

## Guest Editorial

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### Thanking Wisconsin's teachers of today and the future

*A guest editorial by State Superintendent Carolyn Stanford Taylor on Teacher Appreciation Week*

The past year has underscored the critical role teachers play in the lives of our students, families, and communities. Spurred by a public health emergency that continues to bring many daily stressors and unforeseen challenges, Wisconsin's teachers have reinvented the way they educate our students, ensuring learning continues. The ways in which teachers continue to inspire, even when faced with such uncertainty, have been nothing short of amazing.

This week is Teacher Appreciation Week, a time for Wisconsinites to express our gratitude to those who have dedicated their lives to educating our students of today and leaders of tomorrow and highlight how the work they take on truly influences society.

When the pandemic hit Wisconsin last spring, teachers across our state did not miss a beat. Within the span of just a few weeks, they re-envisioned their entire educational delivery models. Concerned about the welfare of their students, teachers have gone to great lengths to check on their students' well-being while engaging with them in new ways. Educators responded to daunting circumstances like they are prone to do, with compassion and innovation, adjusting lesson plans and adapting to meet this new reality head-on.

I thank Wisconsin teachers for their commitment to our young people and having a lasting impact on their lives. Although many have accepted this commitment, far too many are choosing to retire early or leaving the profession altogether, and too few students are aspiring to become teachers. These realities have continued to worsen this past year, especially. It is essential we work to reverse this troubling trend.

We, as a state, must do more to recruit and retain teachers in our schools. We can do this by further supporting teachers, respecting their voices, and thanking them for nurturing a love of learning in Wisconsin's youth. We must commit to doing all we can to attract young people to consider this most honorable profession. We must work with our educator preparation programs to substantially diversify our state's educator workforce, so all students can benefit from having a diverse, strong teacher core.

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Teachers are integral to our nation's recovery and are on the frontlines of collective efforts addressing and disrupting systemic educational inequities both in Wisconsin and across the nation.

During Teacher Appreciation Week, I encourage all Wisconsinites to take a moment and thank a teacher for their tireless work in developing Wisconsin's next generation, who soon will shape our world.

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**NOTE:** A headshot for publication of State Superintendent Carolyn Stanford Taylor is available at <https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/statesupt/jpg/carolyn-stanford-taylor.jpg>. This guest editorial is available electronically at <https://dpi.wi.gov/news/releases/2021/teacher-appreciation-week-carolyn-stanford-taylor>.