



WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

P.O. Box 7882 • Madison, WI 53707-7882

Date: February 1, 2022

To: Members of the Assembly Education Committee

From: Representative Warren Petryk and Senator Kathy Bernier

Re: Testimony regarding Assembly Bill 903

Thank you Chairman Thiesfeldt and fellow members of the committee. We are here today regarding our legislation to enhance programming for gifted and talented pupils in Wisconsin.

National testing data indicates that many Wisconsin students have the ability to work up to four grade levels beyond their placement, but few receive work at an appropriate level. Ensuring that these students have an appropriately challenging curriculum is critical both for learning and for motivation. Wisconsin also falls behind our regional peers in the percentage of students identified as gifted: WI (4.9%), OH (8.6%), MN (9.2%), IA (10%). To help address this gap and increase participation in gifted education, the Joint Committee on Finance doubled the amount of gifted and talented grants in the recently signed state budget.

In addition, here in Wisconsin low-income rural, suburban, and urban children are far less proportionately represented at the highest levels of achievement compared to other Midwest states as well as nationally (Peters & Plucker, 2017). On the 2018 – 2019 Forward Exam, 14.2% of non-FRPL (free or reduced-price lunch) eligible students scored advanced in math compared to 3.4% of FRPL eligible students. In Science, these same comparisons are 29.4% to 10.1% and in Social Studies 27.6% and 9.2%.

That is why in the last state budget, along with the support of several colleagues here in the committee, we worked to include a provision that doubles the amount of state funding allocated for grants to support these students. This is important, because long-term studies show that appropriately challenging programming leads to considerable post-secondary success (advanced degrees, awards, inventions, creative and scientific innovations, etc.).

Assembly Bill 903 is trailer legislation to that important investment made in the state budget. This bill will provide additional information for parents to access their local gifted and talented program while gathering important data on pupil identification, participation in gifted and advanced programs, the types of services schools provide, and how much time a school district dedicates to this important issue. This data will help us further understand the state of gifted

education in Wisconsin in order to better inform future policy, investment, and the adoption of best practices.

For example, the Department of Public Instruction will now have data on gender, race, ethnicity, and if the student is economically disadvantaged. Having this data can help future legislatures make additional decisions about the gifted and talented grant programs to make the funds stretch even further.

Finally, this bill also helps address the workforce shortage of gifted and talented teachers in our state. This bill expands the Wisconsin Fast Forward program to also include grants to increase professional development for teachers to serve this needed population. In State Fiscal Year 2021, DWD expended \$574,000 to help train additional teachers, and we feel this supplementary scope language will provide additional access to this program and help future students reach their full potential.

Thank you again for your time and consideration of our legislation.



Assembly Committee on Education
February 1, 2021

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction
Testimony for Information Assembly Bill 903

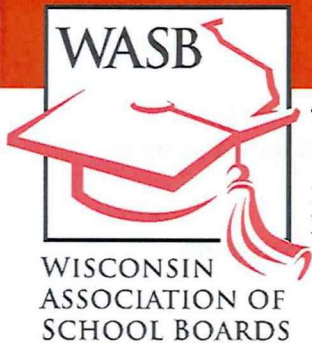
In Wisconsin, “gifted and talented pupils” means pupils enrolled in public schools who give evidence of high performance capability in intellectual, creative, artistic, leadership, or specific academic areas and who need services or activities not ordinarily provided in a regular school program in order to fully develop such capabilities. In 1985, Wis. Stat § 121.02(1)(t) was enacted, now commonly referred to as “standard (t)”, it requires school districts to provide appropriate programming for gifted and talented students in Wisconsin public schools. Further key elements are defined in Wis. Stat § 118.35 along with additional direction to school districts.

Assembly Bill 903 (AB 903) would increase reporting requirements for school districts and data collection and compilation work by the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) on gifted and talented programming across the state. While DPI already collects some of the data required by the AB 903, additional data elements would need to be added to our current collection

As a result of the new requirements, school districts are likely to incur additional costs to implement them. Those potential costs include additional staff resources and professional development to comply with the new data collection and reporting requirements contained in this bill. Since staffing levels, resources, and existing levels of gifted and talented programming varies across districts, the cost to school districts would also vary. School districts contract with a variety of vendors of student information system, because of that the costs to each district to update their system to comply with the new data collection would be difficult to predict at this time.

