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2016 WASB Business Honor Roll highlights strong business/education partners

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Evers Honors Teachers of the Year

In surprise ceremonies at their respective schools, State Superintendent Tony Evers recognized four educators as the 2016-17 Wisconsin Teachers of the Year.

- **Sarah Breckley**, a high school world languages (Spanish) teacher at Reedsburg Area High School in the Reedsburg School District (High School Teacher of the Year);
- **Pamela Gresser** of Hatley, a fifth-grade teacher at Rothschild Elementary School in the D.C. Everest Area School District (Elementary School Teacher of the Year);
- **Chris Gleason**, a band director and instrumental music teacher at Patrick Marsh Middle School in the Sun Prairie Area School District (Middle School Teacher of the Year); and
- **Barbara VanDoorn** of Tony, a 4K-12 school counselor at Lake Holcombe School in the Lake Holcombe School District (Special Services Teacher of the Year).

A panel of educators, parents, and community leaders selected the four Teachers of the Year from a pool of 86 public school Kohl Teacher Fellows who were named in spring 2016. Kohl Teacher Fellows, nominated by colleagues, parents, students, or members of their community, are chosen for their ability to inspire students' love of learning, instructional innovation and leadership, and commitment to community involvement.

"The Teacher of the Year program highlights the many contributions educators make to our children, schools, and communities," said Sen. Herb Kohl, philanthropist and businessman, who co-sponsors the Wisconsin Teacher of the Year program through his educational foundation "They are leaders who put forth extraordinary effort to help all children achieve." ■

More Funds Allocated for Fab Labs

Biz Times Magazine reports that the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) is allocating an additional \$500,000 to the state's Fab Lab program. A Fab Lab is a small-scale workshop equipped with computer-controlled tools (CNC) such as 3D printers, plasma cutters, routers, and laser engravers.

The funds are on top of \$100,000 that WEDC provided in May, which was used to provide 25 Wisconsin school districts with Fab Lab grants. This month, WEDC plans to begin seeking applications



for the next round of Fab Lab grants. Money from the grants help Wisconsin school districts purchase the equipment needed to outfit a Fab Lab. *For more information, visit inwisconsin.com.* ■

STAT OF THE MONTH

56%

Percent of Americans who responded that the local school board (over federal government and state government) should have the greatest influence on what is taught in public schools.

Source: The Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools

School Funding Disparity Harms Student Outcomes

A new study commissioned by the Association for Equity in Funding (AEF) found that disparities in school funding among school districts have negative effects on student achievement.

The study, released in September, is a follow-up to an earlier study that developed a "Funding Disparity Ranking" of Wisconsin public schools that allows an "apples-to-apples" comparison of school district funding and spending capacity. The new study sought to answer the question of whether Wisconsin's school funding system and resulting disparity between districts (as measured by the "Funding Disparity Rank") has a

direct impact on student performance and outcomes.

The study reports that schools with the highest levels of student poverty are also typically seeing the greatest negative effect of funding disparity. For instance, school districts with higher funding disparity saw lower test scores on eighth-grade math tests.

Scott Wittkopf, a researcher with the Madison-based Forward Institute and author of the study, concludes that the quality of educational opportunity in Wisconsin now largely depends on where a student lives, and the relative affluence of a student's family and community. ■



Valuing and Supporting Educators

What makes a strong education system? Quality educators? Equitable funding? Modern schools? Community support? All of the above?

This summer, the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) released a study that examined high-performing school systems in countries around the world. The goal of the study was to identify key elements that lead to strong education systems and encourage states to implement them in the U.S.

The findings from this study are described in greater detail in this issue of *Wisconsin School News* in the article “Learning from High Performers” (page 10). Among other factors, the study found that countries with high-performing education systems value and support their educators.

Unfortunately, in the U.S., we are seeing more and more evidence that paints a poor picture for how we value our teachers. A recent study by the Economic Policy Institute found that the wages of public school teachers in the U.S. were 17 percent lower than comparable college-educated professionals. More surprisingly, the average weekly wages for public teachers (inflation adjusted) actually decreased \$30 per week from 1996 to 2015. Statistics like these send the wrong message to our educators and to those who may be

considering entering the profession.

A report released in September from the Learning Policy Institute, which examined the nation’s teacher shortage trend, found that it is not just about money. The top reason given by teachers for leaving was dissatisfaction with the profession. They cited reasons such as lack of support, large class sizes, assessments and accountability measures, and lack of autonomy among others.

The Institute’s recommendations for combatting the teacher shortage are in line with those of the NCSL study of high-performing education systems. Educators need to be supported and respected by their school districts and state policy makers to be successful. Teacher pay is an issue — particularly in attracting highly qualified individuals to the profession — but equally important is providing professional development and support to educators and emphasizing their value and importance in our education system.

In addition to valuing educators, the NCSL study found that countries with high-performing education systems have a long-term vision and an evidenced-based strategic plan that sets goals and priorities and benchmarks practices and outcomes against those of high-performing countries and high-performing states. A long-term vision for education in Wisconsin is something that our state

and many others are lacking. This is certainly something that has been at the top of my mind and, perhaps, the release of the NCSL study will renew talks to establish a unified, long-term vision for education in Wisconsin.

The leadership and visioning work that you — our school board members and administrators — do is tremendously important. This month, we will be honoring our school boards as part of Wisconsin School Board Appreciation Week (Oct. 2-8). This special week is a time to build awareness and understanding of the vital function an elected board of education plays in our communities. We encourage school districts to recognize their school boards and publicly thank them for their leadership.

In addition, we are in the middle of the WASB Regional Meetings. These events give you an opportunity to network with other school board members, hear a feature presentation on the school board’s role in continuous improvement and receive an update on the WASB’s activities and plans. I have enjoyed meeting with you and look forward to talking with more of you this month as I travel around the state. I especially enjoy hearing about the great work taking place in our public schools. While we have work to do, Wisconsin is a great place to be a student. ■

Among other factors, the study found that countries with high-performing education systems value and support their educators.

Teaming Up for EDUCATION

2016 WASB Business Honor Roll highlights strong business/education partners

Each year, through the WASB Business Honor Roll, the WASB helps school districts recognize businesses that provide support to their local schools. This article features some of the impressive school-business partnerships included on the 2016 WASB Business Honor Roll.

Kiel Area School District

AMEREQUIP

Teaming for a Brighter Tomorrow

Mental illness, addiction, depression, and other mental health issues are becoming an important area of focus for school districts. However, it can be hard for some districts to address these issues by themselves. The Kiel Area School District and Amerequip,

a manufacturing company, are working together to ensure students are successful in school and in life.

Mike VanderZanden, president and CEO of Amerequip, contacted the district with a vision to come together as a community. He developed a campaign called Teaming for a Brighter Tomorrow to create a comprehensive network of programs to assist students with the challenges they face.

One of the resulting programs is

Challenge Day — a one-day, school leadership program designed to build empathy and connection between students and staff through the celebration of diversity, truth and expression. With Amerequip's support, the school district has held a Challenge Day for the past four years. Around 600 students have gone through the training.

"Financially, there's no way we could have funded Challenge Day alone," said Louise Blankenheim, superintendent.

Challenge Day is just the beginning. Through the Teaming for a Brighter Future campaign, other community members have stepped

**"It's like the saying, 'It takes a village to raise a child.'
We've always known that but it's really cool to see it in action."**

— Katie Thibeault, a social studies teacher, Kiel Area School District



Teachers participate in Challenge Day in the Kiel Area School District.



Mike VanderZanden (center), president and CEO of Amerequip, is recognized by Dan Dietrich (right), Kiel school board vice president, and Todd Olig (left), Kiel school board member.

in and provided support to the district. Susan Beatty, who runs Pathways for a Better Life, a local organization that provides alcohol and drug treatment services, has done six workshops for the school district on a variety of issues including, addiction and depression.

Katie Thibeault, a social studies teacher, said the Teaming for a Brighter Tomorrow work has opened

the doors of the school to people who can help the district.

“We’re bringing the experts in the community together for a goal and the goal is to counteract mental health and addiction challenges,” she said.

“It’s like the saying, ‘It takes a village to raise a child,’” Thibeault said. “We’ve always known that but it’s really cool to see it in action.”

Waterloo School District

LANNY’S PIGGLY WIGGLY

New Opportunities for Students with Disabilities

Arranging employment for students with significant disabilities can be a greater challenge for smaller districts where there are a limited number of job opportunities. Thanks to a partnership between the Waterloo School District and Lanny’s Piggly Wiggly, a special education student is getting work experience and others are learning life skills.

“The concept of community-based employment for adults with significant disabilities is not a new one, but it is new to Waterloo,” said Connie Dettmer, director of special education. “Thanks to Pamela Lanny and her employees at



Waterloo student Eric Mason gains work experience at Lannoy's Piggly Wiggly.

Lannoy's Piggly Wiggly, it has become a reality."

One special education student, Eric Mason, works several hours a week at the grocery store and others visit the store to shop and learn skills to become self-sufficient.

Dettmer said Eric has been well received.

"He is happy to go to work," she said. "He loves the routine and clear expectations, and is told that he is appreciated and valued. He is a part of a wonderful team of employees

who greet him and seem glad to have him as a fellow worker."

While only one student works at the grocery store, Dettmer said their partnership may help open the doors to other opportunities for her students.

"It has helped me to be a better spokesperson for my students, and other businesses are following their lead," she said. "It has also helped to pave the way for other businesses in the community to consider employing students with disabilities."

In addition to providing support to the district's special education students, the grocery store has long provided support to the district through various donations.

"They've been very supportive of our schools and students for many years," said Brian Henning, superintendent. "They've done a lot for the community."



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“We’ve been in the community a long time and we want to see it continue to grow and develop.”

— David Marten, vice-president of Marten Machining

Stevens Point Area Public School District

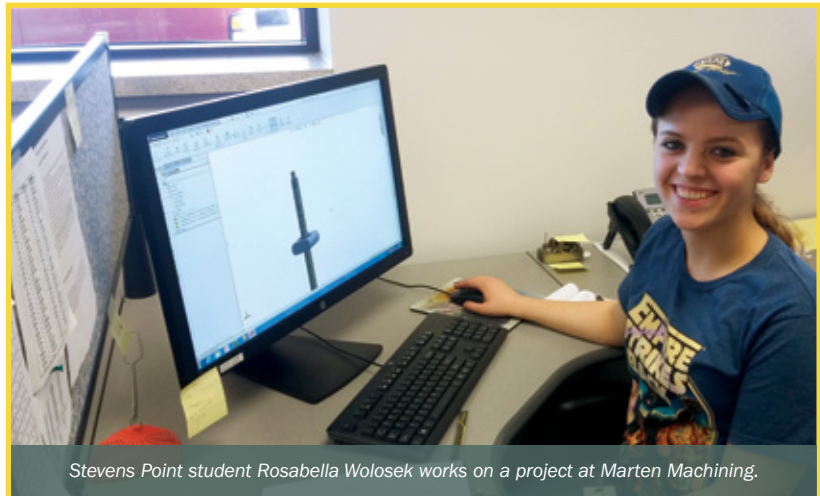
MARTEN MACHINING

Boosting Manufacturing and Engineering Opportunities

For about the past 20 years, Alan Marten, owner of Marten Machining, has supported the youth apprenticeship program at Stevens Point Area Senior High (SPASH). Over the years, Marten Machining has provided manufacturing equipment to the school, work experience for students, and much more.

