

2024 SCHOOL BOARD SUMMIT

WAUKESHA,
WISCONSIN

APRIL 12
2024

will-law.org
nwef.org

Professional Development Training
for Wisconsin School Board Members



SCHEDULE

- 7:30 to 8:00** Registration & Breakfast
- 8:00 to 8:15** Opening Remarks by Rick Esenberg
Wisconsin Institute for Law & Liberty
- 8:15 to 8:30** Presentation by Melvin Adams
Noah Webster Educational Foundation
- 8:30 to 9:30** Panel: Empowering School Board Members
- 9:30 to 9:45** Break
- 9:45 to 10:45** Panel: Equality in the Classroom
- 10:45 to 11:00** Sponsor Introductions
- 11:00 to 12:00** How to Ensure District Funds Deliver the Most for Students
- 12:00 to 1:00** Lunch & Networking
- 1:00 to 2:15** Panel: Parental Rights & Student Gender Identity
- 2:15 to 2:30** Break
- 2:30 to 3:30** Panel: Cultivating Collaborative Partnerships
- 3:30 to 4:30** Panel: Connecting Policy to Practice
- 4:30** Closing Remarks by Cory Brewer
Wisconsin Institute for Law & Liberty



7:30 to 8:00	Registration & Breakfast
8:00 to 8:15	Opening Remarks by Rick Esenberg <i>Wisconsin Institute for Law & Liberty</i>
8:15 to 8:30	Presentation by Melvin Adams <i>Noah Webster Educational Foundation</i>

Leadership. Administration. Politics. These, and more, are required to be a good school board member. The role can be complex, but certain simplicities lie at the heart of the job and being effective in its mission. Discovering them and staying the course is central to success. This brief session will explore the balance between the complexities and simplicities of the job.



Rick Esenberg

Rick Esenberg is the founder and current President and General Counsel of the Wisconsin Institute for Law & Liberty (WILL). As one of the leading experts on the Wisconsin Constitution, Rick is a frequent litigator in state and federal courts and nationally recognized scholar and commentator on constitutional law, particularly the First Amendment's guarantees of freedom of speech and religion. Rick's work seeks to advance the rule of law and individual liberty, formed by a robust civil society that forms individual and community character, preserving the wisdom of the past and an openness to the future.



Melvin Adams

Melvin Adams is the Founder of the Noah Webster Educational Foundation. He has over 40 years of experience in educational leadership, has served on the teaching faculty and in the administrations of several schools and colleges in the U.S., and started and led a college in Ukraine from 1993-2000. He has served as a Senior Advisor on Education for gubernatorial candidates and Presidential Transition Teams. He lives in Virginia with his wife Sandy. They have six children and twenty-one grandchildren.

Alternative Resources for Informed Decision-Making and Governance

So often, the only resources known to school board members are given from one perspective. Instead, school board members should know about the many resources at their disposal, enabling them to make informed decisions and prioritize student academic achievement in their communities. WILL legal and policy experts will provide introductions on several important topics, which will include an overview about school board member powers and duties, how to access data about your district, how to track relevant legislation at the state level, and how to ensure compliance with open records laws. This presentation is tailored for school board members seeking to expand their knowledge base and enhance their decision-making capabilities by hearing about resources beyond traditional avenues such as state school board associations or district administration.



Cory Brewer

Cory Brewer is an attorney at the Wisconsin Institute for Law & Liberty (WILL) and Director of the Restoring American Education project. She focuses on legal and policy issues related to K-12 Education and is an advocate for both school choice and public school education reform. Cory holds a law degree from the University of Wisconsin Law School and a B.A. from Lawrence University. She resides near Milwaukee with her husband and three daughters.



Kyle Koenen

Kyle Koenen is the Policy Director at the Wisconsin Institute for Law & Liberty (WILL) and serves as a founding school board member for Mill Creek Academy, a new independent charter school in Waukesha. Prior to joining WILL, he has held key policy roles in both the Senate and Assembly, including serving as the clerk of the Senate Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety. He holds a B.A. in Political Science from the University of Wisconsin – Parkside. Kyle is a native of Racine and currently resides in Waukesha with his wife Ashley and dog Dusty.



Will Flanders, Ph.D.

Will Flanders is the Research Director at the Wisconsin Institute for Law & Liberty (WILL). Dr. Flanders conducts econometric research on the application of WILL's principles of freedom and liberty to the educational system in Wisconsin. Since joining WILL, he has authored or co-authored reports on the return on investment from charter schools, the effects of Act 10 on the teaching workforce, and the economic benefits of the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program. Dr. Flanders holds a Ph.D. in Political Science with a specialization in American Politics and Public Policy from Florida State University, as well as an M.S. in Political Science and an M.S. in Applied American Politics and Policy from the same school. He earned his B.A. from Valdosta State University in Georgia, his home state.