The bill would result in additional costs to DPI including IT and staffing costs related to new data collection and reporting requirements, new auditing and compliance responsibilities, changes to school and school district accountability reports, and the creation of a searchable data related to gifted and talented curricular resources. The bill does not provide additional resources to implement these added responsibilities, which will require the Department to reallocate existing resources.

The ability to provide funds to help support professional development for gifted and talented educators is an important component to best support our students and is needed by schools across the state to support their educators. We look forward to having additional conversations as we continue to discuss how this proposal would be implemented at the state and local level, including the best way to uniformly collect and report the new data requirements.



"Leadership in Public School Governance"

JOHN H. ASHLEY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

122 W. WASHINGTON AVENUE, MADISON, WI 53703
PHONE: 608-257-2622 FAX: 608-257-8386

TO: Members, Assembly Committee on Education
FROM: Dan Rossmiller, WASB Government Relations Director
DATE: February 1, 2022
RE: OPPOSITION to ASSEMBLY BILL 903, relating to: programs for gifted and talented pupils.

The Wisconsin Association of School Boards (WASB) is a voluntary membership association representing all 421 of Wisconsin's locally elected public school boards.

During a typical legislative session, numerous bills are introduced to impose additional, new mandates on schools. The WASB generally opposes those bills when they impose significant unfunded mandates on local school boards.

The existing statutory mandates related to "gifted and talented" pupils have long been an underfunded, if not unfunded, mandate on school boards. This bill does nothing to change that reality.

While there was a doubling of existing state funding for gifted and talented grants in the last budget (from \$237,000 per year to \$474,000 per year), gifted and talented funding in Wisconsin remains paltry in comparison with what is provided in our surrounding states.

For example:

- Illinois provides local districts with \$40 per student to support gifted and talented education. (Funding is allocated according to the total enrollment of the district (i.e., for each student in the district) rather than by a specific count of gifted and talented students.) Further, Illinois is on a path to full state funding.
- Minnesota provides local school districts with about \$13 million per year in gifted and talented aid.
- In Iowa, \$42.5 million was spent on talented gifted and programming in Iowa public schools with nearly \$31.9 million of that coming from state funds.
- Under its most recent budget, the state of Ohio provided \$83.7 million to local school districts for gifted and talented programs in 2021-22. Ohio also provides state funding for schools to conduct a universal screening process for gifted education. This funding was recently increased to from \$5 to \$24 per student for the next two years.

WASB members have expressed their concerns about the lack of state funding. A 2019 resolution adopted by the WASB Delegate Assembly calls for "increasing state funding for Gifted and Talented programming in Wisconsin's public schools."

While the WASB believes the authors of Assembly Bill 903 are well-intentioned, and while the WASB supports gifted and talented programs, this bill compounds the situation by including additional reporting and audit requirements with no new funding for gifted and talented programming. Even the provisions of the bill that aim to increase the supply of credentialed gifted and talented teachers and program coordinators, borrow funding from an existing training appropriation rather than providing a new one.

Clearly, further dialogue on the provision of gifted and talented programming is needed. The WASB is willing to engage lawmakers in discussions on this issue in hopes that a plan can be developed for inclusion in the next biennial (2023-25) state budget bill.

The lack of dedicated state funding for gifted and talented programming has our members frustrated and looking for solutions.

A resolution adopted by WASB members at this year's WASB Delegate Assembly "encourages that schools focus less on identifying "gifted" students and more on identifying and addressing unmet learning needs of students capable of high levels of achievement."

As a part of that same resolution delegates adopted language stating that the WASB further "encourages districts to provide a variety of advanced programming opportunities for K-12 students, including acceleration options, and to offer opportunities to individuals such that students from every background are able to achieve at their highest possible levels."

For the above reasons, the WASB opposes Assembly Bill 854.

AB903

Feb. 2, 2022

Chairman Thiesfeldt and Members of the Assembly Committee on Education:

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of AB903. My name is Pam Clinkenbeard, and I'm a retired education professor from UW-Whitewater. I'm also a board member and former president of the Wisconsin Association for Talented and Gifted, and at one time I was a board member of the National Association for Gifted Children. I also created Wisconsin's first university program for licensing teachers in this field, in collaboration with a colleague at UW-Stevens Point.

