



# Van H. Wanggaard

Wisconsin State Senator

## TESTIMONY ON SENATE BILL 663

Thank you Mr. Chairman and committee members for this hearing today on Senate Bill 663, which would allow the Department of Children and Families (DCF) to award grants for the expansion of four-year-old kindergarten programs in up to 3 economically disadvantaged counties. In these counties, the intention is to expand supported 4k programs into full day programs.

In today's world, early educational success is critical for workforce and academic readiness. The evidence supporting early childhood education is overwhelming. For many students, they receive a measurable leg-up beginning traditional K-12 education after being enrolled in 4k. This is especially true in reading achievement. Further, children who are behind when they start five-year-old kindergarten not only have a difficult time "catching up" and "keeping up" with their peers, their slow development may also hinder the development of other children in their class.

In some areas, especially those with higher poverty rates, obtaining and paying for high quality child care and education for four-year-olds can be difficult. As a result, some children go without that education and the supporting environment to reinforce that education. By housing them together at a single site in a single program, the potential impact of early education can be multiplied.

I understand that not everyone agrees that this model will work. For those reasons, we limit the opportunities to fund this program to just three counties with historically high unemployment. The bill does not authorize new money be allocated for this purpose or require that DCF spend money on these programs. Rather, the bill allows DCF to fund these programs if DCF has funds available for this purpose.

We know that early childhood education and a healthy learning environment is one of the keys to success in life. As our workforce needs evolve over the coming years, one thing is certain – we need every children to be ready to either work or continue their education when they leave high school. This pilot program may hold the key to unlocking their success.

Serving Racine and Kenosha Counties - Senate District 21



# JESSIE RODRIGUEZ

STATE REPRESENTATIVE ★ 21<sup>ST</sup> ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

---

**SB 663: Establishing a Full Day 4K Pilot Program**  
**Testimony of State Representative Jessie Rodriguez**  
**Senate Committee on Education**  
**February 6, 2018**

Chairman Olsen and committee members, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on Senate Bill 663, legislation that will create a pilot program to allow for the expansion of full-day 4K programs in certain areas of the state.

Wisconsin has always been a leader in education innovation and was one of the first to establish a robust half-day 4k program for children throughout the state. The program has demonstrated tremendous success and continues to expand with hundreds of districts offering a 4K program. While many states have some form of 4K education, Wisconsin is one of only eight states with more than 50 percent enrollment.

Research has shown over time that children who participate in 4K are more likely to excel in a variety of academic areas compared to peers who did not participate in a 4K program. Data also suggests, children enrolled in a 4K program are more likely to graduate, enroll in higher education programs after high school and maintain financial stability later in life. Participation in a 4K program is especially important in preparing children for school who come from more challenging backgrounds and areas of the state that see higher rates of unemployment.

As we continue to explore new educational initiatives that improve student success, expanding to a full-day of 4K will provide a significant benefit to children throughout Wisconsin, especially those from areas facing economic challenges.

This legislation will allow the Department of Children and Families to provide grant funding for the creation of a pilot program that will allow existing half-day 4K programs to expand to full-day. The bill requires the Secretary to identify no



# JESSIE RODRIGUEZ

STATE REPRESENTATIVE ★ 21<sup>ST</sup> ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

---

more than three counties with municipalities with high annual rates of unemployment for participation in the program.

School districts such as Racine Unified are already seeing tremendous results in children that participate in full-day 4K. The differences between students participating in full-day compared to half-day are significant. According to the district, in some instances, students participating in full-day 4K were twice as likely to meet development benchmarks compared to their half-day counterparts.

The benefits of expanding early childhood education programs like full-day 4K, cannot be overstated. School districts like Racine Unified are witnessing firsthand the success of full-day 4K. It is time to share this success with other areas of the state. I encourage your support for this legislation. Thank you for your time.



**Testimony to the Senate Committee on Education on SB 366, Creating a Pilot Project to Use TANF and GPR Funds to Pay for Four-Year-Old Kindergarten**

**February 6, 2018**

The Wisconsin Child Care Administration Association (WCCAA) cannot support SB 366 because it would shift funds that are intended for child care to pay for four-year-old kindergarten at a time when state support of child care is severely underfunded. Furthermore, based on fiscal estimates from the Department of Children and Families (DCF) and the Department of Public Instruction (DPI), the bill's goal of using TANF funds to pay for kindergarten is not allowed by federal rules and the bill could have the unintended consequence of changing the amount of general/equalized aid received by school districts.

