



**Wisconsin Improvement Program**  
**Handbook**

**Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction**  
Tony Evers, PhD, State Superintendent



# Wisconsin Improvement Program (WIP) Handbook



**Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction**  
Tony Evers, PhD, State Superintendent  
Madison, Wisconsin

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# Foreword

Our Wisconsin Quality Educator Initiative provides the foundation for preparing and supporting highly qualified educators in our schools. To raise all students' achievement and to provide children, no matter where they live, the best educational experience, Wisconsin embarked upon redesigning both the educator preparation program approval process and the process for license renewal. In 2000, Wisconsin legislators approved Wisconsin Administrative code PI 34. This resulted in the implementation of an educator preparation program approval process and educator licensing process that are both standards and performance-based.

The Wisconsin Improvement Program (WIP) offers strong teacher education candidates the opportunity to serve as interns in Wisconsin's PK-12 schools. WIP internships provide extensive and deep clinical experiences that enhance interns' preparation for their teaching careers. Wisconsin's students benefit by having more teachers to help them achieve, and Wisconsin's schools benefit by developing a strong pool of potential future employees.

Approximately 4,500 initial educators are certified and licensed annually under the Wisconsin Quality Educator Initiative, PI 34. Recognized nationally for our high-quality teachers, we are positioned to do even more, thanks to the collaboration of local school districts, teachers and administrators, higher education representatives, educator preparation program providers, unions, professional and school board organizations, parent organizations, and the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI).

As State Superintendent, I am proud of our commitment to student learning and strong teacher, pupil service personnel, and administrator preparation programs. Strong teachers and school leaders are essential to the success of our students, schools, and communities.

Tony Evers  
State Superintendent



# Acknowledgments

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# Overview of the Wisconsin Improvement Program

# 1

## A Brief History

The Wisconsin Improvement Program (WIP) was founded by John Guy Fowlkes, then Dean of the School of Education at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, in the late 1950s. The Wisconsin legislature formalized WIP as part of Wisconsin's education landscape in its 1987-89 budget bill.

Wisconsin Statute 115.41 states:

Teacher improvement program. The state superintendent shall operate a program to provide prospective teachers with one-semester internships under the supervision of licensed teachers. The program may also fund inservice activities and professional development research projects. The state superintendent shall charge school districts fees for participation in the program. Program costs shall be paid from the appropriation under s.20.255(1)(hg).

Wisconsin Administrative Code PI 34.22 states:

Intern Licenses. An intern license may be issued to a person assigned to a school system through an internship program approved by the state superintendent. An intern shall hold an intern license to receive a stipend from a board of education. The license may be issued only to a student recommended by the proper preparation institution authorities and who holds senior or graduate rank. A request signed by the district administrator of the participating school district shall be filed as a condition for the issuance of an intern license. An intern is assigned to limited instructional duties under the direction of a fully licensed practitioner in the specific field of internship. This license does not authorize the holder to substitute teach.

Two major initiatives of WIP are the teacher intern program and the funding of professional development programs for interns and cooperating teachers throughout the state. The internship program offers pre-service teachers throughout Wisconsin a chance to enter the profession with specialized intern licenses.

*Two major initiatives of WIP are the teacher intern program and the funding of professional development programs for interns and cooperating teachers throughout the state.*

## **DPI Oversight**

The Department of Public Instruction (DPI) is the agency through which WIP is implemented.

The Wisconsin DPI WIP director provides technical assistance to Wisconsin educator preparation programs and Wisconsin schools or districts regarding the development of internships, hiring WIP interns, and professional development using WIP funds. In addition, the director reviews and approves internship requests and addresses concerns that arise about specific intern placement.

# WIP Internships

# 2

## WIP Interns

WIP interns are preservice teachers enrolled in one of Wisconsin's educator preparation programs who complete an internship in lieu of student teaching.

## Length of Internships

WIP internships are full-time, one-semester positions in Wisconsin public and private schools, per Wisconsin Statute 115.41. Although interns are placed in their schools for full days, they may teach no more than 50% of the time over the course of the semester.

