BOE WEEKLY UPDATE

October 1, 2026

Dear Board of Education Members,

This is being delivered to you amidst a number of important updates, milestones and reflections. As I begin my series of updates to you this year, I plan to begin them by offering some reflections on a component of MMSD: Excellence Together.



Foster Belonging is one of our **five Guiding Commitments**. Belonging is built in the daily, quiet interactions across our district: how a student is greeted as they step onto the bus, how a family's home language is honored during a conference, and how an educator is supported during a challenging day.

As Superintendent and Board of Education members, our shared responsibility is to ensure that our budget allocations, strategic directives, and policy decisions consistently align to make this sense of connection a reality for every individual in the Madison Metropolitan School District.

I welcome continued dialogue and collaboration with the Board as we monitor progress on these indicators throughout the school year.

- On October 2 the Wisconsin DPI released embargoed District and School Level Report Cards. Our RAI team will use this window to review and analyze, especially identifying any anomalies that may require follow up with DPI. These are important Macro level reports used to guide our work and will absolutely be essential for our MMSD: Excellence Together metrics.

- I had the chance last week to address my colleagues from around the state at our Wisconsin Association of School District Administrators (WASDA) Fall Conference. As the invited Wednesday evening opening session speaker. Here are the opening few lines of my session:

Building for the future

From Defense to Offense: Proactive Planning to Build for the Future Public schools are built into the foundation of our democracy and designed to educate all youth – regardless of background – at no cost to them or their families.

I enjoyed sharing my Madison story with my peers and then shifting into delivering the charge that as leaders we must commit to sharing our stories, our strategies and our vision in leading our communities. Based on the title, you might also see where I was able to work in several coaching analogies, which was a lot of fun and applicable to how we do our work.

- As part of the WASDA Fall Conference I wanted you to know that we do have a large district caucus that meets regularly. This is the state's 20 or so largest districts. We meet 3 or 4 times a year and I am always amazed at the reaction of my attendance due to what I assume has been an absence of MMSD throughout the years. I find these peer interactions extremely helpful and I also know that leading Madison is a challenging and complex position. I have always enjoyed sharing with others as part of a peer network while also learning from them.

- I was also grateful to participate on a panel at this year's Cap Times Idea Fest. Sponsored by the Madison Public Schools Foundation, the title of our panel was: **Can Madison Get This Right? Public Schools, Homegrown Talent, and the City's Future**



Source: Cap Times Staff

I was pleasantly surprised to see the Cap Times follow up with these quotes, one of them shared by me.

> *"To think of how much our city is rapidly changing, it shows the complexity and the urgency of this work. … Madison of the past has missed some incredible opportunities to promote and to withstand the kind of growth that we're seeing right now." — **Joe Gothard**, the superintendent of Madison's public schools*

As you know, this has been on my mind since returning to MMSD. Building for the Future (BFTF) was created to help us understand how MMSD is prepared to embrace, innovate and inspire real change in our school district and city.

Our BFTF phase 2 engagement is underway and I know that some of you have or will be attending the sessions. The feedback thus far has been incredibly positive about the process and depth of information. There is without a doubt people who may be directly impacted by proposed changes that are not happy. Our team's goal remains to bring you recommendations that are based on all that we've learned throughout the process, including our community engagement. As a reminder, BFTF charged us to:

- Assess current school attendance areas and MMSD's district boundary.
- Establish attendance areas where development is occurring in areas near land owned by MMSD.
- Evaluate current programs and options.
- Understand what our families value for their child's educational experience.

- Last week at the Annual State of Education address, by Dr. Jill Underly I was sure *"MMSD proud"* to have three performances by MMSD scholars. A ninth grade student from West sang the Black National Anthem, a group from Lincoln performed a sweet dance, and three weeks into the school year the Choir from Hamilton filled the Capitol with amazing and talented MMSD students.

  As part of Dr. Underly's speech was another chance to honor our State Teacher of the Year, Kristen Scott from Nuestro Mundo. Following the address, I joined Ms. Scott at the Governor's Residence for a reception honoring the State's teachers of the year.

- We continue to work towards a finalized 3rd Friday of September enrollment count. It appears that we are below our projected enrollment though it is too early to speculate exactly why. As such an important focus of our work, I will be sure you have updates when they are ready.

- It can be very easy to overlook the importance of ensuring that our Central Office team is engaged and feels a sense of connection to MMSD: Excellence Together. We have scheduled four dates throughout the year to spend a half-day together so that we can collaborate in the truest form. Our plan is broken into five broad focus areas and for the most part, staff are assigned to one of five. Building this early capacity now is an intentional strategy to prepare us for implementation.

Thank you again for your support in starting this new school year. I am grateful for what we've accomplished and look forward to continuing to build for the future together!

Have a nice weekend, and I look forward to seeing you Monday afternoon.

Joe

Joe Gothard, Ed. D

OTHER INFORMATION

Purpose & Cadence of Behavior Education Plan Ad Hoc Policy Committee

Please find attached the updated purpose and cadence document for the Behavior Education Plan Ad Hoc Policy Committee. This document is updated with feedback that was given by board members at the August Board Retreat.

Safe Storage Letter

For the 2026-27 school year, and thanks to the hard work of MMSD student-led group, Student Demand Action, all MMSD families will receive a letter stressing the importance of safe gun storage at home. They will also be asked to affirm that they support safe gun storage and understand that safe storage at home equates to safer schools and communities. These are a couple of the items on the Board of Education Resolution that was passed with the tireless efforts of MMSD's Students Demand Action.

