



# The League of Women Voters

of Appleton, Wisconsin

**February 2005**

Visit our website at [www.lwvappleton.org](http://www.lwvappleton.org)

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## From Karen

### The President's Message

A little light reading this month... This issue of the Bulletin includes consensus questions for our State Education Study. Please read the questions carefully and come to the February 3 meeting at the Appleton Public Library prepared with your concerns and opinions. We have also included a resource guide from the League of Women Voters of Wisconsin with a myriad of options for learning more about this important study. Take the time to check out a few of the resources. Another quick read is included in this Bulletin. It's an edited version of a Voter's Guide to Judicial Elections courtesy of the League of Women Voters of Los Angeles Education Fund. In preparation for the local judicial election in April, I think you'll find this information thought provoking.

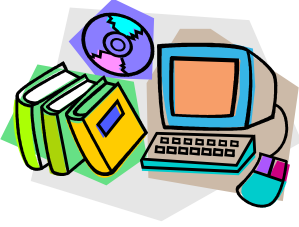
This is a great time of the year to curl up with a good book. In addition to that experience add a little League "light" reading.

Karen

P.S. Only a Leaguer would consider the above "light" reading!!!

### League Calendar

Date	Event	Meeting Place
Thursday, Feb 3 6:00 P.M.	State Education Study Consensus	Appleton Public Library Lower Level Meeting Room
Tuesday, Feb 8 6:00-7:30 P.M.	Appleton LWV Board Meeting	Appleton Public Library Lower Level Meeting Room
Tuesday, Feb 15	Appleton Public School District Referendum, State School Superintendent Primary	



***Consensus Meeting***  
***State Education Study***  
**Thursday, February 3, 6:00 PM**  
**Appleton Public Library**  
**Lower Level Meeting Room**

Consensus questions and some background information are included in this bulletin. Your input is needed for our local League's response to these questions. Additional resources are available on [www.lwwwi.org](http://www.lwwwi.org) Click on State Education Study, Resources, or Consensus Questions. If you are unable to attend and have some individual comments or questions you would like to make, contact Connie Kanitz, 722-6438 or [ckanitz@new.rr.com](mailto:ckanitz@new.rr.com)

## **Observer Corps: League's eyes, ears and face**

Observer Corps volunteers are not only the League's eyes and ears in our community—we are the face of League. When the City of Appleton's Common Council was on the evening news debating a smoking ban, did you recognize any League members in the background? Members took up seats in the first and second rows of the audience and were a visible presence.

Whether it's at a budget hearing at the county level or at a school district board meeting, Appleton League members are there—listening and reporting to the board on issues of importance to us and to our community. Here are just a few highlights we've received from recent observers:

- **Kathy Kamp** attended the Jan. 5 City Council meeting and reported that an Alderperson stated his intention to introduce a resolution that would combine the city's aldermanic and the county's supervisor positions along common boundaries. She also was approached by a judicial candidate asking if the League was planning to sponsor a candidates' forum. She made the League visible.
- **Liz Schneider**, a friend of League, attended the Nov. 22 school board meeting and outlined the three questions on the spring referendum: 1. Upgrade buildings and technology; 2. Lower class sizes and update textbooks and instructional materials; and 3. Expand world languages and the Healthy Kids physical education program at elementary schools. For more information, go to the Appleton Area School District's Web site at: <http://www.aasd.k12.wi.us/> or call the referendum hotline at 832-6109

We **need more volunteers beginning this spring** for meetings of the city council, county board and school board. The more members who participate, the fewer meetings each of us must attend. You can choose the night of the week which works best for you or the unit of government you're most interested in. The commitment involves one or two meetings, with a short form to help you report. You can send the report, e-mail it or just leave a phone message with any items of interest or concern from the meeting.

For more information or to volunteer, contact Nadine Miller at 733-0012 or [nadinemiller@tds.net](mailto:nadinemiller@tds.net). Thanks for being the eyes, ears and face of the Appleton League of Women Voters.

