



Kids First Beloit

Educating Our Children

KIDS First Beloit exists to support educational opportunities for our community's families and children so that they may achieve all they dream to be.

Our Time Together

1. We want to share information with you.
 - Information on School and Student Performance in Beloit
 - Discuss the school choice options available for your child
2. We want to learn from you.
 - What is most important to you in a school?
 - What options would you like to know more about?
 - What does the ideal school environment offer?

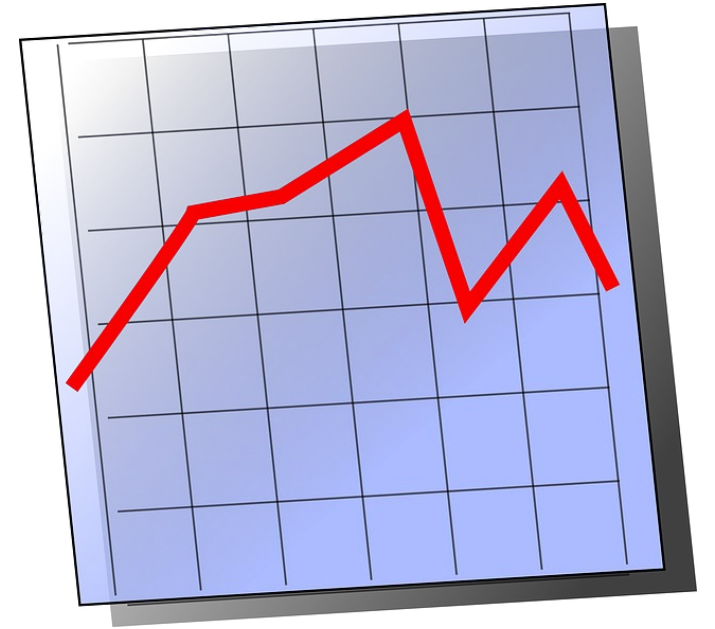


As parents, the education of our children is one of our highest shared priorities. It is an important priority for our community.



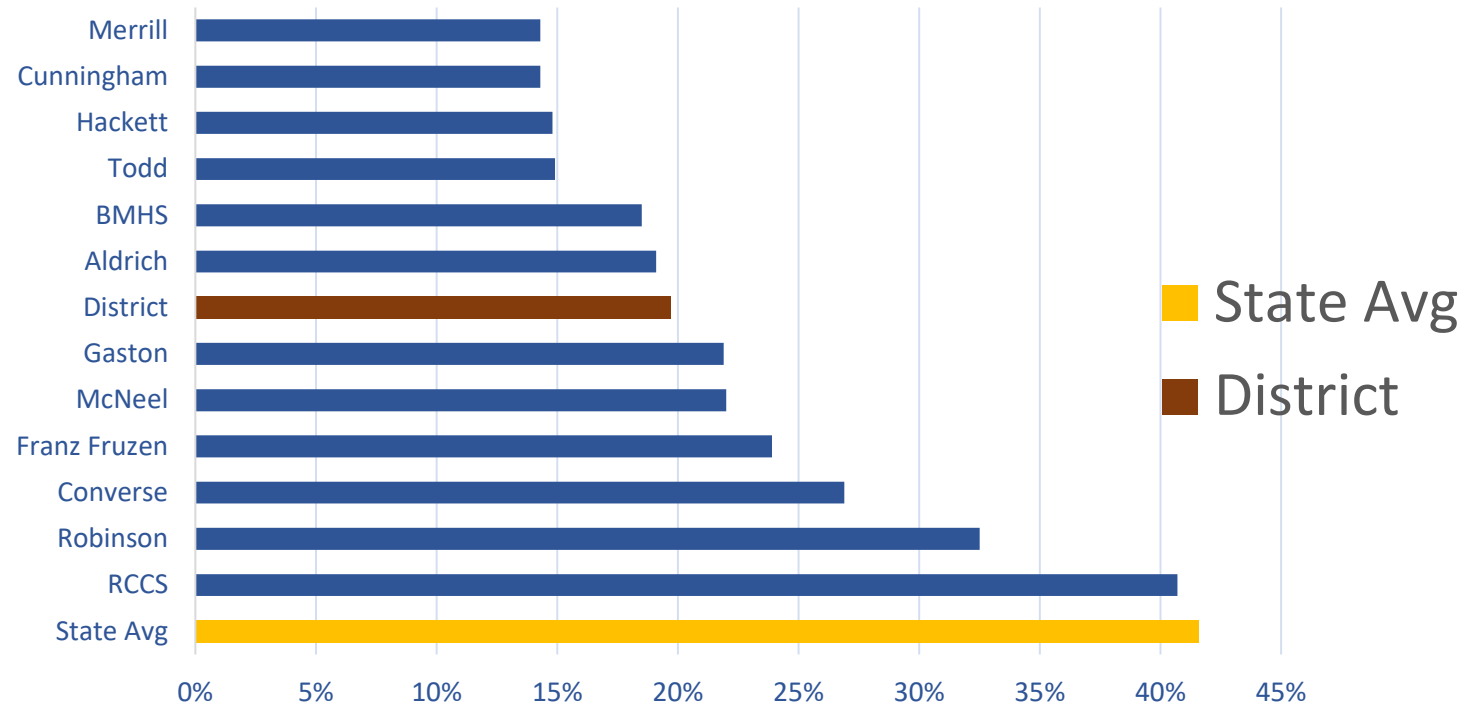
Every child in Beloit deserves access to an education that prepares them for college or career.

The data shows that as a community, we **MUST** do better.