Interns should be on-site at the school five days per week and work the same hours as full-time teachers, as defined in the district's policy manual or teacher association contract.

## Interns' Workloads

Interns' actual workload will vary by internship.

Interns teach up to 50 percent of the time and spend the remaining time planning, observing, and conferring with colleagues. Some internships include co-teaching or team-teaching responsibilities; in these cases, one-half the time of the co-teaching or team-teaching duties counts toward the 50 percent teaching duties.

Below are examples of the "50 percent rule" in action:

**Example 1:** A full-time teacher teaches six periods per day in a middle school with an eight-period schedule. The intern teaches three periods per day. During the remainder of the day, the intern prepares for instruction and observes the cooperating teacher or other teachers in the building or district.

**Example 2:** A full-time teacher teaches three blocks per day in a high school with a four-block schedule. The intern teaches one block per day for the first six weeks. For the second six weeks, the intern teaches two blocks per day. For the final six weeks, the intern teaches three blocks per day. Throughout the semester, the intern observes the cooperating teacher and other veteran teachers during the periods he or she is not teaching.

**Example 3:** A full-time teacher teaches five hours per day in an elementary school with a six hour schedule. The intern co-teaches the reading and math blocks in a primary classroom for three hours per day, which counts as 1.5 hours of teaching per day for the purpose of the 50 percent rule. In addition, the intern teaches science for one hour in the afternoon. During the remaining time in the day, the intern plans and observes the cooperating teacher or other teachers in the building.

*Interns teach up to 50 percent of the time and spend the remaining time planning, observing, and conferring with colleagues.*

## **Stipends and Fees**

Interns are paid a minimum stipend of \$4,500 per semester by the employing school or district. In addition, the employing school or district pays a professional development fee of \$500 per intern per semester to the DPI.

Educator preparation programs (EPPs) pay the DPI \$200 per intern for membership in WIP. If an EPP has no interns in a particular academic year, it pays a baseline membership fee of \$200.

## **Intern Licenses**

Interns must hold intern licenses issued by the DPI. They apply for these licenses after they have received an offer for an internship from a school or district.

## **Substitute Teaching**

Interns may not serve as substitute teachers.

## **Unemployment Compensation**

Interns are not eligible for unemployment compensation.

## **Work Stoppage**

Should a work stoppage occur in an intern's school or district, interns shall be declared nonparticipants to all parties involved in the dispute. Interns will remain on a stand-by basis during the period of time that a school is closed as well as when a school is open but issues remain unresolved. Interns are not to be considered employees or members of the local teacher association.

## **In the Event of a Problem**

Problems related to WIP internships should be addressed immediately. Serious problems should be brought to the attention of all stakeholders, including the intern, the cooperating teacher, school or district administrators, the supervisor from the educator preparation program, and the campus coordinator at the educator preparation program. All participants should commit to resolving issues in collaborative and professional ways. However, should the situation be irreparable, the school or district administrator is responsible for making a final decision about the status of the intern and for informing all parties, including the WIP director, if the intern will be removed from the position.

# Roles and Responsibilities

# 3

The intern experience is an important component of a teacher preparation program, and all parties must strive to ensure that a supportive learning environment exists. The WIP internship is guided by a team that consists of the intern, a cooperating teacher, select school staff, and the educator preparation program supervisor.

## Cooperating Teachers

The cooperating teacher serves a key role in ensuring that the internship is successful. Cooperating teachers must meet all requirements specified by PI 34.15(6), which are:

- The teacher has at least three years of teaching experience.
- The teacher has at least one year of teaching experience in the school or school system of current employment.
- The teacher has completed training in both the supervision of clinical students and the Wisconsin teaching standards.
- The teacher has volunteered to serve as a cooperating teacher.

