

WELS COMMISSION ON LUTHERAN SCHOOLS

Summer 2023



The Commission on Lutheran Schools (CLS) exists to guide and assist WELS congregations in advancing the gospel of Jesus by providing resources, training, and personal assistance for starting and strengthening Lutheran schools.

Quick Links

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

Lutheran Schools Resource Center
cls.welsrc.net

facebook.com/WELSSchools
instagram.com/wels_schools

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
welscongregationalservices.net

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

God’s richest blessings on the coming school year!

This document is filled with both requests for information from you, and resources from our Lutheran Schools team.

Please take the time to review everything included and especially note the dates for submitting information that will help WELS serve you well this school year.

New Theology Curriculum Task Force

Earlier this summer, pastors, teachers, and representatives from NPH, MLC, and the Lutheran Schools team met at the Center for Mission and Ministry. These individuals have joined together, forming the WELS Theology Curriculum Task Force representing early childhood through high school instruction. The task force has begun a two-year process in 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 coordinator the task force efforts in her part-time role while also continuing her current call serving Fox Valley Lutheran Schools.

An electronic version of this packet with hyperlinks is available at
cls.welsrc.net/download-cls/general-documents

Please share this important information with your staff.

WELS Testing Update

WELS Testing Partner NWEA was purchased by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt in January. As NWEA neared that merger, WELS was informed that NWEA intended to renegotiate the at-will partnership with WELS. After some negotiation they offered that the minimum fee would continue to be waived, if the Lutheran Schools office served as the billing department for all WELS NWEA testing schools. Due to the merger, the logistics to enact this change were not in place. The 2023-2024 school year will be the last year of the old WELS/NWEA contract. Expect your NWEA rep to present new prices and new terms when the 2024-2025 contract time arrives.

Due to all this uncertainty and some concern over some of the messaging NWEA has sent out, WELS explored marketplace options for testing. Fox Valley Lutheran Schools began using iReady, a testing product from Curriculum Associates. We have begun the process of seeking a preferred partner status with them. While the number of students that Fox Valley Lutheran Schools tests is large, the number of students needed to justify a contracted relationship needs to grow. If you are interested in more information, please check out curriculumassociates.com/reviews/wels.

Whichever testing solution your school opts to use, Lutheran Schools continues to work to establish partnerships that help you.

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*

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*

Teacher Call Window

The window for calling active teachers from the field begins on **October 15, 2023**, and runs through **April 15, 2024**. The volume of teacher calls remains high and congregations are encouraged to plan ahead, keeping the following in mind:

- 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](https://wels.net/cwcompcalc).

Early Childhood Ministry

A number of resources are available to support and encourage congregations with an early childhood ministry and those who serve in them. For more information visit cls.welsrc.net or contact Cindi Holman, National Coordinator for WELS Early Childhood Ministry cindi.holman@wels.net. Following are a few of those resources.

- WELS Early Childhood Educator devotions are shared once a week. Visit wels.net/serving-you/devotions to view and subscribe.
- Building Blocks: A Handbook for Beginning and Operating a Christian Early Childhood Ministry is designed for congregations looking to begin, expand, or revitalize an early childhood ministry.
- WELS School Accreditation: WELSSA has several formats available for accreditation for WELS Early Childhood Ministries including programs that serve only PreK (ages 3-4), childcare centers, and also an Early Childhood Addendum for PreK programs connected to an elementary school. For more information, contact welssa@wels.net.
- Early childhood district coordinators are eager to provide support, resources, and encouragement for congregations, ECMs, and those who serve in an ECM. Find your early childhood district coordinator at cls.welsrc.net/general-documents.

Ministerial Growth and Evaluation Process

Free refresher webinars will be held on **July 24** and **August 9** from 10:00 a.m to 11:00 a.m. central with question and answer time until 11:30 a.m. Contact lutheranschools@wels.net for link to the webinar.

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.



*Ministerial Growth
& Evaluation Process*

Consulting Services

Do you have challenges or opportunities that would benefit from outside insights including a deep look at your demographics and a review of what's best for the overall ministry? Contact Jim Sievert at James.Sievert@wels.net to arrange CLS consulting services.

Save the Date - WELS Education Conference 2025

Mark your calendars for **June 22-25, 2025** for the next WELS Education Conference in Green Bay, WI.

Amazing Grace Virtual Academy

Amazing Grace Virtual Academy (AGVA) exists to facilitate the offering of quality online courses taught from a scriptural perspective. Their courses empower ELS/WELS schools to better serve their students through expanded curricular offerings. 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.



WELSSA
WELS School Accreditation

WELS School Accreditation (WELSSA)

What's new in the world of accreditation? WELS School Accreditation (WELSSA), a tool for schools to evaluate their ministry based on Scripture and sound educational principles, continues to grow, with 46% growth of the program over the past decade. One of the many benefits of becoming an accredited school is an appreciation of the many blessings our gracious God has already provided. WELSSA also identifies new ways in which a school ministry can better serve its students and surrounding community. Schools and early childhood ministries learn to understand their strengths and areas for improvement by working through a self-study of the WELSSA standards.

