

# Participation in a Professional Development Program on Culturally Responsive Practices in Wisconsin

REL 2021-047

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

*A Publication of the National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance at IES*



# Participation in a Professional Development Program on Culturally Responsive Practices in Wisconsin

Jameela Conway-Turner, Kyle Fagan, Alexander Mendoza, and Daniyal Rahim

November 2020

State and school district leaders in Wisconsin are interested in improving education outcomes among Black students across the state. To achieve this goal, the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction encourages schools to implement culturally responsive practices, which prior research suggests are related to improvements in outcomes among racial/ethnic minority students, and supports a professional development program on those practices called Building Culturally Responsive Systems. The department and other stakeholders in Wisconsin have asked for more comprehensive information about schools' participation in the program. Using data from the 2012/13–2018/19 school years, this study examined the percentage of schools statewide that participated in the program, differences in the characteristics of schools that participated in the program and of schools that did not participate, implementation of culturally responsive practices among schools that participated in the program and schools that did not participate, and the relationship between participation and school-level academic and behavior outcomes. The study found that 4 percent of schools across the state participated in the program (meaning that teachers and administrators from the school attended at least one of the program's five sessions). Schools that participated in the program had a larger average enrollment, were more likely to be eligible for Title I funds, and were more often located in cities and suburbs compared with schools that did not participate, but there was no meaningful difference between the two school groups in the percentage of Black students (the difference was less than 5 percentage points). About 17 percent of schools that participated in the program reported implementing culturally responsive practices in reading instruction compared with 28 percent of schools that did not participate. Program participation was not meaningfully related to a school's "closing gaps scores" for English language arts or math, attendance rate, suspension rate, or expulsion rate one year, two years, or three years later, after school characteristics and pre-program academic and behavior measures were accounted for. The small number of schools that reported implementing culturally responsive practices might be a factor in this result.

## Why this study?

In 2015 Wisconsin had the largest gaps in scores on the National Assessment of Educational Progress between Black and White students in grades 4 and 8 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2019). Having recognized these disparities, the state has made improving outcomes among Black students one of its highest education priorities (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 2014). To achieve this goal, the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction encourages schools to implement culturally responsive practices.

Culturally responsive practices describe a way of teaching that empowers students by using culture to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes (Gay, 2018; Ladson-Billings, 2014; see box 1 for definitions of key terms). The theory behind culturally responsive practices is grounded in research on cultural relevance (Ladson-Billings, 1994). Culturally responsive practices include behaviors such as understanding students' cultural beliefs and practices, believing that all students can learn, having high expectations for students, helping students set goals for themselves, and creating bridges between students' home and school lives (Gay, 2018; Ladson-Billings, 1994). Prior research suggests that culturally responsive practices are related to improvements in student engagement (Christianakis,

For additional information, including an overview of the professional development program examined by the study, technical methods, and supporting analyses, access the report appendixes at <https://go.usa.gov/x7NQJ>.

2011; Dimick, 2012), motivation (Milner, 2011), writing skills (Souryasack & Lee, 2007), reading achievement (Bui & Fagan, 2013), and math achievement (Hubert, 2013), as well as to reductions in behavior problems (Wortham & Contreras, 2002). In addition, culturally responsive practices have been shown to be related to increases in teachers' ability to discuss issues related to diversity (Hulan, 2015).

---

## Box 1. Key terms

**“Big Five” school districts.** The five largest school districts in Wisconsin. These districts also serve the majority (71 percent) of Black students in the state: Milwaukee (50 percent), Madison (6 percent), Racine (6 percent), Kenosha (4 percent), and Green Bay (3 percent; Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 2019).

**Closing gaps score.** A score calculated by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction that measures a school's progress toward closing achievement gaps between target groups (racial/ethnic minority students, students with disabilities, students with limited English proficiency, and students who are economically disadvantaged) and comparison groups (White students, students without disabilities, students classified as fully English proficient, and students who are not economically disadvantaged). Scores on a scale of 1 to 100 are calculated separately for English language arts, math, and graduation rate for every school in the state as part of the school's annual report card. Higher scores mean that the gap between groups is narrowing, and lower scores mean that the gap is widening. Scores increase when the performance of students in target groups increases but the performance of students in comparison groups remains the same as well as when the performance of students in target groups remains the same but the performance of students in comparison groups declines.

