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Arrowhead High School students run their own business through senior capstone class





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Herb Kohl Educational Foundation Announces 2024 Honorees

The Herb Kohl Educational Foundation announced its 2024 award winners in a March press release.

“Herb Kohl believed that education is the key to the future of Wisconsin,” Herb Kohl Philanthropies President/CEO JoAnne Anton said of the former U.S. senator who died in December 2023. “We hope this year’s awards help this impressive group of recipients in their individual pursuits so that they pay it forward in the future.”

The 100 Teacher Fellowship recipients will receive \$6,000, the 17 Principal Leadership recipients will receive \$6,000, and 187 graduating high school students will receive \$10,000 scholarships. □

Evers Keeps School Safety Office Alive

On March 27, Governor Tony Evers signed legislation that will keep core functions of the Office of School Safety going into next year. According to The Capital Times, the office was created in 2018 to train school districts and police departments on the best ways to deal with threats. The Speak Up, Speak Out Tipline was created in 2020, allowing anyone to report bullying or troubling behavior.

With funding running low, Evers signed AB 1050 into law as 2023 Wisconsin Act 240. The bill will allow the Office of School Safety to use funds raised through concealed carry permit fees to continue funding their operations. This stopgap measure only allows for these measures to stay in effect through the next budget cycle. □

DPI Allocates Nearly \$12M to Support Student Mental Health

As students face growing mental health challenges, the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction announced in a March 27 press release that it has allocated nearly \$12 million in federal funding to local education agencies to help meet their unique individual needs.

The Stronger Connections competitive grant is part of the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act legislation signed into law by President Joe Biden in June 2022. In addition to helping school districts establish safe, inclusive, healthy and supportive learning opportunities and environments for students, grant funding provides the opportu-

nity for districts to implement comprehensive, evidence-based strategies and increase access to place-based interventions and services.

“Our state currently has the means to make a tremendous difference in the mental health of our kids, and I will continue fighting for our schools to be equipped with staff and the resources to do so,” State Superintendent Dr. Jill Underly said. “It is critical we come together to support our kids as they endure mounting mental health challenges.”

A complete list of the 40 grantees can be found on the DPI’s Stronger Connections webpage. □

STAT OF THE MONTH

91.9%

Attendance rate of Wisconsin students during the 2022-23 school year.

Source: Wisconsin DPI’s WISEdash Public Portal

Smartphone App Enables School Bus Tracking

Madison parents can track their child’s school bus thanks to a smartphone app.

WMTV reported in March that the Madison Metropolitan School District launched FirstView Transportation, a smartphone app that allows parents to see if their child’s school bus is running late. The app is operated by the bus service company First Student.

“We want to make it as easy as

possible for families to get their children to and from school,” MMSD External Communications Officer Ian Folger told WMTV, noting that driver shortages have led to late pick-ups and delays.

The app, which requires parents to use their child’s private identification login, utilizes GPS technology to notify family members when the bus is close to home, lessening wait times and improving family communication. □



Welcome New Board Members

This is my first formal opportunity to welcome all the new board members who were elected in April, as well as board members who have recently been appointed to fill vacancies. I hope you will find a home with the WASB where you can learn, grow, network and get your school board-related questions answered.

You sought this office because you believe you can make a difference, have the knowledge and background to effect positive change, and saw an opportunity to give back to your community — all great reasons to become a member of your local school board.

The WASB is here to serve you and help you start your board service on the right foot.

I hope you were able to attend one of the New School Board Member Gatherings hosted by the WASB region directors in April. The recorded virtual gathering is available on our website to review at your convenience.

I was delighted to meet several new members at the gatherings in Regions 6 and 12. I look forward to meeting many more of you in the months ahead.

Be assured there are more WASB-sponsored training opportunities to come. This month, the WASB is holding a series of five in-person workshops on board governance, titled “Navigating Today’s Challenges While Keeping the Focus on Students.”

These evening workshops, held from May 7-15 at CESA (Cooperative Educational Service Agency) offices

around the state, offer board members an opportunity to share a meal with, learn from and inspire each other in an interactive atmosphere. There will also be an online workshop on May 16 for those unable to attend.

This summer, the WASB will host a conference in Green Bay on July 12 and 13. Friday’s sessions will help school board members understand emerging technology issues for schools, such as artificial intelligence, cybersecurity and the impacts of social media on student mental health.

Saturday’s sessions will address what school boards can do to improve student attendance, and how boards can use data to improve student performance. The conference will close with sessions aimed at helping boards understand school finance so they can better communicate with their communities about funding needs, school referenda and the challenges of “right-sizing” districts.

This issue of School News highlights the importance of career and technical education (CTE), an often overlooked and underappreciated topic.

Robust CTE programs in our schools not only help students explore potential careers but also keep students engaged by giving them practical knowledge they can apply immediately upon graduation, if not sooner. Strong CTE programs provide alternatives to a four-year college degree and can help Wisconsin solve its increasing worker shortage.

This issue profiles some of Wisconsin’s most dynamic CTE programs.

Turn to page 4 to travel to Arrow-

head High School and see how a senior capstone class empowers students to design and sell products through a completely student-run business: Warhawk Manufacturing.

On page 8, see how students in the Hurley School District get hands-on exposure to environmental education through the Northstar Trout Lab. The program gives different grade levels a variety of tasks as they shepherd trout through a yearlong life cycle before releasing them in a local lake.

Meet a recent Oak Creek High School graduate on page 13 and see how a youth apprenticeship (YA) program illuminated her career path. She puts a face to YA programs, which provide on-the-job training that equips students with practical experience, valuable skills and early entry into the workforce.

On page 20, explore how districts are collaborating with health care partners to prepare students for in-demand careers.

Finally, many forms of post-secondary education come at a cost. Turn to page 10 to learn how Wisconsin’s Edvest 529 College Savings Plan helps families save for education and career training.

The workforce is changing. Our schools and communities will be well served if we adapt, partner with local businesses and organizations, and provide our students with the education and experience they need to find opportunities and pursue their goals. ■

Strong CTE programs provide alternatives to a four-year college degree and can help Wisconsin solve its increasing worker shortage.

Manufacturing the
ENTREPRENEURIAL
Spirit





Arrowhead High School's technology education curriculum includes courses in technology, engineering, manufacturing and automotive.

Arrowhead High School students run their own business through senior capstone class

by Anne Davis

The employees of Warhawk Manufacturing don't have to commute to work. They just have to switch classrooms.

Warhawk, a completely student-run business formed in the 2019-20 school year, operates out of Arrowhead High School as a yearlong capstone senior class. Students design, manufacture, market and sell their products to individuals and businesses. Each fall, they decide what types of products they would like to produce that year. Items are sold through their website, but they also solicit special orders that are designed and manufactured on site.

"The students do everything," says technology education teacher Anthony Christian, one of two Arrowhead teachers supervising the operation,

which asks students to run the website, design products, negotiate with suppliers and customers, track materials and do the manufacturing in the school's wood and metal shops. "This is the type of learning that is real business. It's real lifelong learning."

Students sell a variety of items direct to the public. This year's selection includes wooden and metal lawn decorations, a four-foot metal fire ring, wooden coasters and a variety of wooden charcuterie boards. Prices range from \$1 for a key ring ornament to \$175 for a metal and wood lake home sign. They do not ship items. Purchases are available for pick up at the school.

Warhawk Manufacturing's most lucrative products have been their contracts with local businesses. This

year, students designed and produced an ornate \$16,000 backdrop for the head table at Vallery, an event space. For \$30,000, they designed and built new brackets to hold signature pads at a local credit union.

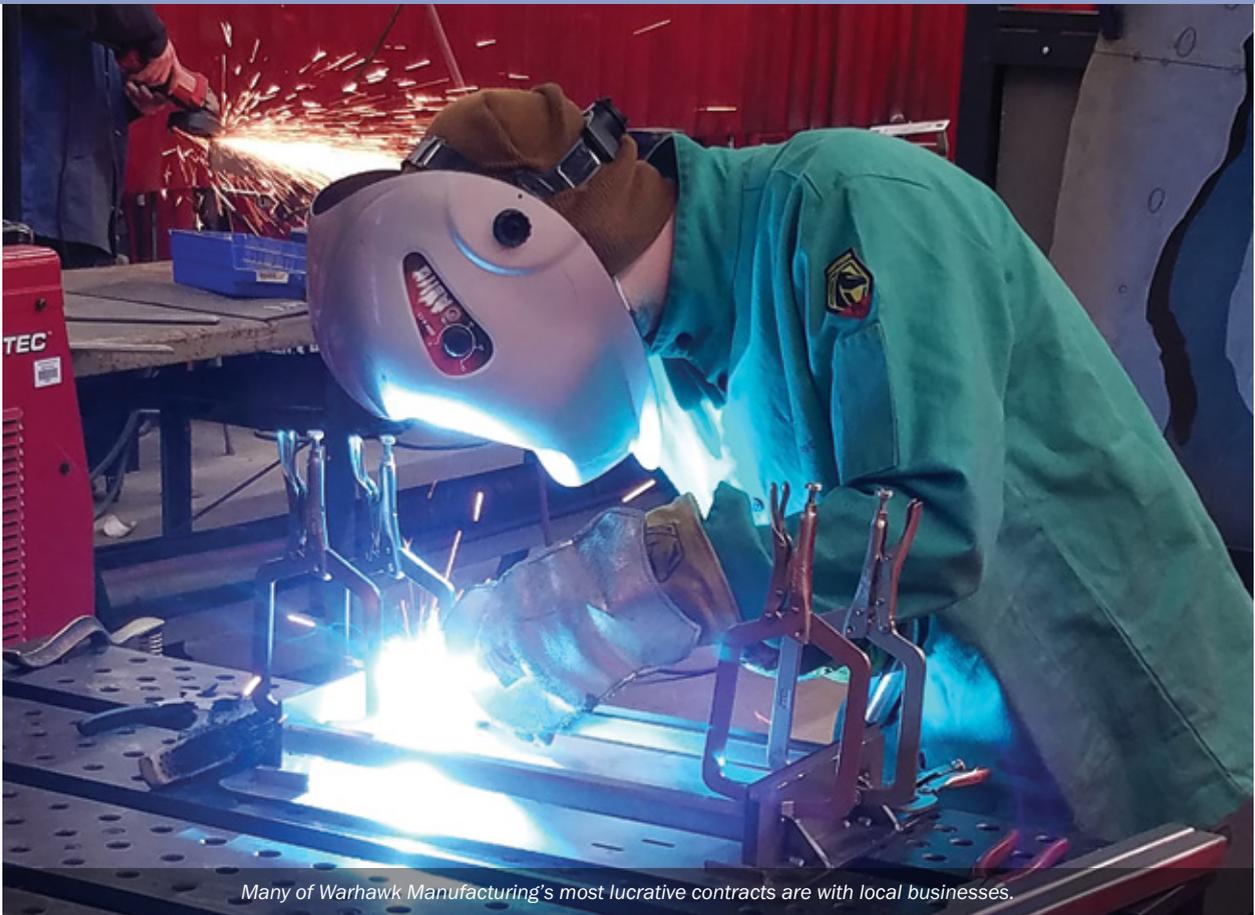
Last year, the business had \$42,000 in total sales, with a net profit of \$30,000. The profits are distributed to the students in the form of manufacturing scholarships, averaging \$2,000 each. Over the five years the business has been running, a total of \$90,000 in scholarships has been awarded.