Both state law and federal guidelines say that Wisconsin Shares child care subsidies should be set at the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile of the child care market in the state. Unfortunately, following more than ten years of mostly frozen rates, the Shares subsidy is at the 23<sup>rd</sup> percentile of the market and will decrease from that position by the end of the current biennium if there are no funding increases, according to the Legislative Fiscal Bureau.

The reality is that the funding model for our small businesses, which are committed to quality early education and care, is not sustainable with these extremely low subsidy rates. DCF should be using its unspent funds to support child care and thereby support the working families across the state who are struggling to make ends meet.

The DCF fiscal estimate says the department "does not anticipate that federal funds... could be used to fund grants under the bill." The estimate also notes that "No new GPR funding is provided under the bill, but the department may submit a request to the Joint Committee on Finance under s. 13.10 to transfer funds from another GPR appropriation to fund grants under the project." WCCAA believes that GPR funds at DCF should be used for programs, like child care, that are part of DCF's responsibility.

The DPI fiscal estimate says: "The effect of changes in shared costs per member could very well impact the amount of general/equalized aid received by the school district." Is this really what the bill's authors want to do with this bill?

The best path the Legislature could take would be to tell DCF to use its existing funds to raise Shares rates. This would be accomplished by passing Assembly Bill 916, authored by Rep. Shankland and Senator Erpenbach, which would increase Wisconsin Shares subsidies to the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile. The cost would be \$24 million per year, well below the expected surplus of TANF funds at the end of the biennium.

Another option would be to pass LRB-5388, recently proposed by Reps. Mark Born and Jessie Rodriguez, which would increase Shares subsidies by \$8 million this biennium and increase quality YoungStar bonuses from 25% to 30% for five-star centers and 10% to 15% for four-star centers.

**TO:** MEMBERS, SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION  
**FROM:** MILWAUKEE SUCCEEDS PARTNERSHIP  
**DATE:** FEBRUARY 6, 2018  
**RE:** SENATE BILL 663 / ASSEMBLY BILL 797,  
FULL DAY 4K PILOT PROGRAM IN HIGH UNEMPLOYMENT AREAS

We are writing today as business, education, and community leaders in the City of Milwaukee to express our support for Senate Bill 663 / Assembly Bill 797 to create a pilot program at the Department of Children and Families to help fund full-day four year old kindergarten (4K) programs in areas of high unemployment.

As noted by our partners at Higher Expectations in Racine County, a combination of national research, local data, and recommendations from the Speaker's Urban Education Task Force suggest that the use of funds within DCF to support full day 4K would build a path to academic success for students in districts with high unemployment including the City of Milwaukee.

Milwaukee Succeeds was established by a cross-sector of partners with a vision of "success for every child, in every school, cradle to career." We have learned that school success starts well before five-year-olds arrive at the classroom door. In the City of Milwaukee too many children lack access to high-quality early childhood education and care. At the same time, our partnership's interventions in literacy suggest that we cannot wait until children enter the traditional K-12 system to introduce early literacy skills, which are essential building blocks for long-term academic and workforce success. Providing full-day 4K to every child is a critical step that moves us closer to ensuring that all children are prepared to succeed.

In addition to improving outcomes for students and families, full day 4K would save money in a variety of ways including lowering special education costs. This initiative will enable communities across the state to collect and analyze data gathered from any grant awarded under this pilot to ensure data-driven and results- focused measurement to document its success. Upon proving the pilot program works, we hope that full day 4K will become a legislative priority.

This bill is cost neutral. It simply gives DCF the ability use eligible, unspent funds within the department to fund a pilot program. Should no such funds become available, the pilot program will not be funded.

We are strongly urge your support for Senate Bill 663 / Assembly Bill 797, a very small step towards opportunity and success for, particularly, some of Wisconsin's most disadvantaged children.

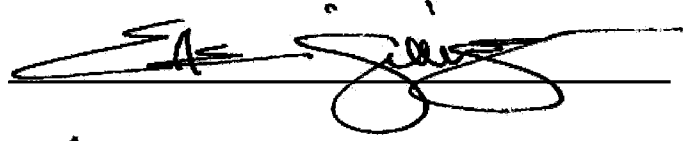
Sincerely,

Milwaukee Succeeds Executive Committee

- OVER -

**Milwaukee Succeeds Executive Committee Members**

Greater Milwaukee Foundation  
President/Ellen Gilligan



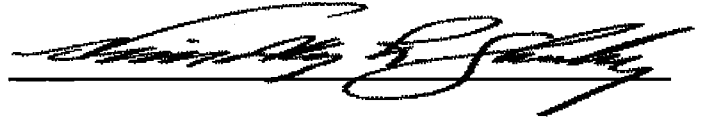
Common Council  
President & Alderman/Ashanti Hamilton



