

Thank You to Our Local Educators – Column by Rep. Born (R- Beaver Dam)

The past two years were difficult for students, parents, teachers, and school administrators, as they navigated new challenges. I was proud to continue building relationships with local school leaders and provide assistance as they worked diligently to adapt as challenges arose. Our school leaders are the reason classrooms could stay open and students were able to continue to learn in an environment that is best for their needs and success.

Research has shown that school closures have had detrimental impacts on student mental, social and academic wellbeing—along with straining families and keeping many parents out of the workforce. While some school districts in our state prioritized teachers unions over doing what’s best for kids and families, I am grateful our local schools kept their doors open.

But I recognize that keeping our classrooms open often came with significant obstacles. Labor force shortages have impacted every industry and education is no different. These general workforce shortages, combined with teacher and staff absences, made getting kids to school, staffing our classrooms and providing additional services difficult at times.

While occasional closures happened, our local educators and support staff have been flexible to provide for the needs of kids and families to keep our schools open. Horicon School District leaders have been pitching in to help kids get to and from school on buses and Hustisford School District officials have delivered meals and materials to homes during student illness. Meanwhile, teachers in districts throughout our community have stepped up to cover absences in other classrooms. The dedication of our school staff is why our local schools are a model for districts throughout the state for doing what’s best for our kids.

The importance of these efforts cannot be understated—because of the hard work our local schools did to stay open, our area avoided the larger drop in graduation rates and increases in chronic absenteeism that happened in other parts of the state that didn’t prioritize keeping kids in the classroom. Those districts took a step backwards from the meaningful improvements in graduation readiness that occurred in the years leading up to the pandemic, but here in the 39th Assembly District, our school leaders have been the example that shows it is possible to prioritize health and safety, while keeping kids engaged and on track.

Parents, educators, and policymakers know that an in-person educational experience is best for our kids. The challenges of past few years have highlighted how our local schools have gone above and beyond to adapt to difficult circumstances and keep kids in the classroom. I appreciate the partnership that I’ve had with our school leaders and look forward to more positive collaboration in the future. Thank you to each and every teacher, staff member and school official in the 39th Assembly District for your commitment to the success of our kids.