Welcome to WASDA’s August edition of our online Newsletter! It is hard to believe that summer is slipping away so quickly. The WASDA staff is busy preparing for the new year. Jessica has also been very busy updating member files and processing membership dues. This is the time of year when we see the greatest number of changes in our membership. If you have moved to a new district, please keep her informed of your new address, email address, etc. Since the majority of our communication with you will be via email and our website, it is imperative that we are kept up to date!

Registration will be opening soon for the WASDA Fall Superintendents Conference to be held September 21-23. We are very excited to welcome you all back to Madison in September! Our complete calendar of events is available online.

It was great to see so many of our members in Door County for the Annual Legal Seminar! Be sure to mark your calendar for next year’s event at the Stone Harbor Resort in Sturgeon Bay on July 26-28, 2023.

We hope you enjoy these last few days of summer!

Wisconsin Association of School District Administrators
4797 Hayes Road
Madison, WI 53704
608/242-1090; 608/242-1290 - FAX
www.wasda.org
2022 WASDA Fall Superintendents Conference
WASDA Executive Director’s Report
The Capitol Report - John Forester, Dir. Of Gov. Relations
100 Districts to Have New Administrators
38th Annual WSPRA Spectrum Awards
First Year Superintendents Academy
New Superintendents
Baird Video Library Update
Fall School Finance Workshops
Supporting Principal Excellence Academy
Message from WASDA President-elect John Thomsen
2023 Superintendent of the Year Process
CoSN News
Superintendent Vacancies
WASDA Calendar of Events
BOOK YOUR HOTEL ROOM BY AUGUST 21!

Concourse Hotel - Madison - (800) 356-8293
The room block with a room rate of $185 Concourse Premier Room/$235 Governor's Club Room will be available until August 21st (or until the block is full). On this date, any remaining rooms in our block will be released for general reservations at the hotel's prevailing daily rate, which may be higher than this group rate, so please book your overnight accommodations by August 21st. Please call (800) 356-8293 and tell the reservations department that you are with the WASDA Fall Superintendents Conference 2022.

DOWNTOWN MADISON HOTELS:
MADISON CONCOURSE HOTEL - 1-800-356-8293
MADISON MONONA TERRACE HILTON HOTEL - 1-866-255-5100
BEST WESTERN INN ON THE PARK - 1-800-279-8811
DOUBLETREE OF MADISON - 1-800-222-TREE
GRADUATE MADISON - 1-800-589-6285

FOR MORE HOTELS IN MADISON PLEASE VISIT: www.visitmadison.com
Join us on Thursday, September 22 for our third annual Facility Field Trip sponsored by Findorff, EUA (Eppstein Uhen Architects), and PMA! This year we are visiting the new Granite Ridge School in the Monona Grove School District. This building serves grades 3 through 5.

Granite Ridge School was designed to reflect the natural habitats found in this area of Wisconsin and has been built with a forward-focus on future flexibility and energy efficiency. The building layout emphasizes independence and a strong sense of community for young learners. Is your district running into issues with spaces that no longer serve the needs of your students? Come see and hear how the design at Granite Ridge addressed these concerns with dedicated flex cafes, multi-use common areas, and more! Join us to experience the modern, flexible, and collaborative learning environments that Monona Grove has to offer.

Begin to envision what could be possible!

TOUR DATE // September 22

- 2:50 – 3:30PM   Travel to Granite Ridge School
- 3:30 – 5:00PM   Tour Granite Ridge School
- 5:00 – 5:30PM   Travel back to Concourse Hotel
- 5:30 – 6:45PM   Reception for all WASDA Conference Attendees

Building Features Include:

- Highly flexible and collaborative grade wings
- Innovative spaces to learn together or independently
- Collaborative and inclusive environments that accommodate all learners
- Dynamic layout to encourage student-focused learning that is meaningful and relevant
- Streamlined experience for bus and parent drop-off

ALL ABOARD!

2022 WASDA Fall Conference Facility Field Trip
Granite Ridge School

ALL ARE WELCOME!

» RSVP through WASDA Conference Registration
» Transportation provided
My Recommendation Might Not Be Fun, But You Will Be Glad You Did It ~ Have a Productive August

Please click on the link below to hear a message from Jon.

CLICK HERE.

Please send your comments and questions to Jon - jbales@wasda.org.
100 DISTRICTS HAVE NEW ADMINISTRATORS

According to the records in the WASDA office as of July 25, 2022, 100 school districts in Wisconsin have or will have a new chief school district administrators for the 2022-23 school year. Of the 100 districts that will have new superintendents, 61 will have superintendents that will be classified as either beginning superintendents or as superintendents new to the state of Wisconsin. The remaining 39 will have chief school district administrators that have moved from one district in Wisconsin to a different school district in Wisconsin, are still listed as vacant or have an interim administrator.