Greater Milwaukee Committee  
Co-Chair/Mark Sabljak



Metropolitan Milwaukee Association of Commerce  
President/Tim Sheehy



United Way of Greater Milwaukee & Waukesha County  
President/Mary Lou Young





**TO: MEMBERS, SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION**  
**FROM: HIGHER EXPECTATIONS FOR RACINE COUNTY**  
**DATE: FEBRUARY 6, 2018**  
**RE: SENATE BILL 663 / ASSEMBLY BILL 797**  
***FULL DAY 4K PILOT PROGRAM IN HIGH UNEMPLOYMENT AREAS***

We are writing today as business, education, and community leaders in Racine County to express our support for Senate Bill 663 / Assembly Bill 797 to create a pilot program at the Department of Children and Families to help fund full-day four year old kindergarten programs in areas of high unemployment.

As members of Higher Expectations for Racine County's Leadership Table, we are committed to advancing efforts, such as full-day 4K, that will ensure our future workforce is prepared to succeed in school and career.

With the combination of national research, local data, and recommendations from the Speaker's Urban Education Task Force, the use of funds within DCF to support full day 4K would build a path to literacy success for students in districts with high unemployment, like Racine County. In addition to improving outcomes for students and families, full day 4K would save money in a variety of ways including lowering special education costs. Racine County, and hopefully others who seek to take advantage of this initiative, is poised to collect and analyze data gathered from any grant awarded under this pilot to ensure data-driven and results-focused measurement to document its success. Upon proving the pilot program works, we hope that full day 4K will become a legislative priority.

High quality full-day 4K may be the most effective way to prepare children, particularly those from more difficult backgrounds, for school and beyond. We are absolutely certain that full-day 4K will ensure far greater kindergarten readiness early childhood development, which is proven to reflect academic success and workforce readiness in the future.

This modest bill spends nothing. It simply gives DCF the ability use eligible, unspent funds within the department to fund this pilot program. Should no such funds become available, the pilot program will not be funded.

We are strongly urge your support for Senate Bill 663 / Assembly Bill 797, a very small step towards opportunity and success for, particularly, some of Wisconsin's most disadvantaged children.

Sincerely,

The Higher Expectations Leadership Table

- OVER -

**Dr. Bryan Albrecht**  
President, Gateway Technical College

**Ann Lee**  
Senior VP of Strategic Performance, Johnson Financial

**John Batten**  
President & CEO, Twin Disc

**Cory Mason**  
Mayor, City of Racine

**Thomas A. Burke**  
President & CEO, Modine Manufacturing

**Matt J. Montemurro**  
President, Racine Area Manufacturers and Commerce

**Jonathan Delagrave**  
Racine County Executive

**Jeff Neubauer**  
Executive Director, Higher Expectations For Racine County

**Dr. Deborah Ford**  
Chancellor, University of Wisconsin-Parkside

**Rodney Prunty**  
President & CPO, United Way of Racine County

**Brian French**  
Vice President, HR – North America, CNH Industrial

**Dr. Daniel Ross**  
Vice President of Medical Affairs, Ascension – All Saints

**Jackie Hallberg**  
President & CEO, Goodwill Industries of Southeastern Wisconsin

**Chris Ruud**  
President, Ruud Family Foundation

**Dr. Lolli Haws**  
Superintendent, Racine Unified School District

**Chad Severson**  
President, InSinkErator

**Art Howell**  
Chief of Police, City of Racine

**Dr. John Swallow**  
President, Carthage College





STATE SENATOR  
**LaTonya Johnson**

WISCONSIN STATE SENATE

6<sup>TH</sup> DISTRICT

**Testimony of State Senator LaTonya Johnson  
Senate Committee on Education  
Tuesday, February 6, 2018**

Thank you Chairman Olsen, and members of the committee for holding a public hearing on legislation included in the Speaker's Task Force on Foster Care.

All of our kids deserve to live in great communities that have their best interest in mind. To achieve this, the Foster Care Task Force met and listened to the individuals on the front lines of this issue who work hard each and every day to make living in safe and healthy communities a reality for all of our children.

I want to thank the many Wisconsinites who came to share their experiences, expertise, and suggestions with the Task Force. Without the input of the caseworkers, parents, foster parents, advocates, and children who have experienced the foster care system firsthand, this legislative package would not have been possible.