The Madison Metropolitan School District (MMSD) prioritizes student safety and well-being. With firearms now the leading cause of death for U.S. youth, safe storage is more than a precaution—it is a necessary commitment. By securing firearms at home, we can directly reduce the risk of unauthorized access, accidental injury, and suicide. Ensuring our homes and schools remain safe environments for every child is a community responsibility.

2025-2026 School Year Restraint and Seclusion Data

Please find attached an update on the restrain and seclusion data from the 2025-2026 school year.

Great Things Happening Around MMSD

- Results from the 2025–26 Wisconsin Forward Exam show year-over-year improvements in the percentage of district students reaching the highest performance level in English language arts, reading and mathematics, with gains in the percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations across all three areas
- MMSD launched a new monthly recognition program celebrating staff and students who exemplify the values at the heart of the district's work – People, Purpose and Pride – honoring Lake View teacher Chase West, Gillespie secretary Bridget Disch, West High students Lilah Dean and Emmy Schultz, and La Follette student Elijah Williams as the inaugural recipients
- The district launched the second round of community input sessions around its Building for the Future attendance area/boundary review, engaging with stakeholders at Steamfitters Local 601, Henderson Elementary, Hamilton Middle , Gompers Elementary, and the Boys and Girls Club of Dane County
    - MMSD seeks community feedback on school boundary

changes (Madison365)
    - What to know about changes to Madison School District boundaries (State Journal)
- Midvale fourth-graders bused over to the Alliant Center for the World Dairy Expo, where they had a chance to get up close and personal with Brown Swiss, Holstein, and Guernsey cattle, check out a milking machine, and gain a deeper understanding of the importance of Wisconsin's dairy industry
- Nuestro Mundo students had an amazing time at the school's Hispanic Heritage Month assembly, which included a colorful, energetic, and pride-filled flag parade
- The West High Civics Club welcomed U.S. Representative Mark Pocan to the school to speak with students, answer their questions, and engage in conversation about the issues that matter to them
- More than 300 students, families, and staff came together to visit classrooms, read together, participate in hands-on literacy activities and enjoy a Hispanic Heritage Month dinner at Lake View's Literacy Open House Night
- MMSD leaders and project design team members provided media tours of the buildings being constructed as part of Phase 1 of the 2024 facilities referendum, allowing them an inside look at the progress being made every day
    - Madison's new schools are under budget and on time (State Journal)
    - Construction advances on Madison school referendum projects (Spectrum News 1)
    - Construction begins at four MMSD schools (WMTV)
    - Madison school renovations remain on time, on budget (Channel 3000)
    - MMSD rebuilds four North Side schools with an eye toward the future (Madison365)
- Community Shares of Wisconsin recognized Nuestro Mundo Elementary School social worker Sandra Rivera with the Sally Sunde Family Advocate Award at last Thursday's Change-maker Awards, for her "selflessness, humility, and passion for helping others"
- The State Journal shined a spotlight on East High volleyball sisters Reese and Tatum Inda, who are powering their team to a winning season, and also named Memorial High's Nani Arakawa (girls swimming) and Will Lisowski-Semb (boys cross country) to its girls and boys high school stars of the week lists, respectively
- Superintendent Gothard participated in the Cap Times' annual Idea Fest, where he highlighted initiatives the district is undertaking in the educational interests of current and future generations of MMSD students

- West High girls volleyball players visited their attendance area-counterparts at Wright Middle School, for an afternoon of advice-sharing, mentorship and coaching
- At La Follette High, nearly 100 Soulful Seniors volunteered to help incoming freshman navigate the start-of-the-year hecticness and energy, aiming to make their transition to high school as easy and enjoyable as possible
- On the 25th anniversary of 9/11, East High history teacher Terry Green sat down with WKOW to explain how he educates generations who didn't live through the event about how and why it happened, and why its lessons remain important today
    - Teaching 9/11 to kids who weren't alive: One Madison teacher's take (WKOW)
- For the third consecutive year, Dr. Joe Gothard has been named to the Power 100, an annual list of influential leaders shaping Wisconsin's Capital Region, compiled by In Business Madison magazine
    - Gothard, Caire named to Madison's Power 100 list (State Journal)
- West High girls golf standout Ezabell Yu and boys volleyball playmaker Alex Pedretti were named to the State Journal's Madison area high school girls and boys stars of the week lists
- Owing to advocates like Adam Smith, a Toki Middle School Phys Ed teacher who also coaches the team at Memorial High's squad, girls flag football has taken off throughout the district and state
    - Flag football gets girls off the sidelines and into the game (Madison Magazine)

OUR UPCOMING BOARD CALENDAR

Thurs., Oct. 1, 5:30 p.m.	Building for the Future Community Input Sessions In Person – Gompers Elementary School
Thurs., Oct. 1, 5:30 p.m.	Building for the Future Community Input Sessions In Person – Boys and Girls Club
Fri., Oct. 2, 9:30 a.m.	Board of Education Retreat MSCR West
Fri., Oct. 2, 10 a.m.	Policy Committee Meeting Virtual
Mon., Oct. 5, 5 p.m.	Instruction Work Group Meeting In person and virtual—Open to the public