Below is a listing of the school districts that have either a beginning administrator this year or an administrator new to the state of Wisconsin, an administrator that moved from one district to another this year, as well as the names of the districts that were still vacant at the time this WASDA Newsletter was published. PLEASE NOTIFY JESSICA AT THE WASDA OFFICE - jschwedrsky@wasda.org - WITH ANY ADDITIONAL ADMINISTRATOR CHANGES OR CORRECTIONS!

*Beginning/New Administrators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>New Administrator</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Albany</td>
<td>Kurt Soderberg*</td>
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<td>Algoma</td>
<td>Jesse Brinkman*</td>
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<td>Alma Center-Humbird-Merrillan</td>
<td>Drew Semingson</td>
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<td>Appleton</td>
<td>Greg Hartjes*</td>
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<td>Ashland</td>
<td>Robert Prater*</td>
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<td>Auburndale</td>
<td>Kevin Yeske (Interim)*</td>
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<td>Barneveld</td>
<td>Robyn Oberfell</td>
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<td>Beloit</td>
<td>Emmett Durnschi*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Berlin</td>
<td>Lynn Halverson*</td>
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<td>Brighton</td>
<td>Carrie Reid</td>
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<tr>
<td>Butternut</td>
<td>Ben Heninger*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cambria-Friesland</td>
<td>David Dude*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Campbellspor</td>
<td>Tom Wissink*</td>
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<td>Cedarburg</td>
<td>Jeridon Clark*</td>
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<td>CESA 1</td>
<td>Sue Doyle*</td>
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<td>CESA 4</td>
<td>Paul Fischer</td>
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<td>CESA 7</td>
<td>Colleen Timm</td>
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<td>CESA 9</td>
<td>Al Betry*</td>
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<td>Chequamegon</td>
<td>Kyle Cronan</td>
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<td>Clear Lake</td>
<td>Chris Petersen*</td>
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<td>Cochrane-Fountain City</td>
<td>Troy White*</td>
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<td>Columbus</td>
<td>Jacob Flood*</td>
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<td>Crivitz</td>
<td>Kelly Robinson*</td>
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<td>D.C. Everest</td>
<td>Casey Nye*</td>
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<td>De Pere</td>
<td>Christopher Thompson</td>
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<td>DeForest</td>
<td>Rebecca Toetz*</td>
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<td>Dodgeland</td>
<td>Jessica Johnson*</td>
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<td>Drummond</td>
<td>Missy Giesregen*</td>
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<td>Elcho</td>
<td>Rachel Lemanczyk*</td>
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<td>Elkhart Lake-Glenbeulah</td>
<td>Adam Englebreton</td>
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<td>Erin</td>
<td>Joannie Kalina*</td>
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<td>Fontana Jt 8</td>
<td>Steve Torrez*</td>
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<td>Franklin</td>
<td>Annalee Bennin</td>
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<td>Genoa City Jt No 2</td>
<td>Drew Halbesma*</td>
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<td>Germantown</td>
<td>Chris Reuter*</td>
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<td>Gibraltar</td>
<td>Brett Stousland</td>
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<td>Green Bay</td>
<td>Vicki Bayer*</td>
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<td>Greenwood</td>
<td>Joe Green*</td>
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<td>Randy Rensland</td>
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<td>Independence</td>
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<td>Michael Shimshak</td>
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<td>Mark Holzman</td>
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<td>Johnson Creek</td>
<td>Mark Gruen</td>
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<td>Kaukauna</td>
<td>Mike Slowinski*</td>
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<td>Kenosha</td>
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<td>Lac Du Flambeau</td>
<td>Josh Ernst</td>
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<td>Lake Country #1</td>
<td>Chad Schraffenragel*</td>
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<td>Lake Geneva</td>
<td>Peter Wilson*</td>
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<td>Lakeland UHS</td>
<td>Robert Smude</td>
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<td>Linn Jt 6</td>
<td>Tami Martin*</td>
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<td>Lomira</td>
<td>Ty Breitlow</td>
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<td>Luxembourg-Casco</td>
<td>Jo-Ellen Fairbanks</td>
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<td>Manitowoc</td>
<td>James Feil</td>
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<td>Marion</td>
<td>Troy Edwards*</td>
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<td>McFarland</td>
<td>Aaron Tarnutzer*</td>
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<td>Menominee Falls</td>
<td>VACANT</td>
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<td>Mercer</td>
<td>Renae McMurray*</td>
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<td>Merrill</td>
<td>Shannon Murray*</td>
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<td>Mishicot</td>
<td>Craig Gerlach (Interim)</td>
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<td>Monroe</td>
<td>Rodney Figueroa</td>
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<td>Montello</td>
<td>Liz Calmin*</td>
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<tr>
<td>New Auburn</td>
<td>Lee Bush (Interim)</td>
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<tr>
<td>New Lisbon</td>
<td>Scott Hickey*</td>
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<tr>
<td>New Richmond</td>
<td>Troy Miller*</td>
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<td>North Fond du Lac</td>
<td>Matt Mineau*</td>
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<td>Norway Jt 7</td>
<td>Adam Scanlon*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oconomowoc</td>
<td>Mike Sereno*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Owen-Withee</td>
<td>Scott Winch</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pittsville</td>
<td>Jason Knott*</td>
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CONTINUED, NEXT PAGE...
### 38th ANNUAL WISCONSIN SCHOOL PUBLIC RELATIONS ASSOCIATION'S SPECTRUM AWARDS

