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**To:**

**CC:**

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**Subject:** Foundation for Florida's Future, Key Reads: 7/11/11

## Foundation for Florida's Future, Key Reads: 7/11/11

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## FLORIDA NEWS

### How do we assess value in education?

Florida Times-Union

Editorial Board

July 10, 2011

<http://jacksonville.com/opinion/editorials/2011-07-10/story/how-do-we-assess-value-education>

How do we assess value in education?

American education, much like its health care system, has been spending a lot of money with spotty results.

In the last 40 years, the United States has been one of the biggest spenders in the industrialized world, while student achievement has basically been flat.

The recent list of Duval County's school grades was revealing, especially schools that kept an A grade for 10 years.

They are schools from affluent neighborhoods or are magnet schools with engaged parents.

Chart the family income around the neighborhood schools, and you'll find it's mostly at the top end.

These schools tend to have two parents at home, are more likely to have mothers at home and have connections that help lead to business partners for the schools.

They have reading material at home. Families take educational trips

Volunteers? No problem. Raising money for extras? No problem.

Then look at the schools in disadvantaged neighborhoods. They can be successful for a short period, but it's difficult to maintain.

A high-performing principal gets transferred. Teachers move to schools with fewer demands on their free time.

Families tend to move more often, meaning it's more rare to keep students at even a high-performing school for more than a few years.

Consider West Jacksonville Elementary, an A school for two straight years in 2008 and 2009 and now an F.

Or Brentwood, also an A school not long ago, now an F.

Pinedale Elementary achieved the near-impossible this year, rising from an F to an A. Simply incredible, but the more difficult job is to maintain it.

It's not to belittle the hard work that goes into academic achievement at any level to note that it's more difficult when students come to school far behind their peers and without support at home.

So it's not enough to educate the students with all the advantages. When a large percentage of students in Jacksonville come

from low-income families, we must find a way to educate them, too.

We have plenty of examples of temporary success. We need to sustain it.

### *Measuring value*

Thus, the mark of an excellent school district is one that achieves despite long odds. But how do you measure it?

That has led critics to say that money has no effect. That's not the case. The best private schools often spend much more money than public schools. But in few other major areas has spending been so removed from outcomes.

A study from the Center for American Progress seeks to start a national conversation on this issue.

The center identified which school districts do better with the funds that they receive. The researchers took the key ingredients in a school district, such as total budget, percentage of low income students and special education students.

They then predicted how well the districts would do.

The object is to arrive at an efficiency score, identifying high-achieving but low-spending districts.

Some more fortunate districts, those with high percentages of college-educated parents, for instance, may not do as well as they should. Some less fortunate districts do better than would be expected.

Thus, Duval County received a mediocre score, three out of six. Other urban districts do much better.

### **KEY FINDINGS**

Productivity gaps are huge: Low productivity costs the nation's public schools as much as \$175 billion a year. More than 1 million students are enrolled in highly inefficient districts. They are more likely to be poor and minorities.

Spending may not work: Money matters only if it's spent in effective ways. More money may have a negative impact.

Only 17 percent of Florida's high-spending districts are in the top third in achievement. More dollars corresponded to higher student achievement in just 16 states.

In five states, including Florida, more money predicted slightly lower achievement. Less-productive districts also spend more on administration.

Efficiencies vary widely within states. Some school districts are far more productive without regard to funding.

Data is poor: Without good data, school districts are flying blind, unable to determine which programs work.

Focus is key: Highly productive districts are relentlessly focused on achievement.

### *Questions on data*

Theratings pass the smell test. For instance, Clay County's top score reflects the fact that it does not have a deep tax base. Yet Clay has an impressive number of schools with A grades.

By the same token, the study shows that other urban school districts in Florida do better on the productivity scale than Duval County.

The researchers warn about drawing too many conclusions. "Our measures are far from perfect," they wrote.

In fact, Tim Ballentine, executive director of the Instructional Research and Accountability Office in the Duval County public schools, noted that the researchers used generic data.