BOE WEEKLY UPDATE

Mon., Oct. 5, 5:30 p.m.	Building for the Future Community Input Sessions In Person – Lake View Elementary School
Tues., Oct. 6, 6:00 p.m.	Building for the Future Community Input Sessions In Person – Stephens Elementary School
Wed., Oct. 7, 5:30 p.m.	Building for the Future Community Input Sessions In Person – Olson Elementary School
Wed., Oct. 7, 5:30 p.m.	Building for the Future Community Input Sessions In Person – Warner Park
Wed., Oct. 7, 5:30 p.m.	Student Senate In Person – Doyle 103
Thurs., Oct. 8, 5:30 p.m.	Building for the Future Community Input Sessions In Person – Centro Hispano
Mon., Oct. 12, 5:30 p.m.	Building for the Future Community Input Sessions In Person – Meadowlands Apt. Complex
Wed., Oct. 14, 2:30p.m.	Board Officers Virtual
Fri., Oct. 16, 10 a.m.	Policy Committee In Person
Week of October 19	Board Briefings Virtual
Mon., Oct. 19, 5 p.m.	Operations Work Group Meeting In person and virtual—Open to the public
October 20-25	Council of Great City Schools Fall Conference In Person – Boston, MA
Wed., Oct. 21, 5:30 p.m.	Student Senate In Person – Doyle 103
Mon., Sept. 29, 5 p.m.	Special Meeting in Closed Session In Person – Doyle 103
Mon., Oct. 26, 6 p.m.	Regular Board of Education Meeting In person and virtual—Open to the public
Fri., Oct. 30, 10 a.m.	Policy Committee In Person

ITEMS ATTACHED FOR INFORMATION

1. Purpose and Cadence of BEP Ad Hoc Policy Committee
2. Safe Storage Letter
3. 2025-2026 Restraint and Seclusion Data
4. U.S. Mail
    a. Policy Perspectives – September 2026

Purpose & Cadence of BEP Ad Hoc Policy Committee

I. Purpose:

To comprise a multidisciplinary team of MMSD stakeholders who will analyze district data & trends (qualitative and quantitative), discuss systemic challenges and concerns in supporting students, and identify barriers to implementing policy with fidelity. The committee will incorporate feedback, stated priorities, and areas of success across all stakeholder groups (including prioritizing student voice) when evaluating the need to revise (or enact an updated) policy and a corresponding implementation plan.

II. Mission:

To comprehensively evaluate the current Behavior Education Plan (BEP) by analyzing qualitative and quantitative data, scaling successful practices, and synthesizing community input to recommend strategic policy updates that foster safe, equitable, and supportive school environments.

III. Vision:

Create a behavior education policy that supports, teaches, and builds our students' skills in behavior and interpersonal relationships. The resulting policy objectives will directly support and work towards achieving the three primary performance objectives of the *MMSD Excellence Together (MET)* strategic plan by increasing (1) academic achievement, (2) college and career readiness, and (3) student belonging.

IV. Membership & Expectations:

To establish accountability, membership roles have been categorized by responsibilities:

Board of Education Representatives (1-2 Members):

- **Governance & Strategic Oversight**: Ensure committee direction aligns with district-wide equity goals and *MET* priorities.
- **Resource Advocacy**: Advocate for the financial, staffing, and structural resources required to execute the recommended policy changes.
- **Policy Stewardship**: Guide the drafted recommendations through first/second reads and lead the final policy presentation to the full Board.

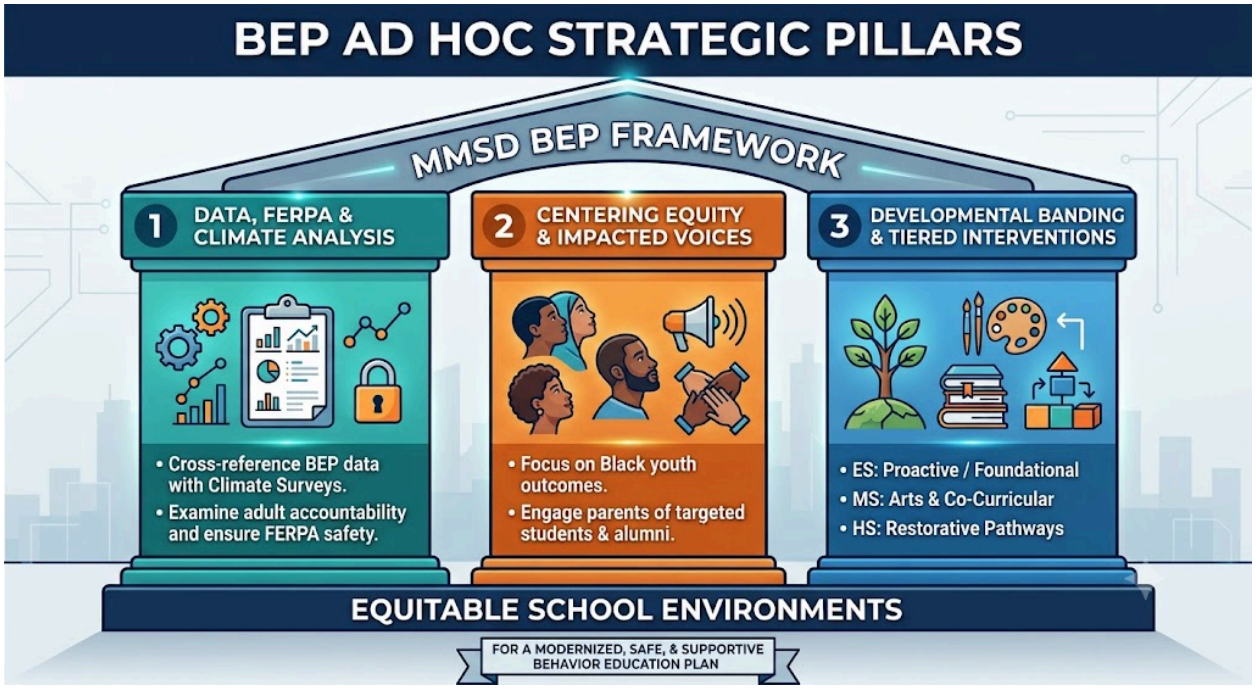
Central Office & School Membership (33% Central Office Leadership & 33% School-Based Leadership, 33% School Staff Representation):

- **Data & Climate Analysis**: Provide grounded insights into adult accountability, climate survey trends, and system implementation variance across schools.
- **Developmental & Operational Alignment**: Ensure proposed supports are developmentally appropriate and clearly banded by grade levels (ES, MS, HS).
- **FERPA Integrity**: Ensure all data presented to the committee is de-identified and complies with FERPA regulations.

