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K-12 Education

Summer is coming to a fast end and with the end of summer comes the beginning of the school year for many families across Wisconsin. August 15th was National School Prep Day. The school year is coming very quickly and with that being said I want to share some statistics from our current schoolchildren and what our legislature did this past year to curb the learning issues throughout our state.

Under the direction of Secretary Jill Underly who was elected in April of 2021, around two-thirds of all 8th graders in Wisconsin are not proficient in reading. This is the lowest in the state since 1998. Alongside this horrible statistic, only one-third of Wisconsin 8th graders are proficient in math. This is the lowest since 1996.

Wisconsin currently has the worst racial disparity in math and reading test scores throughout the entire nation. Along with this, reading and test scores significantly regressed since the start of the pandemic and Governor Evers didn't allow our kids back in school. All of these horrible educational statistics are under the direct guidance of Secretary Underly and Governor Evers and this cannot be allowed to go on any longer.

The Republican authored budget thankfully allocated a \$325 per pupil increase in each year of the biennium. This will amount of \$975 per student in new revenue. We also proudly placed over \$100 million towards special education costs.

As I mentioned above, our reading scores are the lowest they have been in 25 years. This of course is not acceptable which is why our budget worked to fund \$50 million towards new literacy initiatives. These new literacy programs will hopefully curb the ongoing lack of proficiency in this specific area.

Mental health concerns and issues are also an increasing problem in this day and age. Students are tragically not handling outside pressure very well and with this being the case, we gave \$30 million to mental health categorical aid. This funding will hopefully stop the increased suicide, depression, and anxiety rate.

These are some large highlights of our education budget as the new school year approaches. I look forward to seeing how this money helps our students.

As always, if you have any questions, comments, or concerns please feel free to reach to my office at Rep.Pronschinske@legis.wi.gov.

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