

WELS COMMISSION ON LUTHERAN SCHOOLS



2022 Fall Newsletter

Lutheran Schools Task Force Work

WELS schools served over 44,900 students last school year, with over two thirds of WELS schools (Pre-k – 12) across the country reporting enrollment growth. The growing enrollments along with teacher retirements and resignations left our WELS schools needing about 300 (or 10%) new teachers for the 22-23 school year. Candidates trained at MLC and assigned in May filled many vacancies, but many schools still had teacher needs. We are thankful for the seventy-five WELS-trained former teachers who have returned to the classroom, and the one hundred five WELS members who were called to serve in our schools for the first time. We praise the Lord for the growing opportunities to share Jesus daily with more and more souls in our schools, and we are thankful that teachers have been provided for our classrooms. A teacher shortage task force was appointed by President Schroeder back in late May and will report to the Conference of Presidents in October. Educators from across the country along with representatives of MLC, Ministerial Ed, the Commission on Lutheran Schools, and the Conference of Presidents who make up the task force have been looking closely at multiple data points and have been considering recommendations regarding recruitment, teacher retention, and teacher training pathways. We ask the Lord's blessings on the work of all our teachers and this task force.

Christ-light and Christ-light II have served WELS schools well for decades. Much has changed in our schools and who and how we serve over those decades. A task force of teachers and pastors with members representing early childhood, elementary, high school, Martin Luther College, and the Commission on Lutheran Schools has been assembled and is laying the groundwork for what we believe will be a dynamic curriculum to help meet our needs now and into the future. Watch for updates in the months ahead on the work of this important task force.

WELS early childhood ministries provide blessings and opportunities to share the gospel with young children and their families. A group consisting of one district president, two early childhood directors, and the CLS office is working on ways to assist congregations and their leadership in supporting and encouraging those who serve in an early childhood ministry. Resources and individual support are being considered as they continue their work.

An early childhood training task force including nine ECM directors and MLC professors met over five months to review the training needs of currently-serving early childhood teachers. Using a 2022 survey, they identified the needs and recommended strategies to meet them. The task force report is being used to plan appropriate continuing education.

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

Administrators Google group "adminmail" for principals and directors to ask questions and share information. Send an e-mail to lutheralschools@wels.net to request an invitation.

Congregational Services
welscongregationalervices.net

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

Bookmark our sites for
news & resources

[CLS.WELSRC.NET](https://cls.welsrc.net)

[WELSCONGREGATIONAL
SERVICES.NET](https://welscongregationalervices.net)

[WELS.NET](https://wels.net)

MY WELS CLOUD

VERIFY YOUR USER NAME

To verify your user name visit yearbook.wels.net, search for yourself, open your information card, and click on your name in the gray header at the top. A box will show your username.

RESET YOUR PASSWORD

To reset your password go to account.wels.net and select the reset password button. You will need to provide your username (see above). A one-time password will be sent to the e-mail address we have on file for your account. Enter the provided password into the password field on the log-in screen.

NEED ASSISTANCE?

For assistance accessing My WELS Cloud forms, contact 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 lutheranschools@wels.net or call 414-259-4354.

Institute for Lutheran Apologetics

A group of 25 pastors, teachers and laypeople who were selected to form the Institute for Lutheran Apologetics (ILA) gathered together this summer for their inaugural meeting. The group explored the many facets of apologetics and collaborated to define its scope, audience, and priorities for the future. CLS Associate Director Paul Patterson is a member of the group and sees an ever growing need for our Lutheran school students to be able to “give a reason for the hope that we have” that is done with “gentleness and respect.”

WELS Profile & Self-Assessments

Called workers can update personal information any time via their WELS Cloud Account. Visit cloud.wels.net/me.

Profile Section

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 or relocation limitations in the [Teacher/ Staff Minister Information](#) form.

Teacher Self-Assessments

It's important that Self-Assessments be done annually to keep your profile current. Please consult the Guide at the top right hand corner of the form as needed. Feel free to contact our office for assistance!

Duties, Subjects, and Grades tabs in the [Teacher Self-Assessment](#) should be completed as applicable. The “Top 5 Strengths” section on the Strengths tab is for use with an online [CliftonStrengths Assessment](#). To complete this section, visit store.gallup.com to purchase and then enter your top 5 strengths in your Self-Assessment form. If you have not taken the [CliftonStrengths Assessment](#), please leave this section blank.

Please indicate your ministry goals and interests in the Strengths comments box on the *Strengths* tab. Have your Self-Assessment reviewed per Steps 1-5 on the *Finalize & Submit* tab. Once reviewed, click Save & Submit at the bottom to upload the form to your profile.

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. 12, 2022** through **April 16, 2023**. The increased teacher demand, combined with a shortage of teachers, has required some updated guidelines, and new considerations for calling bodies to recognize. Here are some expected new normals:

Calling bodies should submit their electronic call request at wels.net/callrequest at least two weeks in advance of the desired call date. Calling bodies should wait for an email 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.