"If the whole group does well, you do well," Christian says of the business lesson the profit-sharing model provides students.

Arrowhead High School has two campuses. The south campus houses

"This is the type of learning that is real business. **It's real lifelong learning.**"

— Anthony Christian, technology education teacher



Many of Warhawk Manufacturing's most lucrative contracts are with local businesses.

Representatives come to the schools to discuss their businesses and the types of jobs they offer.

The businesses often end up hiring students after graduation.

freshmen and sophomores while the north campus houses juniors and seniors.

Christian, who has been teaching for 15 years, said the idea for Warhawk Manufacturing came from a similar project in another school district. But the idea only came to fruition after a north campus remodeling that included extensive renovations to the technology education areas. The curriculum was also overhauled, and local business partners donated \$400,000 to help get Warhawk off the ground.

Christian's goal was to make Arrowhead's technology education program "the best in the state."

Arrowhead works closely with an array of business partners who support the technology education

program with expertise and funding. Representatives come to the schools to discuss their businesses and the types of jobs they offer. The businesses often end up hiring students after graduation.

Christian also meets with the partners twice a year to talk about the types of skill sets they are most interested in seeing in their employees. The skills they value most remain the "soft skills" of teamwork, communication, time management and resilience. With that knowledge, Christian says Arrowhead's technology education program tries "to speak to those skills that employers value."

When the project first started, 60% of the students planned to attend a four-year college while the rest planned to attend a two-year

technical school or go right into the workplace. Now, the mix is 50/50.

"The kids who come out of this are incredibly skilled," Christian says.

Remington Landmann is one of this year's Warhawk Manufacturing student employees. He started taking technology education classes as a freshman and became particularly interested in manufacturing. In addition to Warhawk, he is taking three other technology education classes: cabinet making, capstone engineering and engineering mechanics.

He designed the new brackets for the credit union's signature pads.

"Warhawk's opened my eyes to what's out there," Landmann says. "I get to do the full aspect of a business."

After graduation, he plans to go straight into the workplace and take a

job in engineering.

Destiny Bartol is one of Warhawk's three female students this year. As a freshman, she gravitated toward technology education classes because she wanted a class that was "hands on."

"I found a lot of joy in making things," she says.

But her job at Warhawk is not manufacturing. While she steps in occasionally, she primarily runs the website and is part of the student leadership team that oversees all operations and planning. She thinks the class has taught her valuable leadership and marketing skills that will help her as she continues her education and moves into the workplace.

"I like that it's (Warhawk) is all cooperation and collaboration," says Bartol, who plans to attend college to major in psychology and minor in criminology. "It really opens your eyes about working in group settings."

Hayden Gregory took metal fabrication as a junior and learned a lot about welding. This year, he's taking a more advanced metal fabrication class along with participating in Warhawk, where he's responsible for materials acquisition and inventory.

If the company is running low on certain items, Gregory places the order with the suppliers. He appreciates the collaboration that's crucial to Warhawk's success. Teamwork will be helpful in his future career, as he plans to become an EMT and firefighter.

"Most high schools don't have this," he says. "It's kind of an early chance to get used to what it's like in real life."

The strength of Arrowhead's technology education program has been widely recognized. Area high schools have toured the program to get ideas for their own schools. The Wisconsin Technology Education Association named Arrowhead the 2024 High School Program of the Year, highlighting the school's innovative curriculum, dedicated faculty, engaging learning environment and strong partnerships.

The technology education curriculum currently includes courses in

technology, engineering, manufacturing and automotive. Arrowhead is accredited by the Project Lead the Way program, a national initiative to support and develop STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) programs in schools.

The school intends to continue developing new career pathways for students. Specifically, Arrowhead is interested in starting programs in building construction and mechatronics, which combines electronics with mechanical engineering. However, with a national shortage of technology

education teachers, much depends on resources and staff members.

In any case, the program will continue focusing on the goal of making technology education inviting to students while helping them identify their post-graduation paths.

"High schools are such a great way to launch kids," Christian says.

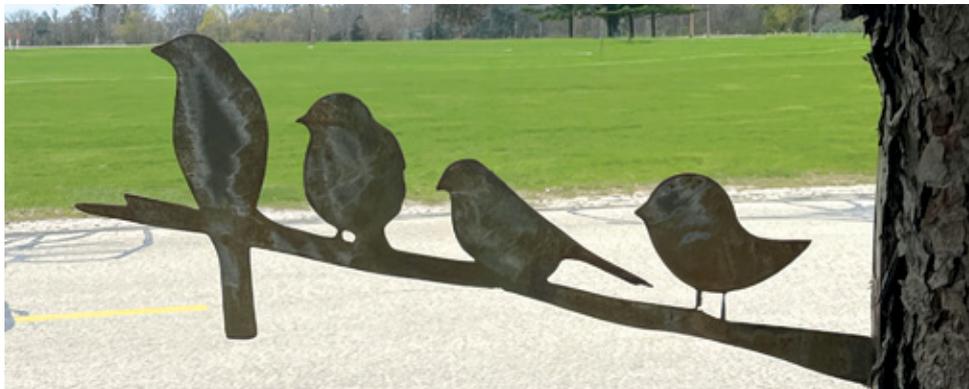
No matter where they eventually land. ■

Anne Davis is a freelance writer who has been covering public education in Wisconsin for over 30 years.



Profits from the sale of metal, wood and seasonal products are divided up at the end of the year and given to participating students in the form of scholarships.

Photos: Warhawk Manufacturing





TROUT in the CLASSROOM

by Anne Davis

The next fish R.J., a seventh grader at Hurley Middle School, pulls out of Weber Lake could be one that he helped raise.

R.J. is one of the many enthusiastic student participants in the Hurley School District's Northstar Trout Lab program. The lab, in its second year of operation, gives students a firsthand look at the life cycle of lake trout as they grow from eggs into fingerling trout ready to be released into nearby Weber Lake. Along the way, they learn lessons in biology, ecology, mathematics and even engineering.

"We're not just raising fish in the classroom, we're setting up a year-long fish lab," says middle school science teacher Dan Rye, one of the project organizers.

Rye believes the lab fits the district's emphasis on hands-on, project-based education by "getting kids excited about learning without text-



Lab gives students front-row seats to yearlong life cycle

books or computers."

The lab is part of the national Trout in the Classroom environmental education program, an initiative of Trout Unlimited. Schools that participate set up an aquarium, receive trout eggs from state hatcheries, and raise the fish until they are old enough to be released in a local stream or lake. The program connects students to their local watershed, fostering better understanding of the local ecosystem and all the

factors that influence it.

Rye and high school biology teacher Corey Chilson became interested in joining the program two years ago, after the school science lab underwent a major remodel and update. Because the district's three schools are contained in a single building, the Northstar Trout Lab became a school-wide program.

The first step was to acquire funding for the aquarium and other equipment from the Hurley Education Foundation. The teachers started the program with a 50-gallon aquarium plus a filtration and chiller system. The eggs, which arrived in the fall of 2022, were acquired from a hatchery through the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

Once the fish hatched, fourth graders fed them two to three times a day. Seventh and eighth graders were tasked with removing a

In addition to the obvious lessons in chemistry, biology and environmental science, the students also learn math as they graph rate of growth.

random sample of the fish population and measuring them to graph the rate of growth. High school students tested the water quality for harmful levels of nitrites and ammonia, while also cycling clean water through the system weekly.

Last spring, 16 students released the fingerlings into the lake. They also heard presentations by fly fishing experts and practiced learning how to tie their own flies. Fly fishing, the method often used to catch trout, is more complicated than the typical rod and cast technique. Instead of worms, the hook is baited with a fly — a lure made with hair or feathers meant to look like the insects that make up the trout diet.

