



BPDD comments on Wisconsin Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) state plan (2017)

Comments submitted electronically into a Department of Public Instruction web form.

Accountability

BPDD agrees with Survival Coalition's public comments.

As is the case with all students, education is the foundation that prepares students with disabilities to become contributing members of their communities and a valuable asset to Wisconsin's skilled workforce. Poor educational preparation of students with disabilities translates into a lifetime of high unemployment (63% unemployment rate), lower wages (30% less than workers without disabilities), and reliance on public benefit programs (27% have incomes below the federal poverty line). Wisconsin cannot afford to leave students with disabilities behind.

BPDD recommends that DPI measure English Reading Language and Math scores as separate indicators, students with disabilities who take the alternative assessment are included in the indicator for academic achievement, proficiency of students with disabilities be calculated every three years, schools are held accountable for a four year graduation rate for students with disabilities, students taking the alternative assessment are included in the graduation rate, and that all students with disabilities are included in the calculation of the graduation rate.

School Improvement (establishment of long term goals)

BPDD agrees with Survival Coalition's public comments.

Research clearly shows that 99% of students – including those with disabilities -- can learn grade-level content in the general education curriculum and achieve proficiency on grade level standards with the appropriate supports. BPDD has worked with a number of school districts interested in improving outcomes for students with disabilities through our Let's Get to Work program.

Through BPDD's Let's Get to Work project, 12 school districts across the state tripled the number of students with disabilities with paid jobs in their communities in the first year of the project. After 3 years, more than 60% the students with disabilities that participated in the project have a paid, integrated job in their community. In many cases, it was not an influx of funding that was needed but targeted team approach between general and special education teachers and a culture shift among staff that improved outcomes for students with disabilities. The current timeline improving achievement for



students with disabilities is too long; a generation of students will have moved through school before 33% of students with disabilities will have achieved proficiency under this plan.

Employment or post-secondary education that will lead to employment should be the goal for all students, including those with disabilities. BPDD recommends that inclusion in general education and attention to transition services are two areas to pay particular attention to improving in order to raise educational outcomes for students with disabilities.

There is a strong correlation between general education inclusion/access to general education environments in high school and improvement in employment rates for students with I/DD. Research finds students with disabilities who have at least one paid job in the community before leaving high school are twice as likely to be employed after high school. Two work experiences increases odds of being employed after high school five-fold. Quality transition supports are key to success for a youth with disabilities. BPDD recommends DPI require transition age students to have paid community employment work experience as a transition service.

BPDD recommends DPI measure the following to assess school quality/student success: Incidents of bullying and harassment in schools, Overuse of punitive discipline through suspension and expulsion, Use of aversive behavior interventions (seclusion and restraint), Student access to effective career and guidance and counseling (Academic Career Plans), Grade 3 Reading Proficiency.

Educator Development

BPDD agrees with Survival Coalition's public comments.

Student Supports

BPDD agrees with Survival Coalition's public comments.