

BOC and COD Notes from 8/14/13 Meetings

1. **2013-2014 School Year Theme:** *“You have the words of eternal life” John 6:68b*”

2. **Elected to serve on Luther High School Board of Control:**

Pastor Wassermann, Mt. Calvary, LaCrosse

Mr. Chris Avila, St. Matthew, Stoddard

Mr Dan Kinstler, St. Paul’s, Bangor

Mr. Kyle Rupprecht, St. John’s, Lewiston

3. **Board of Control Organization**

Board Chairman: Pastor Shawn Arndt, Good Shepherd, Holmen

Board Vice-Chairman: Pastor Andrew Schultz, St. John’s, Barre Mills

Board Secretary: Mr. Dan Kinstler, St. Paul’s, Bangor

Board Treasurer: Mr. Kyle Rupprecht, St. John’s, Lewiston

4. **Board of Control Committees**

Building and Grounds Committee

Mr. Paul Albrecht, First Lutheran, Lacrosse (Chairman)

Mr. Dan Kinstler, St. Paul’s, Bangor

Pastor Christian Christenson, First Lutheran, LaCrescent

Mr. Travis Zenke, St. John’s, Nodine

Education Committee

Mr. Mark Kutz, St. John’s, Nodine (Chairman)

Pastor Shawn Arndt, Good Shepherd, Holmen

Pastor Robert Wassermann, Mt. Calvary, LaCrosse

Mr. Chris Avila, St. Matthew’s, Stoddard

Finance Committee

Mr. Kyle Rupprecht, St. John’s, Lewiston (Chairman)

Mr. Charlie, Handy, First Lutheran, LaCrosse

Mr. Bruce Jentz, Immanuel, LaCrosse

Pastor Andrew Schultz, St. John’s, Barre Mills

5. **Gratitude:** Special thanks to Mr. Jon Hahm and Dr. Gregg Henckel for their faithful service on the Board of Control.

6. **Synod Convention Bible Translation Resolutions:** The recent Synod convention passed a resolution not to adopt the NIV 2011 for synodical publications, preferring instead to allow Northwestern Publishing House to use whatever translation judged to be best for any given project. Delegates also decided that a new translation of the Bible would not be done as a synodical project.

7. **Bible Translation at Luther High School:** Luther High School's mission is to serve the congregations of the LHS association. Because that is true, the Luther High Religion Department is reluctant to make any decisions about a specific translation of the Bible for use in the religion classes and worship life of Luther High. What this means for the congregations of our association and parents of future Luther students is this: Without further direction from the Synod (at least 2 years away), Luther High will work with students who are using a number of different translations (some have called this the "eclectic" approach.) Some of our association congregations may choose to use different translations and Luther High School recognizes that there are several solid translations available. We will look for direction from the pastors and congregations of our association for future decisions on the translation matter. For memory work, the religion teachers will provide a print out of the passages, possibly using several different translations, by determining which translation well conveys the Biblical truth being taught. As this matter is a work in progress Luther High School will survey the association congregations for further input and will also include this as part of the discussion for Pastors' Day.
8. **Pastors' Day – November 7** This year Pastors' Day has been scheduled for Thursday, November 7. The focus for our discussion with the Pastors will be Bible translations at Luther High School.
9. **Chapel Auditorium:** The Building Committee summary of the three open forums (faculty and two association) to the committee on July 16. The recommendation of the committee to the Board and ultimately the COD is to form a long range master plan committee with representation from all LHS association congregations.. Responsibilities of this committee are:
 1. Assess the use of the present building room by room,
 2. the immediate and long term maintenance needs and costs of the present building,
 3. the estimated energy and maintenance costs for proposed additions, and
 4. integration of the proposed addition(s) with the old building.
 5. The committee would make its initial report to the COD at its February meeting.
10. **Church Mutual Insurance:** Luther High School will no longer be providing supplemental medical insurance for injuries related to athletics. .
11. **ALHS Chapel/Auditorium Visits**– Several faculty visited Fox Valley, Kettle Moraine, Wisconsin Lutheran College, Cedarburg High School and the La Crosse Community Theater auditoriums to research ideas for Luther's own Chapel/Auditorium. Many ideas were incorporated into a proposed plan by the faculty.
12. **Projectors Installed** – This summer the Band, Choir, & Board Rooms had projectors installed.
13. **Internet upgrades** – faster Internet has been installed to accommodate the increase of computers used in the classrooms

14. **Skyward** – Server was moved offsite to a secure host. Security, backups and updates will now be handled by the host company.
15. **Laptops** – Several variations of laptops will be deployed this Fall into the classrooms. Some that will allow an entire class to each have a laptop and some with just a few that can be shared.
16. **BYOD – Bring Your Own Device** is a proposal to have the students each bring their own electronic devices instead of one being provided by Luther. The faculty is discussing the pros and cons and will work toward a recommendation in the future.
17. **Summer Improvements:**
 - A. Choir room lighting completed. Waiting for final billing and rebate.
 - B. Carpet in Pastor Bilitz' room replaced with epoxy (\$4535.23 cell tower).
18. **Softball Field:** Mr. Ross has raised money to put underground irrigation on the softball fields. This was an approved wish list item. Paul Albrecht and Keith met with Mr. Ross and the installer to go over the layout of the project. The well will supply the water. Volunteers also added a warning track to the varsity field.

