

Wisconsin Association of School Boards: School leaders learn together at State Education Convention

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MILWAUKEE — The 102nd Wisconsin State Education Convention, held Jan. 18-20 in Milwaukee, convenes education leaders from across the state to learn from each other.

The convention — the largest gathering of education officials in the state, with more than 2,500 attendees — brings together the members of three associations representing Wisconsin school board members, business officials and district administrators.

The event features [four nationally recognized keynote speakers](#) and more than 100 breakout sessions, most of which are presented by a Wisconsin school district. It offers continuing education across a wide variety of topics, including school governance and leadership, facilities, school funding, improving school climate and elevating achievement for all students.

School leadership is complex, and school board members may not be experts in education when they take office. Events like the State Education Convention and the learning opportunities it provides are critical to help them be effective leaders.

Barbara Herzog, president of both the Oshkosh School Board and the Wisconsin Association of School Boards, said attendees learn from each other as much as presenters.

“There are so many content-rich programs that are offered to staff members, so that they can learn from the presenter as well as one another,” she said. “We are unified behind the concept of putting students first in all of our decision making.”

Nick Ouellette, superintendent of the Hudson School District and president of the Wisconsin Association of School District Administrators, said the convention helps school leaders find common solutions to common problems.

“A lot of times when you’re having challenges in your own district that seem almost insurmountable, or they seem very much like you’re the only ones ever having to deal with this, then you go down and talk to some other boards about what they have going on in their district,” Ouellette said. “A lot of times, the board will come back feeling pretty good that the challenges aren’t so insurmountable.”

Phil Frei, director of business and finance at the Sun Prairie Area School District and president of the Wisconsin Association of School Business Officials, appreciates that the convention brings all three association under one roof.

“So, for all three groups, I think it’s great that it opens the door so that we can see what some of those two other groups are doing,” Frei said. “As business officials, communicating with board members and superintendents is a critical part of our role.”

State Superintendent Jill Underly will address convention attendees Wednesday morning. Gov. Tony Evers is scheduled to speak Friday morning.

Check the [complete schedule](#) for the full list of speakers and sessions.

At 1:30 p.m. on Wednesday, Jan. 18, the Wisconsin Association of School Boards will convene a delegate assembly. It is composed of one representative from each member school board and each of the state’s 12 cooperative education service agencies. At the assembly, delegates vote on board-submitted resolutions, setting the school board association’s legislative agenda.

Media passes are available at registration on the third floor of the Wisconsin Center for outlets that would like to cover the convention. To attend the Delegate Assembly, members of the media may request permission from WASB Director of Communications Dan Linehan at dlinehan@wasb.org.