



2020
WCRIS
Leadership
Conference

Learn Today. Inspire Tomorrow.

Wisconsin Council
of Religious & 
Independent Schools
Committed to a Higher Standard

Wisconsin Council of Religious and Independent Schools
March 6, 2020 | Ingleside Hotel | Pewaukee WI
wcris.org | 608.287.1224 | wcris.staff@wcris.org

**When
you're at
school,
you're also
here.**

**WCRIS is your
voice.**

**That's a member
benefit.**

Everyday, WCRIS staff works hard to ensure private schools are protected from government intervention and that your staff and students are treated equitably.

Advocacy is one of the many member benefits your school receives. You can learn more about your member benefits by going to wcris.org/about-wcris/membership/

Dear WCRIS Members,



Sharon L. Schmeling
WCRIS Executive
Director

Greetings!

Your work as leaders can be exhausting and your well can run dry, unless you stop to get refreshed.

So, we welcome you today in a spirit of renewal. We pray you have an enriching and uplifting day.

Now, you may wonder, how is that possible with all this talk of trauma on the program today?

It's possible if you keep in mind two thoughts by Helen Keller, who suffered her own share of trauma, until a remarkable educator came into her life:

- "Although the world is full of suffering, it is also full of the overcoming of it."

And,

- "We could never learn to be brave and patient, if there were only joy in the world."

Inspired by these two thoughts, our program is designed to focus on the concrete things you can do as educators and leaders to make your schools and classrooms more joyful.

Whether it's the initiatives offered by our keynote speaker, or ideas for addressing parental choice, school culture or legal issues that overshadow your work, all of these topics will help you overcome the pain and suffering you encounter daily in your staff, students and families.

Working through these issues together, we will learn how to be brave and patient, and will thereby bring more joy into the world.

If you need anything along the way, or have ideas of how we can better support your daily efforts to educate our precious children, please talk to any WCRIS staff person.

We are here to serve!

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sharon".

Who We Are

Our Accomplishments

Our Mission

WCRIS supports the unique missions of member schools through advocacy, education and partnerships, to ensure an extraordinary education and equitable opportunity for each child.

This legislative session, WCRIS has:

- Advocated for schools to have the ability to announce school safety drills;
- Provided a Private School Ombudsman, funded by the DPI at the WCRIS offices, to help private schools navigate federal Title programs;
- Helped shape the rules governing the state's Special Needs Scholarship Program, which provides vouchers to parents of children with special education needs;
- Advocated for school safety grants that funded \$6 million in updates to school doors, locks and classrooms;
- Worked for equitable recognition of private school teaching experience.

Daily, the WCRIS staff works too:

- Protect private school students' access to federal special education services;
- Provide professional development and support for private school administrators;
- Prevent countless laws from being passed that hamper our schools' independence with unneeded regulations and paperwork;
- Promote educational excellence by facilitating private school participation in the annual Kohl Foundation principal, teacher fellowship, and student scholarship competitions that provides nearly \$500,000 annually to WCRIS schools.

Member Benefits

By being a member of WCRIS, your school gets:

- Advocacy at the State Capitol and in Washington D.C. to protect and defend private schools, staff and parents;
- Access to "Current Events," a weekly e-letter with news from Madison and Washington D.C.;
- A free copy of the biennial WCRIS Legal Handbook, which compiles all of the state laws that regulate private schools;
- Urgent announcements and communications from the DPI and other state agencies;
- Participation in the Kohl Foundations awards;
- Reduced registration fees for the annual March WCRIS Leadership Conference and August Teacher Professional Learning Conference;
- Reduced-priced, or free WCRIS publications;
- Membership in the Council for American Private Education (CAPE).

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Speakers



Keynote:

Dr. Lori Desautels

Dr. Lori Desautels is an Assistant Professor at both undergraduate and graduate programs at Butler University in Indianapolis. Before teaching at Marian and Butler universities, Lori taught emotionally troubled students in the upper elementary grades and worked as a school counselor in Indianapolis. She was a private practice counselor and co-owner of the Indianapolis Counseling Center. She was a behavioral consultant for Methodist Hospital in Indianapolis on the adolescent psychiatric unit.

Lori is a Tedx talk presenter and the author of three books. A fourth is due out later this year.

Dr. Desautels will follow-up her keynote with a two-part workshop series today that will focus on practical things that school's leaders can do to address trauma in their schools.



Luncheon:

Chad Dirkse

Chad Dirkse is a graduate of Oostburg Christian School and Sheboygan Christian School. Currently, he is President of Chattanooga Christian School in Tennessee. Chad graduated from Covenant College with a BA in Elementary Education, and he also holds an MBA with a specialization in school leadership from LeTourneau University. He also serves as a Fellow at the Center for Advancement of Christian Education (CACE).