Community (Community partners), Parent, & Youth Members: (at Phase 2)

- **Lived Experience Expertise**: Inform policy updates by sharing direct experiences with current disciplinary systems.
- **Co-Design**: Ensure the BEP distinctly separates *progressive discipline* from *cultivating pro-social behaviors*.
- Youth Voice (may impact available meeting times)*
    - ** May have to meet with students outside of core ad hoc for time purposes.*

V. Strategic Pillars



1. Data, FERPA, & Climate Analysis

- **Cross-Referencing Data**: The committee will cross-reference disciplinary data with data on attendance, climate surveys, and other "whole child" needs to evaluate the relationship between adult behavior, school culture, and student outcomes.
- **Early Intervention Trajectories**: Address the reality that high-intensity behaviors in older students often stem from unaddressed early childhood needs.
- **Data Privacy**: Establish strict protocols to de-identify data to protect student privacy under FERPA.

2. Centering Equity & Impacted Voices

- **Equity Focus**: Address systemic and historically pervasive disproportionality by acknowledging our current outcomes, providing pathways for adult mindset learning, and improving practices and access to supports within a culturally and developmentally responsive lens.
- **Targeted Outreach**: Intentionally gather qualitative feedback from students, alumni, and parents whose children are disproportionately targeted for disciplinary action.

3. Developmental Banding & Clear Systems

- **Behavioral Education**:
    - What do we mean when we refer to "Behavior Education"? Ensure that any resulting policy, or revisions to the existing policy, serves as a framework and model for students' **proactive** educational opportunities around behavior and incorporates clear, restorative, **responsive** guidelines for when unsafe or inappropriate student behavior may occur.
- **Grade Band Strategies**:
    - **Elementary School (ES)**: Focus on proactive, foundational behavioral supports, early interventions, and preparation for secondary (especially at 4th and 5th grade).
    - **Middle School (MS)**: Leverage innovative arts-integrated models tied to co-curricular learning, peer-to-peer conflict support and learning, including behavior tied to "bullying".
    - **High School (HS)**: *Suggested Addition:* Focus on restorative pathways, career/community-connected learning, and youth-led conflict mediation.

Ideas for consideration:

- Can the committee bring other examples of cross - reference data (Blair)
    - Example: some students might not take the survey and provide their honest opinions. Other types of data.
    - Is it data in MET that can help inform this?
        - Superintendent Search
        - Building For the Future
        - Other Surveys

VI. Cadence & Timeline

Phase	Timeline	Strategic Focus & Key Actions
Phase 1: Launch & Discovery	**Sept – Nov 2026**	• Monthly 1-hr meetings; quarterly 2-hr deep dives. • Analyze de-identified & cross-referenced BEP and Climate data • Evaluate early childhood history trends and systemic barriers.
Phase 2: Community Engagement	**Dec 2026 – Jan 2027**	• Launch stakeholder listening sessions (centering Black youth, targeted parents, alumni, and school staff). • Differentiate progressive discipline vs. pro-social behavior supports.
Phase 3: Policy Formulation	**Feb – Mar 2027**	• Finalize grade-banded strategies (ES, MS, HS). • **Early April Target:** Formulate final draft recommendations to align momentum with Year 1 of MET.
Phase 4: Board Review & Pilot Design	**Apr – May 2027**	• **1st Read** with the Board of Education. • Incorporate Board/community feedback. • Design **pilot programs** to test next steps in select school environments.
Phase 5: Adoption	**June 2027**	• **2nd Read** and final Board vote on revised BEP policy and implementation plan.

Subject: A Shared Responsibility: Keeping Our Students Safe Through Safe Gun Storage

Dear MMSD Families,

At Madison Metropolitan School District (MMSD), our mission is to create safe, inclusive schools; deliver high-quality instruction; strengthen positive relationships; and partner with families and the community. From classroom teachers and support staff to families and community partners, we must all align on school safety and student well-being. Our greatest successes will come from school-community collaboration, inclusion, and shared responsibility.

Gun safety is a community concern and a responsibility we all share. Firearms are the leading cause of death among children and adolescents (ages 1–19) in the United States, surpassing motor vehicle crashes in 2020 and remaining the top cause four years in a row. This includes gun-related homicides, suicides, and unintentional injuries, with 4,455 child deaths by firearm reported in 2023 (Johns Hopkins University, School of Public Health, 2024).

Between 2020 and 2022, gun violence in Wisconsin claimed the lives of 130 children aged 0–17, marking a 23% increase compared to 2015–2018 data. Additionally, 96 young adults aged 18–19 died from gun injuries during that same period, representing a 99% increase, making guns the leading cause of death for Wisconsin children (Wisconsin Medical Journal, 2024).

Safe storage at home equates to safer schools and communities. Our students have spoken up, saying safe storage is vital to their overall well-being, both at school and in their community. In response, the MMSD Board of Education has passed a **Resolution on Safe Storage** (2026). The MMSD student-led group – Student Demand Action – has asked families to affirm their support for safe gun storage, which was a part of this year's enrollment.