I don't love the word "gifted," but I have been working my entire career to help parents and teachers provide appropriately challenging opportunities for children in order to develop their talents. Some of my research has been on student motivation, and it's well-documented that most students put out their best effort only when they're working on tasks that are at least somewhat challenging. Thousands of students all over Wisconsin are being underestimated and under-challenged, and this is a waste for them and for the state, but we don't know the full extent of the problem because we don't have much data on advanced programming. This bill would improve accountability and transparency, such that schools would need to report on how they identify students who need additional challenge, who those students are in terms of demographic information, and what the school districts are doing to provide that challenge. It's good for the students, and it's good for the economy in terms of talent development.

Services for gifted and talented pupils in five different domains (general intellectual, specific academic, creative, leadership, and performing arts) have been mandated in Wisconsin for decades, but there's almost no reporting required on those activities, so this bill would strengthen the accountability for what is already required. The Wisconsin Association of School Boards just passed a resolution in January supporting advanced learning and that resolution is consistent with this bill. Part of that resolution states *"The WASB further encourages districts to provide a variety of advanced programming opportunities for K-12 students, including acceleration options, and to offer opportunities to individuals such that students from every background are able to achieve at their highest possible levels."* We at WATG are committed to supporting the development of gifts and talents in students from every corner of the state, and we support the passage of AB903.

Pamela R. Clinkenbeard, Ph.D.
Professor Emeritus, UW-Whitewater
WATG Board Member
1802 Monroe St. Unit 406
Madison, WI 53711
pclinkenbeard@watg.org

Wisconsin Assembly Committee on Education
February 1, 2022 Hearing

I appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony in support of Wisconsin Assembly Bill 899 which would guarantee that all Wisconsin students will cross the stage at their graduation with the financial skills they need to thrive in the future.

My name is Tim Ranzetta, co-founder of NGPF Mission 2030 Fund, which is affiliated with Next Gen Personal Finance (NGPF), the leading financial education non-profit. Our curriculum is used by more than 50,000 educators reaching 3 million+ students in all 50 states. In Wisconsin, 1,610 teachers currently have accounts on the NGPF platform and 450 teachers have participated in 12,000 hours of professional development delivered by Next Gen Personal Finance.

In addition, NGPF has also partnered with the Milwaukee Public School (MPS) district to provide a three year grant to fully fund a full-time resource in the district office to provide curriculum support and professional development and increase access to financial education. Importantly, all of NGPF's curriculum and PD are provided at no cost as NGPF's operations are funded by an endowment created by its co-founder.

Our experience at facilitating multiple FinCamps in Milwaukee and Madison and through our virtual PD workshops, has demonstrated that Wisconsin educators are passionate, qualified and committed to reach more students with this essential course. In fact, Wisconsin leads the nation with 16 high schools receiving NGPF Gold Standard Challenge grants for ensuring that all students receive a course in personal finance. The reason for that success: matching financial education grants provided by DFI! That's the good news.

In many of these cases, however, teachers, parents and students advocated for years in order to make this happen. The unfortunate news is that only 1 in 3 students in Wisconsin is guaranteed today to take a personal finance course while in high school (NGPF State of Financial Education Report, 2021). We cannot afford to continue to withhold this course from Wisconsin high schoolers.

What we see happening in Wisconsin with the introduction of Assembly Bill 899 is part of a larger national movement. In the last three years alone, the number of states guaranteeing financial education has grown from 5 to 10, with Ohio being the last (and largest) state to make this commitment in October of 2021. Already in 2022, 17 states have introduced bills, with almost all of them increasing access to financial education (NGPF FinEd Bill Tracker).

We know that there are concerns regarding how a bill like this would be implemented and funded. Should the state of Wisconsin pass a bill that guarantees that all high school students complete a course in personal finance, my organization will commit to the following:

- No-cost curriculum (available now): other high quality non-profit providers are available which eliminates need for textbooks
- No-cost professional development (available now): also available from excellent Wisconsin providers, such as DFI and Economics Wisconsin
- Up to \$500 stipend for every teacher tapped to teach personal finance as a result of this legislation (estimate of \$300,000)
- Three year grant to support DPI in implementing this course guarantee

Wisconsin has a chance to send a signal to the nation and become the 11th state to guarantee that every student crossing that graduation stage will have the financial skills they need to thrive in the future. It's good for students, it's good for families, it's good for the state economy. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Regards,



Tim Ranzetta

Advocate, NGPF Mission 2030 Fund

My name is Roxane Hagedorn. I am the Executive Director for Wisconsin Association for Talented and Gifted (WATG). I'm also a parent of a student who was identified as gifted in talented in 3rd grade. I live in Wausau, in Assembly District 85. I am here today to speak in support of Assembly Bill 903.