Conference of Delegates Meeting
Wednesday, November 13, 2013
7:30 PM

Conference of Delegates Meeting Agenda

1. **Opening Devotion** Chairman, Pastor Shaun Arndt
2. **Minutes** Secretary, Mr. Dan Kinstler

3. **Mission Statement Review**

We assist parents and area WELS congregations in training their children in the Lord by keeping Christ in high school education.

Therefore, Luther High School will:

1. faithfully proclaim and apply the Word of God through the teaching of classes, life skills, and activities in accordance with the Lutheran Confessions.
2. promote spiritual growth and maturity through the proper use of God's Law and Gospel.
3. encourage and train students to share their faith throughout their lives whether in personal or public ministry.
4. instill a desire for knowledge, understanding and wisdom while taking "every thought captive and making it obedient to Christ."
(2 Corinthians 10:5)

4. **Finance Committee Report** Mr. Kyle Rupprecht & Mrs. Nancy Rieck
5. **Principal's Report** Mr. Paul Wichmann
6. **Education Committee Report** Mr. Mark Kutz
7. **Luther High Foundation Report** Mr. Jim Mendell
8. **Ministry of Christian Giving Report** Mr. Harry Mears
9. **Building and Grounds Committee Report** Mr. Paul Albrecht
10. **Friends of Luther / Good Steward Store Report** Pastor Roger Sachs
10. **Old Business** –
 WI School Choice Program (Voucher)
11. **New Business**
 A. Faith, Black River Falls request to join LHS Association
 B. Master Planning Committee update
12. **Adjournment** with Lord's Prayer

Principal's Report
Conference of Delegates Meeting
November 13, 2013

“Lord God. Our Maker and Preserver, our hearts overflow with gratitude for the blessings you have showered upon us. Your mercies are new every morning, great is your faithfulness.”

Among those blessings are:

Knight for a Night 48 seventh graders of our association attended this September 20th. . Food, fund and fellowship are all part of this special evening. After playing some mixer games, the seventh graders enjoy a brat, hot dog or hamburger prepared by the Friends of Luther grill masters. They were part of the crowd that cheered on our Luther Knights football team in their game against Westby. Pastor Bodden concluded the evening with a devotion around a bon fire in the north parking lot.

Open House Evening– On October 18, families with students in grades 5-8 had an opportunity to learn more about Luther High School at our annual Open House. Those present learned about courses, activities, and many other aspects of “life at Luther.” Your continuing encouragement of these students is an integral part of promoting our high school.

Grandparents' Day –Over 200 grandparents were present for this event on October 18. Their day at Luther began with a continental breakfast, followed by being fed with the Word at chapel. Their morning included visiting two classes with their grandchildren and was capped off with entertainment by the Sound Foundation. We are grateful for the Moms who helped plan and serve the breakfast. Special thanks also to Kwik Trip for supplying the food and to River City Lawnscape for the potted mums to beautify the tables. The National Honor Society organizes this event.

Children's Theater This year the Drama Department performed the play “Pinocchio” One hundred twenty-five attended the public performance on Sunday, October 27. Six hundred students from the lower grades of Lutheran elementary schools attended their special performance on Monday, October 28.

Board Visitation Day - The Board visited classes on Tuesday, October 15. Each year the Board has occasion to discuss the curriculum of one of the academic departments or the various co-curricular activities. This year the Foreign Language Department and Social Studies Department provided an overview of current course offerings and reported on recommended curriculum changes. The Education Committee report details those changes.

5th Grade Science Day - Mr. Schibbelhut and several Luther High students shared scientific activities with our 5th grade guests on Friday, November 8.

Veterans' Day – Luther High School will have a special Veterans' Day program from 9:45-11:15 AM, on November 11. This year's program will focus on helping our wounded and disabled service men and women..

School Accreditation – Notification of continuing accreditation with WRISA (Wisconsin Religious and Independent School Accreditation) has been received. LHS has also been approved for accreditation for 2013-14 school year by WELSAA (Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran School Accrediting Association) and NCPSA (National Council Private School Accreditation) .

International Student Application Host Family Needed: Luther High School has received a request from an international student to enroll beginning with the second semester. The student is female and will be a freshmen. Initially housing is needed for the second semester. It also possible that this student may desire to continue her education at Luther beyond her freshmen year. The host family does receive financial compensation for housing and will also receive a tuition assistance grant, which can be used for your student, a relative, or designated for the general tuition assistance fund.