Believing a small tank and frequent water changes stressed the fish, Rye and Chilson scaled up the lab operation in its second year. The 2023-24 program features a 250-gallon tank and larger chiller and filtration system. The larger tank, which cost \$3,500, has required no water changes so far. The lab started with 250 eggs that have produced 160 live fish. That rate of survival is much higher than the 2022-23 school year, and much higher than in nature, where less than 1% of the eggs laid grow into fingerlings.

“So many changes affect them in the wild. Here we have a perfect environment,” Chilson says, noting that the fact that not all eggs survive to release teaches his students another important lesson. “Life and death are part of science.”

In addition to the obvious lessons in chemistry, biology and environmental science, the students also learn math as they graph rate of growth. There are engineering and technology lessons involved, too, as the students use 3-D printers to

design and build special fish baskets to keep the eggs in until they hatch.

The students have also set up a website for the program, featuring a live webcam of the fish as well as a graph measuring their weekly growth.

R.J., who measured the fish alongside his classmates, was surprised that some weeks the rate of growth went up significantly while other weeks it



did not. While the fish are measured in millimeters, R.J. has learned to convert the measurement to centimeters for the graphing process.

“It’s something other than sitting at my computer,” R.J. says of why he enjoys science and the hands-on aspect of the Trout Lab.

David Branstad of the DNR has been the Northstar Trout Lab’s

contact with the hatchery, shipping the eggs to the school after they arrive from the hatchery. The DNR stocks yearling trout in Weber Lake every year, so the fish raised by the school district add to the total number of trout in the lake, increasing anglers’ opportunity to catch a fish.

“The project is significant because it gives the students

hands-on learning experience in the early lifecycle of a trout in the classroom,” Branstad says. “The students get to go through the process of receiving the eggs, watching the eggs hatch, feeding the fry when they are ready and monitoring water conditions for optimum health conditions for the trout. If they are successful at raising the trout, they get to release the trout into an approved water body at the end of the school year.”

Bob Traczyk, a board member of the Wild Rivers Chapter of Trout Unlimited, presented the Trout in the Classroom program to local schools. When Hurley agreed to start the lab, he contacted the DNR and helped the district get the appropriate paperwork. The lab escalated from there.

“Dan and Corey have brought this project to levels that I never expected,” Traczyk says. “For instance, last year, Dan flew a drone over the release area and captured the students fishing. This year, he has the fish camera running. I think we have one of the best operations in the state.”

Rye and Chilson are hoping to release this year’s batch of fingerlings on May 1. R.J. can’t wait, expecting the best part of the project to be “catching the fish.” ■

Anne Davis is a freelance writer who has been covering public education in Wisconsin for over 30 years.

HOW TO SAVE

for Higher Education

Edvest 529 helps families prepare for the cost of education and career training



by Cheryl Rapp

Paying for higher education is one of the most important financial goals for many families.

In fact, according to a 2023 Thrivent survey, when given the choice between saving for their kids' college education or saving for their own retirement, 56% of Americans said they would choose to save for college.

To address those priorities, the state of Wisconsin's Edvest 529 College Savings Plan offers a free workplace financial wellness benefit specifically designed to help families save for higher education and career training. School districts can partner with Edvest At Work to provide their employees with a pathway to save for this major milestone. Many Wisconsin school districts are already benefitting from this partnership.

What is Edvest 529?

Edvest 529 is the state of Wisconsin's direct sold 529 College Savings Plan. A 529 plan is a tax-advantaged

investment account designed to help individuals and families save for future education expenses. Parents and relatives often open a 529 plan for a child or loved one, but they can also be used by adults saving for continuing education.

Contributions to a Wisconsin 529 account may qualify for a state income tax deduction — account earnings grow tax-deferred while in the account, and withdrawals are tax-free at the state and federal level when used for qualified education expenses such as tuition, books and laptops.

Funds can be used at any accredited public or private university, college, technical college, community college or professional school nationwide — and many abroad — as well as toward the cost of apprenticeship programs registered and certified with the Secretary of Labor under the National Apprenticeship Act. Additionally, funds can be used for K-12 tuition (up to

\$10,000 per year, per student) and to pay back qualifying education loans (\$10,000 lifetime limit).

The Edvest 529 plan is administered by the State of Wisconsin Department of Financial Institutions and managed under contract by TIAA-CREF.

Edvest At Work

Bank of America's 2023 Workplace Benefits Report shows that employees continue to look to their employer for help with financial well-being. But for school districts often operating on tight budgets, it may seem near impossible to expand into the realm of financial wellness. Fortunately, Edvest At Work can be added to your existing benefits package at no cost, making it a win-win for employers and



Cheryl Rapp



The staff of CESA 3 in Fennimore, which is partnering with Edvest At Work this year.

employees. It's designed to allow employers to help staff save for a loved one's higher education, minimize household student loan debt and build a skilled Wisconsin workforce.

Winneconne Community School District have offered Edvest At Work to their employees for several years. Julie Von Holzen, a human resources specialist in Winneconne, first heard about Edvest 529 through an email from the Wisconsin Department of Employee Trust Funds. The email included an invitation to a webinar on saving for college with Edvest 529.

After attending webinar and speaking with Edvest At Work consultants, Von Holzen worked with Winneconne's payroll software company to set up direct deposit. Once organized, she started promoting the new benefit to all employees.

"I shared educational fliers, emails and other materials directly from Edvest with staff," she says. "And our launch happened to take place during Edvest's 529 Day match deposit bonus promotion, so we promoted that, too. It was a seamless setup, and all the tax benefits are amazing."

Winneconne School District now includes information on Edvest At Work during new employee onboarding, and also features program information on their

internal website so existing employees can learn more about Edvest 529.

Employee well-being

Later this year, CESA 3 in Fennimore will be offering Edvest At Work as a new financial wellness benefit.

"We're trying to recruit the best talent and we can't always compete with the private sector, but from a benefit standpoint, if this is something that we can provide as one more convenience for our employees, we're adding it," CESA 3 Agency Administrator Jamie Nutter says. "Other than some initial set-up, it's really no extra work for any of the bookkeepers or the HR folks in charge of paychecks."

This is because all contributions to a 529 plan are made post-tax, so there is no reporting required by the employer.

Stressing that CESA 3 takes pride in providing employees with financial education resources, Nutter says CESA 3 representatives "deliver the talking points that are provided to us by our Edvest and 403B consultants because a lot of people haven't had that opportunity for personal financial literacy. We now have a

requirement for high school students to receive financial literacy education in the classroom, but a lot of the people that we have employed never received that information."

Nutter also feels that offering Edvest At Work is meaningful for employees who are balancing the cost of raising children.

"When you set up something like Edvest At Work, you're sending the message to your employees that you care," Nutter says. "We care about you more than just being an employee. We care about your well-being outside of work, and though we can't fund an account for you, we're going to do everything we can to make it easy for you to provide that opportunity for your children."

Administering the benefit is free and easy, and Edvest 529 offers ongoing support at no charge. Partners are provided with educational materials, webinar invitations and in-person training to help educate districts and their employees about saving for college and career training through payroll direct deposit.

To learn more about Edvest At Work, visit edvest.com/employer. ■

Cheryl Rapp is a College Investment Program finance officer with the Wisconsin Department of Financial Institutions. Contact her at cheryl.rapp@dfi.wisconsin.gov.



Skills for Success

HOW HIGH SCHOOL APPRENTICESHIPS SHAPE TOMORROW'S WORKFORCE

by Sean Cullen

In recent years, the landscape of education and career preparation has expanded to include pathways beyond traditional college degrees.

One pathway gaining recognition is youth apprenticeship programs at the high school level.

These programs offer students the opportunity to seamlessly integrate classroom learning with hands-on experience in a specific trade or industry, providing a unique alternative to the conventional route of pursuing a college education.

Youth apprenticeship programs

equip students with valuable skills, provide early entry into the workforce, and offer a practical and financially sustainable alternative to the traditional college route. When given the appropriate resources and attention, youth apprenticeship programs have transformative potential in shaping the future of education and workforce development.

A high school youth apprenticeship program integrates classroom learning with on-the-job training, allowing students to gain practical experience in a specific trade or

industry while completing their high school education. Typically spanning one or two years, these programs enable students to split their time between attending school and working at a job site. Participants earn an hourly wage and academic credits that contribute toward their high school diploma. After high school graduation, individuals may pursue a full-time apprenticeship in their chosen trade or industry.

Apprenticeships involve a combination of hands-on training and classroom instruction, with appren-

tices working under the guidance of experienced professionals to develop the skills necessary for their chosen field. The hours completed during a student's youth apprenticeship can be applied toward the hours required for their apprenticeship certification. Depending on the program and trade, apprenticeships can last anywhere from one to six years.

After completing their program, apprentices may receive certifications or journeyman status, signifying their mastery of the required skills. Whether during high school or after graduation, apprenticeships offer valuable pathways to well-paying and fulfilling careers across various industries, providing individuals with the opportunity to gain real-world experience and prepare for success in the workforce.

Considering how to best prepare students for successful careers?

Youth apprenticeships in the trades offer a compelling alternative to a traditional four-year college path. Apprenticeships can be a win-win for students and schools by:

- **Increasing student engagement:**

Hands-on learning keeps students motivated and fosters a deeper understanding of classroom concepts. This practical experience can reignite academic interest for students who might struggle in a purely theoretical setting.

- **Improving workforce readiness:**

Youth apprenticeships provide students with a head start in their careers. They graduate with valuable work experience, industry-recognized skills and the potential for immediate job placement. This can significantly decrease the time it takes for them to become financially independent.