How You Can Help: While federal and state laws regarding comprehensive safe storage are limited, you, as a parent or guardian, can take immediate action at home. Storing firearms securely; locked, unloaded, and separate from ammunition- can prevent tragedies and save lives. MMSD currently promotes the non-partisan **Be SMART** (besmartforkis.org) Campaign on our safety website (mmsd.org/safety) with specific handouts on gun locks, safe storage, and how to talk to parents about gun access.

We are proud to stand with our students in promoting a safer Madison - at home, school, and in the greater community. Thank you for your partnership in protecting our future.

Sincerely,

Sedric Morris, Sr.

Executive Director of Safety and Security Response

Gina Aguglia

Director of Cross Systems & Critical

MADISON METROPOLITAN SCHOOL DISTRICT

Student Services Department

TO: Members of the Board of Education

FROM: Dr. Nancy Molfenter, Associate Superintendent of Student Services

DATE: October 1, 2026

SUBJECT: 2025-26 SY Restraint and Seclusion Data

Background:

Wisconsin State Statute 118.305 regulates the use of restraint and seclusion in the school setting and also establishes reporting requirements related to individual incidents of restraint and seclusion (DPI Link). Annually by October 1st, the Principal of each school or their designee is required to submit the following data to the Board of Education:

1) The number of incidents of physical restraint and seclusion.
2) Total number of pupils involved in incidents.
3) The number of students with a disability involved in incidents.

Level	Number of Students Involved	Number of Students with Disabilities Involved	Incidents of Restraint	Incidents of Seclusion	Incidents of Seclusion and Restraint	Total*
Elementary School	**141**	**109**	**167**	**243**	**263**	***673***
Full Prior Year (2024-25)	181	131	134	86	210	*430*
Middle School	**21**	**17**	**42**	**7**	**14**	***63***
Full Prior Year (2024-25)	20	19	30	6	17	*53*
High School	**17**	**13**	**16**	**14**	**8**	***38***
Full Prior Year (2024-25)	10	9	2	6	15	*23*
Total	**179**	**139**	**225**	**264**	**285**	***774***
Full Prior Year (2024-25)	211	159	166	98	242	*506*

*Total is number of incidents = (# of Restraints + # of Seclusions + # of seclusion and restraint together)

Overall Number and Percent of Students Impacted

- ***0.007%*** (179 students out of 24,960) of the MMSD student population experienced restraint and/or seclusion during the 2025-26 school year.
- ***0.03%*** (139 out of 4528) of all students with disabilities experienced restraint and/or seclusion.

Key Data Trends (2024-25 to 2025-26)

- Total Incidents: 506 ——————► 774
- Total Students: 217 ——————► 179
- Ave. Incidents/Student: 2.33 ———► 4.32

Interpretation of Data and Next Steps

Positive Trends:

- Fewer students overall and at the elementary school level experienced restraints and/or seclusions during the 2025-26 school year than the year prior.
- Fewer students with an IEP experienced incidents of restraint and/or seclusion than during the 2024-25 school year.
- Decrease in the number of middle and high school students who experienced incidents involving both restraint and seclusion.

Trends to Address and Action Steps in 2025-26:

- In 2025-26 we saw an increase of seclusion and restraint over the year prior.
    - This school year, as training is provided to staff, and consultations occur, clear review of circumstances that constitute imminent risk will be conducted.
    - Continuous review of data will be completed, and consultation provided if trends at a school emerge.
    - Consultation will include ideas for supporting the student(s) experiencing high distress, as well as alternative actions school staff members can take rather than resorting to use of restraint and/or seclusion.
- The most significant increases were in the number of incidents at the Elementary level of students, including those with a disability. Elementary schools account for 86.9% of all district incidents (673 of 774) and 78.8% of all involved students (141 of 179). Elementary incidents grew by 56.5% year-over-year.

- The number of students with a disability involved in one or more incidents of restraint and seclusion decreased from 159 in 2024-25 to 139 in 2025-26, however, students with disabilities represent 77.7% of all involved students in the current dataset (139 of 179), up from 75.3% in the prior year. Targeted steps will be taken to reverse this trend in 2026-27.
    - All special education teachers and student services professionals are required to recertify in Nonviolent Crisis Intervention every two years. Additional training in supporting students who are in distress and struggling to meet behavior expectations will be provided to Student Services staff above and beyond the required training.
    - General, school-based, and student-specific training will be provided on Functional Behavior Assessment and Positive Behavior Support Plan development and implementation. This will include training on incorporating alternatives to restraint and seclusion that can help maintain safety for students and staff during times of high distress for a student.
    - Directors for Student Services and 504 Plans will review data with each of the Principals in their respective area of responsibility and discuss means by which restraints and seclusion can be reduced through greater emphasis on preventative practices and/or programming changes.
    - Principals will be provided professional learning covering the requirements outlined in WI Act 118 and an overview of the principles of Non-Violent Crisis Intervention during the fall of 2026.
    - Principals and other key staff at schools identified as needing level II support based on disproportionate use of restraint and seclusion with students who have an IEP will engage in root cause analysis and multiple meetings over the course of the 2026-27 school year with expert staff from CESA 2 and district leaders, with the objective of reducing the use of restraint and seclusion.

Additional Action Steps to Address and Reverse Increases

1. Data Tracking and Accountability

- Implement Threshold Tracking: Set automated alerts in the district's Student Information System (SIS) whenever any student experiences 2 or more restraints and/or seclusions within 30 days to trigger immediate administrative review (in addition to the Act 118-required student-level response).

