



# State of Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

**Elizabeth Burmaster, State Superintendent**

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## Reading Update

### **New Wisconsin Promise**

Through the "New Wisconsin Promise," the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction continues strong focus on improving student achievement with a focus on reading and a balanced literacy standard that has all students reading at grade level.

Additional elements of the promise are: closing the achievement gap between economically disadvantaged students, children of color, and their peers; providing quality teachers in every classroom and strong leadership in every school; investing in early-learning opportunities through the four-year-old kindergarten, Preschool to Grade 5, and SAGE class-size reduction programs; increasing parental and community involvement in our schools and libraries to address teenage literacy, dropouts, and truancy; and providing career and technical education as a comprehensive strategy to involve students in becoming active citizens by better understanding their role in the family, society, and the world of work.

Find additional information at <http://www.dpi.state.wi.us/dpi/sprntdnt/nwp/nwp.html>.

### **Quality Educator Initiative**

New Education Program Approval and Licenses rules (PI 34) have restructured teacher education, educator licenses, and professional development for Wisconsin educators. The new system is based on the Wisconsin Standards with demonstrated knowledge, skills and dispositions for teaching, pupil services, and administration. Initial licensing is based on an educator's successful performance as measured against these standards.

Extensive information is available on the DPI Web site at <http://www.dpi.state.wi.us/dpi/dlsis/tel/watsnew.html>. Information includes:

- PI 34 overview and rules
- Development of licensing centers for educators not employed by school districts
- School district implementation of PI 34
- Program approval under PI 34
- Licensing under PI 34 - Initial Educator, Professional Educator, and the optional Master Educator
- Teacher, administrator, and pupil service standards
- Draft professional development plans

### **Reading Excellence and Demonstration of Success (READS)**

The purpose of this statewide initiative is to provide grants to local education agencies (LEAs) to enhance the use of comprehensive, evidenced-based literacy instruction with all students with a particular emphasis on reducing achievement gaps between economically disadvantaged students, students of color, students with disabilities, and their peers. Project evaluation has

shown small but steady improvement in standardized test scores, reduction of achievement gaps, and a lowering of special education referral rates.

The Fiscal Year 2005 application process was opened up to all school districts and CESAs in Wisconsin. Applications were accepted for three categories: Individual Grants, District or Consortium Grants (multi-school or multi-district), and Special Education Grants. Schools were asked to analyze local needs and enhance existing literacy programming to provide an expanded range of evidence-based instructional options designed to enable every student in the school building to achieve literacy success.

Proposals were distributed among DPI staff for review. A total score of 0-100 and rating of "strong", "average" or "weak" was awarded. Two or three readers evaluated each grant on eight required components. Criteria for evaluation were published on the READS Website.

1. Leadership team composition
2. Existing schoolwide reading programs
3. Evidence of need
4. Proposed program enhancements
5. Proposed professional development, collaboration, and technical support
6. Evaluation plan
7. District support for the initiative
8. Utilization of resources/budget

Final funding recommendations were made using the following criteria.

1. Reviewer rating--grants rated as "weak" were not recommended for funding
2. Priority category--high need and rural schools received priority
3. Geographic distribution
4. Adherence to budget guidelines

For FY 2005, 60 competitive grants were awarded involving 165 schools in 74 Wisconsin school districts for a total of slightly over \$1.9 million. Projects are implemented in Wisconsin elementary, middle or secondary schools. Find information about READS at <http://www.dpi.state.wi.us/dpi/een/reads.html>. Information about the 2005-06 grant cycle (pending funds) will be posted on the READS Web pages in winter 2005.

### **Reading First**

The United States Department of Education approved Wisconsin's Reading First grant, totaling \$11.1 million for 2003-04 and approximately the same amounts for 2004-05 and 2005-06. Reading First is part of the reauthorized Elementary and Secondary Education Act, also known as No Child Left Behind. Reading First is designed to assist schools in establishing reading programs for students in kindergarten through grade 3. These programs must be founded on scientifically-based reading research and aid in ensuring that every student can read well by the end of third grade.

Reading First focuses on professional development in reading; implementation of the essential components of reading instruction--phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension; and the selection and/or administration of screening, diagnostic, progress monitoring, and outcome assessments.

By spring 2004, 65 schools were participating in the Reading First program. Competitive grant awards per district ranged from \$3,500,600 to \$57,608 with Milwaukee receiving the largest award (comparable to its percentage of Title I funds).

Check the Reading First Web pages on the DPI Web site at <http://www.dpi.state.wi.us/dpi/dlsea/title1/rdngfirst.html>.