- **Reducing student loan burden:**

Unlike college, apprenticeships often involve earning while learning. This minimizes student debt, allowing graduates to focus on building their careers and futures without the financial pressure of significant loans.



YOUTH APPRENTICE SPOTLIGHT

CHARLOTTE FRISCH, a recent graduate of Oak Creek High School, has her sights set firmly on the future of the construction industry. Her journey began with a youthful spark and blossomed through JP Cullen's Youth Apprenticeship program.

Frisch's fascination with construction started young, fueled by her interest in home improvement shows and hands-on learning opportunities in school. This passion led her to join JP Cullen's Youth Apprenticeship program during her junior and senior years, solidifying her desire to pursue a career in carpentry.

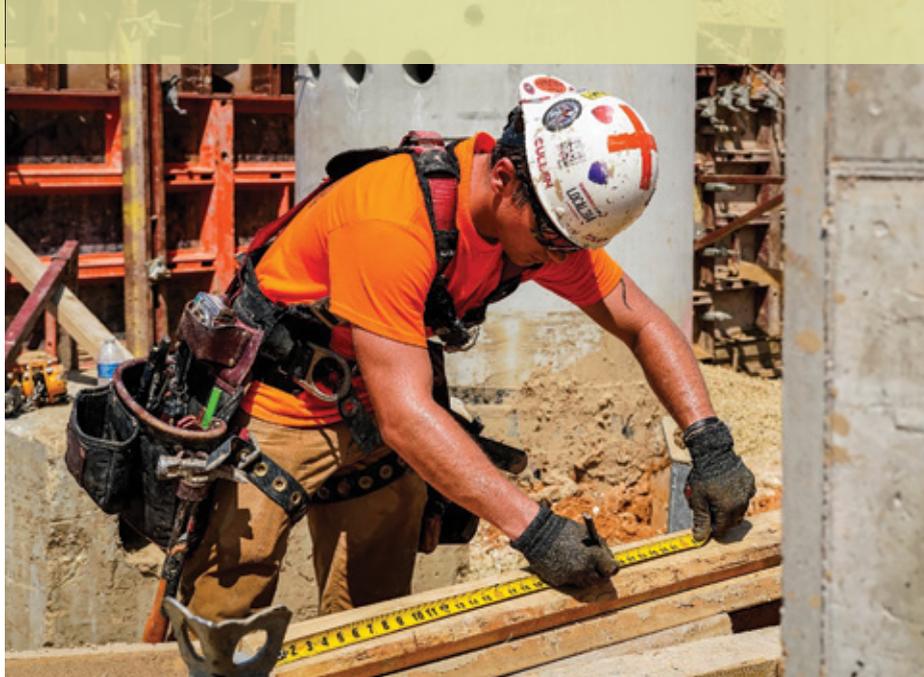
During her youth apprenticeship, she worked on \$85 million worth of construction projects spanning multiple markets, providing her with firsthand insights and experience working in different types of facilities. Some of the projects included Franklin Public Schools, ProHealth Care's Oconomowoc clinic, the MSOE Music House, Froedtert South Division and UW-Milwaukee's Sandburg Hall. All of Frisch's youth apprenticeship hours are credited toward the carpentry apprenticeship she is currently completing at the Brookfield Cardiovascular Associates Ambulatory Surgery Center & Medical Office and UW-Milwaukee Mitchell Hall renovation projects.

"It doesn't feel like a job," Frisch shares of her experience with JP Cullen, highlighting the positive company culture and supportive colleagues. While she enjoys various aspects of carpentry, she finds casework particularly rewarding due to its unique challenges and variety.

She acknowledges the support of her high school teacher, family and JP Cullen coworkers, all of whom have played a significant role in her journey. When asked the advice she'd give aspiring construction professionals, Frisch emphasizes individuals follow their passion, stay confident and seize every opportunity.

With her apprenticeship now transitioning into a full-time position at JP Cullen, Frisch is already contributing to impressive projects like Franklin High School and UW-Milwaukee facilities.

She exemplifies the success of JP Cullen's Youth Apprenticeship program, which currently empowers seven young individuals alongside its 84 apprentices. For more information about the program, contact JP Cullen Apprenticeship Director Maurice Mueller at maurice.mueller@jpcullen.com.



By promoting youth apprenticeships, your school can equip students with the skills and experience they need to thrive in the workforce, **while also helping them graduate with a brighter financial outlook.**

By promoting youth apprenticeships, your school can equip students with the skills and experience they need to thrive in the workforce, while also helping them graduate with a brighter financial outlook.

■ **How to make a best-in-class youth apprentice program**

Creating a best-in-class youth apprenticeship program requires careful planning, collaboration and evaluation. Here's a comprehensive approach:

1. Partnerships: Forge strong partnerships with local businesses, industry associations, trade unions and community organizations. These partnerships can provide support, resources and opportunities for apprenticeships.

2. Curriculum development: Design a curriculum that integrates academic learning with hands-on experience. Ensure that the curriculum aligns with industry standards and provides apprentices with the skills and knowledge needed for their chosen field.

3. Mentorship: Assign each appren-

tice a mentor who is experienced in their chosen field. Mentors can provide guidance, support and valuable insights as apprentices navigate their apprenticeship.

4. Work-based learning: Provide apprentices with meaningful work experiences that allow them to apply classroom learning in real-world settings. Rotate apprentices through different departments or projects to expose them to a variety of tasks and responsibilities.

5. Professional development: Offer ongoing professional development opportunities for apprentices to continue learning and growing throughout their apprenticeship. This can include workshops, seminars and certifications relevant to their field.

6. Support services: Provide apprentices with support services, such as counseling, tutoring and career guidance, to help them overcome any challenges they may encounter during their apprenticeship.

7. Quality assurance: Regularly evaluate the program to ensure that it's meeting its goals and objectives.

Gather feedback from apprentices, mentors and employers to identify areas for improvement and make necessary adjustments.

8. Recognition and credentials: Provide apprentices with recognition for their achievements, such as certificates or credentials, upon completion of the program. This can help them transition into the workforce with confidence and credibility.

9. Diversity and inclusion: Ensure that the program is accessible to students from diverse backgrounds and actively promotes diversity and inclusion in the workplace.

10. Continuous improvement: Continuously seek feedback and strive for continuous improvement. Keep abreast of industry trends and best practices to ensure that the program remains relevant and effective.

By following these guidelines, a school district can develop a best-in-class youth apprenticeship program that prepares students for successful careers in their chosen fields. ■

Sean Cullen is owner and director of business development at JP Cullen. Contact him at sean.cullen@jpcullen.com.



The WASB is here to serve Wisconsin school boards

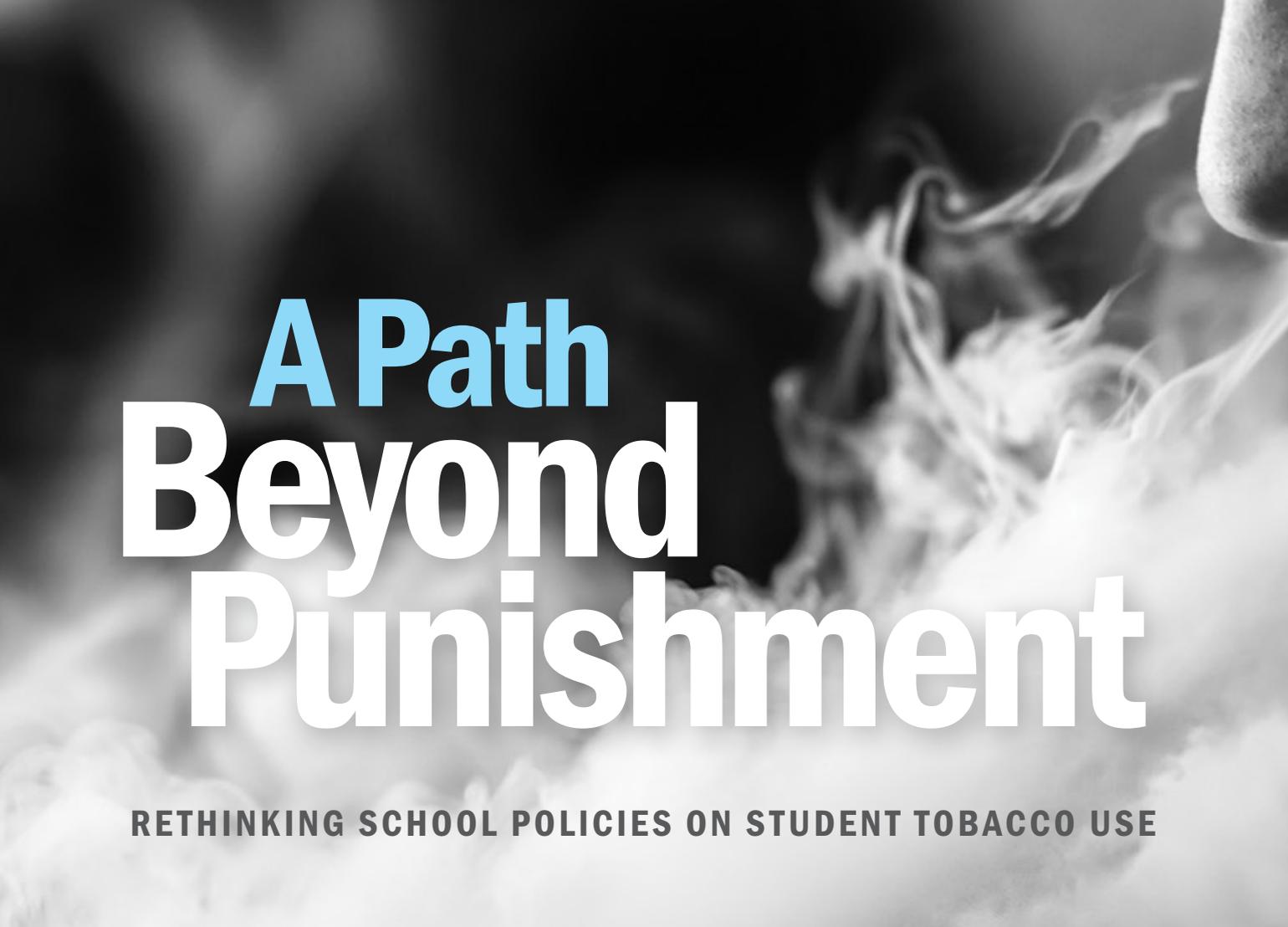
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Contact the WASB today.