If you are able to provide room and board for a Luther High School student for the second semester (January-May) of this current school year or if you have further questions, please contact Mr. Wichmann at 783-5435 ext 100

Enrollment To date we have received 5 freshmen applications for 2014-15 . Very preliminary projection for next year's freshmen class is upper 50's to low 60's. best guess is 61. Pool of 107. 53% average would be 57. Current enrollment is 272 (73 seniors)

**Conference of Delegates
B&G Report
November 13, 2013**

- A. Server Room:** Once again on a Sunday the air conditioner went down for the server room. The problem finally manifested itself in the compressor failing to start. We did a temporary fix and then had the 1.5 ton unit replaced with a 2 ton unit. The air handler is able to accommodate the larger unit and the increased cooling will take care of future demands. Cost was \$1855 (Lenox - 5 year warranty).
- B. Choir Room Lighting:** Focus on Energy rebate was \$340.37. Our final cost for the project was \$794.24.
- C. Bottle Filler Fountains:** The family of Pastor Beckendorf has designated memorial money for a water bottle filler station in the new gym. They will also help fund one for the commons area.
- D. Football Lights:** The circuit breaker for the northwest pole tripped during the second quarter of the Viroqua game September 27. The lights came back on when the breaker was reset and stayed on the remainder of the game. Ron Klich inspected the breaker and found no apparent damage. Since a new breaker is \$500 and the next varsity home game is not until October 18, we will use the two C football games and two Jr. Knights evening practices, which will be before the next varsity game, to test the breaker. No continued problem.
- E. Hot Lunch:** We have received positive comments about the quality of the food and the selection and have had a daily average of 170-180 students. The amount of wasted food has reduced significantly and the tenor in the lunch room is more pleasant. Breakfast, so far, has been barely at the break even point: too few participants to cover the labor cost. Because the students that opt for breakfast enjoy it and need it, we will do our best to continue to accommodate them. Best estimates, we are running in the black.
- F. Carpet Donation:** St Paul, Tomah, got a super price on a large quantity of carpet squares and gave us the extras to replace the carpeting in Mr. Wichmann's office. We thank them for the donation.

November 13, 2013
Conference of Delegates Agenda

Education Committee Report

Mr. Mark Kutz

- A. **Wish List** – approved the 2013-14 wish list.
- B. **Weekly Website Updates** – An increased effort is being made to provide more timely updates to the website and to include more of the events and activities in which our students participate.
- C. **2014-15 Calendar** – Start/days off/end of 2014-15 calendar has been approved. A more detailed calendar will be available in late May/early June.
- D. **Social Studies & World Language Dept Curriculum Changes** –the following curriculum changes from the Social Studies & World Language Depts were approved by the BoC for the next school year.
 1. **Replace the elective 1 semester Elements of Social Studies with an elective yearlong course AP Psychology** AP Psychology course would essentially take the place of the current course Elements of Social Studies. The three main branches of social studies covered in that course are Psychology, Sociology, and Economics. Much of the economics material is covered in Consumer Education. Psychology and sociology go hand in hand. This will be a great opportunity for Luther High School to add another Advanced Placement course to our curriculum to assist our students as they move on to college.
 2. **Move the required 1 semester Sophomore Civics course to the Sr year and change the name to Government** The curriculum of Civics (currently required of sophomores) and Government (currently an elective for juniors and seniors) are nearly mirror images of each other. The teaching of government and its application would be more age appropriate for seniors in high school. As the sophomore year course of study has six required courses, this will afford greater opportunities to take electives during that year. Other area Lutheran high schools require government for seniors.
 3. **Offer two semesters of World Geography** Geography is currently one semester course for sophomores it has been extremely challenging to cover all of the material and continents in the World. We have traditionally been covering only the Western Hemisphere. With the proposed plan, we will offer two semesters of World Geography. Only one of those semesters would be a requirement. The other semester could be used as a Social Studies elective. Students would be able to choose which course they would be able to take as the “required” one. Students would not be required to take both.

4. German 1 and German 2 will no longer be offered Enrollment in German has been very low. This language is no longer a prerequisite for pastoral track studies at MLC. German is also offered through the Area Lutheran High School Online program. Students still wishing to take the class may opt to join ALHSO (Area Lutheran High School Online). Enrollment in Spanish continues to increase

