

# WISCONSIN SchoolNews

January-February 2020 | wasb.org

Wisconsin State Board of School Boards, Inc.

2020 WISCONSIN

## Teachers OF THE YEAR

*This year's honorees  
share their expertise  
and insight*



*Erin McCarthy,  
2020 Wisconsin  
Middle School Teacher  
of the Year, Greendale  
School District*



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# WISCONSIN SchoolNews

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## PROTECTING STUDENT DATA: The Wisconsin Alliance

The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction recently purchased membership into the Student Data Privacy Consortium for all school districts in the state to have access to their resources and help protect student data when working with third-party vendors. The resources include:

- A template contract that includes data privacy and security language, fully vetted to meet Wisconsin laws. If a vendor signs this contract and the appendix for any district in Wisconsin, they must honor that same language for all districts in the state.
- A list of state and national vendors who have agreed to the privacy and security language. The list includes free software applications.
- A process for vetting software applications before purchasing them and loading them onto local district networks.

More information is available at [bit.ly/WI-alliance](http://bit.ly/WI-alliance). □

## Reminder: 2020 Census Quickly Approaching

This year, the federal government will conduct the nation's 24th census. Required by the U.S. Constitution every 10 years, the goal is to count every person living in the United States and its territories.

An accurate count is important for school districts because significant amounts of federal education funding are distributed based on numerous factors, including the census and other population data. This funding includes the two biggest allocations from the U.S. Department of Education to states — Title I aid for disadvantaged students, which totaled \$15.8 billion in fiscal year 2018, and special education grants to states, which was \$12.3 billion in fiscal year 2018.



If you are not already participating in your local community's efforts to ensure an accurate count, consider reaching out to your counterpart on a city, town or county board to learn more and determine whether and how your district could be involved.

Visit the Wisconsin Department of Administration and [census.gov](http://census.gov) for more information. □

### STAT OF THE MONTH

# 10%

**Percentage increase** in total U.S. population from 2000 to 2010, when the last United States Census was conducted.

Source: United States Census Bureau

## WI Superintendent Named Superintendent of the Year by Education Dive: K12

All Creek Superintendent Joe Sanfelippo has been named Superintendent of the Year by Education Dive: K12, a leading industry news publisher.

"The people and organizations that win the Dive Awards are trailblazers and leaders in their markets," said Davide Savenije, editor-in-chief of Education Dive's publisher, Industry Dive. "Their achievements in 2019 are shaping the future of where the latest strategies and trends are going."

According to Education Dive, "Sanfelippo's approach to social

media, and the success he's seen in embracing these platforms, provides a best-practices case study for public schools nationwide at a time when branding is more important than ever, given the amount of competition many districts are facing from school choice initiatives. His strategy boils down to three key points:

- Find your audience, find out where they are, find out where they live virtually.
- Build momentum.
- Celebrate kids.

In practice, his approach doesn't

just promote the wins that occur between school walls to the broader community: It builds a culture that celebrates students and staff at all levels of the organization and extends a helping hand when needed."

The 2019 Dive Awards recognize the industry's top disruptors and innovators. Winners were chosen by the editors of Education Dive based on thorough and independent research, reporting and analysis.

*Go Crickets!* □





## The Options We Didn't Have

It's easy to wax nostalgic about how school used to be. But if we're honest, we should acknowledge that students today have opportunities to flourish that we couldn't have imagined at their age.

When I was in school in Milwaukee during the '50s and '60s, schools didn't adapt to us; we adapted to them. Yes, our teachers cared about us and the adults we were becoming, but we were all put on a similar track.

As you'll read in this issue of Wisconsin School News, students today are being asked what they want from life and our schools and teachers are responding. They are giving students the tools and support they need to pursue their dreams.

We know that a high school diploma is no longer a one-size-fits-all solution to life after high school, nor is it guaranteed to unlock a middle-class lifestyle. Our schools, programs and expectations are evolving to match that reality. In our schools today, personalized educational opportunities are allowing our young people to focus on what's relevant to them while adapting to a changing economy.

In this issue, you'll hear from the Wisconsin Technical College District Boards Association executive

director who explains that more than 51,000 Wisconsin high school students were enrolled in dual-credit programs in the state's technical colleges last year. In addition to saving millions in tuition each year, participation in these programs is correlated with higher rates of college graduation.

Tania Kilpatrick, director of career and technical education at CESA 6, describes how Pathways Wisconsin is bringing together educators and employers to get students on track to quality, in-demand jobs. Verona High School Principal Pam Hammen describes how her school has expanded AP coursework opportunities to more underrepresented students.

Perhaps, even more importantly, you'll hear from our 2020 Wisconsin teachers of the year — the best of the best. We asked them to write specifically to you — our members — on what they and their students need to succeed. They have a consistent message about the need to be heard, respected and supported in their profession. If our students are going to succeed, we need our teachers ready and willing to take on the challenges.

In a few short weeks, many of us will be gathering in Milwaukee for the 99th annual State Education Convention. I encourage you to seek

out sessions that will help you ensure your district has the culture and climate for your teachers and students to succeed.

If you want to learn more about college, career and life readiness work, in particular, consider the pre-convention workshop led by Dr. David Schuler, the 2018 Illinois and National Superintendent of the Year. If you'd like to hear firsthand stories of career and technical education in Wisconsin districts, consider a breakout session about the Unified School District of Antigo's partnership with North-central Technical College. Or learn how the Racine Unified School District created a career academy education model.

Our convention keynotes will share what they think needs to change to make school more relevant for our children.

When I ask students about their dreams, I'm always inspired. They say they can solve the problems that my generation left them, and I believe them. Wisconsin parents can be proud they have schools with the empathy and vision to ask what their children can be and find opportunities to help them reach their potential. ■

Personalized education allows young people to focus on what's relevant to them while adapting to a changing economy.



Bawaajigekwe Andrea Boulley  
Ashland Middle School

Photo Credit: Avira Duggar, Makenna Zak and Drew Meierotto

# 2020 WISCONSIN Teachers of the Year

Recognized for their excellence in teaching and dedication to students, Wisconsin's **2020 Teachers of the Year** share their expertise and insight.

## BAWAAJIGEKWE ANDREA BOULLEY

**2020 Wisconsin Special Services Teacher of the Year**  
Ashland Middle and Lake Superior Elementary Schools,  
School District of Ashland

**S**eventh-generation thinking in education is good for all. “We have an obligation to ourselves and to our communities to be bigger than the moment.” This is a quote by Brittany Packnett, a leader in education and someone who inspires me to be brave, confident and lead

with love. As parents, teachers, administrators, policymakers, leaders and human beings, let us embrace our power and the responsibility that comes with it. It might sound simple, but relationships and feeling connected is something we all need in order to experience

fulfillment in life and to be our best selves.

Within Indigenous communities, we are familiar with thinking beyond the moment as the seventh-generation mindset. It is understood that what we do today is influenced by the work, love and sacrifice of our ancestors, and it will have a ripple effect into the future, impacting generations we may never see. This is a tremendous responsibility and requires courage and love for humankind beyond oneself. And so, if we are to be

bigger than the moment, let us come together understanding that it is the relationships we build within our school communities, systems and structures, as well as with our students and families, that will have the greatest impact.

Many great Indigenous scholars will say it is the relationship with oneself that matters most. This is why teachers and our educational leadership philosophies are important. We leverage our voice, whether it be in the boardroom or the classroom, in order to lead our students to believe in themselves. At the same time, we must believe in ourselves, and that takes a great deal of emotional labor.

My good friend and fellow educator, Gyasi Ross, calls this “changing the narrative.” If we understand the seventh-generation mindset, then we must be conscious of our original teachings and know that while the content we pass on is

important, so is the way in which we engage with it. Our spirits, clans, dreams and stories are significant in who we are as people. When it comes to education and what is happening in the classroom, we want our children to learn the content and make growth in the standards. But what is most important and essential to the process is confidence, love, trust and a belief of brilliance that starts with ourselves.

The truth in that might mean a long, strenuous process of deconstructing current and existing systems, structures and standards in order to build a community of individuals who lead with confidence in knowing the beauty and brilliance that lies within. Building these relationships takes patience, continuous work, humility, forgiveness, unwavering trust and a fundamental belief that we are all equally important and have valuable gifts to share.

To top it off, in education we do not often get to see the final product for years, and sometimes we never get to see it. Teaching is about the process, not the product, and rarely do we get to see the fruits of our labor. Yet here we are, showing up every day to create positive, safe learning communities and strategizing to reach all students, particularly those who seem the most disconnected or under-represented.

Even though I don't often hear feedback on the day's lesson, I know my day-to-day impact and ability to influence as a teacher is real. We have all heard the stories of students who come back to say how much it meant to them that a certain teacher took the time and care to invest and believe, to elevate and create access, and to unconditionally love and value them. It is about the seventh-generation mindset and being bigger than the moment. □



## Policy Resource Guide

Made in Wisconsin for Wisconsin School Districts, the **WASB Policy Resource Guide** is a convenient, up-to-date, Internet-based policy tool providing sample policies and the resources needed to customize local policies.

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Photo Credit: Rebecca Acosta

## CHAD SPERZEL-WUCHTERL

### 2020 Wisconsin High School Teacher of the Year

Ronald Reagan IB High School, Milwaukee Public Schools

**When you attended school, did you listen to lengthy lectures, read from dated textbooks and watch dusty educational films?** That approach no longer inspires learning among teens from diverse cultures. The notable success of my students springs from classroom innovation.

I believe it is imperative to prepare students for rigorous college work through personalized blended learning, allowing them to work at their own pace using technology. More funding for tools such as Chromebooks allows students to independently and collaboratively experiment and innovate, expanding their essential problem-solving and critical thinking skills.

