

LAKESHIA MYERS

Wisconsin State Representative • 12th Assembly District

HERE TO SERVE YOU!

Testimony in Support of AB 232: Teacher Preparatory Programs and Granting Rule-Making Authority

Assembly Education Committee

July 11, 2019

Chairman Thiesfeldt, Ranking Member Pope, and esteemed colleagues of the Assembly Education Committee, I appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony in support of AB 232.

AB 232 would provide educator preparation programs flexibility in designing high quality student teaching experiences that meet the needs of both education candidates and school districts. Under current law, the student teaching practicum must be completed for a full semester at a cooperating elementary or secondary school. Current law further specifies that the hours, days, and semester of student teaching are determined based on the cooperating school's schedule.

The current law is archaic, as it caters only to students who are enrolled in traditional undergraduate teacher preparation programs. As a member of this committee, you are already aware that enrollment in traditional teacher preparation programs is steadily declining. This, coupled with school staffing challenges faced throughout our state, is why I believe we must update our state statute and pass AB232. The ability of candidates to effectively complete their student teaching is a win for licensure candidates, classrooms, and our state.

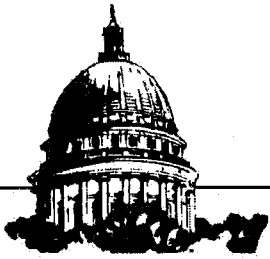
I am certain that we all agree that there is no greater vocation than that of a teacher. While this is true, we must also face some stark realities. During the 2016-2017 school year, Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction reported that Wisconsin had 60,649 public school teachers, which was not enough personnel to meet the demand for students in Wisconsin.

Our current law may contribute to that low number because it is expected that student teachers work full-time at a school for one semester (usually eighteen weeks) without pay. Many of those seeking to become licensed teachers are those who are considered non-traditional students; older adults, career changers, and parents who simply cannot afford to work without pay to achieve their goal of becoming a teacher. This requirement can lead to students leaving school with accumulated debt, no degree, and no teaching license. AB232 would change this phenomenon by allowing candidates to complete the practicum while remaining employed.

AB 232 also aims to encourage districts to “grow their own”. In both the Milwaukee and Wauwatosa School Districts (which I represent) there is a concerted effort to aid paraprofessionals in their quest to become fully licensed teachers. These hardworking and dedicated classroom aids have shown that they are ready, willing, and able to care for and educate our children. But many are bound by the constraints of current law to complete a licensure program. Which is highly unfortunate because many of these individuals act as substitute teachers in their buildings; some even maintaining classes on a long-term basis.

In closing, AB232 is a piece of legislation that brings Wisconsin law up to speed with our current educational landscape. It is legislation that is necessary for us to attract and retain teachers in our state and it is a piece of legislation that makes the process to achieving licensure equitable for all candidates, not just those that heed the call to become educators as an undergraduate.

I would like to thank Representative Mike Rohrkaste and Senators Dale Kooyenga & Lena Taylor for their hard work and contribution in crafting this legislation. Together, we believe AB232 can help us move forward in the right direction.



DALE KOOYENGA
WISCONSIN STATE SENATOR

State Capitol · P.O. Box 7882 · Madison, WI 53707-7882 · (608) 266-2512

July 11, 2019

TO: Members of the Assembly Committee on Education
FR: Senator Dale Kooyenga
RE: Assembly Bill 232

Thank you for holding a public hearing on Assembly Bill 232, relating to teacher preparatory programs and granting rule-making authority.

Wisconsin currently faces a teacher shortage and our growth is dependent on boosting enrollment in teacher programs. Sadly, many of our statutes are outdated or consist of arbitrary requirements that inhibit professionals from pursuing degrees or meeting necessary requirements in order to teach.

Under current law, a teacher preparatory program can only be approved by the state superintendent if the program requires each student to complete student teaching that consists of full days for a full semester at a participating elementary or secondary school. Unfortunately, this prevents non-teaching degree holders from completing teacher education programs.

AB 232 would authorize the state superintendent of public instruction to approve a teacher preparatory program if the program requires students complete the equivalent of the student teaching required under current law. This would make it easier for degreed non-teaching educational professionals to complete a teacher-education program.

By giving the state superintendent flexibility and rule-making authority for the instance described under this bill, we are able to move closer toward closing the teacher shortage gap which will better serve our students.

Thank you again for hearing AB 232 and I respectfully ask for your support.



July 11, 2019

The goal of the bill is to provide educator preparation programs flexibility in designing high quality student teaching experiences that meet the needs of the students in their programs. With the declines in preparation program enrollments and the school staffing challenges we are facing, flexibility with student teaching would allow more non-traditional educator candidates to complete their programs. This would also likely help us to diversify our educator workforce, as the non-traditional candidate population is generally more diverse than the traditional.