We're getting ready for the 38th annual Wisconsin School Public Relations Association's Spectrum Awards! Before the end of the school year, think about your best PR projects from the 2021-22 school year and consider submitting them in our annual recognition program. Not a WSPRA member, or want more information about this organization? [Learn more here](#).

**Watch for an email in the coming weeks with more information on how to enter!**

**The deadline for this year's competition will be FRIDAY, AUGUST 19th.**

And it's FREE to enter!

WSPRA's Spectrum Awards are a statewide opportunity for Wisconsin public education professionals involved in the writing and design of print and electronic materials and development of special projects.

Showcase your achievements.

Be recognized for your creativity and efforts.

Get constructive feedback about your communication efforts.

This year's entries must have been completed between July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022.

**Previous entries are ineligible, regardless of whether or not an award was earned.**

Use the "Enter Today!" link below for full details about the awards, including entry categories, judging criteria, scoring, and entry form.

**ENTER TODAY** If you have a Reviewr account, "Login." If not, "Signup and Submit."

The awards will be presented at the annual WSPRA Fall Conference Spectrum Awards Luncheon on November 17, 2022. The 2022 Fall Conference will be held at the Osthoff Resort in Elkhart Lake, November 16-18, 2022.

Questions? Contact us at [wspraspectrumawards@gmail.com](mailto:wspraspectrumawards@gmail.com).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Administrator Changes Continued:</th>
<th>Somerset</th>
<th>South Shore</th>
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<tr>
<td>Port Edwards</td>
<td>James Bena</td>
<td>Sparta</td>
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<td>Poynette</td>
<td>Jerry Pritzl*</td>
<td>Stevens Point</td>
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<td>Randolph</td>
<td>Brian Zacho*</td>
<td>Stone Bank</td>
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<td>Reedsville</td>
<td>Michael Nate*</td>
<td>Stoughton</td>
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<td>Rib Lake</td>
<td>Travis Grubbs*</td>
<td>Stratford</td>
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<td>Richland</td>
<td>VACANT</td>
<td>Suring</td>
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<td>Rosholt</td>
<td>Dennis Kaczor</td>
<td>Tigerton</td>
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<td>Royall</td>
<td>Tom Benson</td>
<td>Tomahawk</td>
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<td>Salem</td>
<td>Vicki King*</td>
<td>Tri-County</td>
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<tr>
<td>Seymour</td>
<td>Kellie Bohn</td>
<td>Union Grove Elementary</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sheboygan Falls</td>
<td>Zach Pethan*</td>
<td>Waterford Graded</td>
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<td>Shell Lake</td>
<td>Todd Felhofer</td>
<td>Watertown</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shullsburg</td>
<td>Mike Raso*</td>
<td>Wauzeka-Steuben</td>
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<tr>
<td>Slinger</td>
<td>Jim Curler*</td>
<td>Wilmot UHS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*New Administrators*
WASDA is committed to supporting the success of each new superintendent with induction experiences through Academy content for 2022-23 will give particular attention early on, to supporting superintendent decisions associated with leading and operating schools during these challenging times including building relationships with the school community and navigating the political context associated with decisions, addressing the widening achievement gaps, and utilizing federal funding. The Academy syllabus emphasizes developing successful board/superintendent relationships, promoting student achievement and practices to close achievement gaps, addressing school legal issues, wise business and fiscal stewardship, effective communications, and community engagement.

Academy presenters will provide rigorous content while engaging leaders in practical experience-based reflection and activities. Session objectives are designed specifically to assist new superintendents to avoid common errors that can create significant problems, derailing focus and results.

The 2022-23 First Year Superintendents Academy will combine in-person and virtual learning opportunities. The first two academy sessions (August 3 and 4) will be in-person workshops. The September and April in-person sessions are scheduled to accompany WASDA's Fall Conference and spring Annual Educational Conference.

Generally, virtual sessions will be held two times per month via Zoom™ with the session being 1 ½ hours long. Each first-year superintendent will be paired with a highly regarded, experienced superintendent for coaching. The coaching experience reaches beyond the simplistic textbook answers for issues to consider the nuances and subtleties of leadership which high performing leaders have mastered.

