



SENATE SCHOLAR PROGRAM

2026 SENATE SCHOLAR PROGRAM

APPLICATION AND PROGRAM INFORMATION

ELIGIBILITY

The Senate Scholar Program is open to all Wisconsin high school juniors and seniors aged 16-18. Each Senate Scholar must have outstanding academic qualifications and experiences that demonstrate an ability to perform tasks with a high degree of responsibility. Applicants may also be subject to additional requirements imposed by their high school.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

Application decisions are made by an admissions committee composed of the Chief Clerk and Director of Operations, the Sergeant at Arms, the Legislative Education and Outreach Officer and select legislative staff. The Wisconsin State Senate does not discriminate on the basis of race, gender, religion, disability, national origin or ancestry, or any other basis prohibited by law. The Wisconsin State Senate will make reasonable accommodations in the application process and program for individuals with disabilities.

CURRICULUM

Senate Scholars engage in a variety of experiences during their stay in the program. Typical activities may include attending floor debates in the Senate Chamber, committee hearings, and seminars conducted by individuals involved in the legislative process such as lobbyists, reporters, legislative staff, Governor's staff and Supreme Court Justices.

In addition, Senate Scholars will be required to engage in mock legislative activities, such as bill and amendment drafting, policy analysis, fiscal analysis, constituent communications, and lobbying. These activities will culminate in a mock legislative hearing at which Senate Scholars will provide testimony and then hold an executive session to vote a bill out of committee. Parents and relatives are encouraged to attend this hearing.

At the close of the program, there will be an awards reception at which certificates will be presented to the Senate Scholars. Parents and relatives are invited and encouraged to attend this event.

FUN ACTIVITIES

Although the rigorous curriculum is itself an enjoyable challenge, fun evening activities are also planned for each group of Senate Scholars. Typical activities may include movies, bowling at University of Wisconsin-Madison's Union South, mini-golfing, games, sporting and cultural events and dining at local restaurants.

HOUSING AND TRANSPORTATION

Each Senate Scholar is required to stay at the Concourse Hotel in downtown Madison and the cost is included in the tuition fee. The hotel is located one block from the State Capitol. The Legislative Education and Outreach Officer also stays at this hotel and is available to Senate Scholars 24 hours a day. It is the responsibility of each Senate Scholar to obtain transportation to and from Madison.

CODE OF CONDUCT

Although a significant level of supervision will be provided, each Senate Scholar is responsible for governing his or her own behavior. Each Senate Scholar is required to sign a code of conduct, which includes a promise not to consume alcoholic beverages or illegal substances during participation in the program. Any participant found in violation of the code of conduct may be dismissed from the program without refund of tuition, and his or her parent or guardian will be required to arrange transportation home for the individual immediately.

TUITION

The fee for attending the 2026 Senate Scholar Program is \$250. This fee includes the cost of lodging and all meals. This fee is due by January 5, 2026, following acceptance into the program. Applicants are encouraged to solicit groups and businesses or their school for sponsorship to defray the cost of tuition.

SPENDING MONEY

The tuition fee of \$250 covers lodging, events, lunches and dinners. Scholars will need to bring spending money for the week. It is our experience that Scholars bring \$75-\$100 for the week.

QUESTIONS

If you have any questions concerning the program or the application process, please contact Dr. Tammy Wehrle, Legislative Education and Outreach Officer or email senatescholar@legis.wi.gov.

ADDITIONAL APPLICATION MATERIALS

A digital copy of the application, more information and additional application materials may be downloaded from the following legislative website: www.senatescholar.com.

