



WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF  
**PUBLIC INSTRUCTION**

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## **Achievement Gap Reduction (AGR) Program Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)**

### ***Current as of August 5, 2015***

We hope you will carefully consider all the information included in this FAQ to decide which program will work best for your school in the 2015-16 school year and beyond.

### **CONTRACTS AND ELIGIBILITY**

Can schools that do not currently hold a SAGE contract join the new AGR program?

No. A school is only eligible to participate in the new AGR program if the school was subject to a SAGE contract on July 3, 2015. [Wis. Stat. § 118.44\(2\)](#)

My school completed a five-year SAGE contract renewal application that was due in May 2015. Was the SAGE contract approved through June 2020?

No. AGR law prohibits the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) from entering into or renewing five-year SAGE contracts with any school. [Wis. Stat. § 118.43\(9\)](#)

Can my school use the five-year SAGE contract renewal application to apply for a one-year extension of the SAGE program?

Yes. DPI will accept five-year SAGE contract renewal applications as acceptable documentation for a one-year SAGE contract extension. DPI and the school board will still have to agree to a one-year extension valid through the end of the 2015-16 school year for the school(s) that had SAGE contracts expiring at the end of the 2014-15 school year. [Wis. Stat. § 118.43\(2\)\(f\)](#)

Once my school joins the AGR program, can it re-enter the SAGE program?

No. Due to a sunset clause in SAGE law, no SAGE contract may be entered into or renewed after July 3, 2015. Schools that choose to participate in the AGR program and sign a five-year AGR contract are no longer eligible to participate in the SAGE program. Current SAGE contracts are valid through the end date listed on the approved contract. [Wis. Stat. § 118.43\(9\)](#)

### **STATE AID ALLOCATION**

Will the statewide SAGE and AGR appropriation be the same as in past years?

The amount appropriated in the 2015-17 Wisconsin State Budget is \$109,184,500 (less \$125,000) - the same amount that has been appropriated for the last several years. When aid payments are calculated, both the SAGE and AGR programs, will be drawn from the same statewide appropriation at the same time. This means that both programs will result in the same per pupil allocation. [Wis. Stat. § 20.255\(2\)\(cu\)](#)

### **AGR REQUIREMENTS**

What are the requirements for the AGR program?

Contracts signed under the AGR program require participating schools to:

- implement one of three strategies, or a combination of the three. The three strategies include:
  - (a) small class sizes of 18:1 or 30:2 and professional development related to small group instruction
  - (b) data-driven instructional coaching for teachers
  - (c) data-informed one-to-one tutoring for students at risk of difficulty with math or reading
- report to DPI at the beginning of the school year which of the the above strategies it intends to use
- report to DPI by the end of the school year what strategies it did use

- set performance objectives that include reducing the achievement gap for low-income pupils in math and reading
- specify the formative and summative assessments the school will use to determine if it achieved the objectives
- describe its implementation of the program and report its objectives and its success in achieving them to the school board every semester

## AGR STRATEGIES

What strategies can my school choose from to be in compliance with the AGR program requirements?

Contracts signed under the AGR program require participating schools to implement one of the three following strategies, or a combination of the three:

1. small class sizes of 18:1 or 30:2 and professional development related to small group instruction
2. data-driven instructional coaching for teachers
3. data-informed one-to-one tutoring for students at risk of difficulty with math or reading

Can my school select a different AGR strategy for each grade level?

Yes. 2015 Wisconsin Act 53 allows a school board that has entered into an AGR contract to implement one or more AGR strategies in each participating school. Wis. Stat. § 118.44(4)(a)

Can schools switch AGR strategies during the school year?

Yes. An AGR school would need to implement one or more of the required strategies of the AGR program throughout the entire school year. The school will report the intended strategy or strategies to DPI by November 1 and then report the strategy or strategies the school used throughout the year prior to last day of the school year. Wis. Stat. § 118.44(4)(b)2.

Can Title I teachers be used to meet the AGR strategy requirements for class size reduction, instructional coaching, or one-to-one tutoring in a Targeted Assistance school?

No. Title I teachers in Targeted Assistance schools provide supplementary instruction to identified students. The core instructional program in reading and mathematics is a basic operating cost of all school districts, and the AGR strategies are additional requirements that are funded by state aid. Staffing for the delivery of the AGR program in a Targeted Assistance school may not be supported by Title I funds. The use of Title I funding to support class size reduction, instructional coaching, or one-to-one tutoring for basic reading and mathematics instruction or to meet AGR requirements in a Targeted Assistance school is supplanting. Any Title I-funded activities need to supplement the local and state required instructional activities. 20 USC, sec. 1120A(b) of No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (<http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/esea02/pg2.html#sec1120A>)

Can Title I funding be used to meet the AGR strategy requirements for class sizes reduction, instructional coaching, or one-to-one tutoring in Schoolwide schools?

Yes, if the strategy was determined to be appropriate to improve student achievement in the development of the Schoolwide plan. However, Title I funds may NOT be used solely to meet requirements of state law. Furthermore, an LEA may not reduce its allocation of State and local funds and resources to a schoolwide program school because the school receives Federal funds to implement a schoolwide plan. 20 USC, sec. 1120A(b) of No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (<http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/esea02/pg2.html#sec1120A>)

## CLASS SIZE AND FLEXIBILITY

One of the strategies AGR schools are able to select and implement is to provide professional development related to small group instruction and reduce the class size to one of the following:

- a. No more than 18 students
- b. No more than 30 students in a combined classroom having at least 2 regular classroom teachers

What are the differences in the flexibility of carrying out the two programs?