NEW SUPERINTENDENTS

If you are leaving your district, please be sure to notify the WASDA office of the name of the new person who will be assuming the superintendency. If the new person is either new to the superintendency or new to the state of Wisconsin, be sure to have them hold the dates of August 3-4 for the initial First Year Superintendents Workshop for the 2022-23 school year, which will be held at the Holiday Inn-Stevens Point.

REGISTER FOR THE FIRST YEAR SUPERINTENDENTS ACADEMY AT WWW.WASDA.ORG!
BVL AUGUST Update
We picked a few videos you might find helpful this month

Baird is dedicated to your district and your school finance needs. Although the BVL library is full of useful videos to be accessed anytime, this month in the business office, you might be interested in the below videos:

- Annual Meeting
- Annual Meeting Publications
- Budget Hearing and Adoption
- Cash Flow
- Cash Defeasance
- DPI Reporting – Summer School
- Referendum Information – Operational Referendum
- Referendum Information – Capital Referendum
- RL NR exemptions Energy Efficiency Exemption
- Summer School Reporting
- Who-What-Why Series – What does Being Positively or negatively Aided Mean?
- Who-What-Why Series What are the Different Types of Referenda

If you have any questions on the above videos, or if you have any comments on how the BVL can better serve your district, let us know! Reach out to any member of our team below; we’d be happy to help.

Dennis Birr
School Business Specialist
608-415-1254
dbirr@rwbaird.com

Debby Brunett
School Business Specialist
715-552-3567
dbrunett@rwbaird.com

Todd Hajewski
School Business Specialist
414-298-1974
thajewski@rwbaird.com

Keith Lucius
School Business Specialist
920-634-6999
klucius@rwbaird.com

Elise Murn
Coordinator
414-298-2324
emurn@rwbaird.com

Diane Pertzborn
School Business Specialist
608-438-8125
dpertzborn@rwbaird.com
WASDA is pleased to announce that it will be hosting two workshops entitled "Getting School Finance Right: From the Budget to the Levy." These workshops will be conducted by the DPI School Financial Services Team. Although open to all, this "how to do it from the ground up" workshop is geared toward new administrators or those with less than 3 years' experience. It will include:

- A detailed discussion and hands-on practice of the 2022-23 revenue limit calculation
- What to do with the October 1st Equalized Property Valuation from DOR and the October 15th General Aid Certification from DPI
- Determining the impact of the various state aids received, including the state aids for exempt business computers and personal property
- Conceptual overview of Equalization & Special Adjustment Aid (General School Aids)
- How the pieces all fit together (revenue limit/general aid/levy; equalized property valuation/levy/mill rate)

The extended time will allow participants to use their own district's numbers to do the various calculations with hands-on help from the School Financial Services Team. The goal is for you to be confident in your budget, revenue limit and general school aid numbers so the board can certify your district's levy correctly. **This is your opportunity to make sure you're getting it right!**

Items to bring with you to the workshop:

- A laptop computer
- Your district's 2022-23 October 15 revenue limit worksheet*
- Your district's Oct. 15th Certification of 2022-23 General School Aids from DPI*
- Your district's 3rd Friday in September 2022 membership count, including 2022 summer school*
- Your district's 2022 Equalized Values received October 1 from Department of Revenue*

*This information will be available on the SFS Team website so districts may choose to bring a hard copy or simply access the information online while at the workshop.*

Register at [www.wasda.org](http://www.wasda.org)
How K-12 Administrators can Prevent Teacher Burnout

Building a culture of trust can help teachers stay resilient in challenging times

After teaching through several years of a pandemic, many educators are burned out. We’ve all seen the statistics; in February, the NEA reported that 55% of teachers were considering leaving the profession earlier than planned (up from 37% in August 2021), and 90% said that burnout was “a serious problem.” Since January 2020, public schools have experienced a net loss of about 600,000 teachers. It’s not hard to imagine why dedicated professionals with a passion for teaching are feeling the strain of the past several years. What’s tougher is finding effective solutions.

Why are teachers feeling burned out? Many cite staff shortages that leave them doing too much, paired with students in crisis (the American Association of Pediatrics has declared a national emergency in child and adolescent mental health). Managing classrooms full of anxious students and challenging behavior would be a demanding job in the best of times; when you add virus precautions, disruptive quarantines, and a tough economy, the school building starts to look like a pressure cooker that could wear down even the most veteran educator.

But this isn’t a call for panic. There are ways that administrators can ease the pressure on educators and create an environment in which everyone can thrive. Here’s what that might look like from a teacher’s perspective.

Continue reading...

Make mental health a priority with free toolkits for all ages

Make Back-to-School Better

Calm is more than peace and quiet
We can help you create an effective calming space.

Learn More
School administrators need skillful support from leaders of teaching and learning; leaders who believe in coaching as a vehicle for developing exemplary leadership. The Professional Growth Coaching for Leaders Academy, presented by WASDA and AWSA, will equip superintendents, central office leaders and others who directly support principals with the tools and practices that enhance principal performance in leading schools of equity and excellence for student success. The overarching goal of the Academy is to assist with the development of instructional leadership skills that deliver breakthrough results for all students.

