



Testimony in Support of AB 614/SB 611

Senate Committee on Education

January 28, 2026

Chairman Jagler, Vice-Chairman Quinn, and Members of the Senate Committee on Education:

Thank you for providing me with the opportunity to testify in favor of AB 614/SB 611. Our names are Cory Brewer and Lauren Greuel and we are attorneys at the Wisconsin Institute for Law & Liberty (“WILL”). Wisconsin is experiencing a teacher retention crisis, proficiency rates in freefall and growing distrust between parents and schools. This bill aims to remedy these crises.

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.

AB 614/SB 611 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;
- **Requires re-entry and intervention plans** so that removed students returning to the classroom receive appropriate behavioral support;

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/>).

- **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.

AB 614/SB 611 also 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.

As a final note, we would like to emphasize the amendment to AB 614. We understand concerns that were raised about students on 504 plans and IEPs during the committee hearing in the assembly in November. While we do not believe the original bill violated any state or federal laws, the amendment explicitly highlights

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>).

that the rights students with disabilities have to a free and appropriate public education will not be infringed on.

Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to testify today. We are happy to answer any questions you may have.



Cory Brewer
Deputy Counsel



Lauren Greuel
Associate Counsel