At the heart of WCTE is support for Wisconsin’s English teachers. For more than 80 years, our organization has been responding to the changes in education from state licensure to censorship in our classrooms. We are ever mindful of the needs of teachers. With this in mind, WCTE would like to begin forming Wisconsin Action Groups — Committees that Make a Difference. These groups would form and be centered around like interests and concerns. Wisconsin is a large state, and some teachers feel isolated. Wisconsin Action Groups could help English teachers connect. We want these groups to be boots on the ground instructional teacher support.

NEW TEACHER GROUP

Teaching is hard. Not only is there pressure to develop relevant, engaging lessons, but there is an enormous amount of grading. As a new teacher, I felt like I should already know everything, and I found it difficult to admit to my experienced colleagues that I was struggling. WCTE wants to help new teachers not to feel so alone. Our first Wisconsin Action Group is geared to new teachers. This group will form a safe place to voice fears, frustrations and concerns. We are looking for participants with one to five years experience. If you are interested in leading this group, please reach out to me.

GROUP STRUCTURE

Much of the structure and goals of each group will be left up to its participants. Meetings could be virtual or face-to-face, in a large group or small. Likewise, the content of the group will be guided by those attending. We want Wisconsin Action Groups to be fluid and meet the changing needs of the participants.

OTHER WISCONSIN ACTION GROUPS

WCTE supports groups of teachers with like-minded concerns. The following are just some of the other groups we would like to establish and grow:

• Issues in English Education
• Advocacy
• Equity
• Technology and Social Media
• Pre-service Teachers
• Education and Politics

One of my desires is to see WCTE become your go-to place for support. If you are interested in being involved with a Wisconsin Action Group, contact me at lynn.frick@saukprairieschools.org.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Lynn Frick
Executive Director, WCTE
MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT
>> Kelly Seefeldt

Dear WCTE Members,

First, I’d like to introduce myself, as this is the first Update you are hearing from me as your WCTE President (although I have met many of you over the past two years as Vice President, and the year before as Second Vice President). My name is Kelly Seefeldt. I am in my seventh year of teaching at PJ Jacobs Junior High School in Stevens Point, where I teach freshman ELA classes. This year I have an ESL supported section and a SPED supported section as well as two advanced sections of the course, so even though I teach just one grade level, there’s plenty of variety in my day. Before landing in my current position, I had taught sophomores and seventh graders. In addition to my teaching duties, I also serve as an Instructional Leader at my school and as our RtI Specialist for the area of writing.

Being involved with WCTE is just one of the many professional hats I wear, but it is one I value a great deal. You all understand the demands of our profession, so I don’t need to explain to you how it is easy to become overwhelmed by the mountain of papers you have to comment on or the new initiatives your district has decided to adopt this year. However, despite all of that, you, like me, recognize the importance of a professional community, and my goal as your president is to continue to improve that community for you, our membership.

With that in mind, we are in the midst of many changes as an organization. I hope to ensure that all of those changes work toward strengthening our community of English educators throughout the state. Later on in this issue, you can read about some of the structural changes we have been working on over the past year, in the hopes to better serve the state.

Of course, one of the biggest things we do is organize an annual convention in October. This year’s keynote and workshops with Allison Marchetti were so useful to all those in attendance. As in years past, I was also impressed by the breakout sessions I attended and loved learning from my fellow Wisconsin teachers. I’d like to offer a special thanks to all who took the time to put together quality breakout sessions. WCTE would not have a convention without you. It is also important to mention that we reviewed all of the feedback that was offered by convention attendees and are using it to make improvements for future conventions.

Thank you for your continued membership, participation in, and support of our organization. It is my pleasure to serve you as president.

Kelly Seefeldt
WCTE President
kseefeld@pointschools.net

I DON’T NEED to explain to you how it is easy to become overwhelmed by the mountain of papers you have to comment on or the new initiatives your district has decided to adopt this year.

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Thursday afternoon workshops focus on writing

“C3WP: Leading Students Toward Active Listening and Civic Engagement Through Argumentative Writing” focused on engaging students in an argumentative writing project. Presenters Stephanie Hurt (Brodhead High School) and Susan Hart (Waunakee Community High School) discussed the philosophies and practices of this program, while providing specific examples and strategies teachers can implement in their classrooms.

“Coaching and Conferring with Writers” addressed questioning techniques as a way to get students talking about their writing, rather than just answering their teacher’s questions or saying what they think the teacher wants to hear.

“Moving Beyond the Traditional Research Project” clearly captured the interest of dozens of teachers who attended the pre-convention workshops presented by master teachers from the Greater Madison Writing Project. Mark Nepper’s focus in this first session invited participants to explore the Heritage Project, asking who you are and how you got here. One of the strategies Nepper demonstrated and asked teachers to do was the question storm which focuses on generating questions rather than ideas in the early phases of a project.

“Question storms are wildly successful and engaging,” said Julia Corbett, English teacher at Chequamegon High School. Question storming captures an innate human trait — curiosity. Because the focus is on generating as many questions as possible, students can express many more ideas than if they were just brainstorming lists to fit a topic. Through the process of brainstorming questions, refining, and filtering, students can come up with many more ideas and directions.

Nepper’s presentation can be downloaded here.

“A More Humane Assessment” invited teachers to reflect on ways to make assessment more humane for both teachers and students. Jen Doucette from Waunakee Community High School emphasized the importance of sitting beside students for discussion about their work so both teacher and student are focused on the writing. Teachers need to decide what they value in writing, like originality, risk-taking, depth, purpose, structure, perseverance, precision, and the writing process itself. This is the starting point for aligning your your assessment practices with those values.

Doucette’s presentation can be downloaded here. Doucette is the author of The Art of Teaching (McGraw-Hill). She can be reached at jdoucette@waunakee.k12.wi.us, and you can read her blogs at https://medium.com/@jendoucette.
Allison Marchetti goes beyond literary analysis

Addressing students’ need to decide what they want to write about, Allison Marchetti asserted that their content expertise, combined with their passion, can yield authenticity and voice to their writing. Because students need to examine where their passions lie, teachers need to start with an authentic analysis of their students’ topics of interest. Only then can students address literary analysis in their writing.