### **Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts Examinations--Criterion-Referenced Tests (WKCE-CRT)**

Beginning in the 2005–2006 school year, the federal No Child Left Behind Act requires all states to test all students in reading and mathematics in grades 3 through 8 and once in high school (grade 10 under Wisconsin law s. 118.30). These tests are referred to as the Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts Examination Criterion-Referenced Tests (WKCE-CRT) and will replace WKCE reading and mathematics tests beginning in fall 2005. Student performance on these tests is reported in proficiency categories and used to determine the adequate yearly progress of students at the school, district and state levels. NCLB requires schools and districts to ensure all students are proficient or better on statewide assessments in mathematics and reading by 2014, with incremental gains at least every three years. Assessment results must be disaggregated by race/ethnicity, economically disadvantaged, disability, and limited English proficiency. Students in grades 4, 8 and 10 will continue to be assessed in language arts, science and social studies as required by s. 118.30 Wisconsin Statutes.

The WKCE-CRT test reporting categories and items assigned to measure each reporting category are aligned to the Wisconsin Model Academic Standards in reading and mathematics with grade-level appropriate descriptors supporting learning expectations for tests administered in the fall semester. The WKCE-CRT reading reporting categories are: determine meaning of words and phrases in context, understand text, analyze text, and evaluate and extend text. The test design draws approximately 80% of the total score points from selected-response items and 20% of the score points from student-generated constructed-response items.

Students with disabilities will be allowed accommodations during these tests unless an alternate assessment is required based on an IEP process. Students whose English language proficiency as tested on state-approved language proficiency examinations is level three or higher will take the WKCE-CRT tests with allowable accommodations. English language learners with language proficiency scores less than three will take an alternate assessment. All alternate assessments are aligned to state standards.

Wisconsin educators have been closely involved in every step of the test development process: designing the test blueprint, reviewing all passages for the reading assessment, analyzing test items, and evaluating pilot tests. The WKCE-CRT reading tests will assess both literal and inferential comprehension using both paired and independent passages. The new reading tests will have extended passages, both literary prose and informational texts, as well as poetry and everyday texts.

Information about the WKCE-CRT assessments is available on the DPI Web site at <http://www.dpi.state.wi.us/dpi/oea/wkce-crt.html>.

## **Wisconsin Reading Comprehension Test**

Information below taken from July 13, 2004, DPI news release:

Good news in third-grade reading scores

“Our third-grade students’ statewide scores on the Wisconsin Reading Comprehension Test show good news for reading achievement,” said State Superintendent Elizabeth Burmaster in reporting 2004 results that included improved overall performance for all students and all student groups.

The percentage of students scoring in the top two proficiency categories (84.9 percent) was up 3.8 points from the previous year with 96 percent of the state’s 59,065 third-graders tested. Additionally, the percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced increased from 2003 across every racial/ethnic group as well as for students with disabilities, those who have limited-English proficiency, and those from economically disadvantaged families.

“We are especially pleased to see across the board improvement,” Burmaster said. “Reading is the fundamental skill that separates students who succeed from those who fail. It is essential to daily living and the foundation for future learning and lifetime success. That is why it is so important that we stay on course to invest early education through 4-year-old kindergarten and the SAGE program.”

Link to the full news release at [http://www.dpi.state.wi.us/dpi/dltcl/eis/pdf/dpi2004\\_100.pdf](http://www.dpi.state.wi.us/dpi/dltcl/eis/pdf/dpi2004_100.pdf). Find additional information about the WRCT at <http://www.dpi.state.wi.us/dpi/oea/wrct3.html>.

### **Additional helpful Web links:**

The reauthorization of Elementary & Secondary Education Act (ESEA) has many requirements that directly impact how we address the needs of Wisconsin's school children. Find information, updates, and numerous resources regarding Wisconsin's implementation of the various provisions of NCLB at <http://www.dpi.state.wi.us/dpi/esea/index.html>.

Scroll down the helpful list of Badgerlink hotlinks at <http://www.badgerlink.net/> and link to TeachingBooks.net (Requires free registration and sign-in), a great site that generates enthusiasm for books and reading by providing easy access to authors, illustrators, and exceptional book resources.

The ReadWriteThink (RWT) Web site at <http://www.readwritethink.org/> generated about 28 million hits during its first year. The site, which features research-based reading and language arts lesson plans, is generated by the International Reading Association and the National Council of Teachers of English with funding from the MarcoPolo Education Foundation. At no cost, the site provides teachers and students with exceptional resources for reading and language arts teaching and learning.

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