Brigitta Altmann-Austin, director of the SPASH career center, told one story that illustrates Marten Machining’s dedication to the school. The company purchased a large, top-of-the-line HAAS CNC milling machine for high school students to fabricate parts. However, the machine was so large that they knew it wouldn’t fit through the doors. So Marten Machining covered the cost of widening the classroom’s doors. Alan Marten was also on hand to help when the complex piece of machinery was delivered.

“He was here from the time it arrived to the time it was set-up on the floor,” Altmann-Austin said.



Stevens Point student Rosabella Wolosek works on a project at Marten Machining.

In addition to donating and purchasing manufacturing equipment for the high school, Marten Machining also employs and mentors students who are interested in manufacturing and engineering careers. Students who work at the company get real-world experience working at the high-tech company where medical equipment and devices are manufactured for the health care industry.

“It’s a really good opportunity for our students to work at a place like that,” Altmann-Austin said.

David Marten, vice-president of Marten Machining and the son of Alan Marten, said that some stu-

dents who started as youth apprentices in high school have now worked for the company as long as 12 years. This kind of partnership with the school benefits the students, company and community.

“We’ve been in the community a long time and we want to see it continue to grow and develop,” Marten said. “This is one way to help the community grow.”

“They are supportive of our schools and community,” Altmann-Austin said. “They are doing their part to make it a top-notch community while supporting the schools that will supply them with future employees.”

Howard-Suamico School District

INITIATIVE ONE

Training and Support for School Leaders

About three years ago, Fred and Tracy Johnson, owners of Initiative One, a leadership institute that provides training and support to leaders, moved their company's headquarters from Arizona to Green

Bay. Damian LaCroix, superintendent of the Howard-Suamico School District, became friends with the Johnsons and that friendship quickly turned into a valuable partnership for the district.

The school district has benefited directly by making use of Initiative One's expertise and training opportunities. In the first year of the partnership, the district's entire leadership team was invited to take Initiative One's year-long executive

leadership coaching class. The training helped reenergize the district leadership team with a focus on positive accountability, establishing boundaries, decision making, and enacting positive change.

"Our school administrators are under a barrage of expectations, they are expected to be almost perfect," Fred Johnson said. "We have seen a real need among them to replenish the 'well' and reinstall a sense of purpose and a

2016 WASB Business Honor Roll

The following businesses have been nominated by their partner school districts to the WASB Business Honor Roll. For descriptions of each partnership, visit wasb.org. Select "Communications" and then "Business Honor Roll."

Clintonville Public School District

Erickson Home Medical Equipment

Fort Atkinson School District

Fireside Dinner Theatre

Capn's Roadhouse

Spacesaver Corporation

MK Cellular

Hillsboro School District

Hillsboro Equipment

Royal Bank

Gundersen St. Joseph's Hospital and Clinics

Farmers State Bank

Howard-Suamico School District

Initiative One

Kiel Area School District

Amerequip

Middleton-Cross Plains Area School District

Docter Evergreens

Copps Food Center

UPS Store of Middleton

Middleton Optimist Club

Middleton Endowment

Mineral Point Unified School District

Farmers State Bank

Kristen Mitchell Design

Mound City Bank

Point Foods

See-Mor Grain

Oak Creek-Franklin Joint School District

Callen Construction

Oak Creek Plumbing

Dairyland Energy Solutions

PPG Industries

River Valley School District

Royal Bank

The Peoples Community Bank

Home News

WRCO

Hometown Market

Slinger School District

Weld-Fab Manufacturing

Stevens Point Area Public School District

Marten Machining

Turtle Lake School District

Sanmina

Infinity Retail Sales

Dairy State Bank

Waterloo School District

Lannoy's Piggly Wiggly



Fred and Tracy Johnson, owners of Initiative One, help support the Howard-Suamico School District's Upward Together campaign.



Initiative One helped support fundraising events such as this one at the Northeastern Wisconsin Zoo.

“What [Initiative One] has done for our district and the community has been very impressive. We’re really fortunate ...”

— Damian LaCroix, superintendent of the Howard-Suamico School District

much higher focus on things that they can control.”

LaCroix said the district’s leadership team responded to the training. The goal is to help support school

leaders, who in turn support the district’s staff and, ultimately, students.

“When a leader improves, everyone benefits,” LaCroix said.

The partnership continues this year as Initiative One facilitates the district’s strategic planning process. The district is also looking at offering the leadership training to some of its students.

In addition to the leadership work, Initiative One has helped the district’s Upward Together campaign, which has a goal of raising \$3.5 million to enhance school facilities, expand staff resources, and enhance student learning opportunities. Tracy Johnson serves on the campaign’s cabinet and has helped raise funds for the district.

The company opened new headquarters in downtown Green Bay and, in the process, helped revitalize a portion of the downtown.

“What they have done for our district and the community has been very impressive,” LaCroix said. “We’re really fortunate to have them as partners.” ■



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LEARNING FROM High-Performers

Examining the education policies and practices of high-performing countries
to build a world-class education system state by state

In August 2016, the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) released a legislative study of international comparisons of high-performing education systems. The study examines other high-performing countries to learn which policies and practices were in place and what lessons the U.S. and individual states might learn from their success. The following article is excerpted from that study, “No Time to Lose: How to Build a World Class Education System State by State.”

We cannot ignore the reality that most state education systems are falling dangerously behind the world, leaving the United States overwhelmingly underprepared to succeed in the 21st century economy.

The U.S. workforce, widely acknowledged to be the best educated in the world half a century ago, is now among the least well educated, according to recent studies. At this pace, we will struggle to compete economically even against developing nations, and our children will struggle to find jobs in the global economy.

Despite their efforts,

U.S. states have found little success because recent reforms have underperformed. Meanwhile, high-performing countries implement policies and practices and build comprehensive systems that look drastically different from ours, leading them to the success that has eluded states. Pockets of improvement in a few districts or states are not enough to retain our country’s global competitiveness.

The good news is that we have the ability to turn things around. Much

higher-performing, yet less-developed countries — such as Poland and Singapore — have made significant progress developing their education systems in just a decade or two, and most of their innovations came from right here in the U.S.

But we must begin now. There’s no time to lose. We must directly face these challenges and begin immediately to reimagine and

Pockets of improvement in a few districts or states are not enough to retain our country's global competitiveness.

reengineer our own education system. We must implement meaningful and comprehensive changes that will produce real results for our students.

Each state can develop its own strategies for building a modern education system that is globally competitive, similar to the approach taken by other high-performing countries. These countries did not copy each other; instead they borrowed and adapted ideas, many from the U.S., and customized their approach for their own unique context.

■ **Top Performers: How They Became the Best in the World**

As the National Conference of State Legislatures' (NCSL) study group talked with experts from around the world and visited several top-performing countries, they confirmed what others had found — there are common elements that make up the design of world-class education systems. These elements are widely credited for their rapid rise in student achievement. Here is what they found.

Children come to school ready to learn, and extra support is given to struggling

students so that all have the opportunity to achieve high standards.

- Necessary resources ensure that all children enter the first grade with the cognitive and non-cognitive skills needed to master a first-grade curriculum set to high standards.
- Once students are in school, resources are distributed so that students who may find it harder to meet high standards will be given the extra resources — especially highly effective teachers — they need to succeed.

A world-class teaching profession supports a world-class instructional system, where every student has access to highly effective teachers and is expected to succeed.

- The highly professional teaching force is well-prepared, well-compensated and well-supported throughout their careers.
- Teachers support a well-designed instruction system that includes high standards for learning, a core curriculum created by world-class teachers, and high-quality assessments designed to measure complex

skills demanded by the standards and curriculum.

- All students are expected to be ready for college and career, and all educators are expected to get them there.

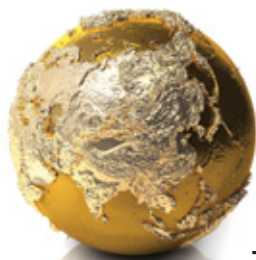
A highly effective, intellectually rigorous system of career and technical education is available to those preferring an applied education.

- A powerful, hands-on applied curriculum is built, requiring strong academic skills.
- The system has no “dead ends,” and pathways to university are clear and always available.
- Schools partner with employers to ensure that high standards are set for the students and provide on-the-job training and learning opportunities to enable them to reach those standards.

Individual reforms are connected and aligned as parts of a clearly planned and carefully designed comprehensive system.

- All policies and practices are developed to support the larger education system.
- The coherent system of education is designed to ensure that every student meets the same goal of college and career readiness.





■ Steps that States Can Take

Build an Inclusive Team and Set Priorities.

State legislators cannot do this work alone. They must assemble a broad and diverse group that brings state and local policymakers, teachers, principals, superintendents, unions, business, parents and students into an inclusive process to set a vision for reform and identify priorities.

State legislators know that it is very difficult to achieve agreement on reimagining and building a 21st century education system. But every person or group cannot get everything they want, so we recommend a different approach to achieving a collective and realistic vision: To build consensus, every stakeholder in the discussion is expected to put on the table a proposition giving them something they never thought they could get, in exchange for giving up something they never thought they would give up. In addition, it is unrealistic to expect that every

person, group or interest will be 100 percent in favor of every idea or strategy. So, it might be wise to establish a threshold for support to move forward. For example, the group might adopt a “70 percent rule”: An idea or decision is approved if 70 percent of the group is in favor.

Study and Learn From Top Performers. Every state should embark on a journey similar to that of the NCSL study group — a journey to discover the policies and practices of other high-performing countries. Reconsider much of what you think you know; abandon many ideas to which you have long been committed; and embrace new ideas, many which come from other countries but also those already implemented in many of our states. Study innovations in the states. Look hard at statewide data and be unafraid to compare your own state to other states and countries.

