



WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

P.O. BOX 8952 · MADISON, WI 53708

Senate Bill 254 – SAGE (Achievement Gap Reduction) Contracts
Committee on Education
September 29, 2015

Thank you members of the Senate Education committee for hearing testimony today on Senate Bill 254. The bill contains minor technical revisions to 2015 Wisconsin Act 53. These clarifications were requested by the Department of Public Instruction.

First, SB 254 clarifies that the contract must require a school board to implement the approved classroom strategies in *each* class in *each* participating grade at *each* participating school. Act 53 as enacted contained the original language, “must be implemented in one or more classes in one or more participating grades at each participating school...” DPI identified this language as ambiguous and requested the technical correction.

Secondly, SB 254 delays by one year the first DPI annual evaluation of the program. Act 53 as enacted set the first evaluation for the 2017-18 school year; the bill adjusts that timeline to the 2018-19 school year.

Lastly, we are also offering an amendment to our bill which would update an incorrect citation to federal law that currently appears in the statute.

As you are aware, Act 53 received wide bipartisan support in both houses of the legislature. We are grateful that our colleagues were united behind this effort to continue closing the achievement gap between low-income students and their peers, and we ask for your support for SB 254 to ensure successful implementation of the program going forward.

Thank you and please contact our offices with any questions.

Senator Luther Olsen
14th Senate District

Rep. Mary Czaja
35th Assembly District



**Senate Committee on Education
September 29, 2015**

**Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction
Testimony on 2015 Senate Bill 254**

I want to thank Chairman Olsen and members of the committee for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill 254 (SB 254). My name is Dee Pettack. I serve as the Legislative Liaison at the Department of Public Instruction (DPI).

DPI supports SB 254, as it clarifies payment processes to ensure that the state appropriately pays only for the implementation of strategies as required under the new Achievement Gap Reduction (AGR) Program. These strategies include class size reduction, instructional coaching, and tutoring.

Under Act 53, the aforementioned strategies are only required to be implemented in one or more classes in one or more participating grades. As was discussed in the Assembly Education Committee during the public hearing on Act 53, this could easily result in situations where schools are implementing an AGR strategy in only one classroom, for example, but receiving funds for students in all classrooms grades K-3. Based on the language in Act 53, DPI would be required to allocate these funds.

As a result, DPI feels passage of SB 254 is critical to maintaining the integrity of the AGR Program and ensuring that the limited dollars are going to students who are actually receiving the benefit of a strategy.

SB 254 accomplishes this by specifying that an AGR contract must require a school board to implement one or more of the strategies required in each class in each participating grade at each participating school. This means the state will appropriately fund only students benefitting from an AGR strategy in their classroom. DPI feels this more accurately reflects the intent of the authors and will provide clearer guidance to schools.

Thank you, Chairman Olsen and committee members, for your time today. We are happy to answer any questions you may have.