



## Office Hours at the Capitol - October 4, 2018 Contact Information and Key Takeaways

### Local government fiscal stress



#### Yunji Kim

Assistant Professor of Urban and Regional Planning  
Dept. of Planning and Landscape Architecture, UW–Madison  
Local Government Specialist, UW–Extension

[ykim535@wisc.edu](mailto:ykim535@wisc.edu)

<http://www.yunjikim.com/>

**Areas of expertise:** Fiscal stress of local governments, state policy constraints on local governments (e.g., revenues, expenditures, policy authority), levy limits, tax and expenditure limits (TEs), and community well-being indicators.

**Short bio:** Professor Kim’s research focuses on how local governments collect revenues and deliver services within the constraints of their demographics, the economy, and state policy and how these choices shape community well-being. Her newest project involves traveling around Wisconsin and talking with local government leaders to understand their fiscal stressors and how they are responding. She has given numerous presentations to county, town, and village officials on local government budget and finance. Kim received her Ph.D. in City and Regional Planning from Cornell University.

#### Yunji Kim’s top takeaways for legislators based on her research

- ★ Local governments are pragmatic and maintain services during fiscal stress by using alternative service delivery methods (e.g., privatization, inter-municipal cooperation) and alternative revenue tools (e.g., user fees, hotel occupancy taxes, developer fees, tax increment financing). However, the success of these strategies is constrained by the local economy, state policy, and geography.
- ★ Tax and expenditure limits (TEs; e.g., “levy limit”) constrain counties more than cities, because counties have fewer revenue tools and more state-mandated expenditures. The broader effects of TEs on government efficiency and democracy are unclear.
- ★ Compared to other states, Wisconsin local governments have limited revenue tools and are highly dependent on state aid and property taxes.



## Special education: Literacy, dyslexia, and teacher preparation



### Melinda Leko

Associate Professor and Chair, Dept. of Rehabilitation Psychology and Special Education, UW–Madison

[leko@wisc.edu](mailto:leko@wisc.edu)

<https://rpse.education.wisc.edu/rpse/people/faculty/melinda-leko>

**Areas of expertise:** Preparing educators to teach reading to children with disabilities, literacy for students with disabilities, special education teacher quality, implementation of evidence-based strategies in the classroom, and reading instruction for adolescents with disabilities.

**Short bio:** Professor Leko’s current research focuses on educator preparation for students with disabilities, particularly through inclusive practices. In addition to her research and teaching, she is a project lead with the U.S. Department of Education-funded CEEDAR (Collaboration for Effective Educator Development, Accountability, and Reform) Center that provides technical assistance to 20 states to reform their teacher and leader preparation programs. She leads the CEEDAR affinity group on literacy. Leko is a former teacher and Orton-Gillingham trainer who has taught both inclusive classrooms and gifted students. She earned her Ph.D. in Special Education from the University of Florida.

### Melinda Leko’s top takeaways for legislators based on her research

- ★ Students with disabilities who do not read at or above a basic level are more likely to be retained, feel isolated from the larger school community, and ultimately drop out of school. A direct response is providing prospective special educators with high quality, extensive preparation that addresses the reading needs of students with disabilities.
- ★ Ongoing professional development is a critical component of special education teacher quality. Effective professional development is extended in duration, provides active learning opportunities in teachers' classrooms, focuses on analyzing student data, and provides collaborative learning opportunities with other educators.
- ★ Within Wisconsin and nationally, there is a severe shortage of certified special educators due to an insufficient supply of special educators entering the field and high rates of special educators leaving the field. Shortages are highest in urban, rural, diverse, and resource-poor school districts.
- ★ Dyslexia is a lifelong condition that makes reading fluently and accurately difficult for students. Dyslexia is not due to a visual problem or students reading letters backwards. Effective instructional approaches for supporting students with dyslexia include explicit, systematic, multisensory structured language education.

## PreK-12: Teacher attraction, retention, and evaluation



### Steve Kimball

Associate Scientist, Consortium for Policy Research in Education  
Co-Director, Wisconsin Evaluation Collaborative  
Wisconsin Center for Education Research (WCER), UW–Madison  
[steven.kimball@wisc.edu](mailto:steven.kimball@wisc.edu)  
<https://www.wcer.wisc.edu/About/Staff/673>

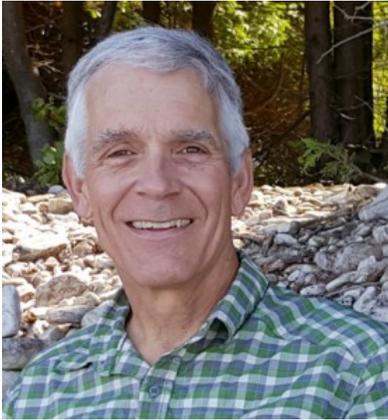
**Areas of expertise:** Educator effectiveness, teacher and principal performance evaluations, teacher attraction and retention, teacher compensation, effect of teacher expertise on student achievement, and principals as human resource managers.

**Short bio:** Dr. Kimball conducts evaluations on the preK-12 education system for governments, school districts, and nonprofit organizations. He currently leads a study of teacher and principal evaluation for the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. Previously, he directed studies on teacher and principal compensation and incentives (U.S. Department of Education), a literacy coaching program (Milwaukee Public Schools), and innovative practices in human capital management of teachers and leaders in high poverty Chicago schools. Prior to his current position, Kimball served as a legislative assistant for a member of Congress and a U.S. Senator. He earned his Ph.D. in Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis from UW–Madison.

