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**Wisconsin Social and Emotional Learning  
Out-of-School Time Case Study:  
Milwaukee Public Schools**

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**Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction**  
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# Wisconsin Social and Emotional Learning Case Study: Milwaukee Public Schools

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## **Introduction/Background**

### ***HISTORY***

In 2013, I found out about the Lions Quest Program at an After School Conference in California. In my school district our middle and particularly high schools were having many fights and issues after school. I was researching and looking for more structured programs for our middle and high school students. I inquired about the program and found that the headquarters was located in Oak Brook, Illinois and decided to pilot the program. We have been successfully implementing the program for the past five years in all of our high schools, traditional middle schools, and selected 6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grade in our K-8 after school sites.

### ***THE MODEL***

Students participate in large and small group inquiry-based and project-based activities using Lions Quest “Skills for Adolescence for Out-of-School Time” curriculum and “Changes and Challenges” student book. Activities include projects on building self-confidence, improving communication and listening skills, conflict resolution and managing emotions, violence prevention, problem solving, good decision making, and goal setting. Students read and discuss thought-provoking articles utilizing writing assignments to enhance language arts skills, and ideas designed to encourage family and community involvement. Students also explore personal and social responsibility by choosing and participating in a Service Learning Project. The school district agreed to provide all students that complete a service learning project through Lions Quest district credit for graduation.

### ***THE PLAYERS***

Each program is required to have a minimum of 20 student participants for the school year. We intentionally target the more “at-risk” student population to get a good mix of students.

## **Big Ideas From ...**

### ***INSTRUCTION***

Students meet 1 to 2 times per week with instruction from the Lions Quest Curriculum. The first semester is strictly focused on Social Emotional Learning (SEL) and community building amongst the students. The second semester is all focused on Service Learning, students contributing and giving back to their communities. Service Learning is student lead with their instructors serving as adult advisors. The students conduct research on their communities and vote to decide what project is most needed and will have the highest impact on individual community needs.

### ***ADULT***

At the beginning of the school year (September), each participating site must provide two staff members to attend training provided by a Lions Quest trainer locally. Each program has two trained instructors who implement the Lions Quest Curriculum at least one hour per week. A second training is held in January to focus on Lion Quest/district Service Learning requirement as the students start the second semester.

**SUPPORT**

I and a Lions Quest Resource Staff person visit and serve as support throughout the school year for each program.

**SUSTAINABILITY**

In the first few years the program way was supported by local Lions Clubs grants. The program is now supported by funds distributed from our local school district.

**Conclusion*****WHAT HAVE THE OUTCOMES BEEN?***

More positive leaders are emerging from the high-risk population and high-risk students are starting to view school in a different way. Overall attendance has increased, and there has been a decrease in fights and suspensions. Students want to do more Service Learning Projects than required. Over 600 students have received the required service learning credit through the Lions Quest Curriculum for graduation.

***HOW ARE THINGS DIFFERENT FOR KIDS?***

More students are taking advantage of more educational opportunities, such as applying for apprenticeship programs, researching and applying to college or trade schools. Students are being recognized by their school administration, teachers, and fellow students for their accomplishments, which increase their overall self-esteem. It has also built increased awareness and sensitivity toward others. Because of the impact of the community service learning projects, even the community is starting to view our students differently.