I find it crucial to empower students with the responsibility for their own learning by having them design website portfolios, accessible by universities, to view their achievements. Scholarship and college recruitment becomes a visual-based, streamlined process via these web-based portfolios. Embedding technology and personalized blended learning has led to individualistic, college-level work and garnered millions in scholarships for my art students.

Just as classes are shifted to better fit student needs, the role of educators must be adapted to embrace education on a greater landscape. Teacher leadership should involve

stepping outside of our classrooms, walking off campus and engaging community stakeholders in conversations about education.

Today's educators must be trained to align themselves with university faculty and embrace civic leaders. We must work to establish student internships like the Satellite Program at the Milwaukee Art Museum, where students lead group tours and display their own work.

**“Education must be a vibrant, ongoing, lifelong process interweaving the individual within a greater community.”**

We need to call upon our alumni to champion mentorship programs and to network with current students for greater graduation rates.

I believe that students more deeply grasp learning through action and creativity. Involvement with others expands our sense of self and provides an awareness of our place and purpose in the world. In my visual art courses, students analyze the art of other civilizations to understand the struggles of their

people and hear marginalized voices. Students are challenged to test their own boundaries, evolving a personal ethic in their work. Community service is an elemental component of student growth. Yet, meaningful volunteer opportunities depend upon our educational leaders engaging in conversations with business stakeholders to more fully embrace students within our community.

Educators need professional training in community communication and partnership. A vibrant community connection is a two-way street, transporting our students to universities while attracting investors, professors, recruiters and scholarships into our schools. We must infuse college experiences throughout our course curriculum. I invite faculty from the Milwaukee Institute of Art and Design, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point for semester-long lessons. They run hands-on workshops, critique student work and embed college-level standards in my classrooms.

I feel it is essential to galvanize learning by plunging students within the community — enrolling them in pre-college summer workshops and displaying their work at civic centers and events, for instance. Funds are essential to bus students to college campuses to interact with professors and college admission officers. Professional partnerships are needed to temper classroom lessons with real-world experiences. I sit my students beside culturally divergent professional artists, graphic designers and award-winning photographers to discuss techniques and future careers. Such practical experiences beyond the traditional classroom walls make learning meaningful, useable and valuable.

Education can no longer be limited to a classroom. Education must be a vibrant, ongoing, lifelong process interweaving the individual within a greater community where they can shoulder their talents, values and responsibilities to enhance the world around them. □



Photo Credit: Miller's current students  
Photomosaic by Ankita Jinendra

## CHELSEA MILLER

### 2020 Wisconsin Elementary Teacher of the Year

West and Sullivan Elementary Schools, School District of Jefferson

**W**e need to talk about mental health. Especially the mental health of your staff and teachers. We know you have no choice but to ask more of us. We know what the stakes are. We experience the direct impact that this system has on our students, whom we inevitably grow to love. Many of us are at war with ourselves daily. Do we follow the rules or do what we know is best for our students? What do you do when you have a student who is so traumatized that you know they are not learning? What about when you know what is best for a student but you don't have the resources? These things and more weigh on our heads and hearts. It wears us down, and some leave the profession.

I was almost one of those teachers. I quit after my first year of teaching. There were numerous reasons for both my exit and my return, but ultimately it came down to my own mental health. My growth and learning were not supported. As the leaders of districts around the state, you're our first line of defense! You can help us fight fatigue that settles in and compounds itself year after year. Teachers and administrators need your support.

The most important task is to hire and develop strong leaders. Leadership isn't ruling with an iron

fist — it's about respect and relationships. Strong administrators use the same skills strong teachers use. My administrators are wonderful about recognizing the efforts of their staff, and they make sure to acknowledge their efforts frequently. I can't count the number of times that I've been thanked or told that I was doing a good job as I was passing my administrators in the hallway. This simple act confirms that my work is appreciated and honored. It's also a reflection of our school culture.

How is your school culture? When you enter a building do you hear teachers collaborating? Do you hear laughter? Do the teachers eat in the lounge? These are things your administration should be prioritizing. Daily collaboration and socialization between staff should be encouraged! We need each other! No one can offer support like a fellow teacher. Strong relationships between staff members drive the foundation for a safe space to learn and grow.

Listen to your teachers ... really listen! Encourage them to be leaders and respect their time. My administrators are fantastic about not burdening me with tasks and professional development not relevant to my area. They trust my professional goal-setting abilities to seek out

“How is your school culture? When you enter a building do you hear teachers collaborating? Do you hear laughter? Do the teachers eat in the lounge? These are things your administration should be prioritizing.”

professional development relevant to me and my subject area. I'm given time to implement and evaluate changes. As a direct result of the latitude I've been given, I was able to implement a stained-glass club, crochet club, mosaic club and construction club. I alone offer four extracurricular activities for children. Because of the collaborative nature of my school culture, we now host 13 extracurriculars for students!

My district is off to a great start in supporting teachers' mental health. We have a wellness day where teachers participate in activities like walking, Zumba, visual art activities, meditation, etc. Every school also has a committee to help fight fatigue through compassionate resilience training, but it's not enough. Teachers need to know that it's not only OK to participate in these activities, it should be mandatory. Self-care needs to be ingrained into district culture and policy. We pour from ourselves every day, and you cannot pour from an empty bucket. It's essential we take care of ourselves. Our students depend on it. □

“We pour from ourselves every day, and you cannot pour from an empty bucket.”



Photo Credit: Abby Brenic

## ERIN McCARTHY

### 2020 Wisconsin Middle School Teacher of the Year

Greendale Middle School, School District of Greendale, 2020 Wisconsin Representative to the National Teacher of the Year Program

“To raise children who innovate and explore, we need to begin with classrooms that focus on the joy of exploration, play and discovery. Every child deserves an inspired educator who never stops wondering how to spark their curiosity.”

**L**et's reshape education. Educators dedicate their lives to preparing the next generation to be global citizens. Educators need time and the respect of their administration to do what is best for kids. If we empower teachers to be grassroots change agents, we can reshape education to meet tomorrow's challenges.

Teachers need to be trained and supported to help children think critically about the information they consume and to find balance. Our children are saying that social media has increased their anxiety and their isolation, but they have already begun to find ways to use technology to empower, unite and uplift. They understand that access to information and people around the world is a powerful tool to connect and question. They are drawn to the storytelling power of social media and are curious about the world because it is at their fingertips. They have a right to be critical consumers of information.

I ask you to value educators' time and expertise in assessing student strengths beyond test scores, so we can raise children who listen beyond what is said, hear with their hearts and have cultural humility. We know the rules are being rewritten for how to be successful in a globalized

21st-century economy. We must commit to teaching empathy to every child so we grow respectful and responsible global citizens. Our youngest children need to focus on play, not academics. As a middle school teacher, I see the impact of the abandonment of play in early childhood education. To raise children who innovate and explore, we need to begin with classrooms that focus on the joy of exploration,

play and discovery. Every child deserves an inspired educator who never stops wondering how to spark their curiosity.

As an educator, I have the power to help children connect to the world. Please, embrace your teachers' ability to be inquisitive so they view their career as their passion, chart new territories and discover innovations that will help our children to bring the world

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Wisconsin's 2020 teachers of the year will be recognized at the opening general session of the 2020 State Education Convention on Wednesday, Jan. 22.

closer. Encourage professional development beyond your district so teachers can model for their students the power of following their curiosity. Allow educators time to develop relevant curriculum that values flexibility and not uniformity.

Encourage your educators to find their voice so we can reshape the narrative about education. Storytelling and forging connections across boundaries breaks down hate

and misunderstanding. To ensure that more voices are heard, actively pursue diversity in hiring. The impact on all students of having diverse teachers is undeniable. To have a more equitable nation, students need to see equity in action. If we want them to always consider others' perspectives — to look around the classroom, the boardroom, the lab or the legislature and ask, "Who is missing?" — we must fight for these voices to be heard ourselves.

Our education system has a responsibility to listen to all kids. As

educators, school board members and administrators, we are their allies. We fight together to turn up the volume on our children's stories and prepare them for a future of global collaboration and communication.

This work is not easy, but for the next generation, we cannot wait. We cannot hesitate or struggle with our uncertainties in the fight for equity for all children. As leaders and influencers in our education system and global citizens, we must ask thoughtful questions and listen honestly to those who will fight for our planet and our humanity. ■

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# ACCESS & OPPORTUNITY

## Addressing Equity in Our High Schools

DR. NICHOLAS D. WAHL, EQUAL OPPORTUNITY SCHOOLS

Approximately three-quarters of a million incoming juniors and seniors are not being afforded access to rigorous academic programs, such as Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate. These students are ready to be enrolled into rigorous academic programs and can succeed, but they need the opportunity, access and encouragement to reach their potential. Unfortunately, students of color and low-income students across the United States are not being engaged at the same rate as their peers.

After 31 years of service in the public school system, I transitioned to my current role as a regional director of strategic initiatives for Equal Opportunity Schools, a Seattle-based non-profit organization committed to closing the classroom equity gap. EOS focuses on doing the right thing for high school-aged students by giving them keys to doors of opportunity they didn't know existed.

Who are the gatekeepers to these doors in your high school?

I had the honor of serving three public school communities in my

16 years as a superintendent of schools. One of my guiding strategic goals was equity of opportunity for all students. But this goal was not always met with support by board members, principals and teachers. I found early on in my superintendent career that there were gatekeepers in my high schools that limited access and opportunities for students.

To lead with equity takes courage, persistence and a student-centered approach to decision-making as a school leader.

I had board members concerned

## “I strongly believe that individuals will live up or down to the expectations presented to them.”

— Dr. Nicholas D. Wahl

about property values when I would tout and celebrate diversity and equity. A minority of my principals pushed back, believing that that students who didn't fit the “school way” needed to adjust. Several teachers pushed back on allowing students to choose their courses, indicating that they believed that this would water down the curriculum in their courses.