**Locale.** An indication of a school's location relative to a populous area: city, suburb, town, or rural (U.S. Department of Education, 2018).

**Multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS).** A framework for schools to monitor, assess, and improve student academic achievement and behavior. It is three-tiered: the universal tier includes high-quality curricula and programming delivered to all students, and the selected and intensive tiers entail different levels of individualized interventions. The goal of MTSS is to provide instruction and interventions that match student needs and monitor student progress. MTSS is related to positive student academic and social and emotional outcomes (Averill & Rinaldi, 2013).

**Professional development program on culturally responsive practices (Building Culturally Responsive Systems).** A five-session, in-person statewide professional development program on culturally responsive practices designed for school and district teams. The program focuses on developing cultural competence, exploring power and privilege, and examining subtleties of culture and diversity. The goal of the program is to provide teams with the ability to “create an inclusive learning environment and develop practices, strategies, and curriculum that include and honor the life experiences and cultures of their students” (Wisconsin Response to Intervention Center, 2019). Sessions are spread out across the year and last a full day. The program costs \$325 per participant, but the cost is waived for districts with disproportionate representation of racial/ethnic minority groups in special education (Wisconsin Response to Intervention Center, 2019). See appendix A for more details on the program.

**School-level attendance rate.** Each student's actual number of days in attendance during the school term divided by the total number of days in the school term, averaged across the entire school.

**School-level expulsion rate.** The percentage of students in a school who received at least one expulsion.

**School-level suspension rate.** The percentage of students in a school who received at least one out-of-school suspension.

**School test scores.** The mean scale scores on state English language arts and math proficiency tests for a school. For students in elementary and middle school, the study included scores from the Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts Exam (administered in 2013/14 and years prior), the Badger Exam (administered in 2014/15), and the Forward Exam (administered in 2015/16–2018/19). For students in high school, scores are from ACT assessments.

**Teacher-to-student ratio.** The total number of teachers in a school divided by the total number of students in a school.

**Title I status.** Whether a school is eligible to receive Title I funds. This includes schools that were eligible to receive Title I Targeted Assistance and schools that were eligible for the Title I Schoolwide Program.

To support the implementation of culturally responsive practices, the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction has funded, since the 2013/14 school year, the Building Culturally Responsive Systems professional development program. The program, offered by the Wisconsin Response to Intervention Center, is based on a model for culturally responsive practices that was developed in partnership with the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, the Wisconsin Response to Intervention Center, and the Disproportionality Technical Assistance Network under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education.

The statewide program is a series of five in-person sessions designed for school and district teams of five or six teachers and administrators. It is intended to help educators understand the policies and practices related to inequitable student outcomes and develop their ability to “create an inclusive learning environment and develop practices, strategies, and curriculum that include and honor the life experiences and cultures of their students” (Wisconsin Response to Intervention Center, 2019). The program achieves this goal by developing cultural competence, exploring power and privilege, and examining subtleties of culture and diversity. Sessions include guided self-reflection, discussion of examples of culturally responsive practices (for example, incorporating literacy books that match students’ demographic characteristics, using call-and-response techniques, and administering learning environment surveys), and discussions on how to use data to understand and address specific equity issues. (See appendix A for more details on the program.)

The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction also encourages schools to embed culturally responsive practices in their multi-tiered systems of supports (MTSS). MTSS is a framework for schools to monitor, assess, and improve student academic achievement and behavior. When well implemented, MTSS may improve student outcomes overall, but it has not been shown to reduce the gap between Black and White students in outcomes such as discipline and achievement (Johnson et al., 2018; Vincent et al., 2013). Embedding culturally responsive practices within MTSS may help address the gap by ensuring that every learner has access to educational resources and rigor that are respectful of and responsive to their race/ethnicity and other personal characteristics.

