

Guest Editorial

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DPI-NR 2016-61

Friday, May 27, 2016

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Graduates: You can change the world

A guest editorial from State Superintendent Tony Evers

Ceremonies for this year's graduation season carry a uniform message to our 2016 graduates. Life doesn't end with high school; it's just beginning. And that's exciting.

The lessons from algebra and English, U.S. history and biology, the attention to detail needed to complete an artwork, write computer code, or fine-tune an engineering project certainly shaped who you are and who you will become. So too, the practices for band or chorus, athletics, forensics, or theater taught you teamwork and discipline for the next steps: to be ready for college and career, military service, or the workforce. What you learned in elementary and secondary school will carry you forward.

That's our state motto: Forward. We are called to look ahead, to strive, to keep improving. And so it is that you, the 64,000 graduates from our public and private high schools in Wisconsin have, a chance to change the world. I hope your plans for the future, whether it's more education or work, include community and civic involvement. Wisconsin, yes our world, needs your drive and passion.

You, the Class of 2016 have an opportunity to change the voting patterns of your generation. Nationally Millennials had the lowest voter turnout of any age group in the last election. Graduates, as soon as you turn 18, you have a constitutional right to register and vote in the place you consider to be "home." Whether that's your parent's house, an apartment, or dorm room, it will be important to follow [Wisconsin's voter registration laws](#). And as Election Day approaches, if your schedule is like mine, absentee voting might be the "plan ahead" option that ensures you have the opportunity to cast a ballot. I encourage you to get and stay informed so you are ready to vote on Election Day.

Civic involvement is more than voting. It means sharing your time and talents with a cause, a club, or organization you believe in. It means putting the public good ahead of your own self-interest. Civic engagement helps us see beyond our differences, and that will change the world.

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NOTES: A high resolution photo of the state superintendent is available on the Department of Public Instruction "Media Contacts and Resources" webpage at <http://dpi.wi.gov/news/contacts-resources>. This editorial is available electronically at http://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/news-release/dpinr2016_61.pdf.