As a former athletic coach, teacher, principal and superintendent, I strongly believe that individuals will live up or down to the expectations presented to them. My push back to this opposition was respectful and clear ... we would offer equity of opportunity and access to all students, and we would make student-centered decisions rather than adult-centered. Like a train leaving the station, most got on board, but some chose to stay behind.

Here are several questions to examine when thinking about the equity of access in your district:

- Are decisions made in your district/school student-centric or adult-centric?

- Are students in your high school allowed to enroll in rigorous courses (AP, IB, honors) based upon their interests and motivation? Or do they require teacher/guidance counselor recommendation to enroll in rigorous courses?

- Are students' GPA and standardized test scores significant determinants in their ability to enroll in rigorous courses?

In all three districts that I served, students initially were only able to access rigorous courses if they had the appropriate GPA and standardized test scores coupled with a recommendation from a teacher or guidance counselor, the “gatekeepers,” to enroll them. I am proud to say we “blew up” that adult-centric system and allowed students to enroll in courses in which they had interest and motivation. We didn't use their GPA and standardized test scores against them when they wanted to pursue rigorous courses.

Please don't mistake this point as a knock on guidance counselors or teachers. In many of our high schools, a guidance counselor may have a caseload of 300-plus students. There is

no way we can expect them to know the interests and motivations of every student assigned to them without a change in process as well as additional tools and analytics to assist them. The same goes for high school teachers.

We changed from an adult-centric model to student-centric by doing the work with our guidance counselors and teachers — not to them. This involved teachers, guidance counselors and administrators working collaboratively to change the process whereby students were afforded access to opportunities on an equitable basis.

After surveying high school teachers, EOS found that the greatest predictors of success for a student in an AP course is the interest and motivation of the student in the course. This makes sense to me, as I perform better if I have interest and motivation in the work that I am doing. The lowest predictors of success of students in AP courses is GPA and standardized test scores. Please let this serve as affirmation for moving your high school to a student-centric environment. □

*Dr. Nicholas D. Wahl is a superintendent-in-residence at Equal Opportunity Schools. Contact him at [nick@eoschools.org](mailto:nick@eoschools.org).*

## About Equal Opportunity Schools...

**Equal Opportunity Schools' mission** is to ensure students of all backgrounds have equal access to America's most academically intense high school programs — and particularly that low-income students and students of color have opportunities to succeed at the highest levels.

**Our partnership model is consultative**, collaborative and requires a commitment to specific and measurable results. EOS has helped more than 600 schools in 180 districts across 30 states identify and enroll low-income students and students of color who qualify for, but are missing from, Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate classes. Working together, we support their academic success, prioritizing the notion that opportunity precedes achievement.

**EOS provides expertise, knowledge, industry research with data analysis**, and the tools and technology for partner districts to address and close their equity and achievement gaps. Many of our partner districts and schools continue to build upon what is already working in their buildings and find EOS nurtures a path to equity that transforms the mindsets of teachers and administrators on previous belonging beliefs. By customizing the EOS model, following consultants' guidance and using the tools and analyses EOS provides, schools have increased enrollment in their AP/IB programs for students of color and low-income students. □

## Open Gates and Create Opportunities for all Students

PAM HAMMEN, PRINCIPAL, VERONA AREA HIGH SCHOOL

At Verona Area High School, we're committed to opening gates and creating the best possible opportunities for all students. It hasn't always been this way. In order to transform our AP program to emphasize inclusivity and excellence, we had to be honest about the role we've previously played as gatekeepers — teachers who decided who could take an AP class. Making this transition was not easy, and we were helped immeasurably by our partnership with Equal Opportunity Schools.

We began our collaboration jumping into the deep end of a murky swimming pool, apprehensive about

the sweeping changes to some of our policies and practices. Still, our prime motivation, then and now, was to do the best for our students and to grow as a school community. As we begin our seventh year of work with EOS, we are no longer fearful. We are "all-in," dedicated to making further progress through a concentrated effort. Now when we see a gate, we don't wonder who will guard it, we wonder how to open it.

It took our work with EOS to realize that we had unintentionally created significant barriers that prevented many students from enrolling in AP classes, or discouraged them from successfully

completing AP coursework. As a school that prides itself on the level of education we provide to all students, this realization was difficult to process. We looked to our students to guide and teach us.

Through student surveys, we were able to identify the critical barriers that affect our learners. They included prerequisite courses, applications, essays, course and exam costs, summer assignments and the practice of requiring all students to take the AP exam if they signed up for the AP course. It was clearly a time for change. While not everyone agreed with the decisions, in year one, we jumped into the deep end by:

- Removing pre-requisite courses
- Removing all applications, including essays, for AP Language and Composition
- Providing AP textbooks and exam fees for students who qualify for free/reduced lunch
- Eliminating or greatly reducing summer assignments
- Allowing students and their families to decide whether they want to take the AP exam at the end of a course

Many of the systemic changes were logistical and relatively easy to implement. The more challenging work was addressing the mindset of some AP teachers who believed we were "setting students up to fail" by opening up the gates of AP coursework to learners who may not fit our notion of a student who is "AP ready." The teachers were guarding gates because they believed it was in the best interests of students, but their



### Attend sessions focused on equity at the State Education Convention.

**Dr. Wahl of Equal Opportunity Schools** will be presenting a session on closing the opportunity

gaps for students of color on Thursday, Jan. 23 at the Wisconsin State Education Convention.

#### OTHER SESSIONS FOCUSED ON EQUITY INCLUDE:

**Excellence, Achievement, Equity: No Excuses!** on Wednesday, Jan. 22 by the Wisconsin Association of School District Administrators.

**Elevating Achievement for All: A Focus on Equity** on Wednesday, Jan. 22 by the Wisconsin Association of School Boards. *(This session will be recorded and available as part of the Virtual Attendee Access program. See the convention website for details.)*

*These are just a few of the related sessions. Visit the convention website at [wasb.org/convention](http://wasb.org/convention) for the complete agenda.*

perceptions led to unintended consequences that were damaging student potential. Particularly at risk were students who had been excluded from rigorous coursework in the past. Changing the mindsets of teachers and students and aligning our actions with our values has been the most challenging and important work. It continues to be a focus of our partnership with EOS.

I am happy to share that our results speak for themselves. In 2013, we had only 29 underrepresented 11th- and 12th-grade students take and pass an AP class. In 2018-19, we had 96. Over the past seven years, this has equated to hundreds of underrepresented students successfully completing AP courses. In addition, we've had more benchmark students (medium- to high-income white and Asian students) enroll and succeed in AP

courses. In 2013, we administered 647 tests to 370 students school-wide. In 2019, we administered 1,062 tests to 566 students.

In Roman mythology, Janus presides over gates and transitions, beginnings and endings. Janus is depicted with two faces, one looking to the past and one looking to the future. Janus represents our journey as a school, from our past as gatekeepers to our future ensuring all willing students can transition into an AP class that challenges and changes them.

Partnering with EOS will build bridges for students to achieve at their full potential as they become the leaders of tomorrow in the classroom today. ■

*Ethan Netterstrom, executive director of curriculum and instruction at Madison Metropolitan School District, contributed to this article.*

## WASB Equity Statement

*We affirm in our actions that each student can, will and shall learn. We recognize that based on factors including, but not limited to, disability, race, gender, ethnicity, and socio-economic status, not all students receive equitable educational opportunities. Educational equity is the intentional allocation of resources, instruction and opportunities to meet the specific identified needs of students and staff in the local school community.*

*Approved by the WASB Board of Directors, June 2018*



**School boards across the state** are actively working to eliminate disparities in student educational opportunities and access based on race, ethnicity, social-economic or other status, and have adopted local equity policies with those efforts in mind. Sample equity policies are available upon request from WASB Policy Services ([tkimball@wasb.org](mailto:tkimball@wasb.org)).





## EMPLOYER PARTNERSHIPS

EMPOWER STUDENTS TO

# Reach New Heights

Partner with employers to prepare your students to pursue their passions

*Tania Kilpatrick*



TYLER JEPSEN, PRINCETON

Students need to be driven and care about their future in order to succeed. An academic and career planning framework actively supported by school leaders and partners can fuel a student's passion and drive to succeed.

Academic and career planning exposes students to opportunities, resources and mentors who care

about their goals so they can graduate ready for college, career and life. While schools offer a variety of programming to help students uncover their passions, many students still leave high school without finding that connection and without a plan. On average, 25-30% of seniors are undecided on their future.

The path to a great career that

aligns to passions is not always clear to students and families. The easiest solution is often to just "go to college." But research shows college is not always the best choice and college enrollment itself does not necessarily produce a well-rounded citizen or provide for long-term self-sufficiency.

A report by the William T. Grant Foundation opined, "The new



CAL PETERS, PRINCETON



forgotten half (are) those youth who do not complete college and find themselves shut out of good jobs in the era of college for all... Many youth who took society's advice to attend college, sacrificing time and often incurring debts, have nothing to show for their efforts in terms of credentials, employment or earnings." As district leaders, we need to redefine the vocabulary around "college" to a meaningful post-secondary experience.

Theo Kretzmann jumped at the chance to take automotive classes at Omro High School. He enrolled in Omro's automotive youth education systems program in which high school juniors and seniors attend Fox Valley Technical College to learn about automotive technology, collision repair and diesel technology. "Taking college-level classes puts you a few steps ahead of the rest of the students," Kretzmann said. "It's a huge jump start." He has started the automotive technology associate degree program and works for Lynn's Service Center in Oshkosh, earning

money and gaining more experience. He will graduate with plenty of know-how and zero debt.

Tannor Wittmus is the first person in his family not going to a four-year college. The Valders High School student plans to bridge his high school courses, certifications and youth apprenticeship at WST FAB, a Manitowoc precision machine shop, into a registered apprenticeship while investigating technical college. "Working with local schools and students has been a positive experience and increased our skilled workforce," said Al Schuh, Wittmus' mentor at WST FAB, which has sponsored four students in apprenticeships.

