

2022 CONVENTION REVIEW

WISCONSIN SchoolNews

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Unlocking POTENTIAL

Keynote Speaker **Brandon Fleming** reminded attendees that "nobody is beyond the reach of redemption."



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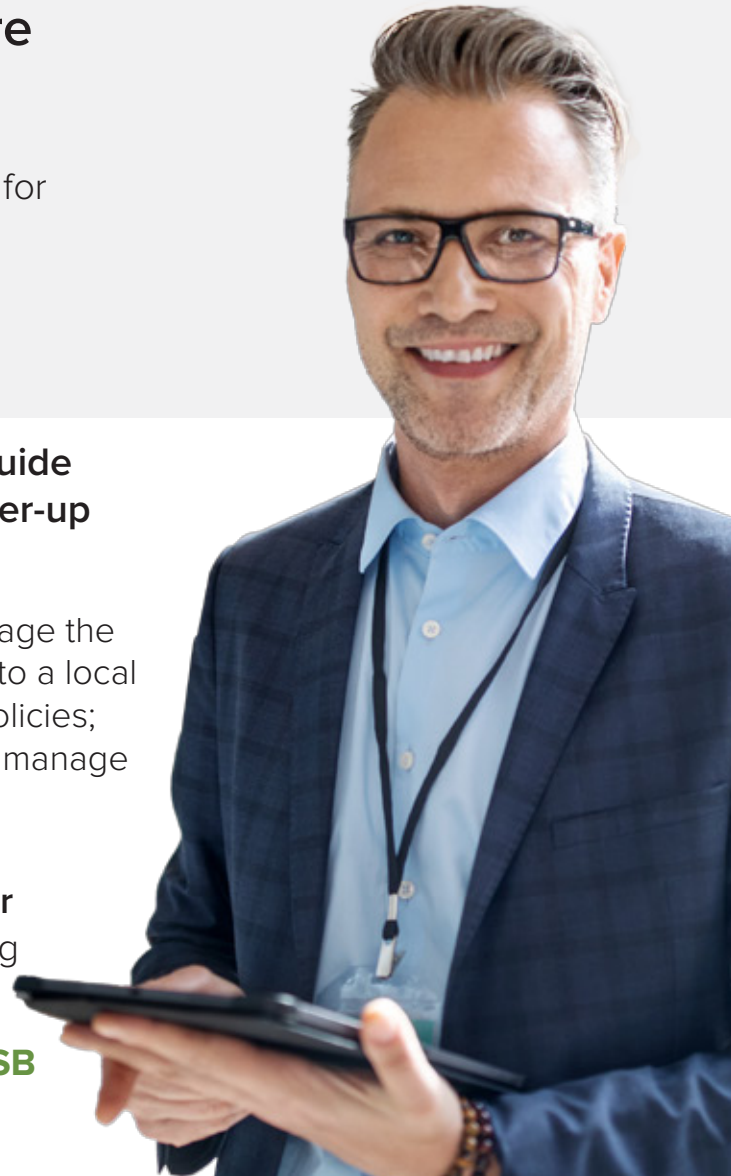
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Forward Together

FOR OUR STUDENTS

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Freelance writers Anne Davis and Joe Quick contributed
to this issue of the Wisconsin School News.

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THE GENEROUS CONTRIBUTIONS BY THE ABOVE ORGANIZATIONS
HELPED MAKE THE 101ST STATE EDUCATION CONVENTION A SUCCESS



Forward for Our Students

Thank you to all who helped make our 101st State Education Convention a success. I'm grateful for the chance to see so many of you in person after two years.

I hope you have returned to your districts inspired and brimming with new ideas.

One of the aspects of the convention I enjoy is the chance to learn across a diverse range of topics. That said, if I were to pull a theme from the convention, it would be meeting each young person where they are.

Our keynote speakers on Wednesday and Thursday said their education didn't mean much to them, at least as children. But once they understood how education mattered to them, it became central to their impressive accomplishments.

Ravi Hutheesing didn't see how math could help him until he sat in a cockpit. If school had been more connected to his interests, he could have been an active learner rather than a passive one.

"School must not try to be everything to everyone," as Ravi put it, "but it must have something for everyone."

It brings to mind another quote, often attributed to W.B. Yeats, "Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire."

Like Ravi, Brandon Fleming did not have a positive experience in his early schooling. School seemed not just irrelevant to a young Brandon, it felt outright hostile.

It took a caring college professor

showing genuine love for Brandon to unlock his considerable academic talents. Now, he's passing that love — his key to academic success — to students from inner-city Atlanta.

His philosophy is helping to unlock the potential of young Black children, but its value is not limited to them. Schools across Wisconsin have children like Brandon, who are indifferent to the classroom. We should not be surprised by the academic disparities that result.

As Brandon's path from indifferent student to Harvard scholar exemplifies, we must take care not to see these disparities as differences in ability.

We talk a lot about making education more engaging. But before a young person can be engaged, they have to know, in their core, that they're cared about.

I have to say, some of the optimism of our keynote speakers rubbed off on me.

Then, on Friday, we heard WASBO Executive Director Mike Barry engage Craig Counsell, the manager of the Milwaukee Brewers, in a candid conversation. I appreciated the thoughtful questions from Mike as well as Craig's openness.

Craig observed that coaching is like teaching in that your goal is to get the best out of the people in your care.

When Mike asked Craig how the team helped pitcher Corbin Burnes improve from a disappointing 2019 to winning the top prize in pitching in 2021, Craig's response was enlight-

ening: "I believe that when we started listening to Corbin, we learned how to help him correctly. Until we listened to the student, we were almost blind to the answer."

Likewise, we as education leaders should understand that the road to academic improvement runs through the unique talents and interests of each student. We need to do a better job of listening to students to better meet their needs.

Finally, if you don't know what "The chicken runs at midnight" means, ask someone who attended the session with Counsell to tell you this touching story.

If you couldn't make it this year — or if you couldn't make all the sessions you wanted to — consider registering for our Recorded Sessions program. You'll receive recordings of eight select breakout sessions as well as Ravi and Brandon's keynote speeches. Visit WASB.org/convention to learn more.

I did hear from attendees about how difficult the last few years have been. We want to support you in the ways that matter to you, which is why we've just finished a survey of our members.

Expect to hear more in coming months about what we've learned from that survey and, more importantly, what we're going to do about what we've learned.

Thank you once again for serving your communities. ■

We talk a lot about making education more engaging. But before a young person can be engaged, they have to know, in their core, that they're cared about.

Forward Together

FOR OUR STUDENTS

School leaders from around the state gathered in Milwaukee for the 101st State Education Convention. This special issue of *Wisconsin School News* looks back on the many sessions, keynote speakers and special events from January's convention.



The Chippewa Falls Wire Choir added electrifying dance numbers to their performance.



The Spencer High School Handbells Ensemble showed off their skill and the range of their bells during the final general session.



The Wauwatosa East Chamber Orchestra gave a masterful performance to open the convention.



Students from the Tomah Area School District documented the convention and produced a highlight video. Visit [WASB.org](https://www.wasb.org) to watch.



An attendee stops to browse student art. In partnership with the Wisconsin Art Education Association and Performance Services, the WASB holds an annual art contest showcasing the work of Wisconsin student artists.

PIVOTS DEFINE PANDEMIC & CHILDREN'S FUTURES

KEYNOTE
RAVI HUTHEESING



For some Iraqis, standing up to ISIS control didn't come from the barrel of a gun, but from a pair of scissors and a violin. Following the liberation of Mosul after three years of ISIS control, Ravi Hutheesing's new friend, Khalid, asked to cut Ravi's hair.

"What I discovered was that as the city of Mosul was being liberated, the men of Mosul started to cut their hair to celebrate their freedom." Khalid, a barber and musician, was "inviting me to join in his celebration of freedom," Hutheesing told State Education Convention general session attendees in January.

Hutheesing, a musician, aviator and cultural diplomat, used his life experience to discuss modifying behavior, finding comfort in the ability to pivot and changing as the circumstances demand. The former supporting guitarist for pop group Hanson, the 1990s' one-hit wonders of "MMMBop" fame, argues that the ability to pivot is essential for success personally and globally.

Hutheesing cited predictions that nearly 40% of today's jobs will be automated by the next decade.

"Where does that leave our students? How do we educate them for jobs we don't understand or know about?" he asked. "Education itself must pivot and I believe it has to

pivot from college and career ready to cultural competence and global citizenship."

As a teen, Hutheesing watched his father and brothers find success in finance. While his brothers went off to college and his parents' marriage crumbled, Hutheesing dreamed of the stage.

"My dream was to be (guitarist) Angus Young of AC/DC," he said. "That's what I wanted to do, and I didn't feel like I was getting that at school. By the time I got to high school, I was just miserably bored. All I wanted to do was drop out."

He says two high school music teachers gave him a reason to stay in school. A high school mentor told him, "'School must not try to be everything to everyone, but it must have something for everyone.' That was so relevant to me because that's what kept me on track."

Hutheesing tried college, but again found little relevancy in the classroom tedium. His father's suggestion to write a business plan before dropping out helped him focus and set goals.

"It was my vision, it was my business plan, it was my life plan," Hutheesing said, encouraging convention attendees to help their schools assist students in similar soul-searching about their dreams.

"It was about so much that was relevant to me."

Hutheesing describes his 1997 flirt with fame as "short, but really sweet" and likened it to the Harvard Business School of Rock and Roll. But after the "MMMBop" flash in the pan and music's increasing digital swing, "I had to pivot — everything changed."

"COVID-19 reminded us that the future requires the ability to pivot," he said. "For me, the only goal of school should be to teach how to learn."

In his current role as a U.S. State Department cultural diplomat, Hutheesing dreams of ways to promote world peace. He mused about politics and civil discourse, offering, "Nothing brings a crowd together like a good conversation on politics."

He maintains the differences are merely based on different points of view depending on an individual's culture.

"Education is the engine that's going to fix all of that — that's the power in this room. We have to teach civil discourse using current events because if we inspire curiosity with relevant current events, that leads to listening. If we promote critical thinking, that leads to having informed opinions, which leads to civil discourse." ■

Education itself must pivot and I believe it has to pivot from college and career ready to cultural competence and global citizenship.