He prefers a study from Educational Research Strategies that will include contact with each school district to make sure comparisons are valid.

Now, more than ever, taxpayers need to know that money is well spent.

This data should be a warning sign. Further study is warranted.

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## **Lake to approve \$50K training on new teacher evaluation system**

Orlando Sentinel

By: Erica Rodriguez

July, 8 2011

[http://blogs.orlandosentinel.com/news\\_education\\_edblog/2011/07/lake-to-approve-50k-training-on-new-teacher-evaluation-system.html](http://blogs.orlandosentinel.com/news_education_edblog/2011/07/lake-to-approve-50k-training-on-new-teacher-evaluation-system.html)

Monday the Lake County School Board will likely approve a \$50,000 contract with Learning Sciences International to train about 250 educators on a new teacher evaluation system.

The Florida Department of Education partnered with the Pennsylvania-based performance management group to offer districts the evaluation method designed by Robert Marzano. The Lake School Board approved the method in May as part of the state's requirement to revamp teacher evaluations.

The method, known as the Marzano Art and Science of Teaching Teacher Evaluation Model, grades teachers on 60 detailed points. Some points include demonstrating "withitness" and chunking content into "digestible bites." The system, based on thousands of studies and decades of work, is directly related to improving student performance according to the evaluation's website. The evaluation only measures half of teacher quality and the other half will come from standardized test scores thanks to the recently passed merit-pay bill.

You can see more of the Marzano evaluation points courtesy of the Lake County Education Association: [part 1](#) and [part 2](#).

If approved, training will be offered from mid-July until October. The training will be paid for out of the district's \$4 million Race to the Top grant award.

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## **STATE NEWS**

### **Highly rated instructors go beyond teaching to the standardized test**

Los Angeles Times

By: Teresa Watanabe

July 11, 2011

<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-test-prep-20110711.0.6013087.story>

*Some Southern California teachers are finding ways to keep creativity in the lesson plan even as they prepare their students for standardized tests.*

Even as the annual state testing season bore down on her this spring, fourth-grade teacher Jin Yi barely bothered with test prep materials. The Hobart Boulevard Elementary School teacher used to spend weeks with practice tests but found they bored her students.

Instead, she engages them with hands-on lessons, such as measuring their arms and comparing that data to solve above-grade-level subtraction problems.

"I used to spend time on test prep because I felt pressured to do it," said Yi, who attended Hobart in Koreatown herself and returned a decade ago to teach. "But I think it's kind of a waste of time. The students get bored and don't take it seriously and it defeats the purpose."

Yi's approach seems to work: She is rated "highly effective" in a value-added analysis by The Times based on her students' standardized test scores in English and math. She also ranks among the Los Angeles Unified School District's top 100 third-, fourth- and fifth-grade teachers in English in that analysis.

Who says students need "drill and kill" exercises to raise their test scores?

The pressure to improve student test performance in California and across the country often meets with disdain from teachers who say they are compelled to throw out creativity and "teach to the test." The phrase is usually code for teachers who are forced to abandon creativity and focus exclusively on areas tested — reading, writing and math. That, critics say, shortchanges students of such other important subjects as art, history and even science in some grades.

A.J. Duffy, former president of United Teachers Los Angeles, for instance, dismisses the weeks before spring testing as "Bubbling-In 101," a reference to class time spent teaching students how to select correct answers.

Visits with Yi and other successful teachers around Los Angeles County, however, suggest that innovative teaching and rich classroom experiences need not be sacrificed in the quest for better test scores. But it's not easy to have it all. Several teachers interviewed said they spend hours of extra planning time and hundreds of dollars to create more interesting lessons. They say they must be supremely organized and strict enforcers of classroom rules. And some quietly skirt official district schedules to run with their own approaches.

Next door to Yi, Hobart fifth-grade teacher Rafe Esquith has cut down L.A. Unified's prescribed reading program from three hours a day to 75 minutes, saying his students can work on reading comprehension, vocabulary and other skills through other subjects. That opens up time to learn physics by building model roller coasters and rockets and to grasp history with Ken Burns documentaries. His students work on long-term art projects, perform Shakespeare and learn musical instruments.