- E. **ALHSO** – Continuing to provide feedback to ALHSO (Online WELS high school courses) administration and promoting classes through the Advisors to Luther students. Classes offered continue to increase. Website is www.alhso.org
- F. **Laptops** – Laptops have been deployed into a few classrooms, some that will allow an entire class to each have a laptop and some with just a few that can be shared. A recent survey of area public schools, area Lutheran Elementary Schools and Area Lutheran High Schools indicated a strong trend that schools already have or are beginning to move to a 1:1 computing environment where each student has a computing device (laptop, Chromebook, iPad, etc.) Implementation and funding of this initiative at Luther is still in the planning stages. Potential cost would be approximately \$75 per student per year.
- G. **Developing Formal Faculty Continuing Education Policy** – The Board of Control is currently evaluating what both Synod is recommending and what other ALHSs have for continuing education policies.
- H. **Bible Translation Consideration** - Luther High School's mission is to serve the congregations of the LHS association. Because that is true, the Luther High Religion Department is reluctant to make any decisions about a specific translation of the Bible for use in the religion classes and worship life of Luther High. For memory work, the religion teachers will provide a print out of the passages, possibly using several different translations, by determining which translation well conveys the Biblical truth being taught.

Task Force on Lutheran Schools

Floor Committee #14

The WELS school as an outreach tool

Perhaps one of the most significant issues facing our schools is whether or not to use the school as a tool to assist the congregation with its outreach and evangelism efforts; or determining how to be an outreach-minded school if that is what they have determined they want to do. Most (but not all) agree that early childhood programs are appropriate outreach and evangelism tools, but there is significant debate about the role of the Lutheran elementary school in this work (and the Lutheran high school as well).

We strongly advise against a system that enrolls children from outside of our fellowship without any "leg work" being done in advance with every interested family. From the point of view of prospective families, they're just looking for a good school—a service (whether they're in the invisible church or not). They want to make sure there are good academics, a safe campus, well-behaved students, healthy parent involvement, and many other attributes. If our schools don't take the time and energy with every searching family on an individual basis, it is no wonder problems arise. Then, as these problems arise, word spreads, and the concept of using the school as an outreach tool gets a black eye.

The role of the principal

The following comes from the synod's Continuing Education for Called Workers Committee:

We recommend doing a 180 on our view of the principal, seeing him first and foremost as a school leader, not as a teacher who also has been tasked with school administrative duties. Rather than saying we need to "free him" up to do some administrative work, we need to see him as being first and foremost the school leader and that he does some teaching as is necessary and appropriate. The principal must have the time resources to be able to manage well the responsibilities that fall to him and to be the forward moving servant working toward achieving the plans of the congregation as they relate to the school. If the majority of his time and energy is spent as a teacher—a calling that also has many pressures and responsibilities—how can he be effective at both? We won't get into the negative impact on health, personal well-being, and family.

Funding WELS schools

God's people want to share all of his truths, including teaching Christian stewardship principles. As Christian stewardship principles are taught, and as the Word of God works in people's hearts, the response of gifts of time, talents, and treasures is the fruit that appears. With that truth in mind, we also realize that operating high quality Lutheran schools is expensive; this is no secret to the many congregations who struggle with this issue on a regular basis. A logical place to begin addressing this issue would be in view of the overall ministry plans of the church. Ministry priorities arise out of ministry plans. If the school is to serve a significant role in the nurture, outreach, and evangelism efforts of the congregation, and if it is to offer excellence in Christ-centered education, then the school will be viewed as a priority. Rather than seeing the school in terms of "cost," members will view it as an "investment."

Third source funding

A debate-arousing topic in WELS is third source funding. This is another concept that can mean a lot of different things, depending on how one defines it. For the sake of this document, we will consider third source funding as any school support that is not from member offerings or school tuition.

We advise against making the blanket statement: "We must accept no third source funding." Rather, church and school leaders are to be "innocent as doves yet shrewd as serpents" when it comes to third source funding. Each scenario or source of funding needs to be considered independently. Questions need to be asked, such as:

- Will this affect our thankful offerings or could this be all the more reason to give thanks and give more to the Lord?
- Is the source of funding (e.g. government or foundation) given with any strings attached'!
- If we receive government funding, will the government put any restrictions on our teachings and practice?
- Can this gift be received while still maintaining a focus that the school is supported as a ministry of the church (i.e. by offerings and/or tuition)?
- Will this funding lead to dependency upon it?

To be sure, third source funding needs to be considered *very* carefully and cautiously. However, to assert that all third source funding is wrong or sinful would be unwise and not supportable by Scripture. There are descriptive passages of Scripture to guide us in such manners, but not necessarily prescriptive passages of Scripture.

We urge each congregation to discuss its current funding model and rationale for using it. Analyze tradition through the lens of Scripture. If-after discussion, study, and prayer-leaders conclude that no changes are needed, they will still receive benefit from having gone through the process of self-analysis. They may find, though, that they can reshape their funding model to better serve their overall congregational ministry plan.