UNLOCKING STUDENTS' POTENTIAL

Fleming draws on educational experience to help the next generation

KEYNOTE BRANDON FLEMING



Brandon Fleming spent years of hating and failing school until a caring college professor took just minutes to turn his life around. Instead of chastising him for submitting a clearly plagiarized paper, she pushed the paper aside, looked him in the eye and told him she wanted to know more about him.

"All of a sudden, this wall between us started to come down," Fleming said as he recalled the transformational moment during his keynote presentation at the State Education Convention. "She put my humanity before my education."

The professor spent hours working with Fleming at his own pace, putting him on a path to earn bachelor's and master's degrees and eventually become an educator himself. He believes the lessons he learned from his English professor are the ones educators need if they are to reach all students.

"English did not change me. Literature did not change me. Academics did not change me. Love is what changed me, empathy is what changed me," Fleming said.

Author and founder of the Harvard Diversity Project, Fleming told convention attendees the story of his unlikely rise from being a college dropout to establishing a career as an assistant debate coach at Harvard University

and creating a groundbreaking educational equity program. The Harvard Debate Council Diversity Project has brought hundreds of students of color on full scholarships to the university's summer residency program to be trained as world-class debaters.

Since the program began in 2017, Fleming's teams have won international competitions, beating elite students from all over the world. His students, who otherwise might never have attempted to go to college, have gone on to attend some of the country's most prestigious universities.

Fleming has been recognized for his work, including being named to Forbes magazine's 30 Under 30 list. His book, "Miseducated: A Memoir," was published in 2021.

Fleming had a troubled childhood, suffering abuse from his stepfather. He acted out in school and was labeled as a troublemaker. Looking for some sort of acceptance, he joined a gang and started selling drugs.

He was saved for a while because coaches discovered that he was a talented basketball player. Focusing only on his athletic skills and not academics, Fleming passed through high school and eventually became a college prospect. He enrolled at Liberty University but quickly suffered a career-ending injury. He dropped out of college and took

a mind-numbing job on an assembly line at the age of 18.

Hopeless, he attempted suicide. He eventually returned to college and selected an English major, but his academic skills were so limited that he fell behind and was taunted by his classmates. It was at that low point that he had the life-changing encounter with the professor who called him in to discuss his paper.

Even as Fleming turned things around, he felt uncomfortable, unsure of why he had achieved and overcome his rough start while others had not. He turned to his religious faith and became convinced that he had a purpose, which became the Harvard Diversity Project.

Fleming recruited his first group of students from Atlanta and raised money to fund the student scholarships. He says the key to the program's success is meeting the students where they are.

He hopes that other educators will follow the example of the college professor who "came for him" and changed his life.

"I want everyone to see that nobody is beyond the reach of redemption," he said. "My charge to you is: Who will you come for and how far are you willing to go?" ■

English did not change me. Literature did not change me. Academics did not change me. Love is what changed me, empathy is what changed me.

BETTER LISTENING

Managing conflict is an essential leadership skill

KEYNOTE CRAIG COUNSELL



Milwaukee Brewers Manager Craig Counsell knows what life is like under the microscope.

“I empathize with the public nature of your jobs,” he told attendees of the 2022 Wisconsin State Education Convention. “I often think when I hear something (about schools) — because I know it happens to me a lot — I wonder, ‘What don’t I know?’ I know there’s a lot all of you accomplish that makes your jobs so valuable, so thank you.”

Over the course of an hour at the concluding session of the convention, Counsell weaved anecdotes into a conversation about leadership, cultural diversity, women in baseball and risk-taking with WASBO Executive Director Mike Barry.

In a discussion of pitcher Corbin Burnes’ Cy Young Award in 2021, Barry noted that “good teachers know to never give up on a student,” describing Burnes’ journey from a struggling pitcher to winner of the coveted prize of best pitcher in the National League.

Counsell was quick to acknowledge the “lesson learned for me was to be a better listener. As teachers, sometimes we think we have the answers, the curriculum. With the Brewers it’s the same way — we think we have an excellent pitching

curriculum.” Burnes’ 2019 losing battles on the mound prompted a re-examination of that curriculum.

“Frankly, our curriculum for Corbin wasn’t that good,” he said. “I believe that when we started listening to Corbin, we learned how to help him correctly. Until we listened to the student, we were almost blind to the answer,” Counsell said, adding that helping a struggling student (player) succeed “is still the best part of the job.”

Counsell described Brewers bench coach Pat Murphy, his college coach at Notre Dame whom he’s worked with for 25 years, as one of his most memorable teachers. The Whitefish Bay High School graduate said Murphy “brought so much out of me that I probably didn’t know was even in there. I think that’s what the greatest teachers do.”

Rather than avoiding conflict, Counsell sees its value, admitting he and Murphy “see the world very differently, but that’s the thing I value about it, we’re going to come up with different answers. But I know ultimately, we will make better decisions. We respect each other’s opinions and that leads us to good answers along the way. We disagree frequently ... and I love it.”

Counsell said COVID-19’s impact on baseball — with empty stadiums,

cardboard “fans” and rigid health protocols — reinforced his steadfast belief that “there’s opportunity in crisis. How it manifests itself, you don’t ever really know.”

He then described “concourse conversations,” where the team would meet to talk in open air on the American Family Field concourse — a place where the team never gathered before. “The best meetings were when we discussed social justice issues,” Counsell said. “To me, whatever happened during the season, the conversations we had there were really impactful for people and changed a lot of us.”

Counsell stressed valuing diversity starts at the top, with Brewers owner Mark Attanasio. “It’s number one to him. It’s the most important thing that you have to get right. The word we use is ‘connected.’ It’s an important word to us and translates easily into Spanish,” Counsell said, noting that nearly half of the Brewers are native Spanish speakers. “It’s almost the second language of baseball.”

Counsell also touched on the emergence of women in baseball leadership positions, admitting that he has things to learn, but is an eager student. “It’s coming; it’s exciting. I, as a leader, frankly, learned my feminine side isn’t good enough. It was really eye-opening for me,” he said. ■

I believe that when we started listening to Corbin, we learned how to help him correctly. Until we listened to the student, we were almost blind to the answer.

STATE SUPERINTENDENT'S ADDRESS

STATE SUPERINTENDENT JILL UNDERLY

Editor's note: Below are State Superintendent Jill Underly's remarks to the Wisconsin State Education Convention on Jan. 19, 2022. The following is edited for space constraints. To view the speech in its entirety, please visit: bit.ly/3L14XE5

Good morning, and welcome to the Wisconsin State Education Convention. Thank you for inviting me to be here with you today. I know this year's theme for the convention is "Forward Together for Our Students," and I can't think of a more appropriate — or inspiring — phrase to use as the frame of our time together. And as someone who deeply values the lessons that history has to teach us, I'm going to get us started moving forward together today by taking a look at the past for some more inspiration.

Earlier this week, I published an editorial on our future as a function of education. It was inspired by a quotation from a 1947 edition of the Morehouse College campus newspaper. The article, entitled "The Purpose of Education," argued that "education must enable one to sift and weigh evidence, to discern the true from the false, the real from the unreal, and the facts from fiction." I think this is brilliant insight from the

18-year-old who wrote it. You can probably see where this is going — the student author was Martin Luther King, Jr. It may not be his most famous piece of writing, but it is arguably his most relevant for us here today.

I love this quote because it speaks to me as an educator who cares deeply about civics, and I love the next sentence even more. King writes, "The function of education, therefore, is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically." Again, I couldn't agree more. What could be more important than teaching intensive and critical thinking? I've said it before — public education is the foundation of our democracy, and this is why.

So, I appeal to you — school board members, district administrators, educators, community leaders. You are needed. We need you to lead. We need you to imagine our schools in a year from now. Think of that second grader right now who has not had a normal year of school since she was in 4K.

In 10 years, she will be a senior in high school. Are we paralyzed as we are right now with COVID, masking debates and science deniers?

Are we stuck in the same cycle of underfunding our schools, Hail Mary passes for an operational referendum, and duct tape hoping



that the roof will hold for one more year? Are you OK maintaining the status quo? Or are we tired of it all, and are we entering a new phase post-COVID, where we can say "we are leaving the past behind us, and we are coming out of this BETTER than when we entered it."

It's no secret that these kids are going to change the world someday, but we can't wait that long. And they'll only be ready to change the world if we prepare them well, if we get their schools and their teachers the resources they need so that they can be there to help them and provide those opportunities.

Indeed, we must move forward together, for our students and for our state. Thank you all for the work you are doing, and for the work we will do together. I am hopeful that we are going to get this done so that our children can change the world. But we need to help them. We need to move forward together for our students. ■

It's no secret that these kids are going to change the world someday, but we can't wait that long. And they'll only be ready to change the world if we prepare them well.

GOVERNOR'S ADDRESS

GOVERNOR TONY EVERS

Editor's note: Below are Gov. Tony Evers' remarks to the Wisconsin State Education Convention on Jan. 21, 2022. The following is edited for space constraints. To view the speech in its entirety, please visit: bit.ly/3gKDSrj

Good morning! It's great to be joining you here on the final day of the State Education Convention.

Thank you to all the school board members, district staff and CESA folks attending. I especially want to thank the executive directors and boards of directors for the WASB, WASDA and WASBO. Your leadership, and your members' leadership, in guiding the education of tens of thousands of our kids is deeply appreciated. I also want to have a shout out for State Superintendent Underly and her staff for their leadership in these very difficult and sometimes contentious times. And finally, I sure wish I was there to be part of the great discussions and to see Craig Counsell in person. Craig is one of my personal heroes and is the epitome of what a successful leader does.

As a former educator, principal, superintendent and state superintendent, I am proud to be known as the 'Education Governor,' and I believe, as I have often said, that what's best for our kids is what's best for our state. That's something that — no matter who you are, where you live,

or if you're a Democrat or Republican — we should all be able to agree on. And doing what's best for our kids means investing in our schools, so that every kid has the support and resources to thrive — no matter what ZIP code they live in or how much money their family has. It's why I've made fully funding our schools a priority while designing my two state budget proposals.

