



# MOVING EDUCATION FORWARD.

WISCONSIN  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS:  
KEY FACTORS FOR  
MOVING FORWARD

# Wisconsin Public Schools: Key Factors for Moving Forward

## Message from WEAC President Ron Martin:

Wisconsin educators are tireless advocates for students. We truly are. We stay with a profession we love because we are dedicated to our students. Collectively, we are the voice to protect and defend public education.

Educators in Wisconsin are working in the wake of historic upheavals in public education and unions. Every day, each one of us chooses to educate and advocate, even in the most difficult situations. United, we have the will to achieve great accomplishments. I believe the success of public education is directly tied to the success of education unions.

In **Key Factors for Moving Forward**, we identify solutions to specific areas in need of improvement through the eyes of classroom educators. Areas in which education unions are uniquely qualified to lead change are:

- Restoration of the Professional Status of Educators
- Improvement of School Conditions and Climate
- Establishment of Educator Retention Policies

Our message is that public school educators, through their union, can and should undertake partnerships to address these key areas. If we do, I have no doubt that Wisconsin students will benefit tremendously.

I wish to thank and commend all who helped with this work, including Vice President Peggy Wirtz-Olsen, Secretary-Treasurer Kim Schroeder, Member Joanna Rizzotto, WEAC members of the Professional Standards Council, the Quality Ed Committee, the WEA Academy, the WEAC Board of Directors, and WEAC/National Education Association staff. Their collective energy, expertise and commitment are formidable resources for unifying and building our future.

**Wisconsin Public Schools: Key Factors for Moving Forward** marks the beginning of statewide discussion, and so, was published in draft form for consultation. We will continue to seek input from stakeholders.

I strongly hope this document inspires Wisconsin Public School educators to unite and lead solutions that will improve the day-to-day experience in our classrooms for students, teachers and education support professionals. I hope it prompts Wisconsin to build consensus on public education and its place in our democracy. And, most of all, I hope educators take the lead in implementing this platform for change in schools large and small across the state.

Ron Martin  
WEAC President



# Wisconsin Public Schools: Key Factors for Moving Forward

## Restoration of the Professional Status of Educators

The restoration of the teaching profession and, more broadly, public education, depends on the redefinition of the profession itself. Wisconsin depends upon education, and education depends upon – more than any other factor – effective teaching. Recruiting and retaining the best educators depends upon respect, feedback, leadership, efficacy, autonomy, collaboration, and funding. There is no single solution, but working together – families, policymakers, educators, and administrators – the teaching profession can be restored. It is our responsibility. There is an urgent need for educators to take the lead and define the power of a collective voice. It is time to step forward in solidarity for students, the teaching profession, and public schools.

Survey results from the DPI Wisconsin Educator Survey conducted August-September 2017, with 20,000 educators responding, are alarming and must be addressed by all stakeholders.

- 65.9% of teachers have given serious thought to leaving their school/district.
- Teachers identified the biggest reasons for considering leaving as insufficient pay (19.9%), leadership (18.7%), and feeling overwhelmed (14%).
- When asked “How much of a voice do you feel you have in decision-making at your school?” 64% of educators said they feel they have very little voice in decision making, while 36% believe they have some voice, and just 2.4% feel they have a significant role.
- 72.9% of teachers describe the leadership structure of their districts as top down; only 20.2% feel it is distributed, and 6.9% believe it is collective.

It is imperative educator voice is included in school decision-making, with representation selected by the teacher collective. Too often, administration gives the illusion of meaningful input into decisions by hand-picking teachers to serve on committees rather than allowing teachers to choose their own representatives. This adds to the distrust educators already have in a top-down system that ultimately causes the de-professionalization of educators. In its essence, the education union is the vehicle through which educators unite and advocate for students, the profession, and public education. Therefore, local education associations have a critical role and must be recognized in their school districts as the voice of the educators. **When the union is strong, the school district is strong.**

Dr. Steven Paine, a nationally renowned American educator, suggests in research he conducted for Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (2012) that lack of respect for teachers is the nation’s number one enemy of public education. Dr. Paine said the major difference between the U.S. system and those in other countries he studied had to do with how teachers are valued, trained and compensated. ([https://www.huffingtonpost.com/matthew-lynch-edd/american-students-consider\\_b\\_1682100.html](https://www.huffingtonpost.com/matthew-lynch-edd/american-students-consider_b_1682100.html))

There are four areas to address to restore the professional status of educators:

- Restoring Professional Learning and Supporting Educator Voice

- 42 • Promoting Professional Learning and Support for Educators
- 43 • Hiring Educators Trained in Fully Accredited Programs
- 44 • Developing a Balanced Curriculum for All Students

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46 **Restoring Professional Learning and Supporting Educator Voice**

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48 Educator voice is essential to restore the professional status of teaching, so educators feel valued and  
49 teaching is again viewed as a viable career option. Educator voice is more than serving on a committee, and  
50 it is more than an opportunity to provide feedback to administrators and local school boards. Educator voice  
51 is about educators having meaningful input and opportunities to share expertise with decision-makers,  
52 provide direction, give guidance, and receive recognition. Educator voice is key to effective change at all  
53 levels, whether at the local school district, Department of Public Instruction (DPI), state legislature, or  
54 federal government.

55

56 Solutions to increase educator voice:

57

- 58 • Any committee or task force by a government agency that is looking to address educator concerns  
59 must be composed mostly of educators, and the union should take the lead in identification and  
60 selection of those individuals.
- 61
- 62 • Regular meet-and-confer meetings should be established with the local association and the  
63 administration. Handbooks should be written or re-written to stress the value of educator voice and  
64 collaboration with labor and management through the meet-and-confer process.
- 65
- 66 • There should be a seat for an educator selected by peers to serve on the local school board, a non-  
67 voting member who can speak freely and openly without fear of retaliation or punishment. The  
68 position should be similar to the position created for student representatives.
- 69
- 70 • Any legislation proposed specifically about education should have input from educators, and hearings  
71 should be scheduled so educators can participate.
- 72
- 73 • There should be opportunities for useful, effective collaboration time with colleagues.
- 74
- 75 • Professional development at the local or state level should be done in real collaboration with  
76 educators; professional development should be created and led by educators to ensure it is  
77 meaningful and relevant.
- 78
- 79 • Legislation should be passed re-affirming the value of public schools and the professionals who work  
80 in them.
- 81
- 82 • WEAC should continue to promote National Board Certification and provide professional resources  
83 for completing the process. WEAC should continue to advocate for funding from the state of  
84 Wisconsin for National Board Certified Teachers, and local unions should organize for local stipends.
- 85

86 **Promote Professional Learning and Support for Educators**

87

88 A strong argument can be made that teacher evaluation in Wisconsin has degenerated into a deficit model.  
89 Administrators identify the domains and components they deem an educator is lacking in rather than focus  
90 on an individual's strengths. Hyper-focus on these negatives does not promote long-term growth.  
91 Additionally, teachers regularly report that the Educator Effectiveness system has resulted in constant  
92 evaluation with no focus on the science and art of teaching and learning. In all practicality, the Student  
93 Learning Objective cycle is a never-ending evaluation.