### ■ Skills mismatch contributes to labor shortages

Wisconsin faces a potential skills mismatch that will contribute to as many as 46,000 jobs going unfilled by 2022, according to the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development.

Based on projections through 2022, there are more jobs than workers available for low-skill positions requiring a high school diploma (Loritz et al., 2013). Conversely, there are not enough projected jobs for workers with a college education, including associate, bachelor's and master's degree holders. While labor market data shows higher than average job growth due to new positions and replacement jobs for our future graduates, those jobs will require higher levels of technical training and adaptability in the workplace.

To assist students and the workforce, schools need to focus on interim measures (college readiness) as well as long-term student outcomes (a great career). Since most people continue to view "college" as a four-year institution, schools should review their communication with students and families and educate them on all post-secondary options and opportunities while in high school.

**CTE supports all career and college-bound students**

Those opportunities include work- and career-based learning, youth apprenticeships and career and technical student organizations. Studies show that students enrolled in career and technical education programs are more engaged, have

higher graduation rates and positive post-high school outcomes.

Career and technical education is for all career- and college-bound students, including those planning to attend four-year universities. It can help college-bound students investigate potential areas of study, make sure the overall field is right for them and focus on a specific field within

a larger area of study. Career and technical education programs also help students learn and practice valuable, sought-after “soft skills” they may not learn in college courses but are expected to be proficient in as they enter the workforce.

**Strategies to support career, college and life readiness**

**Adopt state-endorsed regional career pathways.** The state’s Pathways Wisconsin project aims to increase the number of students who complete career pathways tied to high-skill, high-demand jobs and transform the way districts design and deliver the pathway programs to ensure students are ready for life after high school. It is a culmination of schools and industry working together to support the talent pipeline in Wisconsin.

The pathways are employer-led. Business and industry leaders spend time communicating about the skills they want in future employees. School districts, higher education institutions and others then lay out the pathway, or options, to lead to specific careers. Students can easily see which local classes, certifications, dual-credit programs and work-based learning can lead them toward their goal. Meanwhile, teachers use business and industry input to ensure that their curriculum focuses on relevant, critical topics.

School districts that work with their area CESA and adopt the Regional Pathway Model also have a sustainable framework for 1) regular conversations between local school boards and employers to discuss workforce needs; 2) partnership opportunities with post-secondary campuses to build synergies; and 3) expansion of outreach efforts within the community. The pathways will be updated every two years. By participating in the regional effort, school districts can minimize their own outreach efforts.

Currently, there are four regions in the state with career pathways.

**ACADEMIC AND CAREER PLANNING WEB HUB**



**CESA 6 worked with its web developer**

to design an academic and career planning web hub. For an annual subscription fee, it can be added to any district website that meets the state’s PI 26 web-posting requirements. The hub includes pre-loaded career pathway information and customizable district-specific, work- and service-based learning opportunities.



LILY SONNENTAG, BERLIN



**CHECK OUT THESE RELATED SESSIONS AT THE STATE EDUCATION CONVENTION IN JANUARY:**

**Collaboration and Innovation: Scaling Student Readiness and Dual Credit Success**

on Wednesday, Jan. 22 with the DPI and CESA 6.

**Build Community Partnerships to Support Academic and Career Planning** on Thursday, Jan. 23 with the Antigo Unified School District and Northcentral Technical College.

**How to Build a District-Wide Industry 4.0 Pathway** on Friday, Jan. 24 with the Kenosha Unified School District.

*These are just a few of the related sessions. Visit the convention website at [wasb.org/convention](http://wasb.org/convention) for the complete agenda.*

Plans are underway to expand the project statewide by July 1, 2020.

**Organize programming and communication.** Academic and career planning focuses on providing students more exposure and knowledge around potential career opportunities. School districts have worked diligently to expand programming options to meet the myriad of student interests and requests.

Districts can improve their communication about those opportunities to students and families. According to the state's ACP Implementation report for 2018-19, nearly one quarter of respondents said their school had not yet implemented or institutionalized the practice of informing students about dual credit, Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate opportunities, and more than one-third said the same about college-level industry certification courses.

CESA 6, for instance, worked with its website developer to design an academic and career planning web hub. For an annual subscription fee, it can be added to any district website that meets the state's PI 26 web-posting requirements. The hub includes pre-loaded career pathway information and customizable district-specific, work- and service-based

learning opportunities. It turns the district's course guide into an online, interactive course guide that students and families can search by grade levels, required courses, career pathways, college credit and certifications. Students can create a four-year plan by adding courses to a personal plan.

**Expand community partnership opportunities for students.** Districts

can bolster their academic and career planning efforts by incorporating work- and career-based learning experiences for students in all pathway sectors.

The Waupun School District recently opened the Warrior Innovation Center to provide students with technology education and hands-on training in fabrication and welding. The center houses Warrior

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KYLIE ROEHL, PRINCETON

Fabrication, a student-run business.

In Neenah and North Fond du Lac, the high schools have incubator classes in which students work with professional mentors to develop business ideas and pitch them, “Shark Tank”-style, to “potential investors” who are local business leaders. The programs allow students to make mistakes, take risks and learn to pivot.

The Appleton Area School District created an innovative venue for students, teachers and parents to make

real-world, face-to-face connections with business professionals representing high-demand careers in the New North region. Each Appleton high school will have a launch studio.

“Now there will be a place within our building where businesses, educators and students can create interactions that help students cultivate their own unique vision for their post-high school success,” said Rita O’Brien, dean of career-based learning. “The Launch Studios will help businesses build closer ties with

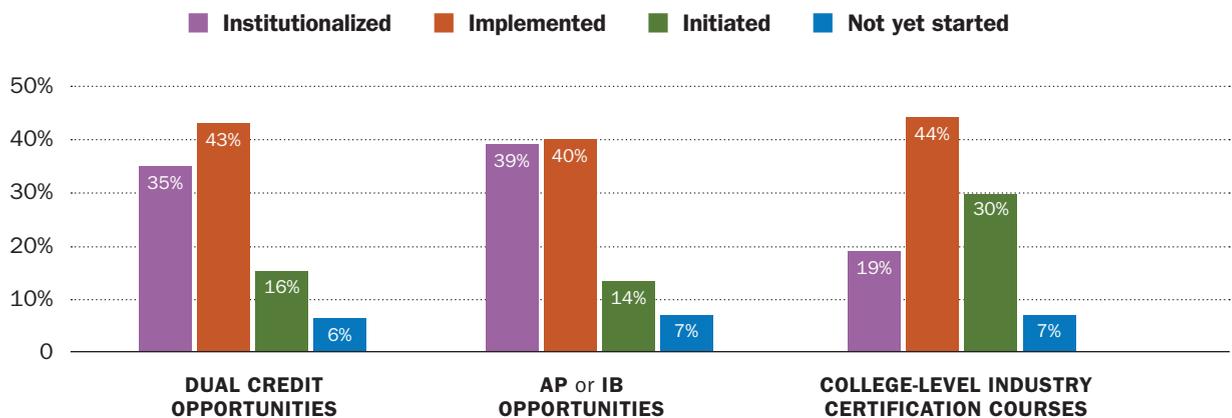
future local talent and will positively impact the talent shortages employers in our area are experiencing.”

Districts can also leverage partnerships to expand certifications and industry-recognized credentials for students. Through the state’s CTE Technical Incentive Grant program, districts can earn up to \$1,000 for each high school graduate who earns an industry-recognized certificate in an occupation facing workforce shortages. In 2019, 99% of the schools served by CESA 6’s College and Career Readiness Center were eligible and received approximately \$1.5 million in combined funding to support career and technical education. Interested districts should reach out to their area CESA for more information. ■

*Tania Kilpatrick is the Director of CESA 6 College and the Career Readiness Center.*

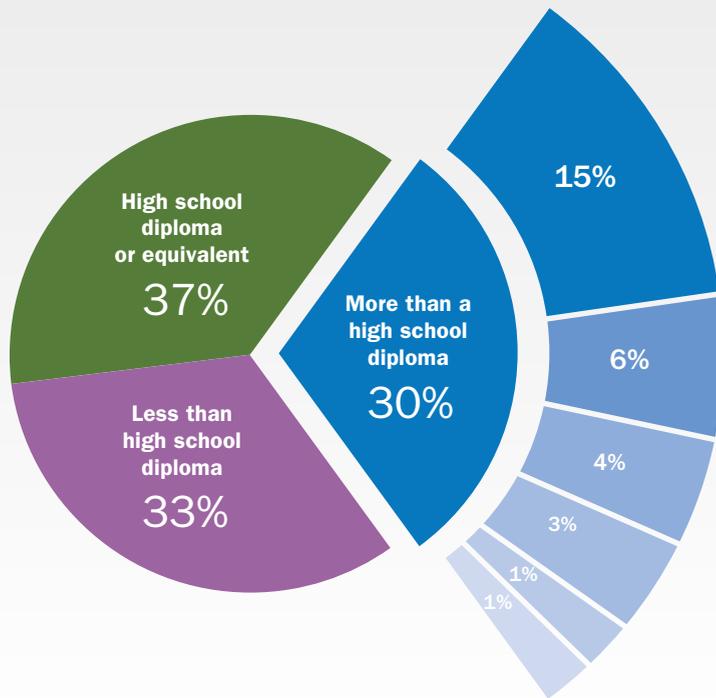


## At what level are students being informed of opportunities in curriculum?



**Academic and career planning focuses on** providing students more exposure and knowledge around potential career opportunities. School districts have worked diligently to expand programming options to meet the myriad of student interests and requests.