WATG is a non-profit organization of parents, students, educators, business and industry personnel, and other interested persons dedicated to fostering a climate in the home, school, and community that allows each individual to reach his or her unique potential. This bill directly relates to our mission.

As Executive Director of WATG, I know that developing talent in Wisconsin's youth is a bi-partisan issue. Our partnerships and parent members know the importance of today's students in building tomorrow's workforce. We need to be doing more for highly capable students as Wisconsin faces continued brain drain and workforce shortages. The accountability in this bill is one way to start.

Too often I encounter parents of high-performance learners who are unsure what school districts are providing for students. They will scour the internet trying to find what services are provided in a school and come up empty-handed. Many times they reach out to us and it's frustrating when we say there is no specific place to go for the data and information they desire. These are parents who only want what all parents want, for their children to have the best education possible and to be successful. Parents need to be able to see what is happening in their district and other districts across the state for comparison. The DPI audit component is also important to parents. Many of them struggle to know if what their district provides meets what is required by law for their gifted and talented students.

I hope that you can support this bill and the accountability that comes with it. It is important to the parents of these students and those of us who support them.

Thank you for hearing my testimony.

Rep. Thiesfeldt and members of the Assembly Education Committee:

I write today in support of AB903 – an act to support and strengthen advanced learning opportunities in Wisconsin. For the last 13 years I have been a professor of assessment and research methodology at the University of Wisconsin – Whitewater.

As of the 2017 – 2018 school year, only 45% of Wisconsin schools provide access to gifted and talented services despite a state mandate to do so. That's 1,225 schools with no gifted and talented services and no students identified as gifted. Iowa and North Carolina also have state mandates for gifted education, but 93% and 96% of their schools provide access. I don't at all think their students are smarter than ours. So what's the difference? Accountability and support. In Iowa and North Carolina, schools must report to the state Departments of Education to demonstrate compliance, and they receive dedicated funding in return.

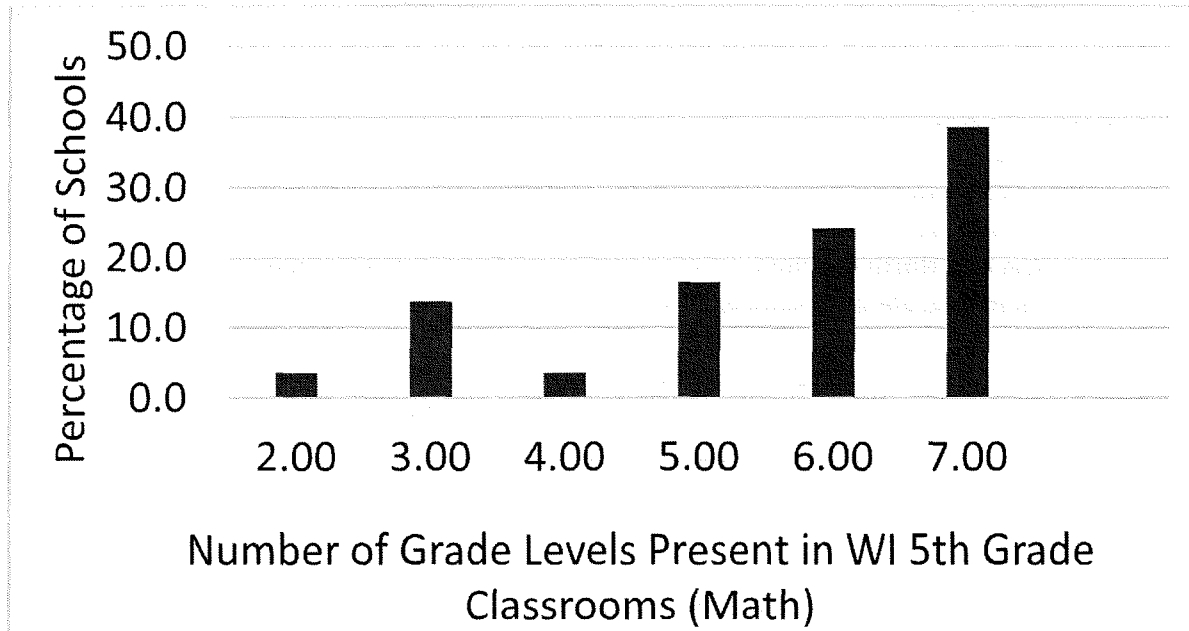
AB903 would do much to ensure that access to GT was not dictated based on where a child happens to live – that all kids, whether they live in Whitefish Bay or Winneconne, would have access to advanced learning opportunities. It would require all schools to report annually how many GT students they have identified and what services they were provided. I had to get my numbers from the biannual Office of Civil Rights data collection because Wisconsin does not collect any information on gifted and talented identification rates or services. This bill would change that in an important move toward transparency. It would also require the Department of Public Instruction to proactively audit districts, at random, for compliance, hopefully increasing the number of students who have access. Other states use a similar process.