# **LWVWI Education Study 2003-2005 Consensus Questions, November 2004**

## **Virtual Charter Schools and Milwaukee Parental Choice Schools (Private Schools that Students Attend with Public School Vouchers)**

Background: Currently public school districts must file reports with the Department of Public Instruction detailing how much was spent on teachers, administrators, support staff, transportation, etc. Districts must also have a yearly audit of their books. Recently, the Milwaukee Parental Choice schools have been required to file financial reports similar to those filed by the public schools. Districts that contract with a private entity to provide educational services (as has been done in the case of some virtual schools) show only how those funds are used by the district. There is no public accounting of costs/profits by private firms.

The students in K-12 public schools including Virtual charter schools must take the tests required by the state and federal government. Districts must publicize how their students perform by providing a district report card to their community. Students in the Milwaukee Parental Choice program are not required to take any of the state or federal tests – or any other tests. This makes it impossible to track performance of those students whose tuition to private schools is funded through public dollars.

### **Consensus Question:**

1. Should any institution or organization receiving public funds for K-12 education be held to the same requirements as K-12 public schools in

- |   |           |          |
|---|-----------|----------|
| a. accounting for the use of those public funds | yes _____ | no _____ |
| b. performance standards for their students     | yes _____ | no _____ |

## **Home School**

Background: After all states made home schooling legal in the 90's the number of students in home school have grown. In 1999, the federal government estimated the number of students being home schooled to be around 850,000. By 2003, the number is estimated to be between 1.7 and 2.1 million students nation wide, according to data from the National Home Education Research Institute. These numbers are difficult to estimate because each state defines and tracks home school enrollment differently. Many studies of the performance of home-schooled students have been made but all face the problem of no standard assessment given to these students. Many states monitor home-schooled students' educational progress by requiring either a test, portfolio or teacher evaluation. New York, Rhode Island, and Pennsylvania require home-schooled students to take tests and require parents to submit their curriculum for approval as well as undergo professional evaluations. Wisconsin law requires no teacher qualifications, record keeping or testing for home-schooled students. The only requirements for home schooling in Wisconsin are:

- Must provide “at least 875 hours of instruction each year”
- Must provide “a sequentially progressive curriculum of fundamental instruction” in reading, language arts, math, social studies, science, and health; such curriculum need not “conflict with the program’s religious doctrines” and
- Must file a statement of enrollment with the state department of education by October 15 each year.

**Consensus questions:**

2. Should the law be changed so that the Department of Public Instruction requires for the home-schooled student the following:

- a. qualification guidelines for the person providing instruction?    yes \_\_ no \_\_
- b. record keeping of student's learning?                                      yes \_\_ no \_\_
- c. assessment of student's learning on a standardized test?            yes \_\_ no \_\_
- d. enforcement of these requirements should be
  - 1. at the local school district level        yes \_\_ no \_\_
  - 2. at the Department of Public Instruction    yes \_\_\_\_ no \_\_\_\_
  - 3. a shared responsibility of both state and local    yes\_\_ no \_\_

**Charter Schools**

Background: Wisconsin law grants all school boards in the state the authority to create charter schools within their particular district. The state legislature also grants chartering authority to the University of WI-Milwaukee, Milwaukee Area Technical College, The Common Council of the City of Milwaukee, and the University of WI-Parkside. Schools chartered by these entities are called Independent Charters. CESA's (Cooperative Educational Service Agencies) also have chartering authority.

Each Independent Charter school receives a set state aid per student payment. The Department of Public Instruction is directed by the state legislature to proportionally reduce the state aid payment of each school district in the state in the amount needed to fund the Independent Charters. Local districts are allowed to make up the reduction in their state aid by increasing the tax levy in their community.

The entities that are the chartering authority have oversight responsibilities for the charter school. The public school districts in Wisconsin have elected school boards that are accountable to the electorate in their district. The universities and technical schools have appointed boards and no elected officials therefore these independent charter schools lack local public control.