And I'm proud that we've been able to start filling in gaps left by an era of underfunding and underappreciation of public education at every level by investing in special education, school mental health, sparsity aid and transportation costs. And while we're not where we should be if we'd made the investments I'd proposed in my first two budgets, our schools are now ranked eighth in the nation in achievement, as compared to ranking 17th in the nation in 2017 after years of cuts.

But I also know that our last budget wasn't good enough for our kids, and I know you know that better than anyone. You've been asked to do more with less, especially at a time when our kids and our schools need our help the most. We cannot continue to rely on local referenda to adequately fund our schools.

The bottom line is that for the last two years, educators, parents and school boards have gone above and beyond to do everything they can to make sure our kids are in the classroom, so we will continue to



support them in their efforts any way we can — just as we have since day one.

Folks, I know as well as you do that our schools are the hearts of our community — from our pre-K and early childhood education providers to our higher education institutions. And I want to thank you again for your incredible service over the last two years of unprecedented challenges. I know that this service hasn't been without sacrifice, but I want you to know that I trust you to continue working together with parents and schools — from setting school curriculum so our kids are informed about our history and our society to setting public health measures so they're safe.

We will work together to get through these tough times, and you can count on me to continue prioritizing the kind of long-term, sustainable investments needed to ensure every kid in every school in every community can thrive.

So, with that, stay healthy, stay safe, and I thank all of you for your service. ■

Meeting the MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES in Education

The mental health of students and staff had been a growing concern for educators for years. Then came the COVID-19 pandemic.

Since then, the rates of anxiety and depression in students and staff have skyrocketed, according to Future Cain, statewide project coordinator for the Wisconsin Center for Resilient Schools. Cain wasn't the only speaker at the 2022 Wisconsin State Education Convention to focus on the issue of mental health.

"The reality is that everyone has needed emotional support with what we're dealing with," Cain said.

The Wisconsin Center for Resilient Schools was formed in 2020 by the Department of Public Instruction and the Wisconsin Safe and Healthy Schools Center as a response to the mental health challenges caused by the pandemic. The WCRS works with schools to identify gaps between existing support systems and actual needs.

Their coaches use a variety of tools to help districts look at whether their curriculum meets the needs of all students. The pandemic's special challenges mean that approaches that worked five years ago may not work now.

Cain urges districts to seek out and interact with students who need

help with mental health challenges because data shows that many students do not feel comfortable sharing their problems at school. Until districts really listen and are receptive to student voices, Cain believes the needs of all Wisconsin students will not be met.

She encourages districts to work together to share information about what approaches have worked in their district.

Meeting the mental health challenges of staff is also important. In their work with districts, WCRS staff often hear that educators are tired of hearing about the need to provide self-care for themselves because it seems like just another task when they are already overwhelmed. Therefore, districts must find a way to help staff engage in self-care without it feeling like a burden.

WCRS services are free and available to all public, private, tribal and charter schools in Wisconsin. As they continue to work with districts, the center's staff members stress the importance of



Marci Waldron-Kuhn, pupil services specialist at CESA 7, presents on trauma sensitivity at the convention. She offered numerous suggestions to help schools recognize the signs of trauma and react productively.

recognizing that meeting mental health challenges is not a quick fix.

"This is a long process," said Stacey Starke, one of the center's statewide coaches. "It's a marathon, not a sprint."

At another State Education Convention session, Marci Waldron-Kuhn, a pupil services and trauma sensitive specialist at CESA 7, discussed the need to recognize the signs of trauma and severe stress, which are more prevalent than ever in students and staff because of the pandemic.

It has been especially hard during the 2021-22 school year since expectations were high that it would be a normal year.

“We know the school year isn’t what it was cracked up to be. Nothing has changed,” Waldron-Kuhn said. “When we see trauma and toxic stress, it’s hitting everybody.”

She listed the seven essential ingredients for identifying signs of toxic stress in students and staff, help them reset and create trauma-sensitive schools: prevalence, impact, perspective shift, regulation, relationship, reason to be and care-giver capacity.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 30% of people have experienced at least one adverse childhood experience, making them more likely to develop health problems, such as depression and mental health issues. Those experiencing trauma may show signs that impact their behavior and ability to learn. They may have trouble regulating their emotions and be more reactive and impulsive.

Waldron-Kuhn told convention attendees that behavior is a sign of communication. If students are acting out, the behavior is often linked to unsolved problems or unmet needs. It can escalate if adults don’t recognize that the students are trying to communicate with their behavior.

She pointed to “frequent fliers,” or students who are often dismissed from the classroom because of their behavior. Teachers try discipline, but it doesn’t work because it doesn’t address the root of the issue, which is unaddressed trauma.

According to Waldron-Kuhn, when children experience trauma, sometimes their behavior gets stuck at the age level in which it began. This explains why educators are currently seeing students using behavior that is more characteristic of younger children. Because today’s students have had the trauma of two years of a pandemic, some sixth graders are acting like fourth graders and some eighth graders are acting like sixth graders, for instance.

STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH SURVEY RESULTS

Have at least one supportive adult besides parent(s)	84.0%
Participate in school activities, teams or clubs	68.4%
Agree or strongly agree that they belong at school	61.1%
Have at least one teacher or other adult at school to talk to	71.5%
Most of the time or always get emotional support when needed	23.9%
List adult as most likely source of emotional support	33.8%

Agree/strongly agree that bullying is a problem at school	42.9%
Self-harm (past 12 months)	18.5%
Problems with anxiety (past 12 months)	49.0%
So sad or hopeless that stopped usual activities (past 12 months)	28.5%
Seriously considered suicide (past 12 months)	15.7%
Made a suicide plan (past 12 months)	13.0%
Attempted suicide (past 12 months)	7.4%

Source: Wisconsin Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2019

Classroom connection

Another factor is the use of masks. Without seeing people’s faces, students are having problems learning social cues, Waldron-Kuhn added during her presentation.

Parents are also overwhelmed by the pandemic and exhibit behaviors that are triggered by the trauma. For example, they may become more easily angered when contacted by a teacher.

Waldron-Kuhn says students indicate they need a break from the classroom by asking to go to the bathroom, go to their lockers or get a snack. When multiple students are showing signs of needing a break, teachers should ask themselves what is going on in the classroom that might be causing anxiety and shut-down.

When students are stressed, they may be unable to communicate what is happening. They may be under so much stress that a simple action —

dropping a pencil — may trigger an extreme reaction.

One way to help students reset before they reach a meltdown stage is by using techniques that appeal to one of the five senses. Some students may calm down and focus better with music. Others may need physical movement like being sent to the office on an errand or a group stretch break.

The key for teachers is being alert to the signs that indicate students are close to being overwhelmed, and then reacting in the moment.

The same techniques can work for adults. If tempers flare during a school board meeting, perhaps it is time to stop the meeting for a few minutes.

Waldron-Kuhn also went over the other elements of a trauma-sensitive school. When it comes to relationships, it is important to find an adult students can trust and respond to at school. It might not always be a teacher — a custodian or other staff



Tiffany Mercer, a parent in the New Berlin School District who works for an organization called Growing Minds, speaks at a convention session about starting a mental health advisory committee. She spoke about her district's collaborative approach to mental health.

member may connect better with a specific student.

Waldron-Kuhn recommended incorporating community-building techniques within a classroom, such as gathering in a circle at the start of the day and sharing with each other. The technique can be used again if a problem arises.

To help students work on a sense of purpose, teachers should encourage them to investigate their interests and skills so they can think about possible future careers.

With teachers so overwhelmed by the pandemic, they also need to figure out ways to ease stress by letting go of some responsibility. Waldron-Kuhn suggests that schools allow teachers to examine their duties and identify which ones give them the most stress, such as bus duty or being a club advisor. Another teacher might be willing to take up that responsibility in exchange for giving up one of their responsibilities.

Investing in social-emotional learning

In the Racine Unified School District, work on addressing mental health needs of students and staff began before the pandemic. District staff and others described their efforts during the convention. In 2013, the district received a Safe Schools and Healthy Students grant after concerns surfaced over data that showed a high level of student mobility throughout the district and high levels of student referrals for discipline.

District officials used that grant and others to invest in ways to identify levels of trauma and introduce social-emotional learning methods. The methods focused on training staff to recognize that students have needs outside of academics.

A key for Racine was distinguishing between the culture and climate of a building and creating a climate where students and staff felt welcome and safe. To help that effort, the district created time dedicated to achieving these goals and hired additional staff members to direct those efforts at individual buildings.

"If you're not willing to take the time to teach these things because you want to teach math, it's guaranteed that you won't teach math," said Andrea Rittgers, Racine's executive director of student services.

Social-emotional elements were incorporated into each school day. Because home-to-school and school-

to-home are the most important daily transitions, a welcoming ritual was added at the start of the school day. Racine also added an optimistic closing celebration that focused on the positive elements of the day.

School officials believe these elements, which happened to roll out the year the coronavirus hit, have helped lessen the trauma for students and staff.

Student services staff meet with principals monthly to discuss how the district is recognizing and addressing mental health issues. Social-emotional competencies have been incorporated throughout the curriculum.

The work is not done. The ultimate goal is to equip every staff member with the tools they need to address student needs. There is evidence that efforts are beginning to pay off, including a recent survey in which 44% of students said they understand what to do when they feel overwhelmed and anxious.

"It takes a lot of time and effort," Rittgers said. "It's the thing our students need; it's the thing our community needs."

Creating a committee

Efforts to address mental health needs in the New Berlin School District also began before the pandemic struck. About five years ago, as district officials began hearing that students and staff needed more support, the district lost a student due to mental health issues.

The topic became a priority and the district decided to take a collaborative approach by joining forces with community partners. A mental health advisory committee was formed that included parents, school officials, health care providers and others.

"We knew that in order to support the whole child, we needed

If you're not willing to take the time to teach these things because you want to teach math, it's guaranteed that you won't teach math.

the whole community,” said Kellie Sanders, chief academic officer of the New Berlin School District.

Parent involvement was especially crucial. Tiffany Mercer, a parent and member of the committee, said parents need to feel that the school district is an ally as they confront this issue and seek to normalize the topic of mental health.

