

1 **WISCONSIN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL BOARDS, INC.**

2 Madison, Wisconsin

3 November 20, 2019

4
5 **REPORT TO THE MEMBERSHIP ON PROPOSED 2020 RESOLUTIONS**

6 WASB Policy & Resolutions Committee

7 Bill Yingst, Sr., Durand-Arkansas School Board, Chair

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10 **Resolution 20-01: *Quorum for the Purpose of Filing School Board Vacancies***

11
12 **Create:** The WASB supports legislation to clarify that in the event of the resignation and/or
13 removal of multiple board members, a quorum for the specific purpose of filling the vacant board
14 seats (in a district other than MPS) is a majority of the actively serving members. “Actively
15 serving members” includes board members who have been appointed to fill a vacancy and have
16 taken the oath of office.

17
18 **Rationale:** This resolution addresses what constitutes a board quorum for the narrow purpose of
19 convening to fill vacant board seats. It is in response to a situation that happened in the
20 submitting district, where three board members resigned nearly simultaneously from a seven-
21 member board. Under a definition of a quorum as “a majority of school board members or fixed
22 by law” that board may not have been able to lawfully convene if a single member was absent or
23 unavailable to attend a meeting and if one more member had resigned, it may not have been able
24 to convene and meet at all. This resolution would clarify that a quorum for the limited purpose of
25 filling board vacancies is a majority of the actively serving members, rather than a majority of the
26 members authorized by law. It would further clarify that “actively serving members” includes
27 board members who have been appointed to fill a vacancy, provided they have taken their oath of
28 office.

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31 **Resolution 20-02: *Blue Ribbon Commission on School Funding Recommendations***

32
33 **Create:** The WASB supports the recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Commission on School
34 Funding, as published in January 2019, that align with WASB resolutions.

35
36 **Rationale:** The Blue Ribbon Commission on School Funding was established in December 2017
37 and was charged with examining how tax dollars are distributed to schools and making
38 recommendations to better meet the needs of students across the state.

39
40 The 16-member Commission held eight public hearings at locations across the state to receive
41 testimony from members of the public and held two informational hearings in Madison to receive
42 testimony from invited speakers and to conduct Commission discussions.

43
44 The Commission issued its recommendations on January 4, 2019, many of which are consistent
45 with WASB resolutions.

1 **Resolution 20-03: English Learner (EL) Services Funding**

2
3 **Create:** The WASB supports increased weighting of English learner (EL) pupils in the general
4 school aids and revenue limit formulas or providing categorical aid to support services for all EL
5 pupils in grades 4K through 12.

6
7 **Rationale:** Bringing students who do not speak English as their first language to proficiency can
8 be more costly than bringing native English-speaking students to proficiency.

9
10 Under current law, the only state aid available to school districts with English learner (EL) pupils
11 is called bilingual-bicultural aid. This aid is provided only to school districts that are required by
12 state law to provide special classes to EL pupils. These special classes are required at schools that
13 enroll 10 or more EL pupils in a particular language group in grades K-3, or 20 or more in grades
14 4-8 or 9-12. In 2016-17, 52 school districts received bilingual-bicultural aid; however, an
15 additional 305 school districts reported at least one EL pupil but did not meet the threshold for
16 receiving bilingual bicultural aid in that year. As a result, these 305 districts received no state aid
17 for their costs associated with providing EL services.

18
19 While school districts are eligible to receive federal aid under Title III (ESSA), at an average of
20 \$145 per EL (2015-16 data), to support the educational needs of these students, providing state
21 aid to school districts that educate ELs but currently do not receive state aid would help those
22 districts fund the cost of EL programming without having to transfer funding from general
23 education programs. It would also help to ensure that the state meets its obligation to serve all EL
24 students.