Lucas Vebber

Lucas Vebber is an attorney at the Wisconsin Institute for Law & Liberty (WILL) where he focuses on separation of powers and regulatory issues. Prior to joining WILL, Lucas worked for the state in both the legislative and executive branches, and as General Counsel and Executive Director of the Litigation Center at Wisconsin Manufacturers & Commerce. Lucas has a bachelor's degree from Marquette University in Milwaukee and a law degree from the University of Saint Thomas in Minneapolis. He lives in Wauwatosa with his wife and children.

9:30 to 9:45

Break

9:45 to 10:45

Equality in the Classroom

Ensuring Racial Nondiscrimination for Wisconsin Students and Educators

By providing a legal update and discussing common examples of racial discrimination in schools, this panel seeks to empower school board members to make informed policy decisions that promote fairness and respect for all students. Presenters will examine concerns about compelled speech and legal challenges related to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) policies and curriculum originating from viewpoints that have sparked debate. The panel will discuss the legal obligations of schools to ensure equal treatment for all students regardless of race and provide an understanding of the need to ensure racial nondiscrimination within all facets of K-12 education.



Rick Esenberg

Rick Esenberg is the founder and current President and General Counsel of the Wisconsin Institute for Law & Liberty (WILL). As one of the leading experts on the Wisconsin Constitution, Rick is a frequent litigator in state and federal courts and nationally recognized scholar and commentator on constitutional law, particularly the First Amendment's guarantees of freedom of speech and religion. Rick's work seeks to advance the rule of law and individual liberty, formed by a robust civil society that forms individual and community character, preserving the wisdom of the past and an openness to the future.



Kimberly Hermann

Kimberly Hermann serves as General Counsel for Southeastern Legal Foundation. Since 2009, she has been working with SLF where she has dedicated her legal career to the freedom-based law movement. Kim advances liberty through litigation in federal and state trial and appellate courts on issues ranging from government overreach, free speech, property

rights, and economic liberty. Her work and that of Southeastern Legal Foundation is regularly covered by national media and you will frequently hear or see her on radio, podcasts and television.



Daniel Lennington

Daniel Lennington is an attorney at the Wisconsin Institute for Law & Liberty (WILL) where he focuses on the Equality Under the Law Project, which pushes back against discriminatory laws and policies. Prior to joining WILL, Dan was an award-winning federal prosecutor in Oklahoma. He also previously served as the Assistant Deputy Attorney General and Deputy Solicitor General at the Wisconsin Department of Justice, where he argued constitutional law cases before the Wisconsin Supreme Court, the Seventh Circuit, and state and federal trial courts around the state. He is a graduate of Hillsdale College and Valparaiso University School of Law.

10:45 to 11:00

Sponsor Introductions

11:00 to 12:00

How to Ensure District Funds Deliver the Most for Students

Bringing Communities Along in Challenging Budget Times

For most districts, financial pressures are intensifying as federal relief funds wind down, enrollments shift, and labor costs continue to rise, all against the backdrop of an economic downturn. Decisions made regarding school district budgets will play a critical role in ensuring that district funds can deliver the most for students. This presentation is designed to equip school board members with the practical skills needed to know how to direct limited resources towards the goal of achieving educational excellence for all students.



Dr. Marguerite Roza

Dr. Marguerite Roza is a Research Professor at Georgetown University where she leads the McCourt School of Public Policy's Certificate in Education Finance. She is the Director of the Edonomics Lab, a research center exploring and modeling complex education finance decisions to inform policy and practice. Her research traces the effects of fiscal policies at the federal, state, and district levels and her calculations have prompted changes in education finance policy at all levels of the education system. She is the author of *Educational Economics: Where Do School Funds Go?*. Previously, Dr. Roza was a Senior Economic Advisor to the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Earlier, she served as a Lieutenant in the US Navy teaching thermodynamics at the Naval Nuclear Power School. She earned a PhD in Education from the University of Washington and a BS from Duke University, and studied at the London School of Economics and the University of Amsterdam.



Will Flanders, Ph.D.

Will Flanders is the Research Director at the Wisconsin Institute for Law & Liberty (WILL). Dr. Flanders conducts econometric research on the application of WILL's principles of freedom and liberty to the educational system in Wisconsin. Since joining WILL, he has authored or co-authored reports on the return on investment from charter schools, the effects of Act 10 on the teaching workforce, and the economic benefits of the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program. Dr. Flanders holds a Ph.D. in Political Science with a specialization in American Politics and Public Policy from Florida State University, as well as an M.S. in Political Science and an M.S. in Applied American Politics and Policy from the same school. He earned his B.A. from Valdosta State University in Georgia.

