

## 2015-16 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.*

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### May, 2016

Capacity building is often defined as “the ability of nonprofit organizations to fulfill their missions in an effective manner”. One key component of capacity building is strengthening leadership within the organization to more effectively and efficiently serve clients and meet their mission.

As we reflect upon the past year, SWSA has not only grown as an organization, but provided incredible leadership opportunities for our members; thus increasing the capacity and effectiveness of the organization overall.

Through the leadership of our members, SWSA has *significantly influenced issues that impact education and the well-being of all children-* which is the vision of the SWSA.

### **Influencing Policy:**

By developing strong relationships with policymakers, SWSA has been invited to and participated in multiple meaningful conversations regarding policy to positively impact educational outcomes for all children in Wisconsin.

- SWSA provided written and verbal testimony regarding the 2015-17 budget. On June 4<sup>th</sup>, regional superintendents gathered and held a press conference to urge lawmakers to amend the state budget.
- In response to concerns over technical and vocational education teacher shortages, a contingent of human resource and business managers worked to develop legislation to provide greater licensure flexibility in this specific area. Led by Emily Koczela (Brown Deer Business Manager and SWSA Co-Chair), this team conducted extensive research and worked with legislators to craft and ultimately pass legislation that has provided the ability for school districts to hire content specialists as technical and vocational educators for the 2016-17 school year.
- SWSA provided extensive feedback and were influential in making positive changes (or ultimately stop) a variety of bills including the referendum bill, transgender bill, school crime reporting bill, and the special education voucher cleanup bill (which contained the significant change for voucher school funding).

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### **Conducting Research**

SWSA embarked on a year-long research study with Hanover Research to develop a District Balanced Scorecard. \* Led by Dr. Pat Greco and a team of SWSA members, the goal of this on-going project is to identify critical early warning indicators that districts should consider tracking that will positively influence educational outcomes.

Although we are still on this journey, the rich conversations have been focused on developing a framework and metrics that provide districts the opportunity to learn from one another and continually improve. Look for more to come in the 2016-17 school year!

*\* Hanover Research (located in Arlington, VA), provides high quality, custom research and analytics through a cost effective model that helps clients in the corporate, education, and healthcare sectors make informed decisions, identify and seize opportunities, and heighten their effectiveness.*

### **Hosting Influential Speakers:**

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:

- Dr. Evers: Wisconsin State Superintendent of Public Instruction
- Jeff Pertl, Senior Policy Analyst, Department of Public Instruction
- Representative Jessie Rodriguez, Chair of Urban Education Taskforce
- Senator Olsen, Chair of the Senate Education Committee
- Representative Thiesfeldt, Chair of the Assembly Education Committee
- Alan Borsuk, Senior Fellow in Law and Public Policy, Marquette Law School
- Dr. Darienne Driver, Superintendent of the Milwaukee Public Schools

As we reflect on the progress we've made over the past 12 months, we are proud of the positive impact that the SWSA membership has had on influencing public policy. We will continue to provide leadership opportunities to build organizational capacity and our ability to advocate effectively on behalf of our students.

Most Sincerely,



Terri Phillips  
SWSA Executive Director

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### **Members of the SWSA Executive Committee:**

Patricia Deklotz, SWSA Co-Chair (Superintendent Kettle Moraine)  
Emily Koczela, SWSA Co-Chair (until March 2016) (Business Manager, Brown Deer)  
John Haslam, (School Board member South Milwaukee)  
Patricia Greco, SWSA Co-Chair Elect (Superintendent Menomonee Falls)  
Region 1 Rep: Larry Smalley (Glendale-River Hills)  
Region 2 Rep: Sharon Muehlfeld, (School Board member Wauwatosa)  
Region 3 Rep: Kelly Thompson (Superintendent Muskego-Norway)  
Region 4 Rep: Marty Lexmond (Superintendent West Allis-West Milwaukee)  
Region 5 Rep: Chris Thiel (Legislative Policy Director Milwaukee Public Schools)  
Pete Christianson, SWSA Legislative Liaison

***SWSA recognizes the following members for their significant contributions to the SWSA, their dedication to their communities, and most importantly to the students in their districts.***

- ❖ *Cheryl Maranto, Board Member, Whitefish Bay. Cheryl has retired from the board after serving four terms. She has served the SWSA in many capacities including Co-Chair, Executive Committee, and long-time advocate.*
- ❖ *Emily Koczela, Chief Financial Officer, Brown Deer. Emily has left her position at Brown Deer to pursue a new opportunity at Messmer Catholic Schools. Emily has served the SWSA in many capacities including Co-Chair, the Executive Committee, and a key contributor to many making significant positive legislative changes.*
- ❖ *Dr. Kathy Cooke, Superintendent, Hamilton. Kathy is retiring from her position as superintendent on June 30<sup>th</sup>. She has served the SWSA in many capacities including one of the founders of the SWSA, Co-Chair, Executive Committee and long-time advocate.*
- ❖ *Dr. Lowell Holtz, Superintendent, Whitnall. Lowell is retiring from his position as superintendent on June 30<sup>th</sup>. He has served SWSA in many capacities including the Executive Committee and long-time advocate.*
- ❖ *Dr. Vance Dalzin, Superintendent, Fox Point-Bayside. Vance is leaving his position as superintendent to pursue other opportunities. Vance has been a staunch advocate for public education and we thank him for his service.*

*We thank each one of you for your dedication to advocating on behalf of all children and wish you the very best!*

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Speaking at a news conference Thursday in Mequon attended by school administrators and advocates, Wauwatosa Superintendent Phil Ertl urges lawmakers to amend the state budget by adding more funds for public schools and rolling back a private voucher school expansion plan. Credit: Erin Richards

*By Erin Richards of the Journal Sentinel*

Representative Jessie Rodriguez (Co-Chair of the Urban Education Taskforce) met with SWSA members to discuss the goals of the urban taskforce as well as seeks input from the membership.



Representative Jeremy Thiesfeldt (Chair of the Assembly Education Committee) and Senator Luther Olsen (Chair of the Senate Education Committee) discussed the opportunities and challenges facing Wisconsin's public education system. (January 2016)

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SWSA Members discussed important issues regarding ESSA, Educator Effectiveness/Professional Development Plans, and Assessment with State Superintendent Dr. Tony Evers and Senior Policy Analyst, Jeff Pertl.