

Wausau School District
Board of Education Meeting Agenda
In Compliance with the Wisconsin Open Meeting Law

James Bouché, President
Public Notice s.19.84 (3)

Cory Sillars, Clerk
Exemptions s.19.85

A **Special Meeting** of the BOARD OF EDUCATION will be held in the **Literacy Center , 415 Seymour Street, Wausau, Wisconsin 54403** at **4:00 PM** on **Monday, August 11, 2025.**

I. Call to Order

II. Board Workshop

- Budgetary / Remaining Referendum Funds
- Weighted Grades / Dress Code
- School Perceptions Assessment / District Goals

III. Adjourn

*** Updated Location to the Literacy Center Room at the Longfellow Administration Center - Update 08/08/25 at 11 am - CP***

NOTICE POSTED: Friday, August 8, 2025, at 10:45 am

By: Cassie Peck

NOTICE SENT TO:

WSAU WSAW-TV WAOW-TV WJFW-TV CITY PAGES WAUSAU PILOT & REVIEW SCHOOLS WAUSAU DAILY HERALD WAAM CITY HALL COURTHOUSE PUBLIC LIBRARY

The Wausau School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, age, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, creed, pregnancy, marital status, parental status, sexual orientation, sex (including transgender status, change of sex, or gender identity), or physical, mental, emotional, or learning disability ("Protected Classes")



WAUSAU SCHOOL DISTRICT BUDGET

UPDATE

AUGUST 11, 2025



Budget Updates

- State passed the biennial budget on July 3, 2025
- \$325 per pupil revenue increase remains, but no increase to state aid
- Special education reimbursement increases from 30.64% to 42%. High-cost special education aid also increases



What Happens if the District Doesn't Levy for Additional \$325

- Revenue limit stays at approximately \$11,774 per pupil
- District can maintain entire defeasance strategy (less outside factors) without increasing overall levy
- Lower overall levy
- District loses 25-26 revenue limit increase for good
- District loses declining enrollment exemption
- Districts faces rather large deficit budget (\$2.6 million) or needs to make drastic changes immediately
- Potential to lose additional significant aid in 2026-27
- Referendum implications

Based on what we know now.



Budget Proposal

- Use increased revenue from special education funding to move staff salary budget authority in line with CPI (3%) from the previously approved 1.5%
- \$800,000 equates to a roughly 1% change in staff salary
- Moving from a 1.5% to a 3% salary increase would add approximately \$1.2 million to the district budget
- Biennial budget changes added approximately \$1.2 million in projected revenue to the 2025-26 budget
- Net result of proposed change is that the projected budget for 2025-26 remains balanced



Questions & Potential Motion

Potential Motion: Move to accept the recommendation for certified staff salaries as presented by administration.





THANK YOU!



Secondary Dress Code and Weighted Grades Workshop

8/11/25

Dress Code Materials:

1. Middle School Dress Code and Enforcement
2. High School Dress Code and Enforcement
3. "Pushing Back Against School Dress Codes"-September 2019 Wausau Daily Herald Article

Weighted Grades Materials:

1. Wausau East School Profile
2. Wausau West School Profile

MIDDLE SCHOOL DRESS CODE

5511 - DRESS AND APPEARANCE

The Board recognizes that each student's mode of dress and appearance is a manifestation of personal style and individual preference. The Board will not interfere with the right of students and their parents to make decisions regarding their appearance, except when their choices interfere with the educational program of the schools.

Accordingly, the District Administrator shall establish such dress and appearance guidelines as are necessary to promote discipline, maintain order, secure the safety of students, and provide a healthy environment conducive to academic purposes. Such guidelines shall prohibit student dress or appearance practices that:

- A. present a hazard to the health or safety of the individual student or to others in the school, including by way of communicating threats of harm or depictions of harmful conduct directed at others;
- B. interfere with school work, create disorder, or disrupt the educational program, including dress that promotes or depicts illegal activity, such as illegal drug use, underage alcohol consumption, or similar activities;
- C. cause excessive wear or damage to school property;
- D. prevent the student from achieving educational objectives because of blocked vision or restricted movement.

Such guidelines shall also apply to the dress requirements for members of the athletic teams, bands, and other school groups when representing the District at a public event. Where appropriate, a uniform or specific dress requirement shall be used for students when representing the District as described.

In enforcing the dress code, the following procedures shall be used:

- A. The principal shall serve as the initial arbiter of student dress and appearance within the building or at school-sponsored events or activities;
- B. before taking action to enforce dress code requirements, including by requiring that a student remove, cover, or otherwise conceal the item or depiction at issue, the principal shall determine whether the item constitutes protected speech insofar as the item independently makes a statement of a discernable nature to the observer by depiction, words, or combination of the two that does not require separate explanation.

Expressive dress may not be protected speech if it involves:

- A. obscenity;
- B. language or depictions intended to incite violence or foment hatred of others.

Dress that is protected speech may still be prohibited if it is likely to cause a substantial disruption to the educational environment. This may include dress that includes the use of vulgarity, discriminatory language including racial or ethnic slurs, negative stereotypes, violence, or other communication when the clear intent is to invoke strong reactions in observers so as to impair the ability of teachers and/or students to engage in educational pursuit.

No protected speech may be prohibited on the basis of disagreement by District officials with the specific point of view expressed if the topic is otherwise permitted (e.g., permitting depictions of support for one political party, but prohibiting depictions of support for the other).

If the clothing cannot be removed or concealed, and other clothing options are not available for the student, the student may be sent home after contact is made with the student's parent.

The school will make attempts to collaborate with the parent to provide alternative clothing so the student can remain within the educational environment.

Revised 2/14/22

T.C. 6/13/22

T.C. 5/12/25

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Legal

120.13(1), Wis. Stats.

The dress code policy of the _____ Middle School is in alignment with the Wausau School District Dress and Grooming Policy (5511) provided above. Responsibility for the personal appearance of students enrolled in the Wausau School District shall normally rest with the students themselves and their parents/guardians. **Student dress or grooming shall not, however, affect the health or safety of students or disrupt the learning process within the classroom or school. Per Board Policy, administration has discretion to restrict student dress causing a health/safety hazard or disruption to the learning environment.** This discretion applies, but is not limited to, the following standards of dress for Wausau School District students:

1. To maintain a focused learning environment and for safety, hoods, hats, caps, bandannas,

and other head coverings are not permitted to be worn inside the school building during the school day. Exceptions will be made for head coverings worn as an observance of religious faith.

2. Student clothing (top or bottom) cannot be solely undergarments (boxers, underwear, bras, bralettes). Clothing must cover undergarments and should not create excessive exposure. Student clothing choices need to express an appropriate level of school decorum.

3. Costumes are prohibited outside of school-approved dress-up days. In this case, a costume may include: large headgear, character costume masks, artificial anatomical features unrelated to a disability, or other components or accessories of a costume that pose a potential safety risk or disruption to the school environment. Make-up, hairstyles, and hair coloring are considered student expression and are allowed as long as the expression complies with other related school policies.

4. Students will not be permitted to wear any clothing that contains references or content related to, pictures of and/or writing about alcoholic beverages, tobacco products, sexual acts, profanity, promotion of gambling, illegal drugs, disruptive symbols of hatred or intolerance (e.g., confederate flags, a swastika or other Nazi symbols, white supremacist symbols, etc.), and/or gangs.

