



Southeastern Wisconsin
Schools Alliance
2014-15 Annual Report

The Mission of the Southeastern Wisconsin Schools Alliance is to advocate for and inform education policy in support of world class public schools to benefit all students and the economic vitality of the region.

May, 2015

Letter from the Executive Committee:

Public Education has seen tremendous changes over the course of the past year. As we write this Annual Report, we are working hard to influence the outcome of the 2015-17 Budget Bill. During the last 12 months, SWSA has been deeply engaged in the debate of numerous education policy and fiscal bills that could significantly impact quality public education.

As a regional advocacy organization, SWSA has played a significant role in influencing education public policy during the past 12 months. Key areas include:

- ✓ Collaborating with **Senator Farrow** and other stakeholders to develop accountability legislation
- ✓ Providing feedback on a variety of bills including technical education licensure, course options/youth options, selling district property, and community schools

SWSA also hosted key players in the Wisconsin political landscape. Our organization was the only advocacy group to host both **Governor Walker and Ms. Mary Burke** during the gubernatorial campaign. Other featured political guests include **Sen. Darling, Rep. Kooyenga, Rep. Barnes, Rep. Wright, Rep. Sinicki, and Sen. Farrow.**

In addition to legislative advocacy, SWSA takes great pride in developing relationships with individuals and their organizations across the state who understand the value of quality public education. These relationships increase our knowledge and strengthen our ability to advocate for the children we serve. These guest speakers included:

- ✓ Dale Knapp, Wisconsin Taxpayers Alliance
- ✓ Jim Morgan, VP of the Wisconsin Manufacturers and Commerce and President of the WMC Foundation
- ✓ Kurt Bauer, President/CEO of the WMC
- ✓ Alan Borsuk, Senior Fellow at Marquette University Law School
- ✓ Department of Public Instruction (Sheila Briggs, Jennifer Kammerud, Jeff Pertl, and Brian Pahnke)
- ✓ Brad Schimel, Wisconsin Attorney General

As we reflect on the progress we've made over the past 12 months, it is clear that SWSA has developed the momentum and skillset that will strengthen individual districts and our ability to advocate on behalf of our students.



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Members of the SWSA realized tremendous value in many of the 2014-15 activities including:

Legislative Advocacy:

- Developed a clearly outlined legislative agenda and strategy prior to the development of the 2015-17 biennial budget
- Provided testimony at the Senate and Assembly Accountability Hearings
- Testified at the Joint Finance hearings
- Invited to the Senate Education Reform Committee to provide special testimony regarding state assessments
- Provided key messages and legislative templates to SWSA member districts making it easier for them to advocate on behalf of their communities and the region.
- Provided real time updates from legislative liaison Pete Christianson from the Senate and Assembly floors allowing SWSA members to contact their representatives to express their views prior to the vote.
- Participated in daily conference calls and coordinated efforts with other statewide organizations prevented damaging legislation from passing in the areas of accountability, budget bill, and to other key education policy
- Expanded legislative influence through the use of frequent press releases, submission to the Wheeler Report, and frequent conversations with journalist Alan Borsuk

Research:

- Nine school districts participated in research studies with Hanover Research. All SWSA member districts have access to the full Hanover research library to inform instructional and management best practice and legislative advocacy.
- Member districts shared implementation of district improvements based on their research studies with Hanover.
- SWSA will be embarking on a 13 month Hanover research study to identify optimal metrics for measuring performance and utilizing this research to influence future report cards and gather data for our region.

The goal of SWSA is to support your local community advocacy efforts with regional strength. Thank you for your continued advocacy efforts on behalf of the children we serve.

Most Sincerely,

The SWSA Executive Committee



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2014-15 SWSA Executive Committee:

Region 1 Rep.	Cheryl Maranto, Board of Education, Whitefish Bay
Region 2 Rep.	John Tharp, Superintendent, Greendale
Region 3 Rep.	Kelly Thompson, Superintendent, Muskego-Norway
Region 4 Rep.	vacant
Region 5 Rep.	Chris Thiel, Legislative Policy Director, Milwaukee Public Schools
Co-Chair:	Jean Lambert, Board of Education, Elmbrook
Co-Chair:	Pat Deklotz, Superintendent, Kettle Moraine
Co-Chair Elect	Emily Koczela, Director of Finance, Brown Deer
Exec. Director	Terri Phillips

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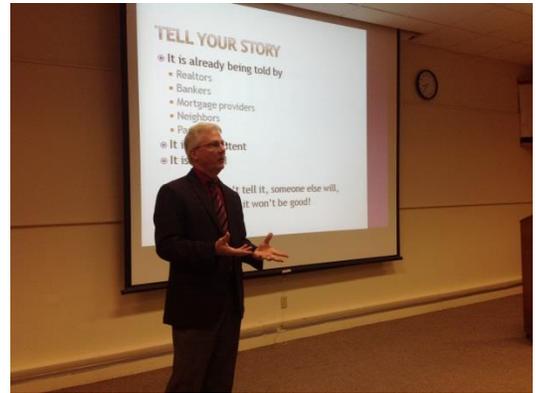
Governor Walker meets with the SWSA Sept. 9, 2014



Mary Burke discusses her education platform, Sept. 24, 2014



Rep. Kooyenga and Sen. Darling discuss education issues with SWSA members on Dec. 9, 2014.



Jim Morgan, WMC discusses advocacy strategies



Brad Schimel discusses the opioid epidemic with SWSA members, May 12, 2015