

School District of the Menomonie Area School Board Convention Summary Report January 18-20, 2023

SDMA school board members Charlie Schneider, Rachel Henderson, Angie Skillings, Abe Smith, Dominique Stewart, and Amy Riddle-Swanson traveled to Milwaukee for the annual school board convention. There were numerous learning and networking opportunities. Here is the [online program](#) for the event and below are some of the highlights of what was learned and experienced at the convention.

Preconvention Workshops-Tuesday Afternoon

School Finance Puzzle- We learned about the major components of the Wisconsin school finance system through a hands-on, interactive approach from members of the Wisconsin Association of School Business Officials and the School Finance Team for the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. We learned the basics of the budget cycle, revenue limits, equalization aid, property taxes and referendums and also how these components interrelate and impact board decision-making. (Rachel and Dominique)

Name of Session- Inclusive School Board Leadership engages school board members to consider their role in creating equitable and inclusive learning environments. Ensuring a district-wide sense of value and belonging requires that all school board members have the tools to provide inclusive recommendations, make inclusive decisions and achieve equitable success in academic outcomes. Join the partners of Kinect Education Group for an immersive and engaging session with tangible takeaways and tools for success as an inclusive school board member. This workshop will help board members prepare to engage key constituents from the balcony to the playing field to ensure their commitment to inclusion is widely shared and openly communicated. Kinect Education Group: Kelly Meier, senior partner; Megan Heutmaker, American Indian Specialist (Abe Smith)

Wednesday General Session and Breakout Presentations

Leading Through Community Conflict With Shared Vision- Has your community struggled with conflict due to COVID or political issues? Learn how the School District of Lodi worked through the pandemic and other controversial issues by engaging the community in a strategic planning process. Session attendees will leave with a better understanding of how to move past the rhetoric and focus on the community's true educational priorities, not the loudest voices. Lodi: Adam Steinberg, Board President; Vince Breunig, District Administrator Session description (Rachel Henderson and Joe Zydowsky)

Public Participation and School Board Meetings- Effectively managing public comment time during school board meetings can present a difficult balancing act for school boards. While providing regular opportunities for community members to offer input is important, school boards also need to carefully manage meeting time, encourage constructive discourse and maintain control if speakers become aggressive. This session will identify the relevant legal and policy considerations school boards can use to guide decisions during meetings or refine their current approach to public participation.

Wisconsin Association of School Boards: Scott Mikesh, Legal and Policy Services
Counselesion description (Abe Smith and Amy Riddle-Swanson)

Referendum Workshop: Is a facilities referendum in your future? A successful referendum requires thoughtful planning. This three-hour interactive workshop will provide school districts an opportunity to review referendum basics and hear about unique challenges that other districts have faced during the referendum process. The objective is to help attendees identify district-specific challenges and collaborate with others to develop solid referendum strategies well before election day. Baird School Finance Team and Baird School Business Solutions Team; Quarles & Brady LLP: Allison Buchanan, Partner/Attorney; School Perceptions: Bill Foster, President; Wrightstown: Carla Buboltz, Superintendent; Wisconsin Heights: Jordan Sinz, District Administrator; Grantsburg: Josh Watt, Superintendent; EUA: Kit Dailey, Engagement Specialist (Abe Smith and Rachel Henderson)

Developing an Open Mindset JoAnn Miller

Description

This workshop will introduce the Arbinger Institute's work, which reveals two distinct mindsets from which people and organizations operate — a self-focused inward mindset and an others-inclusive outward mindset. The way an individual sees and regards people determines their impact and influence. Participants will learn how to turn their mindsets. (Amy)

New Studies Show School Funding Impacts on Students and Districts The Wisconsin Association for Equity in Funding recently commissioned a study examining the impact of funding variations in districts across the state. Presenters will share astounding new results regarding student achievement and the impact of revenue limits; perspectives on equitable system design; and analysis of revenues on staffing. This presentation will be eye-opening for district leaders from across the state as we learn more about funding disparities and their impact on critical student and district outcomes. UW-Madison, La Follette School of Public Affairs: Andrew Reschovsky, Professor Emeritus of Public Affairs and Applied Economics; University of California, Berkeley: Jesse Rothstein, Chancellor's Professor of Public Policy and Economics; Neillsville: John Gaier, Superintendent; Wisconsin Association for Equity in Funding: John Humphries, Executive Director; Munetrix: Mike Geers, Partnership Manager (Abe Smith, Rachel Henderson, and Amy Riddle-Swanson)