But this bill is not solely about sticks – there are also carrots. This bill would allow teachers to access Workforce Training Grants to become trained to provide gifted and talented services, hopefully helping alleviate staffing shortages in smaller districts or those with fewer resources. Similarly, this bill will maintain a database of curricular resources and best practices that have been implemented by other Wisconsin school districts. The best forms of educational policy are those that mandate best practices while also supporting schools in implementing those practices.

Why are advanced learning opportunities important? Because most Wisconsin classrooms include kids at six or more grade-levels of readiness (*see below). That means a typical fifth-grade classroom includes kids who have yet to master 2nd grade standards as well as those who have mastered 8th grade standards. That fifth-grade teacher can't be everything for everyone. They need support. As a state, we need to make sure that all kids have access to learning opportunities that will challenge them at their individual level of readiness.

I believe that the combination of added accountability and resources will provide more information to parents and more expertise to schools to assure that the talents of all Wisconsin students are fostered, regardless of where they live. Thank you for your time today and I hope you will consider supporting this bill.

* Based on a sample of 505 schools in Wisconsin (roughly 1/3 of elementary schools) that gave the NWEA MAP test in Fall of 2016.



Hi, My name is Hillarie Roth, I am the mom of two gifted and talented daughters, I am a school board member in my local community, I sit on the board of the Wisconsin Association for Talented and Gifted and I am here on their behalf today.

My husband and I always knew that Alyssa was different. She always thought more deeply and spoke more convincingly than other kids. She was bullied out of her school in 6th grade, but there was more to it than that.

The last parent teacher conference that I went to at that school I remember the teacher arguing with me about Alyssa's reading assignment. My husband and I were there asking the teacher to give her more advanced reading work when he promptly told us that Alyssa had only gotten a B+ on her last book report. He then proceeded to tell us that Alyssa was really not that smart and that there was no reason to be accelerated in English because of that B+. Now, here's the thing, Alyssa had read the book in question three years prior on her own and she had not liked it. She told us when the book was assigned to the class that there was no way she was going to read it again. She did the book report completely from memory on a book that she had not read in three years! I sat there shocked. I thought that it was amazing that she had gotten a B+ on the assignment! I was told otherwise by the teacher. We changed schools shortly thereafter.

At her new school, all seemed well at first! Shortly after she enrolled, Alyssa was flagged and identified as gifted. We had a friendly and dynamic GT coordinator, we had a plan in place, and educational options! It was a dream come true! Alyssa flourished! Then, at the end of 6th grade, the GT coordinator retired. We learned that they would not be refilling this position. Instead the title would be added to another staff person's already overflowing list of responsibilities. We floundered through 7th grade. I chalked it up to our new resource person just learning the ropes. It will be better next year, I told myself. 8th grade arrived. It was not better.

Alyssa was yearning for a challenge. She had come home from her gifted summer camp excited about a new program that she had heard of while there. NUMATS. This is a program that allows GT students to take the SAT or ACT at a young age. Alyssa REALLY wanted to do this! I approached our "coordinator" about this and told her we were interested in the program. Explaining that we were willing to pay for it, take care of all of the paperwork, everything. All we needed to know was if the school had an affiliation with NUMATS so that the scores could be forwarded to them for their records. I was not only told no, I was lectured about how I should not be pushing my child to take above grade tests. That this was a bad idea, that the school did not support us enrolling

in this program in any way, and that it could be detrimental in some way. I backed down. After all, the educators know best right? We continued to move through eighth grade.

