

Candidate Bios for the WEAC/NEA Positions to be elected at the 2022 WEAC RA:

Candidate for WEAC President

Peggy Wirtz-Olsen – Marshfield Teachers Association

I am a high school art and English teacher, a parent, and a proud public-school advocate. As your President, what happens to public school employees is my life, it is the basis of what I do every day advocating for great public education for the common good.

As your President, I have worked with members across Wisconsin helping them to tell their stories about what our students and our public schools need. As a WEAC officer, I have made hundreds of visits to local associations, I have listened to the needs of our members and their hopes for the future, and under my leadership, WEAC is taking action.

We have been successful in electing pro-public education candidates like Superintendent Underly and Governor Evers, but our work hasn't ended there as we ensure that our voice is heard. As your President, I will work with elected officials crafting policy that is grounded in safety and equity and that reflects our public-school needs in 2022 and beyond.

My experience has been pivotal in shaping my vision of a WEAC that leads again on education in Wisconsin. Please join me to make this vision a reality.

Candidates for WEAC Vice President

Kim Schroeder – Milwaukee Teachers' Education Association

My name is Kim Schroeder and I am running for re-election as WEAC Vice President.

I am proud of what we accomplished during my time as WEAC Secretary-Treasurer and Vice President. We were able to balance the WEAC budget each year, reinstate training for our local treasurers, roll out access for NEA 360 to our locals, debut the online membership sign up, and put WEAC back on the map politically.

As officer liaison to both our Aspiring Educators and our Retired members I am proud we have been able to expand upon our work with both groups. We have been able to move forward as a union, despite the continuing challenges of COVID, and grow our power as a union.

These are just a few examples of what we as WEAC can do when we all work as a team, pushing for the same goals and moving forward in the same direction. There is definitely more work to do -- However, we have proven time and time again that when we work together, we will win.

I humbly ask your support for WEAC Vice President so we can continue the fight together for our students, our members, and our community.

Joanna Rizzotto – South Milwaukee Education Association

As an **award-winning Latina educator** and **accomplished and active union leader**, I am best positioned to elevate and advance WEAC's priorities of advancing racial and social justice, building power through membership, and attaining collective bargaining rights. My proven successes in creating and sustaining systemic change in schools and in our union demonstrate that I have the **experience, expertise** and **energy** to represent and fight for WEAC members as Vice President during our most challenging and uncertain times.

Our collective struggle from Act 10 through the pandemic exposed us to alarming realities and required us to operate through new tactics and strategies. While experiencing the losses alongside all of you, I have been at the forefront of work locally, regionally, and state-wide to **restore** our rights, regain **respect** for our work, and **retain** educators. I offer veteran knowledge to complement our union's existing, solid strategies and the experience of an innovative organizer to confront challenges yet to be revealed. I have the skills and strengths to bring together our

collective experience, expertise, and energy to build **POWER** and change our future. It's out here WEAC, let's get it.

Candidates for WEAC Secretary-Treasurer

Nathan Ugoretz – Port Washington-Saukville Education Association

I humbly ask for your support as I seek re-election as WEAC's Secretary-Treasurer. I am eager to continue serving our members by organizing for growth and collaborating to strengthen our union for the benefit of all public educators across the state.

During my time as Secretary-Treasurer, our union has grown stronger. Recruiting members remains a high priority: we've made gains working with locals statewide; we've made gains highlighting the support WEAC provides for National Board Certification, which brings educators more take-home pay. We've also worked to fund local growth through summer organizing and year-long membership drives.

As Secretary-Treasurer, I've brought forward new ideas such as creating a scholarship that aligns with our values of social justice and workforce diversity. I've begun fundraising so we can cultivate the next generation of Wisconsin educators among historically underrepresented groups. This example illustrates my broader goal: to make strategic decisions with our budget and secure funding sources outside of membership dollars, maximizing WEAC's influence while minimizing the cost to our members.

It is an honor to advocate for the well-being of educators; I am inspired by the commitment of WEAC members and will work tirelessly to ensure our union continues to increase its power.

