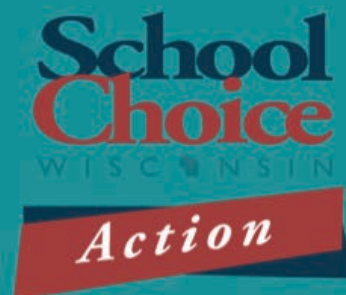
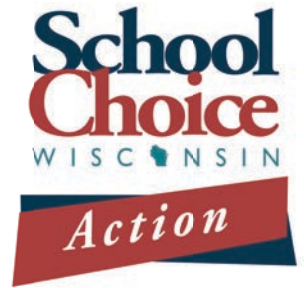


**WISCONSIN
SUPERINTENDENT
OF PUBLIC**

**INSTRUCTION
CANDIDATE SURVEY
2021**



The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction oversees and regulates the education of public and private school students, including those enrolled in charter schools and the state's four Parental Choice Programs. On Tuesday, April 6, Wisconsin voters will elect a new Superintendent of Public Instruction. School Choice Wisconsin Action (SCWA) sent a series of questions to the two candidates about their positions on key education issues impacting public and private schools and their students and families.



The full, unedited questions and answers are reproduced here in their entirety. This information is provided for the purpose of educating voters about the candidates' views on public policy issues. SCWA does not endorse or oppose candidates for public office.

SCWA works to empower families by promoting quality education options for families regardless of their zip code or income through education and advocacy.

Candidates for Superintendent of Public Instruction in Wisconsin



Jill Underly

Superintendent for the
Pecatonica Area School District

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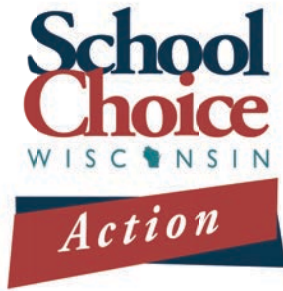


Deb Kerr

Former Superintendent at
School District of Brown Deer

Kerr for Kids
<https://kerr4kids.com/>

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2021 Survey of Candidates for Superintendent of Public Instruction for Wisconsin.

Jill Underly

Deb Kerr

Did not respond

Q) There is an ongoing debate on whether schools should be open for in-person education during a pandemic. Some place a singular focus on COVID community spread, while others take mental health and academic performance into consideration. What is your position?

A) *Open schools five days per week, in person. Parents should have the option to have their kids attend a virtual option. Wisconsin is receiving billions (on top of hundreds of millions) so that schools have the resources to open. Excuses for lack of resources shows the lack of leadership by the status quo DPI.*

Q) Currently, students in Wisconsin receive different levels of funding not based on their needs but on their school type or school district. What are your thoughts on weighted funding and differences in funding by school type or school district?

A) *Wisconsin needs to sit down and review the funding formula for all schools and sectors. I agree with parity in cross sector funding levels. Wisconsin needs to review in a bi-partisan fashion cost drivers such as transportation, special needs, economically disadvantaged, and others to ensure all students in Wisconsin regardless of zip code or school receive a world-class education. We need to stop the political battles between public schools and other sectors. We need to have a funding model which puts all children first.*

Q) *Currently, all families pay taxes into local, state and federal governments for the purpose of education. However, only certain families can gain access to those funds by accessing a certain type of K-12 education delivery system. What role do you believe parents should play in making decisions about how and where families get access to public funding of K-12 education?*

A) *Parental involvement is paramount to a student's academic success. The DPI should not be setting administrative hurdles which hinder educational opportunities. As Superintendent, I will support expanded participation for the trades and other specialty classes. When a community passes a referendum for an autos program, for example, all students who live in that district should have access to the facility provided there is capacity. I would not mandate this; however, I think we can broker collaboration agreements. We need career pathways to success for all students. That's why at Brown Deer I welcomed choice and charter kids to my buildings for courses not offered at their school.*

Q) *Currently, enrollment windows for schools can be open months in advance of a school year but closed near or during the school year. What are your views on modifying the enrollment periods for schools?*

A) *Enrollment periods are a balance between parental choice and school district planning. I support exploring expansion of enrollment periods to ensure parents access to quality education for their children. The enrollment periods should be balanced with the aid formulas so as not to harm any school.*

Q) *The Department of Public Instruction administers Wisconsin's four parental choice programs that currently serve more than 45,000 students. For years, School Choice Wisconsin has had a standing call with DPI to provide the private schools' perspective on regulatory issues. What role, if any, will stakeholder groups play with DPI under your leadership?*

A) *I will appoint a school choice advocate to my cabinet. I will appoint stakeholders from across the education and political spectrum to my cabinet. I will also move the school choice DPI staff to Southeast Wisconsin to be closer to the vast majority of choice students. As DPI Superintendent, my job is to make sure EVERY student regardless of school receives a world-class education.*

Q) *Currently, the funding of the choice program exchanges revenue limits for withheld state aid. Districts count private school students in choice programs in their membership for generating equalized aid. However, the district spreadsheet lists only the withheld aid and does not break out the equalized revenue generated by these students. This leads many districts to erroneously list the revenue limit adjustment as the levy impact. What is your view on getting accurate information out to public districts about the financial impact of private school choice and charter schools?*

A) *I will issue an accurate report each year that follows the law. I would encourage the fiscal bureau to include this correct data in their information papers and budget papers.*

Q) *The REINS Act clarifies the role of legislative review of agency policies and rulemaking authority. How would you address any DPI policies found to be outside the more stringent rule-making process?*

A) *I will follow the REINS act and the rules process set out in Chapter 227 of the statutes. No DPI Superintendent is above the law or legislature. I want to review all administrative rules during my term. We need to make sure administrative rules are written with kids and families in mind, not bureaucrats. We need to make sure administrative rules have kept up with the times and are legal. Furthermore, policies with the enforcement of law or administrative rules should follow the rule making process. Lastly, any guidance documents should be posted to DPI website in an easy to digest format that is easy to access. School leaders and teachers need to spend time educating our kids not trying to figure out what DPI means.*

I want to spend DPI resources educating kids, not responding to lawsuits.

Q) *Since its inception, the private school choice program has increased enrollment. Current law allows for ongoing growth and eventually no enrollment cap at all. How do you view the Superintendent's role as it relates to this enrollment growth?*

A) *The DPI superintendent does not have the authority to change the law. I will follow the law passed by the legislature. Enrollment in these programs will increase only if parents choose to apply and join the program. The DPI superintendent does not have the authority to institute a moratorium - which is a non-starter with the Republican Legislature.*