A Path Beyond Punishment

RETHINKING SCHOOL POLICIES ON STUDENT TOBACCO USE

by Emma Kane and Kayleigh Day

With more than 37,000 Wisconsin high schoolers reporting recent vape use, many members of the public are rightfully concerned. Schools have naturally become a battleground for combating youth vaping, but with limited time and resources, many are finding it difficult to do more than punish students for vaping.

Fully addressing the issue of youth vaping requires moving beyond punitive measures. Alternative strategies are proving to be a game-changer in combating this escalating crisis.

■ The why

Youth vaping is often looked at as students choosing to misbehave. In reality, their behavior is driven by a complex interplay of factors,

including nicotine addiction, the ongoing youth mental health crisis and industry targeting.

The youth vaping epidemic is a symptom of a much larger youth mental health crisis. When asked why they continue to use e-cigarettes, youth most frequently responded, “I am feeling anxious, stressed or depressed.” Vaping becomes a perceived stress-relief mechanism that ends up hooking them on nicotine, turning their addiction into another source of stress.

E-cigarettes stand apart from commercial cigarettes due to their array of enticing flavors and significantly higher nicotine content. While a cigarette typically contains around 10 mg of nicotine, many e-cigarettes boast 50 mg or more, making them particularly potent and addictive. This heightened nicotine concentra-

tion, combined with the ongoing development of young brains, creates a perfect storm for addiction. Youth brains are in a phase of rapid growth, forging connections at an astonishing pace, which not only facilitates learning but also renders them more susceptible to addiction. Introducing nicotine to developing brains disrupts critical functions such as attention and mood regulation, diverting focus toward sustaining the addiction rather than healthy development.

Youth have also been targeted by tobacco and vaping industry marketing. Practices like event sponsorship, social media advertising, flavors and colorful products make vaping seem cool, fun and popular. Couple this with the sheer number of products on the market, often



Ultimately, punitive practices erode trust between students and staff, creating an environment where students are less likely to seek support and confide in adults about their struggles.

illegally, and widely available for low cost, and it's clear that the industries have primed young brains to develop into lifelong customers.

Vaping is not as simple as kids being kids. This is not just normal teenage experimental behavior. Thus, society, including school districts, must explore new opportunities to support kids in today's environment.

The pitfalls of punishment

Punitive practices, such as suspension or referral to law enforcement, have long been the default response when students are found vaping at school. However, decades of evidence show these approaches are ineffective at changing student behavior.

Additionally, punitive measures can have long-term negative conse-

quences for students, including decreased academic performance, disengagement from school and increased likelihood of involvement with the criminal justice system. The effects are felt across the entire student body, not just the student being punished. According to the U.S. Department of Education, "High rates of school suspensions are associated with lower scores on standardized tests and overall academic achievement" for all.

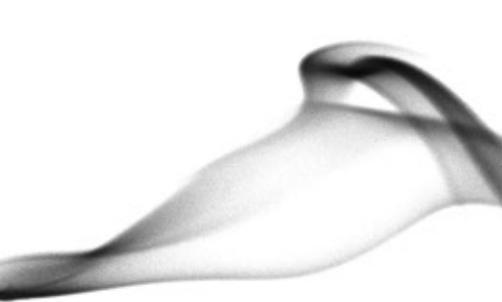
This has led the Department of Education to recommend that "schools should... explicitly reserve the use of out-of-school [punishments] for the most egregious disciplinary infractions that threaten school safety."

Ultimately, punitive practices erode trust between students and

staff, creating an environment where students are less likely to seek support and confide in adults about their struggles. As a result, punitive measures not only fail to address the root cause of addiction but also contribute to a harmful cycle that perpetuates substance misuse and undermines students' well-being.

As a school social worker at Superior High School, Jane Larson is committed to bringing out the best in her students. When she noticed that the practices at her school were falling short of helping students, she began looking for other ways to address the problem.

"I had 13 referrals for students for vaping on campus, but at the time, it was an automatic suspension," Larson says. "I realized we were sending students home, and nothing happened. They're going home, oftentimes without supervision because their parents are working, so what are they learning from that experience? Nothing that's going to help them make any kind of changes in behavior or their attitudes about vaping or what they know about it."



■ A call for alternatives

Schools, identified as battle-grounds against this epidemic, possess a unique vantage point to detect and aid students in combating vaping addiction.

The tide is turning toward alternative strategies embedded within school policies. These innovative, evidence-based approaches prioritize education, counseling and intervention, fostering a supportive environment for students grappling with addiction. Alternative strategies aim to maintain students' educational engagement and tackle the core issues behind their actions while holding them accountable. These approaches prioritize support while keeping students involved in their academic journey.

"I started thinking of ways that we could do something different in the building to address [vaping] instead of just suspend students and have them come talk to me after the fact," Larson says. "It's an hour or two hours a week with some good that would come of that time, versus sending them home for a day — sometimes three days — with nothing changing."

■ The power of supportive disciplinary practices

Despite high rates of youth vaping, many students want to quit, with almost half of Wisconsin students who vape attempting to quit in 2021. Schools embracing non-punitive approaches witness a transformation in student well-being by supporting students in quitting.

"I've had students come back later and say, 'Do you think I could

Alternative strategies
aim to maintain students' educational engagement and tackle the core issues behind their actions while holding them accountable.

do that again?'" Larson says of Superior's program. "I've also had students go through and say after, 'I've really been paying attention to how much I'm vaping, and how many times I think I really shouldn't do it and I can't stop myself or I can't quit. I've been trying to cut back, trying to quit.' And they're coming back and saying, 'What about that cessation group?'"

Schools that offer interventions that address addiction directly create an atmosphere that encourages seeking help. This not only aids in changing behavior but also contributes to a safer, more nurturing school environment for everyone.

"You're planting seeds that come to fruition as students begin to realize and think about what they've learned and start processing," Larson says. "It's a natural bridge. They're asking for [help] as they're realizing they're

really struggling and they can't quit on their own. They need some help and some support."

Supportive discipline has the power to free up time and resources for schools that are stretched thin. When emphasis is placed on problem-solving instead of problem management, schools shift the time normally spent on the cycle of continued behavior and punishment to something that can have a larger impact on their students' overall well-being and success.

Lodi Community Action Team Project Coordinator Brian Bilse has seen firsthand the benefits of implementing alternatives to suspension, saying he's "had no repeat students, or students within our school district that have had a second offense" after completing the district's Intervention for Nicotine Dependence: Education, Prevention, Tobacco and Health program.

■ Options for supportive disciplinary practices: Alternative to suspension practices

Alternative to suspension practices work to directly address vape use and addiction, keep youth in school and create environments where youth feel comfortable seeking help. A tobacco-free school policy that uses evidence-based alternatives to suspension strategies may include a:

- Staff person meeting with a student to discuss their tobacco/vape use and the school policy.
- Student enrolling and completing an evidence-based education program.

A tobacco-free, vape-free future means shifting from punishment to support, guided by evidence-based intervention, education and cessation strategies.

- School providing an evidence-based youth cessation program and resources.
- Student enrolling in an evidence-based cessation program.

“I was very comfortable saying this is evidence-based,” Larson says. “We’ve got something here that we can do in the building. There’s no cost to the families or the students to do this. The cost is four hours of their time to come and meet with me — and the pay off would be huge.”

The road ahead

A tobacco-free, vape-free future means shifting from punishment to

support, guided by evidence-based intervention, education and cessation strategies. Collaborative efforts between health organizations and educational bodies are crafting policy enforcement language that prioritizes student well-being over punitive measures.

“If you’re on the fence with it, think about your ultimate goal,” Larson says. “Because sending kids home and suspending them is not teaching them anything different. It’s not giving them even the opportunity to explore other options or ways of thinking about things or really diving in and taking a look at what this is all about.”

The fight against student vaping demands a holistic approach. By adopting alternative strategies, schools not only combat addiction but also foster a culture of support and understanding. It’s not just about enforcement; it’s about enabling recovery and empowering students for a healthier future.

If you’re ready to explore alternative strategies, contact Kayleigh Day at kayleigh.day@lung.org. ■

Kayleigh Day is senior manager of public policy and advocacy at the American Lung Association. Emma Kane is executive director of the Community Action for Healthy Living.

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Wisconsin schools and their health care partners host career camps for students to explore potential career paths. Health care professionals and settings are a critical part of these camps.

Photo: Southwest Tech

Strengthening Health Care Career Pathways

Collaborating with health care partners to prepare students for in-demand careers in Wisconsin hospitals and health systems

by Ann Zenk

The Wisconsin Hospital Association's 2024 Wisconsin Health Care Workforce Report describes health care workforce shortages as "critical but stable." All employers, including schools, are facing workforce shortages, but the health care industry faces an additional challenge. As Wisconsin's population ages, waves of the baby boomer generation retire, which intensifies the need for health care. Therefore, even as Wisconsin's workforce is shrinking, the demand for health care is increasing.

