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## CORY TOMCZYK

STATE SENATOR • 29<sup>TH</sup> SENATE DISTRICT

### Senate Bill 22 Senate Committee on Education May 6, 2025

SB 22 is very simple and creates more transparency in our schools. As a parent and grandparent, I want to know what my children and grandchildren are learning in their schools. As a taxpayer, I want to know that students are being taught accurate information and not being taught a certain ideology – whether it be my own or otherwise. I want to know what books they are reading and what points of view they are getting their information from.

This isn't political. This isn't meant to try and catch teachers doing something nefarious. This is so that parents know what is being taught to their kids while they are outside the home for eight hours and in the school they have chosen to send their child to.

Would you send your child to a sleepover and not know the parents whose home they will be sleeping in? Would you send your child to a daycare where you did not see the facility and meet the staff? Would you send your child to camp without knowing that it is safe and secure? I highly doubt it. So why should their schools be any different?

SB 22 requires that schools must respond to a written request from a district resident to inspect the books, curricula, and materials that is being used to educate children. This must be responded to within 14 days. If schools have nothing to hide, then this should be no problem. If schools don't want to have to respond to each inquiry, they should put this information on the school's website for all to access.

I encourage you to support this commonsense bill. It increases transparency and allows parents to have a peace of mind to know exactly what their child is learning in school.

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# BARBARA DITTRICH

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STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 99<sup>th</sup> ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

**Senate Committee on Education**  
**Rep. Dittrich Testimony on Assembly Bill 5/Senate Bill 22**  
**May 6, 2025**

Thank you Chairman Jagler and members of the Senate Committee on Education for hearing Assembly Bill 5/Senate Bill 22 (AB 5/SB22) today. This bill is vital in restoring the relationship between parents and school districts. I believe we have seen an outcry from parents around our state, and frankly around the country, regarding the lack of transparency in our public schools when it comes to materials being used in the classroom.

I have often said that when the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdowns of 2020 took classrooms and instruction online, it allowed parents greater access to what their children were learning. Unfortunately, in some instances, the materials being used were not deemed appropriate, either by parents or basic societal decency. This resulted in the outcry we have seen in our local school board meetings, the local and national news, and social media. Angry parents rose up in protest in attempts to protect their children and gain a better understanding of what their children were being taught. Too often they ran into roadblocks from both school boards and instructors who felt they were being personally attacked.

This bill is an attempt to bring parents and school districts together by providing a framework that schools and parents can operate. AB 5/SB22 would allow school district residents to present a written request to view materials to the school board. The respective school board would then have 14 days to comply with the request to inspect a textbook, curriculum, or instructional materials. Finally, school boards must adopt procedures to ensure compliance occurs within 14 days. This establishes a time frame that with which school districts must respond to and fulfill a request, gives parameters to what requests must be fulfilled and what is too far reaching, and how the requests must be fulfilled.

The purpose is to make certain that parents know precisely what their children are being taught, while not targeting our teachers. Children have a much richer educational experience when educators and families can work together instead of engaging in political rhetoric.

Thank you for your consideration. I am happy to answer any questions for the committee.





May 6, 2025

**Senate Committee on Education  
Department of Public Instruction Testimony  
2025 SB 22 Requiring School Boards to Make Instructional Materials Available**

Thank you to Chair Jagler, Vice-Chair Quinn and members of the committee for the opportunity to provide testimony on SB 22.

The Department of Public Instruction (DPI) is submitting testimony in opposition to SB 22.

Families are a child's first educators and partnerships between families and schools are necessary. DPI strongly supports the rights of families and community members to transparently understand the instruction happening in their local communities. We also strongly support the right of each local school district and school participating in the Choice program to make their own local decisions on curriculum and instruction within the parameters of state and federal law.

Quite simply, there is no need for this proposed law. Schools already provide access to instructional materials to families and community members. Almost all schools in the elementary grades send home regular communications informing families about current instructional work. Many schools also already post information about their instructional materials and curriculum on their websites, and information about instructional materials, goals, and a child's progress is provided to families during regular school-family meetings or conferences. Additionally, existing state statutes require that a list of texts adopted by a school board be filed with the school board clerk and that any school providing instruction in human growth and development provide an outline of the instruction to families in advance (Wis. Stats. §§[118.03\(1\)](#) and [118.019\(3\)](#)), ensuring that family or community members have transparent access to instructional materials. Further, any individual may make an open records request for a district's curriculum at any time.

Importantly, making instructional materials available without information or context from educators is likely to lead to additional questions or assumptions. Curriculum is rarely taught exactly as it appears on paper. Educators tailor instruction to the learners in front of them. They may provide additional background knowledge or supports based on the data they have about their learners. They may spend more or less time on a specific point or topic. Local decisions about how to use a given set of curricula may mean that a district substitutes books in a given unit or skips a particular unit altogether. In short, conversations with educators about instructional goals and the curricula used to meet those goals provides more valuable information to families and caregivers than simply looking at printed instructional materials.

Additionally, making instructional materials available for review may be costly and difficult for districts. More and more instructional materials are only available digitally and districts must purchase each license used to view or interact with the materials. Taking the time to print digital materials equates to additional burdens of time and the cost of ink and paper. With curricula for a single subject in a single grade-level often being thousands of pages, this is a cost that would



strain school district budgets and could have the unintended impact of districts going to referenda for general operations. Copyright laws could also pose a difficulty for districts. They may be prohibited from copying materials or may need to take steps to outlaw photographing of materials, which means paying staff to supervise those reviewing the materials.

With the growing politicization of education and attacks on schools and teachers, this bill raises fears that the impact of this bill will contribute to the educator workforce shortage. While the intent of the bill seems to be to increase transparency, educators may view the bill as coming from a place of suspicion and mistrust since there are already pathways for individuals to learn about the instructional materials being used in their local school district. This would make the teaching and school administrative professions less attractive at a time when 4 out of every 10 Wisconsin teachers leave the job in their first 6 years and only 68% of individuals who complete an educator preparation program enter the Wisconsin workforce (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 2024).

In summary, while DPI strongly supports the rights of families and community members to transparently understand the instruction happening in their local communities and strongly supports the right of each local school district and school participating in the Choice program to make their own local decisions on curriculum and instruction within the parameters of state and federal law, DPI is opposed to this bill and recommends families and caregivers take advantage of existing opportunities to meet with their children's educators for a conversation about the instructional materials being used and how educators are using them. Families and caregivers are instrumental partners in a child's education, and DPI supports efforts aimed at increasing collaboration between families and schools.

Thank you for allowing DPI to share this testimony. Please direct any questions to Laura Adams, Policy Initiatives Advisor, at [laura.adams@dpi.wi.gov](mailto:laura.adams@dpi.wi.gov).

Citations:

Rep. 2022 *Educator Preparation Program and Workforce Analysis Report*. Madison, Wisconsin: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 2024, <https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/education-workforce/pdf/2022-wi-epp-workforce-annual-report.pdf>.