

# **WSPRA SPRING CONFERENCE**

*Planned & Conducted with the Wisconsin Association of School District Administrators*

## ***“Closing the Communication Gap: Building Relationships with Key Audiences in Your District”***

We know that real continuous improvement in schools requires an education community that is inspired and engaged in focused and aligned work. We know that the success of public education in a community is tied to the citizens’ and business leaders’ sense of connection and meaningful support of the schools goals and needs. And we know that policy and regulatory authorities must be fully engaged in understanding the needs of schools and the evidenced-based policies that will produce the type of improved outcomes we all seek for students. It follows then that the knowledge, skills and attributes school leaders need to be effective in nurturing engagement in these various audiences is central to meeting their responsibilities to the students and communities they serve. This conference is specifically designed to bring you national, state level and local leaders’ perspectives and expertise in strategies and best practices to improve your capacity to be effective in your role. We hope you are able to join us.

### **THURSDAY, MAY 7**

**7:00 a.m. REGISTRATION OPEN**

**7:00 a.m. NETWORKING BREAKFAST**  
*Sponsored, in part, by Focus on Energy & Nexus Solutions*

**8:05 a.m. OPENING GENERAL SESSION**  
**Session Chair - President Kris Gilmore**  
**Opening Comments - Kevin Hickman, WSPRA President**  
**Welcome to Elkhart Lake - Ann Buechel-Haack, Supt., Elkhart Lake**  
**Presentation of WASDA Bert Grover Child Advocacy Awards**

**8:30 a.m. GENERAL SESSION**  
***Using “Trust Targets” to Build More Successful Stakeholder Relationships***  
At its foundation, public relations is about an organization’s relationships with its publics. It seems like common sense: The more your school district is trusted by key stakeholder groups, the more you can accomplish. Yet it’s more than common sense. It is also research-based that public relations, when viewed as a key, strategic management function, can improve the excellence of an organization. This session will introduce participants to the concept of strategic public relations as a management function as we examine key stakeholder relationships. It will deliver the results of 2013 national research that shows what “works” in building key trusting relationships. Finally, it will help differentiate between activities that inform and activities that build trust.  
***Presenter: Ken DeSieghardt, CEO/Partner, Patron Insight, Inc.***

**9:30 a.m. BREAK**

9:45 a.m. SECTIONALS

10:45 a.m.

1. ***Starting Fresh: Waunakee Community School District's Journey with Positive Community Engagement***

No matter what the need, true community engagement starts with a commitment to sincerely connecting with your community on critical issues facing the district and responding to the feedback offered in a constructive, realistic approach. When it involves long range facilities planning, community support for change cannot be fostered overnight, nor is it gained during the brief 12-week period leading up to a referendum vote.

Engage with Waunakee Community School District Superintendent Randy Guttenberg about how his district took a proactive long-range planning approach to addressing their facilities' needs, utilizing key resources to engage the Waunakee school community over a four-year period. Learn from Mark Roffers with MDRoffers Consulting about how advanced community planning coupled with engagement strategies can help districts set the framework for future solutions. Hear from Eric Dufek and Kit Dailey of Eppstein Uhen Architects lessons learned during this process, and how your district can use the Waunakee experience to shape and improve your future facilities planning efforts.

***Presenters: Randy Guttenberg, Superintendent, Waunakee Community School District; Mark Roffers, Community Planner, MDRoffers Consulting; Eric Dufek, Senior Designer, Eppstein Uhen Architects; and Kit Dailey, Public Outreach Specialist, Eppstein Uhen Architects***

2. ***If You're Going to Talk Mission & Vision, You Have to WALK Mission & Vision!***