Create a Shared Statewide Vision. Developing a shared long-term vision and setting goals to guide the work will be critical to the

success of the effort. The vision becomes a guide for policymaking that transcends the shifts in politics or personalities. The vision becomes the North Star that continually guides the work. The journey will not be a short one, but a good roadmap — knowing where to go and developing the way there — means that policymakers will ultimately arrive at the desired destination.

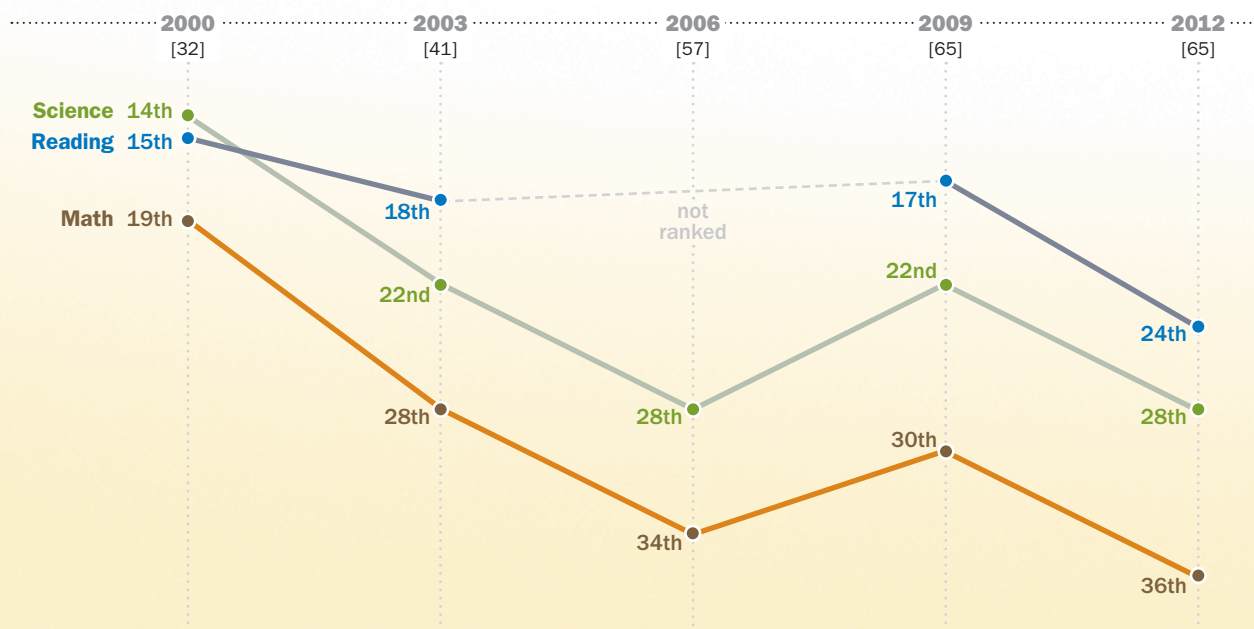
Benchmark Policies. After establishing a shared vision, the state should consider benchmarking its education policies, practices and outcomes against those of high-performing countries and high-performing states. This helps to identify specific policies and implementation strategies for necessary shifts in policy and practice. An ongoing benchmarking process also allows the state to continually monitor its results.

Get Started on One Piece. After creating a comprehensive strategic plan, states should get started right away on a priority area of reform. Building a cohesive system does not

U.S. Rankings on PISA

Number of countries tested shown in brackets below year.

The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) is a comparative study of 15-year-old students’ knowledge in key areas including math, reading and science.



mean states should wait to implement all pieces together, but rather understand and emphasize the connectedness of policy pieces. We urge states to move forward now to design and implement priority reform strategies, such as early literacy, teacher preparation, or college and career pathways. Identify an important early success that supports the state vision and the strategic plan, and use the success as momentum for continuous improvement.

Work Through “Messiness.” In both high-performing countries and in successful reform efforts here in the U.S., the process of designing system-wide reform is always difficult and messy. There is no one recipe for success. The top performers took at least one step backward for every two steps forward, but continued to keep their eye on the goal to stay the course.

Invest the Time. States embarking on this process will find that they cannot tackle everything at once and will need to prioritize their work. We urge states to define these priorities as part of an inclusive process that first identifies a state-wide vision and ensures that indi-

vidual strategies are all needed parts for achieving statewide goals. States will begin this process at different places and will design different pathways. Achieving system-wide change will take time and will begin and end in different places in different states.

State policymakers can take these first action steps to quickly begin to move their states from mediocrity to excellence.

But first policymakers must face and understand the facts — the unfortunate state of our current education system. Then policymakers must understand the common elements found in world-class education systems.

Conclusion

States must work together with local entities to design efforts that are practical and appropriate for each individual state. We will not be successful by allowing the federal government to set agendas and priorities.

The recent reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act as the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) moves federal

education policy away from the top-down, punitive approach that has been in place since 2002. States now have more flexibility to reimagine their accountability systems, design interventions to improve instruction, and use federal resources to support students and schools in more flexible ways. At the same time, states will continue to have the data needed to monitor the performance of student subgroups, ensuring a focus on a high-quality education for all children.

ESSA provides an opportunity for states to ensure that all students have the knowledge, skills, abilities and behaviors to succeed in college and the workplace so that jobs stay in our states rather than going overseas. These changes represent both an opportunity and a challenge for states, and lessons from high-performing countries offer timely guidelines for states at this opportune time. ■

This article is excerpted from the National Conference of State Legislatures' study "No Time to Lose: How to Build a World Class Education System State by State." View the full report at NCSL.org. Reprinted with permission.

International Comparisons are Valid...

When PISA results were first released in the 2000s, many countries enacted sweeping changes to improve their education systems and drive economic development. They realized that they needed to turn their education systems around to compete in a global economy. Some in the U.S., however, explained away the results by criticizing the PISA and methodology, denied that education results in other countries could be compared to those in this country, or argued that international comparisons are irrelevant. This criticism continues even today as the United States falls further and further behind.

The NCSL study group's conclusions were very different. They found that U.S. students' poor performance cannot easily be explained away. For example, critics assert that the U.S. educates all students while the other high-performing countries

educate only their elite. But graduation rates dispel this assertion. The OECD reports that the U.S. graduation rate is 80 percent, lower than most other high-performing countries.

Critics also assert that the U.S. is more diverse than other countries and, as a result, faces challenges that others do not. This may have been true in the past, but it is not the case today. Both Europe and Asia have experienced an upsurge in immigration over the past several decades. The same is true of Canada. A greater proportion of Canadian students was born outside Canada than the proportion of U.S. students born outside the U.S. Furthermore, Asian countries have significantly more cultural, linguistic, ethnic and religious diversity than many Americans often suppose. □

Is Solar Bright



Lower costs, new financing options and incentives are helping bring solar to schools

Mark Hanson & Todd Bushmaker

According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration's Annual Energy Outlook, electricity rates are expected to continue to rise in future years. Meanwhile, renewable energy, such as solar and wind is rapidly expanding across the

country. Renewable energy expansion, combined with recent reductions in solar cost, makes this an opportune time to explore the possibility of solar energy.

Solar energy can provide a unique educational platform for your students while also providing

a cost-competitive source of electricity. Additionally, new financial arrangements and incentives are available in Wisconsin allowing school districts to pursue a solar solution for minimal up-front cost.



for Your School?

■ Why You Should Consider Solar

On-site, solar photovoltaic (PV) systems should be considered with many new construction or remodel projects. Two key considerations are the readiness of the school to include renewable energy education in the curriculum and the PV system's economic performance. Solar will be economically viable today for many schools in Wisconsin, contingent on various factors such as: existing utility rates, size of the school, configuration and condition of the roof, and shading. Solar could also be contemplated as a stand-alone option for existing facilities.

Solar PV systems can provide an interactive and real-time educational platform for students that supports STEM, as well as the social sciences. The Midwest has rapidly growing renewable energy and related jobs in the wind, solar, and biomass sectors. Providing students with firsthand exposure to these systems opens their minds to new opportunities.

In addition to providing learning experiences for students, solar can also help your school district reduce its carbon footprint.

■ Solar Power in Darlington

In January, the Darlington Community School District completed the installation of a 156 kW solar PV system on the roof of their elementary/middle school building.

The PV system provides power to the elementary/middle school and the adjacent high school. This project is the largest solar project at a Wisconsin public school. The system is expected to generate nearly

200,000 kWh of electricity per year, which is about 20 percent of the entire district's current use.

"Darlington teachers and administrators are thrilled to provide our students and community an interactive, real-time solar educational platform for students, which supports science, technology and math education while reducing the carbon footprint for our community," stated Denise Wellnitz, district administrator.

The system is expected to save the school district about \$14,700 in usage and demand charges per year, or about 15 percent of their current electricity costs. It should operate for 40 years or more (its key component has a 25-year warranty).

As electricity rates increase over the next four decades, the project's savings will also increase. It is anticipated to reduce carbon dioxide emis-

sions by over 400,000 pounds per year, which is the equivalent of what is absorbed by 149 acres of U.S. forest. The electricity output would meet the power requirements of 18 average U.S. homes.

The district has set up kiosks and a link on its website that provides information on renewable energy produced, avoided CO2 emissions, and other elements. Students, teachers, and the community can observe power output on a continuous basis, noting daily patterns and the impact of cloud and snow cover. They can compare minute-to-minute to annual solar production relative to monthly and annual building electrical loads, and analyze cost savings.

"It's hard to over-state the educational benefit," said Aaron Wolfe, school board president. "Our students are going to inherit significant

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New Program Rewards Schools for Energy Saving Behaviors

Delivering Energy Efficiency Together (DEET) is a new initiative from Focus on Energy designed to motivate school districts to save energy and reward them with cash incentives for making measurable behavior changes.

Traditionally, energy incentives are awarded for capital improvements and equipment upgrades. However, this new incentive program rewards school communities for their sustainable behavior changes, like turning off the lights in unoccupied rooms or enabling computers' 'sleep' mode when not in use.

Focus on Energy will review your utility data from the past 12 months to determine your baseline energy use and help you identify energy saving strategies that work best for your building(s) and will yield the largest energy savings. Then, every six months during the three-year program, Focus on Energy will review your facility's energy usage. Participating buildings that successfully reduce their energy use (kW, kWh, and Therms) from their baseline use will be rewarded with cash incentives.

Focus on Energy currently has three school districts with 16 buildings participating in the DEET initiative. Focus on Energy provided \$36,896 in incentives to these buildings during their first year in the program.