Thanks to the generosity of the EdChoice Foundation, Chad will speak about how to maintain your school mission by embracing parental choice, which is a prime factor in school growth and sustainability, regardless of participation in a voucher program.

Sponsored by:



EdChoice is a valued partner of WCRIS and has been fighting for parental choice in Wisconsin since its beginning.

edchoice.org

Schedule of Events

- 7:30 am** Registration and Breakfast
- 8:00 am** Welcome Address and Remarks
- 8:15 am** **Keynote:** *Learning in Crisis: The Neurological Effects of Trauma on Learning.* | Dr. Lori Desautels, Assistant Professor, Butler University - Indianapolis
- 9:30 am** Marketplace Visiting Time | Networking
- 9:45 am** Workshop Session 1:
- Strategies for Building a Strong School Culture | Sam Seefeld, Principal, Trinity Lutheran School - Freistadt
 - The Law of the School: Cultural Issues Affecting Our Schools | Wisconsin Institute for Law and Liberty (WILL) lawyers
 - Mythbusters: Debunking Equitable Participation Myths | Abbie Pavela, ESSA Ombudsman, WCRIS
 - Part II of Keynote. Digging Deeper: The Neurological Effects of Trauma on Learning | Dr. Lori Desautels, Assistant Professor, Butler University - Indianapolis
- 11:00 am** Marketplace Visiting Time | Networking | Snack
- 11:30 am** Workshop Session 2:
- Aligning Your Mission for Student Achievement | John Davis, President of Heritage Christian Schools - Brookfield
 - What Is Instructional Leadership and Why Should I Care? | Deborah Erdmann, Principal, Grace Lutheran School - Menomonee Falls
 - The Law of the School: Cultural Issues Affecting Our Schools | Wisconsin Institute for Law and Liberty (WILL) lawyers
 - Part III of Keynote. Digging Deeper: The Neurological Effects of Trauma on Learning | Dr. Lori Desautels, Assistant Professor, Butler University - Indianapolis
- 12:45 pm** Luncheon: *Navigating the Unknown: How to Maintain Your Schools Mission and Identity in the Face of Parental Choice.* | Chad Dirkse, Chatanooga Christian School, TN
- 1:30 pm** Marketplace Visiting Time | Networking | Snack
- 1:45 pm** Workshop Session 3:
- Aligning Your Mission for Student Achievement | John Davis, President of Heritage Christian Schools - Brookfield
 - What Is Instructional Leadership and Why Should I Care? | Deborah Erdmann, Principal, Grace Lutheran School - Menomonee Falls
 - Strategies for Building a Strong School Culture | Sam Seefeld, Principal, Trinity Lutheran School - Freistadt
 - The ESSA Geek is in: Help Clinic for your Title Program Dilemmas | Abbie Pavela, Wisconsin Private School Ombudsman, WCRIS
- 3:00 pm** Prize Drawings and Adjourn

Workshops

Aligning Your Mission for Student Achievement

Room: Woodland D

Your mission statement might sound good, but are you sure it is transforming students' lives? Join us on this journey to student improvement that begins with foundational statements and turns them into concrete goals for your students. Then develop a training plan that will weave your vision into the daily fabric of student experience.

John Davis, President, Heritage Christian Schools - Brookfield

Strategies for Building A Strong School Culture

Room: Woodland A

A strong school culture is essential for success. Ahead of strategies, pedagogy, and programs, the culture in your classrooms and building must come first. Learn effective and practical steps you can implement at your school that promote joy and a passion for learning that prepares each student (and staff member!) to reach their full potential.

Sam Seefeld, Principal, Trinity Lutheran School - Freistadt

The Law of the School: Issues Affecting Our Schools

Room: Woodland C

Knowing what you can and can not do in the face of society's ever-changing values and sexual mores is important for your school's mission. This workshop will help you understand what you can do to protect your school, students, and mission.

Wisconsin Institute for Law and Liberty (WILL) lawyers

What Is Instructional Leadership and Why Should I Care?

Room: Woodland A - Morning | Woodland C - Afternoon

A ship is only as good as its captain. This workshop will help you learn how to effectively lead your school and encourage positive outcomes. Learn how to read your schools needs and act upon them. Instructional leadership will help you engage your staff and motivate them to change.

Deborah Erdmann, Principal, Grace Lutheran School, Menomonee Falls

Mythbusters: Debunking ESSA Equitable Participation Myths

Room: Woodland B

Have you heard things about ESSA equitable participation in conversations with other principals and school districts that make you wonder whether or not it's true? Can a private school be reimbursed? Can I hire my own teachers for Title I instruction? Do I have to participate in all of the Title programs? What about pooling with other private schools? If you've heard answers to these questions that make you think twice, then this is the workshop for you. We will debunk common myths and misconceptions about the Every Student Succeeds Act and learn what principals can do to proactively participate in this federal program.