Members of the Regional Educational Laboratory Midwest’s Midwest Achievement Gap Research Alliance requested this study in order to obtain in-depth information about participation in the Building Culturally Responsive Systems program, including the characteristics of schools that participate. The alliance includes staff from the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction and the Wisconsin Response to Intervention Center. Education leaders intend to use the findings to determine whether schools that might benefit most from the program are participating and to develop marketing strategies to encourage participation. Education leaders are also interested in the relationship between program participation and school-level academic and behavior outcomes and expect to use this information to improve the program and to guide follow-up studies.

## Research questions

This study addressed four research questions related to participation in the Building Culturally Responsive Systems professional development program for schools in Wisconsin between the 2013/14 and 2018/19 school years:

1. What percentage of schools participated in the program?
2. How are the characteristics of the schools that participated in the program different from the characteristics of the schools that did not participate?
3. What percentage of schools that participated in the program and what percentage of schools that did not participate reported implementing culturally responsive practices within their MTSS?
4. Is program participation related to school-level academic and behavior outcomes, after school characteristics and pre-program academic and behavior measures are accounted for?<sup>1</sup>

---

1. Because the number of schools that implemented culturally responsive practices was small and the main regression analyses did not find meaningful differences between program participation and school outcomes, the study team did not test whether implementation of culturally responsive practices was related to school characteristics.

See box 2 for a summary of the data sources, sample, and methods used to answer the research questions and appendix B for details.

---

## Box 2. Data sources, sample, and methods

**Data sources.** The study used data provided by the Wisconsin Response to Intervention Center and the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction as well as publicly available data from the U.S. Department of Education’s Common Core of Data.

- Data provided by the Wisconsin Response to Intervention Center:
  - The list of schools that participated in the Building Culturally Responsive Systems professional development program between 2013/14 and 2018/19. The study team considered any school from which teachers or administrators attended at least one of the program’s five sessions in any study year as having participated in the program. Participants were not required to attend a minimum number of sessions, but all participants attended at least four of the five sessions.
  - Responses to 10 items on two surveys on school practices within multi-tiered systems of supports, one on practices in reading instruction and one on practices in math instruction. The surveys are administered annually by the Wisconsin Response to Intervention Center and completed by a school administrator. The study team used the responses for each school for each year from 2013/14 to 2018/19 to calculate average composite measures for implementation of culturally responsive practices in reading instruction and in math instruction across the study years for each school. The study team then created a binary variable based on the composite measures to indicate whether schools implemented culturally responsive practices in each subject (see appendix B for details). There was a high level of missing data on implementation of culturally responsive practices in both subjects. Among all schools in Wisconsin, only 38 percent of schools responded to the survey on implementing culturally responsive practices in reading instruction, and only 26 percent of schools responded to the survey on implementing culturally responsive practices in math instruction.
- Data provided by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction:
  - Enrollment, percentages of students by race/ethnicity, percentage of students who were eligible for the national school lunch program, attendance rate, mean English language arts and math test scores, closing gaps scores for English language arts and math,<sup>1</sup> suspension rate, and expulsion rate in each school for each year from 2012/13 to 2017/18. The study team calculated the average of each characteristic across all years of data for each school.
  - School district in which each school was located.
- Data obtained from the U.S. Department of Education’s Common Core of Data:
  - Title I status and school grade span for each school for each year from 2012/13 to 2016/17. The study team used the status and the grade span in the most recent year available for each school.
  - The total number of teachers and the teacher-to-student ratio in each school for each year from 2012/13 to 2016/17. The study team calculated the average of each characteristic across the study years for each school.
  - School locale for each school for each year from 2012/13 to 2016/17. The locale for some schools changed from year to year, so the study team used the most frequent locale for each school. For example, a school that was designated an urban school for every year but one was classified as an urban school by the study team.

**Sample.** The analytic sample included 2,290 public schools in Wisconsin (1,297 elementary schools, 72 combined elementary/secondary schools, 390 middle schools, and 531 high schools).