Marchetti identified four essential tools of analysis: 1. Passion is the compass that directs the writer. 2. Ideas are the territory the writers explore. 3. Structure is the map of where a piece of analysis will go and how it will get there. 4. Authority is the demonstration of know-how that makes a writer seem credible.

To support students in this writing task, teachers can help them look at their writing through one lens at a time, highlighting moments of passion and main ideas. Within the text, students’ inclusion of photos, videos or some kind of media can demonstrate and support what is being written.

Marchetti concluded with a quote from Donald Murray: “Writing is discovery, discovery of the world, discovery of a particular subject, and most of all, self-discovery.”

Breakout sessions cover range of topics, interests

Four groups of small sessions during the rest of the day allowed plenty of options for teachers looking for inspiration and support. Some sessions focused on instruction, like using argument as advocacy to engage students in their community, teaching how to write solid paragraphs, and getting students to engage in their communities by writing a civic argument on a self-selected topic and then sending the piece to a changemaker.

Other sessions centered on teaching techniques, like integrating virtual reality into ELL instruction and implementing independent reading in the classroom. The DPI session offered an entire collection of instructional practices.

Lise Weiseman (Badger High School, Lake Geneva) and Justina Plemon (St. Mary’s Catholic Middle School, Neenah) listen to Brenda Williams explain how she uses the Harkness style of discussion as an assessment tool.

Brenda Williams (Reedsburg High School) said students need to develop the communication skills to meet speaking and listening standards.

Vendors support teachers, convention with resources

Convention attendees talk with Penny Parsons, Wisconsin coordinator of Poetry Out Loud for the Wisconsin Arts Board. (See story on page 16.) Parsons is a long-time Wisconsin English teacher.

Doug Tipsword promoted The Graide Network which provides online grading and feedback from 350 expert readers. See sample grade 9 report and AP Lang report.

Kent Berger represented Houghton Mifflin Harcourt at the WCTE convention.

Joyce and Mary Dambekaln from Heinemann brought plenty of copies of Allison Marchetti and Rebekah O’Dell’s Beyond Literary Analysis.
Pooley Foundation Convention Grant winners attend their first WCTE convention

Four teachers were awarded the The Pooley Foundation Convention Grant: Marjorie Struck (Milwaukee Public Schools), Taylor May Passow and Erika Gallagher (Madison Metropolitan Public Schools), and Stephanie Rohner (Marshall School District). Grant recipients attended the 2019 convention with registration and hotel costs covered by the Pooley grant. In addition, their districts received substitute costs for two days and free WCTE membership for one year.

Early career teachers presented with WCTE awards

At the convention luncheon, three new teachers received plaques and congratulations for their outstanding work in their English classrooms.
- Ely Hauber just completed her first year teaching at Rufus King High School in Milwaukee.
- Alyssa Prindl student taught at Bradley Technical and Trade School in Milwaukee and now teaches at Milwaukee Excellence Charter School.
- Jesse Van Dehy student taught at Wausau West High School and now teaches at John Edwards High School in Port Edwards, Wis.

Pernille Ripp to keynote WCTE program

Pernille Ripp is an expert in literacy and technology integration and dedicates her research and practice to developing engaged and empowered students and communities. She is a teacher, speaker, author, blogger and passionate advocate for education. She is a Skype Master Teacher; recipient of the 2015 WEMTA Making IT Happen Award; and the 2015 ISTE Award for Innovation in Global Collaboration.

In 2010, Pernille founded The Global Read Aloud, a global literacy initiative that began with a simple goal in mind: one book to connect the world. From its humble beginnings, the GRA has grown to connect more than four million students in more than 80 different countries. She is the author of *Passionate Readers — The Art of Reaching and Engaging Every Child* and *Passionate Learners — How to Engage and Empower Your Students*, now in its second edition, and *Empowered Schools, Empowered Students*, both focusing on creating learning spaces and communities where students thrive and all stakeholders are empowered and passionate about learning.

She has also authored *Reimagining Literacy Through Global Collaboration* published in 2016 by Solution Tree. Her work has also been featured in many print and online journals including Edutopia, School Library Journal, The Guardian and MiddleWeb.

**2020 CONVENTION PREVIEW**

**WHEN:** Oct. 16-17, 2020  
**WHERE:** Crowne Plaza  
4402 East Washington Ave.  
Madison, WI 53704
WCTE CONVENTION

“Why I came to this convention...”

Ashley Lounsbridge
PJ Jacobs Junior High School, Stevens Point

“WCTE gives you some time to actually think about your profession, think about how you want to grow as an educator within your field and just to take some time out of the year to do what is important.”

Steve Stary
Notre Dame Academy, De Pere

“I came to this conference to learn some good techniques and strategies. It’s been awhile since I’ve been to a conference like this.”

Amy Richards
Bayport High School, Green Bay

“A colleague and I came last year for the very first time and we thought it was wonderful and we took away a lot, so we went back and pushed our district to send a few more of us this year, and I was lucky enough to return.”

Meagan Lynch
Bayport High School, Green Bay

“I’m a second year English teacher, so I was told this would be a really amazing opportunity to learn from other, more seasoned educators, to learn a number of different strategies and techniques for engaging learners.”

Stephane Rau
Bonduel High School, De Pere

“I came to this convention specifically because of the keynote speaker. I really want to find assignments and strategies to use that go beyond the typical essay.”

Marci Johnson
Westosha Central High School, Salem

“The Writing Workshop project is great because it has all the pieces for us. He (Mark Nepper of the Madison Area Writing Project) gave us each piece, step by step, so we could take it back to the classroom and use it immediately.”

NCTE >> Justina Plemon reporting via video

Spirited Inquiry: Baltimore convention

Justina Plemon, WCTE Vice-President, shared this video report on the highlights of her experience at the NCTE convention in November. Click HERE for that report.
CEL >> Kelly Seefeldt, Wisconsin Liaison

CEL Talks Podcast: Welcome to the Conversation...

CEL (Conference on English Leadership) has a brand new way to reach English educators: the CEL Talks Podcast. According to an introduction to the podcast, CEL says that each episode of the podcast hopes to “honor conversations around texts, speakers, and big ideas.”

On the pod, host and CEL member-at-large Josh Flores (@mrjoshflores on Twitter) talks to literacy leaders from inside and outside of the organization about topics that impact our classrooms today. Topics covered include what it would look like to really disrupt the educational system, co-teaching logistics, standards-based grading, and more. The podcast hosts guests from all over the country and engages in conversations relevant to all English educators, not just those in leadership positions.

