

Humphries Long on Blame, Short on Facts

Written by Kathleen Vinehout, State Senator 31st District
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<http://newiproggressive.com/images/stories/S5/education-s5.jpg>



John Humphries, a candidate for State Superintendent of Public Instruction, has been creating conspiracy theories that school report cards are rigged. Sen. Kathleen Vinehout examines his false claims related to changes to the School Report Cards.

MADISON - Recent voucher-convert **John Humphries** has been busy spending his days writing pieces for Right Wisconsin, retweeting voucher leaders, and creating conspiracy theories that school report cards are rigged.

But here is the problem: the report card changes were proposed by Gov. Walker and passed by the Republican legislative majorities--not the Department of Public Instruction (DPI).

Gov. Walker's [February 2015 Budget in Brief](#) says that report card changes will "improve transparency and authenticity by using g letter grades as well as weighting school performance to account for student poverty rates, students disabilities and the length of time a school has had to influence a student's academic progress."

The Governor proposed these changes, and it turns out there was a powerful voice behind the scenes: School Choice Wisconsin chief lobbyist **Jim Bender**.

Bruce Murphy's Urban Milwaukee recently [reported](#) "one reason [Bender's] group was able to take the lead is because of his clout in the Capitol."

He quotes Bender saying, "In working with legislators to improve [the report card], we certainly took the lead.... If there was no choice program, we would likely have the old system" of report cards.

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Just the Facts: the Governor proposed these changes, championed by School Choice Wisconsin, and adopted by the Majority members in the state Legislature.

Meanwhile, DPI provided feedback and analysis on the impact of these changes. The [Legislative Fiscal Bureau budget paper](#) on accountability outlined the potential impact of report card changes on urban and rural schools, based on DPI's analysis.

DPI also provided this information to legislators on the Education related committees. They worked with lawmakers on both sides of the aisle to pass a bill correcting report card drafting and calculation errors adopted in the budget. Hardly seems like DPI is a villain in this story.

To paraphrase the Statesman Senator John Patrick Moynihan: You can have your own opinion, but not your own facts.