"To teach all of the lessons they want us to teach using the official district schedule is impossible — it can't be done," said Esquith, who is rated "highly effective" by the Times and has won numerous national teaching awards. "Teachers have to finagle

the schedule."

Esquith and Yi also bemoaned the increasing focus on testing and sympathized with frustrated colleagues.

At Los Angeles Elementary School in the Pico-Union neighborhood, fourth-grade teacher Maria Duarte lamented the loss of time to teach science — her favorite subject and one that she said most interests her students. Over the years, the time for that subject has dropped from 2.5 days a week to 1.5 days a week in favor of language arts and math. One casualty was a popular experiment growing radishes that Duarte said taught critical thinking and research skills.

Duarte was also rated highly effective in the Times analysis. Under value-added, a student's past test performance is compared with his or her current progress to measure whether teachers added — or subtracted — value to their students' academic growth.

"Painfully, I decided I had to let that go," Duarte said of the experiment. "There's just not enough time — or we need to think of better ways to use our time."

In Monterey Park, eighth-grade teacher Janice Pirolo said she no longer has time to delve deeply into the curriculum or stray much from it. When she does, she falls behind.

When her school, Monterey Highlands, received funding to visit the Japanese American National Museum, Pirolo prepared her students by teaching them about the World War II internment of Japanese Americans. She also spent time on Martin Luther King Jr. before the national holiday named for the civil rights leader.

But none of that is part of eighth-grade social studies standards, and Pirolo fell behind. For a month before the testing in May, she abandoned the textbook entirely to focus exclusively on test prep. As a result, she got through only the textbook's fourth chapter by year's end.

"We have stopped reading the textbook, sadly ... but you live and die by the test," said Pirolo, a 34-year veteran who teaches social studies and language arts.

The nation's enhanced focus on testing began under the 2001 No Child Left Behind federal education law, which attempted to hold school districts accountable for student progress through mandatory annual tests. The law, which is under review in Congress, requires that by 2014 all students meet 100% proficiency levels in math and English — a target no one expects schools to meet.

Many educators see an upside to the national focus on student achievement, as measured by test scores, and have unapologetically instilled intensive preparatory programs. Alvarado Intermediate School in Rowland Heights conducts a concentrated test-prep program before the state exams, using assessment data to identify students who need to strengthen specific skills. The sessions are held after school to preserve electives, such as computers, art and music. Attendance is mandatory, with detention for those who miss and prizes for those who participate.

Principal Ying Tsao said she supported the move toward state standards and regular assessments. In earlier times, she said, teachers might skew toward language arts, say, while ignoring math.

Bruce Clark, Los Angeles Elementary principal, said testing has robbed educators of some flexibility, but he said the benefits of higher student achievement are worth it.

Not that there's no time for fun. Clark sheepishly said he "sold out" and held pep rallies to excite his students about the tests. Duarte motivates her students with a party and movie, bringing in treats to entice them to do well. Monterey Highlands has "March Math Madness" every year to pump up students with math-related scavenger hunts and "problem of the week" contests. To kick off the testing this year, Principal Joe Cash donned an apron and chef's hat to serve pancakes at a school breakfast — while asking math questions (How many pancakes does Johnny eat if he gets two pancakes each of the three times he comes up?).

Los Angeles Elementary aims to avoid last-minute cramming by requiring 15-minute skills sessions at the start of the day throughout the year, featuring questions similar to those on the state test. Duarte prepares her students at the beginning of the year with intense work on Greek and Roman roots of words and multiple-meaning words — areas of student weakness identified by testing data.

A different model is the UCLA Community School, a pilot school launched last year by the university and L.A. Unified in Koreatown. Teachers there are free to develop their own assessments. Kate Beudet uses an individualized reading test that she said is more sophisticated, allowing her to pinpoint a child's actual reading level and areas of weakness.