It has been argued that a year-long student teaching experience may better prepare teachers because they get to experience the entire school year and the different things that happen during each part of the year. We are not recommending that all teachers be required to complete a year-long experience, but the bill would allow preparation programs to provide such an experience while still allowing the student teachers to be employed outside of student teaching or to not have to take on additional student debt.

This bill was not designed specifically for paraprofessionals, although there is a clear use case for preparation programs that target them. We have heard repeatedly from preparation programs that many paraprofessionals have not been able to complete student teaching because they cannot afford to stop working an entire semester. We know of no prohibition in state law regarding paying student teachers, so districts should already be able to address cases like this if they are committed to helping their paraprofessionals become fully licensed.

It should be noted that the next sentence in Wis. Stat. sec. 118.19(3)(a) gives the state superintendent the authority to accept the equivalent of full-day, full semester student teaching for candidates who are prepared outside of Wisconsin. AB 232 merely gives the state superintendent the same authority for instate candidates.

We believe that preparation programs and districts will develop innovative programs that will produce more educators for the state, including more educators of color, if given the flexibility to do so.

**Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction
Carolyn Stanford Taylor, State Superintendent
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**MILWAUKEE
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

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July 10, 2019

Dear Wisconsin State Representative Myer,

I have worked in Milwaukee Public Schools as an administrator for approximately nineteen years. During my time as an administrator I have worked with several paraprofessionals who wanted to continue their educational journey to become a teacher. At times that journey was deterred because the paraprofessional could not financially afford to take a leave of absence to complete their student teaching requirements. This often prohibited that individual from pursuing their teaching degree which then resulted in a loss of talented teachers for our students.

Paraprofessionals with classroom experience and working relationships with students, families and their school communities are an asset to their schools. Paraprofessionals are often able to gain hundreds of hours of teaching experience when they are required to cover classrooms when teachers are absent. At times paraprofessional are placed in situations where they have to plan and teach when classroom teachers are unavailable. In the school setting paraprofessional also gain hours of teaching experience when they collaborate with teachers and others in their school community. Working with colleges, universities and school districts we should be able to modify the requirements to ensure that committed individuals are able to successfully attain their certification to become a teacher.

I am writing this letter to express my support for Assembly Bill 232 which will grant the state superintendent of public education the authority to approve preparatory programs that would utilize student teaching or its equivalent. As an administrator in Milwaukee I believe that this bill will strengthen the work pool and attract individuals who are truly committed to working with students to improve academic achievement.

If you have any questions or concern please contact me at frederca@milwaukee.k12.wi.us .
Sincerely,

C. Frederick-Stanley, Ed. D.
Principal and President of Metropolitan Milwaukee Alliance of Black School Educators

Start. Stay. Succeed.
Comienza. Quédate. Triunfa.

To: Members, Assembly Education Committee

From: Sharon L. Schmeling, Executive Director



Date: July 11, 2019

Re: Assembly Bill 232, Teacher Preparatory Programs

On behalf of the Wisconsin Council of Religious & Independent Schools, we urge you to support AB 232.

WCRIS represents 600 schools enrolling 100,000 students across the state. Our schools employ over 6,000 teachers. They all have bachelor's degrees. Most hold Wisconsin teacher licenses. Those who don't are often licensed in other states or have Masters degrees.

Many of our teachers have taught or will teach in a public school before their careers are over. So, whether or not they are required to hold a license by their employing private school, most teachers want to be licensed as a matter of professional practice.

WCRIS supports AB 232 because it provides necessary flexibility to the State Superintendent to recognize diverse teacher education training program strategies. It promises to help increase the pipeline of teachers and help alleviate the shortage of professionals needed to prepare the next generation of Wisconsin residents for the world of work and family responsibilities.

We would be remiss in our support of expanding the teacher pipeline if we did not take this moment to note that the path to teacher licensure in Wisconsin is overly complicated. We believe it is a deterrent to students entering the field, and to second and third career adults joining the profession.

Therefore, we would encourage this committee to hold subject matter hearings to review the state's teacher licensure process and investigate how it can be simplified and deregulated to attract and retain qualified and talented individuals.

While AB 232 won't solve the problem of our convoluted teacher education and licensure system, it won't hurt. Certainly, the system could benefit from more flexibility. We support AB 232 and encourage you to, as well.

Thank you for your consideration.