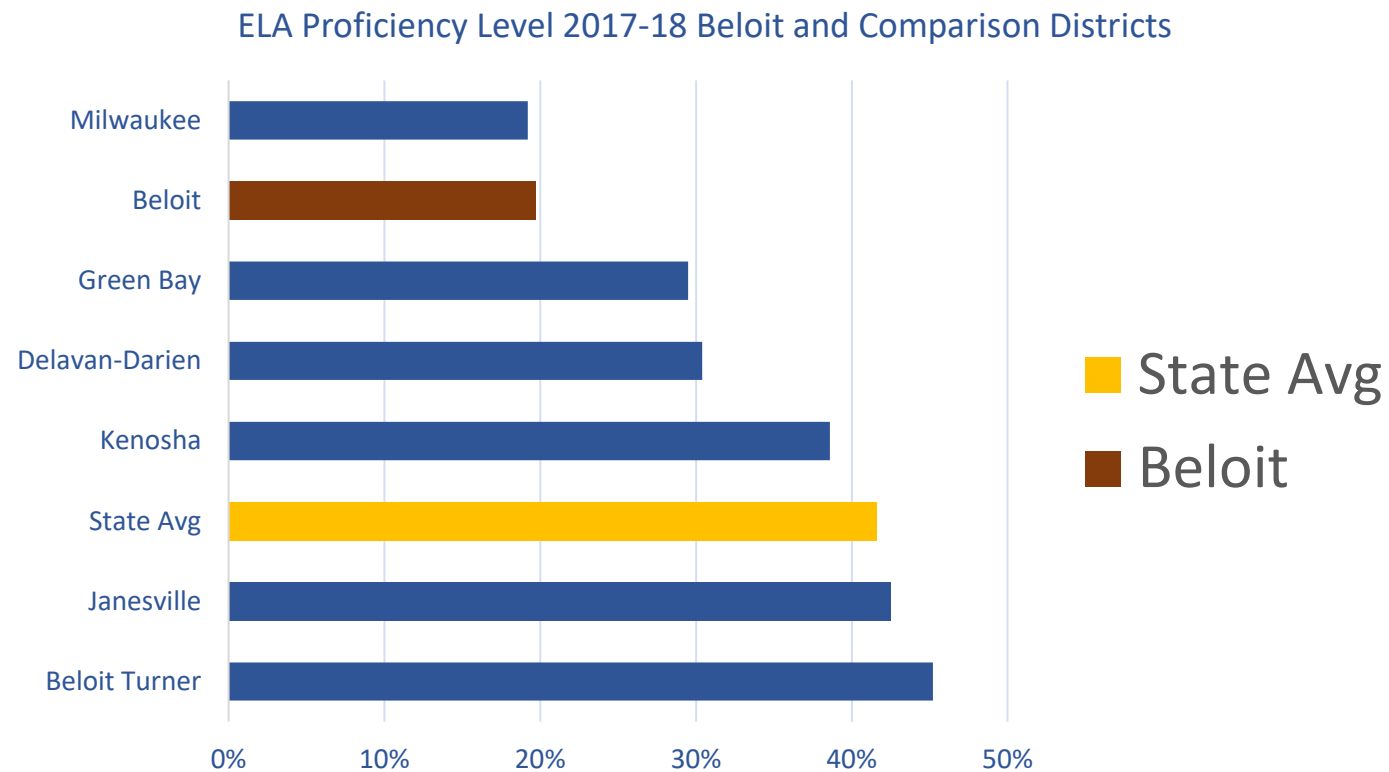


English Language Arts: Beloit Students are well below the state average.

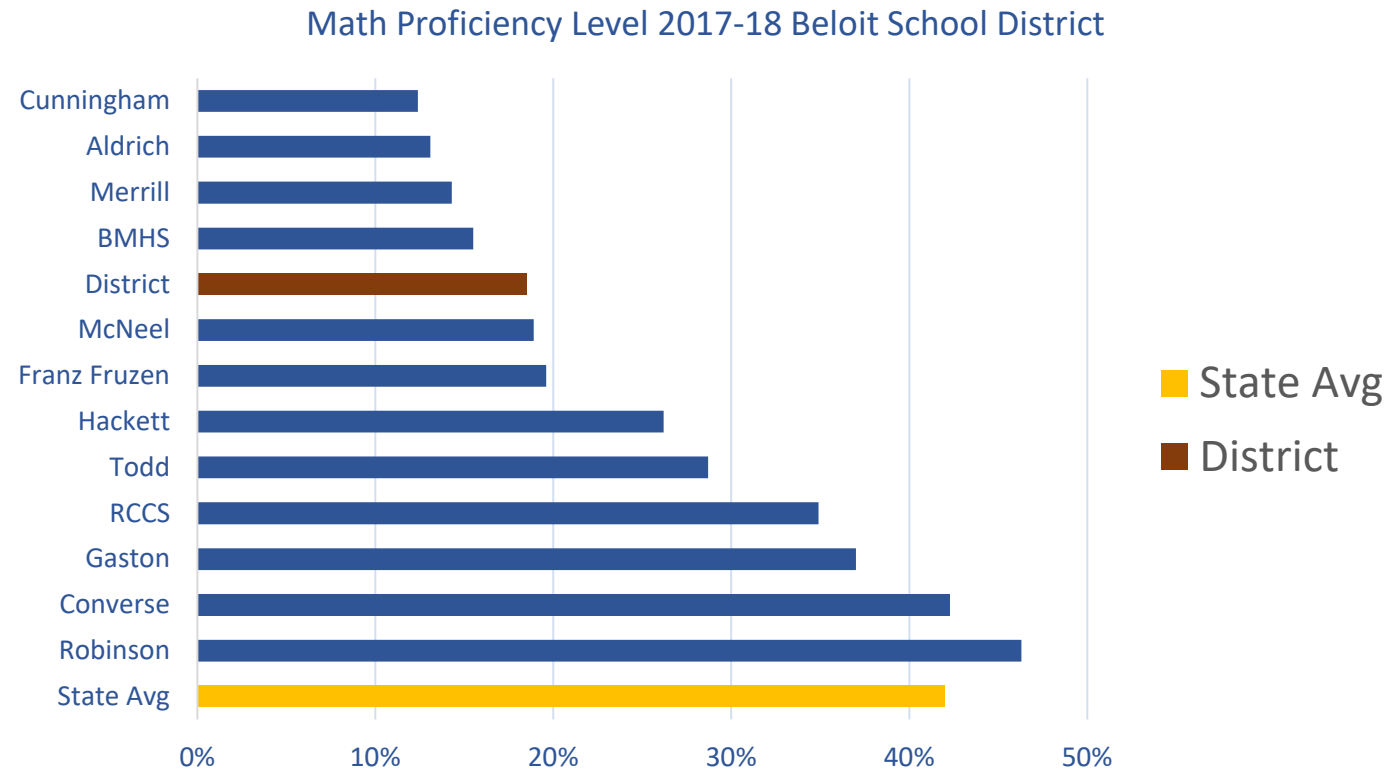
ELA Proficiency Level 2017-18 Beloit School District



