



## STATEWIDE LONGITUDINAL DATA SYSTEMS GRANT PROGRAM

# WISCONSIN



### EVALUATION & RESEARCH

## Educators and Researchers Gain Greater Insight Into Wisconsin's Student Achievement Gaps

A fuller and more nuanced understanding of student poverty will help educators provide more effective support to disadvantaged students when they need it.

### Learn more

<https://dpi.wi.gov/>

<https://www.irp.wisc.edu/>

<https://nces.ed.gov/programs/slids/state.asp?stateabbr=WI>

Wisconsin educators see significant achievement gaps among students of different races and income levels. However, one of the most common approximations of students' socioeconomic status—their eligibility for free or reduced-priced lunch—offers little detail about students' home lives.

The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) partnered with the University of Wisconsin–Madison's Institute for Research on Poverty to explore data from multiple state agencies that could help educators pinpoint the factors affecting student achievement. Additionally, DPI hoped to show state leaders how administrative data can inform policy and help agencies provide the right support to students who need it.

### Researchers dive deeper into free or reduced-price lunch data and student poverty

The Institute for Research on Poverty maintains a data core with information from numerous state agencies and programs, including public assistance, child care subsidies, and incarceration data. DPI shared education data from its SLDS with the institute to analyze the education outcomes of students involved in certain social services programs or receiving public benefits. The results will help DPI staff and stakeholders quantify how much variation these factors cause in students' academic achievement. They also will show how much of that variation can be predicted by free and reduced-price lunch program participation data. With this information, DPI can determine whether the data already available to the agency and its districts are sufficient or whether it will need alternative or supplemental poverty indicators for future analyses.

Additionally, researchers are using free or reduced-price lunch data longitudinally to measure outcomes for students facing different socioeconomic challenges. Preliminary findings from Wisconsin corroborate studies in other states that suggest significant gaps between students who are persistently disadvantaged—defined as receiving free or reduced-priced lunch every year between third and eighth grade—and those who participate in the program intermittently. Both of those groups have lower achievement than students who never receive free or reduced-price lunch.

### Research findings will demonstrate the value of data to support students

The final results of the achievement gap study will be published as a research brief in early 2019, distributed to DPI stakeholders, and posted to Wisconsin's educator resource portal, WISELearn. In addition to sharing the findings at national conferences, researchers will host brown-bag presentations for DPI personnel and educators. Project leaders believe that a fuller and more nuanced understanding of student poverty will help DPI provide more effective support to disadvantaged students when they need it. This research collaboration also could pave the way for additional interagency data sharing to support Wisconsin's education research agenda and policy goals.

**FY 2015 SLDS Grant  
Evaluation & Research  
Priority Area  
\$3,135,008**



[nces.ed.gov/programs/slids](https://nces.ed.gov/programs/slids)



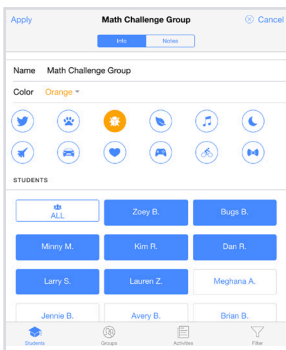
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### INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT

## SmartTeach App Delivers Classroom Data to Teachers and Supports Personalized Instruction



The SmartTeach app lets teachers view profiles of each student, create groups of students, assign activities, and evaluate performance based on a customizable scale.

### Learn more

<https://dpi.wi.gov/>

<https://nces.ed.gov/programs/slds/state.asp?stateabbr=WV>

**FY 2015 SLDS Grant  
Instructional Support  
Priority Area  
\$2,107,858**



[nces.ed.gov/programs/slds](https://nces.ed.gov/programs/slds)

The SmartTeach application developed by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) allows teachers to collect, track, and analyze classroom data to make instructional decisions and personalize learning for their students. Built in response to teacher needs, the customizable mobile app goes beyond response-to-intervention monitoring to help teachers plan lessons and tailor activities for students needing extra assistance as well as new challenges.

### Flexible, user-friendly design fits a variety of classroom needs

In survey of more than 600 Wisconsin educators, one-third of respondents indicated a need for a local assessment data tool. In response, DPI explored existing tools and decided to build a custom platform that could connect classroom data to local assessment data, replace individual teachers' spreadsheets, and be used while actively teaching. After creating a list of must-have features with an advisory group of instructional stakeholders, the app development team visited schools to observe and talk with educators about how they use data in the classroom.

Based on stakeholder feedback, the SmartTeach app was designed to let educators view classroom rosters and easily add, track, and evaluate information for each student. Teachers can view profiles of each student, create groups of students, assign activities to individuals or groups, and evaluate their performance on a customizable scale. Teachers also can tag activities with specific state academic standards and browse materials on related topics in the state's WISELearn Resources Library through the app.

The app's flexible structure—built on an open-source Ed-Fi framework—allows teachers to adapt it to their own teaching styles and data needs. Information in the app can be updated from a computer, phone, or tablet.

### Teacher feedback will inform enhancements to SmartTeach

DPI pilot tested SmartTeach with four school districts and incorporated educators' feedback into an initial round of enhancements. During the pilot, teachers used SmartTeach to take anecdotal notes on specific students, organize and tailor instruction for groups of students, and evaluate student performance on a customizable scale.

A second pilot is planned for 2019 to gather perspectives from users in additional districts ahead of the app's statewide release. The pilot will test enhancements made after the first pilot as well as evaluate SmartTeach's potential as a school learning objective documentation tool. Future enhancements based on user feedback could include integrating the app's data with local student information systems and adding data reporting and export functions. DPI also is considering creating parent and student accounts so that teachers can further involve those groups in supporting student progress.