

Community Education in Wisconsin

Schools and Communities Learning Together

The Wisconsin Vision

Everyone is a resource and everyone is a learner.
Community Education connects learners with resources.

The little red schoolhouse of the American past was a multipurpose building. Socials, musicals, spelling bees, bazaars, festivals, meetings, and other activities drew people of all ages to the school. Residents viewed the schoolhouse as their own, a comfortable and convenient place to gather.

In school districts that adopt the community education philosophy, learning is a lifelong journey. The schools are centers of learning for entire families and for community members of all ages, inspiring loyalty, respect, and support.

Schools can be support centers for a network of agencies and institutions committed to addressing community needs and expanding learning opportunities for all community mem-

bers. Using **schools as community centers** is a cost-effective, practical way to use one of a community's largest investments, its school buildings.

Community Education brings community members together to identify and link needs and resources to help improve the quality of life in the community. The school district staff often provide the leadership to initiate programs; however, many others within the community work together to create partnerships with other organizations. As a result, the taxpayers get a better return on their investment in the public education, which includes the school buildings.

Schools as Community Centers

- ◆ Citizen Involvement
- ◆ Interagency Coordination and Cooperation
- ◆ Leadership and Accountability
- ◆ Needs Assessment and Planning
- ◆ Extended Use of Public Facilities



Elizabeth Burmaster

"We all have a shared responsibility to support student achievement and improve the quality of life in our communities. Working together, we can add value to every neighborhood by encouraging school and community partnerships.

Please join me in making a commitment to meet our challenge. Let's build on the success of Community Education in Wisconsin through active citizen participation."

Elizabeth Burmaster
State Superintendent of Public Instruction



Community Education leadership in Wisconsin is a partnership between the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) and the Wisconsin Community Education Association (WCEA).



Five Components of Wisconsin Community Education

How your school district fits into the Community Education picture

Because of their role and function in a community, school districts often provide leadership for Community Education. Community Education is a process for mobilizing citizens to use existing resources in a more coordinated fashion. Through Community Education, local needs can be identified and met in a timely and organized way.

1. Citizen Involvement strengthens solutions by bringing a variety of perspectives to each issue. People who know most about a problem should be involved in finding solutions. Community advisory councils provide a vehicle for citizen involvement.

- ◆ Does our school solicit the input of citizens in all phases of school operation?
- ◆ Are citizens involved at both the building and district levels?

2. Needs Assessment and Planning allows citizens to determine pressing community needs and a process to involve others in designing solutions.

- ◆ Is our district committed to identifying local needs for all learners and coordinating resources to meet those needs?
- ◆ Do we recognize the importance of acting as catalysts for positive change in our communities?

3. Extended Use of Public Facilities allows citizens access to classrooms, gyms, shops, theaters, and cafeterias to provide extended learning opportunities for everyone. Using school facilities as full-service community centers year round saves money and helps build partnerships between community, families, and schools.

- ◆ Is our school viewed as a lifelong learning center for the entire community?
- ◆ Do we search out services and activities for all residents?
- ◆ Do our school leaders act as catalysts to improve community life?

4. Interagency Coordination and Cooperation results in more efficient use of community resources. By relying on teamwork and reducing duplication of effort, limited resources are leveraged effectively.

- ◆ Does our school district seek collaborative partnerships with local agencies and service providers for all learners?

5. Leadership and Accountability ensure that the Community Education process is sustained. Community Education leaders are accountable for the progress and evaluation of the program

- ◆ Do our schools seek to develop the leadership skills of local citizens to improve community problem solving and decisionmaking to enhance the quality of life for all learners?
- ◆ Do we have a system in place to ensure that Community Education is meeting its goals and placing the right priorities on community needs?

An assessment tool is available to help you determine the status of your district in each of the five components. This can be found at www.dpi.state.wi.us/dpi/dltcl/bbfcsp/cetools.html or use the assessment rubric at www.dpi.state.wi.us/dpi/dltcl/bbfcsp/pdf/rubric.pdf

Benefits of Community Education

Community Education results in

- ◆ effective and efficient service delivery systems.
- ◆ support for education from the entire community.
- ◆ increased leadership skills for citizens.
- ◆ improved community decisionmaking with communication processes in place and citizen input.
- ◆ programs that are timely and responsive to community needs.