This fall, the Commission on Lutheran Schools will likely approve three schools for first-time accreditation, bringing our 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 schools that will be seeking first-time accreditation during the next two school years.

During 2022 - 23, the work of several different early childhood taskforces came to fruition as our WELSSA standards are seeking recognition with YoungStar, the quality rating and improvement system for early childhood programs in the state of Wisconsin. If approved, all WELSSA accredited early childhood ministries would be recognized with YoungStar. WELSSA remains an active member with the National Council for Private School Accreditation (NCPSA), providing us and the schools we serve with national oversight. In the vein of continuous improvement, upcoming WELSSA projects include revising our elementary school standards, studying the mandatory standards at the high school level, and revising the WELSSA consultant role.

Each year over 100 knowledgeable volunteers from WELS schools serve WELSSA as consultants, captains, and team members. We could not do this important work without our volunteers! If you are interested in serving on a site visit team or if you would like to learn more about accreditation for your school, please contact welssa@wels.net.

Synod Yearbook School Update Form

Updates to your school's information for the WELS Yearbook and online directory can be done through a school administrator or school WELS Cloud account at cloud.wels.net/me. The **School Information** form contains your school contact and faculty information in "tabs". This form can be accessed anytime. Please feel free to make updates as often as needed. If the current information is correct, nothing needs to be submitted.

The information you see is what will appear in the print version of the 2024 Yearbook. We can only guarantee that updates received by September 1, 2023, will make into the print version. However, all changes to school information will appear in the Online Yearbook yearbook.wels.net the following day.

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.

How to Update your School's Synod Yearbook Listing

Principal, ECM director, and school WELS Cloud accounts will be able to access the **School Information** form.

1. Go to cloud.wels.net/me. Read the "Important Information", then proceed to My WELS Cloud and login. (The username will always end with "@wels.net".)
2. Click on the **School Information** link in the "Unit" section to review and update. Information icons are available on the form for assistance with specific fields.
3. Early Childhood Ministry and Elementary Schools have separate "units." Early Childhood staff will be listed in the Early Childhood unit.
4. Please contact Lutheran Schools if you believe your faculty listing is incorrect.

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 lutheralschools@wels.net or call 414-256-3223.

School Statistics Collection

Collecting annual school statistics helps the Lutheran Schools office recognize our many blessings as well as understand trends for planning future initiatives and priorities.

The School Statistics form will open on Tuesday, August 22, and can be found on the CLS Resource Center: cls.welsrc.net/stats. No log-in is needed to complete this form. Completed forms are due **September 22**.

To view your school's previous year's statistics, search the online yearbook at yearbook.wels.net/unitsearch. Select your school listing. A "View Statistics" link is located underneath the school contact information.

WELS Cloud Account

School Leaders, please share this information with your staff.

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 by August 19. Instructions to access your WELS Cloud Account and complete the forms within it are below and in this packet. 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.

Self-Assessment Reviews

The Conference of Presidents requests that all [Teacher Self-Assessments](#) go through a review process. Teachers are to have a School Leader review their Self-Assessment. Principals/ECM Directors, please take the time to carefully review the forms and offer suggestions for changes as you see fit. Principals and directors are asked to have their Self-Assessments reviewed by the school board chairman or pastor of the congregation. Please note that Self-Assessments are different from the Summative Teacher Evaluation in which School Leaders review classroom instruction and management, etc. [Teacher Self-Assessments](#) inform us about your ministry preferences, abilities, and experience.

After a teacher has completed the Self-Assessment form, he/she is asked to undertake the following steps as outlined in the Finalize & Submit tab:

1. Follow the instructions on the Finalize & Submit tab to have your Self-Assessment reviewed.
2. Meet with your reviewer to discuss the form and modify rankings if needed.
3. Use the Comment Field to indicate any areas in which you and your reviewer may disagree.
4. Complete the reviewer information fields and submit your Self-Assessment.

Please note that the "Submit" button will not be enabled until the reviewer's name, title, and date of review are entered. Once the "Submit" button has been clicked, your Self-Assessment will flow directly into your WELS Cloud account and will be available for viewing in [Personal Biography](#) under Reports.

IMPORTANT!

Your Self-Assessment will not be uploaded to your WELS Cloud profile until you click Submit.

Congregational Services Resource Center

WELS Congregational Services exists to serve congregations, schools, and their leaders by providing resources, training, and personal assistance so that they might carry out gospel ministry in the most faithful way at the local level. Check out the resources at welscongregationservices.net.



HEART IMPRINTS

A worship resource for children in the congregation, school, or early childhood ministry

Heart Imprints

Heart Imprints - A worship resource for children in the congregation, elementary school, or early childhood ministry. Whether you are giving a children's sermon, or planning chapel for your Sunday school, early childhood ministry, or Lutheran elementary school, this resource provides ideas for your message that will coordinate with the church year and the worship being planned on Sunday.