PARENTAL CHOICE: IMPLICATIONS FOR WELS SCHOOLS

WELS SCHOOLS UNIFIED BUT UNIQUE

Each and every WELS congregation/school and its members are united in faith and in the desire to carry out Christ's Great Commission in accordance with His word. Though united in faith and purpose, the ministries of these congregations are unique. The varied geographical, social, economic, and cultural contexts of ministry require unique practices that are specially suited to each congregation. Because of this, the issue of parental choice is one that each WELS congregation/school must consider within our common faith and within the unique circumstances of its ministry.

GOVERNMENT AID AND THE CHURCH

In exercising their concern for children's education, the government provides services to non-public schools which include:

- Tax-exempt status;
- Free transportation between the child's home and the school;
- Subsidized school lunch programs; and
- Financial assistance to students.

Nowhere does the Bible forbid the church to accept such assistance. Every program - governmental or private - requires careful examination to determine whether it is beneficial and wise to accept (I Corinthians 6:12).

GOVERNMENT AID AND THE WELS

The WELS synodical conventions in 1963, and 1967, addressed the subject of government aid to schools. The 1967 synodical resolution stated:

it needs to be borne in mind that actions and decisions in just this realm call for very cautious and discerning judgment in order that in the handling of these adiophora neither the interests of the church or the state may actually suffer. Also here particularly is it vital to heed the admonition of I Cor. 6:12: "All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient; all things are lawful unto me, but I will not be brought under the power of any."

One would be hard-pressed to state categorically that all government aid per se is wrong or contrary to the clear teachings of Scripture.

It is necessary for us to study all government aid programs with all their stated implications carefully.

We urge all our church supported schools to heed the warnings to 1) avoid any aid that would hinder our Christian schools from carrying out their objectives, 2) avoid any aid that would lead to dependency upon the government and would undermine our Christian stewardship, 3) avoid any aid that would bring with it improper government control, and 4) avoid any aid that would jeopardize our unified Christian education.

The church's use of governmental support for the education of children is an adiaphoron. It is, however, still wise to adhere to the guidelines established by the 1967 synodical convention. Accepting financial support from the government is acceptable if:

- It does not hinder us from carrying out our objectives;
- It does not lead to financial dependency on the government;
- It does not undermine our Christian stewardship;
- It does not bring improper government control; or
- It does not jeopardize our unified Christian education.

MILWAUKEE PARENTAL SCHOOL CHOICE PROGRAM

The Court also ruled that the program does not violate the Wisconsin State Constitution because it operates primarily to the benefit of the children, not religious schools.

Community and WELS Response

Surveys evaluating the program revealed:

- High levels of parent and student satisfaction with the program;
- Increased parental involvement at participating schools; and
- Improved discipline and attendance.

During the 1998-99 school year, St. Marcus Lutheran School was the only WELS school to participate in the MPSCP. In 1999-2000, Beautiful Savior Lutheran School became the second WELS school to participate. Leaders from both schools indicate that the program enabled more children to attend their schools and did not interfere in the manner in which the schools carried out their ministries. Both schools report that the MPSCP enabled them to bring the Gospel to children and families who would not have heard it otherwise.

Approximately 250 students enrolled in these seven schools are receiving MPSCP vouchers. Of these students, approximately 50% are not WELS members.

BANE OR BLESSING

Parental choice programs can be a bane or a blessing. They can undermine or expand the school's gospel-centered mission. The questions posed in 1967 still apply today:

1. Does it hinder us from carrying out our objectives?
2. Does it lead to financial dependency on the government?
3. Does it undermine our Christian stewardship?
4. Does it bring improper government control?
5. Does it jeopardize our unified Christian education?

CONCERN:

Enrollment on a Random Selection Basis

The requirement that pupils be enrolled on a random selection basis raised concerns that children of congregational members applying for admission under the provisions of the MPSCP might not be enrolled through the random selection process.

RESPONSE:

The law allows schools to increase the number of available "slots" for MPSCP vouchers; thus, allowing additional children entry into the program if the school so desires.

Establishing a tuition assistance program for children of low-income members not chosen via "random selection" eliminates concerns regarding the exclusion of these children from the school.

● **CONCERN:**

School's Religious Mission Challenged

The ability of the school to carry out its religious mission would be challenged if pupils were able to "opt out" of religious classes.

RESPONSE:

The experience of schools participating in the MPSCP demonstrates that parents choosing a religious school do so with the expressed desire to have their children enroll in and participate in the religious classes and activities.

A careful explanation of the school's purpose, objectives, and curriculum prior to enrollment will help parents choose the appropriate school for their children. Mutual understanding and agreement by both parents and teachers prior to enrollment minimize the risk of the "religious opt-out" clause.

The school and its teachers would need to faithfully integrate instruction in God's Word into every aspect of the curriculum.

● **CONCERN:**

Reporting and Financial Auditing Regulations

The reporting and financial auditing regulations require time and skills for financial bookkeeping beyond the ability of most congregational and school leaders.

RESPONSE:

The increased revenue from the vouchers can provide adequate administrative support to take care of the additional reporting and financial audits. Additional part-time staff may be hired to handle these responsibilities.