Compare Traditional and Community Schools

Traditional School

- ◆ Serves ages 5-18
- ◆ Open 9 months a year
6-7 hours a day
5 days a week



Community School

- ◆ Serves all ages
- ◆ Open 12 months a year
12-18 hours a day
7 days a week

Wisconsin Community Education Profiles

ICEPAC Region (Northwest)

Indianhead Community Education Assessment and Planning Council

Cumberland offers Tae Kwon Do, a martial arts program, for K-12 students. A preschool program is held in a local church. Parents organized an open gym for K-8 students and participate with them.

Frederic offers after-school art classes and theatrical experiences that are not available to K-8 students during the day. Dance and karate classes are offered to develop movement and discipline. Creative writing, computer classes, woodworking and other classes are open to students aged two and older. Tutoring is offered to students of all ages after school.

Frederic offers a series of workshops on self-care for individuals and businesses. Some of the most popular workshops are How to Deal with Anger, How to Handle Difficult People, and Embracing Change.

Luck conducts several fund-raisers each year to support the Luck Community Graduate Fund. Every Luck graduate receives \$100 for continuing education. The scholarship can be used toward a four-year college program or a class at a vocational school. Proceeds from the sale of a written and pictorial history of the Luck area, "A Little Bit of Luck," fund the scholarships.

Osceola's computerized writing lab is open to students and the public two nights a week. Osceola also operates a popular "latchkey" program (6 a.m. to 6 p.m.), August through June. The program includes breakfast, an afternoon snack, field trips, swimming, nature and environmental programming, and community awareness activities for children.

Osceola manages a distance learning lab that allows the district to transmit and receive instruction. This service provides programming in childcare-service training and certification, supervisory management for business and industry, and agriculture/geology/environmental issues.

Osceola Community Education is represented on the school improvement team and the citizenship committee. CE partners with both teams to provide leadership activities for students in the community and learning opportunities that raise student achievement. Osceola partners with the

family resource center to provide resource materials and programming for parents and youth.

Prescott partners with the local Family Resource Center, funded with federal Goals 2000 money, to offer parenting and youth enrichment programs. Examples of programs include parenting gifted children, parenting children with special needs, active parenting of teens, and anger management.

Turtle Lake Community Education sponsors a monthly after-school "Craft Night." Elementary students divide into groups according to age and each group selects a craft suited to its ability.

Unity provides an extended-day program for at-risk students in grades 1-8. Participating students address multiple learning needs by completing three different activity stations each session. They also have a nutritious snack.

Unity School District contracted with Polk County to provide customized computer training for county employees. The Community Education director met with staff from Polk County to design a training program to meet the needs of all levels of PC users. County employees use the high school PC lab for the training.

Unity has an Ameri-Corps volunteer who helps with community outreach. One focus is to bring cultural events into the community

rather than forcing residents to travel to the Twin Cities. Unity also has a Community Education float for all of the local festivals, featuring volunteers and CE advisory members, and sponsors a booth at the county fair.

Unity Community Education sponsored activities during an all-school open house for parent-teacher conferences. The district highlighted departments within the school that usually don't get much attention: food service, maintenance, and transportation. School board members were present to talk to people. Free blood pressure checks were offered, open swimming was available, and the band, choir, and other students performed. This idea came out of a CE advisory meeting.



Wisconsin Community Education Profiles

Lighthouse Region (Northeast)

Boulder Junction runs a health fair with the local Lions Club. Among the health services offered at 10 stations are immunization screening, cancer screening, eye checks, and blood tests.

Boulder Junction, in cooperation with the parent-teacher organization, sponsors a Fun Night every Friday for families. They also organize a "Cornstalk Carnival" during Halloween. Competitive games are played in the gym, providing an entertaining and safe environment for kids.

Schrieber Foods in **Green Bay** contributed \$100,000 to build a family center in the Fort Howard Elementary School, and later added a family center at Nicolet and Howe Elementary Schools. A group of citizens raised over \$400,000 to purchase and renovate a building adjacent to Howe Elementary School for a family center. The center offers preschool classes, parent training, family recreation, and support services. Other family needs are also addressed.