WIAA Competitive Balance Ad Hoc Committee- For years, high school athletic associations across the country have dealt with the issue of trying to ensure competitive equity when teams meet for postseason action. In the fall of 2021, the WIAA Board of Control created an ad hoc committee whose purpose is to thoughtfully and intentionally research the association's ability to hold tournament series in which all members feel their school has an opportunity to be competitive; and based on this research, the committee will recommend option(s) to the Board of Control to help ensure all members feel their school has an opportunity to be competitive. Join members of the committee to learn about the plan that will be submitted to the Board of Control in February with the hopes it will be acted on by the membership of all schools at the WIAA Annual Meeting in April 2023. Wisconsin Heights: Jordan Sinz, District Administrator; Florence: Karl Morrin, Superintendent; Potosi: Kurt Cohen, Superintendent; Winneconne: Margaret Larson, District Administrator; Eau Claire, Michael Johnson, Superintendent; Whitehall: Mike Beighley, Superintendent; Niagara: Nate Burklund, Superintendent (Joe Zydowsky)

General Session Wednesday Morning- The 102nd State Education Convention opened with a performance by the Vel Phillips Memorial High School Wind Ensemble of the Madison Metropolitan School District. During the general session, administrators and educators of the year were recognized along with the student art award winner. State Superintendent Jill Underly addressed the opening general session. The keynote speaker was David Horsager the CEO of Trust Edge Leadership Institute and a global authority on helping leaders and organizations become the most trusted in their industry. Without trust, leaders and organizations fail, but with trust leaders get followed, the trusted suppliers get bought from, and the trusted business outperforms the competition. Through David's industry leading research and firsthand experience working with the world's highest performing organizations, he revealed how top leaders and organizations drive results to become the most trusted in their sector. (All)

Implementing Compensation Systems That Are Focused, Equitable, Flexible and Legally Compliant- Now, more than ever, school districts are tasked with finding ways to "do more with less," an impossible ask. Changing the way you think about compensation for your staff can be beneficial and fair for employees, as well as a means for ensuring an equitable, budget-workable solution for employers. In this session, the presenters will discuss how to restructure and realign compensation systems to be legally compliant and beneficial for every stakeholder in the district. Attolles Law, s.c.: Andrew Phillips and Chrissy Hamiel, Attorneys (Joe Zydowsky)

Delegate Assembly - At the Delegate Assembly, there were several resolutions considered by WASB membership. The actions of the delegate assembly are to give guidance to the WASB for their interaction with the state and federal government. (Skillings)

Exhibit Floor - This year the convention had a very robust demonstration of vendors, which provided us with a unique opportunity to converse with a variety of vendors at one time. Particular interest for our school district typically includes the areas of building security, technology, capital equipment, school supplies, and school business services. (All)

Thursday General Session and Breakout Presentations

WASB Breakfast

Leaders put others before themselves. That's the core of the concept of servant leadership. Tom Thibodeau, an associate professor at La Crosse-based Viterbo University, discussed what servant leadership means and how it applies to school leadership. Tom is the founder of the Master of Arts in Servant Leadership, the first master's degree of its kind in the nation. (Abe, Rachel, Angie, Amy)

District Level Budget Outlook: Fiscal Cliff Ahead! School district budget planners expect turbulent conditions for 2023-24 and beyond as federal funds wane, inflationary pressures persist and state lawmakers begin a new biennial budget cycle. Four school district business officials will discuss the looming "fiscal cliff" and its possible impact on their school districts. Oregon: Andrew Weiland, Business Manager; Beloit-Turner: Brad Boll, Director of Business Services; Kettle Moraine: John Stellmacher, Business Manager; Nekoosa: Lynn Knight, Business Manager; Wisconsin Association of School Business Officials: Mike Barry, Executive Director (Abe Smith, Angie Skillings)