Does your district have a mission and/or vision that are lived - *daily* - in the staff's work with students and through the decisions made by teachers, administrators and the board? Three years ago, the Sheboygan Falls Schools District began a journey to develop its mission, vision and commitments. We thought our next step was "to get the word out" through branding: What we discovered was that a deliberate and strategic communication plan is all that and so much more when it is grounded in best practice of communication and public relations. As we strive to live the mission, vision and commitments everyday through our actions and decisions, a strategic communication plan has been an integral part of our journey. Our communication plan has sometimes been risky, sometimes common but always deliberately planned and implemented to support our district's educational goals. From staff, to the board, to administration and the community, we are engaging our stakeholders to help us develop the climate where our schools are viewed as our community's greatest asset. This presentation will share our experiences from the collaborative development of our plan to the strategic implementation of communication tactics that are causing a climate shift in our District.

***Presenter: Mary Lofy, Director of Instruction, Sheboygan Falls School District***

3. ***Developing a Strategic Pathway to the Future***

Over the course of the past year the School District of Greenfield has engaged over 70 stakeholders in a unique Strategic Planning/Visioning process that has resulted in a clear, concise one-page document entitled the School District of Greenfield's Pathways to Success which guides and informs every decision and process in the district. The facilitators will engage the participants in the same World Café discussion designed to elicit the core beliefs about teaching and learning in their own district. As well as, engage participants in meaningful discussions in order to begin to design the support systems necessary to make the desired outcomes for students a reality.

***Presenter: Lisa Elliott, Supt., Greenfield***

**4. *Build Trust, Build Relationships: Using the 5 Behaviors of Cohesive Teams***

The Five Behaviors of a Cohesive Team is an assessment-based learning experience that helps individuals and organizations reveal what it takes to build a truly cohesive and effective team in the most approachable, competent, and effective way possible. Individual profiles help each team member understand their own work style. Bringing together everyone's profiles as part of a team provides the essential elements to form a cohesive, productive team. It takes team work and results in a huge payoff—for individuals, the team, and the entire organization. This presentation will introduce the overall concepts and the success at the Mosinee District will highlight the outcome.

***Presenters: Ann Schultz, Ph.D., Supt., Mosinee, and Marilyn Bugenhagen, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Leadership, Marian University***

**5. *Understanding and Communicating Key Budget Variables and the Impact of the 2015-17 Biennial Budget***

Residents are now, more than ever, aware of school finance—especially with the recent biennial budgets and the most-recent 2015-17 budget proposal. Explore how critical variables such as revenue limits, equalization aid, and the tax levy interrelate and are affected by biennial budgets. Most importantly, gather strategies to communicate these items to your various district stakeholders.

***Presenters: Dennis Birr, Supt., New Lisbon; Mike Clark, Director, Robert W. Baird; and Debby Schufletowski, School Business Specialist, Robert W. Baird***

**10:45 a.m. BREAK**

**11:00 a.m. GENERAL SESSION**

**12:00 p.m.**

***If Not Engaged, Then . . . What?***

It's about being energized, passionate, resilient and committed to the success of the organization. Among other things, this translates into consensus around key objectives, strong alignment of high levels of effort, persistence at addressing challenges of change over time, a supportive climate, and going beyond the norms and expectations. And it produces tangible results. It's about ENGAGEMENT and it is central to a District leader's work with your board, your faculty, your leadership team **and** your community. This presentation will speak to the principles that will guide more effective engagement with each of these four audience groups and share some examples of how these principles apply to each.

***Presenter: Drew Howick, National Practice Director for Leadership and Organizational Development, Patina Solutions***

**12:00 p.m. WASDA NOON LUNCHEON/ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING**

Presentations by President Kris Gilmore and candidate for President-elect, Todd Gray, Supt., Waukesha

**12:00 p.m. WSPRA NOON LUNCHEON**

**1:45 p.m. SECTIONALS**

**2:45 p.m.**

**1. *How Does Your Staff Feel? The Value of Measuring Staff Engagement***

There is a direct correlation between staff engagement, student achievement and how your community perceives your district. Therefore, quantifying staff satisfaction and engagement is critical. Join School Perceptions as they discuss using their 12 Indexes for Employee Engagement to develop targeted interventions for each employee group at each of your schools.