2. High-Impact Practices

- Administrative follow-up regarding the mandatory IEP and Functional Behavior Analysis (FBA)/Behavior Support Plan (BSP) Reviews: Convene Individualized Education Program (IEP) teams for all students with disabilities after two incidents of restraint and/or seclusion, and set up additional increments. Re-evaluate Functional Behavior Assessments (FBAs) and Behavior Support Plans (BSPs) to ensure proactive, non-restrictive accommodations are active.
- Deploy Intensive Support Team (IST) Members: Reallocate district IST staff member specifically to elementary sites to provide support to IEP team members and coach staff during high-risk transitions or trigger times.

3. Establish Oversight Protocols

- Increase District Seclusion Response: Implement the requirement for building leadership to provide debrief documentation to a central administrator within 72 hours of any incident involving seclusion.
- Root-Cause Analysis on High-Frequency Students: Establish school review teams (psychologists, special educators, administrators) to conduct case-by-case reviews for the top 15% of students generating repeat incidents quarterly.

Required Staff Training

Wisconsin statute 118.305 mandates that training in the use of restraint and seclusion is required for any school staff member prior to using physical restraint or seclusion. MMSD's Nonviolent Crisis Intervention (NVCI) training is designed to assist staff in learning how to effectively prevent emotional and behavioral escalation as well as assist a person who has already escalated. Stages of emotional and behavioral escalation are described,

and each stage is paired with a positive action plan for educators and teams to prevent escalation or support an already escalated individual to de-escalate. The content emphasizes proactive interventions and supports State of Wisconsin legal requirements, MMSD guidelines, and appropriate restraint and seclusion techniques.

District Training Provided

The District transitioned from its Crisis Management Intervention (CMI) training program to Nonviolent Crisis Intervention (NVCI)training program (second semester of 2017-18 school year). The transition was an effort to provide staff with the highest quality and nationally recognized strategies/procedures. NVCI also significantly improves the accessibility of our training to reach more staff who can benefit from proactive, prosocial and trauma-informed intervention strategies and techniques. All newly hired special education teachers and student services professionals are required to successfully complete Nonviolent Crisis Intervention training prior to using restraint or seclusion.

If/when Student Services personnel suspect potentially inappropriate usage of restraint and/or seclusion or when there are zero instances, the District will conduct investigations and, where appropriate, require corrective action to ensure the inappropriate practice(s) do not recur. The District will continue that practice to ensure appropriate use of restraint and seclusion.

Mandated Staff for NVCI Training

Employees in the following job categories MUST complete the NVCI training prior to employment, or at the earliest possible time after employment begins.

- Building Administrator
- Behavior Interventionist or Behavioral Education Assistant (BEA)
- Psychologist
- Social Worker
- Speech/Language Clinician
- Occupational & Physical Therapist
- VI and DHH Teacher and staff
- Special Education Teacher/PST
- Special Education Assistant
- Substitute Special Education Assistant
- Security Assistant
- Nurse and Nurse's Assistant

Initial NVCI Training Description

This training is designed for staff who have not had prior training in NVCI or their training has expired. The course is a blended training, consisting of three components: Online Modules, facilitated/zoom mtg and the in person physicals training. The online modules are self-paced and take about 2-3 hours to complete. The facilitated/zoom portion is scheduled for 1.5 hours. The in person physical skills instruction and practice portion is scheduled for 2 hours.

Components	Format	Time Commitment
Modules	Self paced-asynchronous	2-3 hours
Facilitated Learning	Synchronous-Zoom	1.5 hours
Physicals Skills	Synchronous-In Person	2 hours

Recertification Training Description

This training is designed for staff who are current and set to expire with NVCI training. The course is a blended training, consisting of three components: Online Modules, facilitated/zoom mtg and the in person physicals training. The online modules that are self-paced take about 2-3 hours to complete. The facilitated/zoom portion is scheduled for 1 hour. The in person physical skills instruction and practice portion is scheduled for 2 hours. In MMSD staff are required to be recertified every 2 years.

Components	Format	Time Commitment
Modules	Self paced-asynchronous	2-3 hours
Facilitated Learning	Synchronous-Zoom	1 hours
Physicals Skills	Synchronous-In Person	2 hours

A Policy Publication of the
Wisconsin Association of School Boards, Inc.

WASB
WISCONSIN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL BOARDS

POLICY PERSPECTIVES

Vol. 49, No. 3
September 2026

DPI CONFIRMS THAT SCHOOL DISTRICTS MAY ENROLL FOREIGN EXCHANGE STUDENTS WHO ARE NOT RESIDING IN THE DISTRICT

Students from other countries who are participating in bona fide foreign exchange programs typically stay with a host family whose residence is located within the district in which the student attends school during the student's visit to the United States. However, suppose that the family of a current nonresident, full-time open enrollment student is hosting an exchange student and that the family would like the visiting student to attend the same high school as the family's own open enrollee. Can the nonresident school district allow the family's exchange student to attend its high school without either the payment of tuition or having the visiting student be approved for open enrollment?

The DPI's Bureau of Education Options recently provided guidance on the status of foreign exchange students under state law that resolves the scenario presented in the previous paragraph. According to the DPI, the school district **may** enroll the exchange student being hosted by the nonresident family without requiring the payment of tuition. Moreover, the DPI expressly clarified that foreign exchange students "**cannot** and do not need to apply for open enrollment." (Emphasis added.)

The school district's legal authority to enroll an exchange student is found in section 121.84(1)(c) of the Wisconsin Statutes and reads as follows: "A school board may permit a foreign exchange student to attend school in the school district without payment of tuition." The tuition waiver authority granted under the statute does not depend on the residency of the student's host family. It also does not depend on the host family having a student who currently attends school in the nonresident school district. Further, although this point was not addressed in the recent DPI communication, it also appears to be the case that a district may enroll an exchange student whose host family resides outside of the school district even if the district rejects all or most nonresident open enrollment applications to attend its high school(s) under space availability determinations.