Beudet and two colleagues, who joined the staff from other L.A. Unified schools, said district testing requirements had taken weeks of instructional time, skewed teaching toward what was tested and led many teachers to rely heavily on worksheets.

"Teachers only want to teach reading, writing and math, because that's what's assessed," said Beudet, who teaches a second-

and-third-grade class.

To prepare for state exams, Beudet incorporated practice questions into work she did all year with literary genres, a third-grade reading standard. Using a test reading passage from an African folk tale, she read the book with her students and helped them analyze the elements and write their own test questions — which both conveyed needed skills and boosted their confidence, she said.

At Hobart, Yi figures she has spent up to \$1,000 a year designing more creative lessons than those offered by L.A. Unified. The district's fourth-grade reader presents only one chapter of "Mrs. Frisby and the Rats of NIMH," so Yi bought copies of the whole book to enable her students to read the entire story. She also bought materials so students could make stuffed rats.

Meanwhile, the project helped Yi's students practice a state standard: to read a set of directions and answer questions about them. She also wrote related vocabulary and comprehension questions. And Yi said that being able to read entire books has instilled in many a love of literature.

Not all teachers are willing to go to such lengths. Some of her colleagues have simply used test prep books all year, Yi said. But that's not for her.

"I enjoy challenging myself to think of better, different and fun ways to teach," she said. "I love to see the light of learning go on."

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## Online schools add teachers, students

Columbus Dispatch

By: Jennifer Smith Richards

July 11, 2011

[http://www.dispatch.com/live/content/local\\_news/stories/2011/07/11/online-schools-add-teachers-students.html?sid=101](http://www.dispatch.com/live/content/local_news/stories/2011/07/11/online-schools-add-teachers-students.html?sid=101)

The state's largest online charter school will hire 100 new employees - 75 of them teachers - as enrollment surges there.

The Electronic Classroom of Tomorrow, Ohio's first charter e-school, gained 2,000 new students during the past year. The statewide school, which has operated for a decade, now has an enrollment that tops 12,000.

That means it has more students than the Gahanna-Jefferson, Reynoldsburg and Worthington districts and nearly as many as Dublin and Westerville.

And its growth comes at a time when few traditional school districts are adding jobs, and some are cutting back. For example, Dublin schools are hiring 17 teachers for the fall to fill existing positions. Reynoldsburg is leaving about 50 positions vacant.

ECOT is getting bigger as online schools become more widely accepted, spokesman Nick Wilson said.

"When we started and for many years, there was definitely a stigma associated with online learning. I think each year more people are embracing online education as an acceptable way to learn, and it's become just another option for families depending on their needs," he said in an email.

About 30 percent of Ohio's charter-school students are enrolled in virtual schools. Charter schools are publicly funded but often privately run. Ohio has 27 virtual schools that enroll about 30,000 students. Seven of the schools serve students statewide.

Other large online charters are adding students and staff members, too. That's even with student turnover that typically is higher than at brick-and-mortar schools.

"You'd find the same kind of growth curve at Ohio Virtual Academy and Ohio Connections Academy," said Bill Sims, who heads the Ohio Alliance for Public Charter Schools.

"Online education is one of the highways to our public-education future. There's just too much happening in that arena for it not to be."

Ohio Connections Academy expects to add more than 1,000 students for the coming school year. The roughly 3,000-student school also will hire more teachers.

ECOT will hold a job fair to fill the positions from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on Tuesday at 3700 S. High St.

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## Effective tenure reform requires political, professional competence

Michigan Live

By: Peter Luke MLive.com

July 10, 2011

[http://www.mlive.com/politics/index.ssf/2011/07/column\\_effective\\_tenure\\_reform.html](http://www.mlive.com/politics/index.ssf/2011/07/column_effective_tenure_reform.html)

Gov. Rick Snyder and big Republican majorities in the Legislature could have taken the cheap way out and simply tried to abolish teacher tenure in Michigan altogether, as some conservatives wanted.

What did they do instead that prompted the Michigan Education Association to announce it would put its resources into otherwise doomed recall drives against GOP lawmakers?

They approved tenure changes.