94  
95 Value-added assessments have contributed to the de-professionalization of teaching. The argument that  
96 value-added teacher assessments lead to professionalization through a standardized evaluation system is  
97 faulty for a number of reasons.

98  
99 Since value-added assessments have become part of Wisconsin's teacher effectiveness program, we have  
100 seen pressure on educators to raise test scores, ultimately forcing teachers to teach to the test. This lends  
101 itself to problems including stripping away the joy of teaching, illustrated by Charlotte Danielson who said,  
102 "I'm deeply troubled by the transformation of teaching from a complex profession requiring nuanced  
103 judgement to the performance of certain behaviors that can be ticked off on a checklist. In fact, I and many  
104 others in the academic and policy communities believe it's time for a major rethinking of how we structure  
105 teacher evaluation to ensure that teachers, as professionals, can benefit from numerous opportunities to  
106 continually refine their craft." ([https://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2016/04/20/charlotte-danielson-on-  
107 rethinking-teacher-evaluation.html](https://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2016/04/20/charlotte-danielson-on-rethinking-teacher-evaluation.html))

108  
109 Value-added assessment fails to acknowledge the factors outside a teacher's control that influence student  
110 test scores. This includes the amount of time parents spend with their children on homework, parents'  
111 educational level, and income. (Briggs, D. & Dominique, B. "Due diligence and the evaluation of teachers."  
112 Boulder, CO. 2011). While teachers work to close the achievement gap that can exist for these students,  
113 teachers should not be assessed solely on student achievement that can be affected by factors outside of the  
114 teachers' control.

115  
116 Teachers are seen to "add-value" only when student test scores improve. (Milner, H.R., "Analyzing poverty,  
117 learning, and teaching through a critical race theory lens." 2013)

118  
119 Despite clear research on the challenges of value-added assessment, it is used in many districts for high  
120 stakes decision-making such as firing or hiring educators and salary decisions. This has contributed to the  
121 deprofessionalization of teachers in Wisconsin. A review of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation's multi-  
122 million-dollar Measures of Effective Teaching (MET) Project found the project largely fell short of its goal  
123 to increase student achievement. According to Brian Stretcher, lead author of the report, "This suggests that  
124 focusing on teacher effectiveness alone is not likely to be the potent sort of intervention that really moves the  
125 needle on student outcomes."

126  
127 Not only are educators opposed to value-added assessment, but parents are very concerned as well. In a 2015  
128 Gallup Poll, 67 percent of public-school parents said there was too much emphasis on testing, and 63 percent  
129 opposed requiring teacher evaluations to consider student performance on standardized tests.

130  
131 Behavioral science has identified four discrete accountability mechanisms: evaluation, identification, reason-  
132 giving, and the mere presence of another. All four must be implemented for good professional  
133 accountability. Brian Gill, author of "Redefining Accountability to Treat Teachers and Leaders Like the

134 Professionals They Are,” argues that outcome-based accountability in education fails to use all forms of  
135 accountability. High-stakes testing uses two mechanisms to create accountability – identifying schools and  
136 evaluating them – but does not employ reason-giving or the presence of another. And by itself, it provides no  
137 tools to help educators improve their practice. He also states professional accountability could be used in  
138 schools alongside other forms of accountability to promote a cycle of continuous improvement. Employing  
139 all four accountability mechanisms would provide educators and administrators an opportunity to collaborate  
140 and design an evaluation system that will give the desired outcome for students and schools.  
141

142 Wisconsin should be focused on professional learning and how effective educators are supported. Danielson  
143 identifies that no more than six percent of the total teaching profession is below standards, and yet the focus  
144 and attention has been given to that group. Personnel policies should be focused on the group of effective  
145 teachers who comprise most of the teaching corps. Danielson tells us that “given the complexity of teaching,  
146 a reasonable policy would be one that aims to strengthen these educators’ practice. Personnel policies for the  
147 teachers not practicing below standard – approximately 94 percent of them – would have, at their core, a  
148 focus on professional development, replacing the emphasis on ratings with one on learning.”

149 (<https://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2016/04/20/charlotte-danielson-on-rethinking-teacher-evaluation.html>)  
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#### 151 Solutions to Improve Educator Evaluations:

- 152
- 153 • Peer Feedback. Peer feedback provides subject matter expertise that many principals lack and enables  
154 teachers to take greater control of the process. The MET study noted that teachers were more open  
155 and honest during peer feedback and that teachers respect feedback from a distinguished peer with  
156 whom they have a positive relationship over that of an administrator.
- 157 • Improve Evaluation Feedback. Currently, teacher evaluations are viewed as deeply flawed and  
158 counterproductive. Feedback resulting from evaluation must be fair, accurate, specific, and timely.  
159 Fairness requires consistency, which means that different observers rate the same performance in the  
160 same manner. Accuracy requires an assessment of the teacher’s professional practice and impact on  
161 achievement, not the diligence or socioeconomic status of parents. Specificity demands that teachers  
162 receive feedback that they can use to improve their craft. Timeliness demands that teachers receive  
163 feedback so they can link observations to performance  
164
- 165 • Include Educators in Developing Evaluation Systems. Educator voice is essential in developing  
166 effective evaluation systems within school districts, and a collaborative meet-and-confer process  
167 between administrators and educators is ideal for developing systems and resolving issues. When  
168 collaboration is strong, researchers have found greater goal alignment between educators and  
169 administrators, increased educator efficacy, stronger mentoring relationships between educators, and  
170 perceptions by staff that the principal and education association representative are both trusted  
171 professional resources. The alternative to top-down leadership is distributive leadership and  
172 collaboration. When educators drive the agenda for teacher evaluation systems, the professional is  
173 elevated along with the profession itself, leading to the restoration of the professional status of  
174 educators. (McCarthy, J.E. & Rubinstein, S.A. 2018)  
175
- 176 • Develop Association Building Committees (ABC). These committees develop labor and management  
177 partnerships. Establishing an ABC at every school building is crucial for educator voice and to create  
178 collaborative mechanisms to resolve issues that benefits labor and management.

