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DPI program aimed at retaining special educators celebrates successful first year

258 new educators complete Special Educator Induction Program

MADISON — A program launched last year by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction aimed at tackling special education educator staffing challenges is celebrating the completion of its first year.

In its pilot year, 258 participants successfully completed [the DPI's Special Educator Induction Program](#), which offers support services to newly employed special educators. With a goal of developing new special educator skills and retaining them in the profession, the program provides opportunities to learn from professional personnel through a high-quality coaching program, ongoing professional development, and forming a network of beginning special educators.

“It is essential our schools keep high-quality, passionate educators in the classroom, supporting the growing needs of our learners,” State Superintendent Dr. Jill Underly said. “We should be investing our state’s massive surplus in increasing special education reimbursement, especially as schools encounter staffing and fiscal challenges. However, even in the absence of additional funding for schools, the DPI is moving forward with innovative programs like the Special Educator Induction Program, focusing on retaining educators new to the field. I am thrilled so many new special educators took part in the first year of the program and found so much value in its offerings. I look forward to seeing this program grow in the future as we collectively work to meet these critical staffing needs.”

[Data from the DPI's 2022 Educator Preparation Program and Workforce Development Report](#) shows special education as the area with the highest shortage area among Wisconsin schools. Of program participants who responded to a voluntary survey, 93 percent said they intend to stay in special education.

During the first year of the program, 25 participants were selected in each Cooperative Education Service Agency (CESA). The DPI intends to continue and grow the program, funded through an IDEA Discretionary Grant, for the 2024-25 school year. More information on the program can be found [on the DPI's website](#).

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NOTE: This news release is available online [on the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction's website](#).