



DUEY STROEBEL

STATE SENATOR • 20TH DISTRICT

Senator Stroebel Visits Every School District in 20th Senate District

During my time as an elected official, I have always attempted to never lose sight of the importance of the next generation. As the parents of eight children, my wife and I have an acute interest, as we all do, in ensuring Wisconsin offers first rate educational opportunities for our youth. The next generation represents the future of this great state.

With this in mind, I embarked on an aggressive tour of every public school district and many private schools in the 20th State Senate District. I walked away from these tours inspired by many teachers that are preparing their students for success.

As I toured the schools in my senate district, I was happy to observe exciting reforms and learn about inspiring programs that are preparing the next generation of leaders. What all of the schools have in common is a laser-like focus on the local needs of students. What is working in one school district may not be the answer in another.

The New Holstein School District focuses on the future agricultural needs of the community. The high school features an impressive agriculture lab that prepares students for a future career in the agriculture business. The district has invested in cutting edge technology to better prepare students for the modern day farm, where centuries old techniques meet the modern day technologies that streamline tasks and incorporate much needed efficiencies.

In Port Washington, the district has partnered with local manufacturers and foundries to expose students to careers in those industries. Similar to the agriculture business, today's manufacturers and foundries often rely on technology that requires a sophisticated understanding of not only the immediate task, but the software and engineering that makes the functionality possible. The importance of these partnerships is even more pronounced when one considers the skills gap many manufacturers face.

In West Bend, the school district has taken partnering with the local business community to a whole new level by creating an Education Committee of the West Bend Chamber of Commerce. The opportunities provided by the alliance include youth apprenticeships, state certified co-ops, and job shadowing. The high school now features a state of the art performing arts center thanks to the generous support of several key local businesses, in the process avoiding additional burden on the local taxpayers.

Finally, the Cedarburg School District continues to challenge its students to achieve some of the highest academic standards in the state. *Newsweek* ranked Cedarburg High School as the 180th top high school in the country on their annual "America's Top High Schools" list. Among the 17 Wisconsin high schools that made *Newsweek's* list, Cedarburg has the fifth-highest ranking in the state. The high school has consistently been a recipient of the Support Music Merit Award as part of the Best of Communities for Music Education program.

This is just a partial list of the numerous examples of forward-thinking, education innovations in our schools. I was thrilled to have the opportunity to tour the public school districts in our communities. For the past two budgets, spending on equalized aid has increased and K-12 spending represents over one-third of Wisconsin's spending.

Yes, there are challenges for education in Wisconsin. There are funding formula difficulties for rural schools and urban districts face increasing truancy. We must continue to find ways to increase parent participation and choice in our education system. This includes expanding school choice. Additionally, the old mentality of pushing four-year college post high school must be reformed to encourage students to advance in the way that is best for them. Wisconsin manufacturers report a lack of qualified and skilled labor. As the legislature moves forward on education reform, I am committed to ensuring all students have the opportunity to succeed for many years to come.

*This column is attached for your publication consideration. For more information, contact
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