Cooperating teachers provide assistance to interns with:

- Planning for instruction
- Assessing students and using assessment information in instructional planning
- Accessing instructional resources
- Creating a learning environment in the classroom
- Evaluating lessons and making modifications for future instruction
- Developing new instructional strategies
- Collaborating with students' families
- Collaborating with school faculty and staff
- Getting to know the school or district
- Preparing for the edTPA portfolio (when required)
- Ensuring success in meeting all Wisconsin teaching standards

Cooperating teachers provide ongoing feedback to interns and complete at least one written intern evaluation. During the course of an internship, the cooperating teacher, educator preparation program supervisor, and intern meet to discuss the intern's progress.

*Principals are responsible for oversight of internships, to ensure that they are successful for all involved.*

## **Roles for Others in the School or District**

**School principals** ensure that interns have appropriate schedules and adequate resources and that interns and cooperating teachers have time to meet on a regular basis. In addition, principals ensure that cooperating teachers meet all requirements as outlined in PI 34. Principals also are responsible for oversight of internships in general, to ensure that they are successful for all involved.

**Leaders of the local teacher association**, when there is one, learn about internship requests and provide their signature to indicate support for the internship.

**Superintendents** are the statutory authorities responsible for WIP internships and they or their designees ensure that internships are aligned with WIP rules and policies and that resources are provided to make the internship a success. Under superintendents' leadership, school districts ensure that interns have obtained their intern license from the DPI, provide a contract or other agreement specifying interns' duties, and provide payment of interns' salaries and of professional development fees.

## **Educator Preparation Program Supervisors**

Educator preparation programs that sponsor internships provide supervisors who work closely with interns, cooperating teachers, and others on the internship team. Supervisors have experience and expertise in the subject matter areas and level of pupils for internships they supervise. They make a minimum of four visits to interns' school sites, to observe interns and confer with members of the internship team. Educator preparation program supervisors also ensure that they and the cooperating teachers produce a total of at least four written evaluations of each intern, and they coordinate at least two in-person conferences with each intern and cooperating teacher.

# The WIP Intern Hiring Process

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## Step 1. Development of a WIP Internship

Schools and districts interested in WIP teacher internships begin the process by creating the internship position. Some things to keep in mind when creating internships are:

- Internships should not be used to fill positions that have been previously held by licensed teachers or that will be held in the future by a licensed teacher.
- Interns should teach no more than 50 percent of the time over the course of the semester. (See the WIP Internships section of this handbook for more on the “50 percent rule.”)
- Internships must be supervised by a cooperating teacher who meets all requirements per PI 34 and who has adequate time to support the intern. (See the Roles and Responsibilities section of this handbook for more on the requirements for cooperating teachers.)
- Internships should be supported by the entire educational community.
- Internships should provide opportunity for interns to meet all ten Wisconsin teaching standards.
- It may be helpful to discuss potential internships with nearby educator preparation programs, but it is unwise to interview candidates before the internship has been approved by the DPI.

Some matters to thoroughly address in developing WIP internship positions include:

- Who is the intern’s cooperating teacher? Does that person meet PI 34 requirements for cooperating teachers?
- How will the intern’s schedule be set up in order to meet the “50 percent rule”?
- How will the stipend for the intern be paid? Will taxes be withheld?
- What procedures should the intern follow when absent due to sickness or emergency?
- How will the intern be supported via professional development activities, and which of these activities is eligible for reimbursement from WIP professional development funds?
- What information about the school, the district, and the placement will need to be provided to the intern? Who will provide this information? When?

*Internships should provide opportunity for interns to meet all ten Wisconsin teaching standards.*

## **Step 2. The Internship Request**

Schools and districts submit a request for internship to the DPI using the online internship request form, found at <http://tepd.dpi.wi.gov/programs/steps-in-wip-teaching-internship-process>. A password unique to WIP and assigned by school building is necessary. Contact the WIP director at [licensing@dpi.wi.gov](mailto:licensing@dpi.wi.gov) if the code is needed.

