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DPI-NR 2024-94

Monday, Dec. 9, 2024

Contact: DPI Media Line, (608) 266-3559, media.inquiries@dpi.wi.gov

DPI receives \$10M grant to improve youth mental health services

MADISON – The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction was recently awarded federal grant funding to help meet the growing mental health needs of Wisconsin students by increasing pupil services staffing capacity in schools.

The five-year, \$10 million grant was awarded by the U.S. Department of Education through its 2024 School-Based Mental Health Professionals Grant Program and supports school districts in building mental health staffing capacity. The DPI was one of 22 grant recipients across the nation to receive grant funding.

“With this significant investment from the Biden-Harris Administration, Wisconsin is poised to make a meaningful impact on youth mental health and meet the growing needs of our students,” State Superintendent Dr. Jill Underly said. “I am grateful for the administration in recognizing the urgent need to improve mental health services in our schools. Together, we will work to ensure every student has access to the support they need to thrive.”

Funds will increase the recruitment, retention, and diversification of school counselors, school psychologists, and school social workers through a multi-faceted approach, including extending online certification pathways from high school to post-graduate programming, developing a “Grow Your Own” initiative to attract diverse candidates, and expanding service delivery models such as teleservice to improve access to school-based mental health professionals.

This grant award builds on the DPI's previous success as one of six states selected to pilot the federal [2020 School Based Mental Health Professionals Grant Program](#). To date, this pilot project successfully reduced the ratio of students to school-based mental health professionals by 14 percent in participating local education agencies, leading to the hiring of more than 348 school-based mental health professionals since the 2021-2022 school year. Additionally, enrollment in nine University of Wisconsin graduate pupil services certification programs has surged by 487 new students over the last two years because of this initiative. More information on the 2024 School-Based Mental Health Professional Grant will be provided once available [on the DPI's website](#).

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