## OCCUPATIONAL EDUCATION FORECASTS 2012-2022



### BREAKDOWN OF

#### More than a high school diploma:

- 15% Bachelor's Degree
- 6% Post Secondary non-degree award
- 4% Associate Degree
- 3% Doctoral or Professional Degree
- 1% Master's Degree
- 1% Some college, no degree



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right to the classroom*



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# THE PROMISE & CHALLENGE of Dual Credit

We live in an information age, dominated by global economic pressures and ever-evolving workplaces of unprecedented connectivity and complexity. Lifelong learning is no longer optional. It is a given in Wisconsin that educators must strive to prepare students to be college- and career-ready, meaning that students are challenged to master critical-thinking and problem-solving skills. Students should be armed with academic knowledge, but also be nimble and adaptable learners with the skills to communicate, collaborate and apply that knowledge.

At the same time, Wisconsin is grappling with the workforce challenges posed by two colliding

demographic trends — decades of lower birth rates and an outsized baby-boom generation on the cusp of retirement. Economists leave no doubt that we must educate as many of our citizens as we can — as well as we can and as quickly as we can — if we want to maintain our quality of life and economic vitality in the future.

In partnership with K-12 schools and future-minded employers, technical colleges are working to show young students that college is possible, and that challenging, high-paying careers are waiting for them right here in Wisconsin. Today's K-12 students are fortunate to be served by a variety of strong educational partnerships that are tearing down silos in order to

better serve students with relevant technology, rigorous instruction and critical-thinking skills. One critical component of those partnerships is dual credit, which brings together high





schools and technical colleges to increase academic and economic opportunities for students. Despite its promise, a critical pillar of dual credit is under threat.

With more than 51,000 students enrolled at over 400 high schools last year, many people are familiar with dual-credit programs offered by Wisconsin's technical colleges through a variety of models, including transcribed credit, Start College Now and special contracted services. Most courses are provided through transcribed credit, which is a revenue-neutral program taught by high school teachers and provides tech college curriculum. Families pay no tuition and students can transfer the college credits after graduation. Thousands of college-bound students use these courses each year to get a head start on the general education classes required for any associate or bachelor's degree, saving themselves both tuition and time.

What the general public may not know is that the proven benefits for students go well beyond saving millions in tuition dollars each year. Dual enrollment also helps ease the transition from high school to college academics. University of Wisconsin-Madison Professor

**Economists leave no doubt** that we must educate as many of our citizens as we can — as well as we can and as quickly as we can — if we want to maintain our quality of life and economic vitality in the future.

Emeritus L. Allen Phelps led a study of Fox Valley Technical College's dual-enrollment programs under a 2014 grant from the National Science Foundation. He found that students who had taken dual-enrollment courses in high school had higher rates of successful course completion their first year in college, demonstrated higher rates of persistence in their second year of college, and had higher college graduation rates compared to students who did not take dual-credit courses.

Of course, not all students enroll in college right out of high school. Dual credit can also serve those students' needs. In 2018, Milwaukee Area Technical College partnered with Milwaukee Public Schools and Harley-Davidson to create a pilot program that provided a class of Bradley Tech High School students with an innovative early college/youth apprenticeship opportunity. Students went to high school, earned dual-college credits and then worked as paid toolmaking and industrial electrician youth apprentices. Students also explored other careers available at Harley-Davidson.

The pilot was so successful that the program rapidly expanded to provide 150 high school students similar experiences the following year. Following completion of the yearlong youth apprenticeship, students can choose to continue as registered apprentices after graduation. At Harley-Davidson, the new apprentices are earning \$28 per hour right out of high school, with higher wages available once they complete the apprenticeship. The college credits these students earned in high school also count toward the classroom instruction required under the registered apprenticeship.

In the opposite corner of the state, Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College partners with 47 school districts — nearly all of them small and rural — to reinvigorate career and technical education programs and expand the available curriculum, including college-level general education courses. Despite a territory spanning 10,500 square miles and with relatively poor broadband penetration, WITC has been able to combine contracted services, transcribed credit and creative logistical strategies to make dual credit available to high school students throughout the region.

Programs are as varied as construction essentials, welding, certified



nursing assistant, financial services and automotive maintenance. Every program not only qualifies students to go to work right out of high school, but also ladders seamlessly into programs leading to higher credentials at the college. For example, the CNA credential counts toward requirements to earn an associate degree in nursing, which in turn transfers into any of the state's bachelor's of science in nursing degree programs.



**The first class of Harley-Davidson's youth apprentices** (seated) were joined on their 2018 signing day by (back row, left to right) Erica Case, Milwaukee Area Technical College board member and director of human resources for Harley-Davidson's Wisconsin Operations; MATC President Dr. Vicki J. Martin, chair of the Bradley Tech Commission; and Milwaukee Public Schools Interim Superintendent Dr. Keith Posley.

Despite the benefits, dual enrollment in Wisconsin is threatened by a change in enforcement of required teacher qualifications coming in 2022. The Higher Learning Commission is the nation's largest regional accreditor, setting standards for colleges and universities in 19 central-region states. It accredits all public and private nonprofit institutions in Wisconsin, which qualifies them for federal financial aid programs, such as Pell Grants. HLC policy requires that high school teachers delivering college-level curriculum must have the same credentials as college-level faculty. For most non-occupational courses, that means a master's degree in the content area being taught, or a master's degree in another field plus at least 18 graduate credits in the content area being taught. Wisconsin's technical colleges requested a delay in implementation of these requirements, but that waiver expires in 2022.

Based on survey information, these credential requirements will severely reduce the number of teachers considered qualified to teach technical college transcribed credit courses. Combined with tight budgets for all types of dual credit, fewer transcribed credit courses will mean fewer opportunities for students, and likely increased costs to provide other types of dual-credit courses instead. It is incumbent on

all of us to increase the number of qualified teachers across the state and to ensure that dual-credit classes are available to all students,

regardless of where they live and go to school.

Technical colleges hope to partner with K-12 leaders and local





**School districts are subject to legal requirements** and have some local policy-making responsibilities related to academic and career planning, education for employment, career and technical education, and dual-enrollment programs such as the Start College Now Program (technical college program) and Early College Credit Program. **Additional information on these topics is available from WASB Policy Services as follows:**

- Information on academic and career planning is available in the March 2017 issue of WASB’s subscription policy publication, *The FOCUS*.
- Background Information on the Start College Now Program and Early College Credit Program is available in the WASB Policy Resource Guide along with sample model policies/procedures on these programs, education for employment and career and technical education.
- Sample policies from other Wisconsin school districts are available upon request from WASB’s Policy Service Assistant Teresa Kimball (tkimball@wasb.org).

stakeholders to identify policy solutions that make sense to school boards and teachers, as well as state-level policymakers. While the state Legislature provided some funding to cover graduate school tuition, not enough teachers are taking advantage of those dollars. Additional incentives are needed. One proposal, advanced by the

Northeast Wisconsin Educational Resource Alliance based in Green Bay, would provide state funding for stipends for teachers who pursue graduate credits in order to teach dual credit. This could incentivize teachers for whom the old “lanes and steps” models no longer apply.

Local school districts may have their own strategies to address the

issue, but time is of the essence. We hope you will join us in the effort to increase the supply of qualified dual-credit teachers and preserve opportunities in the coming years. ■

*Layla Merrifield is the Executive Director of the Wisconsin Technical College District Boards Association.*



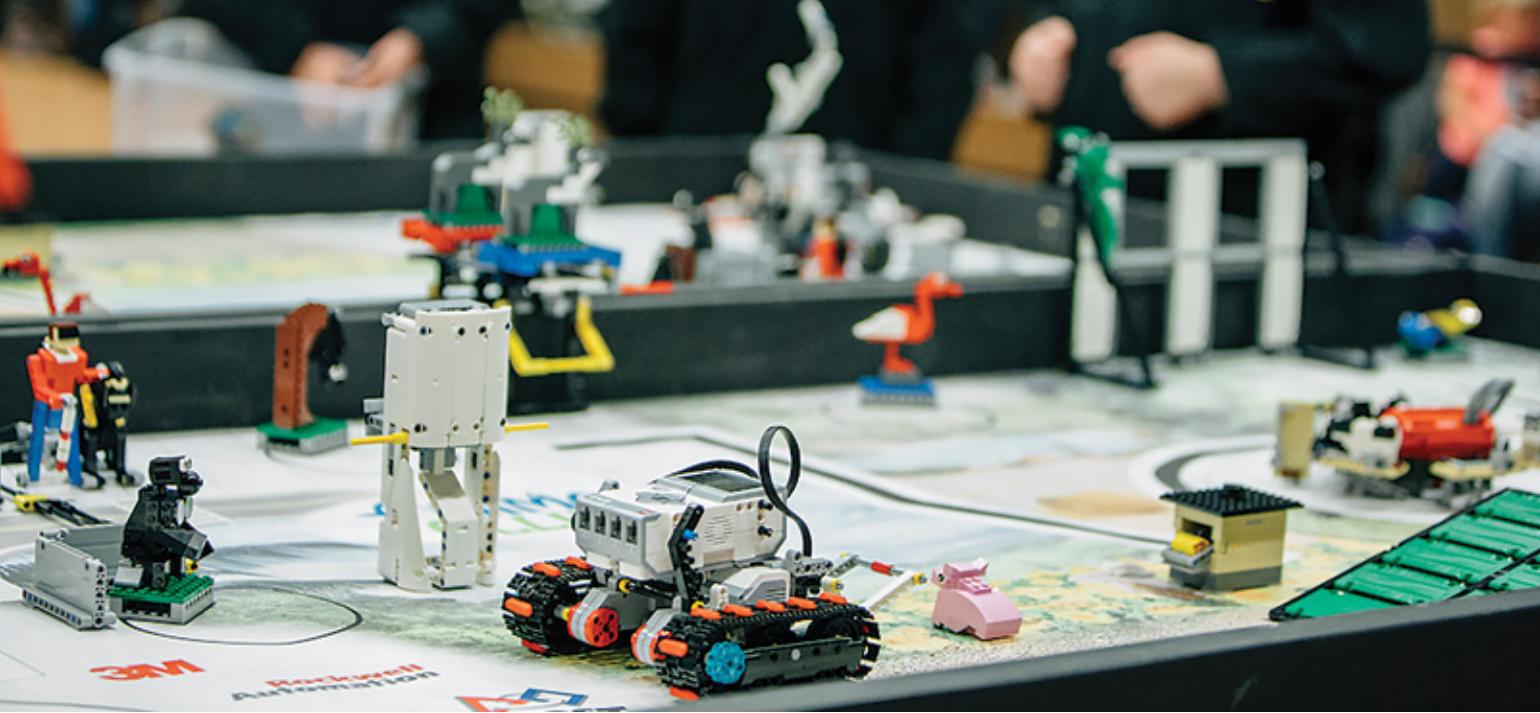
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# Growing **High School Robotics** in Wisconsin

## Why our high schools should be promoting robotics

**S**cience, technology, engineering and math jobs are in high demand all around the globe. Employers covet a workforce with well-developed technical and soft skills, while providing some of the highest-paying jobs. However, many schools throughout the state are missing out on one of the best STEM programs: FIRST Robotics.