MAIL APPLICATION MATERIALS

All application materials must be received by November 7, 2025. Applicants will be notified of their admission status by December 10, 2025. Please mail all application materials to:

Dr. Tammy Wehrle
Legislative Education and Outreach Officer
Office of the Senate Chief Clerk
P.O. Box 7882
Madison, WI 53707-7882

WISCONSIN STATE SENATE SCHOLAR PROGRAM

REQUIREMENTS AND CHECKLIST

Each individual wishing to become a Senate Scholar must provide all of the following:

- Cover Letter.
- Resume.
- Completed Application.
- Completed Senate Scholar Examination.
- Completed Essay.
- Official transcripts indicating that the applicant has maintained at least the equivalent of a “B” average.
- Letter of sponsorship from the applicant’s State Senator. Complete the one page sponsor form and send to your State Senator.
- Letter of recommendation from a teacher or school administrator, attached to the enclosed recommendation form. The letter may not be written by a relative of the applicant.
- Letter of recommendation from another person familiar with the applicant’s skills and abilities, attached to the enclosed recommendation form. The letter may not be written by a relative of the applicant, but may be written by another teacher.

QUESTIONS

If you have any questions concerning the program or the application process, please contact Dr. Tammy Wehrle, Legislative Education and Outreach Officer at 608.261.0533 or by email tammy.wehrle@legis.wi.gov.

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WISCONSIN STATE SENATE SCHOLAR PROGRAM
APPLICATION

(Please print or type)

Name: _____ Cell Phone: () _____

Date of Birth: _____ Gender _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Wisconsin Zip: _____ County _____

Email Address: _____

High School: _____ School Phone: () _____

Faculty Contact and Title: _____

Civics/Social Studies Teacher: _____

School Address: _____ City: _____ WI Zip: _____

Name of your State Senator: _____

What Senate District do you live in?* (Ex: 33 SD)* _____

**For the process of selecting participants and alternates, it is very important that you select the correct legislative district. If you are unsure or need assistance, click on "Who are my Legislators?" on the Wisconsin State Legislature's website: <http://www.legis.wi.gov/>.*

Academic Standing

January 2026 standing: Junior Senior Expected graduation date (month and year): _____

Honors and relevant course work: _____

Please rank your preference for the week you would like to participate in the Senate Scholar Program (1st, 2nd and 3rd choice).

These dates are subject to change*

____ Week 1 January 11-16 ____ Week 2 February 8-13 ____ Week 3 March 15-20

PLEASE INDICATE ANY FOOD RESTRICTIONS* OR ALLERGIES YOU MAY HAVE: _____

PLEASE INDICATE ANY SCHEDULING CONFLICTS OR NEEDS WE SHOULD KNOW: _____

*For example: vegetarian/vegan/gluten free/diabetic? Other? Please explain above.

There is a tuition fee of \$250 (payable by check or money order) which is due by January 5, 2026, following acceptance into our program.

I hereby approve this student to be considered for acceptance into the Senate Scholar Program, and will grant this student an excused absence for participation in the program.

Principal's Signature

Date

If selected to participate in the Senate Scholar Program, my daughter/son has my permission to attend.

Parent's/Guardian's Signature

Date

I affirm that the information on this application is correct; that as of the date of the program, I will be a Wisconsin resident, aged 16-18; and that if appointed as a Senate Scholar, I will abide by all the rules and requirements of the program. I also understand that the program cannot reschedule around my other extracurricular activities.

Applicant's Signature

Date

**WISCONSIN STATE SENATE SCHOLAR PROGRAM
CODE OF CONDUCT AND CONSENT TO USE PHOTOGRAPH**

Senate Scholars shall:

Participate in all scheduled activities;

Display respectful, positive, responsible conduct at all times;

Wear appropriate work attire. For males, appropriate work attire is dress slacks, a button down shirt, and appropriate shoes. Males should bring a tie and at least two dress shirts. For females, appropriate work attire is dress slacks or a skirt of at least knee length, a blouse, and appropriate shoes. Senate Scholars will be issued an official page jacket to wear during Senate session;

Wear tasteful casual attire during social activities;

Provide a credit card at the time of check-in at the program hotel for the purpose of covering any telephone or other incidental room charges;

Be in the program hotel and in his or her room by 10:00 p.m., unless involved in supervised Senate Scholar Program activities;

Remain in his or her room all night following the bed check; and lock and bolt room door.