Changes that were recommended by a Democratic majority on Michigan's State Board of Education, nominated for the ballot with the MEA's consent.

Changes that have already been adopted by Democrats in Colorado and other states.

Changes that are being encouraged by a Democratic president who has been endorsed for re-election by ... the National Education Association.

Alas, with a handful of exceptions, Democratic lawmakers characterized as shameful the four-bill package that seeks to require teachers to be actually good at their jobs.

From a policy standpoint their stance made no sense, given that parents in the most under-performing schools rely on Democrats to protect their interests. From a political standpoint it dilutes what had been a pretty effective message handed them by a Republican budget that turns state school-aid fund surpluses into cuts to local K-12 districts.

If cutting the per-pupil foundation grant is a bad thing for kids, why is it a good thing that a teacher objectively determined to be ineffective three years running -- and who failed when given opportunities to improve -- should remain employed? Or that an ineffective teacher should receive preference during layoffs over an effective teacher that has less seniority?

As with most legislation, whether the tenure bills crafted to gauge teacher effectiveness will itself be effective depends on the execution.

The legislation requires a new teacher be rated effective for at least the final three years within a five-year probation period to receive tenure. Tenured teachers who receive three straight ratings of ineffective "shall" be dismissed by the district, a late addition that replaced the possibility of probation. Building principals would have to concur on teacher placement.

Parents would be notified six weeks before the start of a school year whether their child's new teacher had been rated ineffective for two straight years. That's good for parents, but a headache for administrators consequently flooded by demands for a classroom change.

In Michigan, teachers currently are evaluated every three years. Under the new law it'll be every year. For teachers rated ineffective, administrators will be required to come up with individual development plans with improvement goals and the training to meet them. Academic results from students absent for more than 15 percent of the school year will not be included in an evaluation.

Teachers will be graded on classroom management skills, leadership abilities, rapport with parents and ability to cope with inherent pressures of the profession.

But by the 2015-2016 school year, half the score will be based on student growth. The elements that define growth will be crafted by a Governor's Council on Educator Effectiveness that has to report back by next April.

In Colorado, they called it the State Council for Educator Effectiveness. It defined growth as academic progress on standardized measures from one period of time to another, or student learning against academic standards.

The introduction to the council's report last spring, signed by Democratic Gov. John Hickenlooper, announced the goal of the reform effort was to "ensure that every student has an effective teacher and an effective principal. Colorado will now have common statewide definitions of teacher and principal effectiveness, clearer expectations for job performance, and consistent scoring guides to rate job performance."

Echoing the rationale behind the Michigan effort, the report said in the future an educator's tenure status would be based on "effectiveness in the classroom, and not on years of service."

Michigan's package recognizes the state has a moral and economic interest in the improvement of schools that receive the bulk of their funding from the state. And it adopts the national reform consensus that student performance depends on a quality teacher in the classroom.

Ensuring that happens in Michigan requires fair, objective standards competently applied by administrators committed to professional development. Can, for example, a cash-strapped district with two principals in four buildings accurately evaluate 80 teachers every year?

Get this wrong and good teachers will be punished. Or the not-so-good ones will be socially promoted, along with their students.

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## **Lynch gets bill changing NH teacher tenure rules**

Associated Press

By: Staff

July 10, 2011

[http://www.boston.com/news/local/new\\_hampshire/articles/2011/07/10/lynch\\_gets\\_bill\\_changing\\_nh\\_teacher\\_tenure\\_rules/?rss\\_id=Boston.com+--+Latest+news](http://www.boston.com/news/local/new_hampshire/articles/2011/07/10/lynch_gets_bill_changing_nh_teacher_tenure_rules/?rss_id=Boston.com+--+Latest+news)

CONCORD, N.H.—New Hampshire teachers who haven't worked for their school district for three consecutive years as of July 1 would have to wait two more years to win tenure under a bill on Gov. John Lynch's desk.

Lynch has until midnight Wednesday to act on the bill that also makes changes in the appeal process for teachers whose contracts are not renewed.