5. Students are prohibited from wearing flags as capes or draping them over their shoulders in a cape-like manner. This includes flags of any nation, state, or political subdivision.

6. To ensure a safe and organized learning environment, middle school students are permitted to bring backpacks to and from school. However, during the school day, backpacks (including drawstring bags, purses, belt bags, or any other carry-all bags) must be stored in student lockers and are not permitted in classrooms, hallways, the cafeteria, or the gymnasium. Students are expected to utilize their assigned lockers for all personal belongings, carrying only necessary materials (e.g., binders, notebooks, writing instruments, or specific classroom supplies) between classes. Exceptions may be made for students participating in extracurricular activities requiring specific equipment, with prior approval from school administration.

7. Medallions or other jewelry that identify gang members or gang affiliation or that represent a gang shall also not be worn or displayed in school or at school events. No gang insignia may be worn, possessed, used, distributed, displayed, carried, or sold by any student on school grounds or at school-related activities at any time.

The reference to "gang insignia" would also encompass items of clothing that signify gang activity by the manner in which they are worn. This code is not intended to limit the right of the building and/or District administration to establish rules or restrictions regarding other paraphernalia or dress that disrupts or threatens to disrupt the learning environment of any school.

Students found in violation of this policy are subject to administrative action, including but not limited to the following steps:

1. **Initial Concern & Resolution:** When a dress code concern arises, staff will first address it directly with the student. An alternative clothing option will be offered to help the student come into compliance.
2. **Parent/Guardian Notification:** If the issue isn't resolved or is a repeated violation, pupil services and/or admin will document it in Educlimber and contact the student's parents or guardians. The school will also offer alternative clothing if needed.
3. **Parent/Guardian Conference & Further Action:** For persistent violations or more significant infractions, a conference will be scheduled with the student's parents or guardians to discuss the issue. This may lead to further disciplinary action. The conference and further action (if necessary) will be documented in Educlimber.
4. **Repeated Violations & Disciplinary Action:** Consistent and repeated violations of the dress code policy will result in progressive disciplinary action. Action will be documented in Educlimber and coded as a Major violation. Potential administrative responses could include, but are not limited to, detentions, in-school suspension (ISS), and out-of-school suspension (OSS).

If there is a disagreement between students and/or parents/guardians and staff regarding the appropriateness of clothing or other personal items, the principal will use their discretion to make the final decision.

HIGH SCHOOL DRESS CODE

5511 - DRESS AND APPEARANCE

The Board recognizes that each student's mode of dress and appearance is a manifestation of personal style and individual preference. The Board will not interfere with the right of students and their parents to make decisions regarding their appearance, except when their choices interfere with the educational program of the schools.

Accordingly, the District Administrator shall establish such dress and appearance guidelines as are necessary to promote discipline, maintain order, secure the safety of students, and provide a healthy environment conducive to academic purposes. Such guidelines shall prohibit student dress or appearance practices that:

- A. present a hazard to the health or safety of the individual student or to others in the school, including by way of communicating threats of harm or depictions of harmful conduct directed at others;
- B. interfere with school work, create disorder, or disrupt the educational program, including dress that promotes or depicts illegal activity, such as illegal drug use, underage alcohol consumption, or similar activities;
- C. cause excessive wear or damage to school property;
- D. prevent the student from achieving educational objectives because of blocked vision or restricted movement.

Such guidelines shall also apply to the dress requirements for members of the athletic teams, bands, and other school groups when representing the District at a public event. Where appropriate, a uniform or specific dress requirement shall be used for students when representing the District as described.

In enforcing the dress code, the following procedures shall be used:

- A. The principal shall serve as the initial arbiter of student dress and appearance within the building or at school-sponsored events or activities;
- B. before taking action to enforce dress code requirements, including by requiring that a student remove, cover, or otherwise conceal the item or depiction at issue, the principal shall determine whether the item constitutes protected speech insofar as the item independently makes a statement of a discernable nature to the observer by depiction, words, or combination of the two that does not require separate explanation.

Expressive dress may not be protected speech if it involves:

- A. obscenity;
- B. language or depictions intended to incite violence or foment hatred of others.

Dress that is protected speech may still be prohibited if it is likely to cause a substantial disruption to the educational environment. This may include dress that includes the use of vulgarity, discriminatory language including racial or ethnic slurs, negative stereotypes, violence, or other communication when the clear intent is to invoke strong reactions in observers so as to impair the ability of teachers and/or students to engage in educational pursuit.

No protected speech may be prohibited on the basis of disagreement by District officials with the specific point of view expressed if the topic is otherwise permitted (e.g., permitting depictions of support for one political party, but prohibiting depictions of support for the other).

If the clothing cannot be removed or concealed, and other clothing options are not available for the student, the student may be sent home after contact is made with the student's parent.

The school will make attempts to collaborate with the parent to provide alternative clothing so the student can remain within the educational environment.

Revised 2/14/22

T.C. 6/13/22

T.C. 5/12/25

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Legal

120.13(1), Wis. Stats.

The dress code policy of the Wausau _____ High School is in alignment with the Wausau School District Dress and Grooming Policy (5511) provided above. Responsibility for the personal appearance of students enrolled in the Wausau School District shall normally rest with the students themselves and their parents/guardians. **Student dress or grooming shall not, however, affect the health or safety of students or disrupt the learning process within the classroom or school. Per Board Policy, administration has discretion to restrict student dress causing a health/safety hazard or disruption to the learning environment.** This discretion applies, but is not limited to, the following standards of dress for Wausau School District students:

1. During the school day, hoods, hats, caps, bandannas, protective hairstyle pieces, and any

other head coverings are allowed to be worn in the building unless otherwise specified by staff and/or administration. Specified exceptions for religious purposes will be allowed.

2. Student clothing (top or bottom) cannot be solely undergarments (boxers, bras, bralettes). Clothing must cover undergarments and should not create excessive exposure. Student clothing choices need to express an appropriate level of school decorum.

3. Costumes are prohibited outside of school-approved dress-up days. In this case, a costume may include: large headgear, character costume masks, artificial anatomical features unrelated to a disability, or other components or accessories of a costume that pose a potential safety risk or disruption to the school environment. Make-up, hairstyles, and hair coloring are considered student expression and are allowed as long as the expression complies with other related school policies.

4. Students will not be permitted to wear any clothing that contains references or content related to, pictures of and/or writing about alcoholic beverages, tobacco products, sexual acts, profanity, promotion of gambling, illegal drugs, disruptive symbols of hatred or intolerance (e.g., confederate flags, a swastika or other Nazi symbols, white supremacist symbols, etc.), and/or gangs.

5. Students are prohibited from wearing flags as capes or draping them over their shoulders in a cape-like manner. This includes flags of any nation, state, or political subdivision.

6. Medallions or other jewelry that identify gang members or gang affiliation or that represent a gang shall also not be worn or displayed in school or at school events. No gang insignia may be worn, possessed, used, distributed, displayed, carried, or sold by any student on school grounds or at school-related activities at any time.

The reference to “gang insignia” would also encompass items of clothing that signify gang activity by the manner in which they are worn. This code is not intended to limit the right of the building and/or District administration to establish rules or restrictions regarding other paraphernalia or dress that disrupts or threatens to disrupt the learning environment of any school.