Archdiocese of Milwaukee

Association of Christian
Schools International

Christian Schools
International

Diocese of Green Bay

Diocese of LaCrosse

Diocese of Madison

Diocese of Superior

Lutheran Church
Missouri Synod
North Wisconsin District

Lutheran Church
Missouri Synod
South Wisconsin District

Wisconsin Association
of Independent Schools

Wisconsin Conference
of Seventh Day Adventists

Wisconsin Evangelical
Lutheran Synod
Northern Wisconsin District

Wisconsin Evangelical
Lutheran Synod
Western Wisconsin District

Wisconsin Evangelical
Lutheran Synod
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District

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WISCONSIN EDUCATION ASSOCIATION COUNCIL

TESTIMONY on ASSEMBLY BILL 232

Ron Martin, President

Wisconsin Education Association Council

Thank you for allowing me time today to address the committee. I am Ron Martin, an eighth grade teacher from Eau Claire and president of the Wisconsin Education Association Council. I am here in support of Assembly Bill 232.

Our statewide association of educators includes university students preparing to enter the teaching force, paraprofessionals, current teachers, and other school professionals who work together to teach the whole child. This bill would introduce flexibility around a student teacher's ability to earn income while in service to public schools – while maintaining the critical hands-on experience teachers know is essential to prepare them for all the rigors of the profession.

The Wisconsin Education Association Council works closely with Educators Rising, a program geared at high school students thinking about becoming teachers, and Aspiring Educators, current college students enrolled in teaching programs. I know firsthand from the workshops, conferences and meetings I conduct all cross the state that this bill would lighten the load for our next generation of teachers. At WEAC, we are concerned about effective solutions to Wisconsin's teacher shortage and have established a standing committee of Early Career Educators to bring voice to the unique challenges of those entering the profession. We are also thought leaders on teacher shortage solutions, focusing on:

Ron Martin, President
Bob Baxter, Executive Director

- Restoring the Professional Status of Educators;
- Improving School Conditions and Climate; and
- Establishing Educator Retention Policies

Wisconsin ranks 33rd in the nation in average teacher salary, according to the annual NEA Estimates and Rankings. Adjusted for the rate of inflation, educators' purchasing power is last in the nation when it comes to our compensation keeping up with how much it costs to live a middle class lifestyle. It's a struggle for longtime educators to pay the bills to support their families, and it's even more of a struggle for full-time college students and paraprofessionals who are among the lowest paid in our schools.

Student teaching is a full-time job, and it is unpaid. Many student teachers must quit paid positions to focus on their student teaching. Others, who cannot quit, work late hours after the school day to pay bills – adding stress and crunching their time. Imagine working with students all day as you learn to juggle all that goes into being a teacher, and then heading to work in the evenings and over long weekends to meet your expenses. The alternative? Add to the already massive pile of student debt today's college students are accruing.

AB 232 allows student teachers to focus fully on their work with students. Additionally, this bill allows paraprofessionals who are already dedicated educators to work to support their families and also complete student teaching. Paraprofessionals and other degreed non-teaching professionals could complete their student teaching requirement during the school day or through a partnership with local school districts. That removes a key obstacle and increase the number of certified teachers. We have highly qualified support staff who are interested in the teaching profession but are not able to complete programs because of the student teaching requirement. I know my mom, who served as the as support staff personnel in the Northwood School District for over 25 years would have been a great teacher – she not only had the experience but the disposition to be an outstanding educator. It was her dream to be a high school English teacher, but in the late 1950s she chose to marry and have children rather than go on to higher education. My mom would have had no problem meeting the requirements of “seat time” for any of the teacher preparatory programs offered – meaning she would of easily completed the course work as classes were offered in the evening and during the summer when she was not employed but there was no way of her completing the degree program for licensure requirements due to the full days for a full semester student teaching requirement. As a single mom, raising four children she could not take that time off her work to meet that requirement. Her days were spent in a kindergarten class as a classroom aide, from the minute she showed up at work to when she left work she worked a long side a credentialed educator. She did many things that most student teachers never experienced. I believe my mom’s situation is not unique. As the President of the Wisconsin Education Association Council we offer scholarships for our ESP members who would like to go back to school to earn their teaching degree. Several of those ESP members are not able to finish the required student teaching experiences for the very same reasons my mother wouldn’t have been able to. The flexibility

allowed through this amendment would give opportunities for individuals to seek out a teaching degree!

This is truly in the best interest of Wisconsin students, allowing student teachers more time to hone their craft. Providing student teachers the opportunity to work reasonable hours allows them to better focus on lesson development and execution, as well as how to develop relationships with families and students.

Please support AB 232 so our future teachers can be their best and enter our classrooms ready to reach, teach and inspire.