As CEL’s Wisconsin state liaison, and an enthusiastic member of the organization, I encourage you to give the CEL Talks Podcast a listen. If you find yourself liking what you hear, consider joining CEL.

Blowing Things Up with Matt Marone
Matt Marone and host Josh Flores talk about making students cringe through appropriating slang and what true disruption of the educational structure would look like. Hint: relationships, not grades. Prepare to laugh and think and tweet tales of lessons that failed spectacularly using #MyWorstLesson.

Changing the Verb with Chris Bronke
Josh talks with Chris Bronke, CEL Associate Chair, English teacher, and department chair at Downers Grove North High School about stepping into leadership, standards-based grading, and creating curriculum that both meets students where they are and prepares them for the future. This was the first episode recorded for the series.

Higher Ed and Classroom Collaboration with Emily Meixner and Rachel Scupp
Emily Meixner, professor, and Rachel Scupp, middle school teacher, talk with Josh about their ongoing collaboration creating and testing middle level LGBTQ YA literature curriculum, the logistics of coteaching, and the importance of working with supportive administrators.

Being of Service with Dr. Zackory Kirk of Atlanta Public Schools
In this inaugural episode of CEL Talks, host Josh Flores talks with Dr. Zackory Kirk, Director of Curriculum and Instruction for the Atlanta Public School System, about Dr. Kirk’s ignite session at CEL2018 and what it takes to be your best as a teacher.

These four episodes are available at http://www2.ncte.org/groups/cel/cel-talks-podcast/.

CEL: A Professional Community for Literacy Leaders

The Conference on English Leadership (CEL), a constituent organization of the National Council of Teachers of English, welcomes all those concerned with language arts leadership. Since 1970, CEL has assisted language arts leaders in sharing mutual problems and insights, exchanging resources, seeking the advice of successful leaders, and investigating issues of greatest concern to leaders.

CEL members include English language arts leaders at all levels: department heads, language arts coordinators, supervisors, consultants, teacher leaders, principals, directors of instruction, college and university English educators, and other exercising formal or informal leadership in their schools, districts, or states.

Follow us on Twitter! @ncte_cel

To become a member, join online or call NCTE Customer Service toll free at (877) 369-6283. CEL membership is $25 a year for NCTE members and includes a subscription to the CEL online journal English Leadership Quarterly (ELQ).

CEL MISSION: The Conference on English Leadership fosters an intimate professional community dedicated to building the leadership capacity of literacy educators.

CEL MEMBER BENEFITS:
• Attend CEL Annual Conventions held each November immediately after the NCTE Convention.
• Receive the English Leadership Quarterly publishes timely articles on a variety of issues important to the decision maker in English language arts.
• Connect with CEL State Liaisons to learn more about issues pertinent to literacy leaders in your state.
• Read the CEL Blog to learn about best practices in teaching and leading.
• Participate in #CELChat, a monthly Twitter chat on topics that matter most to literacy educators.
• Join the CEL Facebook Group to participate in digital book clubs.
• Apply to the CEL Emerging Leaders Fellowship if you are new to a leadership position and want to work with an experienced mentor.
At the annual meeting after our convention, new bylaws were officially approved. Because of these changes, we will have new positions which will need to be filled. There are many options if you would like to get involved:

**DISTRICT DIRECTORS:** The district directors of this council are an elected, unpaid position for a term of two years. Six district directors will be elected to provide support to two CESA districts per director (District 1-2, District 3-4, District 5-6, District 7-8, District 9-10, District 11-12).

We need district directors from all areas of the state because the current district directors may be moved to other positions. This position is a great way to give back to other English teachers in your area!

The district directors of this council shall:

- Maintain an email contact list of English teachers from your specified districts (as attained by the DPI liaison or through personal pursuit). If unavailable, at least acquire the email of one teacher or department head for each school district in your region;
- Use the email addresses of English teachers from your specified districts (as attained by the DPI liaison or through personal pursuit) to communicate with your constituents three to four times per year (generally in connection with information gained at the WCTE board meetings);
- Send survey link from district director liaisons to English teachers using your email list;
- Reach out (by phone call or personal email) to at least ten new potential WCTE members about joining or attending convention, for each term served;
- Attend at least two of the three board meetings each year;
- Write articles for the WCTE Update as necessary.

**AFFILIATE LIAISON COORDINATOR:** The Affiliate Liaison Coordinator is an appointed, unpaid position for a term of three years. A strong candidate for this position is interested in making connections with people throughout the English-Education world.

The Affiliate Liaison Coordinator shall:

- Maintain a relationship with NCTE, WELATE, SLATE, SCOA and other English-related organizations and report to the group;
- Attend at least two of the three board meetings each year;
- Write articles for the WCTE Update as necessary.

**WEBSITE COORDINATOR:** The website coordinator is an appointed, unpaid position for a three-year term. More than one person may act in the role of website coordinator. We currently have website coordinators who may be moving to other positions, but would be there to help you succeed. If you have talents with web page design, please consider joining our team!

The website coordinator shall:

- Communicate with the officers, directors, members, and general public to maintain a repository of information for retrieval online.
- Website Coordinator Qualifications:
  - Some experience with web-based activities such as maintaining a blog, posting videos on YouTube, interacting through Facebook, or using a class wiki.
  - Access to a reliable service provider.

**SOCIAL MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS CHAIR:**

This chair (or co-chairs) will maintain a regular presence on social media and communication with membership. If you are already heavily involved with social media, why not use your interest to have a direct impact on other teachers around the state?

Those duties shall include:

- Posting regularly to all social media accounts (e.g. Facebook and Twitter), including, but not limited to, promotion of upcoming Twitter chats, annual convention, and any other organization business
- Schedule the year’s monthly Twitter chats and solicit volunteers to moderate those chats
- Design and schedule the year’s monthly membership email messages to promote upcoming events, deadlines and announcements.

**PROFESSIONAL ISSUES AND DIVERSITY CHAIR:**

The Professional Issues and Diversity Chair is an appointed, unpaid position for a term of three years. If you are looking for a way to have a positive impact on our profession and this world, this is the position for you!

