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We need to support our kids, not punish them

A statement by State Superintendent Dr. Jill Underly addressing misguided truancy legislation

MADISON – State Superintendent Dr. Jill Underly released the following statement today addressing misguided legislation on truancy currently being debated in the legislature:

“Our Wisconsin schools must be places where our kids know that, when they show up for the school day, they will be engaged, they will be supported, they will be affirmed; in turn, they will be ready to learn. We need to make sure our students are engaged in learning that is relevant and challenging, that our schools have the tools and resources they need, and that our children feel a sense of belonging in our classrooms.

“Wisconsin, like many other states, faces a school attendance challenge. But it’s one that must be carefully addressed with evidence-based solutions and not with bills that would further harm our kids. Legislation being discussed today in the Capitol appears to be intent on punitive measures that would discourage kids, create challenges for families, and are likely to actually increase absences and the likelihood of student dropouts. Mandatory grade retention is not a realistic solution and does nothing to improve student outcomes. If we want to address this challenge, we need to work together to remove barriers and encourage prevention strategies. This legislature has the means to make a difference for kids by investing more resources like special education, mental health, and nutrition funding into our public schools. I call for that investment, not this punishment.”

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NOTE: This news release is available online on the [Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction’s website](#).