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- Place a Moratorium on Test-Based Assessments. Educator Effectiveness has done very little to help the most vulnerable students. Under the federal Every Student Succeeds Act, there are opportunities for the state to make swift changes in how Educator Effectiveness is administered. Effective teaching is the most important school-based factor influencing student achievement and other outcomes. What’s missing from the current system is the ability for the educator to have a voice in the decisions that affect what they do on a day-to-day basis. Jo Anderson Jr., Co-Executive Director of the Consortium for Educational Change, mentions in a blog dated August 16, 2018, “In many states teachers have limited or no venues for collective voice and presence. It is hard to be a true profession without such collective voice and presence.” He goes on to state, “One huge unanticipated consequence of abolishing agency fees or fair share provisions could be that it leads to union leaders being more fearful and timid in taking on efforts to improve teaching and learning, ultimately hurting students in the process.” To make the shift in how we operate in our schools, we must focus on collaboration. The Every Student Succeeds Act creates opportunities for policymakers to re-imagine accountability in schools – and not only by incorporating additional measures of student success into outcome-based accountability systems.
- Redesign Professional Development. Professional development must be redesigned and involve educator voice in both content and delivery. Professional development must be timely, relevant, and related to job growth. Professional development must meet the needs of individual educators to help them grow professionally.
- Strengthen Teacher Leadership Statewide. People do not quit jobs; they quit bosses. (Harter, 2016) Time and energy must be expended to develop teacher leadership. Teacher leadership is a powerful strategy to promote effective, collaborative teaching practices in schools that lead to increased student achievement, improved decision making at the school and district level, and create a dynamic teaching profession. WEAC should lead on developing a credentialed certification for teacher leaders that is recognized by the DPI and local school districts. WEAC should create teacher leadership academies that bring together experienced teachers aspiring to formal teacher leadership roles in their schools and provide them with training in action research, group processes including advocacy work, and facilitation skills. WEAC should also develop and support teacher leadership networks to provide ongoing support, sharing of practice, and continuing professional development for educator leaders in schools and districts.
- Support Teacher Efficacy. Teacher efficacy is achieved when educators in a school have the profound belief that they can make a difference for students. A growing body of evidence ultimately concludes that teacher efficacy matters. School leaders must elevate policies that support teacher efficacy such as linking teachers’ practices to student success, helping teachers build on strategies that are having an impact (DuFour, Reeves, & DuFour, 2018), and removing policies that undermine efficacy. The use of data to rate, rank, and humiliate teachers must be stopped. Observations and evaluation practices that provide minimal or no feedback to the teacher should also cease, including the ridiculous practice of reporting observation feedback through an automated email. There must be personal contact and the opportunity to have a conversation between the administrator/evaluator and the teacher. Achieving teacher efficacy also depends on placing a moratorium on value-added assessment and redesigning professional development, described earlier. WEAC, in partnerships with education organizations such the DPI, AWSA, WASDA, and WASB must provide a system for

225 supporting collaboration, such as through district and school workshops and joint statewide education  
226 summits on labor-management partnerships. Collaboration must be restored in our schools and can  
227 take place through any number of projects, such as new teacher induction, peer assistance/mentoring,  
228 social-emotional learning, and professional development.

### 229 **Hiring Educators Trained in Fully Accredited Programs**

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231 Teaching is a calling, a balance between an art and a science. Alternate licensing programs and fast tracks  
232 into the profession have been brought on by a teacher shortage and send a message that learning to teach is  
233 easy and can happen quickly. This contributes to further de-professionalization. According to national  
234 research, including National Economic Policy Center, Teach for America, the American Board for  
235 Certification of Teacher Excellence (ABCTE), and other fast-tracked programs are failing students and entire  
236 communities.  
237

238  
239 Traditional teacher training programs should prepare teachers to make professional judgments, meet the full  
240 range of student needs, build positive working conditions, and negotiate and balance multiple layers of  
241 bureaucratic pressures. The same holds true for alternate or fast-track teacher preparation programs.  
242 Policymakers should abandon the idea that alternate or fast-track teacher preparation programs will solve the  
243 teacher shortage or be a long-term solution to fill gaps where jobs are difficult to fill.  
244

245 Teachers are a cornerstone of society. The goal of the profession is providing the highest quality education to  
246 all students. To achieve this goal, the profession must be comprised of individuals who meet the highest  
247 standards. These standards must be established, maintained, and governed by the members of the profession  
248 in all areas: recruitment, teacher preparation, induction, professional development, evaluation, practice, and  
249 accountability. Members of the teaching profession must assume expanded leadership roles and must have  
250 the time, resources, and decision-making authority to provide the highest quality instruction for each student.  
251 (WEAC Resolutions, A-19).  
252

### 253 Solutions to Address Fast-Track and Alternate Licensing Programs:

- 254  
255 • Repeal ABCTE Law. The state law that allows for an alternate license through ABCTE should be  
256 repealed. ABCTE is an alternate teacher preparation program that does not provide the experience or  
257 rigor needed to be a successful teacher. ABCTE focuses solely on helping the candidate pass the  
258 American Board’s required pedagogy exam and subject area exam. The ABCTE website identifies  
259 five things you must do to earn your certificate: 1) Pass American Board’s pedagogy and subject area  
260 exam, 2) Submit your transcript to American Board and pass a federal background check, 3) Receive  
261 a teaching certificate and institutional recommendation from American Board, 4) Apply to the WI  
262 DPI for a teaching license, 5) Begin teaching in a Wisconsin school. Absent is student teaching and  
263 all other practicum experiences that are vital to teacher preparation. Absent is the ability to work  
264 closely with veteran educators who will mentor the aspiring educator and provide for guidance and  
265 support. We wouldn’t want a surgeon who hasn’t spent quality learning hours in an operating room,  
266 and we don’t want educators who haven’t spent quality learning hours in classrooms working  
267 alongside experienced educators and with students. ABCTE is nothing more than a “license factory”  
268 that is demeaning to all of us who are educators.  
269



- 270 • Hire Fully Qualified Teachers. District administrators and principals should only hire teachers from  
271 fully accredited teacher preparation programs vetted by the DPI and possessing the resources needed  
272 to prepare educators for all aspects of the teaching profession.
- 273
- 274 • Adopt Resolutions to Prevent Unqualified Hires. School boards should adopt resolutions committing  
275 to not hire individuals who have only completed ABCTE or other similar programs.

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## 277 **Develop a Balanced Curriculum for All Students**

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279 In Wisconsin, the curriculum has narrowed and, in many ways, has been scripted for educators. Even in  
280 cases where teachers are not forced to read actual scripts, the overemphasis of certain content due to the  
281 focus on high-stakes testing amounts to scripted curriculum. This narrowed approach has decreased the  
282 amount of time our students are exposed to social studies, science, physical education, music, art, health  
283 education, family and consumer education, world languages, and other areas. At the elementary level, recess  
284 or play time has been limited. In high schools and middle schools, elective courses that allow students to  
285 explore talents have been limited, curbing opportunities for career exploration.

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287 Solutions to Stop a Scripted and Narrow Curriculum:

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- 289 • Stop Test-Based Policies. A moratorium on the use of value-added assessment, as described earlier, is  
290 essential for ending scripted and narrow curriculum. Education accountability is an entire  
291 community’s responsibility and local school districts should be allowed to develop an accountability  
292 system that involves educators, administrators, families, students, and the community. Test scores can  
293 be used to inform instruction, but cannot measure success.
- 294
- 295 • Develop a Different School Accountability System. Wisconsin’s current school report cards focus too  
296 heavily on outputs, and should provide a more comprehensive picture. The development should occur  
297 through a collaborative process with key stakeholders.
- 298
- 299 • Develop a Balanced Curriculum for All Students. Students, especially at the early levels, need to  
300 have organized play time, and all elementary students should have recess. Secondary students need to  
301 be exposed to electives that will help them make the best decisions for their futures.