The Professional Issues and Diversity Chair shall:

- Promote and support ongoing dialogues about intellectual freedom or race, ethnicity, gender, disabilities, and/or sexual orientation issues in all aspects of teaching, respond as needed to requests for assistance from Wisconsin educators and others facing challenges to intellectual freedom, and monitor important legislation and other policy issues.
- Form a committee to gather data about underrepresentation of people of color and other minorities in our membership.

If you think you may be interested in any of these positions, please email President, Kelly Seefeldt @ kseefeld@pointschools.net or Past President, John Schad @ schad@kohler.k12.wi.us
Films by and about indigenous people for use in classrooms

First Nations Films is a Canadian company that creates and distributes award-winning television documentary films for, by and about indigenous people who, historically, moved freely across the continent. Their videos tell the stories of these peoples, relevant to any North American classroom. Their programs are distributed to broadcasters, schools, libraries, universities and other individuals and institutions throughout the world. They specialize in the inception, creation and distribution of hard-to-write television, video and educational programs about native people.

For detailed information and streaming prices, contact richard@firstnationsfilms.com or 604-318-5418. ($149.00 for DVD with PPR.)

Sample a few video previews at their website. Read summaries of current Native news with links to articles and research.

SAMPLE VIDEOS

OUR FIRES STILL BURN - The Native experience - documentary 2016 - 60 min.

This exciting and compelling one hour documentary invites viewers into the lives of contemporary Native role models. It dispels the myth that First Nations have disappeared from the horizon, and reveals how they continue to persist, heal from the past, confront the challenges of today, keep their culture alive, and make significant contributions to society. PREVIEW HERE

LIFE ON THE RESERVE - An inside look at real life on the Rez - documentary 2011 - 24 min.

A new documentary that highlights the significant challenges that people living on reserves have to deal with, as well as the hope they have for their community, as told by the residents themselves. Graham Shonfield, the 19-year old documentary filmmaker, had volunteered for development work in Africa, but nothing prepared him for the impoverished conditions that he experienced first hand in Northern Ontario at Gull Bay First Nation reserve. Although Gull Bay is only one reserve in this great country, it has similarities to them all. PREVIEW HERE

First Nations Films for Streaming and on DVD

First Nations History (the truth)
Our Healing Journey (health)
Spirit of the People (community)
Rise of the Salmon People (land)
Reclaiming Our Children (family)
Our Fires Still Burn (experience)
Nanabozhung (native solutions)
The Dugout (working together)
Journey of Hope (change)
Life on the Reserve (real stories)
Making a Drum (ancient arts)
Native Young (native youth)
Reclaiming (family)
Residential Schools (other side)
First Nations Suicide (answers)
Living in Two Worlds (old and new)
The Medicine Wheel (spirituality)
Whose Land is This? (truth)
Making Treaties (land settlement)
Role Models (inspiration)
Beat of the Drum (native music)
Native Women: Politics (history)
Unbowed (courage and truth)
In Search of Hamat’sa (dance)
Dancing on the Moon (drama)
Deception of Freedom (land)
Sacred Buffalo People (culture)
Sleep Dancer (journey)
Vanishing Link (returning)
HIV...If There's a Will ... (hiv)
The Storytellers (cancer)
The PipeMakers (truth and honour)
Medicine People (ceremonies)
DPI WCTE Liaison Report Winter 2019

This is the most up-to-date information for English teachers from the Wisconsin Department of Instruction. For more details or additional information, contact Bianca Williams-Griffin (bianca.williams-griffin@dpi.wi.gov), English Language Arts Consultant at DPI.

STANDARDS REVIEW

The Department of Public Instruction convened English Language Arts educators from across the state to begin work on revising Wisconsin Standards for ELA in late October. The diverse team members represented classroom teachers (all grade bands, special education, ELL), institutions of higher education, district administrators, as well as members of professional organizations. It is important to note that the ELA writing committee promotes DPI’s efforts in equity with close attention paid to racial and gender equity and inclusion. The diverse representation of teachers on the standards writing team provided practical, personal and instructional insight that will help inform standards that are beneficial and inclusive of all students in Wisconsin.

The ELA Standards Writing Team was presented with results from the survey that was sent out in July 2019. Survey data reported that

• there was not a need to drastically change the standards,
• the standards need to be simplified and condensed,
• the current strands were sufficient, and
• the standards should be more culturally responsive.

After the data was presented, the large group was split into smaller strand teams (reading, speaking and listening, reading foundational skills, writing, and language) to begin their individual team work. The teams worked through the remainder of the day and continued their work over the next six weeks. Next, individual group standards will be reviewed by the whole writing committee. A draft copy of the standards for public comment will be available in February, 2020.

EQUITY

During the 2019 WCTE convention, I had the opportunity to provide a workshop that introduced and allowed participants to explore the recently released Instructional Practice Guide for Equitable Teaching and Learning in English Language Arts. The workshop was well received and the Instructional Guide can be downloaded from the DPI ELA webpage.

INSTRUCTION

In order to assist Wisconsin school districts with providing quality instructional materials and professional learning in ELA and mathematics, DPI has partnered with the Wisconsin Center for Educational Research (WCER) to collect information on what types of ELA and mathematics materials are being used by schools in Wisconsin. The survey was sent out to district administrators to be completed. Results will be shared with all districts administrators in January of 2020.
State legislature studies proposals regarding dyslexia

Wisconsin educators should be aware of the current issues that are facing their classrooms. Often times items are included in state budgets or state assemblies and not discussed on local news. Please consider reviewing the current issues that may be affecting your classroom as outlined below.

**Wisconsin ELA Standards**

The process for reviewing and revising the ELA standards has begun. Please check out the [link](#) to learn more about it.

**Dyslexia**

Recently the Wisconsin Legislature met to discuss identification and proposals around the area of reading issues and the label of dyslexia. The proposals included adding a dyslexia handbook, DPI dyslexia specialist and licensing. This will affect students and teachers in and outside of the classroom. The area of literacy is a highly discussed topic with varying issues and opinions. We encourage you to gather the facts as they relate to the work that you do, and we will do our best to provide resources as necessary.

The Wisconsin eye recorded the meetings and can be viewed [here](#).

DPI has provided a [statement](#) on dyslexia.

Literacy is a requirement across curriculums, so it is important to be aware of [DPI reading resources](#) as related to this topic.