Knowledge Objectives:

- Identify strategies to determine best practices in teaching and learning.
- Understand how to use evidence of principal practice to identify next steps of leader improvement that foster a positive educational environment and support the diverse cultural and learning needs of students.
- Learn a process for determining local academic priorities and problems of practice.
- Understand how to identify a shared problem of practice and recognize strategies to impact change.

Practice Objectives:

- Analyze coaching conversations and scenarios for effectiveness and intended impact.
- Promote reflection on impact by engaging leaders in coaching simulations that use targeted questioning and conversation strategies.
- Engage in a relationship with a principal for the purpose of practicing and analyzing coaching skill.
- Facilitate coaching conversations that ensure equity and excellence in schools.

Academy Dates
Each workshop will be held at the Wisconsin School Leadership Center in Madison and begin with registration and breakfast at 7:30 a.m. and conclude by 3:00 pm.

- Thursday, October 6, 2022
- Wednesday, November 30, 2022
- Thursday, January 5, 2023
- Thursday, March 16, 2023

The sessions are intended to build upon each other and therefore you are to attend all four sessions.

Register at [www.wasda.org](http://www.wasda.org)
YOUR GOALS.
OUR MISSION.

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.
MESSAGE FROM WASDA PRESIDENT-ELECT
JOHN THOMSEN

Gratitude
Thank you to Larry Ouimette for your many years of service and leadership in public education as well as your year of leadership as the WASDA President. Your calm and reassuring leadership has been very much appreciated by all of us. We wish you well in your retirement.

Thank you to the WASDA Executive Board and Committee for your trust in me. Thank you to Jon Bales for your leadership and service, especially during the past challenging years. Thank you to my CESA I colleagues as well. You are a remarkable group of leaders and I treasure our time together and our strong, productive, positive, working partnerships.

My name is John Thomsen and I am currently in my 11th year as a superintendent and I am finishing my 7th year as the Superintendent of Schools in the Whitefish Bay School District. I am humbled and honored to serve as WASDA President-Elect during the 2022-23 school year.

I ask all of you to presume positive intentions; my intentions are nothing but positive, and should I unintentionally misstep or upset you, I ask for your forgiveness, understanding, and grace.

Recognize the WASDA Membership for Job Well done
I think it is appropriate to recognize the many remarkable leaders in the room who have served graciously, unselfishly, and professionally during the pandemic. Superintendents have served their communities well with patience, courage, kindness, dignity, and respect. You were not always treated the same way from those in and around your school community.

Superintendents continuously took the high road and the high ground. This can be a very lonely place to be, especially when treated poorly. But at the end of the day, it was the right place to be, and you could look yourself in the mirror and know you were doing the very best you could with the information available to you and your teams at that time.

As the fury spun in many of our communities, students were watching, observing, and learning. With the children we serve, there are times in which more is caught than taught. Students learn from, and often imitate, the actions of adults around them. That is so concerning as we watched some adults’ actions as they participated in local government in disrespectful ways. There were times this was even close to civil discourse.

What is not concerning to me whatsoever, and what I am so proud of, is how the superintendents in the State of Wisconsin and beyond, have led the last during the two plus years. That is, being solution-based, being focused on what is best for students and staff, and being as responsive to local communities as much as possible. This was and continues to be a challenge, as many local communities continue to be split on many COVID related and many non-COVID related issues.

So, let us pause right now, reflect, and be collectively thankful for the great work every superintendent and their teams have done during the pandemic especially. Please join together in a round of applause, for the collective effort of the entire WASDA membership. So, well done!
My Family
I grew up in the home of an educator. My dad, Coach Thomsen, was a PE teacher, football, wrestling, and tennis coach at Wauwatosa West High School. The last portion of his career, Coach Thomsen served as the Athletic Director at Tosa West. Our family lived two blocks from Eisenhower Elementary School, Whitman Middle School, and Tosa West High School. This was a wonderful place and environment to grow up in.

My father is my greatest teacher. At 85 years of age, he still leaves me thinking about important questions, and not just providing his answers. I think that is true of the best teachers.

My other greatest teacher is my mother. She continues to teach by daily example in all areas of life - again, often, more is caught than taught. "When the student is ready, the teachers will appear."

Thank you Mom and Dad for being my greatest teachers - I know I am slow to catch on at times.

I have two sisters - Karen and Mary. Karen passed away a little over one year ago and I miss her dearly. Karen is one of my biggest supporters to this day. Karen's unyielding belief in me was often the fuel I needed for pushing forward during my most challenging and difficult times. She will always be there for me. I love Karen and I miss her.

Mary and I live about two blocks away from each other and we grow closer as the years go by. Mary worked as a nuclear medical technician in southeastern Wisconsin and for GE Labs as a trainer of highly sophisticated medical equipment for most of her career. Mary has a great sense of humor, will help anyone in need, and is a wonderful role model for all. Mary is always there for me as well.