25
26 One way to provide additional funding is by counting EL students as more than 1.0 FTE (i.e.,
27 increased weighting) in the state’s general equalization aid and revenue limit formulas. Another
28 way is by providing funding in the form of categorical aid that is received outside revenue limits
29 and can be provided either to reimburse a share of overall costs or on a per-pupil basis.

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32 **Resolution 20-04: Equalization Aid Payment Schedule**

33
34 **Repeal and Recreate existing Resolution 2.20 (d)** to read: The WASB supports the payment of
35 equalization aids in four equal installments (25% each) in September, December, March, and
36 June. Phase in the new schedule as follows: Increase the September payment by two percentage
37 points and decrease the June payment by two percentage points each year for five years.

38
39 **Rationale:** School districts generally do not receive their operating revenue in even, regular
40 amounts throughout the course of the fiscal (school) year. For this reason, districts must either
41 maintain a fund balance in their General Fund, known as Fund 10, or they must borrow funds on a
42 short-term basis to meet cash flow needs. Although interest rates are currently at historically low
43 levels, many districts seek to avoid short-term borrowing because of the costs involved.

44
45 State general equalization aid is currently distributed to school districts according to the following
46 statutory payment schedule: 15% in September; 25% in December; 25% in March; and 35% in

1 June. This resolution would support gradually evening out these payments into four payments of
2 25% each.

3
4 By shifting the distribution schedule for equalization aid payments so that more aid is received
5 earlier in the school year, the need for districts (at least those that receive substantial amounts of
6 equalization aid) to either maintain large fund balances or short-term borrow would likely be
7 reduced.

8
9 Legislation has been introduced (2019 Senate Bill 415 and 2019 Assembly Bill 461) to
10 accomplish this change, which was recommended by the Blue Ribbon Commission on School
11 Funding.

12
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14 **Resolution 20-05: *Transportation Aid for High Poverty Districts***

15
16 **Create:** The WASB supports the creation of a state categorical aid program, to provide new
17 monies aimed at helping school districts with high concentrations of students from poverty
18 backgrounds increase the attendance and participation rates of students whose families are unable
19 to transport them to and from school or for extracurricular activities.

20
21 **Rationale:** One way to increase school attendance, reduce absenteeism and address truancy is for
22 schools to provide transportation to students living within a two-mile radius of schools who
23 would otherwise lack transportation to and from school and who aren't required by law to be
24 transported to and from school. Providing additional transportation options for such children
25 would enable them to participate in extracurricular activities, increasing their sense of inclusion in
26 the school community and promoting greater equity. Because pupil transportation is costly,
27 additional state aid could assist school districts in such efforts. Districts might also be able to use
28 this additional state aid to run late busses for students who reside more than two miles from
29 school and are regularly transported to and from school on normal bus schedules. Late busses
30 would enable these students to more easily participate in extracurricular and other school
31 activities.

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34 **Resolution 20-06: *Dyslexia Guidebook***

35
36 **Create:** The WASB supports the development of a guidebook to inform school district policies
37 and practices for providing services to students with dyslexia and related conditions. School board
38 members, parents, teachers, administrators, reading specialists, school social workers and other
39 stakeholders should have input into the development of such a guidebook and should serve as
40 members of any advisory committee established for the purpose of developing such a guidebook.

41
42 **Rationale:** The Legislative Council Study Committee on the Identification and Management of
43 Dyslexia was formed in 2018 and directed to review current screening, identification, school
44 intervention, and treatment protocols for dyslexia in K-12 schools; to examine the effects of
45 current state statutes and regulations on literacy outcomes for students with dyslexia; and to
46 evaluate the effects of dyslexia on literacy outcomes in the state.

1 Testimony before the committee indicated that parents, teachers, and administrators assisting
2 students with dyslexia and related conditions may have difficulty finding information and
3 resources related to dyslexia and related conditions.