**Methods.** To address research question 1, the study team calculated the number and percentage of schools that participated in the Building Culturally Responsive Systems professional development program on culturally responsive practices. To address research question 2, the study team compared key characteristics of schools that participated in the program and of schools that did not participate. The characteristics included school enrollment, number of teachers, teacher-to-student ratio, Title I status, percentage of students eligible for the national school lunch program, percentages of students by race/ethnicity, and school locale. Differences of 5 percentage points or greater were considered meaningful. To address research question 3, the study team calculated the number and percentage of schools that reported implementing culturally responsive practices by whether they had participated in the program. To address research question 4, the study team conducted two sets of analyses. First, the study team compared average school-level academic and behavior outcomes for schools that participated in the program and schools that did not participate. Second, the study team used a series of regression models to examine whether program participation was meaningfully related to school-level outcomes (all continuous variables) one year, two years, and three years later, after school characteristics and pre-program academic and behavior measures were accounted for. The study team calculated effect sizes and reported standardized coefficients. Effect sizes and standardized coefficients with an absolute value greater than .15 were considered meaningful.

### Note

1. Closing gaps scores for high school graduation rate were excluded from the analysis due to a high level of missing data (see appendix B).

## Findings

This section presents the main findings. See appendix C for supporting analyses.

### ***Overall, 4 percent of schools in Wisconsin participated in the professional development program on culturally responsive practices***

Between the 2013/14 and 2018/19 school years 4 percent of schools in Wisconsin (96 of 2,290) participated in the program.

Participation varied from year to year between 2013/14 and 2018/19 and ranged from 2 schools in 2016/17 to 33 schools in 2014/15 (figure 1).

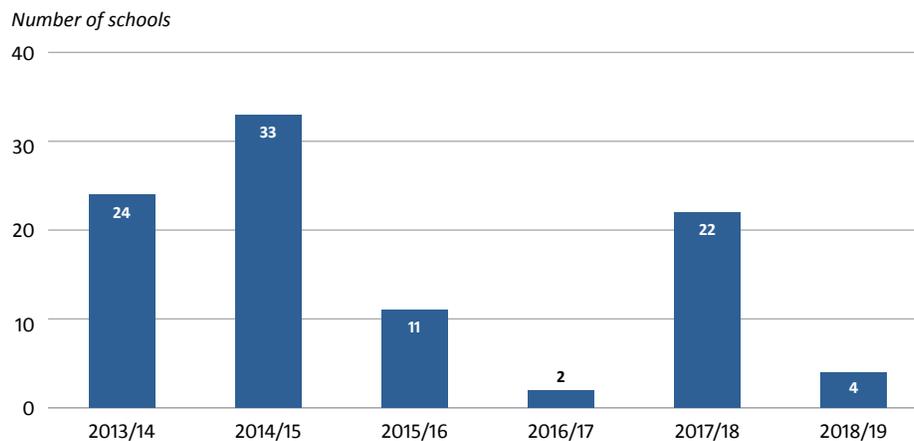
### ***Schools that participated in the program had a larger average enrollment, were more likely to be eligible for Title I funds, and were more often located in cities and suburbs compared with schools that did not participate, but there was no meaningful difference between the two school groups in the percentage of Black students***

Participating schools had a larger average enrollment (582) than nonparticipating schools (378; table 1). Participating schools had a larger average number of teachers (41) than nonparticipating schools (25).

Participating schools were more likely to be eligible for Title I funds than nonparticipating schools. About 76 percent of participating schools were eligible for Title I funds compared with 71 percent of nonparticipating schools (see table 1).

Participating schools were more often located in cities and suburbs than nonparticipating schools. Among participating schools, 42 percent were located in cities, 30 percent were located in suburbs, and 14 percent were located in rural areas (see table 1). Among nonparticipating schools, 25 percent were located in cities, 20 percent were located in suburbs, and 36 percent were located in rural areas.

**Figure 1. The number of schools that participated in the professional development program on culturally responsive practices in Wisconsin varied from year to year, 2013/14–2018/19**



Note: The analytic sample consisted of 2,290 elementary, middle, and high schools.

Source: Authors' analysis of data from the Wisconsin Response to Intervention Center and the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction.