After the online internship request is submitted, a signature sheet will be made available on the next screen. This sheet must be printed and used to obtain signatures from the following parties:

- Principal
- District administrator
- Cooperating teacher
- Local teachers' association representative, when there is one

This signature sheet is then returned to the WIP director via U.S. mail at the address on the form or by scanning it into an email attachment and sending it to [licensing@dpi.wi.gov](mailto:licensing@dpi.wi.gov).

Upon receipt of the online internship request form, the WIP director reviews it and works with the school or district to modify the request if necessary. When the request is in compliance with WIP rules and describes an internship that likely will provide a successful learning experience for the intern, and after the completed signature sheet has been received, the director approves the request.

Internship requests for fall semester are due before the second Friday in August. Internship requests for spring semester are due before the second Friday in January. However, schools and districts are encouraged to submit their requests early in order to draw from the largest pool of potential interns.

Internship requests will not be approved if they do not align with the specifications outlined in this handbook. Many internships require modifications before they are approved. For these reasons, it is unwise to interview potential interns before internship requests are approved by the WIP director.

## **Step 3. Notification of Potential Interns**

Approved internships go into a data base accessible to WIP coordinators at educator preparation programs. Those coordinators notify potential interns of available internships.

The school or district sponsoring an approved internship may want to notify nearby educator preparation programs when they have internships in the data base, particularly if an internship has been approved close to the deadline for hiring.

## Step 4. Intern Selection

Potential interns apply to the school or district after the internship has been approved and they have been notified about the internship by their educator preparation program. Hiring schools or districts are encouraged to use interview processes similar to those used when hiring licensed teachers.

When an intern candidate is selected for the position, the school or district makes an offer to the candidate and notifies the candidate's educator preparation program. By participating in the program, schools and districts are entering into a bona fide agreement with the intern and the educator preparation program. However, schools and districts are encouraged to offer the intern a written contract outlining the details of the internship, the responsibilities of the parties involved, and how the intern will be paid the stipend.

## Step 5. Intern Licensure

After being offered and accepting an intern position, intern candidates apply to the DPI for an intern license. The link for this application can be found at <http://tepd.dpi.wi.gov/programs/steps-in-wip-teaching-internship-process> in the information for Step 5 of the process. Note that the intern license application requires a passcode, which is unique for each internship approved by the DPI; the WIP campus contact provides that code *after* candidates have been offered and accepted an intern position.

Someone in the hiring school or district—either a human resources officer or the principal at the school where the internship is located—should be responsible for ensuring that interns are indeed in possession of their intern licenses at the start of their internship. The DPI Educator License Lookup at <https://www2.dpi.wi.gov/lic-tll/home.do> can be used for this purpose.

*Potential interns apply to the school or district after the internship has been approved and they have been notified about the internship by their educator preparation program.*



# Professional Development

# 5

Schools and districts are expected to support their interns' and cooperating teachers' professional development. In addition, educator preparation programs are expected to provide professional development for interns who are candidates in their teacher education programs.

## Possible WIP Professional Development Activities

Possible professional development activities include but are not limited to:

- Attendance at conferences, workshops, or seminars. It is ideal for the interns and cooperating teachers to attend together if possible.
- Participation in seminars or workshops offered by interns' educator preparation programs.
- Purchase of materials for units taught in the classroom and remaining in the sponsoring school when the internship ends, including books, instructional software, DVDs, instructional manipulatives or games, and subscriptions for students.
- Purchase of professional books for interns' use.
- Participation in new teacher orientation.
- Participation in school or district-sponsored professional development activities.

## Reimbursement for the Cost of Professional Development Activities

Professional development activities that include interns can be reimbursed by WIP at a rate of \$225 per intern. Requests for reimbursement for costs incurred by interns, cooperating teachers, schools, or districts are submitted on Form PI-1692-A, which is found at <http://tepd.dpi.wi.gov/programs/wip-professional-development-funds>.

Requests for reimbursement for costs incurred by educator preparation programs are submitted on Form PI 1692-B which is found at <http://tepd.dpi.wi.gov/programs/wip-professional-development-funds>.

Requests for reimbursement for fall internships should be submitted by January 31 and for spring internships by June 1.

