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## **\$10 million will go to MPS math initiative**

### **Doyle assures district that funding for effort hasn't been cut**

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Milwaukee Public Schools officials got the assurance they were seeking when Gov. Jim Doyle said Wednesday that he will release \$10 million to improve math instruction in Milwaukee next year.

Although the money was included in the budget approved last fall, Doyle had the option of not awarding it. After Doyle used his veto powers recently to require a \$270 million cut in spending next year, MPS leaders were concerned the \$10 million might be chopped.

Doyle used an eighth-grade classroom at the Lincoln Center of the Arts, an MPS middle school on the lower east side, to announce he was awarding the money, which is to be used to pay for more than 100 math teaching positions.

### **Money 'well invested'**

Asked if this meant the math money was off the table for cuts for next year, Doyle said, "This is one that we're really committed to getting done . . . To me, this is money very, very well invested."

The money essentially is intended to continue a math initiative begun five years ago with a federal grant. That grant is running out. The new money will be used primarily to pay for "lead teachers" in math in dozens of MPS schools. Those instructors will work with classroom teachers to improve math instruction.

MPS Superintendent William Andrekopoulos said scores in math were showing improvement in early grades but not in higher grades, and that he expects the lead teachers to play a successful role in meeting goals for improved achievement. The gap between MPS and state scores in math is large. Only 26% of MPS 10th-graders were rated proficient or advanced in the state standardized tests this year.

## Math called key

Both Doyle and Andrekopoulos stressed the importance of math ability as a key to long-term educational success and to getting good jobs.

Doyle said he asked Andrekopoulos a couple years ago what the state could do that would really make a difference to MPS. The superintendent's response was money to improve math teaching.

MPS began the lead teacher initiative in the second semester of this year, but it got off to a slow start, largely because of a major shortage of math teachers. Finding a new crop of teachers for next year will also be a challenge, MPS officials say.

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