The Assembly committee referenced Bill 110 that mandated an advisory committee that will be made in order to create a dyslexia guidebook for parents, guardians, teachers, and administrators regarding dyslexia and related conditions. The statement on this is [here](#).

If a professional issue arises and you would like more information or want to share with WCTE members, please feel free to contact the WCTE Professional Issues chair at mrs. sarahr.b@gmail.com.

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**ELA STANDARDS REVISION >> Justina Plemon**

Public forums to gather feedback on proposed revisions

The Wisconsin English Language Arts Standards are up for review through the Department of Public Instruction. Select educators from the state have been gathered by DPI to revise the standards over the next school year. Committees have been formed to divide the work between language, writing, and reading standards in each elementary, middle, and secondary bands.

The revision process has a tight timeline. Educators met in late October to review the survey given to educators in Wisconsin regarding the current standards. Many comments stated that the standards were too convoluted and very long: too much to get through in one year. Rough drafts of the revised standards are to be published in February and DPI will hold public forums to gather feedback from educators. The committees will then reconvene and finalize the revisions based on feedback at the end of March. The final drafts of the standards will then go to the Standards Review Council. The goal is to have updated standards to educators by the end of the 2019-2020 school year for implementation in the fall of 2020.

Another major issue of focus for the revision of standards is to make them more inclusive. Wisconsin has the largest achievement gap between black and white students, and ensuring success across all cultures is a task that the committees have been asked to have in mind as revisions take place. So far, this has looked like accepting more forms of language used by students in their everyday life in multimodal forms while still requiring the effective and purposeful communication we always have asked of our students. Educators may also be asked to offer students a variety of purposes for which to write, allowing those multiple and varied modes of communication to achieve what a standard English 5-paragraph essay once did — while not throwing it away completely at the same time.

Along with the release of the standards is the goal to provide more student exemplars and ideas for achieving each standard within your classroom.

If you have any questions about the process from my perspective or suggestions for the writing portion of the middle grades standards, please reach out to me, [Justina Plemon](mailto:Justina.Plemon@dpi.wi.gov), Bianca Williams-Griffin ([Bianca.Williams-Griffin@dpi.wi.gov](mailto:Bianca.Williams-Griffin@dpi.wi.gov)) is involved with the Wisconsin Council for Teachers of English in her position through DPI as well as a facilitator for these revisions.
TWITTER CHATS >> WCTE Board members

Join us for WCTE’s Twitter Chats @WCTEorg #wctechat on 4th Mondays

If you have not already joined us for our new Twitter chats, now is the time!

Previous chats have discussed:
  • Scary/Horror Reading/Books
  • Speech/Communications
  • Writing Skills
  • Poetry

This is such a cool way to connect with English teachers around the state!

Join the wave of teachers who are looking for practical advice to improve their teaching practice and share your thoughts and expertise in our next chat:

Dec. 23, 2019 @ 8 p.m. – Reads for Winter Break led by Kelly Seefeldt and Pat Osowski

MARK YOUR CALENDAR for Upcoming Twitter Chats
  • Jan. 27 New Year, New Professional Development, led by Sarah Rowse-Borelli and Jennifer Kieran
  • Feb. 24 Why Teach, led by Justina Plemon and Tanya Sponholz
  • Mar. 23 Women’s Literature: Women’s Sufferage 100-year anniversary, led by Marianne Potter and Kelly Seefeldt
  • April 27 Teaching Non-traditional Short Stories, led by Kelly Seefeldt

What’s happening in the WHSFA?

WHSFA inclusively recognizes and uplifts all students for interscholastic speaking and performance.

Film Festival Steering Committee meets in January to plan inaugural 2020-21 event.
Middle Level Speech festivals kick off in January.
High School Speech Adjudicator Workshops in January/early February.
High School Speech festivals kick off in February.
National Speech & Debate Education Day is March 6, 2020.
Wisconsin Council for the Social Studies Conference in March features debate.
State Speech Festival is in April at UW-Madison.

Other efforts contributed by Executive Director Adam Jacobi as a member of the National Speech & Debate Association (NSDA) Board of Directors:
  • National committee of educators to determine pedagogy underlying contest categories/events, with an objective of aligning these to evaluation criteria.
  • Group reviewing learning standards in reading, writing, speaking, listening, and media literacy as delineated by the National Communication Association.
  • Working group to recommend teaching/coaching standards for speech and debate educators/coaches.
  • Committee to draft and recommend an equity statement.
Please contact adam@whsfa.org with any questions.
Spring Conference Call for Session Proposals: Building Bridges & Breaking Walls: Literacy for All

We English teachers love a good metaphor. This year’s conference theme “Building Bridges & Breaking Walls” invites us to reexamine our professional work through the lens of two metaphors. A bridge connects and relates. It brings together people from different places, perspectives and times without negating those different points of origin. Crossing a bridge can be dizzying and dazzling, frightening and freeing. In contrast, Robert Frost’s “Mending Wall” famously opens, “Something there is that doesn’t love a wall.” Nature itself conspires against the wall; slowly crumbling the divisions and borders humans erect to keep things in or out.

This year’s conference theme especially invites teachers to focus on this duality in our work. As we engage our students in the English Language Arts, what tools and texts serve as bridges into deeper thinking and richer human connections? What tools and texts help our students break down the walls that divide us?

Breakout sessions and keynotes will all focus on these critical, complex questions related to reading, writing, media, speaking, and literacy practices. By the end of the two-day conference, you will be able to return to your classrooms with lessons, strategies, book recommendations, etc. to improve the relevancy of your curriculum for your students. This opportunity to collaborate with teachers from across the state to promote equity, diversity, and empowerment throughout our classrooms is one you will not want to miss!

FEATURED SPEAKERS

KELLY HOLSTINE: named Minnesota State Teacher of the Year in 2018. She is the first LGBTQ teacher and the second Alternative Educator to be given this honor. She is currently serving as Director of Educational Equity at Outfront MN.

DEBORAH APPLEMAN: professor of educational studies at Carleton College. She is best known for Critical Encounters in Secondary English, and her new book, Words No Bars Can Hold, focuses on teaching language and literature courses for the incarcerated.

SHANNON GIBNEY: author and English professor at MCTC. Her young adult novel, Dream Country, about five generations from a Liberian and American family, received five starred reviews and earned her a second Minnesota Book Award.