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## 303

## 304 **Improvement of School Conditions and Climate**

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306 Wisconsin has a major problem when it comes to school climate. The state is not alone. Throughout the  
307 country, teaching conditions and climate have worsened and are negatively affecting outcomes in the  
308 classroom and schools. In Wisconsin, the problem is intensified due to severe shifts in the educational  
309 landscape, massive school funding cuts, and policies that have challenged worker representation.

310

311 Anecdotal reports from teachers and education support professionals such as paraeducators, clerical  
312 employees and bus drivers describe a consistent decline in the conditions in which they work and the school  
313 climate. Formal research supports their reports and serves as evidence to the growing challenge facing public  
314 schools. Conditions and climate for the sake of this report includes areas that directly impact teaching  
315 conditions in schools – student behavior, classroom support, stress level/feeling overwhelmed, lack of

316 respect, school leadership, and having meaningful voice in decision making at the school site and in the  
317 district.

318  
319 Students' learning environments are one in the same as the educators' work environments. So, when the  
320 Wisconsin Educator Survey reported that about 60 percent of educators have considered leaving the  
321 profession due to climate-related issues, it is a major concern. Beyond the direct impact on educator  
322 retention, a negative climate in schools can be a detriment to students' attitudes and willingness to learn,  
323 which can cause discipline issues. In the same survey, 45 percent of those same educators said that  
324 improvements in these areas alone would be the most likely reason for them to stay in the profession.

325  
326 Of further concern from that survey is that about 65 percent of teachers asked said their districts do not  
327 consider workload or assignment for early career educators, only 21percent reported their district assists  
328 educators in addressing work/life balance, and over 50 percent said their districts do not have any focus on  
329 improving school climate/morale specifically for staff. In addition, only five percent of educators feel they  
330 have a voice in decision-making at their school, and about 44 percent reported they do not feel they are  
331 treated as equitable partners in the education of the students in their school/district. Finally, only seven  
332 percent of educators felt the leadership structure in their districts provides for a collective voice.

333  
334 Educators say all of this leads to feelings of powerlessness, and, at times, fear, stress, and despair. Related  
335 concerns include dropping salaries and plummeting benefits (Center for American Progress Action Fund,  
336 2017), unmanageable workloads, top-down leadership styles, and disrespect for the profession.

337  
338 The severe restrictions on collective bargaining enacted by the Wisconsin Legislature in 2011 caused chaos  
339 that continues today. At that time, most districts tore up existing agreements and then failed to include  
340 provisions to address working conditions or climate in the handbooks or school board policies that replaced  
341 contracts. And while some local unions have regained many of the provisions they lost and even improved  
342 upon former contract language, many have not. Those educators have no assurances when it comes to  
343 conditions and climate and instead work at the whim of school and district administrators. In those districts,  
344 this adds to the problem of climate and morale, where educators report feeling under-appreciated and under-  
345 valued.

346  
347 Research shows that educators credit positive school climate and good working conditions with job  
348 satisfaction, motivation, performance, and retention – all of which benefits students. (2011-2012 Schools and  
349 Staffing Survey) Therefore, Wisconsin must promote solutions to enhance climate and working conditions.

350  
351 WEAC has a long history when it comes to improving school conditions and climate for educators and  
352 students. There are 41 WEAC Resolutions stating positions covering areas including fair funding, educator  
353 voice, safety and discipline, and workload. (See Appendix A for relevant WEAC Resolutions)

354  
355 In addition to WEAC Resolutions, the WEAC Legislative Agenda also supports public policy that advances  
356 safe and welcoming school environments, up-to-date learning materials, educator involvement, mandatory  
357 preparation time, equitable funding, equitable access, and diversity.

358  
359 Solutions to Improve School Conditions and Climate:

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- 361 • Strong Local Union Presence. The local union is in the best position to make the changes necessary  
362 to positively impact conditions and climate by meeting and conferring with administration and  
363 working with school boards to adopt policies on student discipline, manageable workload, classroom  
364 support, and involvement in school-based decision making.
- 366 • Consistent Enforcement of School Rules. Research indicates teachers who perceived higher  
367 enforcement of school rules had higher job satisfaction. Consistent enforcement of rules by school  
368 administrators had a significantly greater effect on satisfaction than collegial enforcement of rules.  
369 Findings also indicate that teacher victimization has a significantly negative effect on job satisfaction.  
370 Consistent enforcement of school rules may reduce instances of student misbehavior and teacher  
371 victimization, helping reduce teacher stress and anxiety and leading to greater job satisfaction. This  
372 underlines the need for strong administrators who enforce school rules consistently and refrain from  
373 shifting blame onto educators for circumstances they cannot control. (Kapa, Ryan; Gimbert, Belinda.  
374 2018. Job Satisfaction, School Rule Enforcement, and Teacher Victimization. *School Effectiveness  
375 and School Improvement*, 29(1), 150-168.)
- 377 • Systematic, Statewide School Climate Surveys. Such surveys, taken annually by staff, students, and  
378 parents will provide baseline data and keep principals accountable for more than test scores.  
379 Traditionally school improvement focuses only on technical indicators like grades and test scores and  
380 ignores the social-emotional aspects of school like trust, safety, and connections. Having a climate  
381 score on a school report card would go a long way for families, potential employees, and the  
382 community.
- 383 • Connectedness to WEAC. Our union must provide resources and assistance to locals including, but  
384 not limited to, ensuring opportunities for local union leaders and activists from different areas to  
385 network, share successful handbook language and school board policies, and strategies on passing  
386 local-level policy. WEAC must also assist locals in setting up an organizing structure to help grow  
387 local strength because, ultimately, handbooks and school board policies are a direct reflection of a  
388 local union’s strength.
- 390 • State-Level Advocacy. WEAC must advance state laws and rules that require local school districts to  
391 address school conditions and climate in a meaningful way. This includes a fair funding formula for  
392 public education, so districts have resources to lower class sizes, hire qualified support staff, and  
393 make sure all students have access to needed resources. Restoration of collective bargaining is  
394 another example of state-level advocacy, to give local unions a direct voice in setting forth conditions  
395 in a contract. Collective bargaining rights alone are not a solution, as local unions need a strong,  
396 active membership and community allies to institute positive change at the bargaining table.