Consisting of a Bible reading, an object lesson outline that articulates the law and gospel, and a suggested order of service Heart Imprints is connected to the church year and available throughout the year. Visit cls.welsrc.net/heartimprints.



MissionInsite Demographics

Any WELS congregation or entity is able to run as many demographic reports as they want for free. Learn more about how MissionInsite can help your school as you look to reach out in your community. Learn more at welscongregationservices.net/missioninsite-know-your-audience.



Kids Connection

Kids Connection shares stories about people, places, and programs around WELS; connecting Christian kids to other Christian kids, showing there are other schools like theirs and other Christians like them across the nation. Learn more and start your subscription at wels.net/kids-connection.



Telling the Next Generation: Utilizing Our Schools for Outreach

New school year! New families to serve! New opportunities! At the heart of all we do in our schools and early childhood ministries is sharing the precious gospel of Jesus. (Psalm 78:4) How can we do that in an intentional and meaningful way? How can we connect families to the Means of Grace? Consider a Telling the Next Generation workshop for your ministry to learn more about creating and implementing a harvest strategy. Fall dates are starting to fill up. Reach out today for more information on hosting or attending a workshop near you. tellingthenextgeneration@wels.net.



WELS Devotions

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

Lutheran Schools Purchasing Center

The Commission on Lutheran Schools (CLS) is pleased to offer a secure online purchasing center for Lutheran Schools Annual Support, WELS School Accreditation (WELSSA) annual fees, WCRIS dues (WI schools only), and PowerSchool fees. Visit clservices.wels.net to create or log into your school's CLS Purchasing Center account. Contact lutheranschools@wels.net for account assistance.

Lutheran Schools Annual Support

The work of CLS is funded only in part by Synod allocation of congregational mission offerings. Many of the services provided by CLS are made possible by annual support provided directly by schools. Lutheran Schools Annual Support (formally called supplemental contribution) 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 discounts on PowerSchool training and annual per student fees, WELSSA annual fees, and select conferences and events. Please note that Annual Support payments must be made before you can purchase other items at the discount rate. (See box below.)



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.

Subscription Services Annual Fees

Lutheran Schools Annual Support per student

ECM (FTE) & LES	7.50	LHS	4.00
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Rate

With Annual Support Discount

Power School	35.50	18.50
Product Training	450.00	300.00

To avoid any interruption of your 2022-2023 PowerSchool subscription, please pay your renewal fee by October 1.

WELSSA – Annual Fee

Rate

With Annual Support Discount

Enrollment 1-99	400.00	200.00
Enrollment 100+	600.00	300.00

Wisconsin Council of Religious and Independent Schools (WCRIS)

Fee for Wisconsin schools 4.50 per student for grades K4 – 12. There is no discount for contributing schools.

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

IMPORTANT NOTE:

After you have made a Lutheran Schools Annual Support payment, log back in to receive the discounted price for additional purchases. Purchasing subscriptions prior to making an annual support payment will not provide you with a discount. You must log-in with the same credentials as you used to make your Annual Support Payment.

Payments accepted: Visa, Master Card, Discover, or American Express credit cards. (No debit cards can be accepted.)

If you are mailing in your contribution and/or any subscription fees, please include the 2023-2024 Payment Form available on the purchasing center, resource center, and in this packet.

If you have any questions, contact the CLS office at 414-259-4354 or e-mail 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 kids c.a.r.e. project for 2023-24 is "Missionary Kids Retreats."



Missionary children, especially ages 14-25 years old, have been raised overseas in other cultures and find there are extra struggles to assimilate when returning to American culture. Funds raised will help defray some of the expenses for this unique group of our WELS Christians when they attend the annual weekend retreats. At the retreats, these young adult missionary kids receive tools to cope with these many changes and forge friendships with other missionary kids who have shared similar experiences.

Free materials are available at lwms.org/kidscare including: instruction letter, poster, offering box template, parent trifold brochure, and a poster coloring sheet. 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.

See the included flier or 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 WELS Special Ministries specialministries@wels.net or 414-256-324.

A City for God - Chaplains in Schools

Discipling thousands for Christ, and working with schools, students, and communities toward the goals of spiritual resilience and community building and growth. Learn more at acityforgod.org.

WELS Christian Aid and Relief

WELS Christian Aid and Relief is sponsoring Community Care and Compassion Grants. Student Councils at our schools could work with their congregation members to sponsor an activity through the church and school to show Christ's love and care to the people in their community. Plan an activity in your community 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. Find grant information and application at wels.net/relief or contact Pastor Dan Sims, Administrator of WELS Christian Aid and Relief at daniel.sims@wels.net.

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 of the booklet, 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, an annual hybrid event, shares various Moments with Missionaries videos, cooking tutorials and recipes, and other fun kid's activities that you could use in your classroom. Keep an eye out for information about the annual Taste of Missions School Challenge that occurs every spring. Find all of the videos and activities at tasteofmissions.com.

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 Centers

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.