**Table 1. Characteristics of Wisconsin schools, by participation in the professional development program on culturally responsive practices, 2013/14–2018/19**

Characteristic	Schools that participated in the program (n = 96)	Schools that did not participate in the program (n = 2,194)
Average school enrollment	582.3	378.4
Average number of teachers	41.4	25.3
Average teacher-to-student ratio	1 to 14	1 to 17
Eligible for Title I funds (percent)	76	71
Located in a “Big Five” school district <sup>a</sup> (percent)	6	14
Average demographic makeup (percent of students)		
Black	8	9
Hispanic	12	10
Other race/ethnicity <sup>b</sup>	13	7
White	67	73
Eligible for the national school lunch program	46	43
Locale (percent of schools)		
City	42	25
Suburb	30	20
Town	15	19
Rural	14	36

Note: The analytic sample consisted of 2,290 elementary, middle, and high schools.

a. The “Big Five” school districts are the five largest school districts in Wisconsin. These districts also serve the majority of Black students in the state.

b. Includes American Indian students, Asian students, Pacific Islander students, students who identify as two or more races/ethnicities, and students with unknown race/ethnicity.

Source: Authors’ analysis of data from the Wisconsin Response to Intervention Center, the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, and the U.S. Department of Education Common Core of Data.

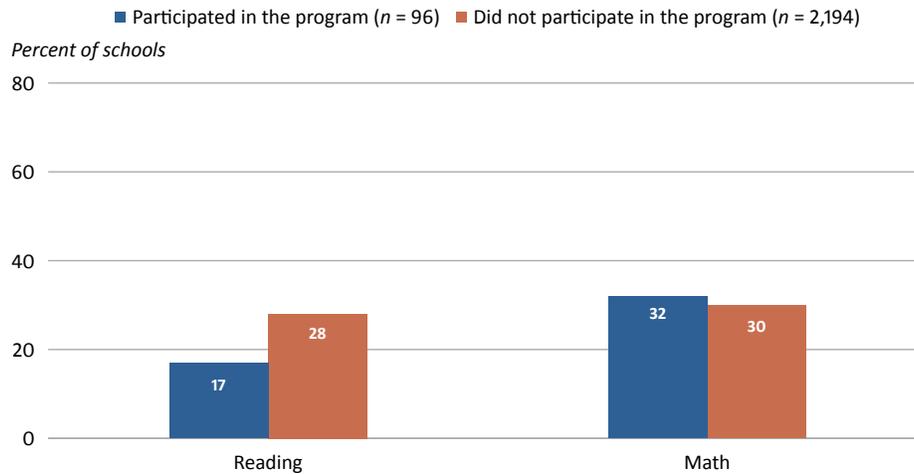
About 6 percent of participating schools were located in one of the “Big Five” school districts, which serve the majority of Black students in the state, compared with 14 percent of nonparticipating schools (see table 1).

There was no meaningful difference between participating schools and nonparticipating schools in the percentage of Black students. However, participating schools had a higher percentage of students of “other race/ethnicity” (13 percent versus 7 percent) and a lower percentage of White students (67 percent versus 73 percent; see table 1 and appendix C for additional results).

### ***About 17 percent of schools that participated in the program reported implementing culturally responsive practices in reading instruction***

On average, schools that participated in the program were less likely to report implementing culturally responsive practices in reading instruction than schools that did not participate. Among schools that responded to the Wisconsin Response to Intervention Center survey on practices in reading instruction, 17 percent of schools that participated in the program (10 of 58) reported implementing culturally responsive practices in reading instruction compared with 28 percent of schools that did not participate (229 of 808; figure 2). Among schools that responded to the survey on practices in math instruction, there was no meaningful difference in the percentage of schools that implemented culturally responsive practices in math instruction between schools that participated in the program and schools that did not participate.

**Figure 2. About 17 percent of schools that participated in the professional development program on culturally responsive practices in Wisconsin reported implementing the practices in reading instruction in their multi-tiered systems of supports compared with 28 percent of schools that did not participate, 2013/14–2018/19**



Note: For schools that participated in the program, 38 schools did not respond to the survey on practices in reading instruction, and 65 schools did not respond to the survey on practices in math instruction. For schools that did not participate in the program, 1,386 schools did not respond to the survey on practices in reading instruction, and 1,629 schools did not respond to the survey on practices in math instruction.

Source: Authors' analysis of data from the Wisconsin Response to Intervention Center and Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction.