English Language Arts: Beloit is one of the lowest performing in the state.

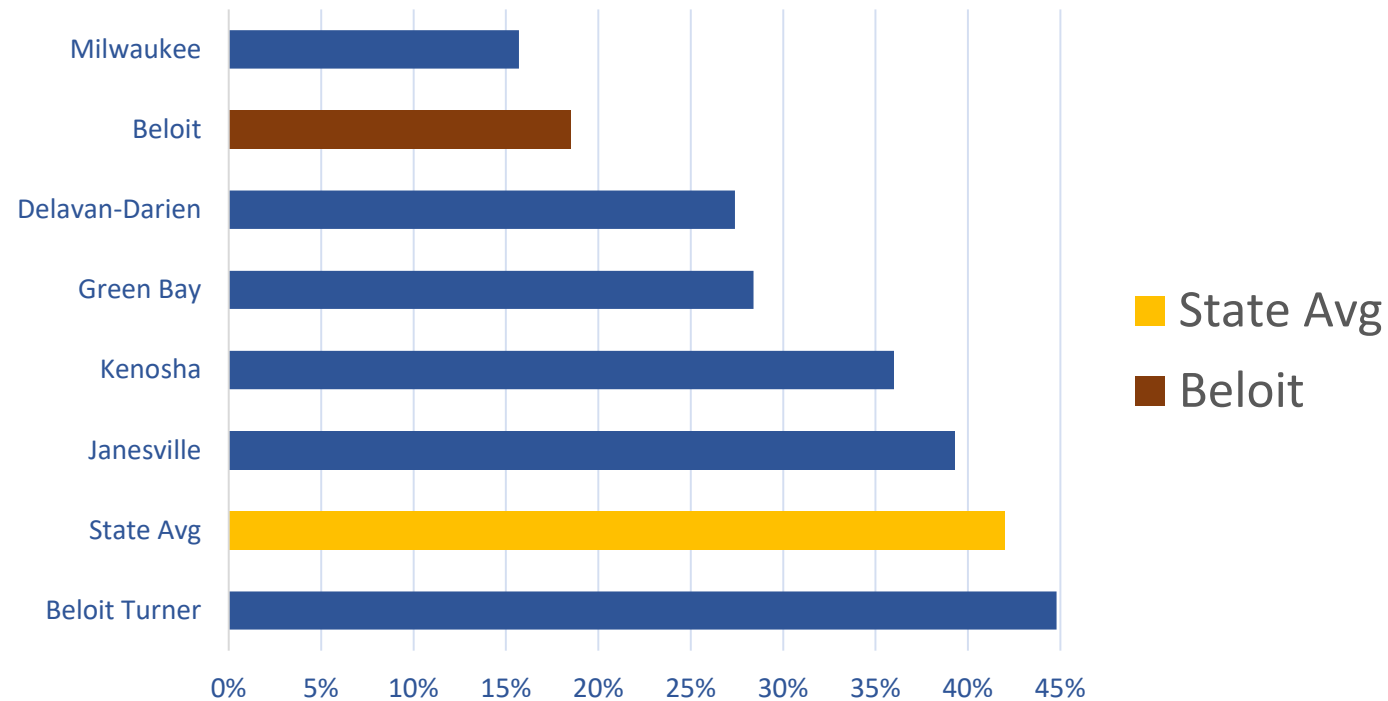


Math Proficiency: The majority of Beloit Schools perform below the state average.