**Consensus question:**

3. Should charter school authority be given only to K-12 public school districts?    yes \_\_\_\_ no \_\_

**Public School Employee Requirements:**

Background: All teachers and administrators of traditional, charter, and virtual schools must meet requirements for a Wisconsin teacher's or administrator's license.

- The charter school license as compared to a traditional Wisconsin Teacher's license allows teachers to teach courses and levels outside the areas of their certification. A 1-year charter school instructional staff permit can be granted upon request to DPI if certain positions cannot be filled, if the applicant has a bachelor's degree in the subject assigned to teach or has proof of mastery in a trade assigned to teach, and takes courses toward certification.
- Teachers and administrators of private voucher schools have no state license requirements.

**Consensus question:**

4. Should employees of Wisconsin schools receiving public funds or educating publicly funded students (including Milwaukee Parental Choice schools ) meet the same state standards as those that are required of all public school employees?    yes \_\_\_\_ no \_\_

## **No Child Left Behind Act**

Background: The NCLB Act is Federal legislation for improving proficiency for all students. It states that by 2013-14 100% of the students score at state-defined proficiency levels on reading and math assessments. Also schools and districts must meet annual targets for the percent of students at or above the proficient level, with those targets rising over time for both all students and for subgroups of students who are poor, speak limited English, have disabilities, or come from racial-or ethnic-minority backgrounds.

Since this is federal legislation state and local leagues can only act on a LWVUS position or national principal with the permission of the national Board of Directors of LWVWU. The committee, therefore, has no consensus questions about this legislation. However a summary report of information from the NCLB survey conducted by local leagues will be posted on the LWVWI web site and sent to each league.

At the national board retreat, the LWVUS board voted to start an LWVUS/LWVEF sponsored list on the impact of NCLB. Members can join the on-line discussion group through the Members Site on [www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org) or by sending an e-mail to [subscribe-lwv-nclb@lists.lwv.org](mailto:subscribe-lwv-nclb@lists.lwv.org).

## **Time for Action**

### **Time for Action**

Way back when...local Leaguers received Time for Action alerts mostly through Bulletin articles or phone call "trees". These action alerts were posted when local, state, or national legislation was facing our elected officials. If the LWV had positions on pending legislation, we encouraged our membership to "take action" by contacting their appropriate elected officials or by supporting direct legislation in other ways.

Now that we're into the 21st Century, we plan to distribute Time for Action alerts via email. Email is more timely and for many of us way more efficient for communicating with our elected officials. Also, email can provide links to websites for background information and also to the appropriate legislators or other action groups.

So far this year, we've received no Time for Action alerts from the state or national Leagues – but when we do, we'll forward them to those of you with email addresses. If you do NOT want to receive action alert emails, please let Jan Quinlan ([quinlanj@lawrence.edu](mailto:quinlanj@lawrence.edu)) know.

### **Local Time for Action**

LWV-Appleton wants to alert you that NOW is the Time for Action on an important local issue. Our support positions on education clearly support the February 15 Appleton Area School District's referendum. Karen de Young and Jan Quinlan are composing a formal letter from our local league to the Post-Crescent stating the reasons we support the referendum.

What can you do?

- \* Become informed by visiting the AASD website at: <http://www.aasd.k12.wi.us> or the citizen's action group at: <http://www.strongereducation.com/>
- \* Join the volunteers calling voters to urge their support - the citizen's action group website provides you with information on how to do this.
- \* Vote YES on February 15

# Trust Agreements for the LWVWI Endowment Funds

Note: The Board of the LWV of Appleton approved publication of this letter in its Bulletin.

To: LWVWI Members

From: Mary Jo Tietge (former LWVWI President), Dotty Juengst (original Endowment Fund Trustee),  
Barbara Hoffman (former LWVWI Treasurer) and Jan Quinlan

Re: Trust Agreements for the LWVWI Endowment Funds

In 1995 the biennial convention of the League of Women Voters of Wisconsin established endowment funds for the State League and for the State League Education Fund. Their purpose was to insure the financial stability of the State League and its Education Fund, and to provide a vehicle for gifts other than cash. These funds were specifically not to compete for local or national contributions. Subsequently, because of the apprehensions of the local Leagues, trusts were established to protect the integrity of the two Endowment Funds.