Mercer is also an executive assistant at Growing Minds, one of the community partners working with the district. The agency offers training for students and adults in ways to reset the neurological pathways in the brain when they are under stress. Trainers use non-religious mindfulness exercises to train the brain into producing a more desirable response when placed under stress.


Another district partner is Family Service of Waukesha, which oversees school-based mental health services in the district. Having the agency’s psychotherapy services at school makes it easier for students and parents.

Therapists also connect with parents and teachers and share strategies for students to use at home and in the classroom. Services are funded by private insurance and a scholarship grant fund set up through the mental health advisory committee gives financial assistance to families.

Community partners like Rogers Behavioral Health, Red Oak Counseling, and Care Solace give staff and students options when seeking mental health services.

Overall, the key to assisting students with mental health needs is to intervene as early as possible, according to Family Service’s Director of Agency Development Laura Cherone.

“At young ages, the brain’s foundation is formed. We want to invest in forming the best foundation we can at the youngest ages possible,” Cherone explained during the convention. “The more we can provide a good foundation for our kids, the more successful they will be.” ■



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— Tosha Womack, Former Principal,
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CRISIS & CONFLICT

Utilizing clear communication during trying times



Dorreen Dembski, a communications consultant, walks attendees through the planning, collaborating and communicating needed for the Marinette School District to successfully garner public support.

■ Clarity, consistency are key in crisis

Navigating a crisis is part and parcel of managing a school district, regardless of your job. How district officials respond to crisis is critical to garnering community support, encouraging staff buy-in and organizing parent advocates. A feeling of being under siege can prompt entrenchment, closed communication and animosity. In the moment, it is wise to fight this urge.

Several sessions at the 101st State Education Convention broached communication regarding a variety of circumstances, including race, declining enrollment, COVID-19 protocols, school closings and student suicide. Tough times demand

clear, concise communication and thoughtful planning for the future. Without plans and strategy, long-term success is difficult. Representatives of several school districts offered convention attendees their thoughts about planning, community support and communication.

In his session, “Unity in the Community Begins with You,” Howard-Suamico Superintendent Damian LaCroix said, “Leadership is about progress, not perfection. It’s about taking steps, not giant leaps. Your community doesn’t need Superman, they need you.” We’ll take a glimpse into practices, strategies and successes regarding communication in several different situations.

■ Changing face of race

Resting at the foot of Lake Winnebago, the Fond du Lac School District is similar to many Wisconsin communities. It has a countywide white population of almost 94%. However, Fond du Lac’s schools have a non-white population of 30%. School demographics are clearly changing — half of the school population is eligible for free or reduced-priced meals — more quickly than the broader community.

A district-produced video engaged parents of school-aged children to tell their stories. What school district leaders learned was unsettling and hit close to home. “Being of African-American descent in a predominantly Caucasian area, you are bound to experience some

sort of racism,” one parent offered. They also expressed concerns about stereotypes such as Black Americans get easy college access due to sports, are too aggressive, speak slang and have behavioral issues.

A father with five biracial children said, “My children have been discriminated against, as have I, in this city and state.” Another parent described a school-produced musical with performers in matching outfits — except for the two Black girls. A teacher questions a Black student in Advanced Placement classes, “Why are you hanging around with those kids?” referring to non-AP Black students. A white father with a mixed-race child laments the different treatment of his two children while shopping, driving and attending school. The father asks, “How much of a toll has this taken on my son, to have to work harder than his peers due to his mixed race?”

Twenty-five-year Fond du Lac school board veteran Susan Jones was a participant in the district’s initial effort to grapple with issues surrounding race. In 2008, Fond du Lac schools created its district Equity Leadership Team, composed of district and community participants, to examine issues surrounding race. Middle school student voices were also part of the mix.

“One thing that really sticks with me is a presenter telling us that Wisconsin is 50th among the states for the widest student-achievement gap between white students and students of color,” Jones remembered about

the district's 2008 efforts.

The district updated policies, established districtwide restorative practices, created a mentoring program, and provided staff professional development opportunities. Participants acknowledged and agreed that everyone should share their own experiences and that some people might feel uncomfortable. In 2015, a small group identified community racial tension and sought to shine a light on it.

Board member Linda Uselmann told session attendees of the Humanity Project, where the goal was to connect people on a personal level. "A lot of where the tension comes from is assuming things about another and this was meant to break down those barriers," she said, adding that one-to-one relationships were formed between community members who typically would not interact. They shopped, took walks and spent time together.

Undaunted by COVID-19 during

the 2020-21 school year, the district and community continued the Humanity Project by offering four Zoom sessions with an average attendance of 60 participants. District and community book groups examining race have flourished. The district conducted an equity audit in every school, kept a sharper focus on student assets versus perceived deficits, and hired a person of color to be the school resource officer at the high school. The district created and hired an equity coordinator position, and the school board continues to give greater scrutiny to student achievement data.

When identifying key traits in the search for a new superintendent, the community group said "equity fluency" is an important attribute.

"We've come a long way, but we still have a long way to go," Uselmann said. "We're working on things day-by-day."

"We know this work is never-ending," equity coordinator Laurie Snyder added. "We're

always looking for the next opportunity to engage one another and our community."

Failed referenda, superintendent revolving door

When LaCroix took the reins of the Howard-Suamico School District in 2005, the operation was floundering. There had been five superintendents in six years and three referenda had failed in the same period. "Our community was sending us a strong message: 'Get your act together!' There was no trust, and it took a while to rebuild that," he said.

Just 10 minutes north of Green Bay's Lambeau Field, Howard-Suamico is the 25th-largest district in the state with 600-plus employees and a \$90 million budget. LaCroix doubled down on strategies to turn the ship around, stressing "How are we going to learn from the disorder? So, we can apply the lessons when we get back to a state of reorder?"



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LaCroix outlined “five big ideas to turn adversity into opportunity.”

1) Stay mission-focused. The district has defined its vision, mission and core values and keeps them front and center in internal and external communications and decision-making. The district has surveyed parents seven times in the last 22 months to ensure the district is on track.

2) Communicate thematically. The district identifies a theme for every school year. LaCroix termed it “intentional redundancy,” saying, “Pick a theme and pound it into the ground.” Last year’s theme, apropos for contemporary times, cribs from Patrick Henry in 1799, “United we stand, divided we fall.” Henry went on to say, “Let us not split into factions which must destroy that union upon which our existence hangs.”

3) Enlist key people and process. “Who are the powerbrokers in your community? You’ve got people that can get stuff done and say things you can’t say. So often we get tripped up by process — ‘What’s the process? The plan?’ No — who are the people we need to get involved? Who has the power to influence positivity?”

4) Frame within policy. “Governance is a really fragile thing. If you don’t have a system in place by which to govern and clearly identify roles and responsibilities, you’re probably struggling right now on your board.”

5) Deputize leadership. “I hope you deputize your leaders (other administrators, community leaders) for influence and impact ... influencing people to come together in pursuit of the common good, not the individual good.”

COMMUNITY AGREEMENTS

Staying Engaged

- Listening fully with our ears, eyes and heart
- Be aware of what’s going on (with you and the group) and notice when you’re leaning into disengaging
- Take a risk
- Practice mindful listening
- Be fully present in the conversation

Speak Your Truth

- Without blame and judgement
- Personal, local and immediate
- “I” statements
- Personal accountability
- It’s okay to be messy, but not okay to be mean

Expect/Accept Non-Closure

- Be open to the experience and to each other
- Building relationships and equity/social justice work takes time
- We each enter the conversation in different places and in different ways
- Equity work does not follow a checklist/to-do list

Experience Discomfort

- Notice moments of discomfort and stay curious
- Growth comes from discomfort
- Be aware of when discomfort shows up and how you react; name it and lean in
- Requires self-awareness and self care

Building consensus

Declining enrollment, aging facilities and dated learning environments were the challenges faced by the Marinette School District last decade. However, long before the district even contemplated a referendum, community engagement laid the groundwork for overcoming the district’s challenges.

Located on the Wisconsin-Upper Michigan border, the Marinette School District is home to 2,000 students — half eligible for free or reduced-priced meals — and 200 staff members. District representatives and partners offered practical suggestions for community engagement and building consensus critical for much more than passing referenda.

In 2016, former superintendent Wendy Dzurick set out to develop a strategic plan with staff, student and community input.

“I spent a lot of time listening to stakeholders,” she said. “I learned we had a very enthusiastic and passionate group of people who wanted to be a part of whatever it was we were doing.”

To ensure dwindling resources stayed closest to the students, a facilities study was the next step. They used an objective, outside reputable source to gain community trust. Two enrollment studies were also conducted because, as Dzurick said, “We wanted to assure the community that the declining enrollment was real and probably wasn’t going to stop until sometime in the future.”

After six to nine months of study, information was shared with the board. “One of the goals of communication for the district was to talk about identified challenges and what are we going to do about it,” said Dorreen Dembski, a K-12 communications consultant who worked closely with the district during the entire process. “There was a lack of communication and that was leading to a lack of trust (in the community). We needed to improve that communication to build trust.” The school board identified improved communication as part of its role for a successful strategic plan.

Authentically embracing community engagement was crucial. “The board was making a commitment to involve the community,” said Melanie Parma, with Somerville Architects and Engineers, a district partner. Dzurick added that options

There was a lack of communication and that was leading to a lack of trust (in the community). We needed to improve that communication to build trust.

that wouldn't work, such as keeping all six schools open, were not offered to the community.

Ready to move forward following all the data collection, the district formed an internal/external advisory committee that met to fashion recommendations for the school board. The board's drive to seek community input surprised some.

"In Marinette, that was a very unusual way to do business. The community wasn't accustomed to that. They did not believe we were listening to them," Dzurick said.

"We were pivoting before it was

cool," mused Parma, as she described 37 revisions to a community survey and the advisory committee's recommendation to keep only three schools open. With greater community input, it became clear there was a greater comfort level with four schools, and the district listened.

