

News Release

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DPI distributes \$1.9 billion to Wisconsin schools

Funds includes new mental health program, special education supports, general school aids, and transportation

MADISON – The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction distributed funding to schools today from numerous programs, totaling \$1.8 billion, with an additional \$144 million distributed during the week prior. Among the payments are the first from a new state program supporting mental health services in schools.

"This new mental health support is an example of what we can accomplish for our students when we work together," State Superintendent Carolyn Stanford Taylor said. "Our students and educators feel the tremendous need for mental health services in our schools. Now, our commitment to addressing this challenge moves one more step forward."

Aid for School Mental Health Programs was created in the 2017-19 state biennial budget in response to the large, unmet need throughout Wisconsin. In total, \$3.0 million is helping 89 public school districts, independent (public) charter schools, and private choice schools expand mental health services offered by school social workers.

Today's payments, which in total reached every Wisconsin school district, included aid from three programs that support educating students with disabilities. High Cost Special Education Aid totaling \$11.7 million will help 173 school districts and other agencies serve students with the highest needs. The department used \$2.3 million in flexible federal funds to bolster \$9.4 million in state allocations for this aid program. In addition, Special Education Transition Incentive Grants totaling \$3.0 million went to 360 school districts and independent charter schools, in proportion to the number of their graduates with disabilities who were in successful employment or education one year after graduation. Finally, the department sent \$1.8 million in Supplemental Special Education Aid to 11 small school districts where special education costs were high relative to district revenue. However, the primary program that helps districts provide special education services, Special Education and School-Age Parents Aid, has seen a decade of flat funding in the face of increased local costs. That program distributed its final payments for the fiscal year on June 10, in total reimbursing less than 25 percent of districts' eligible expenses.

Today, the department also provided \$12.7 million in High Cost Pupil Transportation Aid to help 154 rural districts with high transportation costs.

"We've been moving in the right direction on rural transportation and mental health funding," Stanford Taylor said. "We need to keep pushing on those areas, as well as special education and general

(more)

school funding, so our schools have what they need to give all our students the right start on the successful lives they deserve and that we all want for them."

The largest portion of today's payments, at \$1.6 billion, was the fourth installment of state general school aids for this fiscal year. General school aids account for approximately 79 percent of state funding paid to Wisconsin's public PK-12 schools. General school aids along with local property taxes represent the two largest sources of funding for public schools in Wisconsin; these two sources are constrained by each school district's "revenue limit," a strict cap imposed by state law on local school funding.

The mental health, special education, and transportation funding streams are among several of the programs providing aid this month which are considered "categorical aid." These programs, established by the Legislature, allocate a set amount of funding for defined needs or student groups.

The department sent payments to schools today from the following major state funding programs:

- Career and Technical Education Incentive Grants
- General School Aids (State Equalization Aid, Special Adjustment Aid, Special Transfer Aids)
- High Cost Transportation Aid
- High Cost Special Education Aid
- Personal Electronic Computing Device Grants
- Special Education Transition Incentive Grants
- Supplemental Special Education Aid

In addition, payments were distributed from federal programs and smaller state sources. Aid for School Mental Health Programs was distributed on June 10 along with funds from other programs.

Following are links to lists of recipients and aid amounts for the programs highlighted above.

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NOTES: Materials explaining our school funding system are posted at <https://dpi.wi.gov/statesupt/every-child-graduate/funding-reform>. This news release is available electronically at <http://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/news-release/dpinr2019-42.pdf>. Lists of districts and aid amounts for programs described above are at the following links.

Aid for School Mental Health Programs: https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/sspw/xls/FINAL_Payments_Aid_for_Mental_Health_Pgms_-_2018-19_Eligibility.xlsx

General School Aids: latest, adjusted amounts can be accessed under "Actual and Projected State Aid Adjustments" on the DPI's Aid Payment Adjustments page, <https://dpi.wi.gov/sfs/finances/aids-register/aid-payment-adj-exp>

High Cost Pupil Transportation Aid: <https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/sfs/xls/Final-2017-18-High-Cost-Pupil-Transportation-5-24-2019.xlsx>

High Cost Special Education Aid: <https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/sfs/xls/high-cost-spec-ed-2019.xlsx>

Special Education and School Age Parents Aid: https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/sfs/xls/SPED-SAP_Aid_Workbook_FY19.xlsm ("Payments" tab)

Special Education Transition Incentive Grant: <https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/sped/spp14-transition-incentive-aid-payments-2019.pdf>

Supplemental Special Education Aid: <https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/sfs/xls/Supplemental-Special-ed-2019.xlsx> (final, adjusted amounts listed in "Determination" tab)