398 **Establishment of Educator Attraction and Retention Policies**

399  
400 Educators are leaving the profession at alarming rates, and there are fewer people entering the teaching  
401 profession. National research shows a declining trend for enrollment in teacher preparation programs, falling  
402 from 719,081 in 2008-09 to 465,536 in 2013-2014 (qtd. in Aragon “Teacher Shortages: What We Know” 2).  
403 In our work with university education faculty, we know that Wisconsin teacher preparation programs are  
404 experiencing similar trends.  
405

406 Additionally, there is greater instability in the teaching profession with nearly 25 percent of early-career  
407 educators (those in their first seven years of teaching) switching school districts from 2011 to 2018. (“The  
408 Effects of Act 10 on Teacher Compensation in Wisconsin” WEAC Research & NEA CBMA August 2017)  
409

410 The importance of educator retention is amplified in schools experiencing teacher shortages, which occur  
411 primarily in schools with specific characteristics. "Urban, rural, high-poverty, high-minority and low-  
412 achieving schools face persistent staffing challenges. Working conditions such as lower salaries and bigger  
413 classes and neighborhood characteristics such as safety and amenities influence teachers’ decisions about  
414 where to teach.” (qtd. in Aragon “Teacher Shortages: What We Know” 5) Therefore, our students and  
415 schools with the greatest need are also seeing the deepest effects of staffing challenges.  
416

417 Teacher turnover adds a high cost to our education system. “Turnover is likely to reduce the quality of  
418 teaching, and hence student learning, in individual classrooms. In addition, the influx of new and  
419 inexperienced teachers is likely to be disruptive and interfere with the development of a coherent program of  
420 education within the school.” (Redding & Henry qtd. in Sorenson and Ladd 2018) The research is clear that  
421 teacher turnover, whether among new or experienced educators, has lasting negative consequences for  
422 teacher quality. (Sorenson, Lucy C. and Helen Ladd “The Hidden Costs of Teacher Turnover” CALDER  
423 Working Paper No. 203-0918-1, 2018)  
424

425 There has been diminishing teacher pay, inequity, and a lower standard of living in the teaching profession in  
426 Wisconsin, as described earlier. From 2011 to 2016, the average teacher salary grew by only eight-tenths of  
427 one percent. Overall teacher compensation (salary and benefits) fell by more than \$5,000. Meanwhile,  
428 benefit cuts and cost shifting reduced total compensation by an average of \$5,500. For every dollar a teacher  
429 received in additional pay, that teacher gave back \$13 dollars in higher benefit costs. This lowered the  
430 standard of living for teachers across Wisconsin. Inequitable pay practices led to non-white educators seeing  
431 even lower compensation. Accounting for inflation, teachers of color lost \$6,800 in annual total  
432 compensation. Males new to teaching were much more likely to receive a starting salary of at least \$40,000  
433 than were their female counterparts. (“The Effects of Act 10 on Teacher Compensation in Wisconsin”  
434 WEAC Research & NEA CBMA August 2017)  
435

436 And, while the challenges are great, so is WEAC’s resolve to improve the lives of educators and the  
437 conditions of our public schools for our students. “An effective teacher is the most important school-based  
438 determinant of education outcomes. It is therefore crucial that school districts recruit and retain high-quality  
439 teachers.” (Allegretto, Sylvia A. and Lawrence Mishel. “The Teacher Pay Gap is Wider Than Ever”,  
440 Economic Policy Institute. 9 Aug. 2016)  
441

442 WEAC believes the most highly qualified and well-trained professional educator should be in front of every  
443 student, every day. “Common Policy responses include loosening of hiring standards through issuance of  
444 emergency teaching certificates and allowing teachers to teach in classrooms for which they are not qualified  
445 to teach. And, while this may limit vacancies, it also may contribute to staffing inadequacies where students  
446 are receiving instruction from the least experienced and/or least qualified teachers. This approach, in time,  
447 may lower teacher quality. Furthermore, efforts based solely on recruitment fail to address longstanding  
448 retention issues creating a revolving door in our schools.” (Aragon “Teacher Shortages: What We Know” 7)  
449

450 As has been noted earlier, “the WEAC believes that the teaching profession is a cornerstone of society and  
451 that teaching is both an art and a science. The goal of the profession must be to provide the highest quality

452 education to all students. To achieve this goal, the profession must be composed of individuals who meet the  
453 highest standards. These standards must be established, maintained, and governed by the members of the  
454 profession and must apply to recruitment, teacher preparation, induction, professional development,  
455 evaluation, practice, and accountability. Members of the teaching profession must assume expanded  
456 leadership roles and must have the time, resources, and decision-making authority to provide the highest  
457 quality instruction for each student. The WEAC believes successful teaching requires more than content  
458 knowledge, but also requires a degree or certificate in education, the ability to relate to students, and  
459 intangible qualities that cannot be quantified and are subjective. These intangible qualities reflect the art of  
460 teaching and include, but are not limited to empathy, charisma, and an ability to nurture. The Council  
461 believes that the NEA Principles of Professional Practice define the knowledge, skills, and dispositions a  
462 quality teacher should possess.” (WEAC Resolution A19)

463  
464 “The WEAC believes students should be encouraged to pursue a career in the field of education. The  
465 Council supports the establishment of organizations involving students interested in the field of education as  
466 a profession. The Council believes that its affiliates should promote the establishment of such organizations  
467 at all age levels and encourage its members to serve as advisers. The Council also believes that affiliates  
468 should strive to build cooperative relationships and partnerships with government, business, and community  
469 leaders to promote the field of education as a profession and as a vital component of every community.”  
470 (WEAC Resolution A20)

471  
472 Wisconsin can do better for students and our educators.

473  
474 Solutions to Establish Educator Attraction and Retention Policies:  
475

- 476 • Union-Led Induction and Mentor Programs. Since currently about one in five teachers in U.S.  
477 classrooms are in their first three years in the profession, and many teachers are now entering the  
478 profession through alternative certification programs, a comprehensive induction program can help to  
479 supply professional growth and improve student learning. (Julie Rowland Woods “Mitigating  
480 Teacher Shortages: Induction and Mentorship 2)

481  
482 Induction programs incorporate mentorship by an experienced teacher. “A comprehensive induction  
483 program would be a multi-year structured program of mentorship and professional development in  
484 which trained mentors provide constructive feedback to new teachers. This kind of program often  
485 ensures release time for participants and evaluates progress based on statewide or program  
486 standards.” (Julie Rowland Woods “Mitigating Teacher Shortages: Induction and Mentorship 2)  
487 Research has shown retention improved through induction and mentorship by more than two-thirds in  
488 districts in Ohio and New York. (Julie Rowland Woods “Mitigating Teacher Shortages: Induction  
489 and Mentorship 3)

490  
491 Teachers who serve as mentors supporting new teachers need training, compensation, and release  
492 time in order to ensure success. (WEAC Legislative Agenda 2017-2018) It is the responsibility of  
493 local districts to provide timely and appropriate mentors for early career educators. Local districts are  
494 responsible for supporting early career educators as they move from a provisional license to a life  
495 license. (WEAC Resolution A-24 - Support for Early Career Educators)

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- Implement Equitable, Predictable, and Sustainable Pay Plans. Criteria for career salary advancement should be objective, predictable, attainable, and professional. Salary models must include pay raises based on criteria that are objective and clear. The use of administrative evaluations and student test score data are unreliable, biased methods, as described earlier. In order to retain teachers, there has to be predictability of earnings and a career salary path that is sustainable and compensates educators who make a commitment to their students and their community. Salary models must be attainable for all educators, not a merit-based system leading to a competitive environment, which reduces collaboration and cooperation among colleagues. Salary models must not contain levels that are impossible to achieve. Finally, a salary model should compensate high-quality professional educators who have experience in the classroom and a high level of education. Educators who take time to study their craft and understand pedagogy deeply should be rewarded as the professionals that they are. (Rizotto, Joanna. “Career Salary Advancement-What Do Teachers Want?” 2018)

509

510 WEAC supports salary models which offer career salary advancement for all educators. (See

511 Appendix B). “Every child deserves an experienced, skilled, professional teacher. Therefore, the

512 primary purpose of a career salary system should be to attract and retain the best staff.” (Rizotto, J.