Senate Scholars shall NOT:

Consume or possess alcohol, tobacco, or drugs (unless prescribed by a physician);

Possess a weapon;

Violate state or local laws; or

Travel to any restaurants, stores, or other locations, unless accompanied by the Education Officer or the Senate Sergeant at Arms staff

Violation of this Code of Conduct may result in immediate dismissal from the program without refund of tuition. The parent or guardian of any individual dismissed from the program is responsible for arranging transportation home.

The parent or guardian of each Senate Scholar is responsible for paying any fees for unusual room cleaning expenses, damage to the hotel room, or damage to other property associated with the program.

The State Senate may use a Senate Scholar's photograph in association with media, websites or communications pieces relating to the Senate Scholar Program. By enrolling in the program, each Senate Scholar consents to the use of his or her photograph for this purpose. By authorizing their son, daughter, or ward to enroll in the program, each parent or guardian consents to the use of the son's, daughter's, or ward's photograph for this purpose.

By signing below, I indicate that I have read and understand the above Code of Conduct and agree to abide by its terms to the extent that they apply to me.

Applicant's Signature

Date

Parent's/Guardian's Signature

Date

**WISCONSIN STATE SENATE SCHOLAR PROGRAM
INDEMNIFICATION FORM**

I agree to indemnify and hold harmless the State of Wisconsin and its employees, officers, and agents for damages to person or property arising from applicant's participation in the Senate Scholar Program.

Parent's/Guardian's Signature

Date

Applicant's Signature

Date

WISCONSIN STATE SENATE SCHOLAR PROGRAM

CURRICULUM (tentative)

Sunday **4:00 p.m.**

Registration and check-in at the Concourse Hotel, tour the State Capitol.

Monday

Overview of How a Bill Becomes a Law. From a constituent's concern to a Wisconsin Act. Discuss the myths around the "Power of Politics."

Topic Introduction. Discuss the week's public policy initiative.

Developing Legislation. Scholars discuss the ramifications of the week's public policy initiative with Legislative Reference Bureau attorney(s).

Media Roundtable. Discussion revolves around their jobs, their role in the legislative process, and how they would approach a story regarding the week's public policy initiative.

Legislative Staff and Constituent Relations. Who are constituents; how they are organized; why they are important; how constituents contact their legislators; and how legislators respond. What are the duties of a legislative staffer. Presented by a panel of Senate partisan staff.

Support Agency Roundtable. Staffers from the non-partisan Legislative Council, Legislative Fiscal Bureau, Legislative Audit Bureau, and Legislative Technology Services Bureau share their role in the legislative process. Discussion emphasis on what it means to be non-partisan.

Supervised Activity.

Tuesday

Overview of Senate Session, Partisan Caucuses, and the Committee on Senate Organization. Intern as a Messenger for Senate Floor Session. Wrap-up discussion at the end of the day concerning session.

Wednesday

How to Draft a Bill. Understanding the intended result, accomplishing that result through accurate writing, and avoiding unintended consequences. Presented by the Legislative Reference Bureau staff.

Legislator Drafting Role Play. Scholars mimic the real world when they present an idea to a Legislative Reference Bureau drafting attorney, the drafter writes the language, and the Scholar makes sure the language reflects the intent.

Lunch at the Executive Residence.

Draft a Hypothetical Bill. Draft a bill implementing an idea for legislation to address the constituent concerns under discussion. Review specific issues and bill drafting strategies. Critique the drafts of hypothetical legislation and choose the one that best accomplishes the desired result. That draft will be introduced, distributed to Senate Scholars as bills, and scheduled for a mock committee hearing. Divide into groups according to position on the issues.

Finish Bill Drafts of Hypothetical Legislation. As a group, critique the drafts of hypothetical legislation and choose those that best accomplish the desired result. The drafts will be introduced, distributed to Senate Scholars as bills, and scheduled for a mock committee hearing. Divide into groups according to position on the issues.