Abbie Pavela, Wisconsin Private School Ombudsman, WCRIS - Madison

The ESSA Geek is in: A Help clinic for your Title Program Dilemmas

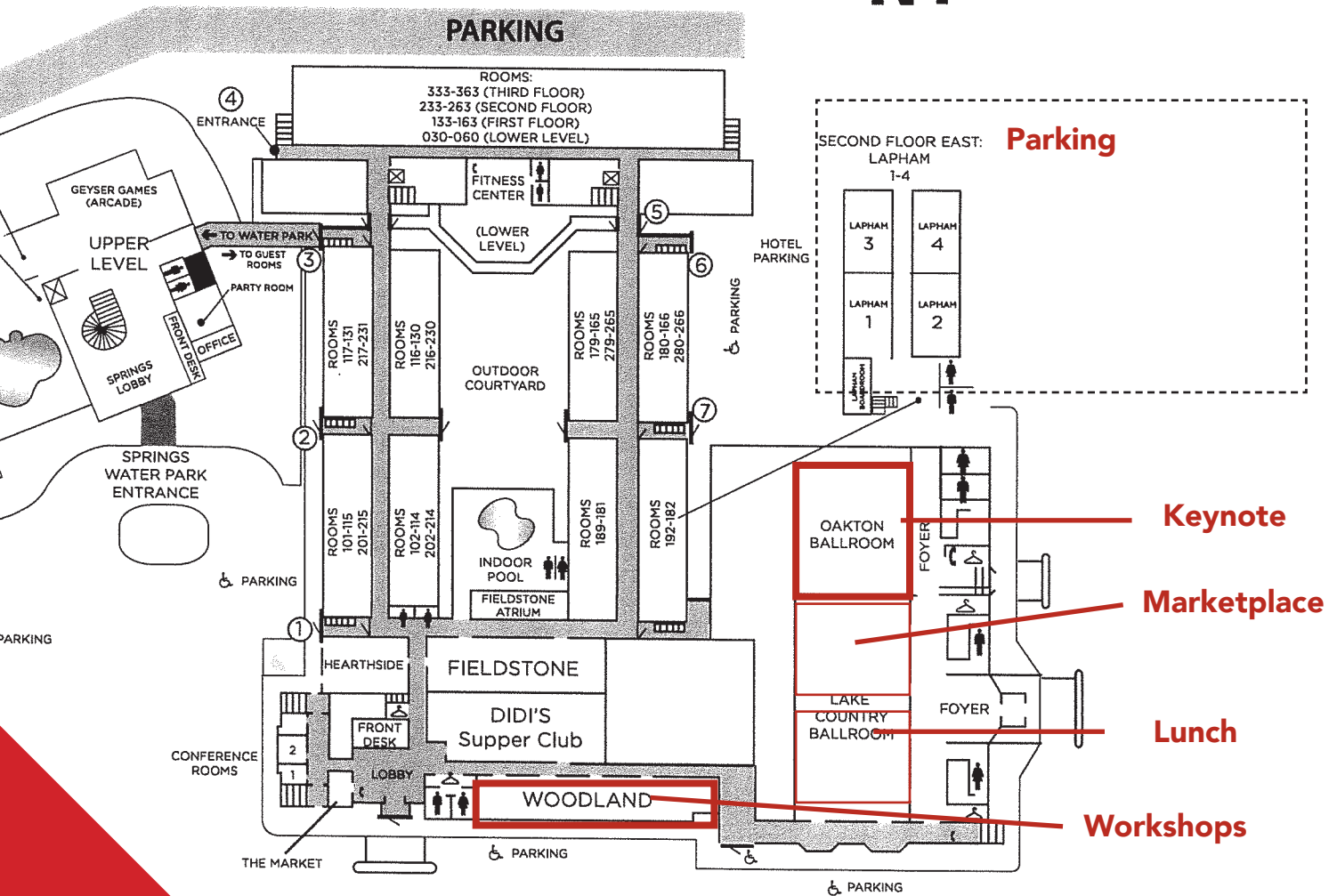
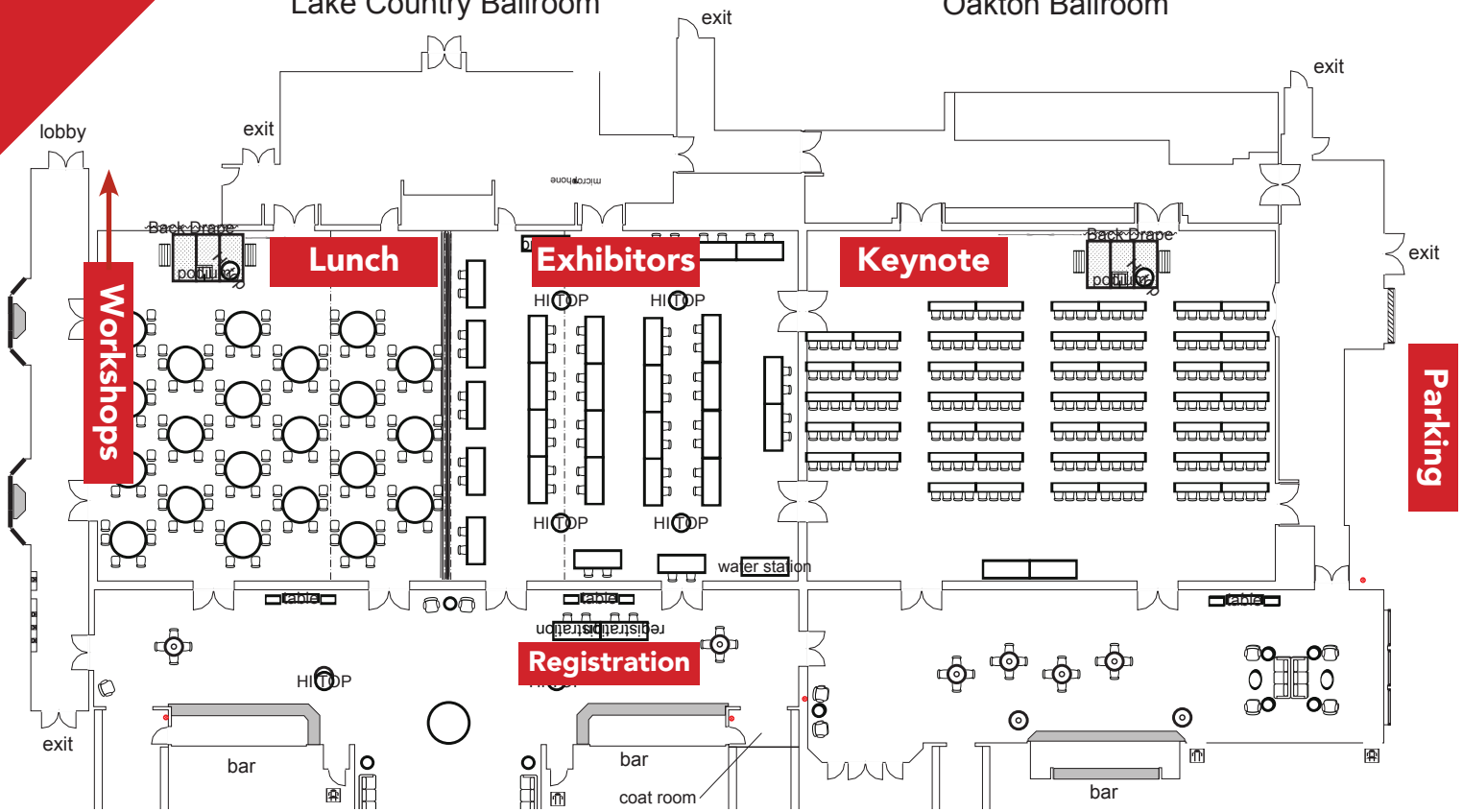
Room: Woodland B