Bookkeeping procedures have been clearly established and carefully laid out to assist school administrators with compliance.

● **CONCERN:**

Risk of Becoming Financially Dependent

Schools that receive significant financial support through parental choice vouchers place themselves at risk of becoming financially dependent upon a source of income that is not dependable. Political changes may bring unacceptable regulations or completely eliminate the program.

RESPONSE:

Congregations are encouraged to ask: 1) What portion of the school's budget is supported by the program? 2) What provisions are made to support the school if the program is discontinued?

Participating congregations would be wise to establish an endowment fund into which they place all or a part of the money previously budgeted for the support of the school. This fund would then be available in the event that they discontinued participation in the program.

CONCLUSION

Parental choice offers great opportunities for WELS schools interested in an outreach ministry to the low-income residents of their community. We must be pro-active to grasp the opportunities which God gives to us to reach out to others with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Failure to seize the moment may cause schools to be isolated from the people within their community. A careful consideration of the issues and opportunities presented through parental choice may open the school house doors to hundreds of children- saved by the blood of Jesus- who are now ignorant of the saving gospel.

It is also important for school leaders to be vigilant. We must be vigilant so that our schools do not rush to solve their financial challenges with private or governmental "hand-outs." It could be easy for our schools to be unaware of the growing danger until it's too late. School leaders need to have a clear understanding of their school's purpose and be vigilant in analyzing participation in parental choice programs in light of that purpose.

How appropriate is the dual prayer voiced in the hymn: "God's Word is Our Great Heritage." May we both spread the light of God's Word from age to age and keep its teachings pure throughout all generations. May God give us the wisdom to make decisions regarding participation in parental choice programs in a manner that enables us to spread the light of His Word more effectively while maintaining its purity for future generations.

ISSUES RELATED TO EDUCATIONAL CHOICE

Presented to: The WELS Commission on Parish Schools
September 25, 1992
by John M. Brenner

I. The School Choice Proposals

The Supreme Court has constructed three tests for "establishment clause" cases, under which the challenged legislation must satisfy each. The legislation:

- 1) Must serve a secular legislative purpose;
- 2) In its "primary effect" must neither advance nor inhibit religion; and
- 3) Must not foster an "excessive entanglement" between government and religion.

II. Biblical Principles

The Two Kingdoms

In order to provide for the welfare of His people God has established two separate and distinct kingdoms, namely, the church and the state. The church and state differ from each other both in their function or sphere of activity and the tools or means God has given them to carry out their work.

III. Synodical History and Past Resolutions

1963 -- Statement RE Federal Aid to Church-Related Schools

But the overriding concern "that such assistance invites the intrusion of the State into an area not assigned to it by God...." is still valid today.

Nevertheless, it needs to be borne in mind that actions and decisions in just this realm call for very cautious and discerning judgment in order that in the handling of these adiaphora neither the interests of the church or the state may actually suffer. Also here particularly is it vital to heed the admonition of 1 Cor. 6:12: "All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient; all things are lawful unto me, but I will not be brought under the power of any."¹⁶

The Supplementary Statement urged continued study, particularly in regard to state aid to students (scholarships & loans) and recommended avoiding the acceptance of governmental aid in regard to facilities until the Supreme Court had the opportunity to review such aid.

The 1967 convention endorsed both statements of the Advisory Committee on Education and resolved,

That we urge all our church supported schools to heed the warnings to 1) avoid any aid that would hinder our Christian schools from carrying out their objectives, 2) avoid any aid that would lead to dependency upon the government and would undermine our Christian stewardship, 3) avoid any aid that would bring with it improper government control, and 4) avoid any aid that would jeopardize our unified Christian education.¹⁸

IV. Questions To Be Considered

We have seen that it is not necessarily wrong for the church to receive financial support from the government for the education of children. Whether it is wise to accept that support depends on a number of factors. We will want to set our political views aside and make our decision on the basis of the pertinent scriptural principles. Our Wisconsin Synod constituency will not be united in their political views and should not be expected to be.

The guidelines for accepting such support as contained in the 1967 synodical resolution are still valid. That resolution urged our schools to avoid state aid: 1) if it would hinder us from carrying out our objectives; 2) if it would lead to financial dependency on the government or undermine our Christian stewardship; 3) if it would bring with it improper government control; 4) if it would jeopardize our unified Christian education.