***Presenters: Bill Foster, President, and Sue Peterson, Project Manager and Strategic Communications Specialist, School Perceptions***

2. ***Adult Bullying; How to Recognize It and Deal With It Effectively***

Much attention has been given to student bullying. However, almost no attention has been given to adult bullying, which directly impacts on the educational success of students, interactions with parents, discussions at Board meetings, and teacher-to-teacher communication. We assume that when an individual becomes an “adult,” bullying disappears. Unfortunately, adult bullying can be even more challenging for school leaders to deal with effectively. Join us for this informative, practical application, and upbeat discussion.

***Presenter: Dr. Michael Weber, Supt., Port Washington-Saukville***

3. ***Earning Your Community’s Trust and Leveraging Existing Communications to Maximize Referendum Support***

DeForest Area School District (DASD) has earned the reputation as a strong advocate for both the district and community. They have worked to build trust with all stakeholders over the years and that work is paying off. After thoughtful planning and extensive community engagement around facilities, the district saw a 75 percent positive response from their community-wide survey in support of their plan – one of the highest levels of support School Perceptions has ever tested.

Harnessing the momentum gained from years of effective communication and dozens of community meetings, the DASD successfully formed a 45-member Community Advisory Committee that helped to study District needs. The main outcomes became the April 2015 referendum to support their growth, aging facilities, and safety needs.

By capitalizing on existing communication vehicles, the District has been able to use their resources and lean on their partners. Together they’ve developed effective communication tools to keep the community informed and excited about the future.

If you’re not currently talking to your District’s stakeholders, join us to learn how to start now. Find out the early steps DASD took to get the communication ball rolling, and how they’re staying in front of community members during the critical process.

***Presenters: Dr. Sue Borden, Supt.; Debbie Brewster, Coordinator of School/Community Relations; and Jan Berg, President, Board of Education, DeForest***

4. ***Avoid the Landmines: Successfully Communicating the Financial Components of Referenda***

From the moment a need is identified and a debt or revenue limit referendum becomes a potential solution, financial questions inevitably begin to be asked, studied, and answered. If a District’s administration and communications staff do not understand, or cannot effectively communicate how financial information is developed, analyzed, and will impact taxpayers, they place themselves in a very difficult position when communicating the referendum’s most critical information.

There are proven best practices, tools and tactics that will save you time, money, and reduce the risk of miscommunicating important financial facts at critical milestones. The session will be interactive, focus on the real-world experiences of District staff and consultants, and feature topics such as:

- Learning how to transparently provide factual information on costs without complicating the issue
- Crafting the story of how referenda amounts are developed and what the financial impact means to taxpayers
- How to best use visual tools, such as charts, tables and other graphics (not spreadsheets!) to tell your story
- Understanding why timing is everything when sharing financial information throughout the process
- Why it’s critical to have accurate and realistic numbers during the community engagement phase of referenda planning

***Presenters: Kevin Hickman, Vice President, Referendum Services, JP Cullen; Kit Dailey, Public Outreach Specialist, Eppstein Uhen Architects; Lisa Voisin, Director, Public Finance, Robert W. Baird Co., and a Supt. TBD***

5. ***Building Consensus with Community and School District Leaders***

Whether you are developing a master plan or defining the strategic direction and goals of your school district, effective communication and building consensus within your community and with your staff and School Board members are essential. Starting early, communicating often, and listening closely are keys to building support and trust. Our presentation will focus on how to involve key groups of individuals, which includes gathering and evaluating their feedback, addressing the needs and concerns of all those affected by your decisions, and collaborating to arrive at a final solution. The end result is a supportive team that will relay a cohesive message about the needs and direction of your school district.