The referendum passed with 56% of the vote and current Superintendent Corry Lambie attributed the success to planning, collaborating and communicating. For Dembski, it came down to, "Sticking to the plan — that was the key." ■



Wendy Dzurick, former superintendent of the Marinette School District, describes the process her district used to collect public input for their strategic plan. For many community members, it was unexpected: "They did not believe we were listening to them."

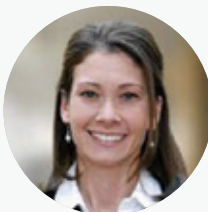
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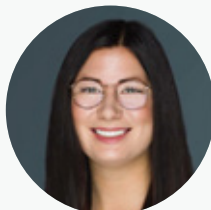
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Effective, Continuous

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PROCESS

Let's imagine you have a plan to improve your school. There may be research supporting a new approach, but there's a tremendous gap between any plan and real-world success.

What data are important? Does the plan have strong leadership and champions to carry it out from meeting room to classroom? Do these leaders understand the barriers to change and how to overcome them?

That's where implementation science can help. It studies the factors and conditions that affect whether a plan fails or succeeds in the real world.

Three administrators from the Superior School District shared what they have learned about school improvement during a 2022 State Education Convention breakout session.

Superior Superintendent Amy Starzecki began by giving credit to the research that underlies her district's model. The science behind their implementation and measurement comes from the National Implementation Research Network at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill. Meanwhile, their continuous improvement process is a modified version of the work of WISEdash consultants from across Wisconsin.

Starzecki believes effective systems change starts with leaders explaining why change is needed. That includes backing the plan up with research

and then training the staff.

"With any systems change and any school improvement efforts, it's important that leaders really understand mindsets and support the staff through the process of creating trust and buy-in on the front end," Starzecki said.

Crystal Hintzman, the district's director of curriculum and instruction, spoke about the crucial personnel elements of continuous improvement.

"You must have teacher voice, principal voice and what we have come to call a shared leadership experience and structure in our district so people can learn and grow together to build the capacity of staff at schools," she said.

Once you have a team behind your improvement efforts, the next step is creating a process for training and teaching the team.

"The team has to have the background about best practices so they can come to the table and be part of that work with a knowledge base," Hintzman said. One popular model for this training sequence starts with research, moves to demonstrations and ends with in-situation coaching.

Kate Tesch, director of continuous improvement and assessment, supports principals in the collection, identification and use of data. When working with data, she believes it's important to retain an emotional connection to students.

"The 'why' behind the work you're doing is so critical," Tesch said. "It needs to be emotional, and it needs to feel significantly important."

Tesch also described, in a step-by-step way, how continuous improvement teams review data, assess its limitations, explain the data, set goals and determine action steps. They use the state's WISEdash portal to find data about student engagement, state tests and graduation.

Explaining the data, called a "root cause analysis," can be a powerful experience.

"It does truly get people talking and digging in deeper and deeper to get to the root cause," Tesch said. Focus on causes that are within the control of the district.

Simplicity is important when setting a goal. Tesch says to monitor just a few goals in a given building.

In her wrap-up, Starzecki told session attendees her district's next goal is to conduct what's called a "practice profile," an exercise that helps translate strategic plans into real-world strategies. The leadership team together identifies what all staff should be focused on to meet collective goals.

"It's the power of the principal and the teacher coming together to really learn our best practices," she said. "What do we want to make sure is happening in all of our classrooms to make sure that the best practices that we've just talked about are actually happening in our classrooms each day?" ■

LEARN MORE: To view a copy of this presentation and watch a recording of the session, visit this story at [WASB.org](https://www.wasb.org).

The 'why' behind the work you're doing is so critical.

It needs to be emotional, and it needs to feel significantly important.

THE TOBACCO ENDGAME

Helping schools address vaping for the long term

In a world where continued tobacco industry innovation and targeted marketing intersect with growing mental health concerns, it is not surprising that from 2014 to 2018, there was a 154% increase in e-cigarette use among Wisconsin high school students.

Nancy Brown, chief executive officer of the American Heart Association, says, “While traditional cigarette consumption by youth in the U.S. is at an all-time low (5%), nearly 33% percent of high school students are actively using e-cigarette products and have increased use of menthol and disposable e-cigarettes.”

Schools can play a critical role in reversing those trends and supporting millions of students who have started down the path of a lifetime of nicotine addiction, tobacco-related diseases and premature death.

That was the message of the convention session, “The Tobacco Endgame: Helping Schools Address Vaping for the Long Term,” led by Tim Nikolai, senior community impact director at the American Heart Association and Carleigh Olson, policy coordinator at the Wisconsin Tobacco Prevention and Control Program.

As of 2018, 1 in 3 Wisconsin high schoolers had tried e-cigarettes, and 1 in 5 were current users, according to the Wisconsin Tobacco Prevention and Control Program. Fortunately, with a thoughtful and comprehensive approach to tobacco policies and discipline response, districts can ensure that they are best equipped to prevent and protect students from the tobacco products of today — and stay ahead of the

game as industry innovation continues. That’s exactly what groups like the American Heart Association and the Wisconsin Tobacco Prevention and Control Program are trying to do.

“While the challenges faced by students and schools around tobacco issues are very real, the good news is that there are many best practices and resources for districts to draw upon as they seek to support students,” said Nikolai. The American Heart Association has pulled together many of those resources at heart.org/antivaping while the Wisconsin Tobacco Prevention and Control Program hosts vaping education, fact sheets and more at tobaccoischanging.org.

Many of the resources focus on helping districts establish comprehensive tobacco policies that have been identified by the American Heart Association, with support from the Public Health Law Center and others. Recommendations specify that district policies be inclusive of all:

- Products (current and future iterations as well as paraphernalia)
- People (students, staff and visitors)
- Places (field trips, sporting events and after-hour events)

Additionally, given the tobacco industry’s current marketing tactics aimed at youth, the American Heart Association encourages districts to codify a refusal to accept any funding or support — including various cessation curriculums — from tobacco companies.

Finally, evidence suggests that, in a school setting, a supportive disci-

pline approach focused on restorative justice and cessation will have better health and academic outcomes when compared to suspensions or financial penalties. This is especially important because tobacco use is generally higher among low-income students and students of color. Suspensions can exacerbate existing academic achievement gaps.

The American Heart Association worked with one Ohio district, Groveport Madison, that has adopted a more supportive approach. An assistant principal in the district, Julie Barnhouse, explained the rationale:

“The purpose of discipline should never be punitive, but instead the goal should be to change behavior in a meaningful way for the better, long term,” she said. “Our data has shown that suspending kids for tobacco violations hasn’t necessarily deterred future behavior.”

This effort is just one of the many ways that the American Heart Association and the Wisconsin Tobacco Prevention and Control Program are working together with schools to end tobacco use and nicotine addiction among youth.

“Just like we want to see students supported as they struggle with tobacco addictions, we are proud to support Wisconsin schools who are facing these same challenges. There are a variety of pathways to get to the goal of truly tobacco free schools,” Nikolai said.

Districts are encouraged to reach out to the American Heart Association and the Wisconsin Tobacco Prevention and Control Program for more information and to receive resources and support. ■

COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS

From vision to data-driven change

The Beloit Turner School District creates and uses actionable data dashboards to measure the student body's progress towards college and career readiness.

They use indicators from the Redefining Ready program, which analyzes high school attributes and how those attributes impact post-secondary graduation and success in the workforce.

These metrics expand beyond the typical academic readiness indicators. Redefining Ready changes the approach to readiness and sees students as "more than a score." Expanding the definition of success to include experiences, rigor, attendance and industry certifications respects the diversity of students and their skills.

The district, in collaboration with WISEdash Local, aligned the Rede-

fining Ready indicators to data metrics in their student information system and assessments to easily track students' progress in meeting the Redefining Ready indicators.

Mike Sindahl, director of technology for Beloit Turner, said seeing the Redefining Ready metrics was eye-opening.

"I was excited that someone was actually able to create quantifiable indicators to identify whether a student is prepared for their lives after high school."

He immediately saw an opportunity to use these indicators alongside WISEdash Local, a data warehouse consortium made up of Wisconsin K-12 school districts.

Principal Christopher Koeppen says in their first year of tracking these metrics, 76% of graduating seniors met indicators for being college-ready

and 94% met indicators for career readiness.

"With this data, we are able to make informed decisions about the effectiveness of our initiatives, interventions, programs and curriculum. This process improves our ability to target areas of growth to improve readiness outcomes for all students."

Specifically, the school has improved its ability to analyze attendance, document community service, integrate industry credentials, increase the enrollment in career courses, and improve student participation in activities.

As a direct result of this work, WISEdash Local has created individual dashboards for students to be able to see and analyze their own data.

High school student Clayton Dalton says he was astounded by the sheer amount of data at his fingertips.

"Rather than question how career ready you are or what you scored on the ACT," he said, "WISEdash displays complex sets of data in an easy-to-understand, student-friendly format."

Focusing on the Redefining Ready metrics for college and career readiness has influenced the direction of the Beloit Turner School District through its strategic plan and corresponding school improvement plans. The vision and collaboration among the director of technology, school administrators and data warehouse partners have been integral to the current successes seen in this area.

Continued partnerships in measuring, organizing and evaluating data give strong promise to future growth. ■

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TRANSFORMING THE EXPERIENCE OF 4-YEAR-OLD KINDERGARTEN

For years educators have known what research has shown: when children learn by doing, they better remember what they have experienced, and that early learning years are critical for vocabulary development. Student understanding of concepts is optimized through active, explorative experiences that build background knowledge.

Knowing this, the Pewaukee School District set out to reimagine the four-year-old learning experience by creating immersive, theme-based learning environments structured around elementary science and social studies curricula.

Over the course of a year, a teacher and their students spend about three weeks in each of 12 themed spaces. Six classrooms, which switch themes each semester, allow students to explore the concepts of oceans, polar regions, space, weather, travel, stories, long ago (dinosaurs), the zoo, construction, city and rural areas, farm to table, and the human body. The experiences within each classroom are carefully designed to build background knowledge, while developing students' literacy and numeracy skills.

For example, during the farm to table theme, students harvest wooden vegetables labeled with rhyming words. They move to the farm's orchard to pick apples labeled with specific letters, and collect a specific number of eggs out of each chicken's nesting box.