Is School Choice the Right Choice For WELS Schools? Paper by James Hoogervorst (12/28/04) Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary

In the document *This We Believe*, the WELS has made this statement concerning church/state relations:

4. We believe that the proper relation is preserved between the church and the state only when each remains within its divinely assigned sphere and uses its divinely entrusted means. The church should not exercise civil authority nor interfere with the state as the state carries out its responsibilities. The state should not become a messenger of the gospel nor interfere with the church in its preaching mission. The church should not attempt to use the civil law and force to lead people to Christ. The state should not seek to govern by means of the gospel. On the other hand, the church and state may cooperate in an endeavor as long as each remains within its assigned place and uses its entrusted means.
6. We reject any attempt by the state to restrict the free exercise of religion.
7. We reject any views that look to the church to guide and influence the state directly in the conduct of its affairs.
8. We reject any attempt on the part of the church to seek the financial assistance of the state in carrying out its saving purpose.

Pastor Daniel Deutschlander, professor emeritus of Martin Luther College, in his book *Civil Government, God's Other Kingdom* made this comment specific to state aid to schools:

“the church needs to exercise the greatest caution when accepting any kind of support from the state for her schools. No hard and fast rule can be made about the acceptance of aid for students or aid to schools. But those who imagine such aid comes without a price tag may well be in for a rude surprise. But the power of the purse is the power to rule and regulate. If the government gives aid, the government assumes a right to regulate where and how that aid is used.”²⁵

Would participation in MPCP dangerously combine the work of the church and state?

Would participation in MPCP be an inappropriate seeking of government financial assistance? Would participation in MPCP mean schools would have to compromise their teachings and mission to be able to participate? These were questions WELS schools had to struggle with before they decided to participate.

Professor Sorum was also careful to point out the "guiding principles that Christians keep in mind as they exercise Christian freedom."³¹

- "Nobody should seek his own good, but the good of others" (1 Corinthians 10:24;
- "Everything is permissible"-but not everything is beneficial...not everything is constructive."
- Christians will refrain from "imposing judgments upon one another (1978 RTTD, p. 188)" and;
- "Forcing their own exercise of piety on the community of fellow Christians," (1978 RTTD p. 188).³²

Professor Sorum (WLS) insisted that as long as a school used its freedom in a God pleasing way, then its participation in MPCP was appropriate. Professor Sorum also made certain that he identified the different ways participation in MPCP would no longer be a matter of Christian freedom:

Of course, participating in School Choice would cease to be a matter of Christian freedom if it should ever hurt our congregations' desire to give freewill gifts to God. Or, School Choice would cease to be a matter of Christian freedom **if** by participating in it, we would give the impression of unity in faith with those whom we do not have unity in faith.

Professor Sorum made this conclusion about receiving outside funding:

The bottom line is that all of the wealth of the world belongs to God. We must manage whatever portion of God's wealth that falls under our control to the glory of God. If resources come to the local congregations through the gifts of her members or through grants from foundations or grants from the government, the church is called to be faithful in her stewardship of God's wealth (Matthew 25:14-30) and to acknowledge God as the giver of wealth (James 1:17). We will exercise great care so that resources from outside sources do not make our churches dependent on outside income and the outside resources do not kill our members' spirit of joyful, generous, firstfruit, percentage giving.⁶

Pastor Kassulke raised the caution that, in spite of great care, participation in MPCP would eventually lead to reliance on the government for financial aid. "I believe that by participating in the Choice program, we will start down the slippery slope of reliance on government funding for our ministry."³⁷

In a survey sent to the thirteen WELS schools currently participating in MPCP one or more representatives from each school had the opportunity to answer whether or not their school would be strong enough financially to continue without participating in

MPCP. Representatives from nine of those schools responded to the question. Seven of those schools said that they either would not be able to continue, they probably would not be able to continue, or they would not be able to continue as they exist now.

Mr. McKinley's position is that by communicating our mission, explaining carefully our vision and articulating what we offer against other schools is how and why we, in his opinion, should be involved in School Choice.⁴¹

Finally, Professor Sorum, in the paper he wrote for other WELS school leaders about participation in MPCP, came to this conclusion about the "opt out" clause:

Regarding the "opt out" clause, we can so organize and articulate our mission, expectations and promises that virtually all prospective school families will opt in or out after the initial interview. In fact, this is exactly what has occurred throughout Milwaukee, only two children from one family have opted out of the "religious" activities of their school. The remaining 5251 School Choice pupils who enrolled in religious schools are choosing to participate fully in the religious activities offered by their schools. We must speak clearly. We must articulate our mission and our expectations. All of our policies that implement our mission and hold people accountable to our expectations and promises must be clearly communicated.⁴²

Both Professor Rahn and Pastor Kleist reported that the "opt out" clause has not been an issue for WELS schools participating in the program. Pastor Kleist said the students who attend Wisconsin Lutheran High School know the Christian mission of the school. If some were going to opt out of one activity and if they were going to be true to themselves, then they would really have to opt out of the entire school because all of the school's activities center on that Christian mission.

Another rule that has caused some concern is the random selection process. The concern here is that **if** a classroom is oversubscribed and the school has to fill those seats through a random selection process, then the school loses control over who it accepts into its school. Pastor Kleist said that since Wisconsin Lutheran High School has participated in MPCP they have not had to turn away any students.

