

1 WISCONSIN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL BOARDS, INC.

2 Madison, Wisconsin

3 December 1, 2024

4
5 REPORT TO THE MEMBERSHIP ON PROPOSED 2025 RESOLUTIONS

6 WASB Policy & Resolutions Committee

7 Andrew Maertz, Reedsville School Board, Chair

8
9
10 Resolution 25-01: *Blue Ribbon Commission on School Funding*

11 *Amend Existing Resolution 2-061*

12 ~~Create:~~ The WASB supports all twenty of the recommendations of the bipartisan Blue Ribbon
13 Commission on School Funding, as published in January 2019 that align with WASB resolutions. The
14 WASB further calls upon the Legislature to provide an equal opportunity for every pupil to have a
15 sound basic education.

16
17 **Rationale:** The current challenges facing school districts are numerous and growing. Declining
18 enrollment, staffing shortages, high inflation, and lagging state support threaten to upend school
19 finance and students' education across the state of Wisconsin. In 2018 the Legislature established a
20 bipartisan Blue Ribbon Commission on School Funding that published 20 recommendations designed
21 to help districts in critical areas.

22
23 Despite the bipartisan nature of their work and support from the public K-12 education community,
24 the findings of the Commission have yet to be acted upon.

25
26
27 Resolution 25-02: *Pathway to Licensure for Paraprofessionals*

28
29 **Amend Existing Resolution 4.61 (a) as follows:** The WASB supports reasonable efforts to
30 provide pathways to licensure for teaching candidates in subject or content areas where there is a
31 shortage of licensed teachers, provided that candidates have bachelor's degrees and/or are
32 qualified to be in a classroom as demonstrated by appropriate experience, knowledge, and skills
33 in the subject or content area, and rigorous training in pedagogy, assessment, and classroom
34 management.

35
36 **Rationale:** In a time of staffing shortages in K-12 education, districts have been looking for
37 alternative pathways to teacher licensure to provide opportunities for licensure to individuals
38 who may struggle to overcome the barriers of entry in a traditional pathway to licensure. Last
39 legislative session, a proposal was put forward to create a provisional license for
40 paraprofessionals already working in a school district, to teach in that school district.

1 This new pathway would give districts the ability to sponsor qualified paraprofessionals in their
2 districts to become licensed teachers in a time of great need.

3
4
5 **Resolution 25-03: *Early Literacy Assessments for English Learners***

6
7 **Create:** The WASB supports that early literacy assessments, screeners, and diagnostics required
8 in state law be provided in an English Learner (EL) student's home language in accordance with
9 current best practices in assessment and instruction for bilingual program students. EL students
10 tested in English should not be labeled "at risk" without verification that the student also fails an
11 early literacy test in their home language.

12
13 **Rationale:** 2023 Wisconsin Act 20 requires traditional public schools and independent charter
14 schools to administer a universal screening assessment. A student that scores below the 25th
15 percentile is identified as "at-risk," meaning the student must be given certain interventions.
16 Students who are not English proficient may be labeled "at risk" by a reading screener in English
17 even though they may not have reading difficulties but instead may have a language barrier that
18 the reading interventions will not address.

19
20
21 **Resolution 25-04: *Decoupling Public and Private School Funding***

22
23 **Create:** The WASB supports separating state funding for voucher schools and independent
24 charter schools from the school aid formula.

25
26 **Rationale:** Future school choice expansion (under current law) could increase local property
27 taxes to the extent school boards increase their levy to make up for the deducted aid. Taxpayers
28 would be protected from additional property tax increases if decoupling occurs as compared to
29 the current funding system that would use further state aid reductions and higher property taxes
30 to fund the program.

31
32 Removing voucher and independent charter school funding from the school aid formula would
33 reduce the burden on local property taxpayers, who currently are facing increases in property
34 taxes as a result of the current funding structure for the programs.

35
36 **Resolution 25-05: *Consistent Standards Across All Wisconsin Schools***

37
38 **Amend Existing Resolution 2.70 (2nd paragraph):** All publicly funded schools, including
39 private schools receiving voucher funding, must have the exact same accountability, reporting,
40 and transparency standards~~and~~ requirements.

Rationale: Currently there is a disparity in the accounting, reporting, and adherence to state education statutes within Wisconsin public, private, and charter school districts and local education agencies who receive state funds. There exist differences in rules for public versus private schools in application of state education reporting requirements and participation in statutory mandates. The current statutory structure lacks transparency for state taxpayers by allowing random inequities in accountability and adherence to state statutes among like groups with no rational basis.

Resolution 25-06: *Early Childhood Education Funding and Public-Private Partnerships*

Create: The WASB supports state funded public school 3K and full day 4K for all Wisconsin children. The WASB also supports collaboration between public schools and other public agencies and programs, private childcare providers, and Wisconsin institutions of higher learning. The WASB further supports district discretionary use of expanded Title I dollars to earlier grade levels by districts meeting the benchmarks for National School Lunch Program (NSLP) direct and categorical participation, and 3K and 4K student households meeting income eligibility for NSLP.

