



State of Wisconsin  
Department of Public Instruction

Elizabeth Burmaster, State Superintendent

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**DPI Reading Report**  
**WSRA Executive Committee Meeting: March 2007**

***Adolescent Learning Toolkit***

A new DPI publication, *Adolescent Learning Toolkit*, is designed to help middle and high school educators strengthen and improve instruction for their adolescent students, specifically in reading and mathematics. The three sections of the toolkit address: 1) developing reading skills in the content areas, 2) teaching and learning in mathematics, and 3) using resources and tools to make changes on a school level.

As always, this publication would not be possible without the support of WSRA. Thank you for the development of this new toolkit to WSRA past presidents, Doug Buehl, Brenda Shearer, Pat Sowls, and Deb Zarling; WSRA members Sue Haertel, Dawnene Hassett, Sharyn Stumpf, and Lisa Wiedmann; and Deb Martin, cross-categorical resource teacher. This publication offers specific teaching strategies and resources to help educators strengthen their practice. The toolkit is available through DPI publications for \$30 in Wisconsin and \$45 out-of-state <http://www.dpi.state.wi.us/pubsales/index.html>.

**State Superintendent's Adolescent Literacy Task Force**

State Superintendent Elizabeth Burmaster will convene a statewide Adolescent Literacy Task Force. The purpose of the Task Force is to review state policies and current research and develop a comprehensive adolescent literacy plan for Wisconsin. DPI will continue to work with WSRA as we move forward to strengthen reading education in Wisconsin.

**Adolescent Literacy Summit**

The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction and the Alliance for Excellent Education <http://www.all4ed.org/> are planning a special one-day meeting on May 7 in Madison, titled *Reading and Writing Are More than Elementary: A Summit on Adolescent Literacy Instruction*.

This one-day Summit aims to build connections among the many groups and individuals working across Wisconsin to improve the teaching of reading and writing in the state's middle and high schools. It offers an important opportunity to take stock of initiatives and programs already underway, to coordinate among those efforts, to share information, to cultivate new champions for high-quality literacy instruction, and to build momentum behind Wisconsin's drive to create the most literate, well-educated citizenry and workforce in the nation.

Participation in the Summit is by invitation only and will reflect a concerted, non-partisan effort to include key representatives from a range of sectors, including Wisconsin's education policymakers, elected officials, business and civic leaders, philanthropists, social service providers, researchers, journalists, parents, and practicing teachers and school administrators.

Nationally prominent experts in adolescent literacy will be on hand to provide an overview of recent research findings, best practices in reading and writing instruction, and relevant developments in state and federal policymaking. A number of Wisconsin's leading educators, policymakers, and school reformers will share candid assessments of the challenges and opportunities they see for improving adolescent literacy instruction in the state, and participants will be given ample opportunity to ask questions, discuss pressing issues, and engage in informal networking.

Thanks to generous support from Carnegie Corporation of New York, there will be no charge for participation.

## **American Diploma Project**

State Superintendent Elizabeth Burmaster and Governor Doyle recently announced that Wisconsin becomes the 27<sup>th</sup> state to join the American Diploma Project (ADP) Network, a national effort that comes out of Achieve ([www.achieve.org](http://www.achieve.org)). The focus of the project is to ensure that every high school graduate is prepared for college or work. This grows out of the recent focus on national education standards. All tolled the network accounts for the education of more than half of the nation's public school students.

The ADP Network project brings together the governor, state superintendent, business executives, and college and university leaders working to raise the vigor of high school standards, assessments and curriculum and better aligning them with the expectations of postsecondary education and work. The website cites research which shows that an expectations gap exists between high school and postsecondary/work worlds.

## **21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills Leadership State**

Wisconsin has become the third state in the nation to join the Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills. What this means to Wisconsin is a collaboration with the partnership and involvement of PK-12 and higher education and business leaders to develop an action plan for updating model academic standards which will include 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, assessments, and professional development so teachers can utilize 21<sup>st</sup> century skills in their instructional practices. What are 21<sup>st</sup> century skills? In addition to knowledge in the core subjects (English/language arts, reading, mathematics, science, world languages, civics, government, arts, history and geography), the framework (found at [http://www.21stcenturyskills.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=254&Itemid=120](http://www.21stcenturyskills.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=254&Itemid=120)) calls for 21<sup>st</sup> century content knowledge that includes global awareness, financial, economic, business and entrepreneurial literacy, civic literacy and health and wellness awareness. Learning and thinking skills, information and communication technology literacy, and life skills such as leadership, adaptability and self-direction are to be included in authentic assessments.

## **Summit on 21st Century Skills**

The leadership of Competitive Wisconsin and the Wisconsin PK-16 Leadership Council will hold a Summit on 21st Century Skills on March 14. An impressive gathering of business, commerce, government, and education representatives will focus on issues critical to the future of Wisconsin's economic and educational competitiveness.

Participants will discuss the needed knowledge, skills, and dispositions of workers of the future in an effort to begin a discussion relative to state academic standards and proficiency levels to ensure they are consistent with 21<sup>st</sup> century needs.

## **Responsive Education for All Children (REACH) Initiative**

*Please recall from an earlier e-mail message to the WSRA Executive Board that the deadline for transmittal of REACH applications for the 2007-2008 school year is March 16, 2007. Link to application materials at <http://www.dpi.wi.gov/reach/grt-abstract.html>.*

The Responsive Education for All Children (REACH) initiative is a collaborative effort between the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction Special Education, Title I, and School Support teams. The intent of REACH is to help Wisconsin schools establish and sustain the capacity to make systemic improvement needed to reduce barriers to learning and enable all students to experience success, including students with disabilities. REACH provides a framework for the use of the IDEA Early Intervening Services funds and for implementation of a "response to intervention" (RtI) process.

All Wisconsin LEAs and CESAs are eligible to apply. Projects may be implemented in elementary, middle, or secondary schools. Approved proposals will meet specific grant requirements. Find grant requirements at <http://www.dpi.wi.gov/reach/grt-abstract.html>.

The total estimated available funds are \$1,250,000, and the maximum award is \$50,000 for district level projects and \$100,000 for consortium level projects. The Department, in its sole discretion, reserves the right to fund, in whole or in part, any, all, or none of the applications.

The estimated number of awards is 25 to 35, and the project period is July 1, 2007 – June 30, 2008.

Please recall that, dependent upon allocation of funding, the annual REACH grant cycle begins each spring when applicants complete the required application forms and submit them to DPI. Grants are reviewed and awarded in summer. REACH grant application guidelines and materials are posted at <http://www.dpi.wi.gov/reach/grt-abstract.html>.

For more information about REACH, contact: Kathy Laffin, Specific Learning Disabilities Consultant at [kathleen.laffin@dpi.state.wi.us](mailto:kathleen.laffin@dpi.state.wi.us) or (608) 266-2841; or Linda Peterson, Office Operations Assistant, at [linda.peterson@dpi.state.wi.us](mailto:linda.peterson@dpi.state.wi.us) or (608) 267-2063

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