

Economic Recovery and Reinvestment

School District Funding Strategies to Support Early Childhood with ARRA Funding

Working Document 5/04/09

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Principles Guiding the Distribution and Use of ARRA Funds

Spend funds quickly to save and create jobs.

1. Improve student achievement through school improvement and reform.
 - o Making progress toward rigorous college- and career-ready standards and high-quality assessments that are valid and reliable for all students, including English language learners and students with disabilities;
 - o Establishing pre-K to college and career data systems that track progress and foster continuous improvement;
 - o Making improvements in teacher effectiveness and in the equitable distribution of qualified teachers for all students, particularly students who are most in need;
 - o Providing intensive support and effective interventions for the lowest-performing schools.
2. Ensure transparency, reporting and accountability.
3. Invest one-time ARRA funds thoughtfully to minimize the “funding cliff.”

Strategies to use ARRA Funding for Early Childhood

1. **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Special Education, Subprogram: Part B, Sections 611 flow-through grants and 619 preschool grants:** This funding is for formula grants to increase the federal share of special education costs. Website <http://www.dpi.wi.gov/pb/stimuluspackage.html> and on the Special Education website <http://dpi.wi.gov/sped/idearecovery.html>

Strategies to promote improved services to young children with disabilities:

- Expand the availability and range of inclusive placement options for preschoolers with disabilities by developing the capacity of public and private preschool programs to serve these children through the creation of community councils, informed referral networks.
- Provide intensive community-wide professional development for special education, regular education, and community teachers on topics such as: Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards, Center for Social Emotional Foundations for Early Learning, serving children with disabilities in community settings, ongoing assessment tools, differentiated instruction and learning supports
- Develop or expand the capacity to collect and use data to improve teaching and learning including purchase and training for district use of ongoing-assessment tools to measure children’s progress;
- Develop or expand the capacity to collect and use data to improve teaching and learning including program evaluation with tools such as DEC Recommended Practices Program Assessment, ECERS, or CLASS
- Hire coaches/mentors or contract for CESA services to provide classrooms with expertise in positive behaviour supports, inclusion, differentiated instruction/learning support or other priority areas.
- Obtain state-of-the art assistive technology devices specifically for young children and provide training in their use to enhance access to the general curriculum for students with disabilities. Develop mechanisms to provide this equipment for children receiving services in community settings.
- Hire child find/transition coordinators to handle referrals from community programs, provide summer evaluations, provide case management through the IEP process etc.
- Hire or conduct joint child find campaigns such as child development days.
- Provide parent leadership support and training for parents including Ready, Set, Go Transition Workshops .
- Expand PBIS systems and training specific to young children.
- Support collaborations with higher education to increase the number of teachers with appropriate early childhood special education licenses.

- Hire personnel, contract with CESA, or contract with community programs to expand community child find efforts such as child development days.
- Hire personnel, contract with CESA, or contract with community programs to expand the provision of parent education and involvement.
- Hire, expand hours, contract with CESAs for early childhood specific coordinators/program support teachers.

2. Title I A Recovery Funds for Grants to Local Education Agencies: The grant contains provisions for ensuring that children who are disadvantaged and enrolled in private schools also benefit from the academic enrichment services funded with Title I, Part A funds. **Website:** <http://dpi.wi.gov/titleone/arra.html>

Strategies to promote improved services to young children:

- Alignment of Title I prekindergarten programs with 4 K.
- Expanded learning time for young children through extended day, week or year programs.
- Provision of professional development to increase availability of high quality teachers.
- Development of a strategic plan to strengthen parental involvement in their children's learning.
- Provide support for training home visitors to engage parents and students in the learning process, and build connections between the family and school.
- Intergenerational family literacy programs such as Even Start or other similar models.
- Improvement of systems for evaluating the effectiveness of early childhood programs.
- Provide support for collaborative planning and training for representatives of school and community sponsored programs to facilitate transitions from early childhood sites to school.
- Coordination of efforts to build effective Response to Intervention (RTI) models through collaborative training.

3. Title I School Improvement Grants, Section 1003(g) Funds for Title I Schools Identified for Improvement (SIFI): The purpose of the this grant program is to provide public school districts with additional funds and resources to help them develop and improve efforts to support their eligible Title I schools. Implicit in these grants is the recognition that all Wisconsin districts have existing resources and programs that support the student achievement of its neediest school(s). These grants are intended to supplement existing district efforts and strengthen district support to SIFIs. **Website:** <http://dpi.wi.gov/ssos/arra.html>

Strategies to promote improved services to young children:

- The School Improvement grants go to Title I Schools Identified for Improvement and first used to directly address the subgroups/subjects etc that the school missed AYP in. If a SYF school missed AYP in an area such as reading or math, they may include 4/5 kindergarten or community programs housed in that elementary school in their improvement efforts.