"For over 14 years, our staff has been conserving energy so it's great our buildings can now receive an incentive to do even better," said Kermit King, energy manager for the La Crosse School District. "The incentives may go to the buildings, but it also lowers our usage and cost from the district utility budget. It has been a good fit for all our school facilities that are participating in the DEET initiative."

"We have made a great effort on educating our elementary school staff on ways they can greatly reduce their energy usage," said Homer Moore, head custodian at Washburn Elementary School. "Teachers have removed coffee pots and mini fridges that were running all day in their classrooms. It is efforts like this that have made a big impact on reducing the electricity consumption in our elementary school building."

Using the DEET initiative to model smart energy choices can support the school's mission to educate students and staff through real world applications. No matter what your title or role in the school — you can contribute to energy savings and in turn reduce the environmental impact of the school.

Everyone has an opportunity to make a difference — one kW, kWh and Therm at a time. For more information, call 888-947-7828 or visit focusonenergy.com/DEET. □

energy problems from us, and they will have to find solutions that go far beyond a 156 kilowatt solar array. Hopefully what we have done here will show them that innovation is possible anywhere and perhaps provide a little inspiration for them to innovate in the future."

■ The Ultimate Vision

Solar and other renewable energy options should always be considered within the framework of an integrated approach to facilities operation. The fundamental approach is to first reduce the energy *requirements* of an existing or new building, including the systems and equipment used within, such as heating and air conditioning, lighting, technology equipment,



Solar Procurement Options for Schools

As with many fast-changing technologies, there are continuous changes in solar photovoltaic (PV) systems, pricing, incentives, and regulations. If your district is ready to consider solar, it is important to identify a professional service provider that understands the current rules, is experienced in procuring solar systems, and can work with you through the financial analysis to find the solar system that meets your goals.

A school district considering an on-site solar PV system has two basic options: purchase the system up-front with cash reserves or a bond referendum, or work with TPP (third-party participants/investors/co-owners). Two additional options in parts of the U.S. include leasing and Power Purchase Agreements (PPA). Unfortunately, Wisconsin regulations are unclear on whether these options are allowed at the present time.

A recent financial analysis of a 150 kW (kilowatt) solar PV system for a school district in Wisconsin for a direct purchase using the newly developed Wisconsin Focus on Energy loan program resulted in the following:

- Total system cost: **\$341,000**
- Initial cash outlay: **\$68,000**
- Bank loan rate for one-half of the loan: **5.5 percent**
- Focus loan rate for one-half of the loan: **0 percent**
- Internal rate of return (IRR) over a 30-year life cycle: **5.8 percent**

The system cost represents our current estimate for a 150 kW solar system installed on a flat roof. The analysis uses 80 percent of that cost as the amount borrowed from a bank that the school district chose.

The remaining 20 percent of the cost is the initial cash outlay from the school district. Pending approval from the Wisconsin Focus on Energy loan program, half of the loan amount is lent at 0 percent interest and the other half of the loan earns 5.5 percent for the bank. Assuming a 4 percent discount rate and an average electric utility rate inflation of 3 percent, the IRR over a 30-year cycle is 5.8 percent.

An alternate approach for a school district is a TPP arrangement where a third-party entity helps install and co-owns the system on the school's property. In this scenario, the school utilizes the generated energy under a long-term (often 15 years) agreement. During the agreement period, the co-owner is responsible for the maintenance and operation of the system and covers its insurance cost. At the conclusion of the co-ownership period, the district has the option to extend the period, buy out the system at fair market value (which is a small fraction of the original price), or have the system removed. At the point of buy-out, the school will take over the operation and maintenance of the system and no longer make monthly service agreement payments.

Analysis of the same solar PV system, using a TPP arrangement, results in:

- Initial cash outlay of **\$0**
- Wisconsin Focus on Energy Loan: **Not available**
- Buy-out at year 15: **\$82,500**
- Internal rate of return over a 30-year life cycle: **4.9 percent**

If a 300 kW solar PV system could be used at this school, the internal rate of return with the third-party provider increases to 9 percent, demonstrating the importance of economics of scale in system purchases. □

vending machines, food preparation equipment, and office machines.

Then, employ solar or other on-site renewable energy systems utilizing the same economic criteria to further reduce operational cost. The goal now being pursued in the building community is to build zero-net energy buildings — meaning

the building produces as much energy as it needs. This may require that it exports energy to the grid at various times and imports energy from the grid in other periods.

Is now the right time to follow Darlington's example and make the switch to solar? The benefits for students, faculty, community, envi-

ronment, and bottom lines should encourage us all to give it serious consideration. ■

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School Board Survey

Statewide Annual Board Development Tool reports boards' successes and areas of focus

Sue Peterson



School boards across the state of Wisconsin report they have set a high priority on ensuring school safety, establishing positive learning environments and improving student achievement. That's according to the aggregate reports of the 2015-16 Wisconsin Annual Board Development Tool summary released by School Perceptions, LLC, the company that partners with the WASB to provide the planning survey tool to every school board in the state.

The online survey was designed based on elements of the National School Boards Association's guidelines, known as The Key Work of School Boards, which includes board/

superintendent relationships, vision, accountability, community leadership and policy. The Annual Board Development Tool is broken into nine sections. Respondents are asked to evaluate board performance in each category: Data-Driven Decision Making, Board Operations, Culture, Planning, Budgeting, District Operations, Community Engagement, Policy and Vision. Items in each category are scored against the following rubric:

- **Fully Achieved:** An area of notable strength that could serve as a model for other districts.
- **Mostly Achieved:** Performance is acceptable, but future improvements might be considered over the coming years.

- **Partially Achieved:** Performance needs improvement this year.

- **Not Achieved or Started:** An area where immediate improvements should be considered.

- **Not Sure:** An area where the respondent neither observed nor has knowledge of the district's practices.

"Each board member brings an expertise and areas of interest to a board," shares Bill Foster, founder and president of School Perceptions. "The tool allows member to see where their expertise and interests align with one another and where additional dialogue and planning is needed."

A summary of this year's data

2015-16 Annual Board Development Tool Comparison

Averages were calculated based on the following weighting:

4 = Fully achieved; 3 = mostly achieved; 2 = partially achieved; 1 = not achieved or started

Item	2015	2016	DIFFERENCE
We regularly communicate with our legislators on a particular subject or bill.	1.74	2.25	+ 0.51
We have initiatives in place to facilitate leadership succession in key administrative positions.	1.99	2.49	+ 0.50
We have a legislative advocacy process to monitor issues and communicate our position to our legislators and the WASB.	2.02	2.52	+ 0.50
Our vision and top priority is student achievement.	2.91	3.33	+ 0.42
We regularly discuss legislative issues during board meetings.	2.18	2.57	+ 0.39

“The tool is designed to increase efficiencies by identifying where a board **should** focus their time and training.”

from school boards across the state showed boards are reporting greatest achievement in:

- Preparing for meetings by reading board packets and asking clarifying questions;
- Having clear policies that promote safe schools and positive learning environments;
- Considering referenda in the budgeting process;
- Maintaining student achievement as a top priority; and
- Having an ongoing process to review and update board policies.

“We know that school boards have a multitude of responsibilities that are critical to the success of the district,” states Foster. “The tool is designed to increase efficiencies by identifying where a board should

focus their time and training.”

According to the report, the areas where school boards identified the greatest need included:

- Inviting legislators to tour schools and discuss important education issues;
- Regularly communicating with legislators on particular bills;
- Having an orientation process for new board members;
- Creating an administrative succession plan for key positions; and
- Developing a legislative advocacy process to monitor issues and communicate to legislators and the WASB.

Despite scoring lower, the report showed that many of these areas have improved since last year. The greatest areas of growth across the state came

in legislative advocacy and developing leadership succession plans.

This is a result of the WASB working with school boards that completed the tool.

“Each district report provides us with a clear direction to customize the training needs and define the areas of focus for the local school board,” shares John Ashley, executive director of the WASB. “The tool also allows each board to monitor their progress by completing the tool annually. They can then quantify growth and establish new priorities.”

“We’ve seen boards make great strides and tackle key issues as a result of using the tool’s data,” Ashley said. ■

Sue Peterson is a project manager with School Perceptions. For more information, visit schoolperceptions.com.

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From Homeless to Harvard

Education paved the way
to success for Liz Murray



The following is an excerpt from Liz Murray's New York Times bestselling book "Breaking Night." The book chronicles Murray's path from homeless teenager to Harvard graduate. In this excerpt, Murray is a 16-year-old homeless, high school dropout in New York who had recently lost her mother. One night, while spending the night in the apartment of a friend of a friend, her life begins to change when she learns about an alternative high school.

After a few weeks of being so dependent on people, I began sleeping a few nights a week on the subway, alone. Into the far corner of the subway car, I appeared just like any other traveler taking public transportation, rocked to sleep by the train's rhythm, well on my way home. No one had to know. But this wasn't safe. Sometimes thugs boarded the train, teenage guys in hoods, their pants sagging, barking loud words to one another, dominating the subway car. I'd awoken a few times to their stares, but never anything more. It was luck. So I chose hallways as my main refuge; they were a better bet.

The top landing of any Bedford Park building's stairwell felt so much safer. Lying there, flat on a bed of marble, using my backpack for a pillow, whole lives played out beneath me: the smell of food

cooking; lovers' arguments; dishes clanking; TVs blasting at top volume; my old shows, *The Simpsons* and *Jeopardy!*; rap music — all carrying me back to University Avenue. Mostly, though, I heard families; children calling out for mothers, husbands speaking their wives' names, sending me reminders of the way love — stretched between a handful of people — fills a space, transforms it into a home. I wondered how Lisa was doing at Brick's. How was she dealing with school when we had just lost Ma? I didn't have the strength to call her; I knew I just couldn't handle the questions I was sure she'd ask: "What are you doing out there, Liz? What are you going to do with your life? Are you going back to school?" It was too much to deal with, so I stayed away.

Many nights, I longed for home. But it occurred to me as I struggled for a feeling of comfort and safety:

I have no idea where home is.

Sometimes, waking up, I didn't initially recognize where I was. For those first few seconds, it could be University Avenue, the footsteps nearby, Ma and Daddy getting ready to binge for the night. Or Brick's place, Sam somewhere right within my reach. But when my eyes adjusted, it was always someone else's personal touches, their family's noises surrounding me, and their scents in the air. I was at Bobby's, Fief's, or one of a few other random places I'd sometimes go, the apartments of friends' friends.

