



Theology curriculum development

The first half of 2026 has been a milestone for the WELS theology curriculum project as four writing teams began crafting the lessons and units for the early childhood, elementary, middle school, and high school levels. A total of 50 WELS pastors and teachers serve as writers on these four teams. Their years of experience reflect the diverse ministry contexts across the synod's 12 districts.

As these writing teams are working, the theology curriculum team is preparing to hand off the writing teams' work to the next production areas. Needed personnel are being identified and assembled to support editing, design, and layout for the print resources and digital platform. This personnel includes contracting with WELS pastors for theological review, copy editors, artists, graphic designers, and digital experts. A working timeline for the WELS theology curriculum project can be found below.

Dates to remember

Aug. 25, 2026	School statistics form opens
Sept. 1, 2026	Profile and synod yearbook updates due Payment window for Annual Support, PowerSchool, NWEA standard MAP fees (excluding new enrollment fees), i-Ready, WELSSA, WCRIS opens
Sept. 25, 2026	School statistics entries due
Oct. 15, 2026	Call window for actively serving teachers opens
Nov. 2, 2026	Payments for Powerschool, NWEA, WELSSA, WCRIS due (see page 5)
April 15, 2027	Call window for actively serving teachers closes
June 30, 2027	WELSSA ASAR/SIP Reports for 26-27 due

Visit cls.welsrc.net/download-cls/general-documents to view an electronic version of this packet with hyperlinks.
Please share this important information with your staff.

Theology curriculum working timeline

2026

Drafting units and lessons

2027

Editing and layout for print and digital

2028

Beta pilot in sample WELS schools

2029

Target release for early childhood and elementary

2030

Target release for middle school and high school

Resources



Heart Imprints

This resource provides ideas for your children's message that will coordinate with the church year and Sunday worship planning. It consists of a Bible reading, an object lesson outline that articulates the law and gospel, and a suggested order of service. Visit cls.welsrc.net/heartimprints.

WELS devotions

WELS publishes daily devotions and Bible readings, and teen, early childhood educator, and family devotions. Sign-up at wels.net/subscribe, and share with your school families.

Congregational services resource center

WELS Congregational Services exists to encourage and equip congregations for faithful and fruitful gospel ministry. Visit welscongregationservices.net for Bible studies, worship planning, youth events, stewardship, and more.

Consulting services

Contact Jim Sievert at James.Sievert@wels.net to arrange consulting services.

Amazing Grace Virtual Academy

Amazing Grace Virtual Academy (AGVA) exists to facilitate the offering of quality online courses taught from a scriptural perspective. AGVA is fully accredited and offers 40 courses to serve middle school and high school students. Visit amazinggraceva.org for more details, or contact Dave Rust at david.rust@amazinggraceva.org.

Support for early childhood teachers

MLC offers growth opportunities for early childhood teachers of all professional levels in 4 tiers. Tier 1 includes 25 free online modules on early childhood education basics. Visit mlc-wels.edu/continuing-education/four-tiers to learn more or contact WELS national coordinator for early childhood ministries at jamie.walta@wels.net.

Synod sub rate

Synod substitution rate for teachers in the 2026-27 school year is \$115/day.

Teacher call window

The window for calling active teachers from the field begins on **October 15, 2026** and runs through **April 15, 2027**.

- Teacher call list requests are submitted electronically at wels.net/callrequest.
- Request forms must be complete and submitted at least 14 days prior to the requested call meeting. Calling bodies should use the two weeks to prepare all items for the call packet electronically, so that the call and accompanying documents may be e-mailed to the candidate called within 12 hours of the meeting.
- Remember to include compensation information using the compensation calculator: cwcompcalc.wels.net.

WELSSA standards rewrite project

Beginning in 2022, feedback from school leaders led to a full redesign aimed at aligning WELSSA standards with current educational practices while maintaining WELSSA's core values of continuous improvement, Lutheran identity, and accountability.

A taskforce created a unified framework with seven core strands applicable across early childhood, elementary, and high school programs, with addendums for the specialized requirements in early childhood and high school settings. The new structure reduces complexity while increasing clarity, rigor, and relevance for schools.

At the 2026 annual summer meeting, the National Council for Private School Accreditation (NCPA) authorized a pilot of the redeveloped standards. At least five schools have already committed to use these standards for their 2026-2027 self-study and validation visit. Feedback from the pilot will be used to further revise the standards. These standards will be shared broadly once they are fully approved by NCPA.

This fall, a series of articles will be shared that describe the revision process and outline the implementation of the new standards.



WELSSA school leaders

If you are in a new leadership role at a WELSSA school this year, please contact **Abby.Truss@wels.net** for access to your School Improvement Plan for the year.