12:00 to 1:00

Lunch & Networking

1:00 to 2:15

Panel: Parental Rights & Student Gender Identity

Understanding the Vital Role of Parent Involvement in Decision-making for Minor Students

This presentation will provide school board members with insights into the importance of parental involvement in education, particularly with regard to the evolving topic of student gender identity. This panel will feature a legal expert, a policy expert, a parent, and a clinical psychologist whose work has focused primarily on children and adolescents dealing with gender identity-related issues. These experts will explore the rights of parents to direct the upbringing of their children while addressing the sensitive issue of gender ideology in schools. By navigating these issues with a commitment to collaboration, school board members can foster positive relationships between schools, parents, and students while upholding parents' constitutional rights.



Nicole Neily

Nicole Neily is the president and founder of Parents Defending Education (PDE), a national membership organization that gives parents the resources and support they need to advocate for their children's education. She is also the executive director of PDE Action, a 501(c)4 advocacy organization. Prior to launching PDE, Nicole created Speech First, a campus free speech organization that sued 6 public universities under her leadership; she has also worked as president of the Franklin Center for Government & Public Integrity; as executive director and senior fellow at the Independent Women's Forum; and at the Cato Institute.



Dr. Erica Anderson

Dr. Erica E. Anderson, PhD, is a clinical psychologist practicing in Berkeley, California, with over 40 years of experience. Between 2019 and 2021, Dr. Anderson served as a board member for the World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH) and as the President of USPATH (the United States arm of WPATH). Since 2016, Dr. Anderson's work has focused primarily

on children and adolescents dealing with gender-identity-related issues, at the Child and Adolescent Gender Clinic at Benioff Children's Hospital at the University of California, San Francisco (2016 to 2021), and at her private consulting and clinical psychology practice (2016 to present). She has seen hundreds of children and adolescents for gender-identity-related issues in that time, many of whom transition, with her guidance and support.



Tammy Fournier

Tammy Fournier is one of the parents involved in securing a groundbreaking legal victory for parental rights. In 2020, when Tammy's 12-year-old daughter began to question her gender and wanted to go by a male name and pronouns while at school, her parents sought professional and medical support for her. They decided after extensive research that immediately treating their daughter as a boy would not be in her best interest, but the district supported and affirmed the gender transition of their daughter over their objection. In 2021, WILL and Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF) represented Tammy in a lawsuit against the Kettle Moraine School District. In October of 2023, the Waukesha Circuit Court ruled in favor of parental rights in a decision that affirms parents' constitutional right to direct the upbringing and education of their children. Tammy's daughter is now enrolled in a different school district and is grateful she never transitioned.



Luke Berg

Luke Berg is a Deputy Counsel with the Wisconsin Institute for Law & Liberty, and he litigates cases involving parental rights, election law, the First Amendment, and separation of powers, among other topics. Before joining WILL over four years ago, he served for nearly four years at the Wisconsin Department of Justice as a Deputy Solicitor General. Berg has argued eleven cases before the Wisconsin Supreme Court and six before the Seventh Circuit. He graduated from the University of Wisconsin – Madison (B.S.) and New York University (J.D.) and served as a law clerk for Judge Diane Sykes of the United States Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit. He resides in Madison with his wife and three boys.

2:15 to 2:30

Break

2:30 to 3:30

Panel: Cultivating Collaborative Partnerships

Fostering Effective Relationships Between School Board Members and Superintendents

This presentation aims to explore practices that support effective partnerships between school board members and superintendents. If all are focused on the best interests of students and families, responsible fiscal policies, and thoughtful consideration of community concerns, then even a board with diverse perspectives can become an effective board. The relationship between school board members and superintendents is crucial because it directly influences positive outcomes for students, teachers, and the community. This panel will seek to provide a roadmap for long-term success and good governance.



Joe Garza

Joe Garza became superintendent of the School District of New Berlin in July 2011, after serving for four years as assistant superintendent. He came to New Berlin from the Almond-Bancroft School District where he was a secondary school principal and then the district's superintendent. Garza earned his B.A. in Education and Music at Luther College and is pursuing his Ph.D. at Cardinal St. Ignace University. He has been a guest lecturer at various post-secondary institutions and has spent time guiding and supporting legislation related to public education policy. He was appointed to the district board of Waukesha County Technical College in July 2018—currently serving as vice chairperson. He is also on the board of directors for GPS Education Partners, where he serves as secretary.