Shelly Moore Krajacic – South Milwaukee Education Association

WEAC and public education in Wisconsin have been the work of my soul since birth. A third generation Wisconsin public school teacher on both sides of my family, I have dedicated myself to working for our students and educators across

the state. I have previously held most possible offices in my local and Region/UniServ, have served on both the WEAC and NEA Boards of Directors and have recently completed six years as a member of the NEA Executive Committee. Additionally, in 2012 I ran for Wisconsin State Senate in the Wisconsin recall races. At all times, I have served WEAC first in each position I have held. It is my firm belief that we have a world of possibilities ahead and I promise to bring my high energy to continue serving WEAC and our members with positivity, working together to move education forward in Wisconsin. Additionally, as one of the co-creators of the NEA Leaders for Just Schools program, I have a record of dedication to dismantling systemic issues of inequity. A high school English and drama teacher, I spent over twenty years in Ellsworth, currently teach in South Milwaukee, and also taught at UW Milwaukee.

Candidate for NEA Director Seat #2

Maiwa Lor – Sun Prairie Education Association

I am a first-generation Hmong Female and with this, I come with my own cultural experiences that help strengthen and grow my continuous knowledge in diversity and equity. I am an English Learner Teacher in the Sun Prairie Area School District. I have been teaching and supporting culturally linguistic diverse students for ten years now. My strong passion in teaching children stands out the most when I am advocating for my English learner students. They are scholars beyond their language capabilities, and they need all the resources they deserve to be successful.

As local President of the Sun Prairie Education Association, we recently advocated and got teachers compensated for taking on extra responsibilities outside the scope of classroom teaching and demanded teachers are treated like professionals. Most importantly, we continue to show and build up our collective educator voice in the district.

I will use my voice to challenge the long-standing norms of systemic racism and challenge those who continue to lead in that way. I am running for NEA Director so that I can continue to collectively implement action at the state level towards a more just school system and advocate for the respect we deserve as professional educators.

Candidate for NEA Alternate Director

Kirah Zeilinger – Beloit Education Association

In my past 16 years as an educator, I have served my union in many roles. This past year I served as alternate NEA director for the first time. I have learned a lot about our organization at the National Level, and hope to continue to represent our state in the same capacity, I come to this position with experience as an elementary and special education teacher, as a building rep, as a regional leader, as a WEAC BOD representative, and now as alternate NEA director.

My goal as a leader is always to continue to learn and do better. It is also to propel other leaders forward. I am constantly advocating for opportunities for my members to learn and grow. I believe working as a collaborative is important and I reach out to make sure decisions being made are for the whole. I hope to continue to be a voice of our collective as WEAC's Alternate NEA director.

Candidate for Minority Guarantee Representative

E-Ben Grisby – Green Bay Education Association

My philosophy is that educators and education support professionals are the cornerstone of community building. As a Minority Guarantee Representative, I'd employ that cornerstone by raising the voices and perspectives of marginalized communities and identities, promoting the vast contributions made by educators of color and ensure that Bylaw 3.1(g) is upheld. Checking boxes are great for remaining focused, but as educators, we're not boxes, but complex stakeholders investing in and supporting students, families, and their professions even under the most precarious times. As MGR, I would like to ensure that equity, justice, visibility, and inclusion in our profession are exceeded with increased transparency and continued relevance, as we continue to build education professionals of all stripes, regardless of zip code.

Candidate for Minority Guarantee Representative Alternate

Adrienne Y. Hicks – Milwaukee Educational Assistants Association

My name is Adrienne Y. Hicks and I am running for Minority Guarantee Representative-Alternate for WEAC.

I have been a paraprofessional in Milwaukee Public Schools for 10 years. I am currently on release as an ESP organizer for MTEA to build membership and power in our buildings. I sit on the MEAA Council as the EA Chair for special education rep.

For the past two years, I have become more involved within the MTEA as a summer organizer. I have volunteered in several political campaigns as a phone banker and canvasser. What I am most proud of is helping MPS successfully win their referendum in 2020.

Throughout my time in the MTEA, I have lived by the motto of walk in love, have understanding and tolerance for all.

I will be a strong advocate that lifts the voices of Educators of color, students and families in Wisconsin.

Thank you for your consideration.