

TEACHER BILL OF RIGHTS

Teachers have a right to teach, and students have a right to learn, in reasonably safe and orderly classrooms.

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- Wisconsin's **Teacher Bill of Rights (AB 614)** creates protections for teachers and students by strengthening teachers' authority to manage their classrooms, requiring parental notification when serious incidents occur, and establishing clear accountability so teachers can focus on teaching.
- **AB 614** addresses specific problems teachers have raised for years about inconsistent discipline and lack of administrative support:
 - ✓ **Clarifies when teachers can remove disruptive or violent students** from the classroom so instruction can continue for everyone else.
 - ✓ **Requires clear re-entry procedures** so students are not automatically returned to class without a plan to address their behavior.
 - ✓ **Mandates parental notification** whenever a student is removed from class, or when a student is involved in or witness to a serious classroom incident.
 - ✓ **Protects teachers from retaliation** when they act in good faith to maintain classroom safety and order.
 - ✓ **Provides a limited enforcement mechanism** for parents if districts fail to comply.

Surveys and data show a troubling trend in classrooms across the state and nation:

- Nearly **half of teachers** report that administrators only sometimes, or never, enforce student conduct rules.
- Over **one in four teachers** say they sometimes fear for their physical safety at school.
- Wisconsin schools report **thousands of incidents** of disorderly conduct, fighting, and threats each year, with many more low-level disruptions not captured in official data.

Despite this, current Wisconsin law offers little direction on removals, re-entry, or parental communication, leaving teachers without support and parents without information.

Wisconsin must ensure that teachers have the authority and support they need to maintain an orderly classrooms, while keeping parents informed and students safe.



Support AB 614, the Teacher Bill of Rights, by Representative Joy Goeben and Senator Rachel Cabral Guevara to empower teachers and protect learning in Wisconsin classrooms.

Teacher Bill of Rights

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is current law regarding student conduct and removal from the classroom?

State law requires that districts have a code of conduct that has “rules pertaining to conduct and dress of pupils in order to maintain good decorum and a favorable academic atmosphere.” Wis. Stat. 120.13(1)(a).

Current law permits removal of pupils from class if the student displays “dangerous, unruly, or disruptive or exhibits behavior that interferes with the ability of the teacher to teach effectively” and violates the code of classroom conduct. The teacher must send the pupil to the school principal and notify the principal for the reasons for the removal as well as provide a written explanation for reasons for the removal within 24 hours.

Wis. Stat. 118.164(2).

The principal must place the pupil in one of the following:

- (1) An alternative education program
- (2) Another class or appropriate place in the school, as determined by the principal
- (3) Another instructional setting
- (4) Return the student to the original class, “after weighing the interests of the removed pupil, the other pupils in the class and the teacher, the school principal determines that readmission to the class is the best or only alternative.”

Wis. Stat. 118.164(3).

How does this bill amend or change current law?

The bill strengthens the teacher’s ability to maintain classroom order by clarifying when they can remove students for disruptive or violent behavior. It requires districts to adopt formal re-entry procedures, ensure parental notification for removals or incidents affecting school safety or instructional time, and provides protections for teachers acting in good faith. It also mandates behavior intervention plans for students before re-entry to the classroom.

What schools are required to comply with this bill?

The bill requires traditional public school districts to comply. This is consistent with current law.

Why isn’t current law protection for teachers and students enough?

Current law allows teachers to remove students but gives little direction on how removals should be handled, how parents should be notified, or what protections teachers have when they act. It also does not require districts to adopt re-entry procedures. This bill fills those gaps by standardizing removal procedures, ensuring parental notification within 5 days, and prohibiting retaliation against teachers who enforce discipline in good faith.

Does this law violate FERPA by requiring notification of parents?

No. The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a law that protects the privacy of student education records. This bill requires traditional public schools to notify parents about disruptive incidents or classroom removals affecting their child without disclosing the identities of other students, ensuring compliance with federal and state privacy laws.

Doesn't this create too many state mandates?

While it does impose additional requirements, these mandates address gaps in existing law to protect students and teachers. The bill provides a clear framework for handling disruptive incidents, ensuring parental notification, and safeguarding teacher authority. The requirements are limited to actionable policies and procedures, such as removal, re-entry, and behavior plans, and are designed to improve the safety and order of the school environment rather than create administrative burdens.

Doesn't this bill encourage lawsuits against school districts?

This bill establishes a limited, structured process for enforcement through a writ of mandamus:

1. Parents must first notify the district of an alleged violation.
2. The district has 30 days to investigate and respond in writing.
3. If the district fails to resolve a violation within 30 days, parents may file the action.