### What is FIRST?

FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition in Science and Technology) Robotics was founded to inspire young people's interest and participation in science and technology. It is a versatile program that incorporates the skill sets of science, technology, engineering and math into a competitive setting. It's more than robots, motivating young people to pursue education and career opportunities in STEM while also building self-confidence, knowledge and soft skills like public speaking, marketing and financing.

FIRST is made up of four individual programs: Lego League Jr., Lego League, Tech Challenge and Robotics Competition.

Lego League Jr. is for students from kindergarten through fourth grade and focuses on building solutions to a real-world problem using a LEGO WeDo model. Lego League is for fourth through eighth-graders and uses LEGO Mindstorm robots to accomplish tasks in a 2.5-minute competition. Students also research a real-world problem and come up with a unique solution.

Tech Challenge is the third level,

designed to help seventh through 12th-grade students increase their STEM skills and soft skills through competitive challenges in the areas of engineering and business. The engineering aspect focuses on working with professionals to learn real-world engineering skills by building and programming a robot. The business and marketing aspects focus on sustaining a team by raising funds and spreading awareness about the programs throughout the community, and by encouraging students to join or create their own teams.

Tech Challenge students have fun while learning skills that are helpful in the real world. The programmers use a professional programming platform and a real-world programming language. With this technology, you can program and develop your own app. Participants

also learn essential communication and outreach skills used on the business side of many different jobs. Students can also explore fields like web and graphic design.

The FIRST Robotics Competition, which is for high school students in grades 9-12, steps up the construction aspect of the robots by using 100-plus pound robots.

### Wisconsin lags behind

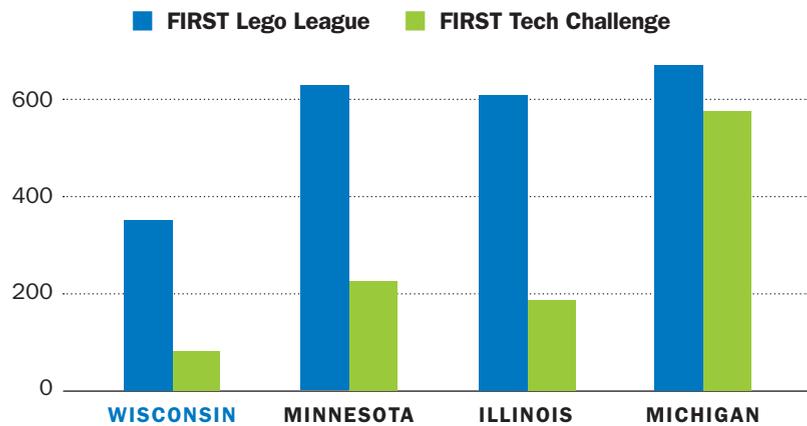
Despite the work teams have been doing to bring more students into the FIRST Tech Challenge, the overall growth of teams in Wisconsin has plateaued over the past few years. During the 2018-19 school year, there were more than 300 Lego League teams in the state but only about 50 Tech Challenge teams. In order to discover the full benefits of robotics, Wisconsin needs to transfer more students from the middle school program to the high school programs.

### Success in Elmbrook

The Elmbrook School District has found success with FIRST Robotics. Brookfield East High School created a FIRST Robotics Competition team, BEAST, in 2006, which has since combined with Brookfield Central High School to form a collaborative team. The joint team then created Hazmat, a FIRST Tech Challenge team, which made it to the Wisconsin state tournament in their inaugural season in 2017.

“FIRST Tech Challenge has allowed me to explore my passion in

## Robotic Teams by State



STEM through hands-on experience,” Hazmat team member Mary Quinn said. “I have learned skills and life lessons from my fellow team members and mentors that I would not have been able to learn elsewhere.”

“I had a lot of fun and gained experience in a work-like atmosphere,” Vaydaant Ebenezer said of the Hazmat FIRST Tech Challenge experience. “I learned important things like time management, planning and how to get things done on time. In the mechanical aspect I learned how to give constructive feedback as well as how to use many different tools.”

“When starting out it may seem that all you do is build robots, but last year, after walking in without any experience, was amazing,” Hazmat member Preston Tran said. “I’ve learned a lot about the mechanical side of the robot as well as programming, business and life skills. Every individual on the team will bring their own aspects and help you become a better person.”

To assist with FIRST

Tech Challenge growth, Hazmat benefited from local and state grants as well as sponsorship from Lockheed Martin, ABB (a global technology company with offices in the Milwaukee area) and the Milwaukee School of Engineering.

### What are the benefits?

Students can gain experience with leadership, public speaking, graphic design, professional communication, mechanical design, computer-assisted design and Java programming.

To demonstrate its value, FIRST partnered with Brandeis University to conduct a five-year longitudinal study measuring STEM-related impacts. It found:

- By the sophomore year of college, FIRST alumni are more likely to be majoring in STEM fields than comparison group peers.
- FIRST female alumni are more likely to declare majors in engineering and computer science than their peers.

Find additional survey information at [bit.ly/FIRST1](http://bit.ly/FIRST1). For more information about starting a FIRST team, contact Miriam Budithi with the Supposable Thumbs FIRST Tech Challenge team in Brookfield at [supposablethumbsftc@gmail.com](mailto:supposablethumbsftc@gmail.com).



A FIRST Lego League Jr. team poses after a competition.

# The Opioid Crisis, Part 2

## Education, Communication and Commitment: Key Things to Consider

The WASB Insurance column in the December 2019 *Wisconsin School News* included a look at the opioid crisis. This month's column is a follow up with suggestions on how to be proactive.

**T**he opioid crisis doesn't have to be viewed in a silo. A holistic plan that focuses on overall health and support for employees, for a variety of needs, can pay dividends far beyond the bottom line – with better employee morale and a dedicated workforce with less turnover and improved productivity.

Signs a colleague may be under the influence at work can be seen on the job or in the claims:

### On the job:

- Reduced mental clarity
- Theft
- Accidents
- Change in work patterns including absenteeism
- Reduced productivity
- Poor judgment
- Change in appearance

### In the claims:

- Increasing medical claims
- Rising pharmacy costs
- Administrative mix-ups
- Worker's Compensation claims

## ■ Educate the workforce

Make employees feel comfortable

seeking help, with a message of education and support.

Teach managers and supervisors to watch for signs of substance use disorder and how to approach someone with a problem.

Educate employees about the risks of opioids, alternative pain management, signs of substance use disorder and treatment options for those in need.

## ■ Enact the right policies

Test for prescription opioids and synthetic opioids, such as fentanyl, if the district policies allow drug tests of employees.

Consider replacing a zero-tolerance policy with one that gives employees a second chance.

Focus on helping those in need, rather than punishing those affected, to increase the chance of someone seeking help.

## ■ Manage benefits

Make sure your district's health care and Worker's Compensation plans offer alternatives to opioids.

Ask your pharmacy benefit manager and employee assistance program partners to help people understand the risks of opioids

and the alternatives to managing their pain.

## ■ Provide resources

Review in-network benefits for opioid abuse and substance use disorder treatment to see if they should be expanded, revised or supplemented with additional benefits.

Share resources and enable people to get care, help them come back to work and hold their jobs for them. Provide resources and make sure they have access to medication-assisted treatment.

Have quality treatment centers and other resources available.

Join our opioid session at the 2020 State Education Convention in Milwaukee in January.

Helpful resources for you to consider: Opioid Prevention at Work ([opioidpreventionatwork.org](http://opioidpreventionatwork.org)) and National Safety Council [nsc.org/forms/substance-use-employer-calculator](http://nsc.org/forms/substance-use-employer-calculator).

Contact Gallagher for additional information: Nancy Moon, Area Vice President GGB Midwest, 262-792-2240 or email [Nancy\\_Moon@ajg.com](mailto:Nancy_Moon@ajg.com); or Jill Goldstone, Area Vice President, Innovation, 856-382-2809 or email [Jill\\_Goldstone@ajg.com](mailto:Jill_Goldstone@ajg.com). ■



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## New WASB Region 5 Director: Jim Bouché

**Jim Bouché of the Wausau School Board** was recently elected by school board members in Region 5 to represent them on the WASB Board of Directors. Jim's three-year term begins on Jan. 22. He succeeds Cheryl Ploeckelman of the Colby School Board.

Jim began his career in education in 1977. He taught and coached at UW-Platteville as well as the school districts of Park Falls, Dodgeville, Wausau and Eagan, Minnesota, where he served as assistant principal and athletic director. In 2008, Jim was hired as principal at Lakeland Union High School in Minocqua, where he later became superintendent. He retired from that position in the spring of 2019.