To say that Alyssa floundered through 8th grade is putting it mildly. She was starting to have anxiety. Noticeable, heartbreaking, anxiety. She was having panic attacks at school, she was argumentative at home. She was not doing well. In her standardized testing she was always maxing out her scores. In English, she would read the assigned book in an evening and the class would work on it for three weeks, during which time Alyssa was told to just read the same book multiple times to “glean a deeper understanding” of it. If I were to hand you the book, “Goodnight Moon” and I told you to read it multiple times a day and to continue to glean a deeper understanding of the work, how would you feel? Now, I know a lot of parents who have read that book multiple times a day to their little ones and it is mind numbing! Imagine that it is your day. All day, every day. That was Alyssa's life. We asked about acceleration and were told that because English 9 and English 10 were graduation requirements she could not test out of them. They gave us the option of taking them on-line but we were also told that the middle school did not have anyone to facilitate that so she would have to be wholly self guided. We gave it a try. During her regular English class time she would be sent to work in a room by herself. I don't really know of many 13 year olds that would have been able to pull that off. It didn't go well. She was put back into eighth grade english. But all this time she kept mentioning NUMATS. She kept asking us. We kept saying no. The school knows best right? She kept asking. Finally, after this strong willed child continued to push us we gave in and signed her up for the SAT. She was beyond excited! She still struggled with anxiety but it was better. When she had a rough day she would come home and we would talk about the SAT and she would light up! Who knew that a test could bring such joy? Then the school found out about it. Cue the phone call from the guidance counselor. Now, this is a good woman. A kind woman. A woman that cares deeply for my child. I have tremendous respect for her! But in this instance? I was told that the SAT was the root of my daughter's anxiety. That us pushing her was causing the panic attacks. That we were off base in doing this and that these behaviors were the exact reason that the school did not normally permit above grade testing. That hurt. It was hard to hear. I pointed out our observations from at home about the test. That it was the only thing that made Alyssa engage and light up. That she seemed genuinely excited about this test. And, I pointed out that Alyssa had pushed for it, not my husband and I, and that we were not letting her study for it. The guidance counselor agreed that once she really thought about it Alyssa really did seem to come around in their conversations when they talked about the SAT. She relented. We took the test.

We got the results of her SAT and Alyssa did pretty well! She held her own and did well enough that the school was willing to consider advancing her into AP English. Alyssa was thrilled at the option of moving forward and being challenged!

We started freshman year with Alyssa in the AP english class. She was the only freshman that our district had ever allowed to take an AP class. There were bumps as Alyssa had never actually learned HOW to study. After years of just understanding everything and not having to work to learn this was a new and unique challenge. A challenge that I was very glad to see my child facing while living in our home and able to receive the help and support needed to grasp the skill of studying. I would love to tell you that we had a great year and everything turned out well but sadly, covid hit, derailing much of our progress. Last year my family opted to enroll both of our children in the 100% virtual option for school, not because we were afraid of covid, but rather so that we would have the consistency and continuity of education rather than constant reactivity to quarantine and isolation protocols. Alyssa again struggled in a virtual platform. We made the best of it for the year and this year we are back to in person learning and re-righting the ship once again.

So this is our story, but I can tell you that it is not unique. I see and hear this same story over and over again in the gifted parenting groups that I am a part of. It is hard, and heartbreaking, but we love our kids and will continue to advocate for them. As we move forward I hope that we can continue to grow and learn from this experience and I pray that other parents are put in positions where they have the support and help they need from educators who understand the unique and diverse needs of the gifted community. AB903 will add a layer of accountability to school districts and ensure that students have the proper support and resources to hopefully give them the positive learning outcomes that they deserve. Thank you.

Hello, my name is Alyssa Roth and I am a junior at Altoona High School. I'm here today because I would like to share with you my experiences as a gifted student in a school district with little to no gifted program. But first, some background information.

I attended a tiny parochial school until 6th grade. In this parochial school, I was definitely what you'd consider an outcast. I learned and understood things way faster than my peers, and my interests were geared more towards literature and the sciences as opposed to the jocks and "cool kids" I was surrounded by. And they made it known that I was *not* one of them. I was severely bullied; it got so bad I ended up switching schools. This was where my journey into the realm of gifted education began.

Within 6 weeks of attending Altoona Middle School I was tested and identified as gifted, and things started looking up for me. I started seeing doors open; I was given different work than my classmates, work that actually challenged me about things I was passionate about. But, just as fast as they opened, these doors closed again.

At the end of my sixth grade year the gifted coordinator retired. Her position was never filled, instead the job fell into the hands of an already busy staff member and was brushed off to the side. That was the last I saw of the gifted program for years.