4
5 The study committee recommended legislation introduced as 2019 Assembly Bill 110, which
6 requires the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) to develop a guidebook for parents,
7 guardians, teachers, and administrators regarding dyslexia and related conditions. Under this bill
8 as introduced, to develop the guidebook, the state superintendent must establish an advisory
9 committee, whose membership shall be determined in consultation with the International
10 Dyslexia Association—Wisconsin Branch, Inc. (IDA), and the Wisconsin State Reading
11 Association, Inc. (WSRA). Representatives from IDA and WSRA also serve as co-chairpersons
12 on the advisory committee.

13
14 This resolution supports the development of this guidebook as well as the inclusion of school
15 board members, parents, teachers, administrators, pupil service professionals and reading
16 specialists as members of the advisory committee charged with developing the guidebook.

17
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19 **Resolution 20-07: *School & School District Report Cards***

20
21 **Create:** The WASB supports legislation to provide that for purposes of measuring a school
22 district's or high school's improvement, the DPI may not include data derived from a public
23 school located in a youth correctional facility that is located within and operated by the school
24 district, if at least 50% of the pupils attending the school are attending on a short-term basis (60
25 days or less).

26
27 **Rationale:** For state accountability (report card) purposes, index score components that are based
28 on state assessment results are calculated using full academic year students. However, full
29 academic year student status is not used in the calculations of attendance, absenteeism, dropout,
30 and graduation rates; these measures apply to all students. Thus, even students who attend school
31 within a district for a relatively short period of time may strongly affect a district's report card
32 score if they drop out or fail to graduate.

33
34 The submitting board argues that its overall district dropout rate and overall district graduation
35 rate and ultimately its overall score as a district is significantly negatively impacted because the
36 district operates a school for students in the Milwaukee County House of Corrections. The
37 students in that school often do not enroll in another school district after they leave the submitting
38 district's school within that juvenile facility, which causes those students to count as a dropouts
39 and non-graduates on the submitting district's report card.

40
41 In 2015, for similar reasons, the Legislature changed the report card law so that data for all
42 students in virtual charter schools in which at least 50% of the students are attending under full-
43 time open enrollment are excluded from district report card calculation. This provision does not
44 affect school report cards, which the virtual charter schools continue to receive.

1 **Resolution 20-08: Social & Emotional Learning**
2

3 **Create:** The WASB supports the creation of a state categorical aid, to provide new monies, to
4 support social and emotional learning for all public school students, grades 4K-12.
5

6 **Rationale:** Social and emotional learning describes a process through which children and adults
7 acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and
8 manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and
9 maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.
10

11 Proponents of making social and emotional learning skills part of the learning equation suggest it
12 can help children succeed in school and life. Children who have acquired and developed social
13 and emotional skills can manage their feelings, build healthy relationships, and navigate social
14 environments.
15

16 Providing state categorical aid could help districts with the cost of curricular materials and
17 instructional materials as well as teacher professional development regarding social and emotional
18 learning.
19
20

21 **Resolution 20-09: Mental Health Categorical Aid**
22

23 **Repeal and recreate existing WASB resolution 6.065** to read: The WASB supports legislation
24 to establish a new categorical aid, to provide new monies, to support school-based mental health
25 related services. The WASB recommends that the state provide a minimum of \$25 per pupil in the
26 first year, \$35 per pupil in the second year and \$50 per pupil in the third year and each year
27 thereafter, with provisions for small districts to receive a minimum amount of aid designed to
28 help them accomplish the purposes listed below. This new resource would enable school districts
29 to provide mental health related services as identified, determined and prioritized at the local
30 level. Services eligible to be funded under this categorical aid may include, but are not be limited
31 to, the following:

- 32 ➤ Contracting with mental health service providers;
- 33 ➤ Employment of a mental health coordinator;
- 34 ➤ Employment of an autism coordinator;
- 35 ➤ Employment of a behavioral specialist or interventionist;
- 36 ➤ Contracting with outside agencies for mental health screening in grades preK-12;
- 37 ➤ Employment of a parent/peer advocate; or
- 38 ➤ Training for staff in the areas of trauma sensitive schools, restorative practices,
39 youth mental health first aid, and emotional regulation.
40