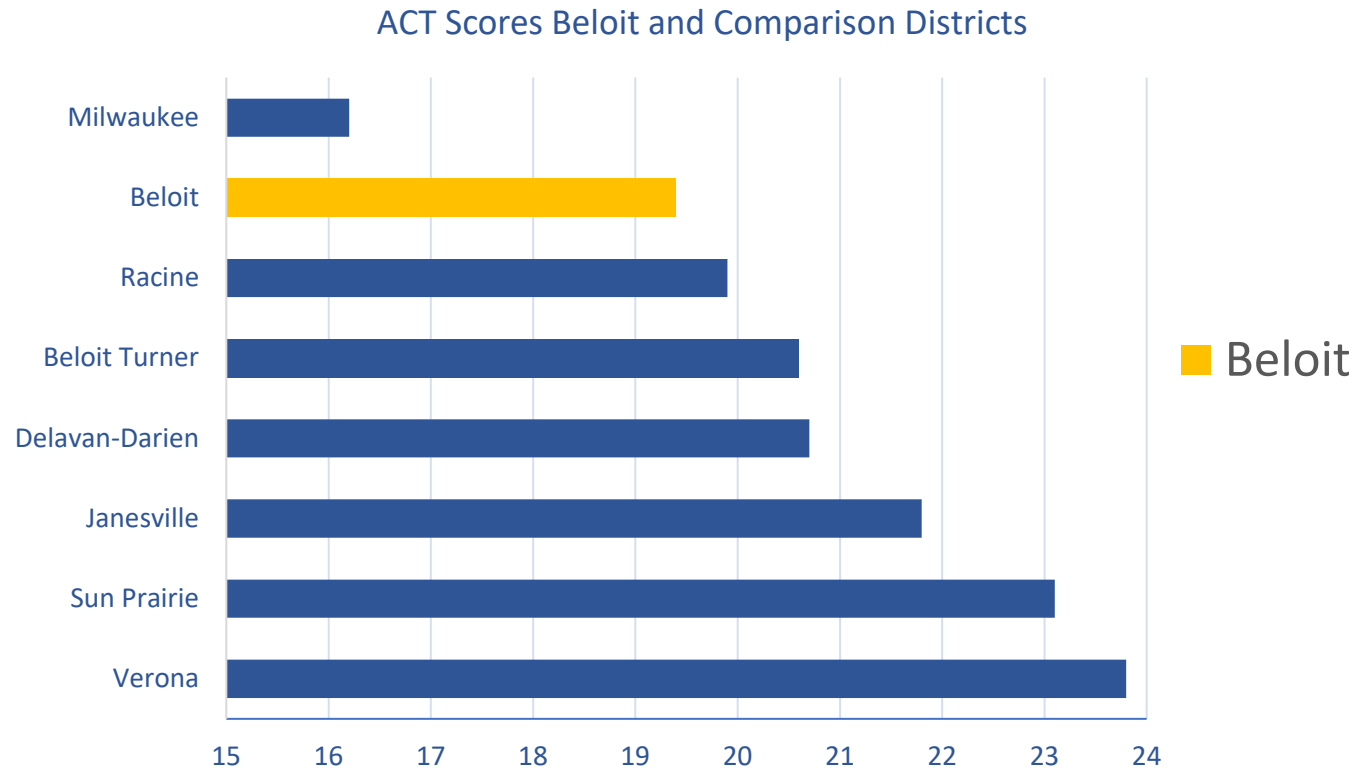


Math Proficiency: Beloit as a district is among the lowest performing districts in Wisconsin.

Math Proficiency Level 2017-18 Beloit and Comparison Districts



ACT Scores: Beloit is below state and national averages.



Beloit Is Coming Together to Serve Children

There are many things to be excited about.

- **Dr. Munro and the leadership at Beloit School District** are thinking about new policies and practices to expand quality options in the district.
- **LUMIN is up and running in Beloit** offering families a new quality private school option (Wisconsin School Choice Program).
- **Community Leaders in Beloit are coming together to investigate the creation of a new public school** option to serve families quickly.

Beloit Can Do Better

Improvement Starts With You.

Tell Us What You Need for Your Child.

- If you could create the school you want for your children, what would it look like?
- What classes and programs are most important?
- How do you want your child to feel when he/she is at school?

If you could create the very best school for your child, which of these would be most important?

- Focus on fundamental skills– Math, Reading/Writing
- Culture of high expectations - all children can and will achieve at high levels.
- Character education
- Safety
- Small class sizes
- Fine Arts – Music, Art, Drama
- Science and Technology Focus
- Location, availability of transportation
- Community service
- Extracurricular activities – sports, clubs, etc.
- Advanced Placement classes
- Dual language
- Job skills, internships, apprenticeships



How do you want your child to describe his/her school experience?

For example:

- I like going to school.
- School is hard but my teachers help me to be successful.
- My teachers care about me.
- I am expected to behave well. Others around me are expected to behave.
- There are people who will help me if I need it.
- I am good at learning.
- I can move at my own pace and learn about things that interest me.



Tell Us About Your Choices

- How many of you have children in the Beloit School District? Other local schools – Beloit Turner, Rock County Christian, LUMIN?
- How many of you have had children in the District in the past?
- Elementary parents? Middle School parents? High School parents?
- How many of you know the results of your children's school?
- How many of you are looking for different school options?
- How many of you have heard of charter schools?



Options Currently Available to Beloit Families

- **District Schools:** Beloit School District
- **Open Enrollment:** In Wisconsin, parents can enroll their students in another local school district. Parents must apply to the District they want to attend during the spring enrollment window. Parents are responsible for transportation.
- **WI School Choice (Private Schools that accept state voucher payments):** Income-eligible children attend for free. Rock County Christian, LUMIN
- **Charter Schools:** Independent public schools that can be run by someone other than the school district. Rock University (Janesville Charter at Blackhawk Tech)
- **Traditional Private Schools:** Tuition/family funded. Our Lady of Assumption

What should we think about as we consider creating a new school option?