Students take their goods to the



classroom's market, stock the shelves and begin to understand that the food in the grocery store didn't just appear there. Fellow students shop in the market and take their food into the play kitchen to prepare and serve it.

"Our 4K experiences tap into the wonder and amazement of young children," Pewaukee teacher Karen Maderski said. "Their natural curiosity and love of learning are fully engaged in each room. Each time the children enter a new room, there is a burst of excitement, with joy and wonderment evident on their faces! The whole child is at the forefront of every experience."

Pewaukee's new 4K program began during the 2020-21 school year, at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. Remarkable learning happened even though students and teachers were masked, some students were fully virtual, and staff had to navigate health and safety needs.

In this first year, there was a 6% increase in uppercase letter identification and a 5% increase in lowercase letter identification. There was

also a 10% increase in letter sound identification. Teachers reported that students were 4-6 weeks ahead in their learning from previous years.

As students moved into five-year-old kindergarten, teacher Shannon Bishop said, "Students' ability to engage in real-world learning experiences is a nod to the exposure they received in 4K. Their background knowledge has been so fun to run with

as they continue to dive deeper into the world around them."

The transformation of the learning spaces was a team effort in Pewaukee. After viewing the concept during a visit to Mansfield Independent School District in Texas, staff planned, created and implemented this unique learning program in a sustainable format.

With the support of the Pewaukee School Board, the fiscal, physical and curricular resources were allocated. While some district and school funds purchased new materials, many of the learning materials were built by staff members, walls were painted by administrators, and items were gifted by businesses and individuals.

Now fully functioning, the rooms are certainly fun, but it is the teachers and students that make the spaces come alive. The engagement, joy and excitement for learning is contagious in these rooms. It's a wonderful way to introduce the youngest learners to school. ■



Attendees were treated to an array of interesting animal visits courtesy of **Mutual of Omaha's Wild Kingdom** sponsored by **WEA Member Benefits**.



Exhibitors were on hand to interact with attendees and feature their goods and services.



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The annual State Education Convention provides an opportunity to recognize some of the educators, administrators and school board members who make public education great in Wisconsin.

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■ School Board Honorees

Diane Hoffman of the Shawano School District (right) was congratulated by WASB 2021 President Sue Today (left) and Executive Director John Ashley for serving 20 years on her school board.

The following board members were also recognized for serving at least 20 YEARS on their local school boards:

- Daren Bauer, Gilmanton
- Aileen Dahlke, Cedar Grove-Belgium
- Dan Dietrich, Kiel Area
- Bill Dittman, Edgar
- Richard Eloranta, Owen-Withee
- Todd Graf, Baldwin-Woodville Area
- George Graper, Marion
- Jeff Hanna, Mount Horeb Area
- Peter Heberlein, Fennimore Community
- Deanna Heiman, Neillsville
- Edward Huberty, Lena
- Mark Kryshak, Tomorrow River
- Randy Lisowe, Chilton
- Mary Rayome, Wis. Rapids
- Barbara Rodgers, Algoma
- Jena Schneider, Random Lake
- David Scott, Ripon Area
- Michael Sealander, Northland Pines
- Bradley Siebers, Kimberly Area
- Wayne Sleeter, Suring
- Randall Smith, Monticello
- Chris Sorenson, Wild Rose
- Peggy Udelhoven, Potosi
- Barbara Van Deurzen, West De Pere
- Kevin Vodak, Baraboo
- Charles Wendler, Wittenberg-Birnamwood

Three board members were recognized for serving at least 30 YEARS on their local school boards:

Gary Bodenburg, Elk Mound Area | Gary Spielman, Beaver Dam | David Strynick, Hustisford

Two Wisconsin school board members were recognized for an exceptional 40 YEARS of service:

Gary Grovesteen, Tomah Area | David Wessel, Algoma.



Teachers of the Year

State Superintendent Jill Underly (right) honored the teachers of the year (left to right): **Tarah Fedenia**, Poplar Creek Elementary School, New Berlin School District; **Anna Miller**, Harmony Elementary School, Milton School District; **Eric Mumm**, Lancaster High School, Lancaster Community School District; and **Patricia Zemke**, John Muir Middle School and Horace Mann Middle School, Wausau School District.

*Not pictured: **Kabby Hong**, Verona Area High School, Verona Area School District*

Principals of the Year

State Superintendent Jill Underly (left) and Association of Wisconsin School Administrators Executive Director Jim Lynch (right), honored the principals of the year (left to right): **Tina Miller**, Howe Elementary School, Wisconsin Rapids School District; **David Beranek**, Marathon High School, Marathon School District.

*Not pictured: **Matthew Raduechel**, John Muir Middle School, Wausau School District*



Superintendent of the Year

Mary Pfeiffer (second from left) of the Neenah Joint School District was recognized as the superintendent of the year by Wisconsin Association of School District Administrators President Larry Ouimette (right), WASDA Executive Director Jon Bales (left) and State Superintendent Jill Underly (second from right).



■ Business Official of the Year

Business managers of the year **John Gahan** (right) of the Pewaukee School District and **Cheryl Richards** of the Ithaca School District (second from right), and new business manager of the year **Caitlin Windler** of the West Allis – West Milwaukee School District (third from left) are honored by (from left) WASBO President Tim Erickson, State Superintendent Jill Underly and WASBO Executive Director Mike Barry.

■ Special Services Director of the Year

Wendi Dawson of the Waupun Area School District (left) was recognized as the Special Services Director of the Year by Lisa Misco, director of student services at CESA 8.





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Forward Together for Our Students

Sue Todey reflects on how “Forward Together” can provide a roadmap for education leaders

It has been an honor and a privilege to serve as your 2021 WASB president. As educational leaders, we have all faced many challenges during that time, but we are gradually making our way to a more normal way of operation in our public schools. We were fortunate this year to have held our regional meetings in person as well as our January State Education Convention allowing us to learn, to grow and to network. As I reflect on our convention theme, “Forward Together for Our Students,” I believe that it sets a clear road map for us for the future. Throughout my years of involvement in education, never have I seen so much focus upon our public schools. Fortunately, we have a road map to ensure that we are providing the very best educational experience for all our students.

We need to seize this opportunity to help parents and the public understand what we need to carry out our work of educating the next generation. The labor shortage in both small

and large communities is critical. How can we partner with the business community to help our students prepare for a rapidly changing world of work? Parents have become very engaged in the operation of their schools. This has posed challenges for educators, but while we have their attention, let’s work with them to help them understand and support our work. Mental health providers say that many of the issues students are facing are a result of the pandemic. Let’s capitalize on this awareness to garner the resources that our students and families need in this area. Let’s move forward together with all of these supporters while we have their attention.

For many years, our public schools have had to fight for the necessary support to provide quality education for all our students. It is imperative that we take advantage of the current community focus on our work and the young people and families that we serve to ensure that we have those resources. The WASB



Board of Directors and the staff will continue to provide the resources and services that we need. We are looking forward to using the data from the member surveys so that we can focus upon the needs that you identify.

I will continue to serve our association as your immediate past president and Region 3 director. Please feel free to contact me at any time with your ideas or questions so that we can implement our convention theme of moving “Forward Together” to ensure that our students are ready to take their place in this very challenging world. Now more than ever we need a well-educated citizenry. ■

Sue Todey, Sevastopol School Board



Herzog to Lead WASB in 2022

Barbara Herzog of the Oshkosh Area School Board has been selected as the president of the WASB for 2022.

The WASB Board of Directors also selected Rosanne Hahn of the Burlington School Board to be the 2022 1st vice president and Mike Humke of the Dodgeville School Board to be the 2nd vice president. Each will serve a one-year term. □

2022 WASB BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Back Row, left to right – Barbara Herzog, Oshkosh (Region 7); Tom Weber, Sun Prairie (Region 12); Andrew Maertz, Reedsville (Region 8); Mike Humke, Dodgeville (Region 9); Bill Wipperfurth, Lodi (Region 10); Brett Hyde, Muskego-Norway (Region 11); and Linda Flottum, Turtle Lake (Region 1).

Front Row, left to right – Mary Jo Rozmenoski, Black River Falls (Region 6); Alan Tuchtenhagen, River Falls (Region 4); Sue Today, Sevastopol (Region 3); Rosanne Hahn, Burlington (Region 13); Sequanna Taylor, Milwaukee (Region 14); and Cherie Rhodes, Slinger (Region 15).

Not Pictured: Captain Terry McCloskey, USN Retired, Three Lakes (Region 2); and James Bouché, Wausau (Region 5)

Thank You, Sheri Krause

The WASB would like to thank Sheri Krause, WASB director of communications, for her service to the association and our member school boards. After 21 years, she has moved on to a new opportunity. After beginning her WASB career in government relations, Krause began leading the communications department in 2010.

In that position, Sheri has served as editor of the *Wisconsin School News*, where she told the stories of education leaders and shared their successes with a statewide audience. Sheri's talent for editing and her economy with words helped shape many of the articles in that publication, and her style and vision transformed and modernized the look of both the magazine and the WASB website.

Krause also led the planning and execution of the State Education Convention, an event that could not have happened each year without her diligence and meticulous attention to detail.

The WASB will miss her skills and energy, and we wish her the best in her new role. □



2022 Delegate Assembly Recap

Annual gathering approves 10 new resolutions



Each January, the WASB holds its annual Delegate Assembly in conjunction with the State Education Convention. This year marked the first time the Delegate Assembly was conducted in hybrid fashion with delegates participating both in person and online.

Delegates adopted all 10 resolutions, albeit with some minor modifications. Several of the adopted resolutions address school funding issues.

One such resolution places the WASB in support of annual increases that meet or exceed inflation in per pupil spendable resources for public school districts.

Under this resolution, the annual increase in “spendable” dollars for school districts could come in the form of a revenue limit adjustment, an increase in per pupil categorical aid, or some combination of the two. Support for this resolution likely was a response to school districts receiving neither a revenue limit adjustment nor a per pupil categorical aid increase in either the 2021-22 or 2022-23 school year.

Another resolution addresses state special education funding by altering an existing WASB resolution in two ways. First, the adopted resolution raises the reimbursement level the WASB supports from 60% to 90%. The second change calls for special education categorical aid to be funded through a sum sufficient appropriation.

