



State of Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

Elizabeth Burmaster, State Superintendent

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DPI 2003-86

Wednesday, October 22, 2003

CONTACT: Joseph Donovan, Communications Officer
(608) 266-3559 / joseph.donovan@dpi.state.wi.us

Burmaster: Wisconsin's highly qualified teachers are the foundation for educational excellence

MADISON—State Superintendent Elizabeth Burmaster noted that Wisconsin was tops in the nation for having core academic subjects taught by highly qualified teachers under the federal No Child Left Behind law according to an analysis by the Associated Press.

“With 98.6 percent of our students having their core subjects taught by highly qualified teachers, it stands to reason that academic achievement in Wisconsin is among the best in the nation,” Burmaster said. “Our teachers are the foundation for educational excellence that puts us first in the nation on the ACT college admissions exam and at or near the top on other nationally administered tests.”

Overall, 39 states and the District of Columbia reported data on the “highly qualified teachers” provision of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act to the U.S. Department of Education. State percentages for highly qualified teachers ranged from Wisconsin’s 98.6 percent to Alaska’s 16 percent.

Wisconsin’s definition of highly qualified teachers requires educators to meet all of the requirements of the state’s licensing and teacher preparation laws—PI34: The Quality Educator Initiative—for all subjects and levels the teacher intends to teach. Requirements include, but are not limited to, earning a bachelor’s degree, completion of an approved licensing program, and a rigorous examination in the subjects being taught.

Burmaster noted that having highly qualified teachers in the vast majority of Wisconsin classrooms reflects several factors, including Wisconsin’s tradition of high standards for teacher certification, strong active professional teaching organizations, and high-quality schools of education. “Wisconsin has set the standard in terms of teacher quality for all other states to follow,” said Burmaster.

###