They first must appeal to the local school board. If not satisfied by the local board's decision, they could either appeal to the state Board of Education or through the grievance process if one is in their union contract. They could no longer appeal through

both avenues.

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## Walker, education leaders seek new school evaluation system

Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

By: Alan J. Borsuk

July 9, 2011

<http://www.jsonline.com/news/education/125270508.html>

*New standards would replace federally imposed system viewed as a failure*

A system of clear, plentiful and sophisticated information for judging the quality of almost every school in Wisconsin, replacing a system that leaves a lot to be desired on those fronts - that is the goal of a collaboration that includes Gov. Scott Walker, state Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Evers and leaders of eight statewide education organizations.

Walker and Evers said Friday that they will seek approval from the U.S. Department of Education to allow the new school accountability system to replace the decade-old, federally imposed one they label as broken.

They want at least a first version of the new system to be ready by spring and to apply it to outcomes for schools in the 2011-'12 school year.

The new accountability program would include every school that accepts publicly funded students, which means that private schools in the state-funded voucher program would, for the first time, be subject to the same rules as public schools for making a wealth of data available to the public. Charter schools and virtual schools also would participate.

The drive to create a new reporting system is part of a broader array of initiatives on which Walker and Evers are cooperating and finding agreement, including development of a new system of standardized tests, a databank with information on every student in the state, and potentially far-reaching changes in how teachers are evaluated, paid, and, in some cases, fired.

With the end - at least for now - of the bitter battle over cutting school budgets and squelching collective bargaining for teachers, Walker is wading into the nonfinancial issues of school life. The results could go far to remake the way schools are run, the way children are taught, and what parents can know and can choose for their children's education.

Democrats and teachers union officials, none of whom signed on to the new collaboration, remain skeptical of Walker.

The degree to which Walker and Evers are collaborating seemed unlikely even a few weeks ago, when Evers, whose election in 2009 was backed by teachers unions, asserted himself as a leading opponent of the conservative Republican governor's budget positions.

Walker said in an interview, "I think there's a strong bond we're building with Superintendent Evers, because there is a strong sense of wanting to have good outcomes."

Evers said in a separate interview: "Basically, I've taken the position I'll challenge and disagree with the governor when necessary, but I also think all of us, including him and me, owe it to the students of Wisconsin to find common ground in certain areas and work together. I think kind of that's where we're at right now."

### *Democrats, union wary*

Mary Bell, president of the Wisconsin Education Association Council, said that her group declined to sign on to the plan for now, because her teachers union hasn't been consulted about it and remains wary of Walker.

"It seems pretty basic that for the last six months the governor has been intent on defunding public schools, disrespecting teachers and busting unions," Bell said, adding her group needed trust to collaborate. "We don't have any right now."

Bell said her group agrees with some of the stated goals of the plan but despite Evers' involvement will need time to decide whether to get involved.

"The work is valuable. I don't know I trust the process," Bell said.

Rep. Sony Pope-Roberts (D-Middleton), the ranking member of the Assembly Education Committee, said she deeply distrusted Walker's motives, adding that she had not "heard a peep" about the plan.

Pope-Roberts said that she believes the proposal is an attempt by Walker to win back voters after dealing with a budget shortfall by cutting state aid to education by nearly \$800 million over two years.

"He's just undermined public education, and he's just realized that doesn't sell real well," Pope-Roberts said. "This is a disingenuous effort to make him look like he cares about public education. I'm very skeptical."

Walker and Evers released a letter that they and the eight education leaders had signed on their goals for the accountability program, along with a memo on how they would proceed with the task.

"Starting this summer, we have agreed to work collaboratively to develop a new accountability system focused on graduating every child ready for college or career," the letter says. "Over the coming weeks and months, we will work together to develop a model that is right for Wisconsin."