Funding special education aid through a sum sufficient appropriation would guarantee the promised level of support (in this case 90%) is met. “Sum sufficient” means the Legislature must provide the amount of funding needed to actually meet the promised reimbursement per-

centage level of support.

Currently, special education aid is provided via a sum certain appropriation — meaning it is a fixed dollar amount. Under this approach, the Legislature provides an amount estimated to fund a given percentage of anticipated costs, which may or may not be enough, to reimburse districts at the promised levels. If the estimated amount is not large enough to fully fund the promised percentage, actual payments to school districts are reduced on a prorated basis so that every district receives a smaller percentage than the promised percentage.

A pair of resolutions addressing the funding of school-based mental health services was also adopted.

One supports broadening the eligibility for state categorical aid for school mental health programs to include school counselors, school psychologists, and school nurses. (School nurses were added by an amendment adopted on the floor.)

Currently, this state categorical aid reimburses eligible school districts only for school social workers and only for 50% of the increase in expenditures for school social worker services in the district from one year to the next. The resolution supports allowing expenditures for other pupil service professionals who work with students’ mental health needs to qualify for state reimbursement as well. For the past several legislative sessions, bills to allow such an expansion have been put forward but not adopted.

The other resolution expresses support for legislation to broaden the scope of mental health service professionals eligible for reimbursement from the state to include licensed mental health social

workers, licensed mental health counselors, licensed mental health psychologists, and community mental health coordinators.

The existing state School-Based Mental Health Collaboration Grant program funds collaborations with community partners to provide mental health services to pupils. However, those community partners must be community mental health agencies and not individual mental health providers. Such agencies are lacking in rural parts of the state.

Another adopted resolution adds a pair of provisions to the existing resolution supporting increased funding for “gifted and talented” education.

State funding support for gifted and talented programming in Wisconsin schools is paltry in comparison to surrounding states. In recognition of this, one of the new provisions encourages schools to focus less on identifying “gifted” students and more on identifying and addressing unmet learning needs of students capable of high levels of achievement.

The second new provision further encourages districts to provide a variety of advanced programming opportunities for K-12 students, such that students from every background are able to achieve at their highest possible levels.

Another adopted resolution encourages Wisconsin public schools to develop curriculum and professional training on the history, culture and contributions of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders to the economic, cultural and social development of Wisconsin and the United States. The resolution also requests the state Legislature provide sufficient funding to develop an appropriate model curriculum and training package. Several state law-

makers are already working on a bill to provide funding for the development of this package.

Yet another adopted resolution places the WASB in support of state legislation to protect youth who have been subjected to child sex trafficking from criminal prosecution for prostitution. Bills to make such a change have been introduced in the current legislative session with bipartisan support in both houses of the Wisconsin Legislature.

Passage of these bills would conform Wisconsin law with the federal Trafficking Victims Protection Act, which treats coerced children as victims, even if they have engaged in criminal prostitution activity.

Child sex trafficking cases are often complicated and lengthy legal proceedings that require additional resources for prosecutors as well as for victims. These children are often homeless runaways who require comprehensive case management provided by victim services organizations to see them through their recovery, help them

navigate the legal system, and aid law enforcement, all of which are necessary to prosecute criminal enterprises involved in human trafficking.

Finally, delegates adopted three resolutions relating to the WASB's future involvement with the National School Boards Association, an organization which has been embroiled in controversy in recent months.

The controversy stems in large part from a letter NSBA's leadership sent to President Biden requesting federal assistance in response to reported threats, intimidation and acts of violence toward school board members and district staff, a letter for which the NSBA later apologized, and which led to changes to the NSBA leadership. The ensuing controversy caused 28 state school boards associations to distance themselves from the NSBA in some form, with 19 of those states discontinuing membership, participation and/or dues payment because of the NSBA's actions.

The WASB Board of Directors voted on Nov. 5 to withdraw the

association's participation in the NSBA's programs and activities. They opted to put before delegates a resolution that would allow the WASB Board of Directors to decide whether the WASB is a member of a national association.

That resolution was adopted and requires the WASB to maintain "a national presence and/or membership in a national association(s)." However, the national association would not necessarily have to be the NSBA nor does the adopted resolution require the WASB to leave the NSBA. The decision as to the nature of the national presence and/or membership in a national association or associations would be up to the board of directors.

Language of the resolutions adopted is posted on the WASB website.

We thank all the boards that submitted resolutions and all the delegates who joined us either in person or online to make the Delegate Assembly happen. ■



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Addressing School Board Vacancies

Board vacancies can arise in a variety of situations and at any time. Board members need to be familiar with the applicable statutes and board policies governing vacancies so they can be properly and promptly filled. Likewise, officer vacancies can affect the operations of the board. A full board is able to conduct its business more effectively and better represent its electors. This Legal Comment will discuss common situations that create board and officer vacancies and explain the procedures for filling board member and officer vacancies. Finally, this Legal Comment will address key considerations for board members when appointing an individual to fill a board vacancy.

How board or officer vacancies are created

Vacancies can be created in a variety of ways including:¹

- The incumbent dies.
- The incumbent resigns. (Boards do not need to accept a resignation for it to take effect).
- The incumbent is removed from office as a result of a statutory judicial proceeding.² (However, a successful recall election does not create a vacancy).
- The incumbent ceases to be a resident of Wisconsin.
- The incumbent ceases to be a resident of the district or area from which they are elected. However, there is an exception for a school board member who represents an apportioned area of a school district and is a resident of the apportioned area for which they are elected or

appointed at the time the member takes the oath of office. If the member ceases to be a resident of that area after beginning their term but continues to be a resident of the district, the member may continue to serve for the balance of the term for which they were elected or appointed.³

- The incumbent is absent from the district for a period exceeding 60 days.
- Whether or not sentenced to imprisonment, the incumbent is convicted and sentenced by a state or federal court for treason, felony or other crime of whatever nature punishable by imprisonment in any jail or prison for one year or more, or for any offense involving a violation of the incumbent's official oath.
- A competent tribunal voids the election or appointment; or adjudges the incumbent to be incapable of understanding the objective of the elective process; or places the incumbent under guardianship, unless the court finds that the incumbent is competent to exercise the right to vote.
- A person elected, appointed, reelected or reappointed to any office neglects or refuses to take and file the official oath, or to execute or renew the official bond if required, or to file the oath or bond as prescribed by law.
- The incumbent neglects or refuses to execute and file an additional bond, when lawfully required, as prescribed by law.
- A person elected or appointed to

fill a vacancy or for a full term declines the office in writing or dies before qualifying or before the time when, by law, the person should enter upon the duties of the office to which elected or appointed.

- The incumbent's term expires.
- If an individual accepts a second office that is incompatible with that individual's first office, the individual effectively resigns their first office, creating a vacancy in that first office.⁴

Temporary vacancies for military service

If a school board member enters the armed forces of the United States and removes themselves from the district, that temporary removal shall constitute a temporary vacancy that shall be filled as any other vacancy, except no election needs to be held to fill such a vacancy. The person temporarily appointed shall not serve beyond the expiration of the term of the member who entered the armed forces. In the event the member who entered the armed forces returns to the district during their original term of office, the member may file with the school board clerk, within 40 days of completed service in the armed forces, a statement under oath that the individual's service in the armed forces has terminated and that the member elects to resume the office. Upon filing of such a statement, the temporary appointment shall cease, and the returning board member shall be entitled to resume the duties of the office.⁵

Board members need to be familiar with the applicable statutes and board policies governing vacancies so they can be properly and promptly filled.

How to fill a board vacancy

Board vacancies are filled by appointment of the remaining members, regardless of the number of existing vacancies on the board.⁶ An appointed board member holds office until a successor is elected and takes office. The duration of the appointee's term is determined by when the vacancy occurred and at what point in the term the vacancy was created. Within eight days after the appointment, the school board clerk shall notify the person of their appointment. On or prior to the day provided for taking office, the appointed school board member shall take and file the official written oath.⁷ The oral oath of office is not required by statute, but may be a board's practice. Board members should also review whether the oral oath is required by board policy. Finally, upon taking office, the appointee should complete and file a campaign finance registration statement. Any person appointed shall be deemed to have accepted the appointment unless, within five days after notification of appointment, they file with the board clerk a written refusal to serve.⁸

When a vacancy occurs in the office of a board member who is in the last year of their term, the successor shall be elected at the next spring election. Additionally, when a vacancy occurs after the spring election but on or before the last Tuesday in November in the office of a board member who is not in the last year of their term, the successor shall be elected at the next spring election. When a vacancy occurs after the last Tuesday in November and on or before the date of the next spring election in the office of a board member who is not in the last year of their term, the successor shall be elected at the second following spring election.⁹

Boards are able to fill vacancies as soon as they are created. However, all boards are required to adopt a policy for filling vacancies that have not been filled within 60 days of the date on which the vacancy first exists.¹⁰ If the

remaining members of a school board do not appoint an individual to fill a vacancy within 60 days of the date on which the vacancy first exists, the remaining members of the school board fill the vacancy in accordance with the board's policy.¹¹ In a first class city school district (Milwaukee Public Schools), vacancies are filled by special election as provided by statute.¹²

At the appropriate spring election, regular positions are filled first, followed by any unexpired terms that are currently filled by appointees. For example, if there are three available seats on the school board and one of those seats is the remainder of an unexpired term that is currently filled by an appointee, the two candidates who receive the highest number of votes will fill the full-term board seats. The candidate who gets the third most votes will fill the remainder of the board seat that had been affected by a vacancy (and that is currently held by the appointee). That third seat will be filled by that individual for the remainder of the unexpired term, after which the individual will have to run for re-election to secure a full-term board seat, presuming the candidate wants to continue to serve on the board.

