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WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact:
Senator Eric Wimberger – (608) 266-5670
Representative Robert Wittke – (608) 266-9163

Audit Committee Approves New Statewide Audits *Auditors to Investigate Lowered Testing Rules, State-Issued Grants*

MADISON – Senator Eric Wimberger (R-Oconto) and Representative Robert Wittke (R-Caledonia) released the following statement after the Joint Legislative Audit Committee approved two new audits – one into the Department of Public Instruction’s school report card process, and another into the administration of grant programs by the executive branch:

“Today’s action in the Audit Committee is another step in the Legislature’s work of providing a more transparent government for the people of Wisconsin.

No matter how Superintendent Underly or her DPI try to spin it, lowering standards instead of addressing Wisconsin’s literacy crisis is wrong, and parents are entitled to transparency. In the face of this literacy crisis, Superintendent Underly refused to appear before our committee to defend exactly why she lowered statewide testing standards. Our schools and our children deserve better than testing standards that exist solely to paper over DPI’s failures. This audit will help us understand how and why DPI decided to lower its standards, rather than addressing the fact that two-thirds of our students cannot read at grade level.”

The audit approved Tuesday will investigate the origins and implementation of DPI’s new school testing standards. Implemented last year, these standards paint a much rosier picture of Wisconsin’s schools than the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). Released in January, the NAEP [showed Wisconsin students performed significantly worse in both reading and math](#) when compared to the data under Superintendent Underly’s standards. The NAEP showed [only 31% of Wisconsin’s fourth grade students](#) are proficient in reading, in comparison to 52% proficiency under the new DPI standards.

Senator Wimberger and Representative Wittke continued, *“The people of Wisconsin voted for reform in November, including more oversight into every area of government spending. Many of the state’s grant programs have never been audited by the Audit Bureau before. With billions of dollars involved in funding these initiatives, we owe it to Wisconsin’s hardworking taxpayers to ensure these funds are being used for their intended purposes.”*

The second audit approved by the Committee will examine various grant programs overseen by different agencies and departments in Wisconsin’s executive branch, including their histories, applicant criteria, and ultimate appropriations awarded throughout the duration of the programs.

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