1. What grades are most interesting to you?
 - K-5, 6-8, 9-12, and/or K-12
2. What programs or services would be most valuable?
 - Advanced Placement, Career and Technical Education, Foreign Language, Personalized Learning, Access to Technology, etc.
3. Are there specific parts of our city that need new options more than others?
4. Would you consider enrolling your child in a school other than the one he/she currently attends?

Tell Us More

- Your feedback is critical - please share more information with us.
- Your voice could help shape the education options available to your child and other children in our community.
- Please fill out the survey before you leave. Thank you!

What's Next?

We will.....

- ✓ Share your feedback with Beloit 200 and use your input to guide charter decision-making
- ✓ Potential Charter application submitted, late 2019
- ✓ Connect with those requesting additional information
- ✓ Stay in touch with those who want to be involved
- ✓ Launch website to provide information and updates

You can....

- ✓ Plan to visit www.KidsFirstBeloit.com
- ✓ Stay informed. Spread the word. Offer Support.



MEMORANDUM

To: Lisa Furseth, Hendricks Family Foundation

From: Gjergj Ndoci, Intern

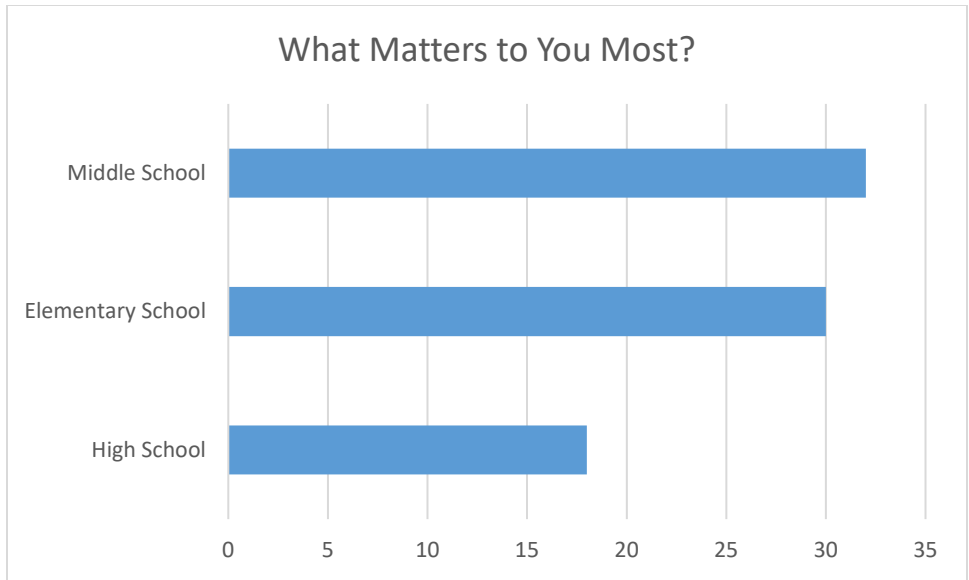
Re: Output of “Educating Our Children” Survey

Date: October 25, 2019

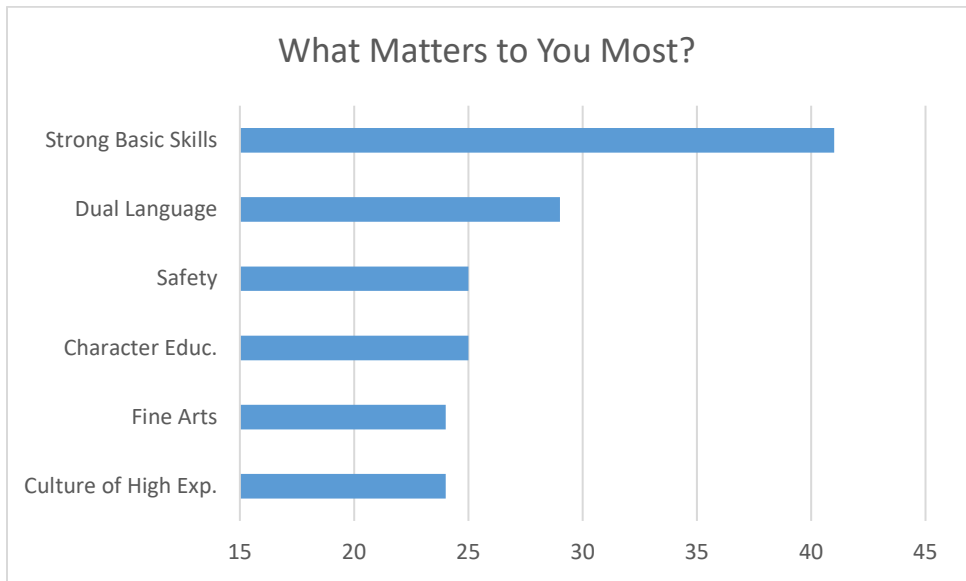
Per your request, I completed a statistical analysis of the survey data that was collected in local community meetings. The following graphs are the outputs of the analysis; data was pulled directly from the “Educating Our Children” Survey.

The survey included responses from 48 members of the Beloit Community. Out of the 48 participants in the survey, 32 of them had children that are currently part of institutions in the Beloit School Districts.