7th and 8th grade were hard years for me. Because of the abrupt halt of the gifted program, I was no longer getting challenging work. My classes became boring and repetitive. I received loads and loads of busy work every day. I stopped seeing the point of all the work that kept piling up, because why do the homework if you're already getting regular A's on the tests without it? Because of this mindset, I gave up on the busy work and scraped by on nothing but the test scores. My grades floundered throughout the year, until I found myself being told by all of my teachers that I was lazy and I was not ready to start high school. This is when I learned about advocacy.

After a long and lengthy argument with the school, I was finally advanced. When I began high school, I was given an individualized learning plan, which allowed me to be bumped up to a high school junior level AP class, AP language and composition. I loved that class, and I thrived in it. It was strange at first, and my classmates were a little hesitant to talk with me, but before too long they saw me keeping up with them and they started talking and engaging with me. I really belonged. And it was an amazing, liberating, free feeling. I wished every gifted kid in the world could feel it.

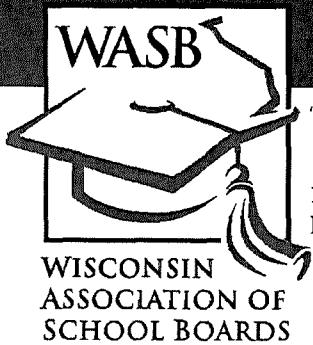
But not everyone can. I went to a gifted summer camp for 3 summers, and they were hands-down the best summers of my life. I got to meet kids that had the same challenges as I do, and we talked about things that were seen as weird or niche to our peers. We truly connected, and we still talk on a regular basis.

At this summer camp, I learned that schools all across Wisconsin have little to no gifted program. These insanely smart kids are stuck in the same place I was in 7th and 8th grade, and that is so hard on so many people. You see, when a gifted kid goes unchallenged, they will find more "creative" ways to occupy their time. These ways can

be dangerous and destructive, to others or to themselves. Drugs, self harm, and even suicide are among the things a gifted kid will do to alleviate boredom.

Gifted kids are stereotypically known as "smart kids", and they have this expectation of excellence and pursuit of greatness dumped on them. They don't get to have hobbies, they get to go home and read a book. They don't get to go out with friends, they have to stay home and study. That is not true. "Gifted" does not mean "knows everything", it doesn't mean "good at everything". We struggle in certain areas too. For example, I am notoriously awful at math. People are so shocked when they hear that. "But I thought you were smart!" is the most common response. I am allowed to struggle. I'm allowed to ask for help, and I shouldn't feel attacked if I get an answer wrong. "Gifted" isn't just "being smart". It's more than that, and it's deeper than that.

This assembly bill will create a layer of accountability to schools, ensuring that gifted and talented students receive the support and services they deserve. I ask for you to pass this bill, and I thank you for your time.



"Leadership in Public School Governance"

JOHN H. ASHLEY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

122 W. WASHINGTON AVENUE, MADISON, WI 53703
PHONE: 608-257-2622 FAX: 608-257-8386

TO: Members, Assembly Committee on Education
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Clearly, further dialogue on the provision of gifted and talented programming is needed. The WASB is willing to engage lawmakers in discussions on this issue in hopes that a plan can be developed for inclusion in the next biennial (2023-25) state budget bill.

The lack of dedicated state funding for gifted and talented programming has our members frustrated and looking for solutions.

A resolution adopted by WASB members at this year's WASB Delegate Assembly "encourages that schools focus less on identifying "gifted" students and more on identifying and addressing unmet learning needs of students capable of high levels of achievement."

As a part of that same resolution delegates adopted language stating that the WASB further "encourages districts to provide a variety of advanced programming opportunities for K-12 students, including acceleration options, and to offer opportunities to individuals such that students from every background are able to achieve at their highest possible levels."

For the above reasons, the WASB opposes Assembly Bill 854.

Hi,

I am a mother of 3 school aged children. My oldest is in 8th grade this year. She has been very high in academics all along. She has scored in the 99th percentile for many years. We were told for her kindergarten report card that she scored too high so the teacher modified the score down so it would look better to other parents.

In forth grade she was given extra support for math as she was so far above the other students. But in fifth that was taken away because she needed to go to the middle school and so was told there wasn't staffing.

In middle school she was accelerated, which worked fine, but I feel like she only got the surface of the concepts due to skipping a year of prealgebra. She is now in private school, where she can work at her level with the depth that she needs. My younger daughter started middle school this year and is being used as a teacher aide. She is placed in a group with the kids who are behind and don't do the work anyway. She gets tired of having to try and motivate these kids to get their work done and teach them how to do it. We are going to move her as well.

Thanks so much for reading my experience.

