

Regional Service Network (RSN)

The Wisconsin RSN is an IDEA discretionary grant that was started during the 1984-85 school year to provide leadership, professional development and technical assistance services to all LEAs within each CESA.

Services provided through this grant are free of charge to all districts within the CESA area.

The specific project goals for 2013-2014 are as follows:

- **Goal 1: Advancing Educational Achievement:** Improve educational outcomes for students with disabilities by coordinating technical assistance and support to high-need LEAs through collaboration with discretionary grant staff.
- **Goal 2: Communication and Leadership:** Build Special Education leadership capacity to ensure that Special Education Directors in LEAs have the knowledge and skills to ensure compliance with IDEA and promote best practices for students with disabilities in their agencies.
- **Goal 3: Professional Development and Conference Attendance:** Improve knowledge, capacity, and skills as an RSN Directors to support goals 1 and 2.

In support of the State Superintendent's Agenda 2017, the DPI Special Education Team is pleased to align its focus with OSEP's vision for improving outcomes for students with disabilities through "**Results Driven Accountability.**"

The new framework in 2013-14 is based upon all IDEA Discretionary grants working in a more coordinated, systematic manner with the RSN Director leading the effort to improve growth in academic and career achievement for students with disabilities.

In 2012-13, RSN Directors began working with districts to target areas of need with respect to Indicator 1 (graduation rates).

Beginning in 2013-14, RSN Directors will led collaborative teams of discretionary grant staff engaged in identifying and supporting districts most in need of improvement in Indicator 3c (Statewide Assessments in Reading).

In the 2013-2014 school year, this team will reach out to the highest-need districts within their CESA and coordinate grant efforts in a comprehensive system of support for these districts.

The five chosen school buildings that participate in the work this year will receive a \$7500 stipend if requirements are met. More details will follow regarding assurances and requirements.

Staffing Issues for Special Education in Wisconsin

Current trends:

1. Shortages across the state in the following areas: School Psychology, Speech/language Therapy, Occupational Therapy, and Physical Therapy
 - Few applicants in our area
 - Competition from the areas down state and Minnesota offering hire wages
 - Competition from the medical field offering hire wages
 - Wages for School Psychologists are now ranging from \$55,00 (CESA 9) to \$65,000 (other CESAs) for new applicants just graduating from college
 - Average wage for new SLPs, OTs and PTs starts at \$65,000 in the medical field, therefore we tend to lose candidates to the medical field
2. Shortages in our area in Special Education Teachers, especially teachers for EBD, Deaf/Hard of Hearing, Vision Impairment, and Orientation & Mobility Instructors
 - Fewer applicants in general in our area
 - Only one college program for VI in the state and none for O & M
 - Many teachers getting trained in the more generic cross categorical programs, receiving less training in behavior supports

Possible Solutions:

1. Use of assistants for therapists.
 - Legal limits in the law for OTs & PTs: 30 students without an assistant, 45 with an assistant.
 - DPI recommendations for SLPs are 25-40 students depending on age and severity of the students. Generally 30-35 students are considered a full caseload.
2. Use of program support teachers to support the evaluation process in districts, CESA 8 and Middleton School District examples
3. Exploring competitive wages
4. Teletherapy options for SLP and limited for OT, however costly.
5. Use of WECAN to post openings. More teachers are beginning to use that system as their primary job search site.
6. CESA 12 CSWD Center is working with UWS to develop Special Education certification options and more satellite sites for classes away from Superior