As the need for health care professionals rises, schools play a pivotal role in shaping the next generation of the health care workforce. By forging partnerships with hospitals and health systems, school districts can better prepare students for rewarding careers in health fields.

Here are actionable steps schools and their partners in health care can take to foster these critical collaborations:

1. "We wish they'd reach out more often."

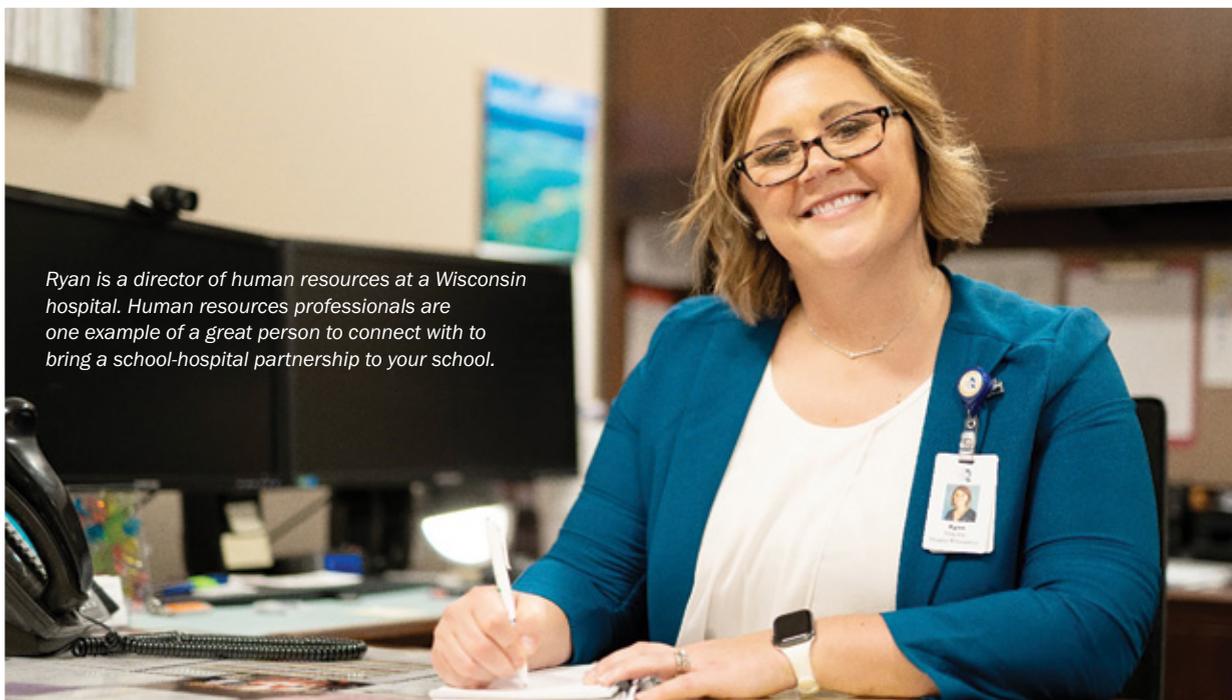
Getting to the right person in the health care facility or in the school system can be the key to unlocking resources for students and teachers wanting exposure to hospital careers, and for health care employers and professionals wanting to connect with students and their adult influencers, including teachers, guidance counselors, principals and family members.

- Hospital human resources and recruitment departments are a great place for school districts to start.
- A hospital president or chief nursing officer won't mind the call.
- Hospitals don't need to wait for a call. Reach out to the school guidance counselor or the instructor of career exploration courses or health care related courses, or even the principal. They won't mind.

2. Ask what's needed.

Breaking down barriers for students can help them gain more exposure to hospital and health system employment.

- Compare notes on schedules, curriculum and your unique situation and needs to create more student opportunities.
- Transportation can be a big barrier for schools and students, and accommodating large groups of students in a hospital or treatment area can be a big challenge for health care partners.
- Ask health care professionals and hospital employees to come to you. A few people traveling to meet with a lot of people makes more sense than a lot of people traveling to meet with a few people.
- Timing matters. Scheduling events during mid-terms, finals or spring break will likely lead to disappointing turnout, just as



Ryan is a director of human resources at a Wisconsin hospital. Human resources professionals are one example of a great person to connect with to bring a school-hospital partnership to your school.

reaching out to hospital or clinic partners during particularly busy times may result in “crickets” and a perception that health care facilities don’t want to help. (See step No. 1: they do!)

3. Pool your resources.

School systems and health systems can partner to support students and health care career pathways, wisely utilizing available funding and resources, while avoiding duplication of efforts.

- Hospitals, high schools, tech colleges, universities and their community partners often hold their own career days or events. While it feels great to see a wide variety of events, and maybe schools and hospitals can even be a bit territorial about “their” event, duplicating efforts stretches school and health care resources even thinner than they already are, creating internal competition for attendance by busy students and their adult influencers.
- Educators and school board members can and should ask their health care partners about how

they support career pathways. Most hospitals and health systems offer training programs for jobs students can jump right into when they graduate. These training programs can be a stepping stone to further employer-supported education and professional development, or a satisfying career an individual can settle into.

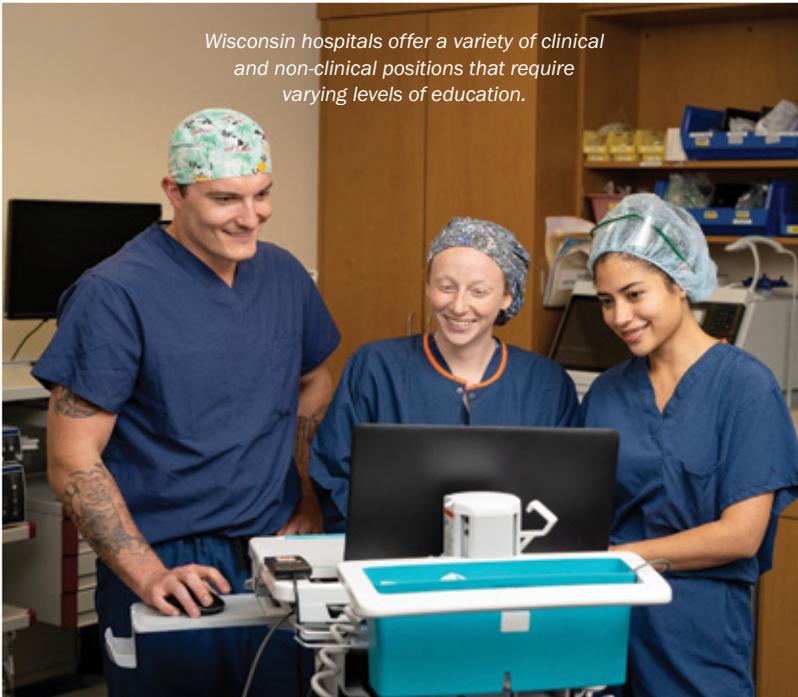
- Hospital and health system leaders, educators and school

board members cross paths all the time. They serve on community teams together, sponsor HOSA chapters, belong to the same community organizations or interact with CESA or AHEC partners. Make use of these common partnerships to grow connections and gain a better understanding of how you can best align your efforts and resources.



A high school student gets a feel for laparoscopic surgery equipment at a Wisconsin hospital career exploration event. Photo: Bellin and Gundersen Health System

Wisconsin hospitals offer a variety of clinical and non-clinical positions that require varying levels of education.



4. It's not just doctors and nurses.

Health care is often a top employer in the school district, offering students exposure to a wide array of clinical and non-clinical career pathways.

- Meeting the health care needs of the communities they serve requires that hospitals have not only teams of health care professionals to care for patients, but also support personnel that range from information technology, facilities management, supply chain and registration and scheduling.
- Teachers in all types of classes can reach out to hospitals and clinics that serve your school district for classroom and event guests in a variety of career pathways.
- Teachers can also access the WHA “So Many Options” hospital career exploration website and School Toolkit at www.wihealthcarecareers.com. The “So Many Options” digital media campaign was launched in February 2024 and has already gained 2 million digital impressions from students, faculty and partners across the state. The

School Toolkit includes resources directed toward parents and students, specifically for schools and teachers to use.

- Hospitals and health systems also have education departments that would love to collaborate with teachers and education leaders in the school districts in their service area.

5. Flexibility and creativity can expand opportunities.

Wisconsin is a relatively rural state, with school districts spanning wide geographic regions and hospital service areas that can cover multiple counties and school districts.

- Hospitals are responding to their workforce’s need for more flexibility. This is a good reminder to be flexible and open to student and school requests, and to accommodate student scheduling when students are health care employees.
- Job shadows, clinical placements and training partnerships with schools and students are a great way to see if a student’s career dreams match the career reality. The effort teachers, students and health care providers put in help students choose the career pathway that feels right for them.

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Wisconsin public school districts face unprecedented challenges and opportunities. The attorneys at Renning, Lewis & Lacy, s.c., are dedicated to helping you meet the challenges and take advantage of the opportunities.



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School-hospital partnerships are critical in helping students connect their interest and skills with available, rewarding jobs.

Photo: SSM Health

- Don't be shy. A student with a family member employed in health care can provide a path to a career mentor or experience. Teachers and health care leaders can work together to help students who don't have that connection get linked up to see firsthand health care and health care professions at work.

Wisconsin schools have a unique opportunity to shape the future health care workforce. By fostering partnerships with health care institutions, pooling expertise and resources, and taking into account the unique needs of students, school systems and health systems, schools can equip students with the knowl-

edge, skills and passion needed to thrive in health care career pathways.