GREEN CARD VOICES PANEL: We’re Here. We Have A Story. We Play A Role. Launched in 2013, Green Card Voices’ mission is to share various stories of our nation’s 40 million immigrants and put a human face to the current immigration debate. Simply, we hope to introduce immigrants to their neighbors.
Poetry Out Loud offers activities for students

Poetry Out Loud is a poetry recitation program for high schoolers sponsored by the National Endowment for the Arts and the Wisconsin Arts Board, which promotes creativity and personal successes (with your support). Your promotion of POL stimulates students to become lifelong lovers of our English language.

I talked with a number of you at the WCTE Convention about investigating Poetry Out Loud for use in your school and classroom. Adding further impetus, early in this school year, Mary Anne Carter, Chair of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) on Poetry Out Loud, messaged high schools throughout the state extolling the inherent values of students participating in POL activities. As Wisconsin Coordinator for POL, I anticipate this introduction will stimulate departmental and classroom involvement in the program.

Teachers interested in learning more about how Wisconsin’s Poetry Out Loud fits into their classroom or as an extra-curricular activity may email Penny Parsons at penny.wipol@gmail.com to get started. POL is a bottom-up operation, originating with the individual student and their teacher/coach and progressing to April’s National Finals in Washington, D.C.

Student Poetry Contest

Wisconsin Fellowship of Poets (WFOP) is dedicated to promoting awareness and appreciation of poets and poetic heritage in the state, mentoring and supporting local poets with regular readings, workshops, conferences and other events, and advocating for the study of poetry in our schools.

Its Student Poetry Contest is open to Wisconsin students in two divisions: JUNIOR DIVISION (grades 6 - 8) and SENIOR DIVISION (grades 9 - 12). The deadline for entries is Jan. 31, 2020. Guidelines here.

Help Us Spread the Wonder of Poetry

Wisconsin Fellowship of Poets is working on establishing a Poets in the Schools programs with the goal of making public a Registry of Poets who are willing to visit schools, workshop and share poetry.

If you are a school looking to connect with a poet and do not find what you are looking for below, please contact our president Jan Chronister at wfoppres@gmail.com.

Registry of Poets by Region

The poets below regularly make volunteer visits in the schools for poetry workshops and poetry readings. You may contact them directly through their “Member’s Page.”

SOUTH CENTRAL (Madison Area)
Bruce Dethlefsen

NORTHEAST (Green Bay & North Area)
Kathryn Gahl

NORTH CENTRAL (Hayward Area)
Nancy Austin

WEST CENTRAL (Eau Claire Area)
Sandra Lindow
TEACHER TRAVEL >> GEEO

Educational travel around the world

Travel the world affordably, earn professional development credit, and bring global understanding into your classroom!

Founded in 2007, Global Exploration for Educators Organization (GEEO) is a 501c3 non-profit organization that has sent over 3000 teachers abroad on adventurous travel programs. With GEEO educators can earn professional development and graduate credit while seeing the world.

GEEO’s trips are 5-23 days in length and are designed and discounted to be interesting and affordable for teachers. In addition to amazing tour leaders, many of the programs are accompanied by university faculty who are experts on the destination. The deposit is $350 for each program and then the final payment is due 60 days before departure.

GEEO also provides teachers educational materials and the structure to help them bring their experiences into the classroom. The trips are open to teachers all over the world: K-12 and university educators, administrators, retired educators, as well as educators’ guests.

Detailed information about each trip, including itineraries, costs, travel dates and more, can be found at https://geeo.org. GEEO can be reached seven days a week, toll-free at 1-877-600-0105 between 8 a.m.-8 p.m. CST.

GEEO is offering the following travel programs for 2020:

- **Africa & Middle East**
  - Morocco
  - Egypt
  - Qatar and Oman
  - Jordan
  - Ethiopia
  - Southern Africa

- **Asia & Oceania**
  - Bhutan
  - Japan
  - Vietnam and Cambodia
  - Multi-Stan
  - Bangkok to Hanoi

- **Europe**
  - Iceland
  - Spain
  - Portugal
  - Camino de Santiago
  - Paris to Rome
  - Central Europe
  - Balkans
  - Maldives
  - Budapest to Bulgaria
  - Armenia and Georgia

- **Latin America**
  - Galápagos Islands
  - Chile and Argentina
  - Colombia
  - Peru
  - Bolivia

- All Programs are discounted for teachers
- Personal, responsive customer service. Call us toll free at 1-877-600-0105 9 AM to 9 PM, 7 days a week
- Humanitarian rate airfare access
- Travel with other intellectually curious educators with free curriculum
- Professional development and graduate credit available
- Small tour groups averaging 11 people with a maximum of 16
There are hard truths that we as a nation need to face: Too many middle and high school students don’t read the assigned texts, and some even manage to slip by without having ever read a single book by the time they graduate. As middle and high school reading declines, college professors lament students’ inability to comprehend and analyze complex texts, or even keep up with the volume of reading that higher education requires.

The rest of us are left to wonder: What do we as a society lose when so many high school graduates have no interest in reading anything?

In *Book Love: Developing Depth, Stamina, and Passion in Adolescent Readers*, Penny Kittle took student apathy head on and showed that when students are given books that are right for them, along with the time to read and regular response to their thinking, a pathway to satisfying reading is created that leads to more challenging literature and, ultimately, a love of reading.

The fact remains: There is only one book for every 300 kids living in under served communities in the U.S. Students need books — the right books that they can connect with.

In response to this national crisis, each year the Book Love Foundation funds starter classroom libraries of 250 books. The Foundation’s Board of Directors awards the libraries to passionately committed teachers who aim instruction towards increasing volume, stamina, and joy in reading in middle and high school. Booksource has been a major supporter of the Foundation, providing libraries and covering shipping costs. Heinemann, publisher of Penny’s books including *Book Love*, generously funds one library a year, as do Penny and her husband, Pat.

In the first seven years, the Foundation funded 200 libraries for a total gift of $500,000 to teachers. There are thousands of classrooms that need in-room libraries.

One way the Book Love Foundation funds the grants they offer is with a yearly summer book club. When you sign-up for the book club, you receive four books, some Book Love swag (a tote, notebook, pencil, etc.), and access to an online community and guided discussions. Throughout the summer, you can follow along with the reading and discussion schedule and participate in online discussions with other teachers reading the book club titles.