Students found in violation of this policy are subject to administrative action, including but not limited to the following steps:

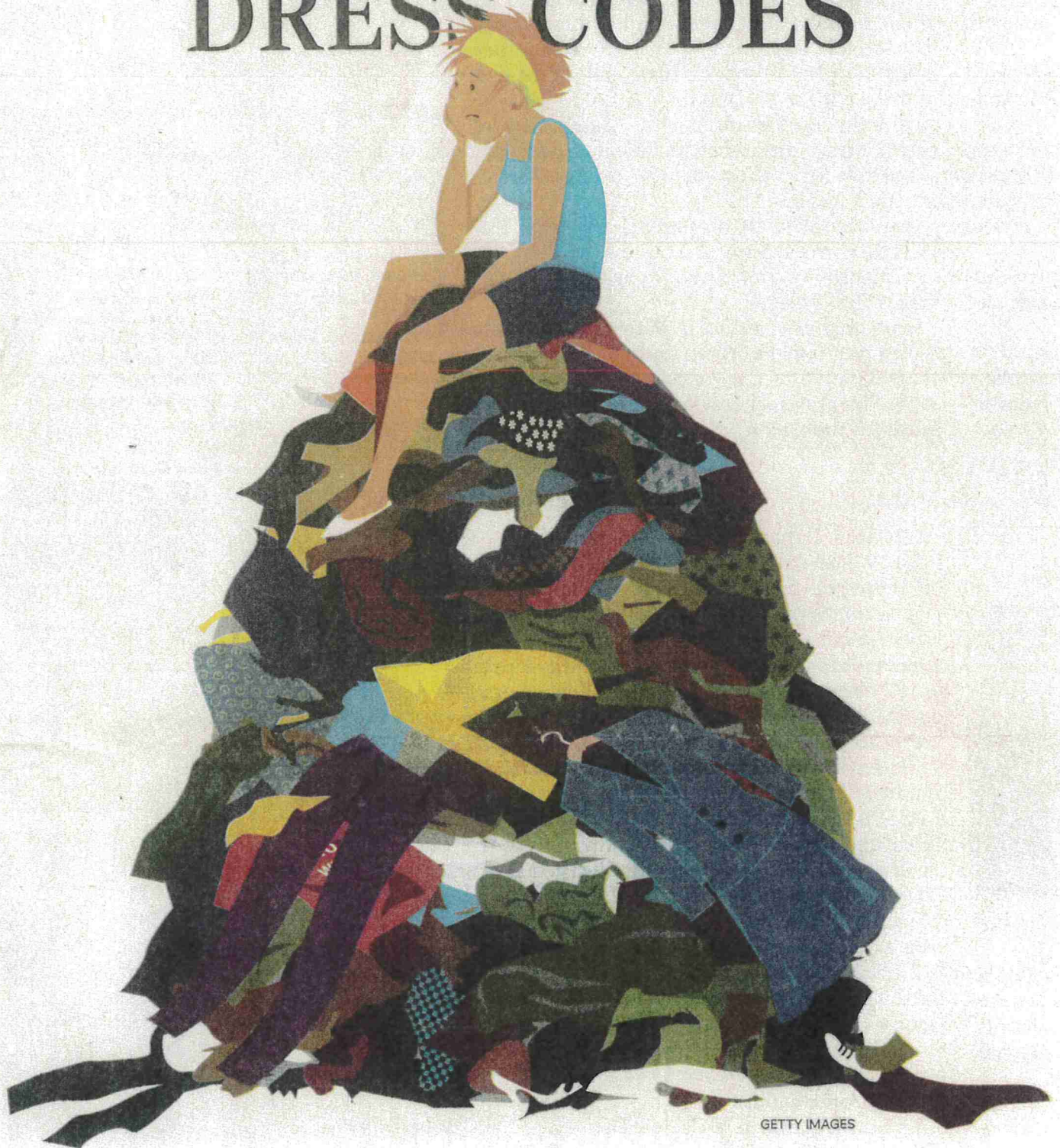
1. **Initial Concern & Resolution:** When a dress code concern arises, staff will first address it directly with the student. An alternative clothing option will be offered to help the student come into compliance.
2. **Parent/Guardian Notification:** If the issue isn't resolved or is a repeated violation, pupil services and/or admin will document it in Educlimber and contact the student's parents or guardians. The school will also offer alternative clothing if needed.

3. **Parent/Guardian Conference & Further Action:** For persistent violations or more significant infractions, a conference will be scheduled with the student's parents or guardians to discuss the issue. This may lead to further disciplinary action. The conference and further action (if necessary) will be documented in Educlimber.
4. **Repeated Violations & Disciplinary Action:** Consistent and repeated violations of the dress code policy will result in progressive disciplinary action. Action will be documented in Educlimber and coded as a Major violation. Potential administrative responses could include, but are not limited to, detentions, in-school suspension (ISS), and out-of-school suspension (OSS).

If there is a disagreement between students and/or parents/guardians and staff regarding the appropriateness of clothing or other personal items, the principal will use their discretion to make the final decision.

If there is a disagreement between students and/or parents/guardians and staff regarding the appropriateness of clothing or other paraphernalia, the principal will use his/her discretion to make the final decision.

PUSHING BACK AGAINST SCHOOL DRESS CODES



GETTY IMAGES

Girls are still targeted more than boys, critics say

Laura Schulte Wausau Daily Herald | USA TODAY NETWORK - WISCONSIN

WAUSAU – When Hope Hill got a call from her daughter’s summer school program in June, she didn’t expect the topic to be about visible bra straps.

Hill had dropped off her 15-year-old daughter at school that morning in a black and white fitted dress. The Wausau mother thought the outfit was a welcome change: Her daughter, Angel, battled mental health issues for the past year, so much that it was hard to get her out of bed some days and most of the time the teen would wear only sweatpants and a T-shirt.

“Angel has been very excited about actually attending school,” Hill said of the summer program. “I have not had any issues ... getting her out the door since summer school started. That’s huge for her.”

But after a few class periods that day, a teacher told Angel her dress was inappropriate for school. Angel knew it was long enough, and it didn’t expose any of her chest. The teacher demanded that Angel call her mother, though.

“When I walked out (of the bathroom), I saw (teachers) looking for me,” she said. “And she said, ‘You need to cover up or go home and change.’”

The teacher asked Angel to put a shirt on over her dress to better cover her bra straps, which she declined to do because she didn’t want to look

stupid in front of her peers, she said. She wanted to be able to wear her dress, but the teachers said that the dress code didn’t allow it.

In Wisconsin and across the country, parents and female students are pushing back against codes that they believe unfairly punish young women for expressing their style and identity. Petitions have popped up on sites such as Change.org, and young women have taken to social media to call for equal treatment on banned clothing.

A USA TODAY NETWORK-Wisconsin analysis of more than 20 such dress codes from across the state, largely from public schools, shows that even without mentioning gender, more rules ap-

See DRESS CODE, Page 5A

Dress code

Continued from Page 1A

ply to the way girls are able to dress and how much of their bodies they must cover.

For example, codes forbid bare midriffs, short skirts or shorts, or backless, halter, strapless and spaghetti strap shirts. Most codes also call for students to completely cover chest cleavage and prohibit undergarments from showing. Leggings are noted in several codes as inappropriate unless covered by a long shirt or skirt. While the codes contained several rules for dress that could typically apply to boys, those restrictions also were as likely to refer to girls' clothing – such as bans on wearing hats, or requirements to wear shoes, and the prohibition of clothes with obscene language or images.