I spent almost a week in this one girl's place. The guys were all crashing there a lot, hanging out with Danny, a friend of Bobby's who had always come and gone through our group of friends over the years and had become someone I counted as a friend, someone in my tribe. He was a tall, light-skinned Puerto



Her story sounds like a Hollywood movie — and it practically is. Lifetime Television produced an Emmy-nominated movie about Murray's life story entitled "Homeless to Harvard"...

Rican guy with large hazel eyes, handsome. Like Bobby, Danny loved video games and hanging out with our group. He always had a different girlfriend, and several other girls who thought they were his girlfriend. Paige was his latest. He had just moved in with her, and brought the group of us along with him to hang out.

Paige was twenty-two years old, a former runaway, grown up. Danny told me she'd done really well for herself, had a steady job and her own apartment, which she could pay for without a roommate. It was a tiny, one-bedroom apartment above a Chinese restaurant, so small that you could roll right out of the living room and into the kitchen because they were actually the same tiny room. But it was all hers. She made it happen herself.

When Paige cooked chicken and rice for all of us, the smell and the heat filled the small space like a sauna. That was when her curly hair

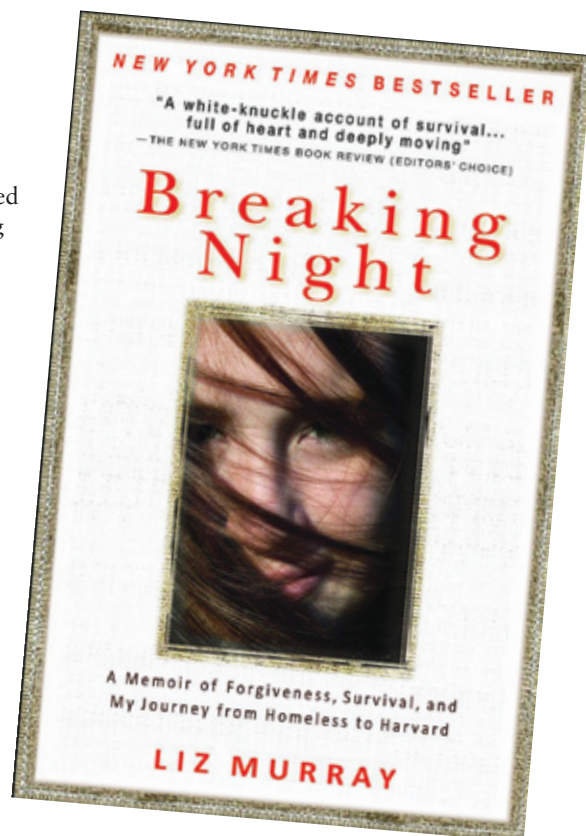
moistened to her temples, making it cling. She wiped it back before speaking.

"Are you sure you're not looking for a GED?" she asked me while lowering a steaming dinner plate onto my lap.

"No. I've been thinking I want to get my high school diploma," I told her. "I'm really not interested in a GED. I've heard they're great, but it's not what I'm looking for...But it's hard for me to be in school, ya know? It's crowded, and I feel really behind."

"Well, my old high school might be the perfect place for you then," Paige said as she filled a dinner plate for Danny.

From Paige, I learned what an alternative high school in New York City was like. "It's a place like a private school, but for



This article is reprinted with permission from Washington Speakers Bureau.

Hear Liz Murray's Powerful Story at the 2017 State Education Convention

LIZ MURRAY will be one of the featured keynote speakers at the 96th State Education Convention, Jan. 18-20 in Milwaukee.

Liz Murray's life is a triumph over adversity and a stunning example of the importance of dreaming big. Murray's life as the child of cocaine-addicted parents in the Bronx was bitterly grim. There was never food in the house, everything was filthy, drugs were everywhere, and the welfare checks were spent before they arrived.

By age 15, Murray's mom had died and she was homeless — living on the streets, riding the subway all night, and eating from dumpsters. Amidst this pain, Murray always imagined her life could be much better than it was. "I started to grasp the value of the lessons learned while living on the streets. I knew after overcoming those daily

obstacles that next to nothing could hold me down." Determined to take charge of her life, Murray finished high school in just two years and was awarded a full scholarship to Harvard University, all while camping out in New York City parks and subway stations.

Murray's story is exhilarating and inspirational. Her delivery is innocently honest, as she takes audiences on a very personal journey where she achieves the improbable.

Her story sounds like a Hollywood movie — and it practically is. Lifetime Television produced a movie about Murray's life story entitled "Homeless to Harvard", which was nominated for three "Emmy Awards." Murray is the recipient of the White House "Project's Role Model Award" and Oprah Winfrey's first-ever "Chutzpah Award." Her memoir, "Breaking Night," landed on the *New York Times* best seller list within a week of its release and quickly became an international bestseller published in twelve countries, in eight languages.

Murray received her Bachelor of Science degree from Harvard University. She is currently pursuing her master's degree in Psychology at Columbia University.

Murray is passionate about speaking on the importance of personal motivation, transforming problems into opportunities, and what it takes to make a difference in people's lives.



anyone who is really motivated to go, even if they don't have the money. The teachers really care about you," she told me.

I scrawled the name and address of her school down in my journal while she went on, speaking about her experiences in high school, trailing off into a story about an ex-boyfriend. As she spoke, I took my pen and darkened in the phone number to her school, until I gave the digits dimension, a life of their own that soared up from the page.

Later, when the apartment was dark and everyone was sleeping, I took over her loveseat and wrote by the nightstand light.

On one page, I made a list.
Things to Look Forward to When I Eventually Get a Place:

1. Privacy
2. Being warm all the time
3. Food, any time I want

4. A big bed!!!
5. Clean clothes, socks especially!
6. Sleeping and no one wakes me up
7. Warm baths

I turned to the next blank page and tapped my pen down a few times. The hall clock was ticking. All over the walls were Paige's abstract paintings from her high school art class, vivid reds, yellows, and greens splashed across big, beige canvases. I studied a photograph tacked up beside the paintings; a woman who looked like an older version of Paige with curlier hair was wearing her Sunday best, standing beside a stout man with a salt-and-pepper beard and a tie. Paige was sandwiched between them. "That was at my graduation," Paige had told me earlier. "We took a million shots that day. Yeah, my art teacher cried, sad to see me go," she'd said.

I tapped on my journal's empty page again, and wrote:

Number of credits required for graduation from high school — 40?...42?(find this out)

My age when the next school year will begin — 17

My current address —Wherever I am staying at the moment

My current total of high school credits — 1

It would have been zero credits, except that every now and then I used to swing by John F. Kennedy High School with Sam. She didn't even officially go to my high school, but with more than six thousand students enrolled, who would notice one extra? Together, Sam and I sat in the back of Ms. Nedgrin's overcrowded social studies class and performed an act you could call "I'm totally weird, look at me." Sam's hair back then was fire-engine red, held in a bun with large chopsticks, and her

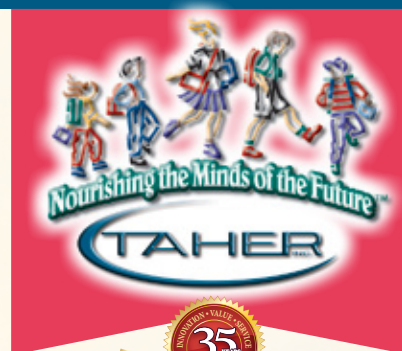
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black makeup was caked around her eyes like a raccoon. I was Goth and wore all black, as I had almost every day since I got out of the group home. For a matching accessory to my outfit, I shoplifted and proudly wore a black leather dog collar, crowned with silver studs. Our clothing was torn up in holes that were “cool.” It just so happened that on one of the days when I sauntered into Ms. Nedgrin’s classroom, I took a social studies test and passed. This is the reason I was given the one high school credit. Well, that and the pity Ms. Nedgrin took on me.

With no in-class preparation, I had scored an 81 out of 100 on an exam, and this got her curious enough to pull me out in the hall one day to plead with me to come to school. “You’re a smart girl,” she said. “I read your file... Your mother is sick, isn’t she? You’ve been in placement before?” Her eyes were watery and sympathetic.

“Yeah,” was all I said, avoiding eye contact.

My whole life teachers had acted that way, like they felt sorry for me. The Westchester-living, string-of-pearls-wearing ladies took one look at my life and it always made them sad. And anyway, if she thought I was so smart, she was mistaken. The only reason I passed the test was because I read one of Daddy’s books that was on the same subject, the Civil War. And the questions on her test were super basic. Really, what I did wasn’t as impressive as she thought it was. And why was she crying? She stood there with her crisp, royal blue dry-clean-only dress and her eyes filled with worry, wiping away tears. She hugged me and said something, words that I held on to for years: “I understand why you don’t come to school, and it’s not your fault. You are a victim of these things, I understand, sweetheart. It’s okay.”

For all of Ms. Nedgrin’s good

intentions, I’d heard only one thing she said, and that was that I didn’t have to do my schoolwork, for reasons that were not my fault. I was a “victim.” She understood. Well, I didn’t want to do my work anyway, so, great.

That was the last time I showed up to school at Kennedy, and when my report card arrived in the mail at Brick’s place, there it was, a row of F’s and a single D, just one passing grade from Ms. Nedgrin’s class. I was the same age as someone getting ready to enter college and this was my entire high school education so far — one pity credit.

Under the light of Paige’s end table lamp, I used my pen to continue darkening in the phone number and address in my journal, and along with it some new words, *alternative high school*. ■

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Convention '17 January 18-20

Save the dates! The 96th annual Wisconsin State Education Convention will take place January 18-20, 2017, in Milwaukee.

Join public school leaders from around the state to hear from nationally renowned keynote speakers, learn from experts at informative breakout sessions, meet with colleagues and vendors, and celebrate public education.

Registration opens Nov. 1



WI State Education Convention | Jan. 18-20, 2017 | The Wisconsin Center, Milwaukee | Visit wasb.org/convention



2017-18 Legislative Session Preview

Assembly GOP agenda and task force reports may foreshadow K-12 legislative initiatives

With legislative campaigns in full swing, we've reached the point in the two-year legislative cycle when task force reports, goals and agendas are advanced by party leadership. The ideas and recommendations outlined in these documents provide a policy platform for candidates and incumbents to use on the stump. They may also form the basis for legislation in the coming legislative session. Whether a particular proposal reflects a serious policy objective likely to be enacted into law or is destined to be merely a discussion point for candidates will be determined by how well each is received in the next few weeks as well as its price tag. Here's a look at the major K-12 education policy recommendations being advanced by Republicans who control the state Assembly.

■ Forward Agenda

State Assembly Republicans unveiled their goals for the next legislative session at a recent Capitol press conference. Labeled the Forward Agenda, the plan focuses on the economy, education and public safety.