Rationale: There exist challenges with the cost and availability of high-quality childcare and early childhood education for many families. Additionally, many areas in Wisconsin are experiencing an increase in poverty and economic disadvantage, and childcare deserts exist in many areas.

Early interventions such as high-quality early childhood education and childcare, including early literacy and social skills development, that counteract poverty and student economic disadvantage have positive, lasting effects, and a high return on public investment, especially when applied early in a child's education.

Resolution 25-07: *Staff Mental Health*

Create: The WASB supports legislation to fund statewide mental health initiatives for district staff in order to help improve staff mental health and increase retention rates.

Rationale: Many school staff members experience significant stress due to the unique demands of working in a school district. School staff are asked to support students' social, emotional, behavioral, physical, and academic needs in concert with the cooperation of families, the community, and an elected school board. This is due in no small part to the dedication, talents,

1 and perseverance of all school personnel. However, in some cases, school staff members find
2 themselves feeling overwhelmed, exhausted, underappreciated, or may even be experiencing
3 burnout.

4
5 In a time of great staff turnover in education, increasing access to mental health services for staff
6 could help retain teachers in the profession.

7
8
9 **Resolution 25-08: *Accountability and School Report Card Standards***

10
11 **Create:** The WASB supports timely revision of the school accountability system to calculate
12 school and district report card overall scores based on student achievement only. Other data may
13 be included for informational purposes, but not used in calculating the overall score. Consistent
14 grade bands should be used rather than school building configuration.

15
16 **Rationale:** This resolution aims to redefine the state school accountability system to provide
17 greater simplicity and transparency by focusing on solely student achievement in calculating
18 school and district report card scores. This redefinition additionally aims to establish consistent
19 scoring metrics across grade bands (such as K-5, 6-8, 9-12) rather than individual school
20 building configurations that may differ from district to district.

21
22
23 **Resolution 25-09: *Educational Objectives***

24
25 **Amend Existing Resolution 3.05 Educational Objectives as follows:** The WASB supports
26 local initiatives that promote increased student academic achievement in key curricular areas
27 including science, math, language arts, social studies, foreign language, and technology with the
28 intent of ensuring college, career, and workforce readiness, in addition to supporting the
29 development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills. The WASB affirms local school
30 board responsibility to establish student course offerings and credit requirements that support the
31 education mission as stated above.

32
33 **Rationale:** The original resolution is limited by listing a finite number of curricular areas. The
34 goal of support for local district initiatives should be ensuring they have the resources necessary
35 to provide course offerings that lead to college, workforce, and career readiness.

1 **Resolution 25-10: *Truancy***

2
3 **Amend Existing Resolution 3.83 Truancy as follows:** The WASB supports legislation which
4 would clarify the responsibilities of school districts, parents, students, courts, and law
5 enforcement agencies in the enforcement of truancy laws ~~and provide greater latitude in~~
6 ~~applying disciplinary measures to keep students in school~~ with the goal of keeping students in
7 school by using strengths-based and evidence-based approaches that focus on families, schools,
8 and community organizations.
9

10 **Rationale:** Amending the current resolution on Truancy will better align it with emerging
11 research and data that suggest an increase of disciplinary measures may not produce positive
12 outcomes in this regard. A strengths-based approach is a way of working that focuses on an
13 individual's strengths, rather than their deficits.
14

15
16 **Resolution 25-11: *Funding for School Meal Debt***

17
18 **Create:** The WASB supports legislation that allocates money to reimburse districts for the
19 cost of unpaid school meal debt if they are feeding all students without stigma.
20

21 **Rationale:** Communities continue to show that they are willing to bear the burden of paying
22 for school meals if students are unable to do so by fundraising and donating money to cover
23 unpaid school meal balances. Several districts within the state pay for school meals for all
24 students. The state could alleviate that burden on districts, students, and families by allocating
25 to a fund that districts can submit for reimbursement at the end of the year.
26
27

28 **Resolution 25-12: *Cybersecurity***

29
30 **Create:** The WASB calls upon the legislature to allocate funding to school districts for
31 cybersecurity measures, including, but not limited to, cybersecurity software/hardware
32 upgrades and trainings for personnel.
33

34 Furthermore, the WASB encourages school boards to develop a plan of action and/or a policy
35 on how the district will respond in the event of a cyber-attack. This may include whether a
36 ransom will be paid, how to operate in the event of a loss of power or data records, and
37 determining authority structures and procedures for communicating with law enforcement.
38

1 **Rationale:** Ransom attacks and other such cybersecurity threats continue to be a growing
2 problem for school districts. Often viewed by malicious actors as particularly vulnerable
3 targets, schools unfortunately have very little funding and experience in cybersecurity matters
4 to help resist cybersecurity threats. The proposed resolution language would aid schools by
5 calling on the state for investment in key protections, as well as providing guidance on best
6 practices that could help alleviate damage in the event of an attack.

7
8
9 ***(Note: Headings/Titles of resolutions and placement in the book are decided by WASB staff.***
10 ***The delegates need to approve resolution language changes and deletions. The numbers in***
11 ***parentheses indicate the year the original/existing language was adopted by delegates.)***