'I can't believe it's still happening'

Hill was surprised when she got the call from Angel, she said, but her reaction quickly turned to anger and frustration at the way her daughter's clothing was being handled.

"I tried reasoning with (the teacher)," Hill said. "She's now enjoying going to school, so why make a huge issue out of her bra straps showing?"

The teacher refused to reverse her decision, telling Hill that she was trying to prepare Angel for success in later life.

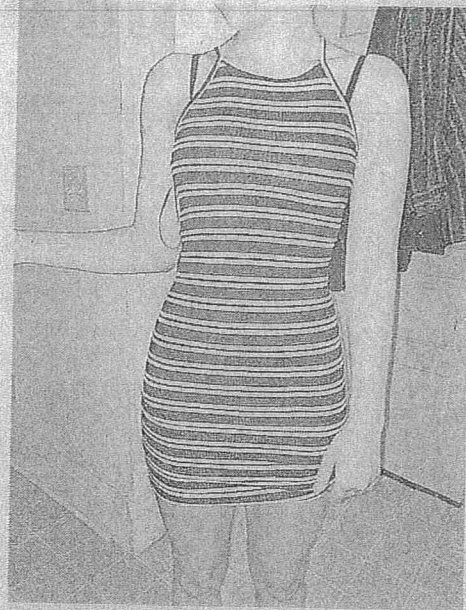
"Well, the way she dresses does not measure her success," Hill said. "That's my viewpoint."

Shauna Pomerantz shares the view that a young woman should not be judged based on her clothing.

Pomerantz, graduate program director and associate professor at Brock University in Ontario, Canada, has been studying and talking about how school dress codes affect young women for 15 years. She wrote a book called "Girls, Style and School Identities: Dressing the Part," which analyzed girls' wear in the early 2000s, and ever since Pomerantz has taken questions from parents and journalists about restrictive dress codes and how to combat them.

"It's so common," she said of those questions. "I can't believe it's still happening."

The way young women were described in the 1990s set her down the path of research about the way girls dress. It was the decade of crop tops,



A photo of the dress Hope Hill's daughter was wearing the day she was sent home from summer school.

COURTESY OF HOPE HILL

Britney Spears fashions and a willingness to classify young girls as "sluts" or hookers because they were showing more skin, Pomerantz said.

"I was so stunned at the language applied to girls," she said.

Pomerantz said she has discovered change is slow when it comes to implementing dress codes that are more inclusive and less harsh for young women.

"We live in a sexist culture where girls are blamed for boys' behavior," she said. "We live in a culture where girls' bodies are distracting and have to be controlled and contained and girls are seen as putting themselves in danger."

Pomerantz said she's heard stories like Angel's many times, and she believes school administrators are failing to notice their dress codes are shaming young women and having a long-lasting effect.

"That shaming is detrimental," she said. "They feel embarrassed. We have to stop teaching girls that their bodies are the problem."

Some schools updated dress codes

In the Wausau School District, the dress code enforced at all the elementary, middle and high schools is actually quite short. It forbids any type of head covering during the school day, tells students that clothing referencing alcohol, tobacco, drugs, sex, profanity or gangs

Dress code rules that target girls found in multiple Wisconsin school districts:

- No backless, strapless or halter tops. No spaghetti-strap tops.
- No bare midriffs.
- No short skirts or shorts. Skirts and shorts must reach mid-thigh.
- Leggings can't be worn as pants.
- No cleavage can be shown.
- No visible bra straps.

is not allowed and bans all "gang insignia." School Board President Tricia Zunker said principals are further allowed to make their individual schools' dress codes stricter.

Brad Peck, principal at Wausau East, where Angel goes to school, said the code has been modified in recent years but enforcement is up to school personnel and mostly based on "decency."

The dress code at East, which is found in the student planner as a part of the student handbook, calls for "the use of common sense" in determining clothing's appropriateness. But it specifically states that clothing must cover the torso completely, can't show chest cleavage, can't be backless, strapless or spaghetti-strap, shorts can't be excessively short and that undergarments are required and can't be showing, among other rules. The code also states that "the school reserves the right to require students to change or cover clothing deemed out of code."

When students complain, Angel said, they are reminded that they signed the student handbook, which means they have to comply.

Pomerantz advocates for a more "lenient" code that allows students more flexibility in dress, makes rules that apply equally to girls and boys and gives especially girls more freedom when it comes to the expression of style.

Lincoln High School in Wisconsin Rapids implemented a more lenient dress code before the last school year, said Superintendent Craig Broeren.

Lincoln Principal Ronald Rasmussen proposed the changes, following a code implemented in an Evanston, Illinois, school district. The code is an adaptation of a model produced by the National Organization for Women Oregon

chapter, which gives students more flexibility with clothing. The model requires that students must wear a top, a bottom and shoes (dresses are included in this); allows clothing items like leggings, pajamas or ripped jeans; but bans clothing depicting violence, drugs, alcohol, hate speech and other offensive images.

The idea to change the code came from a student advisory board, Rasmussen said.

"The old code was restrictive," he said. "I didn't feel that it was a model of the societal standards of today."

Rasmussen said the new policy allows for more fairness and less judgment based on ethnicity, culture, socioeconomic status or gender. Since the code took effect last year, dress code violations have been down, especially violations by girls, he said. Now that the school allows spaghetti straps and is more lenient about the length of shorts or dresses – though they still have to completely cover the buttocks area – staff members have had less cause to talk to students about violations.

And when they do address students, educators try to make sure it's more about teaching than punishing, the principal said.

"When we deal with students, it's educational and students are generally respectful," he said.

The Kenosha Unified School District changed its dress code after the student-led Women's Empowerment Club challenged the fact that girls were consistently "dress coded" for wearing leggings, said Victoria Schantz, a former student who helped to create a petition that circulated around the country last year.

Schantz said she missed a day of school after going home to change her clothes several times one day, which made her feel like she was being called out among her peers. It was uncomfortable, she said. So she and fellow members of the Women's Empowerment group started going to school board meetings and expressing their opinions.

The board wasn't aware of the issue, Schantz said, and eventually, the attention from the petition helped to fuel a change in the code. Now, female students are permitted to wear leggings, she said, and have a much less strict dress policy.

Schantz said students who think their school dress codes are unfair

See DRESS CODE, Page 6A

Dress code

Continued from Page 5A

should take matters into their own hands.

"If you know or think something's wrong, go to the school board," she said. "They're not at the schools all the time and they won't know unless you tell them."

In Wausau, the school board is working through an overhaul of all district policies including the dress code, said Zunker, the board president. Zunker said that the board was not aware of

Hill's complaint, and the overhaul of policies is not in relation to complaints.

'I wish they would ignore bra straps'

Hill said Angel was able to make it through the rest of her summer school session without incident. Hill considered going to the school board, but Angel got nervous about it, so she didn't. Hill was happy to hear the dress code was getting a new look this fall. She hopes teachers will start to focus on teaching rather than critiquing female students' clothing.

"I just don't feel like they should put

such an emphasis on it," Hill said. "They can carry it too far. I just wish that they would focus more on the education, not the bra strap that's showing."