The Wisconsin Hospital Association wishes to express appreciation for the school systems and the hospitals and health systems across the state forming and expanding partnerships that are helping grow the health care workforce faster (but not fast enough). The WHA is also grateful to Bellin Gundersen Health System Career Development Center for their contributions to this list and the article. ■

Ann Zenk is senior vice president of workforce and clinical practice at the Wisconsin Hospital Association. For questions about this article, or any health care workforce issue, reach out to Ann at azenk@wha.org

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January 22-24, 2025

Proposals now being accepted for:

- Breakout Sessions
- School Fair
- Music Showcase
- Art Exhibit
- Student Video Team

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Share your district's best work
to help other districts grow and learn.



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to submit your proposal:

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SESSION PROPOSALS DUE JUNE 21, 2024



2024 SUMMER LEARNING SYMPOSIUM

JULY 12 & 13 HYATT REGENCY | GREEN BAY

Registration coming soon to WASB.org



LEADING FOR THE FUTURE

Join us in beautiful Green Bay for this two-day symposium to learn about the latest technological best practices, cautions and challenges for our schools.

Friday's sessions will include topics focused on artificial intelligence, cybersecurity and school safety, student progress monitoring, and using podcasts to inform and engage.

Saturday's sessions will help attendees understand and reflect on the previous day's themes from a legal and governance perspective, including a legal and governance presentation on school attendance, and concluding with a session focused on school referendum trends and the financial landscape.

AGENDA OUTLINE

FRIDAY, JULY 12

Sessions include:

- How to Maximize Technology
- Artificial Intelligence: Benefits and Challenges
- The Power of Podcasts to Inform and Engage
- Student Progress Monitoring
- Cybersecurity: Best Practices and How to Mitigate Risk

SATURDAY, JULY 13

Sessions include:

- Artificial Intelligence Policy Implications
- Social Media and Electronic Communication Cautions
- Addressing School Attendance
- Strategically Governing and Communicating for the Future

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

Sessions, School Fair, Art, Music and Video Team

The State Education Convention, to be held in Milwaukee, Jan. 22-24, 2025, is your opportunity to highlight your innovative programs and talented students. If your district has results worth sharing, consider submitting a proposal. We are looking for breakout sessions and School Fair proposals that feature innovative projects and initiatives. Breakout session and School Fair proposals are due June 21 and June 23, respectively. In addition, we are looking for three musical performance groups to show off their skills at the convention. Apply by June 7. Finally, we are seeking proposals for student art and a student video team by Friday, Nov. 15. Visit WASB.org/convention to learn more and submit a proposal. □

Welcome New School Board Members!



Whether you're taking office yourself or you are welcoming new members onto your school board, the WASB is here to help.

To begin learning about how to be an effective board member, visit the "Basic Legal and Governance

Resources" page at WASB.org. It includes a variety of resources, including the New School Board Member Handbook and the recently recorded New School Board Member Gathering. □

Spring Workshops

Navigating Today's Challenges While Keeping the Focus on Students



- **MAY 7-9 and 14-16** | 5 Locations
Online Statewide Meeting: **MAY 16**
Networking: 6-6:30 p.m. **Dinner:** 6:30-7 p.m.
Presentation: 7-8:30 p.m. (All in-person locations)

- **Tuesday, MAY 7**
CESA 2, Whitewater
- **Tuesday, MAY 14**
CESA 7, Green Bay
- **Wednesday, MAY 8**
CESA 11, Turtle Lake
- **Wednesday, MAY 15**
CESA 5, Portage
- **Thursday, MAY 9**
CESA 1, Pewaukee
- **Thursday, MAY 16**
Virtual

Amid today's rapidly evolving educational landscape, it can be challenging to keep the focus where it belongs — on promoting the success of all our students. Does your board's mission and vision align with the goal of high levels of learning for all children? Come together, share insights and collaborate on solutions at our Spring Workshop. This isn't just another passive presentation; attendees will meet and learn from other school board members facing common challenges. Don't miss out on this chance to share a meal with, learn from and inspire each other in an interactive workshop where we'll tackle some of the following questions together:

- How does your board's mission and vision align with a goal of high levels of learning for all children? How are you and your administration working together to achieve high levels of learning for all children?
- What metrics are you using to measure outcomes for all kids? How do you navigate the discussions that are brought forth with a specific focus on "some" kids while reflecting and considering "all" kids?
- What are your schools implementing to keep students coming to school engaged in their learning?

Visit [WASB.org](https://www.wasb.org) for more information and to register. Members are welcome to attend a workshop in any location.

Upcoming Webinars

■ SCHOOL DISTRICT REFERENDA (TWO-PART)

PART 1: Community engagement **JUNE 5** | 12-1 p.m.

PART 2: Legal & policy considerations **JUNE 12** | 12-1 p.m.

More and more school districts are going to referenda for funding and facilities. In this two-part webinar series, we'll explore how to engage a community around a referendum project and the legal and policy considerations you should consider. *Registration is required. One registration gets you access to both parts.*

■ ANNUAL AND SPECIAL MEETINGS: NOTICES, PROCEDURES AND POWERS

JUNE 26 | 12-1 p.m.

This presentation will review the notice requirements for annual and special meetings, cover meeting agendas and procedures and discuss the division of powers between the annual meeting and the school board in common school districts. *Registration required.*

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 WASB Webinars page at [WASB.org](https://www.wasb.org). In addition, links to past webinars are available in the Policy Resources Guide.*

■ RECURRING WEBINAR:

WASB LEGAL AND LEGISLATIVE VIDEO UPDATE

MAY 15, JUNE 19, JULY 17 | 12 p.m.

Each month, WASB staff counsel and government relations staff address current topics of interest to WASB members. The topics are typically driven by recent developments affecting schools in the state Legislature, Congress, governmental agencies and the courts.

This webinar is complimentary, and no registration is required. Visit [WASB.org](https://www.wasb.org) for the link.

Business Honor Roll Nominations Now Open

The WASB invites member school boards to submit the names of up to five local businesses, including newspapers or other media, that have been helpful to your school district over the past year.

Tell us who they are and what they have done for your schools, and we will help you promote your business partnerships.

Visit [WASB.org](https://www.wasb.org) for more information.

That's a Wrap!

Take a look at the new laws coming into effect



As political ads began to hit the airwaves and lawmakers turned their attention to the impending election, it wasn't hard to miss the flurry of action that occurred at the end of the legislative session. Luckily, the WASB is here to provide you with a review of new legislation coming to school districts next school year.

K-12 education was one of the most important topics this session, with lawmakers introducing bills reaching almost every facet of education in Wisconsin. Many areas of interest developed through the session, including emergency medications in schools, school and student safety, curricular mandates, licensure and preparatory program requirements, privatization and parental rights.

Signed into law

Emergency medication legislation

In general, these acts allow schools to use and hold a stock of certain medications to be used in the case of a medical emergency. In most cases it would require a physician to write a prescription to a school for said stocked supply. These bills also provide some legal protection to school personnel in the case of an

unforeseen injury that may result from the use of these treatments.

- **Act 27:** Use of epinephrine delivery systems and standing orders for epinephrine.
- **Act 193:** Ready-to-use glucagon rescue therapies in schools.
- **Act 194:** Opioid antagonists in schools.
- **Act 195:** The supply and use of short-acting bronchodilators (inhalers) on school premises or at a school-sponsored event.

School and student safety

Most of these new acts are aimed at tightening or altering definitions in current state statute to close loopholes and better protect kids. Important to note is Act 240, which will allow the Office of School Safety to continue operating until approximately October 2025. This will give the office enough time to work with lawmakers for a more permanent funding structure during the upcoming 2025-27 budget negotiations.

Act 12 requires public high schools, including independent charter schools, and private high schools that participate in a choice program to collect and maintain statistics regarding incidents that occur on school property during

school hours, a school-sanctioned event or school transportation. The incidents must be reported to law enforcement and result in the filing of a charge or citation and include: homicide; sexual assault; burglary, robbery or theft; certain types of battery, substantial battery or aggravated battery; arson; and use or possession of alcohol, a controlled substance or a controlled substance analog. The act requires high schools to report those statistics on an annual basis to the school board or the Department of Public Instruction. The act requires the DPI to promulgate rules to administer the reporting requirements, and it directs the Department of Justice to cooperate with the DPI to develop a reporting system that incorporates DOJ's uniform crime reporting system. The act also requires the DPI to include certain school, school district and statewide totals and averages regarding such statistics in school report cards. The WASB has requested further guidance from the DPI on local compliance for this new state mandate.

- **Act 12:** Shared revenue, school crime reporting mandates, and Milwaukee Public Schools resource officer requirements.

K-12 education was one of the most important topics this session, with lawmakers introducing bills reaching almost every facet of education in Wisconsin.

One key bill that passed this session is Act 95, which **establishes a guaranteed admissions program to UW-System schools based on GPA** and requires school boards to establish class rankings for the top percentage of pupils.

- **Act 61:** Defined “sexual contact” for purposes of crimes against children and sexual assault.
- **Act 154:** Increased penalties for failing to stop for a school bus.
- **Act 198:** Defined “strip search” for the purpose of the prohibition against strip-searching a pupil.
- **Act 199:** Defining critical mapping data for school safety plans.
- **Act 200:** Sexual misconduct against a pupil by a school staff member or volunteer and providing a penalty.
- **Act 240:** Stopgap funding measure for the Office of School Safety through October 2025.