Janet Schulz

Janet Schulz is currently the President of the New Berlin School Board. Since her election in 2019, she has championed excellence and fiscal responsibility, ensuring the schools provide a supportive and enriching environment where all students can thrive. Janet holds a B.A. in Economics and a Master's in Human Resources & Labor Relations, both from UW-Milwaukee, and leverages her

experience in HR and as an Employee Benefits Manager to provide valuable insights to the Board. Beyond her professional role, she actively volunteers with student organizations which inspire careers in Business and STEM. She and her husband Marc are long-time residents of New Berlin and have three children.



Robert Kobleska

Rob Kobleska was elected to the Greendale Board of Education in 2022 where he serves as the School Board liaison to the Village Board of Trustees and Canterbury Elementary School. He is also the school board's representative on the Greendale Education Foundation and GOES committee. He is a proud graduate of South Milwaukee High School, and he holds multiple degrees in Criminal Justice, including a Bachelor's degree from UW-Oshkosh and a Master's degree in Administration of Justice and Security from the University of Phoenix. He is currently the Vice President of Noble Backgrounds, a division of the Noble Group, a workplace and risk mitigation firm. He lives in Greendale with his wife and two daughters, who attend Greendale Schools, and is very active in the community.



James Macy

Jim Macy represents employers in all aspects of employment law including labor negotiations, discrimination defense, disability and ADA issues, wrongful discharge or employment contract disputes, non-competition issues and other difficult personnel transactions. Jim is Chair of the von Briesen's School Law Section and he represents numerous school districts providing advice on a wide variety of school law issues including student rights, records and discipline; policy issues; Board issues; and all contractual matters. He also serves as an independent hearing officer for student expulsion matters. Jim has been recognized by The Best Lawyers in America every year since 2011 and was named "Lawyer of the Year" in Employment Law-Management in both 2013 and 2015.



William H. Hughes Ph.D.

Bill Hughes is the founder and president of Hughes Strategic Group which supports leaders and improves organizations to accelerate student achievement, engagement, strategy, and targeted philanthropy. Bill has formerly been the program director with the Kern Family Foundation, a co-founder and chief academic officer of Seton Catholic Schools Milwaukee, the

Superintendent of Greendale Schools, the Managing Director of Leadership with Schools That Can Milwaukee, and redesigned the principal training and master's program at Alverno College to prepare school leaders to serve in urban schools. Active in education policy since 2005, his current focus is on school board governance, improving student literacy abilities, work-based learning, and parent advocacy and being a voice for good schools across sectors. He is a member or chair of governing or advisory boards with government, non-profits, foundations, and associations.

3:30 to 4:30

Panel: Connecting Policy to Practice

Strategies for Effective Implementation and Evaluation of Policies in the Classroom

This panel discussion is dedicated to empowering school board members with actionable strategies to bridge the divide between policy formulation and classroom application. It is imperative for school boards to recognize their substantial influence over classroom dynamics; they are not just passive supporters of administrative decisions but essential contributors shaping educational outcomes. As educators, administrators, and policymakers collaborate to elevate educational standards, this discussion will highlight the pivotal role of school boards in translating policies into effective classroom practices.



Robert Pondiscio

Robert Pondiscio is a senior fellow at the American Enterprise Institute (AEI), where he focuses on K-12 education, curriculum, teaching, school choice, and charter schooling. Before joining AEI, Mr. Pondiscio was at the Thomas B. Fordham Institute, an education policy think tank. He previously worked for the Core Knowledge Foundation and as an adviser and civics teacher at Democracy Prep Public Schools. Before that, he worked in journalism for 20 years, including in senior positions at Time and BusinessWeek. Mr. Pondiscio is the author of many books and has been extensively published in the popular press, including in The Atlantic and The Wall Street Journal. He is a frequent speaker and is often interviewed on radio and television including CNN and Fox News Channel. Mr. Pondiscio has an MS in elementary education from Mercy College and a BA in English from SUNY Empire State College.



Daniel Buck

Daniel Buck is an Editorial and Policy Associate at the Thomas B. Fordham Institute. He is the author of *What Is Wrong with Our Schools?* and taught English and English as a second language at the middle and high school levels. He earned his master's degree in curriculum and instruction from the University of Wisconsin–Madison, along with bachelor's degrees in English literature and the Spanish language. His work has appeared in the *Wall Street Journal*, *National Affairs*, *National Review*, the *New York Post*, *First Things*, and many other publications.



Cory Brewer

Cory Brewer is an attorney at the Wisconsin Institute for Law & Liberty (WILL) and Director of the Restoring American Education project. She focuses on legal and policy issues related to K-12 Education and is an advocate for both school choice and public school education reform. Cory holds a law degree from the University of Wisconsin Law School and a B.A. from Lawrence University. She resides near Milwaukee with her husband and three daughters.

4:30

Closing Remarks by Cory Brewer

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