Northland Pines Middle School's website club is working with community service groups to build their own websites. First and second semesters, the students set up their school's website (www.fen.com/wi/npms).

In the third and fourth semesters, the students are matched with Service Club members who come into the school to learn from the students. Together they learn how to communicate globally using the World Wide Web. In February 2000, the Northland Pines website received the School to Home Communication Award from the American Association of School Administrators (www.fen.com/wi/npsd).

Oconto Falls operates a school-aged childcare program in the afternoon for morning kindergarten students, and an after-school program for students in grades 1-5.

Oconto Falls also operates a very popular after-school foreign language program for students in grades 1-5. Elementary students enrolled in Spanish and French programs learn basic vocabulary and songs while exploring the countries' cultures.

In **Plymouth** an 83-year-old woman passed the GED test after 18 months of preparation in the district's Community Education program.

Plymouth runs a summer school-age childcare program for nearly 100 children. They attend summer school in the morning and come to the center after school. There is also a summer school program for preschool children in the morning. Citizens donated approximately \$2,000 to furnish a teen room provided by a local church.

Plymouth hosts an annual alumnus meeting and banquet in the high school cafeteria. This year, 275 graduates, who represented 12 class years between 1928 and 1975 participated and raised \$4,000 for the Perpetual Scholarship Fund. As a result, three high school seniors each received a \$600 scholarship.

Pulaski's Community Education success is a direct result of the commitment made to late superintendent Frank Jozwick's philosophy of education. Community involvement with the schools, as a philosophy, was driven by Jozwick's desire to support the growth of a dormant community following World War II.

Jozwick paid staff who lived in the district an extra \$200 per year to assist with community emergencies and conduct community service activities. As a result, youth activities such as Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, and Little League Baseball were started under the supervision of schoolteachers.

Students also helped attract the Northern Shoe Factory Company to Pulaski to provide needed jobs.

Pulaski and **Kaukauna** operate a Senior Tax Exchange Program (STEP) that benefits both students and the elderly. Senior citizens earn property-tax credits for supporting student success. The school boards arrange for the tax credit with the county.

Pulaski offers piano lessons to residents of all ages. Students in grades 4 and up can take lessons during the school day. Pulaski also offers 100 summer school remediation/enrichment classes and, in cooperation with local churches, operates a food pantry.



Shawano-Gresham operates a learning center in partnership with the Northeast Technical College, offering classes in dozens of vocational and avocational areas. A cooperative arrangement with the Shawano Park and Recreation Center provides programs for youth and adults that include swimming lessons, open swim, and weight training.

Valders extends the use of school buildings into the evening so residents can share their talents and skills with others. Community members can take adult education classes and attend community meetings in school buildings, as well as use the school library, gym, and fitness center.

Wisconsin Community Education Profiles

Southern Region

Kettle Moraine Community Education sponsors the Golden Lasers Senior Citizen Group. Weekly lunches and monthly meetings are held at the Brandybrook Center.

More than 100 students work to serve 300 senior citizens a Thanksgiving meal.

Kettle Moraine offers laser youth basketball and indoor soccer programs during the winter. More than 1,000 youth participate each Saturday, supervised by 100 adult volunteer coaches.

Milwaukee offers a free, structured evening recreation program for teens at community centers during the summer. Activities include basketball, swimming, video games, billiards, table tennis, enrichment classes, field trips, and dances.

In **Oregon**, two local women saw a need to build a support system for young families. Key leaders from the community were invited to a community meeting, which provided the catalyst for the Parent-Share program. The Community Education Office acts as the headquarters. Parent-Share offers a variety of programs including a neighborhood-trained volunteer who visits the parents of newborns and connects them to community resources, a "TEEN Connection" for teenage parents, "A Day at Grandma's," "Baby Talk," "Parent Talk," and an open gym.

Sauk Prairie's advisory council includes four high school students. They help connect high school programs with community education programs. The students were instrumental in putting community education "on-line."