I have been married to my best friend Lisa for almost 29 years. I could not do the work I do without her unconditional love and support. I am a truly lucky man. Lisa and I have three remarkable children, Matthew 27, Brandi 22, and Danielle 21. Our children are products of the Elmbrook School District and have benefitted from the remarkable leadership and talented instructional and support staff that are dedicated to each and every child.

Early Educational Experiences
I had a lot of fun in school. A lot of fun. I could have done much better in K-12. I had priorities, many priorities. Many of them were outside of the classroom. My senior year I took physics and decided I better start trying at things "inside a classroom" as college was just around the corner.

Another one of my greatest teachers was my physics teacher, Joe Crnkovitch. Joe answered questions with questions; questions with questions; questions with questions; so much so that I gave him the name, "The Rock."

I called him the Rock because I could not get anything out of him. Again, he never provided us with an answer, just another question - another question; a different question to keep us thinking. He kept me thinking, thinking, thinking, and possibly helping me to discover the answer. The Rock - that was long before Chris Rock and Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson.

This was the first time I had to really think in school. This remains troubling to me. I see a big difference between true student engagement and simply "playing school." I believe our best teachers leave students with more questions than answers and don't allow students to simply "play school." That was a formative experience and an engagement technique I would take with me in all learning spaces.

I did not always listen to my teachers, nor did I always listen to my greatest teachers. My father tried on a few occasions to talk me into other occupations.
I guess he just wanted something better for me. "An attorney John. You should become an attorney. You should either become one, or you're going to need one."

**My Career Path**

I graduated from UW-La Crosse and I began my career at Greendale High School teaching math and coaching, and then moved to Greenfield High School in my second year teaching math and coaching as well.

After 5 years, I somehow lost my "why," or maybe my "why" was not clear. I resigned my teaching position for a job in the private sector. I will never forget the day I resigned. I was very sad but I knew I needed to step away from education. Our students deserve our very best every day, and I was not in a position to give them my best.

I worked in emergency air freight for two years and found success. The things that drove me out of public education were the same things that pulled me back in. I was lucky to get my same job at Greenfield High School with the same teaching duties and coaching opportunities. Note to self: when leaving, thank everyone for the opportunity. Never burn a bridge.

When I went back into the classroom, everything had changed in terms of how I approached our students, learning, and the classroom itself. I won't get into those details today, but what I will share is my unwavering belief that when someone is not happy about being in the classroom and working with students, it is our duty as leaders to support them the very best we can, to help them get to a better spot. If that is not possible, it is our duty to coach them out. That is what is best for kids. Our students deserve our very best every single day. I also want people to be happy, and if that means they go somewhere else to find happiness, I will support that.

After five more years as a high school math teacher, coach, and advisor, and a lot of graduate school, I was provided an opportunity to be the Associate Principal at Greenfield High School. Yes, the same school. What a great opportunity to move up within the same school! A year later, I was provided the opportunity to be the principal at Greenfield High School. Yes, the same school. What a great opportunity.

Five years later, I was provided the opportunity to be Assistant Superintendent-Director of Secondary Education in the School District of Greenfield. Yes, again, the same district. I enjoyed my time in Greenfield and worked with remarkable team members, school boards, and inspiring students. It was difficult to leave Greenfield, but being the Superintendent of Schools in St. Francis was a dream come true.

I began in St. Francis on July 1, 2011 - not the best start date for historical reasons, but was blessed to have been provided that opportunity. St. Francis had a great Board, great leaders, great team members, and awesome students and community. We earned AdvancedEd District Accreditation and enhanced educational opportunities for all, as well as increased rigor across the system. I was sure I would try to end my career in St. Francis, eventually retiring there.
The Superintendency in Whitefish Bay opened and I was encouraged to apply. I was fortunate enough to be offered the position and quickly learned what a thoughtful and supportive School Board I would be working with. Our leaders and team members are amazing and our students show up every day, ready and eager to learn. Even during the most difficult last two years, Bay continues to have a model School Board, great leaders, great team members, awesome students, and a wonderful and supportive community.

**Last Year's Annual Meeting**

Due to the potential uncertainty of last year's annual meeting, about 1,200 community members packed the Whitefish Bay High School Auditorium in support of the public schools and annual tax levy. Words cannot describe the overwhelming support our team felt that evening. That specific event is the overall reflection of support there is in the Village of Whitefish Bay for public schools. With that type of support comes extremely high expectations for all. When the support is there, meeting that challenge is welcomed.

**Other Leadership Experiences**

Throughout my tenure as a school administrator, I have served as the Woodland Conference President; the CESA I PAC Chair; as well as on the Southeastern Wisconsin Schools Alliance Executive Committee. I have also been an adjunct professor for two local universities.