Angel, who is starting her sophomore year at Wausau East, said she was most frustrated by a feeling that some people, including her, are repeatedly disciplined while other students are allowed to bend or break the rules on clothes.

"I don't know how to put it into words, but it makes me really mad because it doesn't happen to everybody," she said. "It's just certain students that don't do as well as others, or who are more put out than the others. It's more girls."

Angel acknowledges she has had rocky relationships with some teachers – she was in summer school and truancy court after habitually skipping the class of a teacher she didn't get along with – but she still feels that she shouldn't have been sent home over bra straps, which affected her summer school attendance.

Asked if the infraction would change her shopping habits or style at school this year, Angel shook her head.

"Nah, definitely not," she said with a smile.

Contact Laura Schulte at 715-496-4088 or leschulte@gannett.com. Follow her on Twitter @schultelaura.

Wausau East High School

2024-2025 School Profile



Community

Wausau is a community of 38,000 people, surrounded by a beautiful state park, Rib Mountain, in a greater metro area of 72,000 in central Wisconsin. Industry and commerce is comprised of dairy and ginseng farms, tourism to Rib Mountain, insurance industries, paper, window, home and other manufacturers. We also have two hospitals, various medical specialties, a two-year university, technical college and a variety of service industries. We are Midwestern in culture and enjoy the luxury of good schools, quality students and a safe environment.

Curriculum

Students at East High School have the opportunity to choose from a diversified range of course offerings. The breadth of curriculum offerings allows students to meet all college entrance requirements, including self-selecting advanced classes in the IB Program. In addition, there are numerous opportunities for students to gain job specific skills through hands on learning in our state of the art Technology Education labs. Students also have the option to concurrently earn college credits by attending local colleges or participating in dual credit classes in multiple subject areas. Because of East's academic reputation, variety of course offerings, and our unique IB Program, many families choose East High School.

INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE (IB)

The IB Program is East's honors program which allows motivated students to take courses with challenging curriculum and opportunities to earn college credit. Students can select IB courses in Art, English, Foreign Language, Math, Science, and Social Studies. Each subject requires an extended research project. The highest honor, the Full IB Diploma, involves: six IB subject courses, competent examination in all subjects, a 4000 word, extended essay, Theory of Knowledge courses, and a community service requirement.

Demographics

Grades	9-12
Type	Public
Enrollment	950

Average ACT (N=230)

English	18.5
Math	20.6
Reading	19.9
Science	20.5
Composition	20.0

Grade & GPA

A	4.0
B	3.0
C	2.0
D	1.0
E	1.0
F	0.0
I	0.0
NCR	No Credit
ME	Medical Excuse
S	Satisfactory
WP	Withdraw Pass
WF	Withdraw Fail

2607 NORTH 18TH ST
WAUSAU, WI 54403

715.261.0650 (p)

715.845.4428 (f)

east.wausauschools.org

CEEB-ACT Code: 502-415

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Susan Holster Asst Principal
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Jason Beal, G-L

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Olivia Dreger, M-Si

odreger@wausauschools.org

Katie Gilles, Sj-Z

kgilles@wausauschools.org

INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE (HONORS) COURSES

English:

PreIB Composition
 English IB I
 English IB II*

Math:

Algebra II PreIB
 PreCalculus IB-Math Studies
 PreCalculus IB-Math SL
 Calculus IB*

Science:

Biology IB I
 Biology IB II*
 Chemistry II IB*
 Physics I IB
 Physics II IB*

Social Studies:

Cultural Anthropology IB*
 History IB I
 History IB II*
 Psychology IB I
 Psychology IB II*

Electives:

Studio Art PreIB
 Theory of Knowledge
 Visual Arts IB*

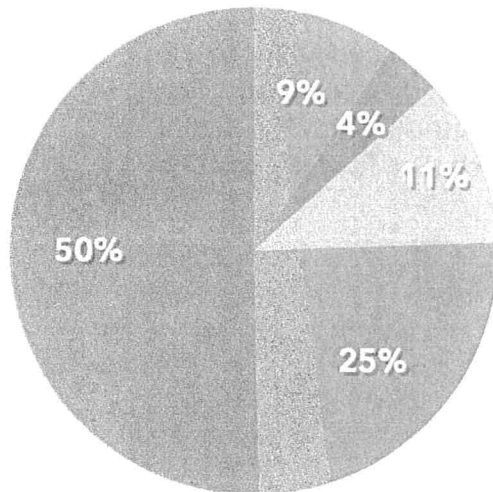
Foreign Language:

French/German/Spanish PreIB
 French/German/Spanish IB I
 French/German/Spanish IB II*

*IB examination available

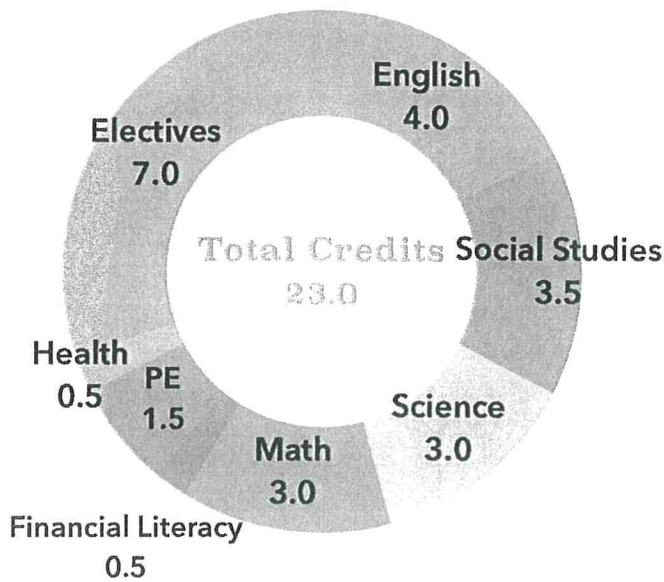
Courses with "IB" are accelerated courses which conform to the demanding standards set by the IB Organization. Students can choose to compete internationally in rigorous IB examinations. Most colleges recognize the rigors of the IB program and will offer credit for IB exams/diplomas.

POST HIGH SCHOOL PLANS - CLASS OF 2024



- Undecided/Other
- Military
- Work
- 2 Year College
- 4 Year College

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS



23 CREDITS REQUIRED

- English
- Social Studies
- Science
- Math
- Financial Literacy
- PE
- Health
- Electives

WAUSAU WEST HIGH SCHOOL

1200 W. Wausau Ave., Wausau, WI 54401
 Website: west.wausauschools.org

(715) 261-0850 FAX (715) 261-3260

The Community

Wausau, nestled in the valley of the Wisconsin River, is a hub in north central Wisconsin in terms of shopping, education, and employment. The surrounding area is primarily rural with industry centered around manufacturing and health care. The metropolitan area population is approximately 40,000. Wausau supports a two-year university center, a technical college and a regional site for the Medical College of WI. Area employers include Aspirus Hospital, Eastbay, Domtar, Greenheck, Ascension St. Claire's Hospital, Marshfield Clinic and numerous retail businesses offering diverse employment opportunities.