41 **Rationale:** Current WASB resolution 6.065 calls for a creation of a revenue limit exemption to
42 be used to fund the listed mental health related items. This proposed resolution would instead call
43 for state categorical aid to be used to fund these listed items. Under a revenue limit exemption,
44 the funding for these services would come from local property taxes, at least in the first year.
45 With state categorical aid, the state would provide the funding and it would be received outside
46 the revenue limits.
47

1 **Resolution 20-10: *Native American Mascots***

2
3 **Create:** The WASB supports legislation requiring school districts to retire Native American
4 mascots, provided such legislation: a) establishes adequate timelines to allow for the
5 consideration and implementation of other alternatives; b) provides state funding to compensate
6 districts for the costs (e.g., changes to facilities, uniforms, etc.) necessary to retire Native
7 American mascots, logos or imagery; and c) does not require the retiring of images, statues or
8 other likenesses of historic individual figures after whom a school or community is named.
9

10 **Rationale:** Supporters of ending the use of Native American mascots argue such mascots and
11 logos interfere with student learning by creating, supporting and maintaining oversimplified, and
12 inaccurate views of North America’s indigenous peoples and their cultures. Supporters argue
13 further that the continued use of such mascots and logos teaches or encourages students to
14 stereotype groups of people on the basis of race, religion, ancestry and cultural ethnicity. They
15 argue that such mascots and logos have the effect of separating, marginalizing, confusing,
16 intimidating and harming Native American children and making the school an inhospitable or
17 unwelcoming place.
18
19

20 **Resolution 20-11: *Meal Shaming***

21
22 **Create:** The WASB opposes singling out, identifying, stigmatizing or embarrassing school
23 children who have unpaid school meal debts as the situation may be totally out of their control.
24 The WASB also opposes state legislation mandating that schools provide a fully reimbursable
25 meal to any student who requests one, regardless of his or her ability to pay for the meal, unless
26 the state provides funding to meet this mandate. The WASB encourages schools and school
27 districts that participate in federal school meals programs to participate, to the extent they are
28 eligible, in federal programs such as the Community Eligibility Provision that provides additional
29 federal funding so that all students, regardless of family income, may receive school breakfasts
30 and lunches without charge.
31

32 **Rationale:** “Meal shaming” is a term child-hunger advocates use to describe practices that
33 publicly identify children with unpaid school meal debts. These practices can cause children who
34 cannot pay for their lunch to be singled out, embarrassed or potentially stigmatized. This
35 resolution not only opposes such practices but also encourages schools and school districts to
36 participate, to the extent possible, in federal programs that provide additional subsidies that enable
37 school and districts to provide no-charge meals to students at all income levels. Because such
38 programs eliminate unpaid meal charges they also eliminate “meal shaming.” This resolution
39 also restates the WASB’s opposition to unfunded mandates with respect to school meals.
40
41

42 **Resolution 20-12: *Social Worker Certification & Licensure***

43
44 **Create:** The WASB supports efforts to increase the supply of school social workers, school
45 counselors and mental health providers throughout the state. The WASB will work with the DPI
46 to address existing obstacles to school social worker licensing with an emphasis on obstacles

1 faced by districts in regions of the state that are located remotely from universities conferring
2 degrees currently recognized by the DPI for licensure.

3
4 **Rationale:** It is our understanding that the DPI will only issue a School Social Work license to
5 graduates of the Master of Social Work programs at the UW-Madison, UW-Milwaukee or UW-
6 Green Bay. Wisconsin's northwestern region is thus at a disadvantage because of its geographical
7 location. With only three approved programs in the entire State, the closest of which is 300 miles
8 away, the potential pool of applicants for licensure in that region is extremely limited.