Jim is married with three adult children and three grandchildren. □



## WASB Connection Podcast Launched

On Dec. 2, the WASB launched the **WASB Connection Podcast**, which is available on the WASB website and most podcast apps. The first episodes focus on the 2020 State Education Convention. The December episode features an interview with keynote speaker Scott McLeod while the January episode features

keynote speaker Yong Zhao and pre-convention workshop speaker David Schuler. The WASB podcasts will be distributed around the first of every month.

The WASB extends its appreciation to the staff of the Texas, Georgia, Tennessee and Michigan school board associations for their advice and assistance in the podcast launch. □



The complete 2019-20 WASB Legal Webinar schedule is available at [WASB.org](http://WASB.org).

## Upcoming WASB Webinars

### Individual Contracts and the Nonrenewal Process

Feb. 12, 2020 | 12-1 pm

Individual teacher contracts have changed since Act 10. This webinar will focus on the process of drafting new contractual provisions to transition from traditional contracts to contracts that meet districts' needs. This presentation also will review the basics of nonrenewal of teacher contracts under section 118.22 of the Wisconsin statutes and include guidance on the application of constitutional protections and discrimination laws as well as alternatives to nonrenewal.

*Presenter: Bob Butler, Associate Executive Director and Staff Counsel*

### Title IX, Part 1

Mar. 11, 2020 | 1:30-2:30 pm

A WASB attorney will identify how Title IX's focus on sex discrimination and gender equity apply in key areas, such as career and technical education, sex-based harassment, school discipline, employment and athletics. Title IX self-audits and other recommended practices will be discussed.

### Title IX, Part 2

Mar. 25, 2020 | 1:30-2:30 pm

In the second of this two-part webinar series, a WASB attorney will address the designation, responsibilities and training of a formal Title IX coordinator.

*Presenter: Bob Butler, Associate Executive Director and Staff Counsel*

## School Law Conference

### Get the latest school law information

on some of the most pressing issues facing Wisconsin school districts. Hear from legal experts across the state on topics including interactions with school resource officers, student safety and discipline, public and private school cooperation, educator misconduct and navigating open enrollment.

Attend early to take advantage of an in-depth workshop on improving relationships between the board and superintendent and among board members. □

**Please note:** These webinars, and all previous ones, 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 webinar catalog page at [WASB.org](http://WASB.org). In addition, links to past webinars are available in the Policy Resource Guide.



## Turning the Calendar Page

*Thoughts on the new year, local control and state mandates*

As you read this column, we will have turned the page on a new calendar year, and the Legislature will be a step closer to winding down the 2019-20 legislative session.

With available cash in the state's coffers and bipartisan cooperation seemingly both in limited supply, we anticipate lawmakers will finish most of their business by mid-to-late February, although it is rumored the state Senate may hold a session day or two in March.

Rather than to try to predict in this column what may or may not happen in the remaining days of the legislative session, we invite you to join us at the State Education Convention for our Legislative Update presentation on Friday, Jan. 24.

The WASB government relations team looks forward to seeing you at the state convention. We outlined the advocacy activities we will be hosting for WASB members at the convention in last month's (December 2019) issue.

In the new year, we look forward to finding new ways to communicate with WASB members about legislative advocacy, including through our new monthly podcasts. If there are topics you would like us to address in those podcasts or in our Advocacy Workshops planned for

August, please let us know.

Knowing your views and interests is always helpful and will allow us to better serve you, your districts and the boys and girls you educate.

We would like to depart from our usual reporting of what is happening in Madison and take a moment to address a concern we have heard from a few board members and district administrators. It's about local control and what role it plays in the goals and aspirations of the WASB and its advocacy.

Wisconsin has a strong and proud tradition of local control exercised by school boards elected by the residents of each school district. We are well known as a state that highly values strong local control.

For nearly 100 years, the WASB has worked to advance the interests of public education and local control in Wisconsin. First, through its legislative advocacy and then, as the need for services grew, its leadership development and legal and policy guidance activities as well.

The WASB strives to maintain and enhance local control. At the same time, we strive to be member-driven.

This sometimes presents challenges when some member boards want the association to advocate for measures which others see as interfering with or dampening local

control. A good example might be resolutions that urge the WASB to support legislation that would impose mandates on school districts.

There is a natural tension created by trying to balance both of these things.

In thinking about how to strike a balance, it is important to keep in mind that one aspect of local control is that member school boards are entitled under the WASB Bylaws to bring forward proposed resolutions for possible consideration at the annual WASB Delegate Assembly.

A parallel aspect of local control is that member school boards are entitled to appoint a delegate to cast their board's vote at the Delegate Assembly. Every district, regardless of size, has an equal vote at the Delegate Assembly. No resolution may be approved unless it receives support from a majority of delegates present.

Your vote is your voice. If you agree with a resolution, argue in favor of it and vote in support of it. If you disagree with a resolution, argue against it, offer amendments or vote against it. If your argument against a resolution is that it interferes with local control and your board thinks the local control argument outweighs other arguments in favor, then, by all means,

In the new year, we look forward to finding new ways to communicate with WASB members about legislative advocacy, including through our new monthly podcasts.

make your case for local control.

The Delegate Assembly is precisely the place where such a debate should occur. It is the one time each year where the WASB membership is gathered in one place with the shared objective of determining the policy direction of the association.

As you think about this, we hope you will also keep in mind that resolutions proposed by boards are not “WASB” resolutions. They are local board resolutions that were offered because they reflect the concerns of local school board members. Those board resolutions are then vetted by the Policy and Resolutions Committee, a committee of 25-30 school board members representing all WASB regions and each type of school district.

A resolution doesn’t become a “WASB” resolution until it is adopted by our members at the Delegate Assembly. That is a decision that starts with each of you at the local board table — it doesn’t get any more local than that — and ends at the Delegate Assembly.

In each legislative session, numerous bills are proposed that would impose mandates on local school districts. You, as members, provide the guidance on how the WASB should respond to those bills. We follow that guidance.

One of the primary ways the

WASB works to safeguard local control is through its legislative advocacy. That includes arguing against unfunded state mandates on schools and against state intrusion into matters that should be rightfully decided by local school boards through policymaking.

Sometimes these two stances intertwine. And sometimes support for local control means taking a controversial or unpopular stance.

A case in point is legislation currently under consideration (Senate Bill 414/ Assembly Bill 459) that would require each school board to include cursive writing in its elementary curriculum and specifically include the objective that pupils be able to write legibly in cursive by the end of fifth grade.

Because the WASB supports local school board control of curricular decisions, we have questioned why the state needs to step in and impose such a mandate.

We recognize that there are generational differences of opinion about the value of cursive writing — older board members are far more likely to see it as a necessary skill than younger board members — but the point is not whether WASB thinks cursive is desirable.

The point is local control. School board members who are in close touch with their communities are in a better position than legislators to decide whether instruction in cursive writing should be required.

We’re not fighting against cursive writing. Rather, we’re fighting for your right as school board members to determine whether to require cursive writing in your district or not. In that regard, it’s all about local control.

The institution of the American school board, where authority and responsibility for education rests in local hands, is one of the most unique in the world. This responsibility and authority ensures that public schools are flexible and responsive to community needs.

We are fighting to keep it that way.

The WASB is honored and proud to represent all 421 school boards in the state. It gives us tremendous credibility to be able to represent this large coalition of school boards (large, small, urban, rural, suburban, etc.) encompassing the entire state and all legislative districts.

We’re here to serve you, the local school boards of our state. We look forward to seeing you at the convention. ■





## Title IX and District Athletic Programs

**T**itle IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits districts that receive federal funding from discriminating on the basis of sex. Specifically, Title IX provides that no person shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.<sup>1</sup> This includes district interscholastic and intramural athletics.<sup>2</sup> Districts are also subject to Wis. Stat. s. 118.13, which prohibits pupil discrimination based on several protected classes, including sex, and which the Department of Public Instruction generally interprets consistently with Title IX.<sup>3</sup> This Legal Comment will discuss Title IX as it applies to athletics. Notwithstanding the fact that Title IX has been in effect for over 45 years, it still presents challenging legal issues for districts in this area.

### ■ Components of Athletic Nondiscrimination

The Office for Civil Rights of the U.S. Department of Education enforces Title IX. Typically, Title IX enforcement actions begin after a private citizen files a complaint with OCR. Following the filing of a complaint, OCR can open an investigation into the entirety of a district's athletic program. During

OCR's investigation, OCR will examine a district's athletic program to determine whether it, as a whole, provides equal athletic opportunities to both sexes.

The factors OCR considers include, but are not limited to, whether the selection of sports and levels of competition effectively accommodate the interests and abilities of members of both sexes and whether there is equity in the provision of equipment; the scheduling of games and practice time; the assignment and compensation of coaches; and the provision of locker rooms, practice, medical, training and competitive facilities.<sup>4</sup>

Unequal funding of girls' and boys' teams is not a per se violation of Title IX; however, OCR will consider as a part of its investigation whether a district failed to provide necessary funds for teams of one sex. OCR will also review whether factors that favor one sex are offset by factors that favor the other sex. Disparities caused by nondiscriminatory factors will generally not result in a Title IX violation. For example, although football equipment for a boys' football team is more expensive than girls' soccer equipment, a disparity in the inherent costs of sports will likely be viewed as nondiscriminatory. Other nondiscriminatory factors that create

disparities between sexes include a district taking affirmative measures to remedy past deprivation of athletic opportunities for one sex and a surge in demand for a newly offered sport.

If OCR discovers a Title IX violation, it will first seek to obtain voluntary compliance from the district. If voluntary compliance is not achieved, OCR can bring an enforcement action in court and seek to have federal funding to the district cut off.