Recently the current State Board rescinded the two trust agreement. This action was disturbing because none of the women participating in this vote had ever contributed in any way to the funds nor did they communicate their intentions to anyone outside the Board, neither to the donors nor to anyone who had worked on the project. This was a breach of trust, not only the financial trusts, but also between the donors and the state organization.

We feel that the Board's action was improper and that it should be set aside until it can be brought to the 2005 convention for action. At the least, the Trusts should be reestablished or their contributions returned to the donors.



## Changes to the Appleton LWV Directory

### **New Member**

Teri VanLieshout                      Tel: 920-830-7814  
709 E. Brewster Street              Email: [jjvanlieshout@yahoo.com](mailto:jjvanlieshout@yahoo.com)  
Appleton, WI 54911

### **Telephone**

Susan and Dan Alger, 731-5048

### **Email**

Cheryl Barnes – [cherylb@pcec.coop](mailto:cherylb@pcec.coop)  
Winnie Doxie - [mapsolutions@athenet.net](mailto:mapsolutions@athenet.net)  
Carolyn Mewhorter - [mewhorter@sbcglobal.net](mailto:mewhorter@sbcglobal.net)

The edited version of a [Voter's Guide to Judicial Elections](#) courtesy of the League of Women Voters of Los Angeles Education Fund, mentioned in Karen de Young's message, will appear in the March issue of this Bulletin.



## *Lively Issues*

Determined Leaguers battled unplowed streets to meet for a small but productive meeting of Lively Issues on January 22nd.

President Karen deYoung suggested that Jan Quinlin review items from the general meeting where League members reviewed our current positions. Suggestions brought forth ideas for looking into regionalization reviews of our positions on billboard control and recycling but members felt most strongly about the need to re-examine our education positions.

Present members voted to recommend reviewing our current educational positions with an eye towards comparisons to the current state education study and issues related to No Child Left Behind legislation.

President Karen de Young shared an upcoming opportunity for our League to participate in a state project called "Women Equal Prosperity" in which Barbara Lawton is inviting teams of League members to come to Madison in March to attend a conference on encouraging and training women to run for office. Last year our League chose to study why more women or other qualified candidates do not run for office and our local study never quite got off the ground. Members felt this project would be a good opportunity to address and proceed with last year's recommendation. Membership committee members had planned on organizing a membership activity based on this topic and supported having our own League send a team to Madison to participate in this project.

Discussion then turned to recommendations for study for our state League. Items suggestion were election voting procedures and continuation of the current education study. A vote was taken and our League suggested that the state continue the current education study, as we felt it needs more details to address No Child Left Behind legislation and financing.

## **League visits Wisconsin Connections Academy**

On January 19, nine League members visited Wisconsin Connections Academy, Appleton's virtual school and one of the 9 charter schools of Appleton. It has 9 teachers, a part-time psychologist, and a speech and language clinician. There are about 380 students (26 are from Appleton).

Students come from districts all across Wisconsin; however, they appear to be clustered in population centers of Wisconsin. 75% of the students have formerly had some home schooling. The other 25% is a mixture of students with special needs, such as a debilitating illness, a few students focused on gymnastics, students from the public schools who have not been able to succeed in a regular public school setting, and other students with a variety of needs. Whereas Wisconsin has very few requirements for home schooled students, the virtual school brings more accountability with reaching these students.

A virtual school differs from a cyber school because learning does not take place entirely on the computer. Each student has a computer, but it mainly is a way to communicate with the center. Students use the computer for some research, etc, but they use regular textbooks far more than the computer. Virtual students are required to take the same standardized tests as other students in public schools.

League members learned additional information including teacher certification, ways socialization needs are met, curriculum, interaction between teachers, parents, and students, what seems to be working well and what remains a challenge, how the academy coordinates with some public school programming, and some feedback from the parents, public, and participating school districts.

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*State Education Study*  
**Thursday, February 3, 6:00 PM**  
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