The School

Wausau West is 1 of 2 comprehensive high schools in the Wausau School District. Current enrollment is approximately 1,490 students, grades 9-12. There are 125 members on the teaching staff and a full compliment of support staff. Wausau West opened its doors in 1970 implementing flexible modular (flex-mod) scheduling. To date, West continues with the flex-mod format which allows for more instructional opportunities and flexibility for students and faculty alike. Programs range from alternative education for at-risk students to dual credit and advanced placement courses.

Grading System

A = 4.0
 B = 3.0
 C = 2.0
 D = 1.0
 F = 0.0

ADVANCED PLACEMENT COURSES

AP Studio Art
 AP Biology
 AP Calculus AB
 AP Chemistry
 AP Computer Sci.
 AP French
 AP German
 AP Literature
 AP Macro-Econ
 AP Micro-Econ
 AP Physics
 AP Psychology
 AP Spanish
 AP Statistics
 AP US Government
 AP US History
 AP European History

Graduation Requirements Class of 2026

English 4.0
 Social Studies..... 3.5
 Mathematics..... 3.0
 Science 3.0
 Physical Education..... 1.5
 Health.....0.5
 Financial Literacy.....0.5
 Electives..... 7.0
TOTAL CREDITS..... 23.0

*Civics Test Requirement

GPA & Rank in Class

Grade point averages (GPA) are calculated based on a four-point system using the Carnegie-unit value of each course (plus and minuses are not calculated in a GPA). Class rank is computed each semester for all students. Final semester grades are used for the calculation of the GPA.

Average College Admission

ACT Class of 2025	Wausau West	Wisconsin	National (2024)
English	18.1	19	18.7
Math	20	19.4	19.1
Reading	19.6	20.5	20.2
Science	19.9	20	19.7
Composite	19.5	19.4	19.4

Post High School Plans Class of 2025

Four-Year College/University53 %
 Technical College23 %
 Employment12 %
 Undecided9 %
 Military3 %

CEEB/ACT High School Code – 502417



BOARD WORKSHOP

AUGUST 11, 2025





Agenda

- Items for discussion:
 - Budget discussion
 - Dress code
 - Weighted grades
- Year in review (feedback)
 - School Perceptions Data
- Moving ahead
 - School Perceptions Recommendations
 - Community Conversation Next Steps





BUDGET UPDATE



Budget Updates

- State passed the biennial budget on July 3, 2025
- \$325 per pupil revenue increase remains, but no increase to state aid
- Special education reimbursement increases from 30.64% to 42%. High-cost special education aid also increases



Budget Proposal

- Use increased revenue from special education funding to move staff salary budget authority in line with CPI (3%) from the previously approved 1.5%
- \$800,000 equates to a roughly 1% change in staff salary
- Moving from a 1.5% to a 3% salary increase would add approximately \$1.2 million to the district budget
- Biennial budget changes added approximately \$1.2 million in projected revenue to the 2025-26 budget
- Net result of proposed change is that the projected budget for 2025-26 remains balanced



Considerations of \$325 Per Pupil Revenue Limit Increase

- Will be a direct ask of local taxpayers
- District has ability to reduce debt defeasance strategy to maintain overall levy
- District has approximately 8,000 students for an overall revenue limit increase of \$2.6 million
- Every district in the state is in a similar situation



Levy Options Based on 2024-25 Levy Numbers

- Decrease defeasance
- Increase overall levy

*A number of factors go into the overall district levy: General Fund Levy (10), Debt Service Levy (38 & 39), Community Service Levy (80), impact of spending throughout the state, etc.



2024-25 Levy Information

FINAL 2024-2025 TAX LEVY - OCTOBER 28, 2024

Wausau School District

Fund	FINAL 2024-25 LEVY	FINAL 2023-24 LEVY	DOLLAR INCREASE	PERCENT CHANGE	EQUALIZED MILL RATE
GENERAL FUND **	\$ 19,219,507	\$ 24,550,622	\$ (5,331,115)	-21.71%	3.11
DEBT SERVICE FUND 38	2,098,764	2,104,070	(5,306)	-0.25%	0.34
DEBT SERVICE FUND 39	22,275,000	22,275,000	-	0.00%	3.60
COMMUNITY SERVICE Fund 80	792,000	662,200	129,800	19.60%	0.13
TOTAL	\$ 44,385,271	\$ 49,591,892	\$ (5,206,621)	-10.50%	7.18



Maintain Full Defeasance Strategy in 2025-26

- Estimate is based on 2024-25 levy numbers
- Would allow district to defease approximately \$15 million again
- Adds approximately \$2.6 million to general levy fund
- Mill rate increases by \$.42 or \$42 per \$100K of equalized value

Wausau School District

Fund	FINAL 2024-25 LEVY	EQUALIZED MILL RATE
GENERAL FUND **	\$ 21,819,507	3.53
DEBT SERVICE FUND 38	2,098,764	0.34
DEBT SERVICE FUND 39	22,275,000	3.60
COMMUNITY SERVICE Fund 80	792,000	0.13
TOTAL	\$ 46,985,271	7.60



Reduce Debt Defeasance to Offset General Fund Increase

- Adds approximately \$2.6 million to General Fund Levy (Fund 10)
- Reduces Debt Service (Fund 39) prepayment by approximately \$2.6 million\
- District is still able to prepay over \$12 million in capital debt
- Mill rate stays the same
- *Numbers calculated independent of other factors influencing the 25-26 levy based on 24-25 levy and equalized value numbers*

Wausau School District

Fund	FINAL 2024-25 LEVY	EQUALIZED MILL RATE
GENERAL FUND **	\$ 21,819,507	3.53
DEBT SERVICE FUND 38	2,098,764	0.34
DEBT SERVICE FUND 39	19,675,000	3.18
COMMUNITY SERVICE Fund 80	792,000	0.13
TOTAL	\$ 44,385,271	7.18



What Happens if the District Doesn't Levy for Additional \$325

- Revenue limit stays at approximately \$11,774 per pupil
- District can maintain entire defeasance strategy (less outside factors) without increasing overall levy
- Lower overall levy
- District loses 25-26 revenue limit increase for good
- District loses declining enrollment exemption
- Districts faces rather large deficit budget (\$2.6 million) or needs to make drastic changes immediately
- Potential to lose additional significant aid in 2026-27
- Referendum implications

Based on what we know now.





QUESTIONS?





SECONDARY DRESS CODE



Board Policy 5511

- Broad and general
 - For good reason. (i.e. changing fashion trends, etc.)
- Emphasis on health, safety, obscenity, and **disruption to the educational environment**
 - Tinker vs. Des Moines (1969)
- “The principal shall serve as the initial arbiter of student dress and appearance within the building or at school-sponsored events or activities.”



State of the Dress Code: 2024-25 School Year

- All secondary schools had some reference to policy 5511 in their student handbooks
- Some had additional clauses specific to their buildings
- Language around enforcement was broad and general



Consistent Dress Code & Enforcement (2025-26)

- Dress codes specific to middle school and high school
- Review of dress codes in-district, out-of-district
- Many clauses pulled from West High's dress code
 - Created by a student panel in 2022 (?)
- Highlights:
 - Clauses specific to obscenity with examples
 - Costumes clause
 - Flags clause



Consistent Dress Code & Enforcement (2025-26)

- Flags clause continued
 - Students are prohibited from wearing flags as capes or draping them over their shoulders in a cape-like manner. This includes flags of any nation, state, or political subdivision.
- Gangs (currently not an issue but kept just in case)
- Student clothing (top or bottom) cannot be solely undergarments (boxers, bras, bralettes)
- Clothing must cover undergarments and should not create excessive exposure. Student clothing choices need to express an appropriate level of school decorum



Enforcement and Documentation

Students found in violation of this policy are subject to administrative action, including but not limited to:

1. **Initial Concern & Resolution:** When a dress code concern arises, staff will first address it directly with student. An alternative clothing option will be offered to help the student come into compliance.
2. **Parent/Guardian Notification:** If the issue isn't resolved or is a repeated violation, Pupil Services and/or admin will document it in eduClimber and contact the student's parents or guardians. The school will also offer alternative clothing, if needed.