The education proposal that garnered the most media attention is a plan to provide a tablet or laptop computer to every high school freshman in the state, regardless of their income or whether they attend a public, private or charter school. Also included in the plan is an initiative allowing students without internet access at home to check out portable Wi-Fi hot spots from their

school. Another idea raised in the plan is to begin providing Wi-Fi capabilities on school buses.

No details were provided on how the program would be funded or whether schools or districts that already provide devices to students would receive some allowance or reimbursement under the plan. According to the Department of Public Instruction (DPI), there are between 65,000 and 70,000 freshmen in Wisconsin high schools this year.

Other K-12 education agenda items include:

- **Evaluating the K-12 funding formula**, and perhaps changing it, to provide more state financial assistance to high-property value districts, such as northern lake areas that currently receive little or no general (equalization) aid.
- **Exploring the possibility** of providing additional funding or flexibility to support more robust summer school programs statewide.
- **Exploring whether to offer** financial support so all schools have vocational training classes.
- **Considering the creation** of a school district matching grant program to encourage collaboration with local manufacturing businesses and other private sector businesses.
- **Increasing the number of students** involved in STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) coursework as well as encouraging greater access to computer science curricula for students, including

activities like robotics competitions.

- **Continuing support for “Fab Labs”** as a way to provide additional STEM education skills.
- **Continuing to support school choice** (voucher) programs in Wisconsin as well as open-enrollment, charter and virtual schools, and homeschooling programs.
- **Exploring the implementation** of Education Savings Accounts (ESAs) to provide families with access to savings that can be used for education-related expenses, including tuition, textbooks and tutoring.
- **Supporting “zones of innovation”** that could permit a school district or combination of school districts to ask for an exemption from statutes, except those relating to the health and safety of students, in order to try out a new, innovative policy for a limited period of time (it is unclear how this proposal might differ from the existing ability school districts have to request waivers from certain state requirements).
- **Continuing to push** for financial literacy and life skills courses in high schools.
- **Ensuring that designated historical documents** — including the Federalist Papers, the Constitution, and the Declaration of Independence — are taught in every Wisconsin classroom.
- **Incorporating special training** for anyone looking to teach in an urban environment, including training every instructor in how to

Whether a particular proposal reflects a serious policy objective likely to be enacted into law or is destined to be merely a discussion point for candidates will be determined by how well each is received in the next few weeks as well as its price tag.

teach reading, regardless of their license category, and specifically tailoring college preparation programs for teachers looking to enter a more diverse environment.

- **Encouraging more experienced teachers** to serve as mentors to new staff.
- **Passing a Teacher Protection Act** (containing as yet unspecified proposals) intended to make sure teachers feel safe in the classroom and students can learn in a safe environment.

■ Task Force on Urban Education

The Assembly Speaker's Task Force on Urban Education released its final report in mid-June. The task force was chaired by Rep. Jessie Rodriguez (R-Franklin) with the aim of improving educational outcomes at urban schools.

The recommendations are:

- **Peer Review Mentor Grants.** Reevaluate the peer review mentor grant program, and consider action regarding the overall funding for the program, the maximum grant award, and the criteria for program participation.
- **License Renewal for Teacher Mentors.** Streamline the license renewal process for experienced teachers who serve as mentors to new teachers.
- **Teacher Training.** Encourage teacher preparatory programs to provide instruction in how to teach in urban settings and in how to teach reading to all teacher license applicants.
- **Provide clarification for School Attendance Enforcement.** Clarify the definitions of "truancy" and "habitual truant" and specify what constitutes sufficient evidence to initiate a court proceeding without providing a student with educational counseling or other evaluative services.
- **Medicaid Reimbursement for School-Based Mental Health Services.** Explore creating a Med-

icaid Billing Code for consultation time between mental health care providers, parents, and school personnel.

- **Patient Information Sharing Between Physicians and Other Mental Health Care Professionals.** Investigate barriers to communications about a student's mental health between physicians and mental health care professionals.
- **Two-Year Transfer Degree Programs.** Review the collegiate transfer programs between the Wisconsin Technical College System and the UW System.
- **Summer School Funding.** Review state funding to school districts for summer school.
- **Pupil Nondiscrimination Reports.** Review the state requirement that school districts report pupil nondiscrimination data.
- **Interim Assessments and Academic Interventions.** Consider funding interim assessments and academic interventions.
- **Statewide Summative Assessments: ACT.** Evaluate the potential to permit schools and school districts to accept student scores from ACT assessments taken at any time during a student's 11th grade year for accountability purposes.
- **Early Childhood Education: Four-Year-Old Kindergarten.** Review state funding for four-year-old kindergarten and explore additional options for investing in early childhood education.

■ Task Force on Youth Workforce Readiness

The Assembly Speaker's Task Force on Youth Workforce Readiness issued its long-awaited report just as the new school year began. The task force was chaired by state Rep. Bob Kulp (R-Stratford). Its mission was to explore new ways to encourage Wisconsin youth to pursue careers in the trades, manufacturing industry, and technical fields.

Recommendations put forward

by the task force chair include:

- **Modify state school report cards** to value technical education course enrollments and the placement of graduates in technical college programs.
- **Encourage the replication of entrepreneurship programs** like the Cardinal Manufacturing program at Eleva-Strum High School in other state high schools.
- **Provide an exception** to school district revenue limits for the purchase of equipment used in technical education programs.
- **Encourage the integration of math skills** in technical education curricula, and the integration of technical education projects in math curricula.
- **Modify grant outcome goals** for grants provided by the state Department of Workforce Development (DWD) to technical colleges so they are tied to regional workforce needs, and utilize regional reports rather than statewide reports. Grants could also be structured to allow for the funding of students' travel costs, particularly in geographically large technical college districts. In addition, grant criteria could be modified to allow technical colleges to enroll students during the summer between their junior and senior years.
- **Direct the Department of Public Instruction (DPI)** to implement a clearinghouse for technical education curricula.

Not all of the recommendations in these task force reports and agendas will be enacted; however, they provide an insight into some of the topics of conversations that will be occurring in the Capitol around K-12 education over the next two years.

To stay up to date on these and other happenings follow our WASB Legislative Update blog and/or the Legislative Newsletter emails. ■

Dan Rossmiller is the WASB director of government relations. Chris Kulow is the WASB government relations specialist.

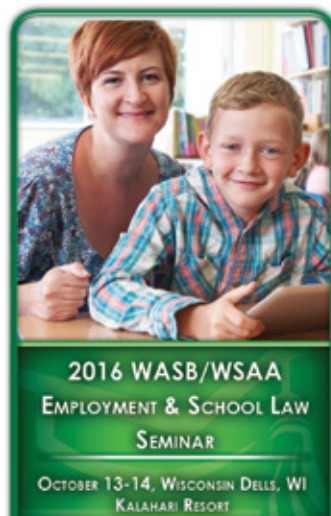
Seminars, Workshops, and Webinars...

WSAA/WASB Employment & School Law Seminar

The **WSAA/WASB Employment & School Law Seminar**, taking place Oct. 13-14 in Wisconsin Dells, will feature experienced school law attorneys and WASB staff presenting sessions on a variety of legal and related issues pertinent to school board members and school administrators.

Sessions will provide attendees with the latest information on important topics including: administrator contracts, Title IX, on-site health clinics, legal and policy issues with drone usage in schools, and much more.

For more information or to register, visit WASB.org.



■ Pre-Seminar Workshop

A special pre-seminar workshop will be offered before the WSAA/WASB Employment & School Law Seminar on Thursday, Oct. 13 from 9 am-12:45 pm. This workshop will give school board members an in-depth look at how to use data in board decision making to drive student achievement. **Please note:** The 2016 WSAA/WASB Employment & School Law Seminar begins at 1 pm on Thursday, Oct. 13. The pre-seminar workshop begins at 9 am.

Wisconsin School Board Appreciation Week is Oct. 2-8

In recognition of the thousands of school board members throughout the state, the WASB has set Oct. 2-8, 2016, as Wisconsin School Board Appreciation Week. This week is designed to recognize the contributions made by Wisconsin's school board members who are charged with governing public education under state law. The WASB has prepared a kit, which includes a sample press release, activities, and more to help school districts recognize their school boards.

Find the kit at WASB.org. Select "Communications" and then "Wisconsin School Board Appreciation Week."

WASB Webinars

The WASB hosts a series of webinars throughout the year on important legal topics. Here is a look at the upcoming webinars from the WASB.

■ Administrator Contracts

Oct. 12, 12-1 pm

Presenter: Ben Richter, Staff Counsel

This presentation covers all aspects of administrator contracts, including the drafting of contracts, contract terms, application of section 118.24 Wis. Stat. to administrator nonrenewals and more. State and federal court decisions on administrator contracts, including the *Klaus v. Eau Claire School District* case, will be covered.

■ Election Notices and Procedures

Nov. 9, 12-1 pm

Presenter: Dan Mallin, Legal and Policy Services Counsel

Wisconsin school districts must comply with numerous statutory obligations related to elections, and this presentation will cover key deadlines, required notices, and post-election processes. This webinar will be of particular interest to school district clerks and to superintendents' administrative assistants (who often assist with election duties).

Please note: These and all previous webinars are recorded and available on demand. WASB members can purchase any webinar and watch when their schedule allows. Upcoming live and pre-recorded webinars are listed on the WASB Webinars page at wasb.org (select "Meetings & Events" and then "Webinars").

Legislative Advocacy Conference

Sponsored by Blackboard

Post-election analysis, a preview of the 2017-19 state budget, and more will be discussed at the WASB Legislative Advocacy Conference, taking place Nov. 12 at the Holiday Inn Hotel & Conference Center in Stevens Point.

Todd Berry, president of the Wisconsin Taxpayers Alliance, will preview the 2017-19 state budget, addressing questions such as: How will competing priorities for resources impact public schools in the 2017-19 budget debate? How will private school voucher programs impact public schools?

As Assembly chair of the Legislature's budget writing committee, State Representative John Nygren (R-Marinette) will offer the legislative perspective of the 2017-19 state budget, offering his view of the coming state budget debate and

where K-12 education fits in with other competing priorities like transportation and Medicaid.

Another important issue facing school districts is the increasing challenge of filling teaching vacancies. Tammy Huth, director of the Department of Public Instruction's (DPI) Teacher Education, Professional Development, and Licensing team, will address DPI's efforts to help schools attract and maintain qualified educators.

Charles Franklin, director of the

Marquette Law School Poll, will discuss the November 8 election results and what his polling reveals about the attitudes and preferences of the Wisconsin electorate and the implications going forward.

