

Assembly Committee on Education
July 16, 2015

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction
Testimony on 2015 Assembly Bill 287

I want to thank Chairman Thiesfeldt and members of the committee for the opportunity to testify on Assembly Bill 287 (AB 287). My name is Jennifer Kammerud. I serve as a policy advisor at the Department of Public Instruction (DPI), and with me today is Jonas Zuckerman, Director of the Title I and School Support Team. That team implements SAGE and the new Achievement Gap Reduction Program (AGR), among other responsibilities.

DPI supports AB 287, as it clarifies payment processes to ensure that the state appropriately pays only for the implementation of strategies as required under the new AGR Program. These strategies include class size reduction, instructional coaching, and tutoring.

Under Act 53, the aforementioned strategies are only required to be implemented in one or more classes in one or more participating grades. As was discussed in this committee during the public hearing on Act 53, this could easily result in situations where schools are implementing an AGR strategy in only one classroom, for example, but receiving funds for students in all classrooms grades K-3. Based on the language in Act 53, DPI would be required to allocate these funds.

As a result, DPI feels passage of AB 287 is critical to maintaining the integrity of the AGR Program and ensuring that the limited dollars are going to students who are actually receiving the benefit of a strategy.

AB 287 accomplishes this by specifying that an AGR contract must require a school board to implement one or more of the strategies required in each class in each participating grade at each participating school. This means the state will appropriately fund only students benefitting from an AGR strategy in their classroom. DPI feels this more accurately reflects the intent of the authors and will provide clearer guidance to schools.

Thank you, Chairman Thiesfeldt and committee members, for your time today. We are happy to answer any questions you may have.