

WELS COMMISSION ON LUTHERAN SCHOOLS

Fall 2023



Quick Links

Subscribe to the weekly CLS e-News at wels.net/subscribe.

Lutheran Schools Resource Center
cls.welsrc.net

facebook.com/WELSSchools
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The Administrators Google group "adminmail" is for principals and directors to ask questions and share information. Send an e-mail to lutheranschools@wels.net to request an invitation.

Congregational Services
welscongregationservices.net

E-mail lutheranschools@wels.net for questions or assistance with resources.

Record Enrollment Brings New Challenges and Opportunities

The 2022-23 School Year saw the greatest number of students attend WELS Lutheran Schools (grades infant-12) in the history of WELS Schools. We thank and praise our God whose hand continues to guide our teachers and schools regardless of location, size, and enrollment trends. Below are some interesting facts regarding WELS schools that have emerged in the past two years:

- Early Childhood ministry enrollment surpassed 12,000 students for the first time ever
- Combined area Lutheran high school and Prep School enrollment grew to over 7,000 students for the first time ever
- Lutheran Elementary School enrollments returned to numbers from 20 years ago
- One in eight elementary aged students had a diagnosed disability, service plan, or educational modification plan in place
- An average of over 20% of the children and families served have no church home, with 33% unchurched at the early childhood level
- 220 former WELS teachers returned to the classroom after at least a one year absence
- 211 WELS members with education degrees teaching outside of WELS schools accepted provisional calls to serve in WELS schools
- One in seven WELS schools had a leadership vacancy or interim plan to lead their school
- Sixty-one percent of school leaders surveyed are unsure of their schools financial sustainability

These blessings and challenges provide many reasons for prayer. Encourage young and mature in your midst who have the gifts to consider training for ministry. Does your school have a harvest strategy or intentional plan to reach the unchurched? Are there ways to improve? Is your school in a position to assist in the training or a future leader? Does it make sense for your school and a nearby school to consolidate to combine gifts and resources?

The Commission on Lutheran Schools is poised and ready to assist you in all these areas of challenge or opportunity. Check out cls.welsrc.net, e-mail lutheranschools@wels.net, or seek out a member of the Lutheran Schools team attending your conference for further information.

TO VERIFY YOUR USER NAME

Visit the WELS online yearbook at yearbook.wels.net, search for your personal or school listing, click on your name to open your information card, and then click on the name in the header at the top. An alert box will pop up showing you the associated username.

TO RESET YOUR PASSWORD

If you don't remember your password, or never had one, please contact support@wels.net or 414-259-4357.

For assistance with accessing the online forms, call the WELS Help Desk Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Central Time at 414-259-4357 or support@wels.net. For other questions, e-mail lutherschools@wels.net or call 414-256-3223.

WELS Cloud Account

Called workers can update personal information any time via their WELS Cloud Account. Current worker information and preferences are essential to calling bodies as they seek to issue a call. Please visit cloud.wels.net/me to review and update your information. A new password reset protocol was implemented over the summer. Please contact support@wels.net or 414-259-4357 if you need help accessing your account.

Profile Section

Please review each form link and complete as applicable. You may indicate your ability to consider calls outside of your home area, distance you are willing to commute, and any additional information on relocation limitations in the [Teacher/ Staff Minister Information](#) form.

Teacher Self-Assessments

[Teacher Self-Assessments](#) are important for calling bodies and worker self-development and should be updated **annually**.

Duties, Subjects, and Grades tabs in the [Teacher Self-Assessment](#) should be completed as applicable. The "Top 5 Strengths" section on the *Strengths & Goals* tab is for use with an optional online **CliftonStrengths Assessment**. If you are interested in completing this section, visit store.gallup.com to purchase and then share your top 5 strengths in your Self-Assessment. If you have not taken the **CliftonStrengths Assessment**, please leave this section blank.

We ask all Called workers to indicate their ministry goals and interests in the "Ministry goals and Interests" comments box on the *Strengths and Goals* tab.

Training for Future Leaders at your Ministry

Does your school or early childhood ministry have a vacancy or does it anticipate one soon, or does your school or early childhood ministry have a high performing leader who would serve well as a mentor of a three year intern? If so, the Principal Training Program or Director Training Program may be the answer to growing a new leader for your ministry or the WELS ministry. A three year guide book, training, and complementary continuing education are available for both the mentor and the mentee. E-mail lutherschools@wels.net for further information.

Help Us Identify Future Leaders already Teaching

Martin Luther College and the Commission on Lutheran Schools have partnered to provide a Master's program and training events to equip current teachers with the knowledge, skills, and training to move to a role of greater ministry leadership. Contact Dr. John Meyer at Martin Luther College or e-mail lutherschools@wels.net to learn more about the Principal Credential and Early Childhood Director Credential cohort program.

Active Teacher Calling Window

Calling bodies may extend divine calls to active teachers, pastors serving in high schools, and staff ministers serving in school settings from **Oct. 15, 2023** through **April 15, 2024**. The electronic call request available at wels.net/callrequest should be submitted at least two weeks in advance of the desired call date. Wait for an e-mail confirming the call date prior to scheduling or announcing the date of the call meeting. Call volume and calls with similar qualifications on a given day may require an alternate date. Consider requesting local candidates currently not serving in a called position in a WELS school. A call list of candidates will be provided electronically by the district president on the day of the call meeting. Alert the district president and the Lutheran Schools office at lutherschools@wels.net immediately after all call meetings to provide the meeting results, as many candidates presented for a list, but not called, may be on a call list the following day.



