



WATERTOWN
UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Out of the Blue

*Excellence
for all!*

Webster Elementary receives \$24,000 grant

Webster Elementary School recently received a Universal Design for Learning (UDL) start-up grant from the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. The UDL framework helps educators design lessons that reduce learning barriers in instruction to help students achieve academic success. The goal of the startup grant is to build capacity in UDL principles within schools, with the hope that they become model schools.

Webster is one of 22 schools in the state to receive this grant. Each one receives \$8,000 annually for three years, and school leaders are given the opportunity to work with UDL coaches and professionals.

“Everyone at Webster Elementary School is very excited to have the unique opportunity to participate in training and implementing the Universal Design for Learning process,” said Brad Clark, Principal. “We know this will help us continue to support our students on the road to success.”

Universal Design for Learning is a scientifically valid framework that provides multiple means of access, assessment and engagement to remove barriers to instruction, helping to achieve academic and behavioral success for all. UDL comes from universal design in architecture that helps reduce barriers. For example, adding yellow sidewalk ramps on street corners makes crossing the street easier for everyone—not just for people in wheelchairs. The same idea applies when using UDL in education. The goal is to help educators design lessons that reduce learning barriers for everyone.

The first year of the grant will be devoted to teaching educators UDL principles and implementing them in two classrooms at Webster. Three staff members, Pam Brown, Nikki Hill and Desha Keuler-Pulkrabek will be the first ones to study the UDL principles and work with training professionals and coaches. They will spearhead the school’s UDL efforts and share their knowledge with the Webster staff. During the third year of the grant, teachers will open their classrooms for other educators to visit and observe UDL in action.