In each of these roles, it was important that the mission, vision, and goals were agreed upon and defined, and that specific and clearly delineated action steps were collectively monitored and adjusted when necessary in order to achieve desired results. Fragmentation around the mission and the work will get you nowhere quickly.

**Why WASDA Leadership?**

As a new superintendent, I received tremendous support through the New Superintendent Program offered by WASDA. I also value the great leaders I have been able to meet and network with throughout the state.

Right out of the gates as a new superintendent, I had a few significant challenges and landed in my in-basket. I quickly learned that we don't get to pick and choose the challenges that fly into our in-basket - there is no exchange counter for local dilemmas.
I had to respond to these very thoughtfully and strategically, as they were new and rare challenges even the most seasoned superintendents had not encountered. I reached out to my network. These issues stumped my new and old professional network - Lou, Gerry, Keri, and Ken….Todd, Mike, Ashly, Lisa, Melissa, Norm, and others had not encountered these before. Yet, we were able to develop a thoughtful response and process alongside the School Board that worked in each case.

The tremendous support I received by WASDA and my professional network allowed me to navigate the choppy seas and helped all involved, including helping the school community come out unscathed and actually stronger. No one was harmed, and actually, most grew.

The same holds true after 11 years. I can't do this work without this remarkable network. I am so grateful and humbled by the intellect, thoughtfulness, and overall talent in our WASDA membership and the leaders in this room.

Since 2011, I have attended WASDA conferences and events on a regular basis. I am familiar with the leadership responsibility that comes with being President-Elect of WASDA.

The WASDA Mission
I am fully committed to the WASDA mission, "the premiere collaborative educational leadership association, serves superintendents by providing professional support and expanding their capacity to be effective, innovative leaders." I believe great organizations continuously strive to grow, improve, and enhance services and support. I am committed to this and know that we never arrive.

I find great value in the learning that takes place during our professional events, and have enjoyed the support and expanded professional networking I have received as a WASDA member.

I am also wholeheartedly committed to the WASDA Belief Statements below:

1. Superintendents exist to **serve children**, community, and the profession.
2. Superintendents exist to ensure that **all children** receive a quality education.

   **All Children** - DPI's Definition of educational equity:
   *Educational equity means that every student has access to the resources and educational rigor they need at the right moment in their education, across race, gender, ethnicity, language, disability, sexual orientation, family background, and/or family income.*

3. Superintendents are responsible for providing **leadership and engaging the community for our educational future**.

   ●Our communities need to understand our work - tell your story from the inside out.
   ●There are more educational options than ever before. As a consumer, I like options. However, all schools receiving tax dollars need to have the same expectations and responsibilities, the same unfunded mandates, and the same responsibility to serve all students - rejecting none at the schoolhouse doors.

4. Superintendents embody and **model strong ethical behavior**. This is vital to the overall reputation of our profession and more is caught than taught.
The Importance of WASDA Events and Professional Supports
The State average for a superintendent tenure in a district is 3.8 years. You can't do this work alone and make it long-term.

Twenty-five percent of all superintendents in the State of Wisconsin have three or fewer years of experience in the superintendent role. To those in this group, thank you. We need you now more than ever and we need you well into the future.

Please don't go it alone. Connect, collaborate, and problem-solve with other leaders.

Also, veteran and seasoned superintendents require and benefit from ongoing support in the current and somewhat volatile educational and political landscape. To those in this group, thank you. We need you now and into the future. Connect, collaborate, and problem-solve with other leaders. Reach out and support those around you and ask for help when you need it. Don't go it alone.

No one else holds this leadership position in your district, so it is essential that WASDA continues to facilitate professional learning, leadership capacity building, and creates the conditions to support the networking between superintendents across the state.

When this is accomplished, it not only benefits superintendents, but also enhances public school districts, schools, communities, and ultimately the students and staff - those we serve. As President-Elect, I am committed to working with others to ensure this can continue for all WASDA members.

My hope is that we are seeing a final sunset on the pandemic. As we continue to off-ramp from the COVID-19 pandemic era, and considering the political polarizing environment that exists, it is extremely important that WASDA remains relevant in all conversations with policy and procedure decision makers. This includes being at the table, providing feedback and direction, advocacy, and partnering whenever possible with groups like WASB, AASA, WASBO, DPI, state and federal officials, and advocacy groups.

As President-Elect, I can draw upon my advocacy experience with our School Board, local communities, government officials, representatives, and SWSA to enhance WASDA's influence in this area.

Being in a membership service organization, it will continue to be important to enhance learning and support for all WASDA members. As President-Elect, I believe it will be increasingly important to garner the voice of our membership in order to inform professional development, advocacy positions, and areas of support that will be required. All voices in the WASDA membership matter.
Care for Self
When COVID began, I was stumbling more than typical. I decided I would be committed to coming out of the experience being a better son, a better brother, a better husband, a better dad, a better friend, and a better leader. This was only possible if I could focus on the things that matter.