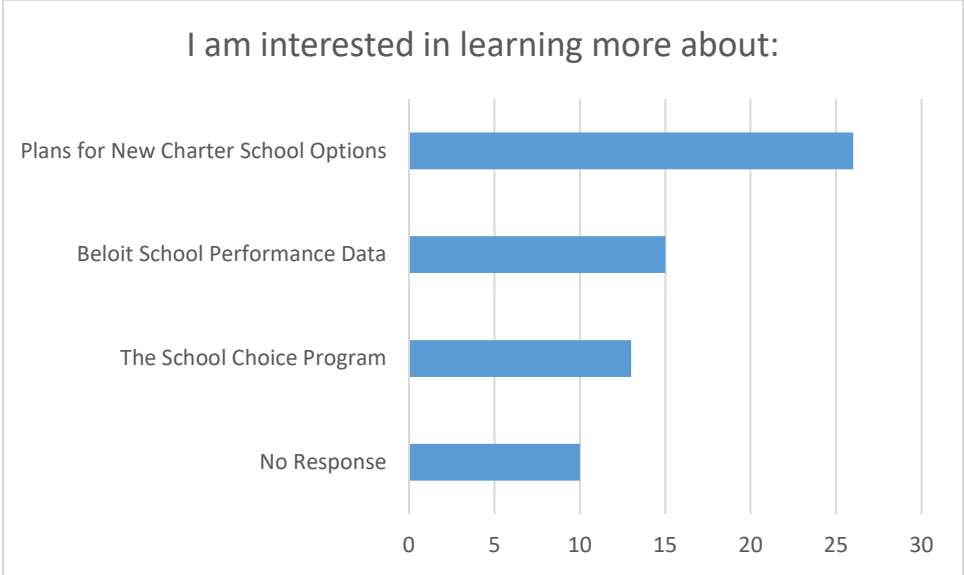
1. The following chart outlines the school level that participants prioritize the most Elementary/Middle/High School. It is worth noting that most participants had children attending Elementary/Middle School, skewing the results in favor of Elementary/Middle School.



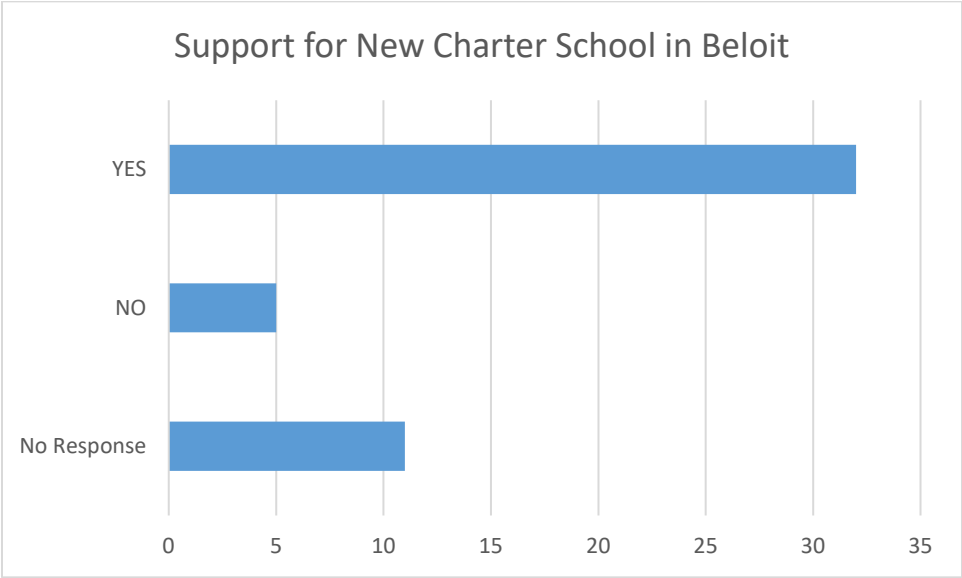
2. The following chart outlines the top features that participants in the survey value in a school.



3. The following chart identifies what participants were most interested to have information on. Considerable amount of participants, 20% did not respond to this question.



4. The following chart outlines participants that are in favor of a Charter School in Beloit.





MEMORANDUM

To: School Choice Wisconsin
From: Wes Anderson, Rick Heyn & Kyle McGehrin
Date: July 15, 2019
Re: Beloit Focus Groups

Methodology & Respondent Composition

We conducted focus groups in Beloit, Wisconsin on July 11th. The groups were made up of parents of school-aged children who are currently enrolled in the Beloit School District. The first group was made up of mothers of school age children and the second group made up of fathers. The age of the children of these respondents ranged from elementary school to high school. Although it was not by design, these respondents skewed largely towards lower income families due to the make-up of the target universe overall. On the whole, we were very pleased with the composition of these groups as they provided excellent insight into the opinions of average Beloit parents on a wide range of issues facing the education system in the district.

Respondent Political Party Affiliation

	Total	Male	Female
Republican	1	0	1
Democrat	12	4	8
Independent	11	6	5

Respondent Ideology

	Total	Male	Female
Liberal	4	1	3
Moderate	19	9	10
Conservative	1	0	1

Political Environment

We asked numerous questions to get a feel for where the respondents see themselves in relation to the world around them. These respondents see the country, the state and even the city of Beloit on the wrong track...with a little more hope for the city, but not by much.

Right Direction/Wrong Track - Country

	Total	Male	Female
Right Direction	3	2	1
Wrong Track	21	8	13

Right Direction/Wrong Track - Wisconsin

	Total	Male	Female
Right Direction	7	2	5
Wrong Track	17	8	9

Right Direction/Wrong Track – City of Beloit

	Total	Male	Female
Right Direction	9	5	4
Wrong Track	15	5	10

The most important issue facing the city of Beloit amongst these focus groups was education, followed by the economy. When asked which issue most directly affects the quality of their life, the cost of living wins the majority with public education coming in second. These voters do have some optimism moving forward as most claim that the city’s economy will stay the same or get better in the next year. However, it should be noted that more than half the women said they felt it would get worse.

Which of the following do you think is the most important issue facing the city of Beloit right now?