513 and Kraig, T. “Career Salary Advancement-What Do Teachers Want?” 2018)

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- Offer Financial Incentives. Student loan forgiveness, stabilization of healthcare costs, and a fully funded Wisconsin Retirement System (WRS) can improve educator retention. Everyone should be able to refinance their student loans in the same manner as home mortgages. Additionally, loan forgiveness and scholarships must be available for teachers and education support professionals in high-needs disciplines and hard-to-staff schools. (WEAC Legislative Agenda 2017-18)

520

521 The Wisconsin Retirement System, recognized as one of the best in the nation, provides stability to

522 public education employees so they can make plans for retirement. Maintaining the current structure

523 of the WRS provides peace of mind to educators who dedicate their lives to students, without

524 worrying about the legislature changing or reducing benefits.

525

526

527 As educators are not currently able to bargain over health care benefits, the quality of health care

528 benefits has declined in Wisconsin. Many educators have seen skyrocketing out-of-pocket expenses

529 and deductibles. This has a direct impact on the quality of life for educators and their families. A

530 statewide health care system for educators that provides a high quality of care and reasonable out-of-

531 pocket expenses can provide a stable, affordable health care system going forward.

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- Create Pathways for Teacher Leadership. Having a voice in school decisions, as described earlier, also makes a difference in retaining quality educators. Research indicates that job dissatisfaction, having little influence or autonomy in their school, and few opportunities for professional advancement could be significant sources of attrition. (qtd. in Micah Ann Wixom “Mitigating Teacher Shortages; Teacher Leadership” 2)

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541

Across the nation, State Teachers of the Year are given opportunities for teacher leadership, and one survey rated teacher leadership opportunities as one of their most significant professional growth experiences. (Wixom) Greater opportunities for teacher leadership in Wisconsin, for all educators, are needed. “Incentives should be created to increase the number of teacher-led schools in Wisconsin

542 school districts, which improves teacher voice and reduces staff resignations.” (WEAC Legislative  
543 Agenda 2017-18)

544  
545 Additionally, thinking about teacher leadership must be broadened in Wisconsin. Teacher-leader  
546 roles can take on a variety of forms including a multi-classroom leader who leads a team of teachers,  
547 co-teaches, co-plans, and provides on-the-job development; department or content chairs who act as  
548 liaisons between administration and colleagues and may have instructional leadership  
549 responsibilities; curriculum or assessment specialists who lead teachers in development of standards  
550 and in following curriculum or development of aligned assessments; and master or lead teachers who  
551 co-teach, lead a team of teachers, and work with new or struggling teachers to improve instruction.  
552 (Public Impact. “Teacher-Led Professional Learning: To Reach Every Student with Excellent  
553 Teachers—Defining teacher-leader roles” 2)

554  
555 Many of the solutions for restoring the professional status of educators and improving working  
556 conditions and school climate are also applicable in the area of educator retention policies. A school  
557 culture that values openness and teamwork is critical to sustaining teacher leadership programs,  
558 research shows. Administrators and teacher leaders must work together and communicate with staff.  
559 Schools need governance structures that are shared or participatory in nature. There must be  
560 supportive roles and relationships between teacher leaders, their colleagues, their principals, and the  
561 school district leadership. (Wixom “Mitigating Teacher Shortages: Teacher Leadership” 3)

- 562  
563 • **Mandatory, Educator-Controlled Preparatory Time.** There has been a massive erosion of educator-  
564 controlled preparation time for all educators in Wisconsin. State and federal mandates have forced  
565 school district administration to dramatically increase mandatory trainings for educators and school-  
566 wide and department-wide meetings. The lack of a fair grievance and arbitration process allows  
567 management to continue to erode working conditions, such as preparation time, while employees  
568 have little or no recourse. Management has added additional work hours and work days in many  
569 districts across Wisconsin, providing less time for educators to prepare for their students and provide  
570 one-on-one attention. Furthermore, the substitute teacher shortage has created circumstances in  
571 schools where educators are forced to cover classes for colleagues.

572  
573 For educators to be prepared and at their best for their students, they need time in their work day to  
574 plan, prepare, and collaborate with their colleagues. This time is best used at their discretion and not  
575 micro-managed to suit the needs of school district administration or building principals. “Mandatory  
576 preparation time during the work day should be required under state law as a solution to the massive  
577 workload required of teachers. Expansive and irrelevant data collection and increased workload are  
578 among educators’ top reasons for leaving the profession.” (WEAC Legislative Agenda 2017-18)

- 579  
580 • **Elevation of the Teaching Profession.** Keys to elevating the teaching profession include a restoration  
581 of respect in public discourse, as outlined previously. This starts with our leaders at the top. Stories of  
582 strong educators and stories of success with students must be shared systematically throughout each  
583 of our school districts and across the state through all available channels.
- 584  
585 • **Meet-and-Confer Process.** Instituting a meet-and-confer process is a first step leading to  
586 reinstatement of collective bargaining rights for educators. When educators are at the table discussing  
587 issues and needs important to their members and their students, schools function best. Currently, the

588 structure of inhibiting educator voice on relevant issues in our classrooms, in our buildings, and in  
589 our districts is not working. School districts that have found a way to work with their local union for  
590 a productive meet-and-confer process are finding success. This practice needs to be the norm instead  
591 of a rarity in our school districts in Wisconsin. School districts with a collaborative culture between  
592 the union and management make the best decisions for the students, parents, and communities that  
593 they serve. And, ultimately, educators need to be afforded the same protections as police and fire  
594 professionals to collectively bargain contracts with their employers.  
595

- 596 • Strong Local Unions. Local leaders must understand the law, know educator rights, and fight for the  
597 schools in which students deserve to learn and educators deserve to teach. WEAC must continue the  
598 work to visit educators in their school buildings and local communities, hearing firsthand success  
599 stories and struggles.  
600

601 Training for local leaders must continue to build the union of today and tomorrow, and to provide  
602 necessary resources. That includes WEAC's work to assist local associations to assess areas of  
603 strength, areas in need of growth, and to plan. For far too long, WEAC rested on its laurels and its  
604 legal rights, forgetting union history and the fundamental need to engage and organize educators  
605 around issues that matter to them and their students. The power of WEAC is in membership, and the  
606 more engaged members make a stronger union.  
607

608 WEAC embraces this time to re-tool, re-adjust, and re-imagine. The strength of WEAC as a state  
609 union depends upon the strength of our local associations across Wisconsin. WEAC is committed to  
610 growing and strengthening each local association. The future of Wisconsin students, the education  
611 profession, and public schools depends on it.