These results may not capture the true level of implementation of culturally responsive practices in schools because of the high level of missing data on implementation. Among all schools in Wisconsin, only 38 percent responded to the survey on practices in reading instruction, and only 26 percent responded to the survey on practices in math instruction. A higher or lower percentage of schools might be implementing culturally responsive practices than what is reported. A nonresponse analysis indicated that whether a school was missing data on implementation of culturally responsive practices in reading instruction and math instruction was meaningfully related to school characteristics. Therefore, the findings on implementation of culturally responsive practices cannot be generalized to all schools in Wisconsin (see the Limitations section for details).

### ***Program participation was not meaningfully related to any school outcomes, after school characteristics and pre-program academic and behavior measures were accounted for***

There was a small relationship between program participation and school outcomes (see the results in appendix C), but the relationships disappeared after school characteristics and pre-program academic and behavior measures were accounted for. Specifically, there were no meaningful relationships between program participation and a school's closing gaps scores for English language arts or math, attendance rate, suspension rate, or expulsion rate, after school characteristics and pre-program academic and behavior measures were accounted for (see table 2 for results on the relationship between program participation and school attendance rate after the program and appendix C for additional results).

The lack of a meaningful relationship between program participation and school outcomes could be due to the small sample size available. Although 96 schools participated in the program, the sample sizes for the analyses of outcomes one year, two years, and three years after participation were smaller because data on pre-program academic and behavior measures and post-program outcomes were limited. When sample sizes are small, it is difficult to see a meaningful difference between groups unless the difference is very large.

**Table 2. The relationship between participation in the professional development program in Wisconsin and attendance rates one year, two years, and three years later, 2013/14–2018/19**

Characteristic	Attendance rate one year after participation (n = 1,494)		Attendance rate two years after participation (n = 1,016)		Attendance rate three years after participation (n = 951)	
	Coefficient	Standardized coefficient	Coefficient	Standardized coefficient	Coefficient	Standardized coefficient
Average school enrollment	-0.00	-.07	0.00	.07	-0.00	-.12
Number of teachers	0.00	.06	-0.00	-.06	0.00	.04
Teacher-to-student ratio	-0.00	-.02	-0.00	-.03	-0.00	-.03
Eligible for Title I funds (percent)	-0.00	-.02	-0.00	.00	0.00	.04
Percentage of Black students	-0.02	-.09	-0.03	-.14	-0.04	-.19
Percentage of White students	-0.00	-.02	-0.01	-.05	0.00	.01
Percentage of students eligible for the national school lunch program	-0.02	-.09	-0.00	-.00	-0.01	-.06
Pre-program attendance rate	0.90	.68	1.00	.77	0.61	.39
Participation in the professional development program	0.00	.00	0.00	.00	0.00	.01

Note: Because the analyses used the population of schools in Wisconsin, the study team did not perform tests of statistical significance. To identify meaningful differences, the study team calculated effect sizes and reported standardized coefficients. Standardized coefficients were calculated by dividing the standard deviation of the predictor variable by the standard deviation of the outcome variable and multiplying that number by the regression coefficient. Effect sizes and standardized coefficients with an absolute value greater than .15 were considered meaningful.

Source: Authors' analysis of data from the Wisconsin Response to Intervention Center, the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, and the U.S. Department of Education's Common Core of Data.

## Limitations

The study has four main limitations. First, the study was not designed to identify a causal relationship. The study did not investigate all potential factors that could explain the relationship between program participation and school outcomes. Further research is needed to better understand that relationship.

Second, because of the low rates of survey response, the results might not be representative of all schools in the state. Among the 96 schools that participated in the program, administrators from only 60 percent of schools responded to the survey on implementing culturally responsive practices in reading instruction, and administrators from only 32 percent of schools responded to the survey on implementing culturally responsive practices in math instruction. Among the 2,194 schools that did not participate in the program, administrators from only 37 percent of schools responded to the survey on implementing culturally responsive practices in reading instruction, and administrators from only 26 percent of schools responded to the survey on implementing culturally responsive practices in math instruction. A higher or lower percentage of schools might actually be implementing culturally responsive practices than what was reported.