	Total	Male	Female
Creating jobs and getting our economy going	7	4	3
Cutting city taxes	0	0	0
Improving education	11	4	7
Reducing wasteful city spending	0	0	0
Fighting crime and drugs	4	2	2
Solving our transportation and traffic problems	0	0	0
Providing affordable housing	0	0	0
Providing affordable healthcare	2	0	2

Which of the following issues most directly affects your quality of life?

	Total	Male	Female
Transportation and traffic	1	0	1
Taxes	0	0	0
Public education	7	5	2
The cost of living	16	5	11
Crime	0	0	0

Thinking about Beloit’s economy, do you think it will get worse, stay the same or get better over the next year?

	Total	Male	Female
Worse	9	1	8
Same	9	4	5
Better	6	5	1

It is no surprise that the respondents in these groups have no real hard opinion of the city manager (Luther). Being parents of school aged children, they lead busy lives both with work and raising their kids, so they have little time keeping up with leadership in the city. During discussion, a few knew Stanley Munro by name and numerous others were aware a new school superintendent had been hired.

Lori Curtis Luther Image

	Total	Male	Female
Favorable	0	0	0
Unfavorable	2	1	1
No Opinion	22	9	13

Stanley Munro Image

	Total	Male	Female
Favorable	1	0	1
Unfavorable	4	1	3
No Opinion	19	9	10

Beloit Public School Findings

Following the introduction and initial questionnaire we asked these respondents about their overall impressions of the school district. Every respondent in these groups had children who are enrolled in a public school, so this is where the conversation naturally began. While there were noticeable differences between the male and female group, both groups held overwhelmingly negative opinions of the state of public education in Beloit. The mothers' stance on the issue can be summed up as a combination of "incompetence" and "complacency." Nearly every female respondent had a personal story of how they felt the district had failed them. These stories ranged from unfair punishment of their child to general lack of involvement from the teachers and administrators. However, almost every anecdote was tied together by a single theme, lack of communication with the parents. Another issue which was common among parents was that they felt unable to voice their opinions regarding their children's educations. Taking this one step further, one respondent brought up that "the affluent parents' voices are sure heard", while another brought up that in addition to income, race was also an issue regarding who had the ear of administrators and school board officials.

Thinking about Beloit's Public School system, do you think it will get worse, stay the same or get better over the next year?

	Total	Male	Female
Worse	11	4	7
Same	7	3	4
Better	6	3	3

In general, do you believe the Beloit Public Schools are getting too much money, about the right amount of money or not enough money to adequately run the school system?

	Total	Male	Female
Getting too much money	2	0	2
About the right amount	5	3	2
Not enough money	17	7	10

The fathers' group was equally negative, but their focus was on a different perceived issue. The male respondents pointed to nepotism and even outright corruption within the leadership of the district. As with the women, they were quick to bring up lack of communication and complained about their voices not being heard, but this group believed that this was based largely on nepotism and corruption, not simply incompetence or lack of enthusiasm. One specific issue that was brought up was truancy tickets. The vast majority of the male respondents believed that this practice was simply a way to pad the coffers of the district, and even the administrators themselves, and is not in the best interest of the students or parents. As with the women, race and income was brought up organically when asked why they felt their voices weren't heard. Having this sentiment brought up in both groups leads to a key finding.

Key Finding - Both the tone of the message, as well as the choice of messenger is very important for any reform or proposal.

In addition to these respondents feeling as if their voices weren't heard, both groups also brought up more tangible problems with education in Beloit. Class sizes, teacher training, ineffective discipline of both students and teacher are seen as issues among parents. Although these respondents could easily list problems they see with the district, they could not name any solutions that they thought were realistic. In fact, many went even farther, believing that there were no solutions to the problems the district is facing. Or at the very least, no short-term solutions.

Key Finding - These parents do not think it will get better any time soon.

Although they believe educational quality should be better, there was a sense of pessimism that was palpable. While they are hopeful that the new superintendent will be an improvement, they think any improvements will be slow and incremental, with several even going as far as saying it will not improve at all. This also applies to the previous key finding as these respondents do not expect that the school board and administrators are going to start to take their complaints seriously. These respondents are pessimistic about all aspects of education.

Pre-Discussion

Beloit Public Schools Image

	Total	Male	Female
Favorable	5	3	2
Unfavorable	19	7	12
No Opinion	0	0	0

Post-Discussion

Beloit Public Schools Image

	Total	Male	Female
Favorable	5	1	4
Unfavorable	18	8	10
No Opinion	1	1	0

Pre-Discussion

Grade for Beloit Public Schools (1.21 GPA)

	Total	Male	Female
A	0	0	0
B	2	1	1
C	7	3	4
D	9	3	6
F	6	3	3

Beloit Private School Findings

The discussion on private schools was very one sided. Largely because of the income demographics of these groups the respondents almost unanimously believed that private schools would never be an option for them. Due to this, most of the respondents held a negative opinion of private schools in the Beloit area. Several said that they believed sending a child to a private school would be "coddling" them while others believe them to be only for "rich white boys". Even when told that many private schools would be essentially free through the state's voucher system the respondents were hesitant. They felt that they would be unlikely to receive the voucher and even if they could, they thought it would not be permanent and could be taken away in the future.