There is an elementary option and a secondary (middle and high school) option, so teachers of all levels can participate. The book selections usually cover a variety of text types, including one professional development selection, as well.

Last summer, the secondary selections were *We Got This* by Cornelius Minor, *The Red Pencil*, a middle-level verse novel by Andrea Davis, *Still Life with Tornado* by A.S. King, and *Reading with Patrick: A Teacher, a Student, and a Life-Changing Friendship* by Michelle Kuo.

I have participated in the Summer Book Club for the past two summers, and I plan to continue. First, I think it is a great way for me to connect with other teachers throughout the summer. In addition, I like the variety of texts chosen and hearing others’ analysis and ideas about how to use those texts in the classroom through the online discussions. I trust that the title selections are going to be great each year. *We Got This* remains one of the best professional texts I have read, and one that I recommend to all my colleagues. Finally, it’s a great way to support the Book Love Foundation and all the teachers applying for classroom library grants each year. While this is something I would be likely to do anyway, it is nice to get the books, the swag, and connections out of my donation as well.
Looking for a good book?
Check out these titles, shared by the WCTE Board

**Natchez Burning**
By Greg Iles

“Raised in Natchez, Mississippi, Penn Cage learned all he knows of duty from his father, Dr. Tom Cage. But now the beloved family doctor has been accused of murdering the African American nurse with whom he worked in the dark days of the 1960s. Once a crusading prosecutor, Penn is determined to save his father, but Tom, stubbornly invoking doctor-patient privilege, refuses even to speak in his own defense. The first book of a trilogy makes connections between current race issues and civil rights issues of the 1960s.” — **Lynn Aprill**

**This Mortal Coil**
By Emily Suvada

Catarina Agatta is a hacker. She can cripple mainframes and crash through firewalls, but that’s not what makes her special. In Cat’s world, people are implanted with technology to recode their DNA, allowing them to change their bodies in any way they want. And Cat happens to be a gene-hacking genius.

That’s no surprise, since Cat’s father is Dr. Lachlan Agatta, a legendary geneticist who may be the last hope for defeating a plague that has brought humanity to the brink of extinction. But during the outbreak, Lachlan was kidnapped by a shadowy organization called Cartaxus, leaving Cat to survive the last two years on her own.

Now Cat must decide who she can trust: The soldier with secrets of his own? The talented coder, is working with others to find the cure and heal them, but Cartaxus, the leader in healing code does not believe in giving healing code to everyone. Despite the technology, there is a plague that is threatening humanity that no one has able to find the cure for. Catarina, a talented coder, is working with others to find the cure and ultimately her father who was abducted by Cartaxus.” — **Tanya Sponholz**

**The Art of Coaching Teams**
By Elena Aguilar

“This is a great resource for anyone in a team-lead position. Aguilar spends much of the book offering gentle instruction on creating “resilient” teams. In addition to some good coaching for coaches, the book contains some exceptional planning documents and useful checklists.” — **Brad Bryan**

**The Last Lecture**
By Randy Pausch and Jeffrey Zaslow

“When Randy Pausch, a college professor, has been diagnosed with terminal cancer. He puts together his last lecture for the faculty and school — about his life. The book is an extended “lecture” about what he thinks and feels about dying and, more importantly, about living. It is inspirational, informative and motivating. It can help each of us, as well as our family members, live more purposefully and prepare for our death.” — **Linda Barrington**

When Randy Pausch, a computer science professor at Carnegie Mellon, was asked to give [a final] lecture, he didn’t have to imagine it as his last, since he had recently been diagnosed with terminal cancer. But the lecture he gave, ‘Really Achieving Your Childhood Dreams’, wasn’t about dying. It was about the importance of overcoming obstacles, of enabling the dreams of others, of seizing every moment (because time is all you have and you may find one day that you have less than you think). It was a summation of everything Randy had come to believe. It was about living.

In this book, Randy Pausch has combined the humor, inspiration, and intelligence that made his lecture such a phenomenon and given it an indelible form. It is a book that will be shared for generations to come.” — **Goodreads**

Look for more good book recommendations in the spring WCTE Update.

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**January**

**Jan. 31**  
Entry deadline for Student Poetry Contest, Sponsored by the Wisconsin Fellowship of Poets. Go to Guidelines for full submission rules.

**Jan. 31**  
Submission deadline for NCTE Edwyna Wheadon Postgraduate Training Scholarship, which provides funding for professional development experiences for English/Language Arts teachers in public educational institutions. The scholarship supports postgraduate training to enhance teaching skills and/or career development in teaching. [http://www.ncte.org/library/NCTEFiles/Sections/Secondary/Wheadon_Guidelines_and_Application.pdf](http://www.ncte.org/library/NCTEFiles/Sections/Secondary/Wheadon_Guidelines_and_Application.pdf)

**February**

**Feb. 1**  
Early (reduced rate) deadline for registration for Winter Advisers’ Seminar for journalism advisers. **Focus on Broadcast.** Seminar will be at Lake Lawn Resort, March 6-7. Sponsored by the Kettle Moraine Press Association. [https://kempajournalism.org/7648/conferences/winter-advisers-seminar-2020/](https://kempajournalism.org/7648/conferences/winter-advisers-seminar-2020/)

**Feb. 6-8**  
**The Wisconsin State Reading Association** (WSRA) annual convention. For more information: [https://www.wsra.org/](https://www.wsra.org/)

**Feb. 14**  
Online submission deadline for NCTE **Achievement Awards in Writing:** This school-based writing program encourages high school students in their writing and recognizes publicly some of the best student writers in the nation. For 11th grade students. For more information: [http://www2.ncte.org/awards/achievement-awards-in-writing/](http://www2.ncte.org/awards/achievement-awards-in-writing/)

**Feb. 15**  
Online submission deadline for **Promising Young Writers:** This school-based writing program emphasizes the importance of writing skills among eighth-grade students. For more information, see [http://www2.ncte.org/awards/promising-young-writers/](http://www2.ncte.org/awards/promising-young-writers/)

**Feb. 28-29**  
WCTE Board meeting in Stevens Point

**March**

**March 6-7**  
**Winter Advisers’ Seminar** for journalism advisers. Lake Lawn Resort. Sponsored by the Kettle Moraine Press Association.