Third, the surveys might not have accurately captured changes in the implementation of culturally responsive practices related to program participation. Schools send five or six representatives to the program. These representatives include grade-level teachers, special educators, instructional leaders, building administrators, and district curriculum administrators (Wisconsin Response to Intervention Center, 2019). However, the surveys on implementing culturally responsive practices are completed by only one school administrator, and that administrator might not have participated in the program. Relatedly, schools might be implementing culturally responsive practices that are not a part of their MTSS. Therefore, the surveys might not fully capture the implementation of culturally responsive practices.

Last, culturally responsive practices are intended to improve the education outcomes of Black students, but none of the outcomes in this study directly measured differences in achievement between Black students and their peers. Even though the closing gaps scores for English language arts and math measure a school's progress toward closing achievement gaps between students, they do not specifically examine the progress of Black students relative to their peers. The target groups include students from racial/ethnic minority backgrounds, students with disabilities, students with limited English proficiency, and students who are economically disadvantaged. Therefore, the closing gaps score might not be the best measure of education outcomes for Black students relative to their peers.

## Implications

The lack of a meaningful relationship between participation in the Building Culturally Responsive Systems program and school outcomes suggests that state and local education leaders in Wisconsin might want to explore how to improve the program to ensure that teachers are able to implement culturally responsive practices in schools. This could lead to improvements in student outcomes.

Future research might explore why schools do not report implementing culturally responsive practices, as well as the type of support that teachers need to effectively implement culturally responsive practices. Among schools that responded to the Wisconsin Response to Intervention Center survey on practices in reading instruction, the percentage of schools that reported implementing culturally responsive practices in reading instruction within their MTSS was only 17 percent for schools that participated in the program and only 28 percent for schools that did not participate in the program. One explanation for this finding is that at least some of the schools that reported implementing culturally responsive practices but did not participate in the program had already received support in implementing culturally responsive practices elsewhere and therefore did not need the program, whereas schools that opted to participate did so precisely because they had not yet begun to implement them or needed extra support.

More rigorous follow-up studies are also needed to determine whether program participation affects student outcomes. One focus could be teachers and administrators because the program targets their individual practice. Although teachers and administrators who participate may share knowledge with their colleagues or try to implement the practices schoolwide, the program is not a schoolwide intervention. Given that each school sends five or six educators to the program, tracking teacher- or administrator-level outcomes before and after participation might be more useful. It might take longer for school-level outcomes to change as a result of participation in a program that is focused at the individual teacher and administrator level. A next step for data collection might be to develop specific measures based on expected change at the teacher level. Another follow-up study could examine whether changes in teacher practice lead to changes in education outcomes for students, specifically Black students.

Finally, if the program is determined to be effective, state and local education leaders in Wisconsin might contemplate how to boost participation in the program, especially among the schools and districts that need it most, such as the districts with the largest percentages of Black students. Only 4 percent of schools across the state participated in the program, and only 6 percent of schools that participated in the program were located in the "Big Five" school districts, which serve the majority of Black students in the state. If state and school district leaders and other stakeholders want more schools—in particular, more schools in the "Big Five" districts—to participate in the program, they could investigate why schools are not participating and address those underlying reasons. For example, they might examine whether all schools are aware of the program, and among schools that are aware of it, what barriers and facilitators affect their participation. One barrier might be the intensive nature of the program, which consists of five day-long sessions that are spread across the year and that require travel for many participants. A follow-up study could include data collection through surveys and interviews that ask why more schools are not participating in the program.