Lobbyists Roundtable. Discussion about their jobs, their role in the legislative process, and how they would proceed with an idea for legislation addressing the week's public policy initiative.

Supervised free time.

Thursday Chairperson election. Scholars elect a chairperson for Friday's committee hearing. Newly appointed chairperson runs the meeting to choose the bill draft on which the committee will have a hearing on Friday.

Intern as a Messenger for Senate Floor Session or Committee Hearing. Wrap-up discussion at the end of the day concerning session.

Prepare for Friday's committee hearing. Scholars will draft amendments. One Scholar, the Lead Author, drafts testimony. Senate staff and Senate Scholar Alumni assist in the process.

Friday

The Governor's Role in the Legislative Process. Presented by the Governor's staff.

The Role of the Judiciary in State Government. Presented by a Supreme Court Justice or judicial staff.

Prepare Testimony for a Mock Committee Hearing. Scholars in the "for" group must prepare to testify in favor of the bill. Those in the "against" group must prepare to testify in opposition of the bill. Groups must anticipate the arguments of the other side, prepare questions to ask those who testify, and prepare responses to questions they are likely to receive.

Mock Committee Hearing. Parents are welcome to attend and participate. Committee hearing will be staffed by employees of the Senate Sergeant at Arms office.

Reception and Awards Ceremony. Parents are invited and encouraged to attend. Program conclusion. Senate Parlor.

3:00 p.m. Program concludes and scholars are released from supervision.

WISCONSIN STATE SENATE SCHOLAR PROGRAM

ESSAY

Legislative Service Agencies.

Write a three to four page informative essay describing the following support agencies for the Wisconsin State Senate: Legislative Reference Bureau (LRB), Legislative Technology Services Bureau (LTSB), Legislative Council, Legislative Fiscal Bureau, Legislative Audit Bureau, and Legislative Human Resources. You must use either MLA or APA formatting (double spaced, 12 font, cite sources, along with a works cited page).

WISCONSIN STATE SENATE SCHOLAR PROGRAM

EXAMINATION

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| A. Professor Edwin E. Witte | F. <i>USS Wisconsin</i> | K. Tommy Thompson |
| B. Laurel Clark | G. The Wisconsin Idea | L. <i>The War at Home</i> |
| C. William Leahy | H. McCarthyism | M. Kathryn Morrison |
| D. Gwendolynne Moore | I. Vel Phillips | N. Fred Risser |
| E. William "Billy" Mitchell | J. Cordelia Harvey | |

From the choices above, choose the correct answer for the following statements:

1. ____ Wisconsin's longest-serving Governor (1987-2001). Elected to the State Assembly (1966). Sworn in as US Health and Human Services (2001). Born in Elroy, Wisconsin where his father ran a gas station and grocery store.
2. ____ First woman to be elected to the Wisconsin State Senate.
3. ____ Captain in the U.S. Navy. NASA astronaut and Space Shuttle Mission Specialist. Died in the Space Shuttle Columbia disaster February 1, 2003.
4. ____ First African-American woman to graduate from the UW-Madison Law School. First African-American woman in the United States to hold a statewide office.
5. ____ This focused on student protests of government policies in the Vietnam War, clashes between students and police, and the responses of politicians and the public to the turmoil. Nominated for an Academy Award.
6. ____ In 1934 developed the policies and legislation that became the Social Security Act of 1935. Often referred to as the "Father of Social Security."
7. ____ Longest serving Legislator in Wisconsin history. Elected to the Assembly (1956-1960) Elected to the Senate (1962) special election; and re-elected since 1964.
8. ____ Served in the Pacific theater during World War II (Philippines, Iwo Jima, and Okinawa); two tours in the Korean War; and a tour during Operation Desert Storm. Currently berthed in Norfolk, Virginia.
9. ____ Used to describe the making of accusations of disloyalty, subversion, or treason without proper regard for evidence. Also now used more generally to describe reckless, unsubstantiated accusations, as well as demagogic attacks on the character or patriotism of political adversaries.
10. ____ U.S. Army General regarded as the "Father of the U.S. Air Force."
11. ____ Former First Lady of Wisconsin. Established veteran's hospitals in Wisconsin and a soldiers' orphans' home.
12. ____ A political philosophy which says that the boundaries of the university should be the boundaries of the state, and that research conducted at the university should be applied to solve problems and improve health, quality of life, the environment and agriculture for all citizens of the state.

