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Audit Committee Chairs Announce Investigations into DPI Testing Rules, State Grant Programs *New Audits on Lowered Standards, \$44 Billion in State-Issued Grants*

MADISON – Senator Eric Wimberger (R-Oconto) and Representative Robert Wittke (R-Caledonia) released the following statement after announcing a public hearing and executive session to approve two new audits – one into the annual Department of Public Instruction (DPI) school report card process, and the other into the administration of grant funding across the executive branch:

“Recent national reporting shows that less than a third of Wisconsin’s students can read at grade level. Rather than support science-backed reform that the Legislature passed last session, Superintendent Underly lowered statewide testing standards to cover over DPI’s failure to solve our literacy crisis. Superintendent Underly’s unilateral standard changing to cover up DPI’s failing is absolutely unacceptable, and this audit will help us uncover exactly how and why these reporting standards were changed to stop future manipulation,” Senator Wimberger and Representative Wittke stated.

The first of the two audits will explore the background of how DPI came to create and apply its new testing standards. These new standards differ from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), a congressionally-chartered assessment gauging the performance of each state’s education system. Released in January 2025, the most recent NAEP report shows more than two-thirds of Wisconsin’s [fourth](#) and [eighth](#) grade students are not proficient in reading. The NAEP results [show a nearly twenty-point drop in literacy rates for the same grades](#) when compared to the scores released by DPI under the revised testing standards implemented by Superintendent Underly last year.

Senator Wimberger and Representative Wittke continued, *“As we start the biennial budget process, it’s prudent to examine how much the state spends through various grant initiatives. In the last budget, the state issued more than \$44 billion in grant assistance funding. Evaluating these programs for wasteful, fraudulent, or abusive spending means we can identify and cut the fat of big government, making Wisconsin’s state government more accountable for our hardworking taxpayers.”*

The second audit will inspect how funding is utilized through the various grant programs overseen by departments within Wisconsin’s executive branch. This will include analyzing the history of these programs, the criteria and rigor needed for applicants, and the ultimate appropriations awarded under the programs. Many grant programs are written lacking specificity, affording agencies room to use funds for unintended purposes.

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