Sauk Prairie sponsors *Health Trip* each year to promote exercise on a community-wide basis. *Health Trip* motivates individuals to continue exercising. In *Health Trip*, fitness points are accumulated based on time devoted to exercising. Over 1,200 participants, comprising 108 teams, have been involved in the past six years.

Whitewater established a *Tutoring Bank* using community resources to help K-12 students with academic needs. Whitewater's Community/ School Gardens have given students an opportunity to



plan, plant, and maintain gardens, which provide fresh produce for the Whitewater Food Pantry and for senior housing centers.

Whitewater Community Education has been the beneficiary of nearly \$165,000 in grant

monies for programs such as adult English as a Second Language (ESL), its volunteer program, high school athletics, and partnerships between schools and families with special needs students. During the 1998-99 school year, the Whitewater community used district facilities for a total of 5,252 hours!

A Vehicle for Change

“Community Education is a philosophical concept that serves the entire community by providing for the educational needs of all its community members. It uses the local school to serve as the catalyst for bringing community resources to bear on community problems in an effort to develop a positive sense of community, improve community living and develop the community process toward the end of self-actualization.”

Dr. Jack Minzey, Emeritus Professor, University of Eastern Michigan

Community Education State Plan

The DPI in cooperation with the Wisconsin Community Education Association (WCEA) developed five state goals to move towards a Community Education philosophy in every Wisconsin community.

The purpose of the state plan is to increase awareness of the benefits and potential impact of Community Education in every community across the state.

- ◆ Collect and disseminate information about existing Community Education programs.
- ◆ Develop strategies to link and partner with similar state organizations and initiatives to allow networking among state agencies and associations, for example, connecting Community Education with the Wisconsin Intergenerational Network.
- ◆ Prepare strategies to help communities searching for necessary resources to plan for Community Education and then to implement and sustain Community Education programs.
- ◆ Support existing Community Education districts by helping them access resources, material, and available training opportunities.

The State Plan document can be found at the Wisconsin Community Education Association’s website:
<http://www.wi-communityed.org/statePlanbrr/>

Community Education Resources

Department of Public Instruction

Stan Potts, Consultant, Phone: 608-266-3569 or 715-425-3759, Fax: 715-425-4479 or Email: stanley.j.potts@uwrf.edu

DPI Community Education Website

www.dpi.state.wi.us/dpi/dltcl/bbfcsp/slcepage.html

Wisconsin Community Education Association

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Phone: 608-767-2737 or Email: jonek@wisheights.k12.wi.us

UW-Madison—Community Education, George Kliminski,
Email: kliminski@education.wisc.edu

CESA #2—Eric Smith, Director of Program Development,
Phone: 608-232-2862 or Email: esmith@cesa2.k12.wi.us

DPI—Family-Community-School Partnerships,
<http://www.dpi.state.wi.us/dpi/dltcl/bbfcsp/fcsphome.html>

Wisconsin Intergenerational Network (WIN),
PO Box 6664, Madison WI 53716. Phone: 608-224-0606.
<http://www.wi-win.org/>

Photographs courtesy of Kettle Moraine School District, Luck School District, and Frederic School District.

National Center Training—www.nccenet.org
DPI and WCEA sponsor annual training. For details visit
<http://www.wi-communityed.org/>

National Community Education Association (NCEA)
3929 Old Lee Highway #91-A, Fairfax, VA 22042. Phone:
703-359-897, Fax: 703-359-0972, www.ncea@ncea.com

Community Education: A Resource and Planning Manual
DPI Publications, Phone: 1-800-243-8782.
www.dpi.state.wi.us/dpi/dltcl/eis/pubsales/partnr_1.html

On-Line Tool Kit—A set of Community Education tools to assist you in starting or strengthening your Community Education program can be found at:
www.dpi.state.wi.us/dpi/dltcl/bbfcsp/cetools.html

WCEA Contacts

Wisconsin Community Education Association (WCEA)
website address: www.wi-communityed.org/

WCEA is divided into three regions to support program development in Community Education: ICEPAC (Indianhead Community Education Assessment and Planning Council), Lighthouse, and Southern.

Southern Region

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