

Wisconsin Agricultural Education and Workforce Development Council

Quarter 2 Full Council Meeting

Date: Monday, May 13, 2024

Time: 1 p.m. – 5 p.m.

APPROVED

Members Present: Sec. Romanski, Shelly Mayer, Greg Cisewski, Scott Loomans, Jeff Edgar, Monica Gahan, Tom Gillis, Ben Huber, Erik Huschitt, Larry Lee, Bob Hagenow, Gwen Boettcher, Jeffrey Wright, Karl Martin, Michael Orth, Kietra Olson, Dr. Underly, Sen. Ballweg, Sen. Jagler, Gary Besaw, Michelle Steen, Corey Kuchta, Miranda Leis, John Rosenow, Nick Stadnyk, Paul Palmby

Other Attendees: Mary Schrieber, Ashley Andre, Arielle Exner, Katie Jaeger, Emily Sydow, Hope Knutson, Kalyna Harder, Cadence Kroll

I. Call to order and Welcome

The Wisconsin Agricultural Education and Workforce Development Council meeting was called to order at 1:02 p.m.

II. Presentation on Culver's Thank a Farmer/FFA Support Programs

Culvers Senior Market Manager Alison Demmer described how the Thank You Farmers projects began. The goal was to help farmers through support their work. She discussed Culvers principles: 1. Agriculture 2. People 3. Communities. The pillars within the thank you farmers project are to support agricultural education, sustainability, and gratitude. Some of the programs include:

- FFA Ambassador program, working with youth to help spread the word about ag ed.
- Supporting people in communities struggling with food insecurity.
- \$1 scoop days where proceeds to support local ag and communities.
- Building careers through culvers and in ag, streamline FFA members who may want to work at Culver's.
- Food science careers

III. Tour of agricultural education spaces

WAEWDC Member and Sauk Prairie School District Superintendent Jeff Wright provided a tour of the school's agricultural education spaces.

IV. Roll Call

Roll call of the council members was completed.

V. Review Meeting Agenda

Bob Hagenow motioned to approve acceptance of the meeting agenda; Chair Shelly Mayer seconded the motion. The motion passed.

VI. Review and approval of the Feb. 23, 2024, meeting minutes

Jeff Edgar requested to add to the minutes that he had made a motion for the group to endorse the professor Ellwood Pricklethorn activity books, but the motion did not receive a second, and no action was taken. Erik Huschitt moved to approve the amended minutes; Jeff Edgar seconded the motion. The amended meeting minutes were approved by the full council.

VII. Secretary Updates

Secretary Randy Romanski said DATCP just graduated another class of ag youth council members and have welcomed the newest class of students. He highlighted his attendance at a case study competitive regarding Wisconsin industries, including the cranberry industry. Romanski recently returned from a trade mission to the country of Chile, and noted there are a lot of trade and agricultural opportunities in Chile. Chilean contacts expressed interest in doing an exchange with Wisconsin for college students and professors. He also noted the DATCP Animal Health Team is working closely to prevent the recent outbreak of H5N1 Disease in dairy cattle. Working across agencies and with stakeholders to ensure Wisconsin is being as proactive in preventative measures as possible.

Dr. Jill Underly discussed DPI's partnership with DWD to offer first registered apprenticeship this fall for teachers in kindergarten through 9th grade. The Teacher of the Year awards were recently announced and an agricultural teacher from New Richmond will be recognized. Underly mentioned the DWD Technical Education Incentive Grants, noting there have been no agricultural related certifications.

DWD Legislative Liaison Arielle Exner provided an update on behalf of Sec. Amy Pechacek. Exner said the second to last Artificial Intelligence task force meeting was held at Northcentral Technical College. The speakers at that meeting shared information about AI as it relates specifically to agriculture. Exner shared an updated about youth apprenticeship week and noted the Project SEARCH graduations begin next week.

VIII. Student introductions and updates

All student ex-officio members were in attendance and updates and reports on their recent ag-related activities.

IX. 2025-2027 State Budget process overview

DWD Legislative Liaison Arielle Exner explained that this council is tasked with providing budget recommendations for biennial budget requests. Council members discussed how they would like to propose ideas to be included in the budget. Council members also discussed engaging different stakeholder and advocacy groups and seeking partnerships.

X. Teacher workforce challenges discussion

a. DPI overview of report

Jennifer Kammerud, director of the Department of Public Instruction Licensing Educator Advancement and Development (LEAD) team presented the Educator Preparation Program and Workforce Analysis Report. She highlighted the positive aspects of the report: Wisconsin is producing more educators than surrounding states when compared to the high-water mark of the 2008-09 school year. The retirement rate remains stable. Wisconsin's most remote rural districts are retaining teachers at higher rates. She also noted some challenges: There has been a 19% drop in earning power since 2010. Out of a possible 5,061 new public school teachers, the state only added 3,436 educators. Only 60.6% of first year teachers are still employed as educators.

Sally Ladsten, Education Consultant for the Department of Public Instruction, presented information about agriculture education in Wisconsin.

- 347 secondary agriculture educators, 235 are female and 112 are male.
- 261 secondary agriculture education programs.
- There were 53 teacher changes in the 2023-2024 school year.
 - 11 teachers left to work in the industry.
 - Five went to another content area.
 - Nine retired.
 - The rest shifted to administrative positions.

The council discussed some of the anecdotes to stand behind the data that was presented. Gwen Boettcher and Monica Gahan shared their experiences as agriculture educators. Bob Hagenow was asked if his school board was asked to assist with these types of issues.

Greg Cisewski asked the ag ed teachers on the council if their difficulty with work life balance is picked up on by students and could that be a deterrent in getting students into the ag ed teaching pathway. The teachers stated that students definitely notice the amount of work and time the teachers put in and it is not something they want to pursue. Jeff Edgar asked what kind of solutions the council could propose to help ensure the success of the future of ag education. Sally Ladsten brought up how many of the council members are industry leaders and could assist with initiatives to support teachers and ag programs.

The group then discussed how to smooth transitions between teachers. The council acknowledged that ag educators often have strong relationships with students and very highly established programs so that when they retire or leave, the next teachers can face challenges.

Bob Hagenow recommended a mentorship program to help smooth transitions between ag teachers as a budget item. Sally Ladsten said the Wisconsin Association of Ag Education (WAAE) has initiatives where they recruit retired ag educators to mentor new teachers. They are providing small stipends for retirees to be able to travel but needs more.

Ladsten said the Illinois has a program that provides regional assistance for school districts and educators to share Ag programming and lessons.

Sec. Randy Romanski said this story should be noted in the annual report and include the identification of the key conversation points from the meeting and proposed solutions.

MOTION: Council members discussed and voted on the proposal to table the remaining agenda items and schedule a virtual council meeting within a month to discuss. The motion to table the remaining agenda items and discuss at a virtual council meeting was made by Greg Cisewski and seconded by Larry Lee. The motion passed.

XI. Subcommittee work block

- a. Determine membership and chairs for each subcommittee.
- b. Outline action items for subcommittee members.

WAEWDC members voted to table this agenda item and discuss at a future meeting.

Subcommittee updates

WAEWDC members voted to table this agenda item and discuss at a future meeting.

XII. Other Business

- a. Attendance/RSVPs

WAEWDC members voted to table this agenda item and discuss at a future meeting.

XIII. Adjourn

Motion by Jeff Edgar to adjourn the May 13, 2024, WAEWDC meeting. The motion was seconded by Larry Lee and the meeting was adjourned.