How to fill board officer vacancies

If the school board president, vice president, treasurer or clerk is unable to discharge the duties of the office due to disability or absence, the school board may appoint a person to discharge that person's duties until the disability or absence no longer exists. In the case of a three-member school board, the appointee shall be an elector of the school district. In the case of a larger school board, the appointee for the president shall be the vice president, and the appointee for the other officers shall be another school board member. The school board shall determine the compensation of such appointees. A person acting as school district clerk or school district treasurer shall have the powers of a deputy clerk or treasurer and, when required by the board or law, shall take and file an official bond covering the person's acts unless the bond of the original officer includes a bond for the officer's deputy.¹³

In the event of a permanent vacancy in the office of school board president, vice president, treasurer or clerk, the school board may appoint a person to serve in that position for

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the remainder of that officer's term. The decision to fill an officer's spot can be made independently of the decision to fill a vacant board seat. For example, if the board clerk resigns both their office as board clerk and their board seat, the appointee to the vacant board seat need not also serve as the board clerk. The board could appoint a different board member to serve as clerk, and the board can do so prior to filling the vacant board seat.

Board members should also review board policy for any applicable policy on filling officer vacancies.

■ Selecting an individual to fill a vacancy

Any appointee to the school board must be legally qualified for the position by being an eligible elector of the school district. This means they must be a citizen of the United States, be 18 years of age or older, and be a resident of the school district for at least 28 consecutive days at the time of their appointment.¹⁴ Board members and individuals who are interested in filling a vacancy should be sure to explore any potential issues related to conflicts of interest or incompatibility of public offices. Exploring these issues early can avoid unanticipated problems in the future. Some ethical issues can be resolved by board members recusing themselves from certain board discussion and voting. However, certain conflicts and incompatibilities cannot be avoided by recusal and might result in criminal penalties or the loss of a public office. It can also result in certain board actions involving that board member being void.¹⁵

Current board members can interview potential candidates to fill a vacancy, but the Wisconsin Open Meetings Law applies to such interviews. An opinion of the Wisconsin Attorney General states that a gov-

ernmental body can only meet in closed session to interview candidates if the information solicited and discussed would involve "financial, medical, social or personal histories or disciplinary data of specific persons ... which, if discussed in public, would be likely to have a substantial adverse effect upon the reputation of any person referred to in such histories or data."¹⁶ The Attorney General opined that it would be extremely unusual that a general discussion of qualifications of potential candidates for a school board position might involve undue damage to reputations. In order to convene in closed session, therefore, at least one board member should have actual knowledge of information that they reasonably believe would damage reputation(s) if divulged in open session, and there would have to be a probability that such information would be divulged during the interview. Even in these extraordinary circumstances, a school board must make the actual appointment of a new member in open session. Additionally, such a vote to fill a vacancy may not be by secret ballot. However, a vote to fill a vacancy in an officer position on the board may be by secret ballot.¹⁷

Boards should review any applicable board policies governing the selection of appointees to fill vacancies. To limit potential legal liability, boards should not base their selections on any class protected by law (sex, race, religious beliefs, etc.). Interviews should focus on the candidate's experience, qualifications and ability to successfully serve as a board member. These are the same core components that are frequently used when hiring employees.

■ Conclusion

Board vacancies can occur at any time. Therefore, it is essential that boards understand the implications

of vacancies and have a policy in place to fill a vacancy promptly and effectively until an election is held to fill the remainder of any vacancy. Boards generally work most effectively when there are no vacancies. Among other things, it makes it easier for boards to assemble a quorum for purposes of conducting business. It might also limit the potential of tie votes when the entire board is present to conduct business. ■

■ Endnotes

1. Wis. Stat. s. 17.03.
2. See Wis. Stat. s. 17.13.
3. Wis. Stat. s. 120.05(1)(d).
4. 81 Wis. Op. Att'y Gen. 90 (1993) (OAG 14-93).
5. Wis. Stat. s. 17.035.
6. Wis. Stat. s. 17.26(1g)(a).
7. Wis. Stat. s. 120.06(10).
8. Wis. Stat. s. 17.26(3).
9. Wis. Stat. s. 17.26(1g)(a).
10. Wis. Stat. s. 120.12(28).
11. Wis. Stat. s. 17.26(1m).
12. Wis. Stat. ss. 17.26(1g)(b); 119.08(4).
13. Wis. Stat. s. 120.05(3).
14. Wis. Stat. s. 6.02.
15. See Wisconsin Association of School Boards, Wisconsin School News, "Recurring Issues for School Board Members: School Board Member Conflicts of Interest, Ethics, and Incompatibility of Offices" (May 2013) for a more in-depth analysis of these issues.
16. 74 Op. Att'y Gen. 70 (1985) (OAG 15-85) (emphasis in original) (quoting Wis. Stat. s. 19.85(1)(f)).
17. Wis. Stat. s. 19.88(1).

This Legal Comment was written by Michael J. Julka and Brian P. Goodman of Boardman Clark, WASB Legal Counsel. For related articles, see Wisconsin School News: "Recurring Issues for School Board Members: School Board Member Conflicts of Interest, Ethics, and Incompatibility of Offices" (May 2013); "Board Member Voting" (April 2007); and "The Duties and Responsibilities of School Board Officers" (March 2007).



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hollyl@skyward.com, skyward.com

Skyward is an administrative software company serving over 2,000 K-12 school districts around the world. Our goal? To foster a more productive, collaborative, and successful environment.

Financing, Banking, Consulting

► Baird Public Finance

800-792-2473
BBrewer@rwbaird.com
rwbaird.com/publicfinance

Baird's Public Finance team provides school financing solutions including: long range capital planning, services related to debt issuance, investment advisory services and referendum assistance.

Insurance and Employee Benefits

► Community Insurance Corporation

800-236-6885, josh@aegis-wi.com
communityinsurancecorporation.com

Dedicated to providing school districts with the tools they need to economically and efficiently address today's changing insurance and risk management environment.

► EMC Insurance Companies

262-717-3900, emcins.com
philip.lucca@emcins.com
Property and casualty insurance.

► Gallagher

262-792-2240
nancy_moon@ajg.com, ajg.com
Specializing in serving the risk management and insurance needs of public schools.

► Key Benefit Concepts LLC

262-522-6415, keybenefits.com
info@keybenefits.com

Actuarial and employee benefit consulting services.

► M3 Insurance

800-272-2443
marty.malloy@m3ins.com
M3ins.com

The dedicated education specialists at M3 Insurance provide over 50% of Wisconsin school districts with the very best in risk management, employee benefits, and insurance services.

► National Insurance Services of Wisconsin, Inc.

800-627-3660
slaudon@nisbenefits.com
NISBenefits.com

Over 82% of Wisconsin school districts are already working with NIS! Since 1969, we've helped school districts find creative solutions to their employee benefit plans. We offer health, dental, disability, life, insurance, worksite benefits, retirement income solutions, full benefit consulting, exclusive proprietary arrangements, and our own online enrollment and benefit administration system, NIS Enroll.

► R&R Insurance

262-574-7000
jeff.thiel@rrins.com
myknowledgebroker.com

Our School Practice Group has more than 25 years of educational institution experience and a dedicated resource center designed with school district's risk and claims management needs in mind.

► TRICOR Insurance

855-904-1618
jgibson@tricorinsurance.com
tricorinsurance.com

We now insure over 150 public schools. Our School Practice Team is made up of a diverse group of experienced individuals who are extensively trained and specialized in school insurance products, risk management, support services, loss control, human resources and claims advocacy.

► UnitedHealthcare

414-443-4735
jessica_a_daun@uhc.com
uhc.com

UnitedHealthcare is dedicated to helping people live healthier lives and making the health system work better for everyone. We are committed to improving the healthcare experience of K-12 teachers, staff, retirees and their families in the state of Wisconsin.

► USI Insurance Services

608-259-3666
al.jaeger@usi.com, usi.com
Our focus is financial security options that protect and assist growth. We go beyond simply protecting against the loss of assets and property.

Leadership Consulting

► Studer Education

850-898-3949
info@studereducation.com
studereducation.com

We support the critical work of school district leaders through coaching around an Evidence-Based Leadership framework to increase student achievement, employee engagement, parent satisfaction, district support services, and financial efficiency.

Legal Services

► Buelow Vetter Bulkema Olson & Vliet LLC

262-364-0300
jaziere@buelowvetter.com
buelowvetter.com

We have decades of experience in representing school boards across Wisconsin. We advise school boards and administrators on a variety of issues from labor and employment to student discipline and expulsion.

► Renning, Lewis & Lacy, s.c.

844-626-0901
info@law-rl.com
law-rl.com

Renning, Lewis & Lacy, S.C. provides legal counsel on a full range of issues that school and higher education institution clients confront on a regular basis.

► von Briesen & Roper, s.c.

414-287-1122
aphillips@vonbriesen.com
vonbriesen.com

We're dedicated to ingenuity and creativity in helping schools solve their most complex legal and organizational problems. Challenge us to help you challenge the status quo.

► Weld Riley, s.c.

715-839-7786, weldriley.com
sweld@weldriley.com
We provide a wide variety of legal advice and counseling to help Wisconsin school districts, colleges and CESAs address corporate-related, body politic and unique legal issues.

School/Community Research

► School Perceptions, LLC

262-299-0329
info@schoolperceptions.com
schoolperceptions.com

An independent research firm specializing in conducting surveys for public and private schools, educational service agencies, communities and other state-level organizations.

Transportation

► Dairyland Buses, Inc.

262-544-8181, ridesta.com
mjordan@ridesta.com
School bus contracting provider, managed contracts, training, maintenance.



SUPPORTING, PROMOTING AND ADVANCING PUBLIC EDUCATION



UPCOMING PROGRAMS



APRIL 2022
Various Locations



MAY 2022
Various Locations

NEW SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER GATHERINGS

Will a new member be joining your school board in April? If so, plan to attend a WASB New School Board Member Gathering with them during the third full week of April. There will also be an online option for members unable to attend in person.

The gatherings provide an informal orientation for newly elected members to begin learning about their role and the WASB services available to them.

SPRING WORKSHOPS

With a focus on effective governance and a board's legal roles and responsibilities, the 2022 Spring Workshops will provide training by WASB attorneys for new and experienced board members.

The workshops will be held in May.

Watch the WASB website and your email inbox for details about these and other upcoming events.

Visit [WASB.org](https://www.wasb.org) for complete information and to register. | 608-257-2622 | info@wasb.org