

News Release

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Grant awarded to DPI and UW to address achievement gaps

MADISON — Wisconsin was one of 16 states to receive funding through the National Center for Education Statistics' Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems (SLDS) Grant Program to advance research on the Department of Public Instruction's Promoting Excellence for All initiative.

The \$5.25 million grant will span four-years. It will support work between the department and researchers at the University of Wisconsin–Madison through the Wisconsin Center for Education Research and the Institute for Research on Poverty to further study promising practices that close achievement gaps among student groups.

“Providing our state’s educators with resources and evidence-based practices that we know help close gaps will set them up to succeed with all of their students,” said State Superintendent Tony Evers. “Reaching all students, regardless of their circumstances, is a labor of love and I am confident that if we give our educators the appropriate tools, they will rise to the task.”

The grant funding will be used to build on the department’s [Promoting Excellence for All](#) initiative to further study local schools that, through data-driven analysis, are demonstrating success closing achievement gaps and to identify the classroom practices they use. Promoting Excellence for All was expanded this year thanks to the state superintendent’s Parent Advisory Council report on [family and community engagement](#) and the creation of [e-learning modules](#) to train educators and the public how to use identified strategies to close gaps. Wisconsin’s SLDS grant will build on this work by

- researching the needs of practitioners,
- developing a method for evaluating the evidence base of resources to address a given need, and
- curating a library of findings presented in terms relevant to school and district staff.

“The reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act has given Wisconsin and its schools an opportunity to use local solutions that work best for our students and communities,” continued Evers. “However, closing the achievement gaps that exist between racial groups, impoverished students, and for our students with

(more)

disabilities when compared to their peers, remains the civil rights issue of our time. We must succeed in this important work.”

The SLDS Grant Program through the Institute of Education Sciences with the U.S. Department of Education has been awarding funds since 2005 to states and territories. Funds are used to improve longitudinal data systems, with this year’s focus specifically on how data is used to inform decision-making. The DPI has successfully competed in and won three previous rounds of funding from this program — \$3.1 million from 2005-2009, \$5.5 million from 2009-2013, and \$13 million from 2009-2013, for a total of nearly \$22 million.

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NOTE: This news release is available electronically at http://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/news-release/dpinr2015_125.pdf.