Curricular mandates

- **Act 20:** Early literacy curriculum.
- **Act 60:** Financial literacy graduation requirements.
- **Act 266:** Requiring school boards to provide instruction on Hmong and Asian Americans.

Licensure and preparatory program requirements

- **Act 26:** Allowing a school board member to serve as a volunteer school bus driver.
- **Act 196:** A tier I license issued by the DPI and modifying administrative rules promulgated by the DPI.

- **Act 197:** An alternative teacher certification program for an initial license to teach.

Miscellaneous

One key bill that passed this session is Act 95, which establishes a guaranteed admissions program to UW-System schools based on GPA and requires school boards to establish class rankings for the top percentage of pupils. The bill was authored and subsequently amended during negotiations between Assembly leadership and UW-Systems over various policy disagreements. Further guidance has been requested from the DPI on this new mandate. For more information on Act 95, see the March 2024 WASB Policy Perspectives.

Two other bills to highlight from this list are Act 165 and Act 192. Act 165 expands the award amount and the eligibility to apply for a technical education equipment grant program run by the Department of Workforce Development. Act 192 was amended late in the session to give school districts more flexibility in the administration of the screener required under Act 20. As amended, the first literacy screener implemented in the 2024-25 school year is now optional. This will allow districts more time to properly train staff and students in the new requirements set forth by the state’s literacy overhaul.

- **Act 11:** Increasing the per pupil payments in parental choice programs and the Special Needs Scholarship program and the per pupil payments made to independent charter schools; and increasing the revenue ceiling for school districts.
- **Act 72:** Recovery high schools operational and planning grant program.
- **Act 95:** Guarantees admission to UW-System institutions and technical colleges, and requires high schools to prepare class rankings for certain pupils.
- **Act 100:** Early literacy programs administered by the DPI.
- **Act 165:** Technical education grants.
- **Act 192:** Mandatory early literacy professional development.

Questions?

If you have specific questions regarding the bills listed above, don’t hesitate to contact the WASB government relations team or subscribe to our legislative update blog! We are here to provide school leaders with help as you begin to feel the effects of the laws passed this session, as well as the knowledge you need to be an effective advocate for your school community. ■



Navigating Student Discrimination and Harassment Based on National Origin and Religion

From time to time, national or international events may place certain student populations in a spotlight. Across the nation, school boards are currently grappling with complaints of anti-Muslim, anti-Arab, anti-Palestinian and antisemitic harassment. As international humanitarian crises continue to impact various communities across the globe, U.S. students who are — or are perceived to be — Muslim, Jewish, Arab, Palestinian or Israeli are reporting harassment and discrimination at school. Such harassment and discrimination harms students and exposes school districts to legal liability.

As school board members, it is crucial to understand and enforce the legal protections against discrimination based on national origin and religion. Several state and federal laws ensure that students have equal access to educational opportunities, regardless of their status in certain legally protected classes. This prohibition on discrimination extends to harassment against students on the basis of these distinct classifications.

In this Legal Comment, we will explore the key aspects of the law in addition to recent guidance from the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) as it pertains to discrimination against ethnic, racial and religious groups.

Overview of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and relevant agencies

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits student discrimination on the basis of race, color and national origin in programs and activities that receive federal financial assistance. Title VI is enforced by the Office for Civil Rights.

As an enforcement mechanism, OCR investigates complaints of alleged discrimination and may reach resolutions with school districts in response to complaints of student discrimination. OCR often issues guidance and relies on this guidance when it makes decisions on complaints related to discrimination or harassment. Therefore, school districts should be familiar with this guidance and review such guidance when addressing any race or related equity issues.

Title IV of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits student discrimination, including harassment, on the basis of religion by public schools. Title IV is enforced by the federal Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division.

In addition to federal law, Wisconsin has its own law prohibiting student discrimination based on, among

other bases, race, religion, national origin or ancestry. These state regulations require each public school district to have written policies that prohibit such discrimination, including establishing a comprehensive complaint procedure and designating an employee of the school district to receive a discrimination complaint. These policies and procedures must require a district to provide written acknowledgement within 45 days of receipt of a written complaint, and to make a determination of the complaint within 90 days. If the district determines that discrimination or harassment did not occur, the district must notify the complainant of their right to appeal to the State Superintendent of Public Instruction.

In addition, students can bring complaints of student discrimination or harassment based on a legally protected class directly to state or federal court. The law does not require students to first bring these claims to a government agency.

OCR guidance on national origin, shared ancestry and religion

OCR issued guidance on March 14, 2024, reminding school districts of their obligation to address discrimination against Muslim, Arab, Sikh, South Asian, Hindu and Palestinian

In addition to federal law, Wisconsin has its own law prohibiting student discrimination based on, among other bases, race, religion, national origin or ancestry.

Any harassment that creates a hostile environment runs afoul of Title VI, and schools **must promptly and effectively respond to such harassment to avoid liability.**

students. On March 15, the Biden Administration launched its National Strategy to Counter Islamophobia and Related Forms of Bias and Discrimination, the first ever national inquiry of this kind. According to the administration, this is an effort to address the disproportionate hate-fueled attacks and discriminatory incidents faced by Muslims in America, and those perceived to be Muslim, including Arabs, South Asians and other religious minorities conflated with Muslims, including Hindus and Sikhs.

The guidance explains that school districts have a responsibility to address discrimination against students when the discrimination involves racial, ethnic or ancestral slurs or stereotypes; is based on a student's skin color, physical features or style of dress that reflects both ethnic and religious traditions; or is based on the country or region where a student is from or is perceived to have come from, including discrimination based on a student's name, accent, English proficiency level or multilingualism.

Similarly, OCR released guidance on November 7, 2023, in response to international humanitarian crises that increased harassment and threats to students who are or are perceived to be Jewish, Muslim, Arab, Palestinian and Israeli. This guidance reminded schools of their federal legal obligations to ensure nondiscriminatory environments, especially in the wake of global crises.

The March 14, 2024, guidance includes the following analysis concerning harassment under Title VI. Harassment or harassing conduct can be either verbal or physical. However, it does not need to be directed at a particular individual. Any harassment that creates a hostile environment runs afoul of Title VI, and schools must promptly and effectively respond to such harassment to avoid liability. A hostile environment based on race, color or national origin, including shared ancestry or ethnic characteristics, is one that is defined by unwelcome conduct based on that legally protected class, that, based on the totality of the circumstances, is subjectively and objectively offensive, and that is so severe or pervasive that it limits or denies a person's ability to participate in or benefit from the school's education program or activity.

Districts must take prompt and effective action to respond to harassment that creates a hostile environment for students. If OCR determines a hostile environment was created based on shared ancestry or ethnic characteristics, OCR will then determine whether or not the school knew or should have known of the hostile environment. If the school knew or should have known about the hostile environment, OCR contemplates whether or not the school met its obligations under Title VI to take prompt and

effective steps reasonably calculated to end the harassment, eliminate any hostile environment and its effects, and prevent harassment from reoccurring.

While Title VI does not explicitly protect students solely based on religion, it encompasses students who experience discrimination, including harassment based on their actual or perceived shared ancestry of a religious group, ethnic characteristics, or citizenship or residency in a country with a dominant religion or distinct religious identity.

Schools have an obligation under Title VI to address discrimination against students of all religious backgrounds when the discrimination involves racial, ethnic or ancestral slurs or stereotypes; when the discrimination is based on a student's physical features, or a style of dress that reflects both religious and ethnic traditions; or when the discrimination is based on a student's country of origin or perceived country of origin, foreign accent, foreign name or names commonly associated with a particular ancestry. In addition, schools have an obligation under Title IV and state law to address student discrimination based on religion, regardless of whether it is also covered under Title VI.

OCR offered examples illustrative of its guidance. In one, a Muslim student reported her concerns about comments made by classmates during history and cultural lessons

related to Sikhism, Islam and other traditions prevalent in South Asia. The Muslim student described classroom peers calling her a terrorist and telling her that she “started 9/11.” The school failed to take action to investigate or respond to the discriminatory comments. Here, the district risked noncompliance with Title VI.

In another example, a Jewish middle school student reported to his teacher that he felt unsafe at school because classmates routinely placed notes with swastikas and other Nazi symbols on his backpack, performed Nazi salutes and made jokes about the Holocaust. The teacher advised the student to simply “ignore it” and took no steps to address the harassment. Again, the

district failed to respond appropriately to a legitimate Title VI concern.

Schools must not overlook religious discrimination in all of its forms, or they risk noncompliance with state and federal law. School boards should review their student harassment policies to ensure that they contain prohibitions against religious and national origin discrimination and harassment. Schools should ensure that students and employees know how to report discrimination and harassment — and to whom. Employees designated to respond to such complaints should understand those policies and applicable laws so that they can promptly respond to complaints and take effective action to end the harassment and prevent its occurrence.

Conclusion

School boards should be aware of increased reports of discrimination and harassment against students of Muslim, Arab, Palestinian, Sikh, Hindu and Jewish backgrounds. Therefore, districts must continue to be attentive to the conduct of students and respond promptly and effectively in these situations. Such practices not only protect districts from liability, but also foster a positive environment for students, staff and the greater community. ■

** This Legal Comment was written by Sarah Ghazi-Moradi and Brian P. Goodman of Boardman & Clark LLP, WASB Legal Counsel. For related articles, see Wisconsin School News: “The Latest on Race Discrimination Under Federal and State Law” (June 2022); and “The Office of Civil Rights Use of ‘Dear Colleague Letters’” (June 2015).*

Legal Comment is designed to provide authoritative general information, with commentary, as a service to WASB members. It should not be relied upon as legal advice. If required, legal advice regarding this topic should be obtained from district legal counsel.



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