit the opportunities for critically important training and professional learning around evidence-based literacy instruction.

By December 1, 2023, the Literacy Council was to provide a list of recommended early literacy curricula to the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. It is currently January 22, 2024 and the Literacy Council is still reviewing the submitted curricula. It is likely that the Council will not have this work completed until after the first of February, at which time they will submit their list to the Department. This timeline puts school districts in a difficult position. The delay of recommended curricula provides school districts with very little time to vet and pilot curriculum resources off of the recommended list for potential adoption for the 2024-25 school year. Many school districts are waiting to see if their current literacy resources will be on the recommended list or not and that list will then guide and inform their next steps with an early literacy curriculum. While the work of the Literacy Council is behind schedule, we are not advocating for them to rush through the process. The reviewing of primary curriculum resources is a critically important first step and needs to be completed in a thorough and vigilant manner. It would make sense for a trailer bill to identify a realistic and practical timeline to ensure all submitted curriculum materials have been thoroughly vetted to guarantee alignment with the state's definition of evidence-based early literacy instruction.

Secondly, school districts are significantly concerned about the timeline regarding the statewide universal early literacy screener. The law states that all school districts must utilize the statewide literacy screener beginning with the 2024-25 school year. Currently, the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction is working on finalizing the Request for Bid for the statewide literacy screener and putting it out for bid. When information regarding the statewide screener was initially

shared with districts, it was shared that districts would know what the screener would be by March of 2024. Over the last few weeks, districts have now been informed that August of 2024 is a more realistic timeline. To expect school districts across the state to set-up and integrate a new screening tool within their existing technology, ensure that it works efficiently and effectively, provide training and professional learning for their administrators and professional educators, as well as successfully launch a new school year is completely unrealistic. By this time in the current school year, the vast majority of school districts have already solidified their plans for 2024-25 initiatives and the necessary, aligned professional learning. Adding the implementation of a universal screener and the associated training and professional learning in August with no ability for districts to plan and adjust prior to that date puts meaningful implementation of Act 20 in jeopardy across the state.

Due to the fact that school districts are already required to have a universal screening tool for literacy, and they likely also use that tool for screening in mathematics as well, an August announcement date for the statewide screener does not provide school districts the opportunity to break their contracts with their current providers for the 2024-25 school year. This reality will not only result in a duplication of efforts as districts will potentially have two screening tools for 2024-25, but it is also a significant waste of time, money, and human resources as it doesn't provide the time or the ability to shift those resources to other key initiatives in the district.

Finally, research indicates that the most influential school-based factor on student success is the professional educator in the classroom. The current timeline for implementation and the reality of when teachers will have the tools they need for the implementation of Act 20 will not only put them at a disadvantage to start the 2024-25 school year, but it will also create a situation where teachers will see this as "one more thing to do" with little additional resources and support. Successful implementation of Act 20 in school districts across the state requires teacher ownership in improving student literacy outcomes and this can only be accomplished by supporting their learning, providing time to collaborate with their peers, and to ask meaningful questions. Due to the significant impact teachers have on their students, the mindset of teachers has to be at the forefront of all we do. Without a reasonable implementation timeline for Act 20, we run the risk of it negatively impacting school culture and teacher morale to start the new school year. The mindset of our professional educators has to be the number one priority if we desire positive outcomes for students.

Our request is simple trailer legislation to require districts, during the 2024-25 school year, to begin to transition away from their current screener to the statewide required screener, with the expectation of full implementation of the statewide screener to begin the 2025-26 school year. This is a timeline that positions school districts to purposefully and confidently implement the requirements of 2023 Act 20.


We appreciate the work and collaboration it took to enact 2023 ACT 20. And, we are grateful for the State funding the screener. We respectfully request that a trailer Bill be enacted to extend the implementation time for 2023 ACT 20 to September 2025. This will allow districts time to acquire and train staff on the new screener. It will also allow districts to pilot and acquire new curriculum after the late spring 2024 Curriculum List announcement.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



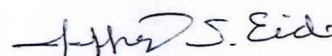
Faith M. VanderHorst, Executive Director
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ckulow@wasb.org



Dee Pettack, Executive Director
School Administrators Alliance
dee.pettack@wsaa.org



Jeff Eide, Executive Director
Wisconsin Rural Schools Alliance
jeffeide@wirsa.org

cc: The Honorable Governor Tony Evers
The Honorable Senator Duey Stroebel
The Honorable Representative Joel Kitchens
The Honorable Senator John Jagler

End of January 26, 2024 letter

Again, thank you for the opportunity to speak before you today. We do appreciate your deep concern for Literacy, the funding provided for the screener and pro rata funding for the new curriculum. We respectfully request adding an amendment to SB990 to strike the first screening cycle and allow all districts to begin use of the screener mid-year (January 2025). This provides districts the opportunity to establish a mid year baseline for each student and then follow up with the screener 45 days prior to the end of the school year.

Thank you, again, for your time.

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

Respectfully,

Faith M. VanderHorst
SWSA Executive Director
262-853-8838
swsaexecdirector4@gmail.com

www.schoolsalliance.com