This ensures that the district is given ample notice and opportunity to comply before litigation. This provision is designed to be used only if the district fails to comply with state law and to be a last-resort enforcement mechanism rather than a first step.

Why are existing teacher contracts not enough to protect teachers if they speak out against decisions by administrators about violence in the classroom?

The bill provides teachers with additional protection from being fired or retaliated against by the district for identifying disruptive students and removing them from the classroom.

How does the required policy interact with existing mandates for safety plans?

School safety plans focus on emergencies like fires, lockdowns, or active shooter situations, and they are required to be shared with local police and safety personnel.

This bill complements those plans by providing a framework for everyday classroom safety, specifically handling disruptive or violent student behavior, removal procedures, and re-entry plans. In contrast to school safety plans, these policies are not emergency-response measures.

What data is publicly available demonstrating that teachers feel the classroom is out of control?

Surveys show growing concerns about student behavior and violence. For example, a federal NCES survey for the 2020-21 school year reported that large percentages of teachers say classroom disruption interferes with teaching and that they lack administrative support after incidents. (National Center for Education Statistics. (2023). Teachers' Reports of Disruptive Student Behaviors and Staff Rule Enforcement. Condition of Education. U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences. Retrieved October 14, 2025, from [COE - Teachers' Reports of Disruptive Student Behaviors and Staff Rule Enforcement.](#))

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According to the 2023 State of the American Teacher survey by RAND, 26% of teachers reported sometimes or often fearing for their physical safety at school. Among those, over half cited student misbehavior and verbal altercations as primary reasons for their concerns. (Teacher Well-Being and Intentions to Leave: Findings from the 2023 State of the American Teacher Survey) The same survey found that 49% of teachers felt school administrators only sometimes or never enforce school rules for student conduct and back them up when needed.

In addition, the 2nd Annual Merrimack College Teacher Survey found that only 20% of teachers were very satisfied with their jobs, 35% of teachers were very/fairly likely to leave the profession within 2 years, and 37% of teachers strongly agreed that they have a lot of control and influence over students' classroom behavior. (Merrimack College Teacher Survey 2023) Those data points support the need for stronger statutory protections for teachers.

What are examples of "appropriate action" a principal should take when a student is removed from class?

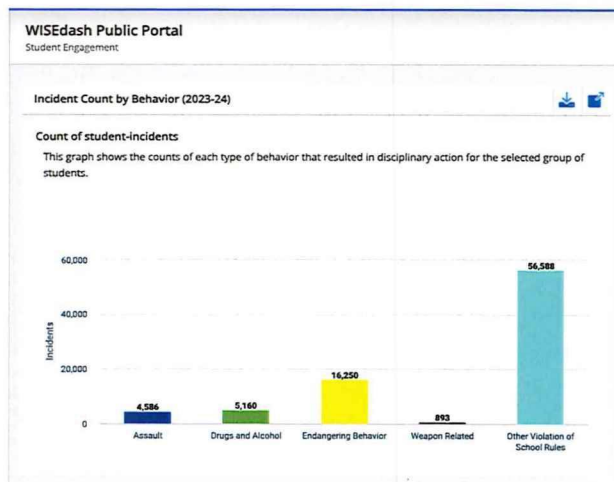
Appropriate actions include promptly investigating the reason for removal, notifying parents, developing or updating a behavior intervention plan, determining whether re-entry to the class is appropriate, and ensuring accountability or consequences before return. The bill specifically requires a behavior plan for any student removed for a disruptive or violent incident.

Have other states implemented similar efforts?

Yes. States such as Alabama, Louisiana, Florida, and Tennessee have enacted "teacher protection" or "classroom discipline" laws that affirm teachers' authority to remove disruptive students, require parental notification, and protect teachers acting in good faith. Wisconsin's bill follows that model but adds a unique parental notification requirement and mandamus enforcement mechanism.

How often do schools experience these types of situations with students?

While the frequency varies by district and grade level, discipline data collected by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) show thousands of incidents each year involving disorderly conduct, fighting, or threats. Many teachers report repeated low-level disruptions that cumulatively undermine instruction but are not captured in suspension or expulsion statistics, which is precisely the kind of behavior this bill targets.



How does this bill address the actions of students with disabilities?

The bill ensures that any action taken by teachers or school administrators is in accordance with existing laws and regulations for students with disabilities. It also requires a behavior plan for any student removed for a disruptive or violent incident, which is put in place for students who may need additional support and interventions to help change their behavior in a school environment. For a student with a disability, the behavior plan must be developed in accordance with IDEA requirements, maintaining compliance with federal law.