Enforcement and Documentation

3. **Parent/Guardian Conference & Further Action:** For persistent violations or more significant infractions, a conference will be scheduled with the student's parents or guardians to discuss the issue. This may lead to further disciplinary action. Infraction and conference are documented in eduClimber.
4. **Repeated Violations & Disciplinary Action:** Consistent and repeated violations of the dress code policy will result in progressive disciplinary action. Action will be documented in eduClimber and coded as a behavior violation. Potential administrative responses could include, but are not limited to, detentions, in-school suspension, and out-of-school suspension.

If there is a disagreement between students and/or parents/guardians and staff regarding the appropriateness of clothing or other personal items, the principal will use their discretion to make the final decision.

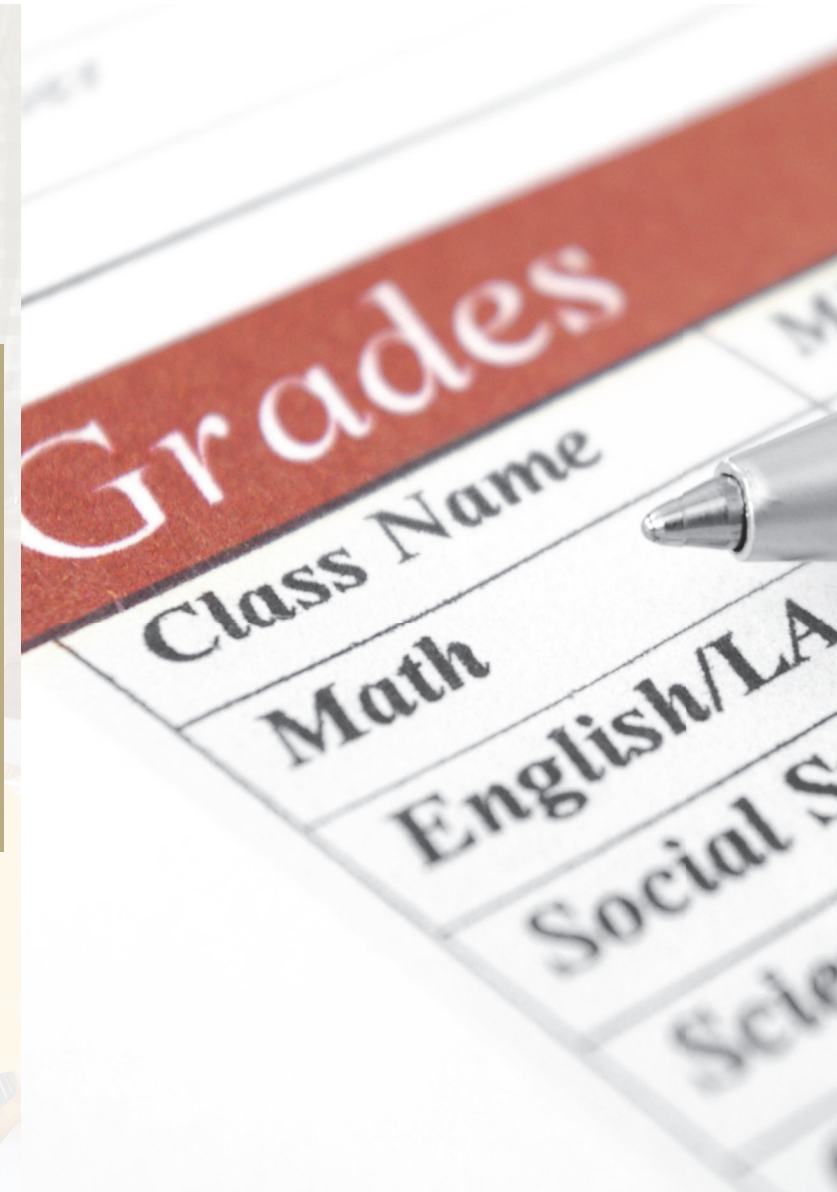
Dress Code Realities

- What constitutes protected speech?
- Body types - the same clothes do not look the same on different bodies
- Accusations of discrimination, targeting, body-shaming, sexism, etc.
 - Males vs. females
- Divided, strong opinions on dress code
 - See 2019 article from the Wausau Daily Herald
- “The principal shall serve as the initial arbiter of student dress and appearance within the building or at school-sponsored events or activities.”





WEIGHTED GRADES UPDATE



Why do Districts Pursue Weighted Grades

- Narrowing down to 1 valedictorian
 - West High recognizes and determines valedictorians and salutatorians
 - East High recognizes 4.0s, but does not determine valedictorians and salutatorians
- Tie breaks for determining class rank
 - Wisconsin guarantee
 - Top 5%
- Student recognition
- Effects on course enrollments
 - Mixed thoughts
 - Positives
 - Negatives



Concerns & Considerations

- Systems in place for tie-breakers for scholarships (Wisconsin Academic Excellence Scholarship)
 - Could adopt a similar policy for determining valedictorian, top 5%, etc.
- Many schools (UWs) do not consider weighted grades in admissions
 - Colleges look at school profiles to determine rigor of students' coursework
- The Common App
 - Used across the country for college admissions, takes into account student GPA and courses taken
 - School profile
- Determining which courses are weighted
 - Rigor is subjective
 - Effect on building culture (staff and students)
 - Students 'gaming' the system
 - Districts report consistently adjusting their weighted courses to account for this
 - Effects on enrollments and teacher FTE?
 - Electives (CTE)



Enrollment Data: West High

Graduating Class of	Total 4.0 GPA	Graduating Class Total	% w/4.0 GPA	
2025	18	384	4.68%	
2024	15	346	4.33%	
2023	17	306	5.55%	
2022	21	333	6.31%	
2021	20	323	6.19%	
2020	18	284	6.34%	
2019	17	321	5.30%	
2018	18	328	5.49%	

Graduating Class of	4.0 GPA + AP	4.0 GPA + Dual Credit	4.0 GPA + College Credit	Total 4.0 GPA
2025	17	14	2	18
2024	15	10	0	15
2023	14	13	5	17
2022	20	15	2	21
2021	19	14	4	20
2020	17	11	2	18
2019	16	15	1	17
2018	18	10	2	18

Year	AP	Dual Credit	College Credit	School Population
2025	327 (22%)	1026 (70%)	49	1469
2024	296 (21%)	760 (52%)	35	1442
2023	257 (18%)	786 (54%)	30	1444
2022	245 (16%)	697 (47%)	16	1490
2021	280 (20%)	696 (50%)	24	1398
2020	241 (18%)	658 (48%)	12	1366
2019	232 (17%)	629 (46%)	31	1366
2018	276 (20%)	494 (37%)	50	1351