## CONCLUSION

*“Why go into the teaching profession? Just listen to the politicians who belittle our ability, blame us for every student whose grades do not reach arbitrary standards, and want to take away every fringe benefit we have.”*

- *A former teacher, on deciding to leave the profession*

More than any other time in Wisconsin, the future of the teaching profession rests on the next steps of our union. Our union is a vehicle for meeting the needs, interests, and aspirations of its members. By organizing and banding together, the union’s strength in numbers provides more power and effectiveness beyond what individuals could accomplish in isolation. Stephen Covey describes four basic human needs: To live, to love, to learn, to leave a legacy. Those needs can be translated for educator union members. To live = the need for a decent salary, benefits and fair treatment. To love = the need to have relationships with colleagues and to have a sense of belonging in one’s work. To learn = the need to continuously grow and learn in one’s practice. To leave a legacy = the need to make a difference in ALL student’s lives. (Jo Anderson Jr., Co-Executive Director of the Consortium for Educational Change)

Our union, along with community partners, is a force to organize around social justice issues that impact the lives of our students and families. The Wisconsin Education Association Council (WEAC) must continue to partner with community and parent organizations. WEAC must work in partnership with administration, school boards, legislators, and policy makers to remove obstacles and improve the conditions needed to transform top down bureaucracies into learning organizations. “In today’s racial and political climate, we can no longer afford to be conforming, passive, unimaginative and silent. We need innovative social justice warriors.” (LeeAndra Khan, CEO of Civitas Education Partners)

The power of the collective voice can never be underestimated and is something in which we must invest our time, resources, and energy. Collective advocacy is our new world. Our history is incredibly important, and the gains made over a hundred years will never be forgotten. Respect for educators and the profession needs to be re-grown in Wisconsin. This does not happen by asking for it, nor by expecting it. We need to be clear on what we need to do our jobs well to educate the future citizens of this state. This is accomplished through collective voice and collective action. Our public schools should be places in which a person entering the building can immediately sense an atmosphere of collaboration, determination, and success. The best ideas on how to make this happen come directly from our union, comprised of public school educators, who work in these environments every day.

We must let go of what once was and open our eyes to what can be. Through collective advocacy, educators have new opportunities to open the door to opportunity for all students.

## **APPENDIX A: WEAC RESOLUTIONS**

WEAC has a long history when it comes to improving school conditions and climate for educators and students. There are 41 WEAC Resolutions stating positions covering areas including fair funding, educator voice, safety and discipline, and workload. Here are some of the relevant WEAC positions:

- **A-3 DPI Practices**  
The WEAC believes that the DPI should be highly supportive of improving the educational environment.
- **A-24 - Support for Early Career Educators**  
The Council believes it is the responsibility of the local districts to provide timely and appropriate mentors for early career educators. The Council further believes that local districts are responsible for supporting early career educators as they move from a provisional license to a life license.
- **A-25 Education Support Professionals**  
The WEAC believes that qualified Education Support Professionals are a vital resource and should be employed and retained to ensure the quality of education for all public-school students. WEAC recognizes that Education Support Professionals perform a variety of important responsibilities within the school setting and should be compensated for pursuing professional growth opportunities. The Council also believes that Education Support Professionals should not be asked to assume the responsibilities of a licensed classroom teacher or to perform duties for which they have not received adequate training.
- **A-31 Effective School Management**  
The WEAC believes that competent school management is essential to effective schools. Effective management advocates for public education, promotes instructional improvement, demonstrates fair treatment of personnel, provides opportunities for employee growth, and encourages professional interaction among education employees.
- **A-35 Professional Self-Governance**  
The WEAC believes in the concept of self-governance of the education profession. The first step toward professional autonomy and self-governance is the control of educator preparation and licensing. The Council should be involved in determining and reviewing standards for licensure of educators in our public schools.
- **B-12 Human Relations**  
The WEAC believes that improved human relations are essential to the school environment. School systems shall plan appropriate activities to promote:
  - Appreciation and respect for persons' similarities, differences, needs, concerns, abilities and values.
  - Greater awareness of personal biases, stereotyping, discrimination, and prejudice.
  - Ongoing, active experiences and curriculum which increase multicultural and interracial understanding.
  - School recruitment policies that will ensure culturally diverse licensed and support staffs.
- **B-27 Disruptive Students**  
The WEAC believes that all students and public-school employees have a right to be safe from injury or the verbal threat of injury inflicted by others. The Council furthermore believes that appropriate use of restraint and/or seclusion may be necessary for the protection of a student or others. In order to promote optimal learning, the Council believes that any legislation regarding seclusion and/or restraint should reflect our members' and students' need for a safe, effective learning environment.
- **C-1 Time To Teach**

The WEAC believes that “time to teach” refers not only to those hours during which an educator is actually teaching but also applies to those conditions that contribute to the student-teacher relationship. These include, but are not limited to, a reasonable, carefully defined workload, a duty-free lunch period, space in which to work, access to telephones, adequate and appropriate office equipment, access to technology and resources, freedom from interruptions during instructional time, sufficient unencumbered planning time, time to evaluate student progress, and time for implementation of federal and state legislative requirements.

The Council also believes that, at all levels and in all disciplines, adequate common planning time should be provided during the student day for employees to design programs to meet the needs of students.

- C-7 Accountability

The WEAC recognizes that the term “accountability” as applied to public education, is subject to varied interpretations. The Council believes that educational decision-making is a responsibility shared by education employees, legislators, other governmental officials, school boards, administrators, parents and taxpayers. The Council believes education employees can be held accountable only to the degree that these other parties are also held accountable.

- C-8 Professional Involvement

The WEAC believes that education employees are most effective when they are given opportunities to participate in all areas of decision making. These areas must include:

- Direct input into courses offered,
- The allocation of funding under the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA),
- Authority in determining materials to be purchased under all budgeting practices,
- Input into planning and designing of school construction and remodeling,
- The choice to participate in determining school policies,
- The right to be paid released time to participate in professional improvement through conventions, workshops, and conferences,
- The right to paid released time to present testimony before governing bodies which establish educational policy, and
- The right to paid released time to serve on local, state, or national committees.
- Professional involvement by education employees must be allowed in a manner that does not overburden an employee's workload or create excessive demands on an employee's time. Education employees must be assured that their professional involvement will in no manner jeopardize their employment status. 03

- C-9 Site-Based Decision-Making

The WEAC supports site-based decision-making processes that are based on contractual and/or formal agreements between districts and local associations. The Council believes that the scope of local site-based decision-making should be limited only by the contractual and/or formal agreement.

The Council further believes that such agreements must include the following elements:

- Voluntary participation by local sites.
- A district-association structure for processing conflict resolution.
- An agreement on the scope of decision-making authority available to sites.
- Any site-based decision which would violate a negotiated contract must receive a waiver from the local bargaining unit specifying exact parameters and timeline. Waivers would be non-precedent-setting.