Bring your Title funding and ESSA questions to this hands-on clinic. You will have a chance to speak one-on-one with the ESSA Ombudsman, who can help you get answers to your burning questions.

Abbie Pavela, Wisconsin Private School Ombudsman, WCRIS - Madison

Lake Country Ballroom

Oakton Ballroom



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“Unless someone like you
cares a whole awful lot,
nothing is going to
get better.

It’s not!”

Dr. Seuss, *The Lorax*

As elections are one of the cornerstones of our democracy, ask yourself, IS MY CLASSROOM A PLACE WHERE STUDENTS WILL:

- Learn about elections;
- Have respectful dialogues;
- Hear about civic responsibilities;
- Learn the democratic process?

The Wisconsin Right to Life Education Fund has hands-on resources for you!

Visit WRTL.org/classroom

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Save the Date:

March 10, 2021 - In Madison!

Join WCRIS for a legislative action day on March 10, 2021 at the state capitol. Attendees will learn about current bills and the newly proposed 2021-23 state budget and how it affects their schools.

Attendees will also go to the capitol and meet with their legislators.

This is a great chance to make a huge impression at the capitol and help lawmakers see what our \$1 billion annual contribution to the state's education infrastructure looks like.

Mark your calendars now!

More details to come. Stay connected through our online Current Events e-letter to learn more.

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12

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