***Presenters: Dr. Melissa Thompson, Supt., Swallow, and Nicholas Kent, Partner, Plunkett Raysich Architects, LLP***

**2:45 p.m. BREAK**

**3:00 p.m. SECTIONALS**

**4:00 p.m.**

1. ***Communication & Engagement Strategies for Facilities Referenda***

Understanding how to communicate your District's facility needs, the costs and tax impact of capital referenda requires a strategic communications plan that builds broad understanding and trust. Do you have the leadership experience to guide the referendum communication process? Do you need an effective strategy for communicating with a diverse group of stakeholders? How do you implement the plan in the midst of all the other responsibilities? Learn from Kettle Moraine School District's successful April 2014 referendum and how they built support through leadership, strategy and outreach. Presenters will interact through a case study of the district's \$49.6M Referendum that included improvements in four key areas.

***Presenters: Dr. Patricia Deklotz, Superintendent, Kettle Moraine; Jill Huskisson, Public Outreach Specialist, Eppstein Uhen Architects; and Christin Mlsna, Communications and Referendum Specialist, Findorff***

2. ***2014-2015 District Administrator Survey: Conception and Presentation - WASDA Small Schools Committee***

This presentation will focus on the results of a survey taken this fall by Wisconsin School District Administrators. Approximately 177, or 41% of the state's District Administrators responded to the survey. The WASDA Small Schools Committee generated the survey in an effort to gather data regarding the challenges and concerns particular to Wisconsin small schools. The survey was open for any District Administrator to respond, which allowed for districts with enrollments of 100 to 2500 students be represented.

***Presenter: Tim Raymond, Supt., Cambria-Friesland, and Ann Buechel-Haack, Supt., Elkhart Lake***

3. ***Guiding Successful Implementation of Educator Effectiveness***

Have you wondered if you're hitting the mark in regard to successful educator effectiveness implementation? If so, this work session is for you! Collaboratively facilitated by the DPI and CESA 6, this model neutral work session will provide participants with a tool to engage in a process that communicates current status and next steps for systemic implementation of educator effectiveness. Based on foundational understandings and implementation planning processes, participants will be able to focus continued efforts within a continuum that strategically communicates a phased approach for successful educator effectiveness implementation.

***Presenters: Cheryl Simonson, Director, CESA 6 Effectiveness Project, and Jacob Hollnagel, Education Consultant-Educator Effectiveness, Division of Academic Excellence, DPI***

#### **4. *Breaking the Higher Education Perception***

The perception for many students, parents, and administrators is that a four year college degree is preferred to any technical college or work in the trades after completing high school, yet the reality is with the growing demand for skilled labor, combined with the rising cost of higher education, a future in the skilled trades is a bright one not to be overlooked. The talent pool in the construction and trade industry is drying up, yet the demand for skilled trades in Wisconsin is predicted to increase 18.81% over the next several years.

With this need for talent identified, JP Cullen, along with over 20 school districts throughout southern Wisconsin, has been working to combat the perception that the trades aren't a noble profession offering competitive salaries and professional growth. To increase awareness to students and parents of the growing opportunity, JP Cullen and the Beloit and Janesville School Districts will present a strategic plan, rich in successful communication principles, designed to bridge the communication gap with multiple internal and external audiences. Presenters will discuss forming an Apprentice committee, getting the right people on board, and tools to use to further raise awareness to the need to increase student involvement in the trades, including establishing a career fair focused on the trades in Southern WI.

In this session participants will learn, how to build the framework for what a successful committee looks like, develop a month-by-month outline of tasks (both major and minor) to be accomplished, and define a method for monitoring the progress of the engagement effort. Participants will be taken through a case study example of how a need was identified and how, along with several school districts, a successful committee and engagement plan was implemented to raise awareness.