- Constituent representation appropriate to the site and selected by each constituency in conjunction with the local bargaining unit.
- Compensated planning and training time for staff and governance bodies as well as additional resources necessary for successful implementation.
- Compensation and/or release time for participating staff members. 92
- C-16 Teacher Workload  
The WEAC believes that the classroom teachers' maximum workload should be geared to the improvement of individualized instruction.
- C-18 Teacher Preparation Time  
The WEAC believes adequate, uninterrupted preparation time for all educators on a daily basis is integral to providing a quality education.
- C-19 Adequate Physical Facilities  
The WEAC believes that an education employee must have an adequate and secure work space. These areas are to be included within the classroom setting where appropriate. If such work space is not available or appropriate in the classroom, then it should be provided in a space contiguous to necessary resource materials.  
The Council further believes that facilities for personal hygiene, separate from student facilities, should be included within the school.
- C-20 Safe School Environment  
The WEAC believes that all educational facilities must be safe from all environmental and chemical hazards. The Council supports the establishment and vigorous enforcement of standards to ensure health and safety.  
The Council believes that education employees, students and their families must be notified of potential hazards and the action plan for corrections. The Council also believes that the affected school districts have the responsibility to notify the public of these hazards.  
The Council further believes that when facilities are altered or repaired, they do not create additional health hazards. Education employees required to handle hazardous materials must be given ongoing training in appropriate safety procedures.
- C-21 Safety and Well-Being of Education Employees and Students  
The WEAC and its affiliates shall work together to insist upon development and enforcement of laws, district and building policies to guarantee the safety of education employees and students. The Council believes school districts must develop and implement policies that control access to buildings and keep students and staff safe from violence in schools.  
The Council believes that when education employees are victims of physical attack, verbal abuse, or sexual or other harassment they should receive the full support of their employer in pursuing legal action and reimbursement for damages to their person or property.  
The Council further believes that education employees should have the right to bring suit against the legal party who brought forth false allegations or caused harm to them, in order to cover damages, emotional duress, pain and suffering, and time lost.  
The Council also believes that education employees must take the responsibility to call attention to student use of physical attack or intimidation, verbal abuse, or sexual or other harassment to another student so that appropriate action may be taken.  
The Council encourages its affiliates to develop curriculum within the schools leading students to the awareness and prevention of such abuses or harassments by any individuals. Further, the Council encourages its affiliates to cooperate with court systems to secure strict enforcement of law in cases involving such disturbances in the public schools.

- C-38 Compensation for Student Needs Meetings  
The WEAC believes that all education employees required to be in attendance at IEP, Section 504, and at-risk student meetings and/or student staffing that occur during their preparation time or before or after school hours be compensated at the district's negotiated hourly rate.
- C-39 School-Related Duties  
The WEAC commends those boards of education who provide adequate financial and time consideration to those individuals who assume the supervision and control of extra school-related duties and activities. Teachers should not be required to accept these assignments.

# APPENDIX C: LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

## Principles for Public Policy Wisconsin Education Association Council



### **NURTURING SCHOOLS**

Safe and welcoming schools that ensure time to learn and teach, up-to-date learning materials, and educator input are essential to student success. WEAC supports policies that include:

**Educator Involvement.** There is a close relationship between positive school climate and educator voice in discussions of working conditions and school decision-making. All decisions should include meaningful input from educators who will ultimately implement policies.

**Mandatory Preparation Time.** To do their best for students, educators need dedicated duty-free preparation time during the work day.

**Class Size Limits.** Small class sizes allow for one-on-one interaction between students and educators. Additionally, any student-teacher ratios used to determine policies should reflect actual student-teacher contact, rather than based on all campus instructional personnel.

**Safe Schools.** Students and staff deserve a safe place to learn and teach. Public policy should embrace diversity and protect immigrant students and their families. School discipline policies should be solution-based and recognize the need for adequate staff and resources, as well as collaboration with and support for, educators.

**Equitable Funding.** Wisconsin can ensure quality education by providing the funding needed for all students to achieve educational excellence. Specifically, policies should be developed to:

- Provide more funds for schools with high numbers of low-income students by placing weights in the state school aid formula.
- Fully fund special education in public schools. The state currently only funds 26 percent of these high costs, while special needs vouchers at private schools are fully funded.
- Guarantee per-pupil increases that at a minimum keep up with the cost of inflation.
- Increase the state's commitment to rural schools including sparsity and high-cost transportation aids, broadband access and grants to hire and keep qualified educators.

**Equitable Access and Diversity.** Equitable access to diverse public schools, including measures that increase diversity and diminish segregation, should be pursued.

**Local Control.** The authority of locally elected school boards to govern in the best interest of students should be recognized, including when it comes to school district referendums and takeovers.

### **STUDENT OPPORTUNITIES**

All students, regardless of their ZIP code, deserve the support, tools and time to learn from early childhood through adulthood. This means more one-on-one attention, inviting classrooms, a well-rounded curriculum, and solutions like these:

**Community Schools.** The Community Schools model of education offers a sustainable solution for struggling districts that privatizers cannot offer. Policies to create partnership funding between local school districts, the state and community partners should be advanced.

**Enhancing Services for Students.** A range of services should be supported including access to mental and general health practitioners, counselors, psychologists, social workers, school nurses and other specialists. Opportunities in career, trades and technical education should be advanced.

**High-Stakes Testing.** Too much focus on high-stakes testing takes away valuable time for learning. More focus should be placed on the availability of one-on-one instruction and educational opportunities.

**Universal Preschool.** School readiness should be invested in through early childhood programs, including funding for optional, quality pre-kindergarten programs for all three- and four-year-olds.

## **QUALITY EDUCATORS**

All students deserve caring, qualified teachers and education support professionals. To attract and keep the best in our classrooms, our Association supports:

**Wisconsin Retirement System.** Preservation of Wisconsin's fully funded retirement system is key so educational employees can plan for retirement without worrying about changing or reducing benefits.

**Supporting Educators throughout Their Careers.** Wisconsin needs high standards for teacher certification and preparation programs. Programs should balance the art and science of teaching, and alternative certification programs should receive regular review to ensure quality. WEAC supports:

- Incentives and financial support for paraprofessionals who pursue teacher certification, as well as continuing education and staff development for educators.
- Prohibitions against an individual supervisor/employer from taking away a teaching license.
- Comprehensive induction programs.
- High-quality mentoring, including funding for training, compensation and release time.
- Incentives and financial support to enable staff development that is ongoing and includes components for educators to provide feedback and direct change.
- Professional development around Culturally Responsive Teaching practices.

**Student Loan Debt Relief.** Borrowers should be able to refinance their student loans the same as they can with mortgages. Loan forgiveness and scholarships should be developed for teachers and education support professionals in high-needs disciplines and hard-to-staff schools.

**High-Quality Instructors in Technical Colleges.** Wisconsin's Technical Colleges need committed, professional educators with certification and experience in their fields as appropriate. Policies should emphasize the educational role of Technical College instructors, including supporting preparation time, the ability to use professional judgement, and access to professional development.

**[END]**

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