9
10 It is our understanding that the DPI's rationale is that the graduate programs in northwestern
11 Wisconsin and Minnesota do not require school placements as part of their program. The DPI
12 apparently assumes these programs have only a clinical focus. However, students completing
13 programs at UW-Superior, University of Minnesota-Duluth, or College of Saint Scholastica can
14 obtain school social work licensure through the Minnesota Department of Education without
15 barriers. Indeed, the states that border with Wisconsin (Minnesota, Illinois, Iowa, and Michigan)
16 honor any social work graduate program that is accredited by the Council on Social Work
17 Education (CSWE) if the candidate also has a license from that state's Board of Social Work.

18
19 Supporters of this proposal argue the need for school -based services is exacerbated because the
20 northwestern region of the state suffers from a relative lack of community health providers due in
21 part to Wisconsin's low Medicaid reimbursement rate when compared to Minnesota. They argue
22 that, as a result, providers elect to locate in, say, Duluth instead of Superior as they can receive
23 higher compensation for providing the same services. It is thus difficult for Wisconsin students,
24 particularly those from impoverished families, to surmount the state boundaries in order to
25 receive services.

26 27 28 **Resolution 20-13: Mandatory Reporting**

29 **Create:** The WASB supports ensuring that all teachers and other school employees receive
30 training adequate to enable them: to identify and report reasonably suspicious cases of child
31 abuse, child neglect and human trafficking; and to work effectively with Child Protective
32 Services, law enforcement agencies and other agencies, including the Department of Children and
33 Families, involved in investigating, initiating interventions and providing services to victims of
34 abuse, neglect or human trafficking. The WASB further supports legislation to ensure the DPI
35 provides a rigorous training program adequate to assist teachers and other school employees in
36 properly following state and federal laws in these areas.

37
38 **Rationale:** School employees have legal and ethical obligations to report suspected child abuse
39 or neglect. However, many school employees are inadequately prepared to work with Child
40 Protective Services and/or law enforcement agencies concerning the students under their
41 supervision or care. Currently, the only training teachers and other school employees are required
42 to complete under state law is the mandatory reporter training that must be completed within six
43 months of being hired and must be completed again once every 5 years to keep current. The
44 current training module can be found here: [https://media.dpi.wi.gov/sspw/av/child-maltreatment-
45 part-1/story_html5.html](https://media.dpi.wi.gov/sspw/av/child-maltreatment-part-1/story_html5.html). This resolution supports teachers and other school employees receiving
46 more rigorous training and supports legislation to increase the rigor of the training module
47 provided by the DPI.

1 **Resolution 20-14: *Whole Grade Sharing Incentive Aid***

2
3 **Create:** The WASB supports legislation to create an aid incentive for school districts that enter
4 into whole grade sharing agreements.

5
6 **Rationale:** Current law allows two or more school districts to enter into a whole grade sharing
7 agreement under which they can share students as a way to potentially reduce costs and maintain
8 existing programming. Under a whole grade sharing agreement, neighboring districts could, for
9 example, agree to consolidate pupils in a particular grade level by offering that grade in only one
10 of the participating districts. Two districts with ten students each in both first and second grades
11 could consolidate these students into two classrooms with twenty students each. Transportation
12 costs aside, the districts could reduce personnel costs and lessen teacher supply issues by adopting
13 such an approach.

14
15 For reasons that are not entirely clear, whole grade sharing has not been widely utilized in
16 Wisconsin. This is unlike the experience in our neighboring state of Iowa, where the Legislature
17 has provided additional aid and whole grade sharing has been widely adopted as a cost reduction
18 strategy. Creating a new categorical aid program would provide an incentive for many Wisconsin
19 school districts to explore entering into whole grade sharing agreements.

20
21 Legislation has been introduced (2019 Senate Bill 412 and 2019 Assembly Bill 442) that would
22 create a categorical aid for school boards that enter into a whole grade sharing agreement and
23 adopt a resolution to consider school district consolidation. Under these bills, an eligible school
24 board could receive a payment of \$150 per pupil enrolled in a grade included in the whole grade
25 sharing agreement for up to five school years.