## References

- Averill, O. H., & Rinaldi, C. (2013). *Research brief: Multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS)*. Education Development Center. [https://www.urbancollaborative.org/files/mtss\\_brief\\_final.modified\\_0.pdf](https://www.urbancollaborative.org/files/mtss_brief_final.modified_0.pdf).
- Bui, Y. N., & Fagan, Y. M. (2013). The effects of an integrated reading comprehension strategy: A culturally responsive teaching approach for fifth-grade students' reading comprehension. *Preventing School Failure, 57*(2), 59–69. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1012311>.
- Christianakis, M. (2011). Hybrid texts: Fifth graders, rap music, and writing. *Urban Education, 46*(5), 1131–1168. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ935781>.
- Dimick, A. S. (2012). Student empowerment in an environmental science classroom: Toward a framework for social justice science education. *Science Education, 96*(6), 990–1012. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ989868>.
- Gay, G. (2018). *Culturally responsive teaching: Theory, research, and practice* (3rd ed.). Teachers College Press.
- Hubert, T. L. (2013). Learners of mathematics: High school students' perspectives of culturally relevant mathematics pedagogy. *Journal of African American Studies, 18*(1), 324–336.
- Hulan, N. F. (2015). Molding a culturally responsive literacy practice: Professional development within diverse schools. *Teacher Education and Practice, 28*(1), 60–74.
- Johnson, A., Anhalt, K., & Cowan, R. J. (2018). Culturally responsive school-wide positive behavior interventions and supports: A practical approach to addressing disciplinary disproportionality with African-American students. *Multicultural Learning and Teaching, 13*(2), 1–12.
- Ladson-Billings, G. (1994). *The dreamkeepers*. Jossey-Bass.
- Ladson-Billings, G. (2014). Cultural relevant pedagogy 2.0: a.k.a. the remix. *Harvard Educational Review, 84*(1), 74–84.
- Milner, H. R. (2011). Culturally relevant pedagogy in a diverse urban classroom. *Urban Review, 43*(1), 66–89.
- National Center for Education Statistics. (2019). NAEP data explorer. Retrieved November 11, 2019, from <https://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/naepdata>.
- Souryasack, R., & Lee, J. L. (2007). Drawing on students' experiences, cultures and languages to develop English language writing: Perspectives from these Lao heritage middle school students. *Heritage Language Journal, 5*(1), 79–97. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ831195>.
- U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2018). Common Core of Data. Retrieved November 11, 2019, from <https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/>.
- Vincent, C. G., Sprague, J. R., & Gau, J. M. (2013). *The effectiveness of school-wide positive behavior intervention supports for reducing racially inequitable disciplinary exclusions in middle schools*. University of California–Los Angeles, Civil Rights Project. <https://cloudfront.escholarship.org/dist/prd/content/qt35z7c5sh/qt35z7c5sh.pdf>.
- Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. (2014). *Promoting excellence for all: A report from the state superintendent's task force on Wisconsin's achievement gap*. <https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/excforall/exc4all-report.pdf>.
- Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. (2019). WISEdash public portal: Wisconsin's information system for education dashboard. Retrieved November 11, 2019, from <https://wisedash.dpi.wi.gov/Dashboard/dashboard/16840>.

Wisconsin Response to Intervention Center. (2019, November). *Building culturally responsive systems*. Retrieved November 22, 2019, from <https://www.wisconsinrticenter.org/event/building-culturally-responsive-systems-2-3/2019-11-12/>.

Wortham, S., & Contreras, M. (2002). Struggling toward culturally relevant pedagogy in the Latino diaspora. *Journal of Latinos and Education*, 1(2), 133–144.

### *Acknowledgments*

The authors are grateful for the contributions of the stakeholder advisory group, which provided valuable input on the research and assisted in obtaining the data. Members included Carl Frederick, Julia Hartwig, and Kurt Kiefer from the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction; Andreal Davis and Kim Gulbrandson from the Wisconsin Response to Intervention Center; and Madeline Hafner from the Minority Student Achievement Network. These stakeholders include members of the Regional Educational Laboratory Midwest’s Midwest Achievement Gap Research Alliance, a collaborative research partnership that aims to improve education outcomes among Black students in Wisconsin, including by better understanding how culturally responsive practices are related to student and school outcomes.

REL 2021–047

November 2020

This report was prepared for the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) under Contract ED-IES-17-C-0007 by the Regional Educational Laboratory Midwest administered by American Institutes for Research. The content of the publication does not necessarily reflect the views or policies of IES or the U.S. Department of Education, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Government.

This REL report is in the public domain. While permission to reprint this publication is not necessary, it should be cited as:

Conway-Turner, J., Fagan, K., Mendoza, A., & Rahim, D. (2020). *Participation in a professional development program on culturally responsive practices in Wisconsin* (REL 2021–047). U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory Midwest. <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs>.

This report is available on the Regional Educational Laboratory website at <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs>.