The number of candidates presented to the calling body may be less than in the past, as the Conference of Presidents seeks to maintain and provide a viable pool of well-qualified candidates to meet the growing number of call requests.

Calling bodies should strongly consider requesting local candidates currently not serving in a called position in a WELS school.

Calling bodies should alert their district president and the Lutheran Schools office at lutheranschools@wels.net immediately after their call meetings to provide the meeting results, as many candidates presented for their list, but not called, may be on a call list the following day.

Calling bodies should expect that their call list of candidates will be provided electronically by the district president on the day of the call meeting.

WELS School Accreditation (WELSSA) is celebrating 20 years of recognizing organizational quality and driving improvement in our Lutheran schools! We are grateful for the blessings our work has received from God and desire to be your partner in supporting excellence in your school ministry.

Accreditation carries many benefits. By comparing and aligning your school to our standards, you can have the confidence that your school is meeting the needs of your learners and their families. In addition, accreditation helps focus your school on improvement areas through the self-study and visitation process. Prioritizing areas to address is valuable for both new and veteran school leaders. Accreditation is also an important validation for your graduates as they move through the educational world. Accreditation can also improve your school's bottom line. Certain state programs and grant opportunities are only available to accredited schools. Finally, as our schools reach into the community to share Jesus with their education program, accreditation provides credibility to people unfamiliar with our school system and assures them that they are receiving a quality education. Since WELSSA is recognized by the National Council for Private School Accreditation, your school also receives national recognition and valuable oversight for WELSSA processes and standards.

In an effort to continually improve WELSSA, our site visit captains met this summer to provide valuable feedback on the forms, self-study process, and direction of WELSSA. In addition to offering insights and recommendations for improving the school visit, the captains reviewed a new template for the self-study and the results of the LES Starred Standard review team. The team recommended keeping just over half of the starred standards. About one fourth of the starred standards were removed until the wording could be revised. Additionally the team recommended that the Commission remove the stars effective immediately and that a committee be assembled to review the standards that need revision.

Over the next several months, our attention will be to complete the starred standard review for the ECM and LHS Standards, study and amend the role of the consultant, develop suggested evidence lists for LES and LHS standards, and appoint a team to review the LES Standards.

If you are interested in serving on a site visit team, learning more about accreditation for your school, joining the WELSSA email group, receiving the handbook and standards, or using the WELSSA logo, email our office at welssa@wels.net.



WELSSA
WELS School Accreditation

School Openings

- Gethsemane Lutheran School (ECM) *Omaha, NE*
- Immanuel Lutheran School (ECM) *Waukegan, IL*
- Lord and Savior Lutheran School (LES) *Crystal Lake, IL*
- Little Lions Child Care (ECM) *Marathon City, WI*
- Holy Word Christian Academy (LES) *Austin, TX*
- First Light Early Learning Center (ECM) *La Crosse, WI*
- Immanuel Little Knights Preschool (ECM) *La Crosse, WI*
- Our Savior Lutheran School (LES) *Brookings, SD*
- Christ Alone Lutheran Academy (LES) *Montello/Princeton, WI*
- CrossLife Christian Academy (LES) *Pflugerville, TX*
- Little Lambs Childcare (ECM) *Beloit, WI*

School Closings

- Grace Lutheran Academy (ECM & LES) *Lowell, AR*
- Faith Lutheran School (ECM & LES) *Antioch, IL*
- Little Blessings Preschool (ECM) *Red Wing, MN*
- Christ Lutheran School (LES) *Oakley, MI*

Congratulations to our 2021-22 first-time accredited schools:

- Bethlehem Lutheran School – Hortonville, WI
- Holy Cross Lutheran School – Madison, WI
- Redeemer Lutheran School – Fond du Lac, WI
- St. John Lutheran School – Waterloo, WI
- St. John Lutheran School – Wrightstown, WI
- St. Luke's Lutheran School – Oakfield, WI
- St. Matthew's Lutheran School – Stoddard, WI
- St. Paul's Lutheran School – Fort Atkinson, WI



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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.



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. Have you attended one yet? Reach out to tellingthenextgeneration@wels.net to schedule one!

2022-23 Substitute Reimbursement Rate

The daily substitute reimbursement rate for teachers approved by the WELS Synodical Council is \$109.

Ministerial Growth and Evaluation

We are hopeful that all calling bodies are making use of the Ministerial Growth and Evaluation materials. All teachers should have a Ministry Development Plan and be receiving summative evaluations either in 2022-23 or 2023-24 school years.

Need help getting started? All four modules have been recorded, and a suite of materials is available to all our schools at cls.welsrc.net/mgep. Options to view the modules on demand with a follow up virtual Q & A remain available. A face-to-face review of the overall process has also been developed and is available as an in-service presentation upon request. The booklet mailed to teachers in the spring of 2020 is available both hard copy (upon request) and electronic. Contact Jim Rademan or Sarah Krause for questions or scheduling.