



Testimony in Support of Assembly Bill 615
Assembly Committee on Education
Thursday, November 6, 2025

Chairman Kitchens and committee members, thank you for holding this hearing today and allowing me to speak in support of Assembly Bill (AB) 615. I appreciate Senator Hutton's willingness to work with me on this important legislation.

Last session, the Legislature came together in a bipartisan fashion to pass the Right to Read Act, aimed at improving the reading proficiency of Wisconsin's students. AB 615 seeks to do the same thing for mathematics. As in almost all areas of education, mathematics requires the gradual building of new concepts upon those learned earlier. If students fall behind in their math skills at a young age, it can be difficult for them catch up with their peers.

Based on results from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), Wisconsin's math scores show a significant decline from pre-pandemic levels. The percentage of 4th-grade math students reaching the proficient level dropped from 45% (in 2019) to 42% (in 2024), while 8th-grade math student proficiency dropped from 41% (in 2019) to 37% (in 2024). In 2024, only 5% of Black 4th-grade students in Wisconsin scored at or above the proficient level in math, compared with 51% of their White peers. Wisconsin is consistently cited as having one of the largest Black-White achievement gaps in the nation. We **must** do better.

This bill will require school boards and independent charter schools to assess students in kindergarten through 8th grade each school year. These assessments will not be lengthy, all-day exams. For younger students, these assessments should be completed in 15 minutes or less. For older students, they should take no longer than 30 minutes. Assessments would be chosen by the school district or charter school from a list recommended by the Department of Public Instruction.

If a student is identified as at-risk of not meeting grade-level mathematics standards on two consecutive assessments, the school would be required to develop and implement a personalized mathematics improvement plan for that student to help them get back on track. While some schools do well at identifying students who need intervention, and work with them to improve their performance, some do not. AB 615 would ensure that all schools are identifying the students who are falling behind in math and implementing a plan to get them moving in the right direction.

Mr. Chairman and members, I ask for your support of AB 615, and thank you again for the opportunity to testify before you today.