



WATERTOWN
UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
Out of the Blue

*Excellence
for all!*

Grant helps improve outcomes for students with disabilities

Three Watertown Unified School District schools are entering their third year of participation in the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction State Personnel Development Grant. The focus of the grant is to improve educational outcomes for students with disabilities. Through this grant, Schurz and Webster elementary schools, and Watertown High School, have developed building leadership teams. These teams include regular and special education teachers, and administrators, who implement professional learning communities to improve instructional practices and increase student achievement.

“Our teachers are seeing an increase in staff collaboration within the buildings,” said Kari Dean, a second-grade teacher at Schurz Elementary School. “The grant has provided us with a framework for increased teacher collaboration, in our grade level and across the school.”

In the past two years, each school leadership team has worked with an instructional coach to identify measurable academic outcomes in reading. Teachers have worked to develop common formative assessments to guide instruction in the classroom. One focus of the grant has been increasing family involvement, and families from each school have been surveyed to see how the staff can work with parents to support each child. In addition, school leaders are collaborating with various outside organizations, including universities, parent support organizations and other schools within the grant.

In the final year of the grant, the focus will be continuing to develop common formative assessments, which will guide teacher instruction. Teacher teams will be discussing student work to continue to reinforce key instructional benchmarks and provide added challenges for students who are ready. District leaders will use the work from these three schools to support the implementation of a professional learning community approach in all schools in the district.