Sincerely,
Rhonda Snyder
Hobart, WI

Sent from my iPhone

RE: Written Testimony for AB903

Hello Members of the Education Committee,

My name is Ayesha Penesetti and I reside in the City of Madison, Middleton School District. I am here to write in support of the 2021 ASSEMBLY BILL 903.

As a parent, I focus greatly on the safety, health and education of my children. I expect the schools the children attend to uphold high standards of education. Tracking key data such as demographic information, audit information etc. is an important part of upholding standards. It is quantitative data that provides us information to check if the current system is working. Bill AB903 also focuses on the accountability of advance learning programs. I strongly believe progress is made when accountability is applied. For these reasons I strongly urge for the support of this bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to write on behalf on AB903.

Sincerely,

Ayesha Penesetti.

Chairman Jeremy Thiesfeldt and members of the Assembly Committee on Education

Comments regarding AB903

Greetings. My name is Penelope Kolloff. I am writing in support of the proposed legislation to ensure accountability and equity for advanced learners.

I currently live in Eau Claire, having retired from a decades-long career focusing on the education of gifted and talented learners and their teachers. Years ago, I lived in Kentucky where, at that time, we looked to Wisconsin for leadership in this particular area of education. Subsequent moves took me to Indiana, Michigan, and Illinois where I continued to be active in gifted education at the local, state, and national levels. Over the course of these periods, Wisconsin's leadership was surpassed by those and other states in terms of services and funding to this population.

We currently have excellent programs in Wisconsin to prepare teachers to work with gifted learners, as well as a thriving state organization (WATG), and pockets of excellence in programs and services for high ability students. Unfortunately, there remains a disappointing lack of commitment on the part of the state to support initiatives to serve this population, specifically to ensure widespread implementation of opportunities for advanced learning for students throughout the state and to address issues related to accessibility and equity.

Before Covid, I was a longtime volunteer in a low-income school here in my community where I saw the need for identifying and offering challenge to youngsters with outstanding potential. A number of these students were not identified for the limited existing programs. Many have been, and will continue to be, overlooked in the face of other priorities.

It is my hope that **AB903** will affirm the importance of services to this population and take into account the needs of these learners and confirm that these needs are being addressed throughout the state.

Thank you for your consideration.

Penelope B. Kolloff, Ph.D.
5401 North Shore Drive
Eau Claire, IL 54703

pbkollo@gmail.com
715 834-2454

Jacquelyn Drummer
Written Testimony in favor of AB903

Thank you for this opportunity to testify. My name is Jacquelyn Drummer, and I live at 1018 Elm Avenue in South Milwaukee. I am a retired gifted education specialist, an adjunct professor of education in Wisconsin's colleges and universities, a Past President of the Wisconsin Association for Talented and Gifted, and a parent and grandparent of gifted children. I am asking you to further talent development in Wisconsin's K-12 schools by supporting LRB3080.

As a gifted education specialist for over three decades, I have had the great privilege of challenging some of our most able youth. As a result of their educational experiences, they are flourishing in their adult lives. Through the magic of social media, I can follow their delightful trajectories, and they often credit gifted and talented programming for igniting their passion for learning and for pursuing excellence. Gifted programming kept them engaged and challenged throughout their school years and beyond. Because they were well educated in our schools, many of them have returned to our community to share their talents and raise their families. This is a true "brain gain" for Wisconsin.

Unfortunately, however, not all Wisconsin students receive necessary gifted educational programming. Though it is mandated in standard (t), gifted education programming is prevalent in some school districts, and sorely absent in others. Thousands of Wisconsin children are NOT being appropriately challenged. These are children of promise from all racial, ethnic, and economic groups. They require appropriate challenge and coaching to develop their talents in academics, creativity, leadership, and the visual and performing arts. Neglect can result in a wasteful loss of talent, "brain drain," and this inequity in services highlights the need for more accountability in our state.

AB903 will strengthen existing law by accomplishing two goals - assuring equity and providing accountability.

I ask that you support AB903 brought forth by Senator Bernier and Representative Petryk. This will ensure, transform, and accelerate talent development in Wisconsin schools.

Jacquelyn A. Drummer, 1018 Elm Avenue, South Milwaukee, WI 53172
Past President and current Board Advisor – Wisconsin Association for Talented and Gifted
<https://www.watg.org>
National Trainer and Facilitator - Supporting the Emotional Needs of the Gifted (SENG)
jdrummer@watg.org
414-916-4785