Student safety and sexual abuse prevention

All schools should be reminded of the importance of maintaining the required safety policies and staff training programs mandated by their respective states. Our office is available to assist schools in identifying and accessing the appropriate resources for their location. In addition, we continue to provide access to Vector Solutions training modules at no cost for all schools that submit a Lutheran Schools annual support contribution.

Wisconsin recently enacted two new laws that affect our Lutheran schools. Act 57 establishes parental notification procedures regarding staff sexual misconduct, while Act 89 requires school districts to provide annual training for school staff on recognizing grooming behaviors and boundary violations. We are grateful for our partnership with the Wisconsin Council of Religious and Independent Schools (WCRIS), whose advocacy helped ensure that the concerns of religious and independent schools were considered during the legislative process. WCRIS has also developed sample policies that schools may adapt to their local circumstances. We encourage schools to review these resources carefully and implement them as appropriate for their ministry setting.

As schools evaluate communication tools that support strong parent engagement and timely notification, ParentSquare is offering a discounted rate to WELS schools during the first three years of implementation. If your school has identified other effective communication platforms, please let us know. We would be pleased to explore whether volume-discount opportunities may be available for additional providers. Finally, WELS Congregational Services continues to develop and expand a suite of sexual abuse prevention resources designed to support both our churches and schools in fostering safe environments for children and families.

NWEA MAP testing

If your school is discontinuing NWEA MAP use for 2026-2027, please advise lutheranschools@wels.net immediately so we do not pay licensing for your school.

NWEA has a 120-license minimum fee. Schools purchasing less than 120 licenses can purchase through WELS to receive the discounted per-student rate.

Schools new to NWEA

WELS schools that are new to NWEA MAP Growth and/or MAP Reading Fluency will follow NWEA's required enrollment process through the WELS program.

- WELS CLS will bill schools for enrollment and any additional testing fees.
- Enrollment fees are required for new schools.
- Costs will be shared among all newly enrolling schools this coming school year.
- **The cost for EACH program will not exceed \$1,260 and will be billed separately**. (MAP Growth Foundations and MAP Reading Fluency Foundations)

Renewing Schools <120 MAP Growth Licenses

Renewing Schools with fewer than 120 MAP Growth licenses will continue to be billed by WELS Lutheran Schools. This includes the required Professional Learning fee for MAP Reading Fluency and Growth Foundations. All MAP testing fees should be paid with other applicable CLS fees starting September 1.

Renewing Schools 120+ MAP Growth Licenses

Schools who are at or above 120 MAP Growth licenses will continue to renew through and be directly billed by NWEA at WELS pricing. Professional Learning continues to be available through NWEA as well.

Contact Kimberly Casmer at Kimberly.casmer@wels.net in regard to enrollment or MacKenzie McCloud at mackenzie.mccloud@hnhco.com for additional information on NWEA products.

Education Freedom Tax Credit

The deputy secretary at the US Department of Education speculates the US Treasury department will release the final rules on the Education Freedom Tax Credit sometime in July. Once the rules are out, the Lutheran Schools team will work with educators and others to provide guidance on scholarship granting organizations. If you would like to be a part of the discussion or would like to recommend someone with experience and expertise in the area of scholarship granting organizations, please send an email to lutheranschools@wels.net, and we will reach out to you.



Free Parenting Resource

Offer parents support on parenting topics from a Christian perspective. Include *Forward in Christ's* monthly parenting column, "Parent conversations," in your school newsletter via forwardinchrist.net/parents or print a hard copy from the pdf that is prepared for schools and churches each month. Also consider adding forwardinchrist.net to your school's website as a resource for parents' questions about the Bible and how to apply it in their daily lives. Have news or photos to share? Submit all items at forwardinchrist.net/submit.

Lutheran schools annual support

The work of the Commission on Lutheran Schools is funded only in part by synod allocation of congregational mission offerings. Lutheran Schools Annual Support is an opportunity for your school to walk together with over 400 fellow WELS schools in our joint commitment to offering gospel centered-education.

Schools who make an Annual Support payment are eligible for a complimentary school counselor visit and for discounts on PowerSchool training and annual per student fees, WELSSA annual fees, and select conferences and events.

Supporting schools also receive a complimentary subscription to Vector Solutions training. This resource provides contributing schools with access to training courses for compliance with health, safety, and environmental issues such as blood borne pathogens, mandatory reporting, bullying prevention, and many more. See the included flier.

Annual support and subscription fees

An invoice with payment link will be emailed in September when 2026-2027 enrollment is better known.