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Testimony in Support of Assembly Bills 614
Assembly Committee on Education
November 6, 2025

Chairman Kitchens, Vice-Chairman Goeben, and Members of the Committee on Education:

Thank you for providing me with the opportunity to testify in favor of Assembly Bill 614. My name is Will Flanders, and I am the Research Director at the Wisconsin Institute for Law & Liberty (“WILL”). We want to thank the authors for bringing this bill forward as well, as it is critical to strengthening Wisconsin’s teacher workforce, improving classroom safety, improving student achievement, and increasing parental trust and engagement in our schools.

Wisconsin’s teacher retention crisis is well-documented. Nearly half of new teachers leave the state or the profession within six years, according to the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI).¹ And we know some of the primary reasons this is happening. A recent *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* analysis found that “personal safety” was among the top reasons cited by the 887 staff members who have left Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS) in recent years.²

These personal safety concerns are not theoretical. WILL has heard stories about teachers from across the state who have been physically assaulted, threatened, or otherwise subjected to persistently disruptive classroom behavior with little to no administrative support.

Assembly bill 614 directly addresses these challenges by restoring basic order, authority, and support for teachers while balancing local control decision-making and parental rights. In particular, this bill:

- **Clarifies teachers’ authority** to maintain discipline, remove persistently disruptive or violent students from the classroom, and receive administrative assistance;

¹ Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, *New DPI report shows Wisconsin’s education workforce is in crisis*, April 11, 2024 (available at: <https://dpi.wi.gov/news/releases/2024/education-workforce-crisis-report-analysis>).

² Rory Linnane and Gabriel Sisarcia, *We analyzed why 887 staff left MPS in recent year. Here’s what they said.*, *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, May 1, 2025 (available at: <https://www.jsonline.com/story/news/education/2025/05/01/why-did-teachers-staff-leave-mps-exit-survey-analysis-reveals-trends/83013251007/>).

- **Requires re-entry and intervention plans** so that removed students returning to the classroom receive appropriate behavioral support;
- **Protects teachers from retaliation** when they act in good faith to maintain safety or discipline;
- **Requires schools to develop and adopt policies** to ensure clear, consistent responses to disruptive or violent incidents.
- **Ensure parents are notified when their student** witnesses or is involved in any disruptive incident on school grounds at a school-approved event.

Together, these reforms provide clarity and support teachers need to do their jobs safely and effectively.

This bill also protects student achievement and learning. As State Superintendent Jill Underly acknowledged, “Wisconsin’s kids are suffering from losing quality teachers.”³ When teachers do not feel safe and cannot manage their classrooms, learning suffers.

And students cannot afford to lose quality teachers at this time. National data shows twelfth-grade math scores have fallen to their lowest levels since the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) began in 2005 and only 23.8% of Milwaukee Public Schools students are proficient in reading and 18.9% in math—figures that likely overstate achievement given the DPI’s lowered proficiency thresholds.⁴ We cannot expect to reverse these trends without first ensuring classrooms are safe and productive environments for learning.

Finally, AB 614 strengthens parental rights and encourages transparency between the school and parents. Statistics have shown again and again that the most accurate predictor of a student’s achievement is not income, social status, or racial demographic, but rather, when parents become involved in their children’s education at school.⁵ Transparency builds between families and schools facilitates parental involvement.

Assembly Bill 613 has similar transparency policies to Assembly Bill 614. We ask for your support of AB 614 because it is a comprehensive bill that creates a

³ See n. 1.

⁴ The Nation’s Report Card, *How did students perform in 2024?* (available at: <https://www.nationsreportcard.gov/>); Wisconsin Institute for Law & Liberty, *School Scorecard 2024–2025* (available at: <https://will-law.org/school-scorecard/>).

⁵ Michael M. Barger, et al., *The Relation Between Parents’ Involvement in Children’s Schooling and Children’s Adjustment: A Meta-Analysis*, American Psychological Association, 2019 (available at: <https://psycnet.apa.org/doiLanding?doi=10.1037%2Fbul0000201>); See also Anne T. Henderson, et al., *A New Generation of Evidence: The Family is Critical to Student Achievement*, National Committee for Citizens in Education, 1994 (available at: <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED375968.pdf>).

structure for public schools to develop a policy and plan for addressing disruptive and violent students and incidents, supports teachers in managing their classrooms and ensures parental notification when incidents occur.

Assembly Bill 614 strikes the right balance: it supports teachers, helps students, and restores confidence for parents. Parents deserve to know what is happening in their children's classrooms, especially when it is disrupting learning, and to know that the law stands behind them. Students deserve a safe classroom that fosters their success and that the law stands behind them. Wisconsin's educators deserve to know that when they maintain order and safety in their classroom the law stands behind them.