### **Steve Kimball's top takeaways for legislators based on his research**

- ★ All Wisconsin school districts are required to regularly evaluate teachers and principals, but have local discretion in the structure, supports, and uses of evaluation results. Evaluation practices that show promise in supporting teacher growth and development have five common characteristics: 1) an environment of trust between teachers and evaluators, 2) application of a research-based model of teaching effectiveness, 3) educator-developed goals focused on student learning and their own professional practice, 4) a cycle of continuous improvement in which constructive feedback is shared, and 5) integration of the evaluation processes with school and district instructional priorities.
- ★ The Wisconsin Educator Effectiveness System, when implemented as intended, can improve teacher satisfaction by providing teachers with effective feedback. School leadership is key to providing feedback and creating conditions that support teaching practice.
- ★ Many districts revised teacher compensation practices following Wisconsin Act 10. These moved away from the traditional single salary schedule and are designed to support a career progression structure. Although there are some elements of pay for performance, a recent study suggests that the changes do not represent radical movement toward performance pay. The impact of the changes has not been subject to research.
- ★ There are several common influences on teacher attraction, retention, and turnover, including: principal leadership; positive working conditions (i.e., trust, collaboration); professional learning opportunities; teacher induction and mentoring programs; teacher engagement in decision making (teacher voice); student behavior; and salary.

## Groundwater quality



### **Ken Bradbury**

Director, Wisconsin Geological and Natural History Survey, UW–Extension

Affiliated Faculty, Dept. of Geoscience, UW–Madison

[ken.bradbury@wgnhs.uwex.edu](mailto:ken.bradbury@wgnhs.uwex.edu)

<https://wgnhs.uwex.edu/about/people/ken-bradbury/>

**Areas of Expertise:** Groundwater movement and contaminant migration, high-cap wells, frac sand mining, karst, presence and transport of viruses in groundwater, water issues on the central sands, mining issues, wellhead protection, and effects of unsewered subdivisions on groundwater.

**Short bio:** Professor Bradbury became the Director of the Wisconsin Geological History Survey and Wisconsin’s State Geologist in 2015. His research in Wisconsin has contributed to important insights into groundwater flow through fractured rocks, the transport of viruses in groundwater, and wellhead protection. Over the past 30 years, he has become a leader in communicating technical information for water policy and management decisions. Nationally, he has served on or chaired several National Academies committees, most recently on a project to determine the priority groundwater needs of the U.S. for the next 25 years. Bradbury was awarded the Research Award from the Wisconsin Water Association and has presented short courses on groundwater issues both domestically and abroad, including for UNESCO and as a Fulbright Senior Specialist. He earned his Ph.D. in Hydrogeology from UW–Madison.

### **Ken Bradbury’s top takeaways for legislators based on his research**

- ★ Groundwater conditions in Wisconsin are closely related to variations in local geology. For example, irrigation wells in central Wisconsin draw water from a shallow sandy aquifer, while in Madison we use water from wells tapping deep sandstone formations. In eastern and southwestern Wisconsin, groundwater moves through fractured limestone with karst features. Each of these and other geologic settings has unique characteristics controlling groundwater quantity and quality.
- ★ Groundwater in areas of karst and fractured rock is particularly susceptible to contamination from surface sources. Likewise, shallow sandy formations are highly susceptible to contamination. Conversely, areas where fine-grained materials such as clay occur at the surface are less susceptible.
- ★ Groundwater and surface water are well-connected throughout most of the state; thus, groundwater and surface water should be considered and managed as a single resource.

## Addiction science and treatment outcomes: Opioids and other drugs



### **Aleksandra Zgierska**

Assistant Professor, Family Medicine and Community Health  
UW—Madison School of Medicine and Public Health

[aleksandra.zgierska@fammed.wisc.edu](mailto:aleksandra.zgierska@fammed.wisc.edu)

<https://hip.wisc.edu/?q=zgierska>

**Areas of expertise:** Addiction medicine, meditation and cognitive-behavioral therapy interventions for chronic pain, clinician training programs on management of substance misuse, and clinician opioid prescribing practices.

**Short bio:** Professor Zgierska’s research focuses on substance use disorders, opioid-treated chronic pain, and the development of effective training programs for clinicians to address these issues. Her newest projects involve evaluating clinician adherence to opioid prescribing guidelines and evaluating a Madison-based “treat instead of arrest” program for minor drug-related crimes. She is the past president of the Wisconsin Chapter of the American Society of Addiction Medicine and in 2018 was appointed to the Wisconsin Governor’s Commission on Substance Abuse Treatment Delivery. Zgierska received her M.D. and Ph.D. degrees in Warsaw, Poland, and completed her family medicine residency in Madison.

### ***Aleksandra Zgierska’s top takeaways for legislators based on her research:***

- ★ Addiction is a chronic disease. Similar to other chronic diseases, such as diabetes or hypertension, treatment of addiction needs to be individually tailored and long-term—typically life-long with regular follow-up visits and, if needed, medications.
- ★ Addiction treatment is effective, but only if individuals are treated. Medications (methadone, buprenorphine, naltrexone) can result in dramatic reductions in the rates of overdoses, death, crime and other negative consequences of untreated opioid addiction. When accessible, addiction treatment (including medications) saves lives, improves health outcomes, and reduces the economic impact of untreated addiction in Wisconsin.
- ★ Addiction-related stigma is a significant barrier, as it deters individuals and their families from seeking help and benefiting from evidence-based treatments. Stigma can also affect policies related to addiction. Open dialogue about addiction can increase patient engagement in treatment and lead to better community health.

Staff Contact: Heidi Normandin  
Director of Legislative Outreach, La Follette School of Public Affairs  
[hjnorman@wisc.edu](mailto:hjnorman@wisc.edu) or 608-263-2353

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