I am proud of the work of the Speaker's Task Force on Foster Care, which resulted in a bipartisan package of legislative proposals aimed at addressing issues facing the child welfare system, including:

**Senate Bill 655**

Senate Bill 655 includes three reforms that will assist caregivers and school personnel in providing information regarding the child's progress and in coordinating their care while the child is in an out-of-home placement.

First, the bill requires the school to be notified when a child attending the school is placed in out-of-home care. This ensures that the actual school receives the notice—current law says that only the “clerk of the school district” must be notified. Not all school districts have an employee with this title.

Second, the bill requires a child's school to be notified of any hearings or permanency plan reviews for the child. This will provide teachers and school social workers with the opportunity to submit testimony regarding the child's progress while in out-of-home care.

Lastly, the bill ensures the timely transfer of a student's pupil records when the student's placement in out-of-home care results in a change of school district. Currently, a school has up to five working days to transfer the pupil records. SB 655 instead requires schools



STATE SENATOR  
**LaTonya Johnson**

---

WISCONSIN STATE SENATE

6<sup>TH</sup> DISTRICT

to make an immediate transfer of pupil records within one working day. This accelerated transfer window will allow there to be as seamless a transition for the child to their new school as possible.

We all want prosperous communities where families are able to thrive. These proposals will get us one step closer towards that goal by helping to prevent the need for family intervention by the child welfare system.

It is important to note that this package is just one step in a larger, ongoing conversation that must continue regarding ensure success for our children. I hope to see the work of the Task Force continue, and I look forward to working with my legislative colleagues on both sides of the aisle to keep the momentum going.



## Racine Unified School District Early Learning Office

Good Morning Senator Olsen and Committee Members,

Thank you for providing this opportunity to speak on the benefits of full day 4K. My name is Culleen Witthuhn, Director of Early Learning for Racine Unified School District and the building principal at the Racine Early Education Center. I have been with my district for the last 18 years. 5 years as a 5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher, 5 years as a 7<sup>th</sup> grade teacher and 8 years in early learning administration. I can attest to the positive impact that full day 4K has on closing opportunity gaps because I have experience in multiple levels of education. I have seen how poorly achieving students become discouraged and disengaged and plan by middle school to not complete high school. Brain research supports that early intervention is the key to closing achievement gaps, building high self-esteem, and creating lifelong learners.

For the last seven years, I have advocated for the creation of full day 4K options for the highest poverty areas in our community as a way to close opportunity gaps. There is lots of research out there that attests to the time-on-task, and the success of early intervention. This research helped our early learning leadership team focus on full day 4K programming for the success of our students in poverty.

In my first year in my position all of my classes were half day programs. Readiness scores collected ranged from 35% to 50% for my half day programs. Staff at my building diligently focused on individual goals, parent education and improving developmentally appropriate practice. After 3 years and very little gain, we worked so hard and only saw minimal improvements on our readiness scores.

The district was committed to providing funding to focus on the benefits of full day 4K. Our early learning department worked on creating a pilot program where we focused on full day 4K in our school for English and Dual Language students. In our first year, the scores in every category saw double digit gains, higher than what students were achieving in half day programs. In one year, our half day students achieved an overall literacy readiness goal of 52%. Whereas, the full day students achieved 100% on literacy readiness goals.

Teachers reported that they did not want to return to half day programs because of the success their students achieved. In our school we have had 4 of our full day students get dismissed from special education services. Teachers are teaching more in-depth meaningful curriculum and teachers see the gains made in Social Emotional Development, Math, Literacy, Language and Cognitive skills.

It is more cost effective to provide full day 4K than provide remediation or special education services. While data proves that these full day students are making great gains, we are limited in the number of full day 4k opportunities we can provide due to our families and our district's funding constraints. In order to provide high quality educational environments that will increase school readiness in all areas of development, support for full day 4k is critical. We are asking our teachers to impact the future of some of the highest poverty populations of students in the state - and research shows that full day 4k opportunities both close opportunity gaps early on, and do so in a cost effective way that can save the state, school district, and taxpayers money later on.

I want to thank Senator Wanggaard and Representative Rodriguez for their commitment to full day 4k and for introducing this bill. I would very much appreciate the committees support on the bill as well. It is my job as an educator to make sure I set up all of our kids for success early on so that they will be ready for the workforce later on. The passing of this bill will provide that opportunity!