### *Key projects*

The context for the accountability plan is important. It includes several projects already under way, some items that drew almost no attention in the new state budget and planning efforts in early stages. A partial list:

The budget includes \$15 million to launch a student information system that would put in the state's hands almost all the information now in the office of your typical school or school district, including every student's grades, what courses they took and attendance information. That would include students in charter schools and students using vouchers in private schools. Walker and Evers describe the data system as a key to getting better information on how students are doing and what is working in schools. Evers also said it would provide some "economies of scale" in record keeping that could save local schools money. He called the system "a real step in the right direction."

Wisconsin is working with more than 30 states to develop a new generation of standardized tests to measure student progress. New Wisconsin tests are intended for use beginning in the 2014-'15 school year. They would replace the widely disrespected Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts Examination, which will be used for three more school years. The new tests are intended to offer better analysis of student performance, while providing results quickly. Walker is supportive of the work Evers and the state Department of Public Instruction have done.

Although some conservatives nationwide have criticized the "common core" school standards movement, Walker and Wisconsin Republicans appear to be holding steady in support of Wisconsin's participation. Wisconsin, at Evers' initiative, was one of the first states to join the initiative. Wisconsin is regarded widely as having inadequate standards for what students are expected to learn in major subjects. If the Common Core effort is successful, it will, in effect, raise the bar for what students are expected to achieve.

Walker launched and is actively chairing a "Read to Lead" task force with the goal of increasing the percentage of students who are proficient in reading, especially young, low income students. Evers is vice chair, and the two say proposals are expected by fall. Likely targets include improving college and university training for students who teach reading, and requiring reading teachers, as part of their licensing process, to show good skills.

The DPI is developing "educator effectiveness" proposals that could lead to a statewide system of evaluating principals and teachers, including using student progress data. The evaluations could play major roles in determining teacher pay, including better pay for those who are rated highly. They also could affect decisions such as whether to fire teachers or whom to let go in layoff situations.

### *Differences remain*

Walker and Evers are not in agreement on many matters, even related to these initiatives. Walker, for example, would like to see every school in Wisconsin given a grade as the result of the accountability process. That was done in Florida by then-Gov. Jeb Bush about a decade ago, and Walker is a fan of Bush's education ideas. Evers has not agreed to the idea of giving grades - and is not such a fan of Bush's thinking.

Charter schools across Wisconsin have been part of the state's accountability system, including publicly reporting WKCE results, but that has not been the case until now for voucher schools. In the past, voucher advocates have resisted public disclosure of a range of information.

This past year, the more than 100 private schools in Milwaukee that use state money to enroll more than 20,000 students were required to disclose how their students performed on the state tests. The answer: Not any better than Milwaukee Public Schools students.

Now, Walker says, he supports including in the accountability process "essentially any student who is supported in any way by public funds."

Asked in an interview whether more needs to be done about voucher schools with poor results, Walker said, "Absolutely." He said he would do that by giving parents information from the new accountability system and letting them make their own decisions.

Jim Bender, incoming president of School Choice Wisconsin, said his voucher schools group was in favor of the basic principles of the plan, including requiring more accountability for private schools receiving public support. He said his group wants the state to have better data that will allow the best practices from all schools, public and private, to be shared and duplicated.

"This is a very good starting point," Bender said.

The letter announcing the school accountability effort was signed by leaders of the Wisconsin Association of School Boards, Wisconsin Charter Schools Association, Wisconsin Council of Religious and Independent Schools, Association of Wisconsin School Administrators, School Choice Wisconsin, Wisconsin Council of Administrators of Special Services, Wisconsin Association of School District Administrators, and Wisconsin Association of School Business.

It also was signed by the chairs of both education committees in the Legislature, Sen. Luther Olsen (R-Ripon) and Rep. Steve Kestell (R-Elkhart Lake).

It was not signed by any Democratic legislators.

Pope-Roberts said she would participate in the effort and supported elements such as ensuring voucher school accountability. But she said measuring the results of schools and teachers wouldn't produce success if schools don't have enough resources.

"You can weigh your pig every day but if you don't feed it, it's not going to grow," she said.

*Alan J. Borsuk is senior fellow in law and public policy at Marquette University Law School. Journal Sentinel reporter Jason Stein contributed to this report from Madison.*

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