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BODY:

The U.S. Department of Education has approved a waiver for the **Madison** school district to allow a class-size restructuring program at **Franklin** Elementary School. In March, **Franklin** Principal Deb **Mercier** applied for state and federal government waivers that would allow her to lower class size from 24 to 1 to 16 to 1. The waivers would allow the school to end special pull-out classes for reading and English as a second language and to use those staffers as classroom teachers.

Assistant Superintendent Rita Applebaum said Wednesday she had received verbal confirmation from the U.S. Department of Education that it had approved the waiver from Title 1, which funds the pull-out reading programs.

"It gives **Franklin** school the flexibility to provide additional help in reading and language arts to all students," Applebaum said.

A fifth of **Franklin's** 404 students speak English as a second language. The state waiver on English as a second language programs is pending.

Approval of the federal waiver means students will be kept in classrooms with smaller student-teacher ratios, where **Mercier** and school district officials believe they stand the best chance of learning to their highest potential.

Franklin serves students from kindergarten to second grade.

"Particularly in a kindergarten to second-grade school, it is important to improve the continuity of education," Applebaum said. "It is better to provide services in the classroom than pull out students and disrupt the flow of instruction."

LOAD-DATE: July 24, 1998

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