Thank you,  
Culleen Witthuhn, Director of Early Learning, Racine Unified School District

2015 FRANKLIN ST., RACINE, WI 53403  
262.664.8201 tel 262.664.8225 fax  
[www.racine.k12.wi.us](http://www.racine.k12.wi.us)

Milwaukee  Succeeds  
*cradle to career*

---

**TO:** WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE  
**FROM:** MILWAUKEE SUCCEEDS PARTNERSHIP  
**DATE:** JANUARY 22, 2018  
**RE:** SENATE BILL 663 / ASSEMBLY BILL 797,  
FULL DAY 4K PILOT PROGRAM IN HIGH UNEMPLOYMENT AREAS

We are writing today as business, education, and community leaders in the City of Milwaukee to express our support for Senate Bill 663 / Assembly Bill 797 to create a pilot program at the Department of Children and Families to help fund full-day four year old kindergarten (4K) programs in areas of high unemployment.

As noted by our partners at Higher Expectations in Racine County, a combination of national research, local data, and recommendations from the Speaker's Urban Education Task Force suggest that the use of funds within DCF to support full day 4K would build a path to academic success for students in districts with high unemployment including the City of Milwaukee.

Milwaukee Succeeds was established by a cross-sector of partners with a vision of "success for every child, in every school, cradle to career." We have learned that school success starts well before five-year-olds arrive at the classroom door. In the City of Milwaukee too many children lack access to high-quality early childhood education and care. At the same time, our partnership's interventions in literacy suggest that we cannot wait until children enter the traditional K-12 system to introduce early literacy skills, which are essential building blocks for long-term academic and workforce success. Providing full-day 4K to every child is a critical step that moves us closer to ensuring that all children are prepared to succeed.

In addition to improving outcomes for students and families, full day 4K would save money in a variety of ways including lowering special education costs. This initiative will enable communities across the state to collect and analyze data gathered from any grant awarded under this pilot to ensure data-driven and results- focused measurement to document its success. Upon proving the pilot program works, we hope that full day 4K will become a legislative priority.

This bill is cost neutral. It simply gives DCF the ability use eligible, unspent funds within the department to fund a pilot program. Should no such funds become available, the pilot program will not be funded.

We are strongly urge your support for Senate Bill 663 / Assembly Bill 797, a very small step towards opportunity and success for, particularly, some of Wisconsin's most disadvantaged children.

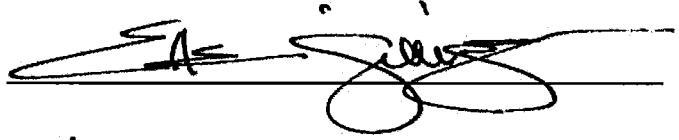
Sincerely,

Milwaukee Succeeds Executive Committee

- OVER -

**Milwaukee Succeeds Executive Committee Members**

Greater Milwaukee Foundation  
President/Ellen Gilligan



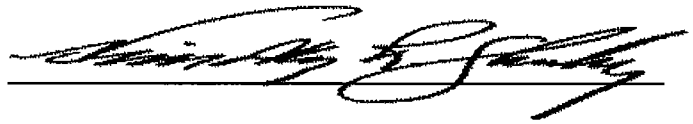
Common Council  
President & Alderman/Ashanti Hamilton



Greater Milwaukee Committee  
Co-Chair/Mark Sabljak



Metropolitan Milwaukee Association of Commerce  
President/Tim Sheehy



United Way of Greater Milwaukee & Waukesha County  
President/Mary Lou Young





# TOM TIFFANY

STATE SENATOR • 12TH SENATE DISTRICT

## **Testimony on Senate Bill 685 and Assembly Bill 477 Senate Committee on Education February 6<sup>th</sup>, 2018**

Thank you Chairman Olsen and members of the Senate Committee on Education for holding a public hearing on Senate Bill 685 and Assembly Bill 477 relating to supplemental aid for school districts.

This bill codifies the current administrative rule that directs the process for awarding supplemental aid grants to school districts having 500 or fewer pupils and that is at least 200 square miles.

In addition, the bill changes the term “enrollment” to the more common term of “membership.” This will make the new statute consistent with other portions of the statute when determining aid eligibility. This is also necessary because the term “enrollment” is currently not defined in statutes whereas “membership” is. This change could potentially capture other categories of pupils, resulting in greater eligibility as well.

Again, thank you Chairman Olsen and members of the Senate Committee on Education for hearing this bill and we would appreciate your support.

Tom Tiffany  
Wisconsin State Senate  
12<sup>th</sup> Senate District