Enrollment Data: East High

Graduating Class of	Total 4.0 GPA	Graduating Class Total	% w/4.0 GPA	
2025	5	220	2.27%	
2024	8	231	3.46%	
2023	8	187	4.27%	
2022	11	232	4.74%	
2021	9	222	4.10%	
2020	9	236	3.81%	
2019	9	254	3.41%	
2018	13	216	6.01%	
Graduating Class of	4.0 GPA + IB	4.0 GPA + Dual-Credit	4.0 GPA + College-Credit	Total 4.0 GPA
2025	5	1	0	5
2024	8	4	0	8
2023	8	2	2	8
2022	11	1	0	11
2021	7	2	2	9
2020	9	0	0	9
2019	8	2	0	9
2018	13	1	2	13
Year	Total IB (Unique Students)	Total Dual Credit	Total College-Credit	School Population
2025	264 (30%)	475 (53%)	17	893
2024	269 (30%)	502 (56%)	6	897
2023	272 (30%)	482 (53%)	9	902
2022	268 (28%)	376 (39%)	17	962
2021	329 (35%)	419 (45%)	9	932
2020	327 (34%)	374 (39%)	13	951
2019	362 (37%)	311 (32%)	16	981
2018	344 (36%)	267 (28%)	10	961

Enrollment Trends Study

- Decrease in % of students with 4.0 GPA between both schools (slight decrease at West, greater decrease at East)
- Students with 4.0s are still taking AP/IB/Dual Credit courses
- Slight increase in AP enrollments at West
- Steady number of IB enrollments at East post-pandemic
- Both schools show increases in students taking Dual Credit



Process for Adopting Weighted Grades

- Committee of teachers, administrators, students, parents, and counselors
 - Consult other districts
 - Determine system
 - Weighted grades
 - Laude system
 - Hybrid
 - **Determine which courses are weighted**
 - Classes selected would need to be unique to each school's programming
 - ex.: AP vs. IB



Process for Adopting Weighted Grades

- Logistics
 - Infinite Campus: adjusting transcripts and rank calculations
 - Updating handbooks, coursebooks, registration materials, board policies
 - Updating scholarship requirements, applications, and selection
 - Communication to stakeholders
 - Where does WAVE fall into this?
- Ideally, we would start with the freshmen class of the 2027-28 school year
 - Concerns of implementing a system ex post facto
 - Course registration starts in January 2027, updating documents/materials by November 2026



Recommendation

- Administration does not recommend adopting weighted grades
 - Secondary principals, head counselors at East and West High
 - Concerns about effect on building culture
 - Not required, or considered, by many college admissions including the UWs
 - Enrollment trends and 4.0 student data are trending in the right direction
 - It would take time to do it correctly
 - First graduating class would be the class of 2031
 - Ongoing reviews and revisions once adopted
- Other considerations
 - Tie-breaking policy for rank and valedictorian
 - WI Guarantee
 - +s and -s are currently not weighted
 - A+ is the same as an A- when calculating GPA
 - Would weighting +s and -s reduce the number of valedictorians and ties in class rank?





TO START... BOARD ACTIVITY



From the Admin Team... The Good

- Board relations
- Elementary consolidation - well received
- Meeting efficiencies
- State budget
- Found efficiencies and absorbed reductions
- Pulse/surveys of 'State of the District'
- Community involvement higher
- Avoided large issues & managed others
- Social media presence
- Increased applications/ fill rates/ etc.
- Building sales
- 2022 referendum under budget



From the Admin Team... The Good

- Building face time
- \$>CPI
- Building assessment completed with 10-year plan
- Teacher-led PD
- Communication
- Tag Team: Ed Department went well despite loss of (director of professional learning & student achievement) and student services loss of position (director of pupil services)
- Community Conversation
- Student data sources - cleaning up going well
- Coordinators - picked up leadership roles/stepped up
- Shift in building community trust - right direction
- Good communication from buildings to Central Office (CO) team
- Cleaned up policy/consistency elements across district
- 8 new principals in last 2 years supported by CO team



From the Admin Team... The Bad

- Failed referendum - questions from the community
- Community trust struggle
- Transportation partner challenges
- Focus – split between so many things
- Staff shortages
- Student behavior challenges for staff
- 80/20 rule of issues - lots of things – lots of time diverted from bigger issues
- Technology Infrastructure issues
- Emotional trauma with medical issues and deaths
- Programmatic Challenges and spreading thin of resources
- Extended school year – weather
- Growing pains - assistant superintendent positions and roles
- 3 buildings navigating associate principals
- East/West divide
- Consolidation wrinkles & staff climate



From the Admin Team... The Bad

- Budget
- Policies/procedures/systems - 'cleaning up'
- School Perceptions Survey - feedback navigation
- Strategic plan development
- Need for increased communication between cabinet and directors



From the Admin Team... The Priorities

- Immediacy of the new reorganization and the start of the new school year
- Acknowledging the negative (and positive) feedback and work ahead
- Wrap up of construction
- Next referendum?
- Meeting structure revised - try to capture communication challenges
- Continue to capture staff (and student) voice
- Finalize strategic plan
- Continued Visibility and presence
- Support for consolidated schools from Central Office





SCHOOL PERCEPTIONS DATA



School Perceptions Data

- School Perceptions Survey Analysis System
- Staff Survey Summary
- Staff Survey Report





MOVING AHEAD



School Perceptions Recommendations



District Strategies

Recommendation 1: Create regular meetings among building-level administrators to share staff concerns at the building level (*concrete time and space*)(*revamp delivery*)

Recommendation 2: Triage district-level communications to staff (*goal related*)(*district newsletter*)

Recommendation 3: Plan professional development around staff concerns that emerge from building- and district-meetings (*institutional responses*)

.....these currently occur, but are not overt...



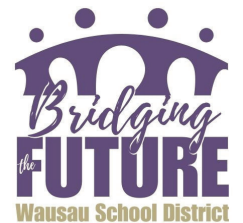


COMMUNITY CONVERSATION



About the Community Conversation

- 3-day summit in March
- Purpose: contribute to the building and creation of the district's vision and future
- Invitation was open to the entire community
- Approximate attendance: 120 people
 - Attendance grew between Thursday and Friday
 - Students, staff members, parents/guardians, businesses and organizations participated





Destination District

Academic Opportunities

Wellbeing of Students
and Staff

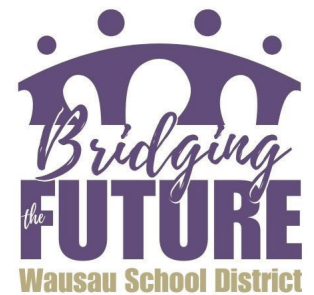
Active, Collaborative
Community Partnerships

Strong Business
Relationships

Engage in Strong
Multi-Directional Communication

Moving Ahead

- Meaningful Dashboards
- Incorporated into Strategic Plan Development





DISTRICT OFFICE GOALS MOVING FORWARD



Longfellow Goals Moving Forward

- **Goal 1 = Discipline - Incidents and Perceptions**
 - Current Baseline:
 - (45% manage consistently)
 - (49% manage effectively)
- **Goal 2 = District heading in the right direction (60%)**
- **Goal 3 = ?**





THANK YOU!