WASB government relations staff Dan Rossmiller and Christopher Kulow will provide a refresher on the legislative process, focusing on the Wisconsin Legislature and the state budget process.

For more information or to register, visit wasb.org. ■



2016 REPORT TO THE MEMBERSHIP

Wisconsin Association of School Boards, Inc. Condensed Statement of Activities for the Year Ending June 30, 2016

REVENUE	
Membership Dues	\$ 1,809,328
Program Revenue	\$ 1,948,462
Interest & Investment Related Income	\$ 26,732
Other Income	\$ 32,684
Total Revenue	\$ 3,817,206
EXPENSES	
Program Expense	\$ 2,639,442
Office Operations	\$ 927,927
Total Expenses	\$ 3,567,369
Change in Unrestricted Net Assets-Operating	\$ 249,837
Depreciation & Other Non-Operating Expenses	\$ 84,799
Change in Unrestricted Net Assets	\$ 165,038

Wisconsin Association of School Boards, Inc. Condensed Statement of Financial Position, June 30, 2016

ASSETS	
Current Assets	
Investments, Cash, & Cash Equivalents	\$ 2,274,610
Accounts Receivable	\$ 192,050
Deferred Costs & Prepaid Expenses	\$ 135,407
Accrued Interest Receivable	\$ 1,437
Total Current Assets	\$ 2,603,504
Property & Equipment, Net	\$ 99,764
Total Assets	\$ 2,703,268
LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS	
Current Liabilities	
Deferred Revenue	\$ 524,004
Accounts Payable, Payroll Taxes, & Benefits Payable	\$ 238,489
Short Term Portion of Capital Lease	\$ 10,404
Total Current Liabilities	\$ 772,897
Long Term Liabilities	
Long Term Portion of Capital Lease	\$ 29,059
Total Liabilities	\$ 801,956
Net Assets	
Unrestricted	\$ 1,872,221
Temporarily Restricted	\$ 29,091
Total Net Assets	\$ 1,901,312
Total Liabilities & Net Assets	\$ 2,703,268



District Disciplinary Proceedings Involving Students with Disabilities

In maintaining a safe and positive educational environment, school boards are authorized to remove students from the classroom, suspend them from school, and expel them from the district.¹ This authority is limited, however, when students with disabilities are involved. While they are not exempt from such discipline, students with disabilities are entitled to disciplinary protections not afforded general education students. These protections may require districts to respond to negative behavior with supports, strategies, or services to address the behaviors and ensure that students with disabilities benefit from their educational programs. If a student with a disability must be removed from the classroom or from the school, state and federal laws limit the number of days the student may be suspended, prevent the student from being expelled when the behavior is the result of the disability, and entitle the student to educational services during the term of an expulsion when the expellable behavior is not a result of the student's disability. District officials must be aware of these protections and adhere to all procedural safeguards when responding to misconduct by students with disabilities.

This *Legal Comment* will review applicable special education law and the protections afforded students

with disabilities with respect to disciplinary proceedings, identify issues that frequently arise during the disciplinary process, and offer guidance to districts in resolving those issues.

■ Special Education Law

A district must provide a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to all students who qualify for special education under the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) and Chapter 115 of the Wisconsin Statutes.²

When a student qualifies for special education, a team of individuals, including district staff and the student's parents, meet to develop an individualized education program (IEP) for the student. An IEP is meant to provide a unique educational program for the student and includes present levels of performance, educational goals, and a description of the supports and services needed to reach those goals. The IEP team determines an appropriate placement for the student with the goal being to educate the student as much as possible with the student's nondisabled peers.

When a student with a disability engages in behavior that impedes the student's or other students' learning, the IEP must address those behaviors, establish goals to help the student learn appropriate behaviors, and set forth a behavioral intervention plan (BIP). A BIP details the problem

behaviors, identifies what triggers them, and recommends actions to decrease them and teach better alternative behaviors. If a student with a disability subsequently engages in the identified problem behaviors, the district must respond in a manner consistent with the BIP. If the behaviors continue, however, the IEP team is required to reconvene and to review and revise the BIP as necessary to address the inappropriate behavior. In addition, the IEP team may be required to consider whether the special education, supplemental aids and services, or program modifications should be revised to include additional behavioral supports.

A student with a disability who exhibits behaviors that violate a district's code of conduct is subject to the district's disciplinary process, but is entitled to protections not available to general education students. In a "Dear Colleague Letter" issued on August 1, 2016, the United States' Department of Education's Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services addressed the rights of students with disabilities whose behavior impedes their learning or the learning of others and reminded districts that their authority to implement disciplinary removals does not negate their obligation to consider the behavioral needs of a student with a disability and the effect of short-term disciplinary removals on their receipt

In maintaining a safe and positive educational environment, school boards are authorized to remove students from the classroom, suspend them from school, and expel them from the district. This authority is limited, however, when students with disabilities are involved.

of FAPE.³ The letter also encouraged districts to actively prevent the need for disciplinary removals by effectively supporting and responding to students' behavior.

In addition to positive behavioral supports and strategies, students with disabilities are entitled to protection from long-term removals from school when their behavior is a result of their disability. Under Wisconsin law, a district may suspend a general education student from school for up to five days per occurrence of misconduct, or for 15 school days provided a notice of expulsion has been served on the student by the fifth school day of suspension. A student with a disability, however, may only be suspended for a total of 10 consecutive school days or 10 school days throughout the school year if the student's conduct constitutes a pattern of behavior. Suspension of a student with a disability that amounts to longer than 10 school days is considered a change in the

student's placement and, therefore, the district must first determine whether the misconduct is a "manifestation" of the student's disability.

The manifestation determination is a process involving the student's IEP team. The IEP team must decide whether the student's conduct was caused by or had a direct and substantial relationship to the student's disability, or was the direct result of the district's failure to implement the IEP. Except in limited circumstances discussed below, if a student's behavior is a manifestation of the student's disability, the district may not unilaterally change the student's placement by suspending the student more than 10 total school days or expelling the student. Instead, the district must return the student to the previous placement and make any necessary changes to the IEP. If the student's behavior is not a manifestation of the student's disability, the district may hold an expulsion hearing. If the school board orders the student expelled, the district must continue to

provide educational services that meet FAPE. Such services generally allow the student to progress in the general curriculum, although in another setting, and to progress toward meeting the student's IEP goals.⁴

Frequent Issues

Dangerous Behavior. Responding to misconduct is challenging when a student engages in dangerous behavior that presents a serious risk to the safety of district employees and/or students. In such cases, the district must act quickly to minimize risks to student and staff safety without acting based on stereotypes or generalizations regarding the disability, and while providing the student with the required statutory procedural safeguards.

Providing the statutory safeguards is often made more difficult by lengthy investigations which may exceed 10 school days. Such investigations may include interviews of students and staff, searches of backpacks, lockers and vehicles, interviews with treating providers, mental

STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, AND CIRCULATION

Publication Title: Wisconsin School News Publication No.: 688-560 Filing Date: September 2016 Issue Frequency: 10 issues/year No. of Issues Published Annually: 10 Annual Subscription Price: \$60.00 / \$94 fgn. / \$60 Can. Mailing Address: 122 West Washington Avenue, Suite 400, Madison, WI 53703-2178 Publisher: Wisconsin Association of School Boards, Inc. 122 West Washington Avenue, Suite 400, Madison, WI 53703-2178 Executive Editor: John Ashley 122 West Washington Avenue, Suite 400, Madison, WI 53703-2178 Editor: Shelby Anderson 122 West Washington Avenue, Suite 400, Madison, WI 53703-2178 Owner: Wisconsin Association of School Boards, Inc. 122 West Washington Avenue, Suite 400, Madison, WI 53703-2178 The purpose, function and nonprofit status of this organization and the exempt status for federal income tax purposes have not changed during the preceding 12 months. I certify that all information furnished on this form is true and complete. Shelby Anderson, editor.	Extent and Nature of Circulation	Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months	Actual No. Copies Published in September
	Total No. Copies (Net press run)	4,389	4,218
	Paid/Requested Outside-County Mail Subscriptions Stated on Form 3541	4,164	3,993
	Paid/Requested In-County Mail Subscriptions Stated on Form 3541	0	0
	Other Classes Mailed through USPS	0	0
	Total Paid and/or Requested Circulation	4,164	3,993
	Free Distribution by Mail- Other Classes Mailed through USPS	10	10
	Free Distribution Outside the Mail	142	136
	Total Free Distribution	152	146
	Total Distribution	4,316	4,139
	Copies not Distributed	73	79
	Total	4,389	4,218
	Percent Paid and/or Requested Circulation	95	95

health assessments, and consultation with independent medical professionals to determine whether the student is at risk for self-harm or harm to others. Obtaining necessary releases and securing interviews with treating physicians and therapists can be legally challenging and time consuming, thereby making it difficult for districts to minimize safety risks by removing a student in a timely manner. In those situations, districts can attempt to reach an agreement with the student's parents to change the student's placement or, as discussed below, may seek the help of a hearing officer or court to secure that result. A change in placement may be particularly appealing to parents if the student has anxiety about coming back to the district after a behavioral incident and would benefit from a change in placement. However, districts should be careful to avoid presenting the change in placement as an ultimatum, as that could deprive the student and parents of the procedural safeguards under IDEA.

Involving Law Enforcement.

Other challenges arise when a student's behavior constitutes a violation of law. If a student is taken into custody or arrested, it may be impossible for districts to interview

the student to obtain critical information and to provide the student adequate procedural protections before imposing discipline. If police are involved and want to question the student at school, districts must be mindful of both the student's constitutional rights and the student's rights under the IEP which may drive the manner, location, and circumstances of such questioning.

If a student is taken into custody before the district suspends the student from school, the student's absence from school does not constitute a removal for purposes of the 10 school-day suspension limitation; that time period does not begin to run until the student is issued a notice of suspension by the district. When an investigation is ongoing, it may be difficult for districts to determine when a student will be released by law enforcement from custody and when a notice of suspension should be issued to begin the suspension and prevent the student's immediate return to school. If the notice is issued too early, the 10 school days may be exhausted before the student is released from police custody. Accordingly, a district will want to

work closely with law enforcement to ensure it has up-to-date information regarding the timing of the student's release from custody. Finally, when law enforcement is involved, districts must adhere to state and federal laws which limit the disclosure of student records to law enforcement.⁵

Immediate Removal. In cases involving serious misconduct, a district may need to remove a student with a disability from the school quickly and for a period of time greater than 10 school days. Federal law allows districts to remove a student from the student's current placement without IEP team intervention in limited circumstances.