At the same time, school districts are not required to enroll *any* foreign exchange students under section 121.84(1)(c). In short, it would be a local policy decision. According to DPI guidance, when a district elects to enroll a foreign exchange student under section 121.84(1)(c), the district of attendance may include the visiting student in the district's PI-1563 pupil membership report if the exchange student is attending school on a student count date.

The authority to enroll a foreign exchange student under section 121.84(1)(c) without requiring the payment of tuition is subject to an important limitation. That authority applies when the international student possesses a J-1 visa and is participating in a formal cultural exchange program, such as the program operated by American Field Service (AFS).

In contrast, an international student who possesses an F-1 visa may be enrolled in a public high school only if (1) the high school is formally certified to participate in the Student Exchange and Visitor Program (SEVP), as overseen by the federal Department of Homeland Security; **and** (2) tuition (as defined under federal law) is paid to cover the full cost of the student's attendance. The federal tuition requirement that applies to F-1 visas cannot be waived by school districts, and the international student generally must demonstrate that the full, unsubsidized per-capita cost of the education that the student will receive has been paid to the public school system **before** the F-1 visa can be issued. *See generally* https://dpi.wi.gov/international-education/students.

DPI IS PROPOSING TO CREATE A "SCHOOL BUSINESS OFFICE SPECIALIST" LICENSE: DOES YOUR DISTRICT SEE A NEED, BENEFIT OR POTENTIAL DETRIMENT?

School districts around the state employ individuals in a variety of non-administrative roles that relate to district financial management and business office operations. In small districts in which the district administrator also serves as the lead business official, it is common for the district to employ one or more non-licensed individuals to assist the district administrator with business functions. In other districts, a licensed business official may supervise and oversee the work of one or more non-licensed subordinates. In either situation, such non-licensed employees might assist the licensed administrator with functions such as managing accounts payable and accounts receivable, conducting account reconciliation, facilitating financial reporting, and other general accounting/bookkeeping tasks. School districts also regularly employ non-licensed individuals to assist with payroll processing, benefits administration, and student account management.

By publishing what is called a "Statement of Scope," the DPI recently announced that it intends to use the regulatory rule-making process to investigate and potentially pursue the creation of a new license area for non-administrative personnel who assist school districts with business functions. Specifically, Statement of Scope 067-26 addresses the potential creation of a "school business office specialist license" within Chapter PI 34 of the Wisconsin Administrative Code. The DPI has described the purpose of the potential new license as follows.

> The school business administrator license, which is a license in the administrative category, authorizes the holder to oversee and direct school business operations and supervise professional staff. However, … there is currently no credential that specifically recognizes the qualifications and responsibilities of school business office personnel who do not serve in an administrative capacity. …
>
> The [proposed] rule would establish the scope of practice for the license, identify the qualifications and requirements necessary to obtain the license, and determine whether the license would be required or optional for individuals performing school business office functions. … Without this rule, Wisconsin school districts would continue to lack a licensure pathway that prepares people for the unique business office functions that are required in public schools and Wisconsin would have no consistent statewide standard for recognizing said qualifications.

Should the Proposed License be Optional or Required?

The most significant issue to be decided in connection with creating a business office specialist license is probably whether any such license should be an optional or mandatory credential for individuals who perform business office duties in a non-administrative capacity. If the new license were to be entirely optional, then it would be unlikely to have any adverse consequences for school districts. Each district would be able to assess the value of the eligibility requirements for the license in light of (1) the job responsibilities of each local position and (2) each job candidate's other skills, education, training, and experience. In this respect, an optional business office specialist license might have similarities to some existing licenses that are available from the DPI but not required, such as the "coaching athletics license" and the DPI-issued "school nurse license."

On the other hand, if the new license were to be required for certain roles, then the stakes could be substantially higher. School district leaders would want to carefully assess all of the following:

1. Whether the proposed eligibility requirements for the license (once they become available for review) create unnecessary barriers to the employment of qualified individuals.
2. Whether the proposed eligibility requirements for the license would meaningfully add to other markers of an applicant's or employee's skills and training.
3. Whether the proposed eligibility requirements for the license truly reflect *unique* functions of a school district business office that normally cannot be learned reasonably quickly by an individual who

has more of a generalist background in business functions.

4. The lower bounds of the scope of practice under the license. That is, what are the specific duties and functions that could not be performed unless the employee holds the license?
5. The upper bounds of the scope of practice under the license. That is, what duties and functions could not be performed even if the employee in question does hold the proposed specialist license? Presumably, any such duties would need to be performed by an employee who holds an appropriate administrative license issued under subchapter VIII of chapter PI 34.
6. Whether the proposed eligibility requirements for the license sufficiently reflect the range of duties performed in different "specialist" roles in different districts. For example, an employee who assists with accounts receivable and accounts payable might need very different skills and training than an employee who assists with payroll and benefits administration. In addition, districts currently employ non-licensed individuals in positions that range from data entry and closely following established procedures all the way up to managerial-level, quasi-administrative positions that generally require some postsecondary education and training (e.g., as an accountant, a human resources professional, etc.). Somewhat notably, it is currently possible to serve as the director of human resources for a school district without holding *any* license.
7. Whether the scope of practice for the license would require the district to substantially restructure some of the district's existing jobs.
8. Whether sufficient time to become licensed or some other transition accommodation is provided for currently-employed personnel.
9. Whether there is likely to be a sufficient supply of preparation programs for the license that will offer training in "unique business office functions that are required in public schools." In 2025, the DPI reclassified licenses in numerous instructional and non-instructional areas as "obsolete" due at least in part to the fact that no preparation programs existed for obtaining the licenses. *See* CR 25-017, Register August 2025 No. 836, eff. 9-1-25 (rendering program coordinator licenses obsolete in areas such as athletics and co-curricular programs, personnel, public relations, research, and school network administration).