1. **Self care** is not selfish - faith, sleep, healthy diet, quiet time, meditation, breathing, reflection, fitness, and movement.
2. **Relationships** - Family, friends, School Board, team, school community. My identity has to be more than a superintendent.
3. **Grow and learn** - Strive for growth and excellence. No one in this room is perfect. Learn forward and give yourself grace - yes, give yourself grace.
4. **Gratitude** - Be thankful and find the joy of your calling each and every day. What a tremendous privilege and responsibility it is to be a superintendent.

In closing
It's important that you know that I take our work together and leadership responsibilities within public education very seriously, although I don't take myself seriously at all.

I am driven, I work hard, I have fun, and I relentlessly strive to maintain a positive, optimistic, and solution-based spirit. This approach has served me well throughout my 30 years in public education.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve in this WASDA leadership position. I look forward to meeting more of you later today and into the future.

If you see me wandering around aimlessly, please stop me and introduce yourself - I would like to get to know you. Finally, thank you for the work you do in serving students, your school communities, and the greater good. Thank you and be well.

John :)  
john.thomsen@wfbschools.com
2023 National Superintendent of the Year Program

About the Program
The National Superintendent of the Year® Program pays tribute to the talent and vision of the men and women who lead our nation's public schools. This program is sponsored by First Student, AIG Retirement Services and AASA. Download the FAQ here.

Eligibility
Any AASA Affiliate Association State Superintendent of the Year® who plans to continue in the profession may be nominated. This program is designed to recognize the outstanding leadership of active, front-line superintendents. It is not recognition of service at retirement or a program to reward current state or national leaders.

Selection Criteria
Each candidate for the National Superintendent of the Year® Award must first be named by their state association as the State Superintendent of the Year.

Each State Superintendent of the Year is judged on the following criteria:

Leadership for Learning – creativity in successfully meeting the needs of students in his or her school system.

Communication – strength in both personal and organizational communication.

Professionalism – constant improvement of administrative knowledge and skills, while providing professional development opportunities and motivation to others on the education team.

Community Involvement – active participation in local community activities and an understanding of regional, national, and international issues.

STATE APPLICATION INFORMATION:

Nominations for both the STATE and the NATIONAL award must be completed online.
NOTE: to be eligible for the AASA National Superintendent of the Year® Award, any nominee must first be awarded their state superintendent of the year designation.

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Premier of Season 5, The EmpowerED Superintendent Series and release of the CoSN 2022 Student Home Connectivity Report

The Consortium for School Networking (CoSN) in partnership with the Wisconsin Association of School District Administrators in its role as a state superintendent association endorser of the CoSN Empowered Superintendent Initiative, along with the CoSN Wisconsin state affiliate chapter, Wisconsin Educational Technology Leaders are honored to support the work of current and aspiring superintendents and district leadership teams in leading all aspects of digital learning transformations.

Premier of Season 5, EmpowerED Superintendent Series
The EmpowerED Superintendent Series, which is co-hosted by AASA, CoSN and edWeb.net and sponsored by ClassLink, launches Season 5 on Monday, August 8, 2022, at 5pm Eastern Time with Leading Learning in the 2022-2023 School Year: Ready, Set, Go. Superintendent Panelists Dr. David Schuler, Dr. Carol Kelley, and Mr. Matthew J. Miller, join host/moderator Ann McMullan in looking at the new school year through the lens of strategies and innovations that engage all learners, teachers, administrators and families in their districts. The Superintendents will also review how they are maximizing new funding resources and their plans to sustain the projects that have been funded by access to new financial aid. For additional information and the link to register free for the live broadcast (or the recording or podcast version after the August 8 broadcast) please go to https://home.edweb.net/webinar/supers20220808/.

CoSN 2022 Student Home Internet Connectivity Study
CoSN recently released its report on the second year of the association’s breakthrough study on student at-home connectivity and the impact on students’ home-to-school experiences. The study involved seven K-12 urban suburban and rural school districts serving a combined total of nearly 300,000 students. The findings in the study provide school leaders with a guide to learn their own next steps in solving the inequities that still exist around school to home connectivity which has a great impact on the work students are able to access and complete when doing schoolwork from home or other locations outside of their school settings. You are invited to access the complete CoSN 2022 Student Home Internet Connectivity Study at:
https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/jennifer.boronyak/viz/CoSNHomeInternetConnectivityFindingsJuly2022/DataStory
In addition to the CoSN 2022 Student Home Internet Connectivity Study, CoSN provides a wide variety of resources for school leaders who are working to solve the challenges of digital equity at:
https://www.cosn.org/digital-equity/

CoSN Membership: If you, your school or district would like more information about joining CoSN or getting more involved with CoSN, please contact Me’Shell Sheffield, CoSN Director of Membership and State Chapters, at MSheffield@cosn.org.