



STATE OF WISCONSIN

DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY AFFAIRS

DIVISION OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Brian M. Satula
Administrator

Scott Walker
Governor

For more information contact: Tod Pritchard, WEM Office:(608) 242-3324
Cell: (608) 219-4008

For Immediate Release
September 12, 2011

STEP Returns to Wisconsin Schools

Free program teaches fifth graders how to get ready for emergencies

(MADISON) – Fifth graders will learn how to prepare for disasters and react to emergencies thanks to a special program being taught once again in schools across Wisconsin. It is called STEP (Student Tools for Emergency Planning).

“The students involved in the STEP program will gain very important and potentially lifesaving knowledge,” said Tod Pritchard, Wisconsin Emergency Preparedness Coordinator. “Students take that knowledge home and share it with family and friends, making their communities better prepared for an emergency.”

STEP is a turn-key classroom curriculum for teachers to prepare their students for various emergencies including tornadoes, flooding and storms. STEP also shows students how to put together an emergency kit and develop an emergency plan with their families. STEP materials include instructor guides, copies of student handouts and starter emergency kits students can take home. All the materials are supplied to schools through a grant program at no cost. The basic lesson is only one hour, but there are up to eight hours of material available. It is very flexible; if teachers would like to expand the teaching time they can.

Last spring, nearly 2400 fifth graders in 45 schools around Wisconsin participated in the STEP pilot program. The goal for 2011-12: 5000 students in approximately 90 classrooms.

How to apply - Starting September 12th, school officials can go to the ReadyWisconsin website (<http://readywisconsin.wi.gov/>) and click on the STEP button. This will direct educators to a simple on-line application. The application window will close on October 28th. The awards will be announced November 7th.

The awards will be based on the following criteria:

- Schools that applied for and/or participated in the 2010-2011 school year.
- Geographic distribution across the State of Wisconsin.
- First to sign up.

The ReadyWisconsin website also has a video where you can watch STEP in action in two different Wisconsin schools (<http://readywisconsin.wi.gov/STEP/default.asp>).

STEP is sponsored by Wisconsin Emergency Management (WEM); the Department of Public Instruction; the Office of Justice Assistance; the Center for School, Youth, and Citizen Preparedness; and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). It is funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

###