Pre-Discussion

Beloit Private Schools Image

	Total	Male	Female
Favorable	6	2	4
Unfavorable	4	3	1
No Opinion	14	5	9

Post-Discussion

Beloit Private Schools Image

	Total	Male	Female
Favorable	9	4	5
Unfavorable	4	2	2
No Opinion	11	4	7

Pre-Discussion

Grade for Beloit Private Schools (2.08 GPA)

	Total	Male	Female
A	1	1	0
B	7	1	6
C	11	4	7
D	3	3	0
F	2	1	1

We then asked these groups about the possibility of reestablishing a private high school in Beloit. Given their stances on private school, it should be no surprise that these respondents did not have a strong reaction to this proposal. Even when reminded about the voucher system, few respondents saw this a viable option for their children. One respondent was excited about the prospect but this was simply because he believes that Beloit should have more high schools, regardless if they are private or public due to the overcrowding of Beloit Memorial. That said, even he did not see the private high school as an option for his children. Although there may be a market for a private school in Beloit, these lower income respondents see that as a world that is not for them and out of reach

Charter School Findings

While the discussion of the state of the public schools was largely one sided, these respondents held a much more nuanced stance on charter schools. Several respondents stated that they haven't had any experience with charters and largely stayed on the sidelines, but others held strong opinions on both sides of the debate. This was more so in the mothers' groups but was apparent in both. In general, the respondents who held a firm opinion viewed these schools more favorably than traditional public schools and several viewed them in very high esteem. Even those who did not hold a strong opinion about charters agreed with one male respondent who brought up that we need to try something new to shake up the failing traditional public schools. Although they were not quick to defend charters as a whole, their overall distaste for the status quo was a powerful convincing force. However, there was a small minority of respondents who remain unconvinced that they are effective enough to warrant taking funding away from traditional public schools with one respondent calling them an "unproven experiment". In addition, some worried that reducing funding for traditional public schools would result in a downward spiral which would result in the most in need students being left in failing schools with even less funding than then have now.

**Pre-Discussion
Beloit Charter Schools Image**

	Total	Male	Female
Favorable	2	2	0
Unfavorable	8	4	4
No Opinion	14	4	10

**Post-Discussion
Beloit Charter Schools Image**

	Total	Male	Female
Favorable	6	6	0
Unfavorable	3	2	1
No Opinion	15	2	13

**Pre-Discussion
Grade for Beloit Charter Schools (1.54
GPA)**

	Total	Male	Female
A	1	1	0
B	2	1	1
C	10	2	8
D	7	4	3
F	4	2	2

**Post-Discussion
Favor or Oppose Charter School**

	Total	Male	Female
Favor	16	8	8
Oppose	8	2	6

School Choice Findings

The discussion surrounding school choice was fairly positive. The majority of respondents had very few bad things to say about it but were uncertain if they would be able to take advantage of it due to the limited amount of openings in the other surrounding districts. There were a few respondents who saw the lack of bussing to be unfair as only the children of parents who could drive them would be able to take advantage of the program. Essentially, these respondents don't see school choice as something they will be able to participate in for their children's education, at least not in Beloit. Unless of course they win the open enrollment lottery in a school system outside of Beloit.

**Pre-Discussion
School Choice Image**

	Total	Male	Female
Favorable	14	5	9
Unfavorable	4	3	1
No Opinion	6	2	4

**Post-Discussion
School Choice Image**

	Total	Male	Female
Favorable	19	7	12
Unfavorable	4	3	1
No Opinion	1	0	1

Public School Board/Parent Advisory Board Findings

As mentioned earlier, among these respondents, the Beloit Public School Board is not seen in a very good light, with only 1 or 2 board members as exceptions. For the most part, these parents feel as if the whole school board needs to be scrapped. They are optimistic about the new School Superintendent but have misgivings about how well he will do with the school board. When we asked them whether they thought parents have a voice with the School Board, we were met with a resounding no. We brought up the idea about a Parent Advisory Board and most of the respondents thought that it would be a good idea. However, they were skeptical whether the School Board would actually listen to what they have to say.

Beloit Turner School Findings

While we did ask the following questions about the Beloit Turner Public schools, we did not directly discuss the schools in that district. They did however come up in the discussions, and generally around the issue of open enrollment. One interesting note is that amongst these respondents, the Beloit Turner Public Schools received the same GPA as the Beloit Private Schools.

Pre-Discussion

Beloit Turner Public Schools Image

	Total	Male	Female
Favorable	7	2	5
Unfavorable	4	4	0
No Opinion	13	4	9

Pre-Discussion

Grade for Beloit Turner Public Schools (2.08 GPA)

	Total	Male	Female
A	0	0	0
B	8	3	5
C	11	3	8
D	4	4	0
F	1	0	1

Conclusion

We asked these parents that if they had a choice to send their children to any type of school, fifty percent of them would send them to private schools. More importantly, nearly all the women chose private. That's important as mothers are generally more involved in such decisions.

If you had the choice to send your children to any type of school you could, which of the following schools would you send them to?

	Total	Male	Female
Traditional Public Schools	8	5	3
Private Schools	12	2	10
Charter Schools	2	2	0
Home School	2	1	1

Any discussion about reopening the private Catholic high school needs to have a well thought out communication plan for its roll out. Since vouchers will be a part of have it, there needs to be a thorough education to the public about what exactly that means. Parents need to know that the vouchers will cover most if not all of the tuition for the school and once their child is enrolled, they will not lose their spot in the school and won't have to reapply each year. Another important point is that the public needs to see this new private Catholic high school be open to anyone and everyone...they don't want to see any hint that it is just for the children of the wealthy in the community.

There are no real concerns that it will be a religious school as everyone understands what a Catholic school entails and understand that those that send their children choose to do so. However, since these are vouchers paid for with tax dollars, they of course want to see that any private school receiving such funds are held accountable as far as educating the children, and that they are graded just like public schools on how they are doing.