## Reimbursable Expenses

These costs for intern or cooperating teacher professional development are eligible to be reimbursed:

- Registration for workshops and seminars
- Mileage to and from workshops and seminars.
- Refreshments or meals provided during workshops or seminars
- Professional literature
- Instructional materials and books
- Stipends for presenters at professional development activities that include interns and are sponsored by either the school, the district, or the educator preparation program
- Copying handouts for professional development activities that include interns and are sponsored by either the school, the district, or the educator preparation program
- Costs of substitute teachers when interns and cooperating teachers are attending a professional development activity together during the school day

This list is intended to cover most reimbursable expenses. However, there may be other costs for which reimbursement could be provided. Contact the WIP Director with questions about unusual or innovative professional development activities *before* they occur.

## Rate of Reimbursement

Professional development activities funded by WIP shall conform to State of Wisconsin regulations regarding travel and reimbursement. Current rates are:

- Mileage: \$.51 per mile
- Lodging: \$70/night maximum (\$80/night maximum in Milwaukee, Waukesha, and Racine Counties)
- Meals:
  - Breakfast: \$ 8 maximum
  - Lunch: \$10 maximum
  - Dinner: \$20 maximum

Requests for reimbursement for out-of-state travel typically are not approved. However, requests for exceptions will be considered and should be made to the WIP Director *before* travel occurs.

## Districts' Contributions to PD Funds

Participating schools or districts contribute \$500 per intern toward the costs of WIP professional development. They are billed by the DPI each spring in any school year that they have had at least one intern.

This amount is distributed in the following way:

- \$225 per intern returns to the **intern, cooperating teacher, school, or district** when reimbursement of the cost of the intern's or cooperating teacher's professional development is requested.
- \$225 per intern returns to the intern's **educator preparation program** when reimbursement for the cost of the intern's or cooperating teacher's professional development is requested.
- \$50 is retained by the **DPI** to pay for statewide professional development of WIP coordinators at educator preparation programs.

Professional development funds must be used during the school year in which they are accumulated, always for the benefit of interns and/or their cooperating teachers. However, it is acceptable for other school or district employees or other candidates in an educator preparation program to participate in the same professional development activities for which the funds are used. For example, a district might use WIP professional development funds for a new teacher meeting at which four WIP interns are present as well as six teachers newly employed by the district, or a college might use WIP professional development funds for a Saturday seminar that includes ten WIP interns and ten student teachers.



# Frequently Asked Questions

# 6

## Questions From Administrators

*Where do I begin the process of requesting approval for my district's WIP internships?*

The link is available at <http://tepd.dpi.wi.gov/programs/steps-in-wip-teaching-internship-process>; see Step 1 of the process.

*How do I find my password for the internship request?*

Contact your district office. If it is not available there, contact the WIP director at [licensing@dpi.wi.gov](mailto:licensing@dpi.wi.gov).

*I accidentally submitted two online requests for the same internship. What should I do?*

Contact the WIP director at [licensing@dpi.wi.gov](mailto:licensing@dpi.wi.gov).

*Do I submit a separate internship request for each internship in my school or can I put them all on one request form?*

Internships that are identical but are available in different semesters (one in fall and one in spring) or in different classrooms at the same grade level or content area can be put on the same form. Be sure to provide the names of all cooperating teachers. Otherwise, prepare a separate internship request for each intern position.

*I have interviewed a student from a local university and believe she would do a great job at the school where I am principal. She has signed a contract for an internship with us—we are so happy to have her! Now, is it my next step to complete an internship request?*

Oops, you have the process turned around. First, complete an internship request and wait for it to be approved by the DPI. Then interview potential interns, select one, and offer a contract.

*Can an intern work in more than one school in my district?*

Yes. Especially in small districts, interns sometimes work in more than one building. In order for such an internship to be approved, it should provide a reasonable teaching schedule in accordance with the “50 percent rule” (explained in the *WIP Internships* section of this handbook). In addition, identify either one cooperating teacher who is qualified to work with the intern in both settings (by having appropriate licensure and experience and adequate time) or two cooperating teachers, one in each building. In the latter case, arrangements must be made for the cooperating teachers to collaborate in working with the intern.