As WELS schools and early childhood ministries reach into the community to share Jesus through their education ministry, accreditation provides credibility to people unfamiliar with our school system and assures them that they are receiving a quality education. Accreditation carries many additional benefits. By comparing and aligning your school to WELSSA standards, you can have confidence that your school is meeting the needs of your learners and their families. Accreditation also helps focus your school on improvement areas through the self-study and visitation process. Accreditation can improve your school's bottom line as certain state programs and grant opportunities are only available to accredited schools. Finally, Accreditation is

an important validation for your graduates as they move through the educational world. Since WELSSA is recognized by the National Council for Private School Accreditation, your school also receives national recognition and valuable oversight on processes and standards.

The Commission on Lutheran Schools approved three schools for first-time accreditation this fall, bringing WELSSA's accredited total to 156. These early childhood ministries, elementary schools, and high schools are located in fourteen states serving over 21,000 students. WELSSA continues to grow as there are fifteen new ministries that will be seeking first-time accreditation during the next two school years.

WELSSA's major improvement project of 2022 – 23 was seeking recognition with YoungStar in Wisconsin through our early childhood standards. WELSSA's recognition with YoungStar would bring the benefits of YoungStar to all accredited early childhood ministries in Wisconsin. Over the next year, our goals are to complete a starred standard review at the high school level, amend the role of the consultant, and begin revising the elementary standards.

If you are interested in serving on a site visit team or learning more about accreditation for your school, contact our office at welssa@wels.net.

Congratulations to our newly first-time accredited schools!

- St. John Lutheran School – Peshtigo, WI
- St. Lucas Lutheran School – Kewaskum, WI
- St. Paul's Lutheran School – Bangor, WI

Save the Date!

**National Conference on
Worship, Music, and the Arts
July 30-Aug. 2, 2024
Carthage College, Kenosha, WI**

**WELS Education Conference
June 22-25, 2025
Green Bay, WI**

School Openings

- Little Lambs Childcare (ECM) *Beloit, WI*
- Immanuel Little Knights Preschool (ECM) *La Crosse, WI*
- Cornerstone Lutheran High School (LHS) *Chippewa Falls, WI*
- Living Promise Academy (ECM) *Morristown, TN*
- Grace for Kids Lutheran Preschool (ECM) *Osceola, WI*
- Little Lights Preschool (ECM) *Waukegan, IL*

School Closings

- Our Savior's Lutheran School (LES & ECM) *Zion, IL*
- St. Paul Lutheran School (LES & ECM) *Moline, IL*
- Petra Lutheran School (LES) *Sauk Rapids, MN*
- Little Lambs Learning Center (ECM) *Danube, MN*
- Precious Pebbles Lutheran Preschool (ECM) *Rochester, MN*

Theology Curriculum Task Force

The task force has begun a two-year process developing a vision of God's Word instruction in our schools and creating learning standards. The work of this task force is the first phase of development for the new theology curriculum. New Lutheran Schools team member Melanie Giddings will coordinate the task force efforts in her part-time role while also continuing her current call serving Fox Valley Lutheran Schools.

WELS Devotions

WELS publishes daily devotions and Bible readings, teen devotions, and early childhood educator devotions. WELS Family Devotions are published three times a week, and the devotions coincide with the previous Sunday's Bible readings. Each devotion is complete with a set of questions for different age groups, a prayer, and hymn verses that can be sung or spoken. **Sign-up at wels.net/subscribe.**

Early Childhood Ministry Educator Devotions are written for anyone who serves young children. On-line devotions are shared once a week. Visit **wels.net/serving-you/devotions** to view and subscribe.

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Heart Imprints

Heart Imprints provides a children's message that coordinates with scheduled Sunday readings. Messages are posted on a monthly or seasonal basis. Pre-K and K-8 levels are included. Visit **cls.welsrc.net/heartimprints** to download, and subscribe to be notified when new devotions are available.

Telling the Next Generation

Each day our WELS schools and early childhood ministries serve children and families with a goal of connecting them with the gospel. How can we connect them with the gospel in an intentional way? Telling the Next Generation workshops guide your ministry team in the development of a written harvest strategy. Reach out to **tellingthenextgeneration@wels.net** to schedule a workshop for your ministry!

2023-24 Substitute Reimbursement Rate

The daily substitute reimbursement rate for teachers approved by the WELS Synodical Council is \$110.

Business Certificate for School Leaders

Through a grant from the Kern Family Foundation and in partnership with Milwaukee School of Engineering's Rader School of Business, you can earn a Business Certificate for School Leaders. This program begins in late summer and runs through the school year. Classes in Finance, Marketing, Organizational Change, and Project Management are paired with a project that addresses a need in your school. For more information reach out to Lutheran Schools Associate Director, Paul Patterson or MSOE Program Director, Michele Trawicki (**trawickim@msoe.edu** or 414-412-7378).

Ministerial Growth and Evaluation

All teachers should have a ministry development plan by the end of the 2024 calendar year. A summative evaluation of every teacher should be completed by June 30, 2025.

Find recorded training and resources at **cls.welsrc.net/mgep** or request on-site training **lutheranschools@wels.net**.