26
27
28 **Resolution 20-15: *Formation of New K-8 and Union High School (UHS) Districts***

29
30 **Create:** The WASB supports legislation to allow two or more existing K-12 districts to jointly
31 create new K-8/union high school (UHS) districts to serve their students.

32
33 **Rationale:** Wisconsin currently has ten union high school (UHS) districts that receive incoming
34 9th graders from several underlying elementary (K-8) districts. There are currently 46 underlying
35 elementary K-8 school districts that feed students into UHS districts.

36
37 Although there is a statutory mechanism for converting K-8/UHS districts into K-12 districts,
38 there is no statutory mechanism for converting K-12 districts into K-8/UHS districts. The
39 approach advanced by this resolution would provide an alternative to consolidation that would
40 allow existing boards to continue operating their elementary and middle schools but share a
41 combined (regional) high school governed by a new union high school board. Sharing students at
42 the high school level can reduce the per pupil cost of offering specialized electives and can avoid
43 the problem of younger students having to ride a bus for extended periods of time that can result
44 from the consolidation of sparsely populated rural districts.

1 **Resolution 20-16: *Weighting of Low-Income Pupils***
2

3 **Amend Resolution 2.20 (q)** to read: The WASB supports using student poverty as a factor in the
4 state equalization aid formula and revenue limits. Specifically, the WASB supports increased
5 weighting of pupils from low-income families in the general school aids and revenue limit
6 formulas.
7

8 **Rationale:** Currently, both the equalization aid formula (a/k/a school funding formula) used to
9 calculate each district’s general equalization aid allocation and the revenue limit formula count
10 each pupil as one pupil without regard to any special needs or characteristics that pupil may
11 possess.
12

13 The Blue Ribbon Commission on School Funding recommended weighting each pupil from a
14 low-income family (i.e., each pupil eligible for free or reduced-price lunch) as 1.2 FTE in the
15 general school aids and revenue limit formulas. This resolution would more closely align the
16 WASB’s policy position with that recommendation.
17

18 Weighting low-income pupils in this way would increase revenue limit authority over a three-year
19 period as the increased weighting of these pupils is fully reflected in the three-year rolling average
20 of enrollment used to calculate revenue limits. In calculating general school aids, increased
21 weighting of low-income pupils would lower districts' equalized value per member, so that
22 districts with disproportionate numbers of low-income pupils could receive additional general aid.
23
24

25 **Resolution 20-17: *Student Equity Statements***
26

27 **Create:** The WASB supports that school boards and districts actively work with partnering
28 organizations and associations which provide the organizational framework for student and school
29 participation in extracurricular, co-curricular and club activities to require their member and/or
30 participating school districts to sign and to commit to enforcing a student equity statement that
31 enables and ensures all students can participate in welcoming, respectful environments where hate
32 speech or other actions motivated by a discriminatory intent are not tolerated and all forms of
33 diversity are actively embraced.
34

35 **Rationale:** The ability of students to participate in extracurricular activities including sports,
36 clubs and associations is of great importance to student engagement and success. All students
37 deserve equitable opportunities to participate in extracurricular activities and be free from
38 discrimination and disrespect. Public school districts often rely on other organizations and
39 associations to partner with them to provide the organizational framework necessary to offer these
40 valuable experiences to our students. Some of these organizations and associations that our
41 member school districts partner with currently do not have policies or practices in place that
42 require their membership to recognize equitable practices relative to participation. This resolution
43 recognizes that in order for all public school students to have equitable, valuable, and respectful
44 experiences through participation in extracurricular activities, partnering organizations and
45 associations must help promote equity and fairness and that students wishing to participate in
46 these activities must agree to abide by respectful standards of behavior, and refrain from engaging
47 in or tolerating hateful actions or speech.

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-- End --