For the following section, please choose the correct answer:

13. ____ Which day is Wisconsin's Statehood Day?
- A. July 3, 1836
 - B. May 29, 1848
 - C. February 5, 1849
 - D. August 15, 1848
14. ____ Which statement is not true surrounding the death of Representative Charles C.P. Arndt?
- A. He was shot by Representative James Vineyard on February 11, 1842, on the floor of the territorial Legislature in the new Capitol in Madison.
 - B. According to the Saturday, February 12, 1842 entry of the *Journal of the House of Representatives*, "Mr. Speaker...The melancholy task devolves on me of announcing to the House the death of one of the delegates of my district in the other branch of the Assembly—the Hon. Charles Coatesworth Pinckney Arndt. ...At noon he died almost instantly on the floor of the Council Chamber."
 - C. Representative Vineyard tendered his resignation from the territorial Legislature, but his colleagues refused to accept it. Mr. Vineyard is the only lawmaker in Wisconsin history to be expelled from the Legislature.
 - D. Mr. Vineyard was acquitted of the charges in October 1843, and his Grant County constituents re-elected him to the Legislature that year. But Vineyard moved to California where he also served in its Legislature.
15. ____ Which Wisconsin company has the New York Stock Exchange letters HOG?
- A. Harley-Davidson Motor Company
 - B. Oscar Mayer
 - C. Patrick Cudahy Inc.
 - D. H. Orville Glade Company
16. ____ Which person was not involved in the FBI shootout at Little Bohemia Lodge outside of Manitowish Waters, Wisconsin on April 23, 1934?
- A. John Dillinger
 - B. Al Capone
 - C. Hugh Clegg
 - D. Eugene Boisneau
17. ____ Which television program was not based in Wisconsin?
- A. *That 70's Show*
 - B. *The Young & the Restless*
 - C. *Laverne & Shirley*
 - D. *The Big Bang Theory*

18. ____ Which Massachusetts Governor is prominently featured in a mural in the Wisconsin state Supreme Court?
- A. John Quincy Adams
 - B. Christian Herter
 - C. Elbridge Gerry
 - D. John Kennedy
19. ____ Just prior to becoming "America's Dairyland," which agricultural product was the primary crop of choice for Wisconsin farmers?
- A. Wheat
 - B. Corn
 - C. Tobacco
 - D. Cranberries
20. ____ Wisconsin's Governorship is known nationally as one of the strongest because:
- A. The Governor's cabinet does not require Senate confirmation.
 - B. The Governor's partial veto authority allows him or her to substantially re-write legislation after it has passed both houses of the Legislature.
 - C. The Governor has the right under Wisconsin Constitution to appoint the Superintendent of the Department of Public Instruction.
 - D. The Governor has unusually broad powers to declare a state of emergency.
21. ____ The function of a referendum is to:
- A. Elect political leaders.
 - B. Minimize the influence of newspapers.
 - C. Involve citizens directly in decision-making.
 - D. Strengthen political parties.
22. ____ Which of the following statements explains a difference between political parties and interest groups?
- A. Political parties address many issues; interest groups usually focus on one issue.
 - B. Political parties support candidates; interest groups nominate candidates.
 - C. Political parties evaluate government policy; interest groups set government policy.
 - D. Political parties influence laws; interest groups ratify laws.