Thank you.



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July 11, 2019

To: Members, Wisconsin State Assembly Committee on Education

Dear Members of the Assembly Committee on Education,

My name is Ingrid Walker-Henry. I am the Vice President of the Milwaukee Teachers' Education Association (MTEA). I have been a Milwaukee Public Schools educator for 19 years. I would like to express my strong support for Assembly Bill 232, which would provide greater schedule flexibility to individuals in student-teaching programs, allowing them to maintain an income while they are student-teaching.

Currently, student-teachers are required to report to the classroom on a full-time basis for a semester of student-teaching. This is done at the financial expense of student teachers who often are not able to work during this period. During this period in my career I was not able to work and accumulated debt on credit cards in order to provide myself with housing and food. A person should not be punished for deciding to pursue the teaching profession.

As para-professionals/educational support professionals make the decision to become licensed teachers, this period of time of non-pay is burdensome. This legislation would allow those student-teaching to fulfill their student-teaching responsibilities while continuing to earn an income.

As schools in Wisconsin, including Milwaukee Public Schools, struggle to attract workers to the education field, this bill offers at least some relief to recruitment efforts. I fully support AB 232 and hope the committee will vote in favor of it quickly.

Sincerely,

Ingrid Walker-Henry
Vice President, MTEA

July 11, 2019

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Eddie Rutledge, I'm an Educational Assistant with The Milwaukee Public School's District, and a business owner of a children's literacy / music program entitled: Amani's World. I was asked to provide a short testimony by Representative Myer's, from the 12th district in reference to Assembly Bill (232). I'm currently starting my fourth year as an EA for MPS. I personally have not encountered many obstacles dealing with the path to becoming a Certified Teacher with the district. I have not made that decision to go into the classroom on a full-time basis as of yet? I don't have many more credits to complete, in order to becoming certified.

I have spoken with colleagues that are trying to go into their own classroom in the near future. They've shared financial, course availability, and course study/ work time obstacles, in order to satisfy the certification requirements. I've tried to help some of them with the information I may come across? I will continue being an advocate for educational growth. Representative Myer's can always count on me for support.

Thank you,

Eddie M Rutledge /
Educational Assistant for MPS /
Business Owner of Amani's World
(414)406-0679
eddierutledge22@gmail.com

July 11, 2019

Hello, my name is Angela Harris I am a first grade teacher at Dr. Martin Luther King jr. Elementary school. The African American Immersion School. I am here to speak in support of legislative item AB-232. I started my time at Milwaukee Public Schools with the goal of becoming a certified teacher of record. I took a non-traditional route with my education and thanks to the alternative certification programs offered by my district, I was able to go right into the classroom as a teacher of record and bypass the student teaching component that traditional education students are required to do. I am not sure if these opportunities weren't available if I would have been able to stop working to complete student teaching. MTEC provides for educators with bachelor's degrees to attend classes at night and work as teachers of records in the classroom. Paraprofessional are already connected to districts and classrooms, are majority educators of color and represent a viable pool of future certified teachers for our students. A viable pool that fills the need of recruiting and retention as well as providing students with educators who look like them. With mass teacher exodus and the pool of students going into education rapidly decreasing. We need to remove any barriers or hurdles that could impede our paraprofessionals from furthering their education to become teachers. We need to not just look at student teaching but lack of school funding and testing requirements like the praxis that also limit pools of viable potential educators for our students. Please consider passing this legislative item and making the pathway to teaching certification for our paraprofessionals easier.



**MILWAUKEE
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

July 11, 2019

Members of the Assembly Committee on Education,

Thank you for your time this morning. My name is Chris Thiel and I am the Legislative Policy Manager for Milwaukee Public Schools and I am here to speak in support of Assembly Bill 232.

I will speak briefly because it is great to see strong bipartisan support for this legislation, strong support from the Department of Public Instruction and we would like to thank Representative Myers and Senator Kooyenga for moving this forward.

We appreciate that this legislation has the twin virtues of both increased flexibility and local control in pursuit of the goal of helping to make sure that we have professional educators of the highest ability and quality prepared to work with Wisconsin students.

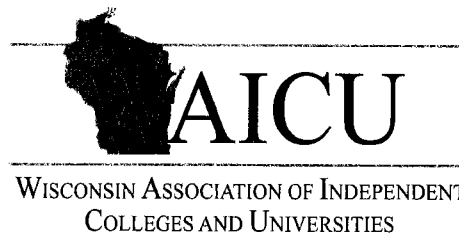
The research from top-performing countries makes clear that having an extended period of clinical practice or on-the-job training strengthens an educator's abilities and as a result improves student outcomes. It is also clear that the form that that clinical practice takes can vary.