Lutheran Schools Annual Support per student

LHS Grades 9-12	4.00
LES Grades K-8	7.50
ECM Infant - 4K (Full-Time Equivalent)	7.50

Wisconsin Council of Religious and Independent Schools (WCRIS) per student, WI schools only

Grades 4K-12	5.25
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PowerSchool/SchoolMessenger per student (annual supporter rate)

PowerSchool	18.50
SchoolMessenger	1.76

WELSSA – Annual Fee per school

CLS Supporter: 1-99 Students	200
Non-Supporter: 1-99 Students	400
CLS Supporter: 100+ Students	300
Non-Supporter: 100+ Students	600

NWEA MAP Testing per student

MAP Growth	13.50
MAP Science	2.50
MAP Reading Fluency	7.00
Foundations Professional Learning for MAP Users <120 licenses (required)	\$20 per school

Schools new to NWEA MAP please see page 4 for additional information

i-Ready Assessment

per student - WELS volume discount

i-Ready Assessment Math	6.60
i-Ready Assessment Reading	6.60

For more i-Ready information contact contact lutheranschools@wels.net or WELS i-Ready consultant Joel Burdick at JBurdick@cainc.com.

Visit cls.welsrc.net/partners_and_group_purchasing for other recommended third party vendors. Mention you are a WELS school when contracting services to receive any available discounts.

LUTHERAN SCHOOLS PURCHASING SITE:

Visit lutheranschools.store to pay annual fees or an invoice with payment link will be emailed in September when 2026-2027 enrollment is better known.

If you have any questions, contact the CLS office at 414-259-4354 or email lutheranschools@wels.net.

School Mission Project Opportunities

Kids c.a.r.e.

The kids c.a.r.e. (care about reaching everyone with the gospel) program is designed to teach children about mission outreach. The Lutheran Women's Missionary Society's (LWMS) kids c.a.r.e. project for 2026-27 is *WELS Home Missions and the goal of starting 100 new mission churches in 10 years across North America*.



Free materials are available at lwms.org/kidscore including: instruction letter, poster, and offering box template. There are three levels of lesson plans: PreK-Grade 1 (non-readers), lower-level (Grades 2-5) and upper-level (Grades 6-8). Each level has two lesson plans, designed to be integrated with the Christ Light curriculum, and will contain age-appropriate enrichment activities, such as music, crafts, recipes, and activity sheets.

WELS Special Ministries

Special Ministries mission projects can support the spread of the gospel, while also giving school children or other groups the opportunity to learn about the challenges of participating in your church. Special Ministries projects help students understand that some people in your church or neighborhood need extra help to be part of worship.

Visit wels.net/serving-you/christian-life/special-ministries for additional information and to request resources. To connect with any of these ministries and receive help for your mission projects, contact specialministries@wels.net or 414-256-3241.

A City for God - Chaplains in Schools

Visit acityforgod.org to learn how Chaplains in Schools is discipling for Christ, and working with schools, students, and communities toward the goals of spiritual resilience and community building and growth.

Mission Resources for Your School

The Lutheran Women's Missionary Society (LWMS) and WELS Missions prepares a Home and World Missions Projects Booklet meant to outline projects for which prayers, encouragement, and gifts are truly needed. This is a great tool to use when deciding which WELS Missions projects to support through your school. To view and download the most recent edition, visit missions.welsrc.net.

Short-term Mission Trip Opportunities

WELS Mission Journeys, short-term mission trips, provides an opportunity for high school students to walk together in the Great Commission. Visit wels.net/missionjourneys.

Taste of Missions

Taste of Missions offers videos, missionary kid interviews, recipes, activities, and other resources that can be used in your classroom to help students learn about WELS mission work around the world. Keep an eye out for information about the annual **School Challenge** for grade school classrooms and the **Poster Contest** for high school students that occur every spring. Find these resources and more at tasteofmissions.com.

WELS Christian Aid and Relief

WELS Christian Aid and Relief is sponsoring Community Care and Compassion Grants. Sponsor an activity through your school to show Christ's love and care to the people in your community. Plan an activity such as encouraging cards with gifts or treats for first responders, a community food drive hosted at your church and school, a seminar on mental health topics for the community, provide meals at a shelter, or an idea that your students dream up. Grant information and application available at wels.net/relief or contact Pastor Dan Sims, Administrator of WELS Christian Aid and Relief at daniel.sims@wels.net.

WELS Kingdom Workers

Volunteers are serving at home and around the world through Kingdom Workers. Visit kingdomworkers.com to see where they are serving and how you can help.

Lighthouse Youth Center

Lighthouse Youth Center provides the community with a central location where youth can gather safely for recreational activities, receive assistance on their academic assignments, enjoy the positive influence of adult Christian mentors, and have opportunities to study and discuss the truths of Scripture. Visit lighthouseyouthcenter.com to learn more and find a location near your school.