Opportunities for District Input

School districts and other stakeholders will have opportunities to weigh in on the potential structure, scope, and need for a school business office specialist license. Typically, there is a preliminary opportunity to comment on the Statement of Scope prior to the publication of a draft rule. Then, assuming that the text of a proposed rule is eventually published for review, the DPI will give notice of and hold a public hearing prior to finalizing and officially promulgating any new regulations. The DPI normally accepts both in-person and written testimony in connection with such public hearings.

As of September 15, 2026, the DPI has yet to announce a preliminary hearing and comment period for Statement of Scope 067-26. School district leaders can monitor the following sites to identify their opportunities to comment on the idea of creating a school business office specialist license:

- https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/code/scope_statements/all/067_26
- https://dpi.wi.gov/policy-budget/administrative-rules

IS IT TIME TO CONVENE THE DISTRICT'S HUMAN GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE? CHECK LOCAL POLICY

Legislation enacted in the spring of 2026 (Act 202) made instruction in child adoption a mandatory element of a district's human growth and development curriculum if the district provides instruction in any of the human growth and development topics that are listed in section 118.019(2)(a) of the state statutes. The instruction in adoption must be provided, "when age appropriate, in the same course and during the same year." To the extent this new instructional mandate results in a change to the district's existing curriculum, the implementation of Act 202 may (1) as determined under local policy, require or encourage a convening of the district's ad hoc advisory committee on the design and implementation of the local HG&D curriculum, and/or (2) require changes to the annual HG&D curriculum notices that are provided to parents.



2026 Fall Regional Meetings & Workshops

September-November

Dates and Locations Vary by Region

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Agenda

4 p.m.	Workshop Registration
4:30-5:30 p.m.	Workshop Program
5:45 p.m.	Registration and Networking
6:15 p.m.	Dinner
7-8:30 p.m.	Regional Meeting Program

Pre-Meeting Workshop

Wisconsin's Open Meetings Law: Understanding and Navigating Closed Sessions

Take a practical, in-depth look at Wisconsin's Open Meetings Law with a special emphasis on the rules, requirements and common pitfalls surrounding closed sessions. Learn when a closed session is legally permissible under the statutory exemptions, how to properly notice and convene a closed session, and what must be discussed in open session before going behind closed doors. Hear tips for taking minutes related to closed sessions and address some of the challenges and options associated with taking official action on matters addressed in a closed session. This workshop also includes governance advice on how school boards should approach sensitive discussions and maintain confidentiality.

Regional Meeting

- Regional Director Welcome
- Member Recognition Awards
- Elections (Regions 1, 2, 3, 6, 8, 12, 14)
- Legislative Update
- Executive Director's Report

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Supporting, promoting and advocating for public education.

DATES AND LOCATIONS

Phone: 833-320-5333

Network With Colleagues and WASB Staff

Join us at your Regional Meeting this fall to network with area board members, celebrate accomplishments and learn what the WASB is doing for you.

Each meeting begins with a networking opportunity and features a legislative update and a report from the WASB executive director.

Prior to your Regional Meeting, WASB staff counsel will host an optional workshop on Wisconsin's Open Meetings Law and navigating closed sessions.

A virtual workshop for all regions will be held via Zoom on Tuesday, Nov. 3, followed by a virtual meeting on Thursday, Nov. 5.

Registration Information

- The registration fee for in-person Regional Meetings is $43 ($42 in Regions 6 and 9).
- Workshop registration is $79 (including the online workshop).
- Attendees receive a $10 discount if registered for a workshop and Regional Meeting.
- Pre-registration is strongly recommended. Capacity may be limited in some locations.
- Members and staff are welcome to attend any workshop or Regional Meeting.
- Refunds are allowed for cancellations received by the end of the day, one week prior. (For example, for the Regional Meeting on Tuesday, Oct. 27, the cancellation must be received by 5 p.m. on Tuesday, Oct. 20).

Date	Region	City	Location
Sept. 29	5	Rothschild	Holiday Inn Wausau-Rothschild 1000 Imperial Ave.
Sept. 30	4	Eau Claire	The Florian Gardens 2340 Lorch Ave.
Oct. 1	6★	West Salem	West Salem High School 490 North Mark St.
Oct. 6	1★	Hayward	The Steakhouse & Lodge 15860 T Bone Ln.
Oct. 7	2★	Minocqua	Norwood Pines Supper Club 10171 Highway 70
Oct. 8	11/15	Brookfield	Sheraton Milwaukee Brookfield Hotel 375 S. Moorland Rd.
Oct. 13	10	Baraboo	The Wisconsin Hotel & Conference Center 60 Gasser Rd.
Oct. 14	9	Fennimore	Southwest Tech 1800 Bronson Blvd.
Oct. 20	8★	New Holstein	Altona Supper Club 2306 Calumet Dr.
Oct. 21	7	Neenah	Bridgewood Resort & Hotel 1000 Cameron Way
Oct. 22	3★	Green Bay	Rock Garden/Comfort Suites 1951 Bond St.
Oct. 27	13	Burlington	Veterans Terrace 589 Milwaukee Ave.
Oct. 28	12★	Sun Prairie	Hilton Sun Prairie 1220 S. Grand Ave.
Nov. 5	Any	Virtual	12 p.m. online meeting. Zoom link to come via email.
TBD	14★	Milwaukee	MPS Administration Building 5225 West Vliet St.

★ Denotes regions with elections for a member of the WASB Board of Directors.