We believe that this bill will offer us the opportunity to honor the importance and maintain the integrity of classroom training while providing flexibility for how that training is implemented. As we explore the opportunities provided by this bill we also hope to attract high-quality candidates who may have had difficulty with the timing and structure of current requirements.

Again, thank you for your consideration and support of this bill.

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Comienza. Quédate. Triunfa.

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VITERBO UNIVERSITY
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TESTIMONY

By

Dr. Rolf Wegenke, President

Wisconsin Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (WAICU)

on

Assembly Bill 232

to

Assembly Committee on Education

July 11, 2019

Chair Theisfeldt and members of the Committee, my name is Rolf Wegenke. I am President of the Wisconsin Association of Independent Colleges and Universities, or WAICU, the official organization recognized in state law as representing 24 private, nonprofit colleges and universities in Wisconsin and their 56,000 students.

I am here to testify in support of Assembly Bill 232. WAICU members have 18 teacher preparation programs among them. Each program is committed to preparing quality teachers for our schools.

WAICU and WAICU-members have been engaged with the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) in efforts to address teacher shortages. For the past several years, I have served as a member of the "State Superintendent's Leadership Group." The Leadership Group is working to address the declining enrollment in teacher education programs. The Leadership group, made up of DPI staff, school district administration, and public and private higher education leadership has been and continues to brainstorm ways to encourage more individuals to enter the profession. Of course, the shortage of teachers is connected to Wisconsin's overall workforce shortages. For this reason, the issue of teacher shortages is also a focus of the major business groups in the state. In addition, both WMC's Future Wisconsin Summit and the Wisconsin Technology Council are focusing on workforce shortage; I am honored to be participating in both.

AB 232 allows more flexibility for students to meet the practice teaching requirement. This flexibility is particularly important for degreed non-teaching professionals to complete a teacher-education program.

WAICU-members have for years offered high-quality, innovative teaching preparation programs. In June of this year, Alverno College announced that it is launching a new teacher licensure program in the fall, aimed at paraprofessionals who have an associate degree or at least 60 college credits. The new program can be completed in 24 months, and courses will be offered in the evening and online. This additional flexibility will further benefit students participating in this program.

Edgewood College, here in Madison, offers an Accelerated Secondary Education Program (ASP) for individuals interested in teaching students in middle and high schools. This program is designed for working adults, for those making career changes and Emergency-Licensed (Tier 1) teachers already working in schools.

Wisconsin Lutheran College's Transition to Teaching program is designed for mid-career professionals and bachelor's degree graduates interested in transitioning to a career in teaching. In as little as two years, students can complete coursework for licensure, with only six additional credits to earn their Master of Arts degree. Also, for the seventh year in a row (since the 2011-12 academic year), 100 percent of their traditional undergraduate education majors have secured teaching jobs.

Assembly Bill 232 provides additional opportunities for innovation but also maintains an appropriate role for DPI. Thank you for the opportunity to share information on WAICU-member initiatives to address teacher shortages. I would be happy to answer any questions.

MEAA President Crystal Ealy Testimony on AB 232
Assembly Education Committee
Thursday, July 11, 2019

Chairperson Thiesfeldt, Members of the committee, good morning. My name is Crystal Ealy. I am the President of the Milwaukee Educational Assistants' Association, the Paraprofessional unit of the MTEA. I am here to speak in favor of AB 232 and want to thank Representative LaKeshia Myers for introducing it and for inviting me to share my thoughts with you.

By allowing prospective teachers to complete their student teaching outside of a traditional full-time teaching schedule, this legislation would allow individuals who wish to become teachers to maintain employment while student teaching. This change would be of tremendous help not only to the individuals it affords flexibility, but also to public schools and districts who are faced with a crisis-level inability to attract and retain high quality workers.

MPS and districts throughout Wisconsin are dealing with an exodus of qualified public educators from the profession as the state has once again failed to make meaningful investments in the public schools our students deserve. Beyond workers leaving the profession, the amount of people entering the education field is at historic lows. That is an incredible disservice to each of your constituents, and it is a solvable problem. While this bill is not an ultimate solution to this issue, it is a step in the right direction as far as retaining and attracting workers.

I represent nearly 1,000 hard-working, committed public education workers who are members of the MEAA. Many are eager to become teachers but cannot afford to lose the source of their and their family's income while they are student-teaching. This legislation will help to ease the exodus of teachers from the classroom, will encourage more people to become both Educational Assistants and teachers, and returns a glimmer of the respect that has been robbed from education professionals over the last decade. Thank you.