For the WELS schools that participate now the one factor that would make it impossible for them to continue in the program would be if the state required them to include items in their curriculum that were contrary to Scripture. So far the participating schools have determined the state has not gone so far in their regulations, but they admit

The participating schools agree that continued vigilance is needed as they continue in the program. Each year the participating schools must renew their intention to participate for the following school year. This gives the schools a chance to review the benefits and possible dangers of the program on an annual basis.

One issue that has caused some difficulty among WELS schools is the strict accounting standards they must follow to participate. Two principals reported the large amounts of paper work required by the state keeps them in their offices more than they would like.

For those schools that are considering participating in MPCP or similar programs throughout the country, they too will have to struggle to determine if participating in such programs is truly a blessing or a step closer to a dangerous interminglement of church and state. As some of these WELS schools are declining, they too will have to struggle to determine if school choice is a good solution to the problem, or a temptation to get involved in a program that could compromise their mission. WELS schools will do well to proceed with their decisions concerning school choice with wisdom, vigilance, caution, and prayer.

Area Lutheran High Schools Consideration of the WI School Choice (Voucher) Program

FVL is going to apply as a School Choice school. Rationale is the same as others indicated.

Lakeside is not jumping into this either for the reason Ryan cited (the religion opt-out). We, too, are monitoring it and will internally and externally discuss it in the coming months.

Luther High School- Onalaska Luther is reviewing this program. That will also be a special focus for discussion with our pastors on Pastors Day. Concerns about the religion opt out and dependency on a state-aid program have been expressed. The Catholic school systems are the most numerous among the 25 schools added for the current school year. I suspect that their top down decision process may have streamlined their consideration. Luther High School's constitution requires that decisions of this magnitude are approved by our Conference of Delegates .

Manitowoc Lutheran is investigating participation in the new statewide Wisconsin Parental Choice status for next year.

Northland

We have so much to do with other areas of ministry that we are focusing on those first as we are "talking about the voucher program". It was dismissed as a priority at the board level last year because of the ability to option out of Religion as well as because of the limit to 25 schools. In addition, we are still very much in the rebuild mode where we need to continue to get our house in order prior to too many other major undertakings. This includes undertakings to bring the association together as well as other school endeavors. One of the many parts of getting our house in order involves the major reaccreditation this year as well. Honestly, we are praying for a school credit program over a school voucher program. At the same time, like I mentioned, we are talking about it, researching it, praying about it, but are not in a position where we want to jump in for next year.

Shoreland's position on the Statewide program is exactly the same as Wisco's. We can't wait for this to be available to more of our families and to more people who have not had the chance to hear the Word taught in its truth and purity.

WLA's administration started its investigation in August. Our Executive Board was made aware of the investigation and we scheduled two informational meetings for our association during September and October. In the September meeting we invited President Ken Fisher and Representative Jeremy Thiesfeldt for remarks and question and answer. In October we invited Principal Scriver from Shoreland Lutheran and Matt Kussow from WCRIS for the same type of format. During this time we have had quite a bit of reaction from association members and pastors both in favor and in opposition. In addition to the information from DPI, I have gathered a packet of informational papers discussing the state of our schools BORAM 2013, the synodical position 2001 from CLS, a paper from John Brenner (1992), and a pretty comprehensive paper from Rev. James Hoogervorst (2004). Those are attached. These have been the study documents for our Executive Board, and the Informational Forums have given us the pulse of the association. We have scheduled a meeting with the Pastors and Principals of the association on November 16, where this topic will receive some attention. I would expect a recommendation to our E-

Board in its November meeting, discussion, and a vote in the January meeting about whether or not to proceed with application or not.

WISCO Even though WLHS has been in the Milwaukee program for many years, our delegates have authorized us to enter the state-wide program as soon as we're legally able to do so. Currently, we are not eligible. We hope that the legislature will correct that issue and allow entry by those schools already in the Milwaukee program (or Racine) to enter both.

Here is the rationale that we shared with our delegates:

The rationale for Wisconsin Lutheran High School to participate in the new state-wide voucher program is as follows:

- 1. The state-wide program could be an aid to the overall recruitment of conference students because it would help in serving our conference students living outside of the City of Milwaukee (e.g. Wauwatosa, Brookfield, Cudahy, West Allis, etc.). Many of our current students would even be eligible to receive these state-wide vouchers (including some who are now receiving tuition assistance). A state-wide program would provide an opportunity to enroll more conference students at WLHS through a voucher who might not otherwise be able to attend.*
- 2. The vouchers could help stretch the dollars in the WLHS tuition assistance program as students move from receiving tuition assistance to being funded by state-wide vouchers.*
- 3. Finally, the state-wide voucher would also offer an opportunity for the WLHS Conference to share the Gospel with students living outside of the City of Milwaukee.*