First, districts may unilaterally remove a student to an interim alternative educational setting ("IAES") for up to forty-five days regardless of whether the behavior is a manifestation of the student's disability if the student carries or possesses a weapon, knowingly possesses or uses illegal drugs or sells or solicits the sale of a controlled substance, or inflicts serious bodily injury on a student while at school, on school premises or at a school function.⁶ However, districts must satisfy a high bar before making such a unilateral change in placement. The definition of "weapon" mirrors the definition of "dangerous weapon" found in the United States criminal code and "serious bodily injury" is defined strictly under the law.

Second, if the situation is critical and time is of the essence, districts may request a state or federal court to issue a *Honig* injunction to temporarily remove the student from his or her current placement.⁷ A court may change the student's placement if the district demonstrates that maintaining the current placement is substantially likely to result in injury to the student or others.

Finally, if no grounds exist for a unilateral placement, the district may seek an expedited due process hearing before an independent hearing officer to change the placement of a student to an IAES for not more than 45 days

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Whether the student is entitled to a manifestation hearing before the expulsion hearing depends on whether the district was “deemed to know” the student was a student with a disability prior to the behavior which led to the initiation of the disciplinary process.

on the basis that the current placement is likely to result in injury to the student or others. These regulations require that the hearing be held within 20 days of the request and the decision issued within 10 days after the hearing.⁸

Students not yet identified for Special Education. Sometimes a student is referred for a special education evaluation *after* engaging in misconduct which triggers the disciplinary and/or expulsion process. Upon referral, the student is entitled to an expedited evaluation under IDEA to determine whether the student qualifies for special education. If the student qualifies, an IEP team must develop an IEP for the student. Whether the student is entitled to a manifestation hearing before the expulsion hearing depends on whether the district was “deemed to know” the student was a student with a disability prior to the behavior which led to the initiation of the disciplinary process. If a district is “deemed to know,” the student is entitled to a manifestation determination and cannot be expelled if the behavior is a result of the disability. If the behavior is not a result of the disability, the student may be expelled, but must be provided educational services consistent with FAPE.

A district is “deemed to know” that a student is a student with a disability if, before the behavior occurred, (1) the parent expressed concern in writing to supervisory or administrative personnel or a teacher of the student that the student was in need of special education, (2) the parent requested a special education evaluation, or (3) a teacher of the student, or another staff member, expressed specific concerns about a pattern of behavior demonstrated by the student directly to the special education director or other supervi-

sory personnel.⁹ To determine whether a district is deemed to have knowledge, districts should conduct an investigation, simultaneous with the special education evaluation, which may include consultation with teachers and other district staff knowledgeable about the student, interviews of the student’s parents and student, and a review of the student’s educational records.

A district is not “deemed to know” merely because parents, teachers, or other staff were concerned about a student’s behavior or suspected a disability prior to the behavior.¹⁰ In addition, a district will not be “deemed to know” if (1) the district has conducted an evaluation and determined the student was not eligible for services and notified the parents of that decision, (2) the parent has refused to permit the district to conduct an evaluation; or (3) the parent has refused services.

Educational Services after Expulsion. When a student with a disability is expelled for conduct that is not a manifestation of the student’s disability, a district is required to provide FAPE consisting of special education and related aids and services that allows the student to progress through the general curriculum and to meet the student’s IEP goals.¹¹ This may be problematic if the student’s behavior presents a continuing risk to the safety of others, thereby limiting the places appropriate for providing services, or if the student is receiving extensive therapy or treatment during the day when services would otherwise be provided. In developing the student’s program, the IEP team must specifically address the student’s behavioral problems, provide individualized instruction by a licensed teacher, and provide related aids and services to ensure the student can benefit from the

educational program in an appropriate placement.

■ Conclusion

Disciplining students with disabilities while adhering to the statutory protections established by law is not an easy task. Districts must have a clear understanding of the laws applicable to students with disabilities and should work closely with a student’s IEP team in proactively addressing problem behaviors before they escalate. When misconduct occurs, districts must adhere strictly to procedural safeguards while exercising their authority to maintain a positive and safe educational environment. ■

For additional information on related topics, see WASB School News, “Disciplining Students with Disabilities” (December, 1996); and “Alcohol, Drugs and Discipline” (April, 1990).

■ Endnotes

1. Wis. Stat. s. 120.13
2. 34 C.F.R. Part 300. This Legal Comment focuses on students eligible under IDEA. Students eligible under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act are entitled to many of the same disciplinary protections.
3. The Dear Colleague Letter can be found at: gov/policy/gen/guid/school-discipline/files/dcl-on-pbis-ieps-08-01-2016.pdf
4. Information Update Bulletin 14.02, Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction
5. See *Sharing Information Across Systems*: <http://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/sspw/pdf/sharing.pdf>
6. 34 C.F.R. sec. 300.530(g)
7. See *Honig v. Doe*, 484 U.S. 305 (1988).
8. 34 C.F.R. sec. 300.532
9. 34 C.F.R. 300.534
10. See *Hudson Sch. Dist.*, 109 LRP 6985, DHA Case No. LEA-08-021 (Nov. 26, 2008) (Wis. State Educ. Agency).
11. 34 C.F.R. 300.530

This Legal Comment was written by Michael J. Julka, Steven C. Zach and Andrew N. DeClercq of Boardman & Clark LLP, WASB Legal Counsel.

Addressing School Transportation Challenges

SERVICE ASSOCIATES Q & A

Q. *What are some of the biggest challenges schools face in school transportation?*

A. Driver shortages — as the economy improves, we lose very qualified folks who were perhaps underemployed and they return to their main career once the opportunity affords itself. In addition, as ever tightening state and federal guidelines make the requirements more and more difficult, the pool of applicants that are interested in the part-time nature of our work shrinks. It is harder and harder to attract candidates who have the flexibility in their schedule to accommodate school busing needs.

Q. *Are there any new features or technology in school busing?*

A. The additions of added systems such as GPS tracking, digital cameras and electronic child checkmate systems has enabled districts and vendors to evaluate their processes and procedures to achieve maximum efficiency, which can translate to real dollars saved. For example, GPS tracking allows us to know where our buses are, track on-time performance, review routing accuracy and deploy additional resources in real-time when needed. School bus tracking apps, like SafeStop, are gaining momentum as

they connect parents and school districts with the vehicles transporting their kids. Digital cameras have started to gain momentum as the norm. They not only protect the driver, but also serve as the mechanism for school officials to sort out any bus behavior issues with what formerly was a “he said, she said” situation.

Q. *What steps can schools take to ensure that their buses are safe?*

A. When it comes to maintaining a safe fleet of buses, you should have complete trust in the Wisconsin State Highway Patrol. Their inspection process is not only extremely thorough, but also second to none.

I would also encourage any district to establish relationships with their providers, see their operations, visit locations and see for themselves how the operation is run and managed. Enhanced requirements such as ASE (Automotive Service Excellence) certifications help, but they are not a failsafe method to ensure that your vehicles are in top running form. Fleet age, replacement cycle, preventative method, engine block heaters for diesel cold weather starting, proper additives, and a strong staff with tons of pride in what they do and how they do it goes the extra mile



Mark Jordan is the president of The Dairyland Group.



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Q. *How can school districts save money on their school busing?*

A. Schools districts can recognize that their vendor is also their partner and cost efficiencies are often derived through a cooperative relationship. Evaluating bell times, staggering start times, adjusting field trip and athletic schedules go a long way to maximizing bus and driver usage, especially when drivers are at a premium. Additionally, districts should not be afraid to ask their partners what they can both do to help each other. In many instances, partners do not communicate enough to work towards common goals. ■

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When it comes to maintaining a safe fleet of buses, you should have complete trust in the Wisconsin State Highway Patrol. Their inspection process is not only extremely thorough, but also second to none.



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We've been a specialist in public sector benefits since 1969. Our insured products include: health, dental, disability, life and long-term care insurance. Our financial solution products include: health reimbursement accounts, OPEB trusts (fixed or variable), special pay plan and flexible spending accounts.

Energy Services

► Midwest Energy Procurement (MEP) Solutions, LLC

608-273-4464
steve.grams@mepsolutions.org
mepsolutions.org

MEP Solutions is a Wisconsin-based energy procurement and consulting firm, which provides clients with comprehensive energy procurement analysis and solutions.

Financing, Banking, Consulting

► Robert W. Baird & Co.

800-792-2473
BBrewer@rwbaird.com
rwbaird.com/publicfinance
Robert W. Baird & Co. provides school finance solutions through its Public Finance team and business office consulting services through its School Business Solutions team.

► Springsted Incorporated

414-220-4250
jdudzik@springsted.com
springsted.com

Advisors to the public sector in finance, human resources and management consulting services.

Insurance

► Community Insurance Corporation

800-236-6885
khurtz@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
philip.lucca@emcins.com
emcins.com

Property and casualty insurance

► R&R Insurance

262-574-7000
bill.hattendorf@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

877-468-7426
john@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

414-443-4094
cecelia_hopkins@uhc.com
uhc.com

Our mission is to help people live healthier lives by providing access to high quality, affordable healthcare. We are committed to improving the healthcare experience of K-12 teachers, staff, retirees and their families in the state of Wisconsin by providing better information, to drive better decisions, to help improve health.

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
cbuelow@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.

► Strang, Patteson, Renning, Lewis & Lacy, s.c.

844-626-0901
kstrang@strangpatteson.com
strangpatteson.com

We provide 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.

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
mjordan@ridesta.com
ridesta.com

School bus contracting provider, managed contracts, training, maintenance.



SUPPORTING, PROMOTING AND ADVANCING PUBLIC EDUCATION



UPCOMING PROGRAMS

2016 WSAA/WASB EMPLOYMENT & SCHOOL LAW SEMINAR



Respected WASB legal services staff and school law attorneys from across Wisconsin will present sessions on a wide range of important school law topics. Sessions include:

- Title IX Compliance
- Performance Contracting
- Districts' Special Education Obligations
- On-Site Clinics, Health Insurance Consortia and Employee Wellness Programs
- Open Meetings and Public Records Requirements in the New Age of Technology
- Administering Leaves of Absences
- New Laws
- And much more!



2016 LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY CONFERENCE

How will the 2016 election shape our state and federal government? What does polling tell us about voter attitudes? How severe is Wisconsin's teacher shortage? With the state's finances once again looking tight, what will the 2017-19 state budget bring for public schools? These questions and more will be addressed at the Legislative Advocacy Conference.

- Teacher Shortages
- Legislative Process Refresher
- Post-Election Analysis
- 2017-19 State Budget Preview
- 2017-19 State Budget: Legislative Perspective

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