*We had an increase in enrollment during the summer and now, in August, we need to add another section of third grade. Can I hire WIP interns to teach this section?*

No. You need to hire a licensed teacher.

*In May we had a fall internship approved by the DPI. Now, in June, I have learned that the cooperating teacher for this internship has taken a job in another district. What should we do?*

You can find another teacher in the same grade or subject area who is qualified to be a cooperating teacher, modify the internship in order to have a qualified cooperating teacher, or cancel the internship. Contact the WIP director at [licensing@dpi.wi.gov](mailto:licensing@dpi.wi.gov) about any of these steps. If you have already entered into a contractual agreement with a WIP intern, work with the intern's campus contact to ensure that any modifications to the internship will still guarantee a quality experience for the intern.

*Our district is not providing adequate coverage in physical education at all levels. We need to increase the amount of physical education offered each week in order to comply with Wisconsin administrative code. The School Board does not want to pay for another teacher. We will hire WIP interns instead, OK?*

WIP interns are not to be hired under circumstances such as yours, where an additional licensed teacher is needed.

## **Questions From WIP Campus Contacts**

*As the campus contact for WIP internships, I want to get all potential interns placed in May of each year for the following fall. Is it OK if I contact local school districts and encourage them to get their internship requests submitted to the DPI?*

It is important for you to have strong relationships with your PK-12 partners and to advocate for your campus's candidates as well. That might include helping local school districts to develop appropriate WIP internships and even reminding them about the process and deadlines for internship approval. Do be cautious, though, not to advocate that an intern candidate be interviewed or promised an internship before the internship has been approved by the DPI.

## **Questions From Teacher Education Candidates**

*I am a college student in a teacher preparation program and want to get an internship. What should I do?*

Contact the WIP coordinator in your program's field placement office.

*I am a college student in a teacher preparation program and have been offered an internship by a local school district. What do I do now?*

Contact your campus field placement office for the passcode unique to your WIP internship. Use it to get your intern license. Go to <http://tepd.dpi.wi.gov/programs/steps-in-wip-teaching-internship-process> and refer to Step 5 of the process.

*I am an intern. I am not having a good experience in my internship. What should I do?*

Your first steps are to talk to your supervisor from your educator preparation program and, if needed, the WIP coordinator on your campus. Take a positive, problem-solving approach to making the situation better.

## **Questions From Cooperating Teachers**

*I have been a cooperating teacher for student teachers in the past. Are the rules for serving as a cooperating teacher for interns any different?*

No, they are exactly the same, as outlined in PI 34.

## **Questions About Professional Development Funds**

*I am an intern. My cooperating teacher and I have selected software costing \$190 that I would like to use while teaching math in my placement. The school does not want to order the items for me in advance of receiving payment from WIP. Can you send me the check and then I will submit the order?*

WIP can reimburse you for expenses you, your cooperating teacher, your school, or your district have incurred in support of your professional development. However, it cannot pay for items outright.

*I am the office assistant for the field placement program at an educator preparation program. The WIP campus contact has asked me to submit form PI-1692-B in request of reimbursement for our intern/student teacher Saturday seminars. Do I understand that you need a list of interns who attended each seminar?*

Actually, we need a list of *all* attendees at the seminar. Of course, interns must be among those who attended.

*I am a cooperating teacher. My intern and I drove together to a conference in my car. Can we submit a request for reimbursement for the mileage to and from the conference?*

Yes, this is an allowable PD expense. You or your district can be reimbursed for the cost of attending a conference with your intern, including mileage.

*Can an educator preparation program's WIP professional development funds be carried over to the following year? We have not used ours and hope to use them next year.*

WIP professional development funds are for the benefit of interns placed in internships during the academic year in which the funds were accrued. They should not be carried over for the benefit of other interns the following year.