4. Education for Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY): These funds are to assist school districts across the United States to implement the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act. **Website:** http://dpi.wi.gov/homeless/arra_faq.html

Strategies to promote improved services to young children:

- Hold child find activities with community agencies such as County Birth-to-3 programs and Head Starts to increase the identification and provision of services to young children who are homeless.
- Hire personnel to contact emergency shelters, transitional housing programs, independent living and street outreach programs, and advocacy organizations to assist with identification of preschool children who are homeless and who may be eligible for special services.
- Provide assessment and screening at community agency sites that serve the homeless such as emergency and transitional shelters to determine child readiness for school, as well as identifying children who are homeless and who may have a disability.
- Hire personnel to organize joint trainings between child welfare, early education and care, community agencies, and district staff on how to assist families with infants and preschool children who are homeless
- Hire personnel to research and create educational strategies to assist preschool children from homeless families.
- Fund transportation services to young children from homeless families to ensure continuity of services.
- Hire a specialist to work on community-wide Birth to 6 early education issues.

- Fund programs to allow young children from homeless families the opportunity for early enrichment experiences with community art programs, parks, public libraries, museums, and recreational services,
- Hire mental health staff to work with young children and their parents to address emotional and mental health care needs.
- Fund “in-home services” for families at emergency shelters and transitional housing locations
- Create mentoring programs to work with parents in mitigating their poverty needs
- Offer classes to help parents become knowledgeable about typical child development
- Offer classes to help parents understand child behavior and establish positive discipline practices

5. **National School Lunch Program - Equipment Grants:** This grant is for the purchase of school food service equipment by schools participating in the National School Lunch Program. **Website:** <http://dpi.wi.gov/fns/recovery.html>

Strategies to promote improved services to young children:

- Focus area: Equipment that allows schools to support expanded participation in a school meal program. (e.g., equipment for serving meals in a non-traditional setting or to better utilize cafeteria space)
- Strategies to promote improved services to young children: Equipment to better utilize cafeteria space for young children including Smaller tables/chairs or smaller size equipment like salad bars.

6. **Enhancing Education Through Technology (EETT):** This grant is to improve student academic achievement through the use of technology, to assist every student in becoming technologically literate by the end of eighth grade, and to encourage the effective integration of technology resources and systems with professional development and curriculum development.

Website: http://dpi.wi.gov/imt/arra_eett.html

Strategies to promote improved services to young children with disabilities:

- Purchase of technology and related programs developmentally appropriate for young children in 4K, 5K, and receiving special education services
- Develop technology systems that link school based and school early childhood programs in community based settings
- Professional development related to technology resources and system
- Curriculum development and systems that utilize technology to support ongoing assessment
- Purchase of other equipment that will support student achievement such as Smartboards

7. **Qualified School Construction Bonds (QSCB):** The Qualified School Construction Bonds (QSCB) provides tax credits, in lieu of interest to lenders who issue bonds to eligible school districts. **Website:** <http://dpi.wi.gov/sfs/qscb.html>

Strategies to promote improved services to young children:

- Construction of new early learning centers to house programs serving young children and their families from birth through 3rd grade.
- Rehabilitation and repair of public school facilities and community programs that service children with disabilities or 4K community approach sites in order to make buildings more developmentally and educationally appropriate for young children including age appropriate playgrounds and gyms; activity centers and furnishings; child size toileting and meal spaces.

8. **Qualified Zone Academy Bond (QZAB):** Through the federal Qualified Zone Academy Bond (QZAB) program school districts with low-income populations can save on interest costs associated with financing school renovations. **Website:**

<http://dpi.wi.gov/sfs/recovery.html>

Strategies to promote improved services to young children:

- Rehabilitate or repair school facilities, obtain equipment, develop curricula, and/or train teachers and other school personnel.

- 9. Teacher Quality Partnership Grants:** This program seeks to improve the quality of new teachers working in high-need school districts by creating successful and high-quality model Pre-Baccalaureate Teacher Preparation programs and/or Teacher in Residency programs for those qualified to begin teaching. **Website:** Available after 4/30/09.

Strategies to promote improved services to young children:

- Improving preparation of early childhood educators
- Teacher education partnerships with a licensed or regulated child care, Head Start or Early Head Start, or four-year-old kindergarten program.

- 10. Teacher Incentive Fund:** This fund supports program that develop and implement performance-based teacher and principal compensation systems, based primarily on increases in student achievement, in high-need schools. **Website:** Available after 4/30/09.

Strategies to promote improved services to young children:

- Pending further information on the program.