Successfully Navigating Book Challenges

The number of attempted bans of school library books continues to rise at unprecedented levels using tactics not seen before. However, the intention and purpose of school libraries remain the same. This session explores what administrators and board members need to know about school library policies and procedures, the importance of following them and how indiscriminately eliminating materials is harmful. Administrators who have experienced challenges will give attendees proactive strategies for navigating challenges aimed at school library materials. (Amy, Dominique)

Basic Financial Oversight of the School District: Top 10 Controls One of the primary responsibilities of a school board member is to provide financial oversight. This session will identify the top 10 things board members should know to exercise responsible financial control, beginning with a fundamental understanding of the budget and asking timely questions. Pewaukee: John Gahan, Assistant Superintendent/CFO; Nekoosa: Lynn Knight, Business Manager (Abe Smith)

Lead for Change by Engaging in Legislative Advocacy The Franklin Board of Education set a goal of becoming more involved in legislative advocacy. They worked with our local lawmakers to enact 2021 Wisconsin Act 212, which changed how a school district's improvement is measured for the school and school district accountability report. During the journey toward Act 212, they found that legislative advocacy was rewarding and have found different ways to interact with both local and state officeholders. Franklin: Judy Mueller, Former District

Administrator; Mike Spragg, Board President; CESA 6: Nicholas Kohn, Learning and Assessment Consultant (Abe Smith, Amy)

Title 9 and Transgender

Discrimination on the basis of sex is prohibited by state and federal law. These laws, including changes to federal Title IX statutes, affect school board policy in complex ways. In this session, we will provide an overview of relevant laws and discuss recent and proposed changes to Title IX. The presenters will provide straightforward guidance on challenging legal compliance issues such as student records, preferred names and pronouns, use of bathrooms and locker rooms, parental notification issues and participation in extracurricular activities. (Angie, Amy)

Restorative Practices: The Key Actions of School Leaders for Effective Implementation-

This presentation provided detailed information for school district leaders regarding the rationale for why change from traditional punitive discipline is needed; the definition of restorative practices; how restorative practices connect to district equity work; how restorative practices can be an alternative to exclusionary discipline; and a summary of findings from a systematic research review that outlines key actions of school principals to ensure effective implementation of restorative practices. (Dominique)

General Session Thursday Afternoon -

Presiding: Barbara Herzog, WASB President, Oshkosh School District Performing: New Berlin Chamber Orchestra. Awards: 20- and 30-year school board member service awards. Speakers: WASB President and Incoming President. Keynote: Sarita Maybin, communications expert and international speaker. (All)

Working Together Better

Learn how to transform uncomfortable conversations into constructive communication in this upbeat presentation based on Sarita Maybin's book, "Say What You Mean in a Nice Way. Take away real solutions for communicating with compassion, kindness and civility — in person and online. (Amy and Angie)

Friday General Session and Breakout Presentations

WASB Legislative Update Learn about the upcoming two-year state budget and legislation affecting public K-12 schools that may be enacted in the upcoming legislative session. Receive tips on how to respond effectively as advocates for your district, schools and schoolchildren. Wisconsin Association of School Boards: Christopher Kulow, Government Relations Specialist; Dan Rossmiller, Director of Government Relations (Abe Smith, Amy)

Preparing for Operational (Revenue Limit) Referendums- Operational referendums have become a critical part of many school districts' budget planning process. This session focused on how districts can determine future operation funding needs, understand the types of

referendum questions and take steps to prepare for an operational referendum. (Dominique, Rachel, Angie)

General Session Friday Morning

Comments by Phil Frei WASBO president Sun Prairie Area School District. Invited remarks by Governor Tony Evers. Oshkosh North High School Chorale. Closing Keynote by Courtney Clark, Resilience and change management expert. Hard work usually pays off. But sometimes, no matter how hard you work, your plans just don't work. Resilience researcher Courtney Clark helps teams adapt to change and crisis when the stakes are high, and she has proven techniques to help you deal with life's detours with humor, resilience and tenacity. In this inspiring and interactive presentation, you'll learn a multi-step framework for creating optimal outcomes in uncontrollable situations. At the end of this session, participants will be able to... Discover how to let go of "the plan", Identify ways to maintain personal power during transition and upheaval, Develop measures to increase perspective and adaptability. (Amy, Angie, Abe, Rachel, Dominique)