The differences between the two programs are compared in this flyer . As far as differences in the class size reduction options, the AGR program also requires professional development around small group instruction when implementing that strategy.

## INSTRUCTIONAL COACHING

One of the strategies AGR schools are able to select and implement is to provide data-driven instructional coaching. The instruction shall be provided by licensed teachers who possess appropriate content knowledge to assist classroom teachers in improving instruction in math or reading and possess expertise in reducing the achievement gap.

**If my school wants to utilize instructional coaches as an AGR strategy, what is the full-time equivalency (FTE) requirement?**

The AGR law does not specify an FTE for the instructional coaches. The AGR law requires that data-driven instructional coaching be provided by licensed teachers who possess appropriate content knowledge to assist classroom teachers in improving instruction in math or reading and possess expertise in reducing the achievement gap.

It is important to remember the school will set performance objectives and report progress on closing the achievement gap between low-income students and all pupils statewide to the school board at the end of each semester.

**Would each AGR school in my district require its own instructional coach?**

No. If an AGR school chooses to utilize the instructional coaching strategy, this is determined by each school based on their needs. There is no specific time or building commitment for instructional coaching, but each school will want to have enough time to make progress on closing the achievement gap between low-income pupils and all pupils statewide. Wis. Stat. § 118.44(4)(a)2.

## **ONE-TO-ONE TUTORING**

One of the strategies AGR schools are able to select and implement is to provide data-informed, one-to-one tutoring to pupils who are struggling with reading or mathematics or both subjects. Tutoring shall be provided during regular school hours by a licensed teacher using an instructional program found to be effective by the What Works Clearinghouse of the Institute of Education Sciences (<http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/>).

**If my school wants to utilize data-informed, one-to-one tutoring as an AGR strategy, what is the FTE requirement for the teacher(s)?**

The AGR law does not specify an FTE for the teachers providing one-to-one tutoring. AGR law requires that data-informed, one-to-one tutoring to pupils who are struggling with reading and/or mathematics be provided during regular school hours by a licensed teacher using an instructional program found to be effective by the What Works Clearinghouse of the Institute of Education Sciences (<http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/>).

It is important to remember the school will set performance objectives and report progress on closing the achievement gap between low-income students and all pupils statewide to the school board at the end of each semester.

**Would each AGR school in my district require its own licensed teacher for tutoring?**

No. If an AGR school chooses to utilize the one-to-one tutoring strategy, this is determined by each school based on their needs. There is no specific time or building commitment for licensed teachers who are tutoring, but each school will want to have enough time to make progress on closing the achievement gap between low-income pupils and all pupils statewide.

*For questions about this information, contact Sharon Suchla (<http://dpi.wi.gov/user/1158/contact>) (608) 266-3983, Michael Dennison (<http://dpi.wi.gov/user/487/contact>) (608) 266-2489*

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## 2015 Wisconsin Act 53 Achievement Gap Reduction (AGR) Program

On July 1, 2015, 2015 Wisconsin Act 53 was signed into law by Governor Walker. Act 53, Student Achievement Guarantee in Education (SAGE)/Achievement Gap Reduction (AGR) law, s.118.43 and s.118.44, Wis. Stats., prohibits the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) from renewing five-year SAGE contracts that expired on June 30, 2015 or any year thereafter. However, the law provides DPI the authority to issue a one-year extension under the existing terms on SAGE contracts which expired on June 30, 2015. If your SAGE school recently submitted a five-year achievement guarantee contract renewal application, your school may participate in the SAGE program for the 2015-16 school year under a one-year contract extension. If your SAGE school has a contract that extends beyond the 2015-16 school year, your school may participate in the SAGE program until the end of the existing contract.

Act 53 also allows all current SAGE schools to opt into the new AGR program as early as the 2015-16 school year. DPI will provide more information to school districts soon, but you should consider the following requirements when making your decision:

### Student Achievement Guarantee in Education (SAGE)

- Continue SAGE up to the end of your current SAGE contract. NOTE: SAGE schools with contracts that expired in June 2015 will be able to continue SAGE through the end of the 2015-16 school year with a one-year contract extension based on the recently submitted application
- Maintain current SAGE rules including class size ratios of 18:1 or 30:2 in kindergarten through grade 3
- Plan for the transition to the AGR program
- Annually report to DPI:
  - class size and low-income student counts
  - end-of-year and financial report

### Achievement Gap Reduction (AGR)

- Complete a five-year AGR contract application to begin in the 2015-16 school year
- Plan which AGR strategy/strategies your school will implement to achieve compliance with the new program:
  - one-to-one tutoring provided by a licensed teacher
  - instructional coaching for teachers provided by a licensed teacher
  - maintaining 18:1 or 30:2 classroom ratios and providing professional development on small group instruction
- Annually report to DPI:
  - class size and low-income student counts
  - description of strategies that the school board plans to implement
  - description of the strategies that the school board did implement
  - end-of-year and financial report
- Report to the school board at the end of every semester:
  - implementation of required strategies
  - performance objectives
  - progress in closing the achievement gap

### CONTACTS AND ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

Please contact us with any questions about the SAGE and AGR programs:

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