



Addressing Education's Biggest Challenges

Recruiting and retaining high-quality educators is a problem for districts across Wisconsin and the nation. Applications to schools of education fell 35 percent nationwide between 2009 and 2014. This is going to have a ripple effect on K-12 education for years to come. So, what do we do?

Recently, the National Center on Education and the Economy (NCEE) released an in-depth report “Empowered Educators: How High Performing Systems Shape Teaching Quality Around the World.” It follows a similar report, “No Time to Lose: How to Build a World Class Education State by State,” published last year by the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL). Both reports studied successful education systems around the world to learn how we can improve public education in the United States.

“Empowered Educators” focuses specifically on elevating the teaching profession and promoting efforts that improve not only the quality of teachers but also the number of people entering the profession. It calls for systematic recruitment of teachers, improving teacher education programs, and, among other efforts, establishing mentoring programs for new teachers. Learn more about their suggestions in the article on page 18 by Linda Darling-Hammond, president and CEO of the Learning Policy

Institute and Marc Tucker, president and CEO of the NCEE.

The NCSL’s report “No Time to Lose,” is based off the findings of a 28-member bipartisan study group, formed in 2014, that spent 18 months meeting with education leaders from around the world and visiting their countries to study different education systems. It found that successful education systems include a strong early education system, give extra support to struggling students, provide and support effective teachers and a professionalized teaching force, offer robust career and technical education, and, among other efforts, align individual education reforms to a clearly planned and carefully designed comprehensive system.

The report recommends that each state assemble a broad and diverse group of stakeholders into an inclusive process to set a vision for reform and identify priorities. This process should involve studying and learning from high-performing countries and innovations in other states as well as benchmarking our state education policies, practices and outcomes against those of high-performing countries and high-performing states.

The NCSL report and its findings from the study group will be discussed during a special in-depth workshop at the upcoming State

Education Convention in January on Thursday, Jan. 18. Representatives from NCSL will discuss how Wisconsin public education can move forward. The NCSL report will also be the subject of a resolution that will be before WASB delegates at the Delegate Assembly and is referenced in the WASB’s Legislative Agenda. (See the Capitol Watch column on page 23 for more information.)

The convention will also feature international keynote speakers Dr. Bill Daggett, who is recognized worldwide for his educational reform efforts, and Ravi Hutheesing, who is known for his efforts to bridge cultural and generational divides. They will challenge you to think about the future of K-12 education in new and innovative ways. Their sessions along with the in-depth workshop, related breakout sessions and networking opportunities will make the convention an excellent forum to explore these ideas with your colleagues throughout the state.

As school leaders, we have work to do. By discussing important issues impacting education, sharing information, and working together, we can take our state forward. Let’s work together to implement meaningful and comprehensive change that will produce real results for our students. ■

By discussing important issues impacting education, sharing information, and working together, we can take our state forward.