### ■ Accommodating the Interests and Abilities of Members of Both Sexes

In considering whether selection of sports and levels of competition effectively accommodate the interests and abilities of members of both sexes, OCR utilizes a three-part test.<sup>5</sup> This test has been adopted by the DPI and the Wisconsin Interscholastic Athletic Association.<sup>6</sup> Under this test, a district is in compliance with Title IX if it meets one of the following parts:

- Are interscholastic-level athletic participation opportunities for male and female students provided in numbers substantially proportionate to their respective enrollments in the overall student population?
- If the members of one sex have

Unequal funding of girls' and boys' teams is not a per se violation of Title IX; however, OCR will consider as a part of its investigation whether a district failed to provide necessary funds for teams of one sex.

been and are underrepresented among interscholastic student athletes, can the district show a history and continuing practice of program expansion which is demonstrably responsive to the developing interests and abilities of the members of that sex?

- If the members of one sex are underrepresented among interscholastic athletes, and the school cannot show a history and continuing practice of program expansion, whether the district can demonstrate the interests and abilities of the members of that sex have been fully and effectively accommodated by the present program?

In order to comply with the third part, a district must demonstrate that it cannot viably form a new sports team to further meet the interests of the members of the underrepresented sex. To demonstrate this, a district must show for each potential sports team that (1) there is no unmet interest in the particular sport; (2) there are not sufficient abilities to sustain a team in the sport; or (3) there is no reasonable expectation of competition for the team. For example, a district that offers a boys' football team does not automatically have to offer a girls' football team. A district might not have an unmet interest in girls' football and might also not have sufficient ability to sustain a girls' football team, and there might not be a reasonable expectation of competition for such a team.

One way that schools can accommodate interest by female athletes in certain boys-only sports is by permitting girls to try out for the boys' team in those sports. A Title IX regulation provides that districts do not have to permit girls to try out for boys' contact sports such as football and wrestling. However, female athletes have successfully challenged this regulation based on the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.<sup>7</sup> As a result, girls are increasingly

being allowed to try out for boys' teams, including contact sports. In this situation, coaches are permitted to hold girls to the same performance standards as boys when selecting athletes for teams. Additionally, girls trying out for a boys' sport should not be required to pass a physical examination or sign a waiver that is not required of boys. Conversely, boys generally cannot try out for a girls-only sport because athletic opportunities for boys have not previously been limited, which is a requirement for allowing one sex to try out for teams that are exclusive to the other sex.<sup>8</sup>

Another way that schools can accommodate unmet interest in athletics by female athletes is to create new girls-only sports. However, a district cannot defend a Title IX claim by claiming the WIAA or the district's athletic conference is responsible for establishing the pool of potential sports for which a district can field teams. The responsibility to comply with Title IX ultimately rests with the district.

For example, girls might be interested in forming a field hockey team, have sufficient ability to sustain the team, and be able to find other districts with a similar interest, even though girls' field hockey is not a WIAA sport. In this situation, some districts have collaborated to provide competition in non-WIAA sports. For example, several districts in southeastern Wisconsin have formed the Wisconsin High School Field Hockey Association to create competition opportunities for girls' field hockey.

Another issue that complicates providing equal athletic opportunities to both sexes is how to accommodate transgender athletes. Many districts are uncertain how to respond to requests from transgender students to participate in sports consistent with their gender identity. The WIAA has created a Transgender Participation Policy addressing this issue. The policy requires districts to consider: (1) the student's school registration information; (2) a written statement

from the student affirming consistent gender identification; (3) documentation from other individuals who can affirm the student's consistent gender identification; (4) written verification from a health-care professional affirming the student's consistent gender identification; and (5) medical documentation of specific required hormone therapy in order for the student to participate in teams consistent with his or her gender identity.<sup>9</sup>

## ■ Facilities

In addition to providing members of both sexes with equal athletic opportunities, Title IX requires districts to ensure members of both sexes have comparable athletic experiences, including facilities in which athletes practice, train and play. Therefore, a district would likely violate Title IX if both sexes are not given comparable facilities, unless there is a non-discriminatory reason for the disparity. Title IX regulations establish several factors that OCR will consider when determining whether facilities provide comparable athletic experiences for both sexes, including the quality and availability of facilities.<sup>10</sup> OCR will also consider whether teams have exclusive use of facilities for their practices and competitive events and the extent to which the district maintains these facilities.<sup>11</sup> For example, absent a non-discriminatory justification, it is likely a Title IX violation if the boys' soccer team has exclusive use of a locker room and field, and the girls' soccer team must share its locker room and field with the girls' field hockey team.

In 2014, the Batavia City School District in New York settled a Title IX lawsuit for failure to provide comparable facilities.<sup>12</sup> The plaintiffs alleged the district rented out a minor league baseball stadium for boys' baseball games while the girls' softball team played on substandard fields. As part of the settlement, the district agreed to substantially upgrade the school's softball field at

a cost of approximately \$175,000. The district also paid \$68,000 in costs and attorneys' fees to the plaintiffs.<sup>13</sup>

### ■ Booster Clubs and Private Donations

Title IX does not prohibit contributions by booster clubs and other private donors. However, private support for athletic programs can result in Title IX violations if donations are not evenly allocated between the sexes. Once a district accepts outside donations for athletic programs, whether contributed by booster clubs or other private donors, the funds become the district's money subject to Title IX's obligations.

Because districts are not obligated to accept donations, they must be careful that they do not inadvertently violate Title IX when accepting them. Districts should work with booster clubs to ensure that they are contributing resources consistently with Title IX. One common way districts avoid Title IX problems is to have booster organizations make an equivalent donation to sports of both sexes or make donations in ways that benefit sports of both sexes equally, such as by improving the soccer field where both the boys' and girls' soccer teams compete.

However, under Wis. Stat. s. 118.27(2), districts must make use of donations as donors specify. Therefore, if a district receives a donation that is specifically directed to benefit the boys' athletic program (or a certain boys-only sport), the district must use the money to benefit that program (or sport). To avoid a Title IX violation, a district has two choices: (1) it can reject the donation if it would unevenly benefit the athletic program of one sex; or (2) it can accept the donation and allocate to the girls' athletic program an equivalent amount from the district budget or private source.

In 2014, a booster club in

Michigan donated seating at the baseball field. This led to an OCR investigation into all the district's athletic facilities. The investigation exposed several disparities between the boys' and girls' athletic programs, revealing that, as a whole, Plymouth's athletic programs were not in compliance with Title IX. As a result of the OCR investigation, the district entered into a voluntary resolution agreement with OCR in which it agreed to renovate the softball field by improving the scoreboard and seating to be equivalent to the baseball field. Even though the district's lacrosse facilities were not part of the initial complaint, following OCR's investigation, the district also had to provide an on-campus practice facility for girls' lacrosse that was equivalent to the boys' practice facility.<sup>14</sup> Eventually, the district concluded it could not afford to install equivalent seating at the softball field and learned that the donated seating at the baseball field was not in compliance with applicable building codes. Therefore, the district made the decision to remove the donated seating at the baseball field.

### ■ Conclusion

Districts should be aware of their obligations with respect to athletics under Title IX. This includes assessing whether their athletic programs provide equal opportunities and equivalent facilities to both sexes. In addition, districts must monitor donations to athletic programs to ensure that such donations do not result in better facilities or equipment for one sex than the other. Districts should also realize that historical practices that perpetuate disparities between boys' and girls' athletic teams are not a defense to a Title IX claim. Therefore, districts should evaluate their current practices to ensure that they are complying with the latest interpretations of Title IX. ■

### ■ End Notes

- 20 U.S.C. s. 1681(a).
- 34 C.F.R. s. 106.41(a).
- DPI & WIAA, The Pupil Nondiscrimination Guidelines for Athletics (6th ed. 2013), <https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/sped/pdf/pndathletics.pdf>.
- 34 C.F.R. s. 106.41(c).
- Letter from the Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Dep't. of Educ., Intercollegiate Athletics Policy Clarification: The Three-Part Test – Part Three (Apr. 20, 2010), <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-20100420.pdf>.
- DPI & WIAA, The Pupil Nondiscrimination Guidelines for Athletics (6th ed. 2013), <https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/sped/pdf/pndathletics.pdf>.
- 34 C.F.R. s. 106.41(b); see, e.g., *Mansourian v. Bd. of Regents of the Univ. of Cal. at Davis*, 816 F. Supp. 2d 869, 931 (E.D. Cal. 2011) (providing a list of successful equal protection cases brought by female athletes).
- 34 C.F.R. s. 106.41(b).
- For more details on this issue, see the complete WIAA policy, WIAA, Transgender Participation Policy (2018), [www.wiaawi.org/Portals/0/PDF/Eligibility/WIAAtransgenderpolicy.pdf](http://www.wiaawi.org/Portals/0/PDF/Eligibility/WIAAtransgenderpolicy.pdf).
- Policy Interpretation: Title IX and Intercollegiate Athletics, 44 Fed. Reg. 71417 (Dec. 11, 1979).
- Id.*
- Myers v. Bd. of Educ. of Batavia City Sch. Dist.*, No. 13-CV-342S, 2014 WL 12903502 (W.D.N.Y. May 30, 2014).
- Myers v. Bd. of Educ. of the Batavia City Sch. Dist.*, No. 13-CV-342S, 2016 WL 4642920, at \*5 (W.D.N.Y. Sept. 7, 2016).
- Plymouth-Canton Community Schools, Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Dep't of Educ., No. 1513-1020 (Oct. 30, 2013).

*This Legal Comment was written by Michael J. Julka; Steven C. Zach; Brian P. Goodman; and Catherine E. Wiese of Boardman & Clark LLP, WASB Legal Counsel. For additional information on this topic, see Wisconsin School News: "Booster Clubs" (April 2009); "Title IX and Athletics after 35 years" (February 2008); "Fair Play: Equal Pay for Coaches" (January 1988); "Sex Equity Part of Athletic Programs" (May 1989).*



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**FEBRUARY 19 & 20, 2020  
KALAHARI RESORTS & CONVENTIONS  
WISCONSIN DELLS**

**VISIT WASB.ORG FOR COMPLETE  
INFORMATION AND TO REGISTER**

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