



*******NEWS RELEASE*******

from the **Education Policy Research Unit (EPRU)**

and the **Education Policy Studies Laboratory (EPSL)**
at **Arizona State University**

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CONTACT:

Glen Wilson

Glen.Wilson@asu.edu, (480) 965-1886

Alex Molnar, Director
Education Policy Studies Laboratory
(480) 965-1886
epsl@asu.edu
www.edpolicylab.org

Find the complete text of this report at:
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**MANY SAGE SCHOOLS MISSING OPPORTUNITIES
TO BUILD ON STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT GAINS**

TEMPE, Ariz.—A Wisconsin program to improve student achievement in kindergarten through third grade may be missing opportunities to improve student gains due to ineffective use of the professional development requirements of the SAGE law, a recent study by Arizona State University's Education Policy Research Unit, reveals.

SAGE—Student Achievement Guarantee in Education—is a statewide Wisconsin program aimed at improving student achievement through reduced class size, increased collaboration with communities, a rigorous academic curriculum, and improved professional development and staff evaluation practices.

Current Development Practices Insufficient

According to the report, SAGE schools have had only mixed success at implementing the professional development and evaluation requirements in the SAGE legislation. When teachers were asked how well SAGE professional development and evaluation requirements have been implemented, the responses ranged from a low 7 percent level of implementation to only a moderate level of 60 percent.

New licensure and license renewal rules based on the Wisconsin Teacher Standards will take effect July 1, 2004, and the federal No Child Left Behind Act (EREA 2001) will phase in new teacher quality requirements by the end of the 2005-06 school year.

The SAGE and Wisconsin Teacher Standards requirements are well aligned with each other, and in most areas, meet or exceed the new requirements of ESEA 2001. Schools that fully comply with SAGE and Wisconsin Teacher Standards requirements will not face significant additional requirements stemming from ESEA 2001, the researchers say.

Improvement Needed for Full Compliance

Significantly, the survey discloses that the *current* professional development and evaluation activities and practices will not fully satisfy the new, upcoming state requirements. Therefore, the report's authors say, the current program must be improved in order to meet full compliance with the Wisconsin Teacher Standards rules.

The best possible student achievement gains in the SAGE program, say the report's authors, are expected to result when reduced size classes are combined with a rigorous academic curriculum and teaches properly trained for teaching in small size classrooms.

The report includes a series of recommendations to improve the program structure and content of SAGE schools' professional development programs, and to build on the achievement gains that have resulted from class size reduction.

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The EPSL is directed by ASU Professor Alex Molnar.

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