***Presenters: Joe Schwengels, Superintendent, JP Cullen Construction Management; Ryan Rewey, Career & Technology Educator Director, Beloit; Joe Kruser, Advanced Construction Instruction, Janesville***

#### **5. *Engaging the Community around School Finance***

Learn about a fun, interactive tool called Investing in Wisconsin Public Schools that fosters dialogue and facilitates understanding around the complex topic of Wisconsin school finance. Investing in Wisconsin Public Schools has been developed by WASBO, WASB and WSPRA to help address the challenges of educating stakeholders on public school finance. This comprehensive process includes large-scale visual maps, key data points, and engaging discussion questions, which are designed to be used in small groups guided by facilitators. Participants will learn first-hand how the tool can be used in their communities. (This session will include an interactive example of the actual table-top experience.)

***Presenters: David Carlson, Governance Consultant, WASB; Sarah Heck, Communications Specialist, Sun Prairie; Brian Hanes, Superintendent, Ashwaubenon; and Woody Wiedenhoef, Executive Director, WASBO***

**3:00 p.m.      LARGE DISTRICT CAUCUS MEETING**

**5:00 p.m.**

**5:00 p.m.      RECEPTION**

**7:00 p.m.      *Hors D'oeuvres Sponsored by Robert W. Baird & WEA Trust***

**8:00 p.m.      ENTERTAINMENT BY THE SUPERINTENDENCIES**

## FRIDAY, MAY 9

**7:30 a.m. BREAKFAST**

**8:00 a.m. WASDA ANNUAL MEETING**

**8:45 a.m. GENERAL SESSION**

### **Advocacy - It's Everyone's Responsibility**

In 2014, the School Administrators Alliance initiated a significant effort to advocate for Evidence-Based Policy for public education in Wisconsin. An emphasis was placed on systematic, ongoing advocacy at the local level to re-engage the various stakeholder groups on the value of public schools and the legitimate needs they have to produce high quality outcomes for students. Re-examine the guiding principles underlying this effort and the impacts local advocacy work has had at this point in the ongoing process.

*Jon Bales, Executive Director, WASDA*

*John Forester, Director of Government Relations, SAA*

**8:50 a.m. Panel: The Public Perspective, Why is Advocacy Necessary and Where Are the Shared Interests?**

A distinguished panel of leaders representing important stakeholder groups will present their perspective on the merits and methods of advocacy for school districts.

*Senator Luther Olsen, Chair, Senate Education Committee*

*Jim Morgan, Vice President, Wisconsin Manufacturers & Commerce*

*Alan Borsuk, Senior Fellow in Law and Public Policy, Marquette University*

**9:20 a.m. Advocacy - What is The End-in-Mind?**

What is the purpose of advocacy? What will happen as a result of meaningful relationships with key constituencies in the school community? Vision is a prerequisite to achievement. Participants will engage in a facilitated process to clarify the vision for effective advocacy.

*Drew Howick, Practice Director – Leadership & Organizational Development, Patina Solutions, and WASDA Consultant for Group Process and Engagement*

**10:30 a.m. Break**

**10:45 a.m. Evidence From the Field - Effective Strategies for Engaging an Important Stakeholder Group**

● Involving Your Leadership Team in Advocacy - *Eric Runez, Supt., Whitewater*

● Systematic and Strategic Engagement in the Legislative Process - *Michelle Langenfeld, Supt., Green Bay*

● Strategies for a Meaningful Relationship With the Media - *Randy Nelson, Supt., La Crosse*

● The Value of Exploring Shared Interests With Business Leaders - *Kris Gilmore, Supt., D.C. Everest*

**11:00 a.m. Best Practices in Community Engagement for the Advocacy of Public Education  
A Facilitated Dialogue With Wisconsin Education Leaders**

Superintendents and Communication Specialists will examine their vision for the relationship with key stakeholder groups; assess the current status; and explore next step development needed to achieve the vision.

*Drew Howick, Practice Director – Leadership & Organizational Development, Patina Solutions, and WASDA Consultant for Group Process and Engagement*

**11:45 a.m. Closing Remarks - Kris Gilmore, WASDA President & Kevin Hickman, WSPRA President**