**March 11**  
Last day for online or mail-in registration for **Conference on College Composition and Communication** (CCCC) convention in Milwaukee March 25-28. [http://cccc.ncte.org/cccc/conv](http://cccc.ncte.org/cccc/conv)

**March 25-28**  
**CCCC Convention,** “Considering Our Commonplaces” in Milwaukee
FOR CLASS >> Linda Barrington

To Kill a Mockingbird walking tour

Linda Barrington teaches at Mount Mary University. When she taught at Wauwatosa East High School, To Kill a Mockingbird was her favorite book, which she taught every year (for 25 years). 

lbarring@wi.rr.com

THIS BROCHURE was created by the Monroe County Heritage Museums.

Monroeville (Ala.) Courthouse, an important setting in To Kill a Mockingbird

A tribute to Atticus Finch in front of the Monroeville Courthouse.
Pavement was scarce and the dirt streets were lined with big oak trees. There were few cars; people used the train to go on trips. The town square was dominated by the 1903 Courthouse with all sorts of businesses surrounding it: a department store, grocery and general mercantile stores, several drug stores with soda fountains, millinery shops, barber shops, the Post Office, a
newspaper office, automobile dealers, hardware stores, doctors and dentists and lawyers, churches, banks, a boarding house, and even residences – all right around this historic old square. Most residences were close in and people could walk to the square for shopping and business matters. You are about to experience the charm and friendliness of this small southern rural town (and we have not changed much!). The walking tour takes about an hour, depending on who you run into. (If you get some good stories, come back and tell us.)

Enjoy yourself...

and y'all come back to see us.

1. **Old Courthouse** (built in 1903) - The Courthouse was the model for the movie based on the Pulitzer Prize-winning book *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee. It is the home of the Monroe County Heritage Museums and the Monroe County Tourism Center.

2. **Monument and Camellia Garden** - Tables and benches were on the courthouse lawn for domino games. The monument, in honor of Atticus Finch, was erected by the Alabama Bar Association.

3. **New Courthouse** - Built in 1963 on the site of an earlier Courthouse (c. 1834, burned about 1928).

4. **West side of Square** - The two-story square building in center of the block was the 1930 jail. The two-story building on the south corner was the Monroe County Bank where Attorney A.C. Lee (Harper Lee's father) had an office. The Monroe Journal, once owned by Harper Lee's father, was located in the two-story building to the right of the old jail.

5. **Katz Dept. Store** - On the corner, it was established by Russian/Jewish immigrants. Look for the mural on the wall.

6. **Thompson's Bakery** - (Two story building) This was a favorite of Truman Capote and fictionalized in *The Grass Harp*.

7. **E. T. Millsap's Mule Barn and Feed Store** - E.T. “Short” Millsap was Probate Judge from 1941 until his death in 1963, the year the new courthouse he commissioned was completed.

8. **South Mt. Pleasant** - Two blocks of houses were built by the leading families in town: Coxwell, Mims, Millsap, Wiggins, Sawyer, Finklea, Sellers, and ending with Sellers' Store, a favorite of the school children.

9. **Schools** - The Elementary and the High Schools, as well as athletic fields, shower house, and the band room encompassed this large block. The Monroeville Elementary School now occupies the site, and budding young authors continue the literary legacy.

10. **Maple St.** - There were three houses on this street. The Roberts, the Rikard (still standing), and the Dennis families lived here. There were no houses on the north side then.

11. **Vanity Fair Mills** - Apparel manufacturer came to town in 1937, changing our economic base from agriculture to industry.

12. **Nu-Modern Cleaners** - A dry cleaners operated on this site. Down Ivey Street, on the railroad to the east, were the Hudson-Mims Gin, Lucian Jones’ Sinclair Refining Co., the Gulf Refining Co. and the Canning Factory for peaches, peas and okra.

13. **Cannon Oil** - Site of the Boulware’s house. The big oak tree was between the house and the school playground.
To Kill a Mockingbird mural in Monroeville, Ala.
FOR TEACHERS

Board members share favorite resources

1 **Quill.org**
   Free tools to make your students better writers. Quill provides free writing and grammar activities for elementary, middle, and high school students. A resource for grammar with pre-made activities/quizzes.

   **Recommended by John Schad**
   I assign this to students as a supplement/assessment to what we do in class. [John teaches at Kohler Middle School.]

2 **Practicing Presence: Simple Self-Care Strategies for Teachers** by Lisa J. Lucas
   The text is a wonderful resource as you try to think about how you respond in moments of high stress in the classroom and in your own life. There are helpful activities that promote mindfulness; ideas to help you assess how you use your time to find personal and professional balance; and suggestions on how you can better notice and reduce negativity, etc. Everything is tied back to applications in the classroom and how you can help your students develop mindfulness to reduce stress in their hectic lives.

   **Recommended by David Roloff**
   I give my students (future teachers) selections to help them manage the increasing pressures they’re facing as they enter the profession; we also discuss how they can integrate some of these same practices with their own students in the future. [David teaches at UW-Stevens Point.]

3 **Glogster**
   Glogster is a Web 2.0 platform that allows users to create interactive online posters called glogs, by adding images, videos, audio and text. As a learner-centered tool, Glogster supports students’ building of knowledge by allowing them to construct their own meaning of the content.

   **Recommended by Marianne Potter**
   Glogster helps me link with my online students. It can easily assist with flipped classrooms. I find it especially helpful with my online students. [Marianne teaches at Stevens Point Area High School.]

4 **SmartBrief Leadership**
   SmartBrief Leadership site lists articles (with links) about leadership in education. Edutopia provides links to news articles related to education.

   **Recommended by Lynn Frick**
   Both sources provide information and instruction for teachers about issues and trends in education, classroom pointers, and help for those with school leadership and coaching responsibilities. [Lynn teaches at Sauk Prairie High School.]

5 **JEA Digital Media**
   This site will help you and your students learn how to write and edit for broadcast, create videos, use multimedia tools, develop advertising, maximize your use of social media, design a website, market your stories, and more. Guides and resources for all aspects of digital publishing are a teacher’s dream.

   **Recommended by Linda Barrington**
   I use it with students to plan our projects and problem solve as we/they develop their stories and learn how to publish through various media. [Linda teaches at Mount Mary University.]