23. ____ Which Wisconsin sports team is the only publicly owned team of its kind?
- A. Milwaukee Brewers
 - B. Wisconsin Woodchucks
 - C. Milwaukee Bucks
 - D. Green Bay Packers
24. ____ Why is Wisconsin called the Badger state?
- A. Miners who became permanent residents of the "Wisconsin country" made for themselves 'dugouts' in the sides of bluffs and hills, burrowing like badgers.
 - B. In the early 1850's prior to the fur trappers decimating the population, Wisconsin had more badgers per square mile than any other geographic region in the United States.
 - C. The University of Wisconsin needed a more intimidating mascot than the "Golden Gophers."
 - D. "Wisconsin" means "Land of the Badger" in the original Native American Algonquian language.
25. ____ Which modern day political party began in Wisconsin?
- A. Progressive Party
 - B. Green Party
 - C. Republican Party
 - D. Free Soil Party
26. ____ Which is not true about the *Villa Louis* in Prairie du Chien?
- A. The Victorian-style mansion was built over the site of the former Fort Shelby.
 - B. H. Louis Dousman, a man who grew up penniless but made a fortune in gold mining in California, moved back to Prairie du Chien and built the house in 1870.
 - C. In 1952, the mansion became a Wisconsin state-operated historic site.
 - D. H. Louis Dousman died unexpectedly in 1886, and his family renamed the home "Villa Louis" in his memory.
27. ____ Which of the following cheeses was invented in Wisconsin?
- A. Brick cheese
 - B. Cheddar cheese
 - C. Limburger cheese
 - D. Uberkase cheese

28. ____ Which is not a federally recognized tribe in Wisconsin?

- A. Lac Courte Oreilles Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians
- B. (State) Chippewa Tribe: Fond du Lac Band
- C. Ho-Chunk Nation of (State)
- D. Stockbridge Munsee Community

29. ____ In which of the following situations has the United States Supreme Court ruled that a student's individual freedom can be limited?

- A. A student decides to attend a private school
- B. A student wears clothing likely to disrupt instruction
- C. A student writes a letter to the editor of his/her school newspaper
- D. Two students quietly say grace in the school cafeteria before eating

30. ____ Theodore Roosevelt delivered a 90 minute speech after being in shot in the chest. The attempted assassination took place in Milwaukee, WI on October 14, 1912. He was shot by John Shrank, an unemployed New York City saloonkeeper. What happened to John Shrank?

- A. He got out of prison, after serving just five years
- B. He was set free by Teddy Roosevelt, just like the bear
- C. He was found insane and confined for life in a Wisconsin State Asylum
- D. He escaped to Canada

WISCONSIN STATE SENATE SCHOLAR PROGRAM
RECOMMENDATION FORM

(Please print or type)

Name of Senate Scholar Applicant: _____

Your Name: _____

Daytime Phone: () _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____, Wisconsin Zip: _____

Your Relationship to Applicant: _____

Please attach your letter of recommendation to this cover sheet. Thank you.

WISCONSIN STATE SENATE SCHOLAR PROGRAM
RECOMMENDATION FORM

(Please print or type)

Name of Senate Scholar Applicant: _____

Your Name: _____

Daytime Phone: () _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____, Wisconsin Zip: _____

Your Relationship to Applicant: _____

Please attach your letter of recommendation to this cover sheet. Thank you.

WISCONSIN STATE SENATE



SENATE SCHOLAR PROGRAM

REQUEST FOR SPONSORSHIP

Dear Senator _____:

The student below requests your sponsorship to the Senate Scholar program. If you choose to sponsor this student for the program, please forward a copy of this signed form to Dr. Tammy Wehrle, Legislative Education and Outreach Officer in B18SE.

Name: _____ Cell Phone: () _____

Year of Graduation _____

Address: _____

City: _____ WI Zip: _____ County _____

Email Address: _____

High School: _____ School Phone: () _____

School Address: _____ City: _____ WI Zip: _____

Senator signature

Date