

An Information Paper

Northeast Wisconsin Technical College

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## **NWTC Background and History**

Northeast Wisconsin Technical College is one of 16 districts that operate within Wisconsin in a statewide plan for vocational, technical and adult education. The District serves all or parts of nine counties in Northeast Wisconsin around the bay of Green Bay. It was organized July 1, 1967, and operates campuses at Green Bay, Marinette, and Sturgeon Bay. Green Bay is designated as the comprehensive campus and is the location of the District Office.

Vocational education has been a significant part of American instruction for over a century, and Wisconsin has long been a pacesetter in the nation's job training movement. The State was steered into its present thrust toward education at this level when it passed its first compulsory education legislation in 1911. Industrial revitalization brought to reality the fact that new educational needs had to be met with fresh ideas in the constantly changing American way of life. Alarmed by the number of students who did not "complete" their educations, the legislature in those early pace-setting laws required that each city provide forms of compulsory education.

The 1911 statutes set up a state board of industrial education, the first of its kind in the nation, and required municipalities to establish continuation schools. The law also set attendance requirements. The application of the requirements varied according to population classes of the municipalities and a number of other factors. The result was that many municipalities started their own occupational schools, and a number of others offered courses and programs on a more limited basis.

The early schools were primarily extensions of the secondary education system, and instruction was directed toward students who left school to work or who had otherwise dropped out of the then traditional system.

Green Bay and Marinette were among the first in the state to respond, and they organized city vocational schools in 1913 to provide this form of compulsory education. The city of Sturgeon Bay organized its own school in 1941. Other communities in the area were also active under that law. Among them were Niagara in Marinette county and Oconto in Oconto county. Both organized boards and conducted some adult programs, although they did not form schools of their own.

As the changes continued through the years, these individual city vocational schools adapted to meet them. They operated more or less independently, yet they maintained strong ties with the state governing board, as the statutes required. The schools developed programs and facilities to meet their local needs. This development added trade extension classes for the indentured apprentice programs and the development of adult education classes for both vocational and avocational interests.

A major force affecting the growth of the schools was the depression in the Thirties. Vocational education in Wisconsin moved toward occupational training programs for the unemployed. The Forties brought the massive training programs for the “war effort”. VA training, population mobility, and resettlement brought more great changes that started in the late Forties and continued through the Fifties.

By the end of the Fifties most of the larger city vocational schools had phased out their compulsory education programs, those students being retained and served by the local high schools. The thrust of the vocational schools was moving toward educational programs for specific vocations, and a greater emphasis was placed on a more adult clientele.

The ever-changing needs of the cities and their citizens in the Sixties made new demands for training. It was a growth period for the cities of Sturgeon Bay, Marinette, and Green Bay and the vocational schools kept pace. The local vocational schools expanded their vocational offerings and began to offer new programs in technical education. They continued the services provided for the apprentice programs and broadened their service to adults through “night school” programs. The Green Bay school became one of the larger schools in the state, expanding its service area into much of the surrounding parts of Northeast Wisconsin.

Change also affected the state vocational education organization. The Wisconsin legislature in 1965 created Chapter 292 of the state statutes, which reorganized a State Board of Vocational, Technical, and Adult Education and expanded its powers. Its mission was to initiate and supervise programs with “specific occupational orientations” below the baccalaureate level. Other services included training apprentices and offering adult education activities below the professional level. The powers given to the State Board in 1965 include the authority to authorize local districts to grant associate degrees, to establish requirements for post-high school instruction, and to approve programs. Further, the Board was named the state agency that cooperates with the federal government to execute federal statutes pertaining to vocational,

technical and adult education. In Wisconsin, this Vocational, Technical and Adult Education Board is independent of the Department of Public Instruction and the university system, although there are efforts to coordinate activities of the three agencies.

The same law stipulated that all the territory of the state be apportioned into 18 vocational, technical and adult education districts. These districts were to replace the local city vocational schools with the organization deadline July 1, 1970. Consolidations and realignments have since reduced the number to 16.

The first efforts toward organization for the College began in 1966 when the county governments of Brown, Door, Kewaunee, and Oconto counties adopted resolutions that requested the state to approve organization as a district under the plan. The State Vocational, Technical and Adult Education Board acted on the resolutions on April 18, 1967, and established Area Vocational, Technical and Adult Education District 13, as the District was then called.

The transition from the separate city vocational schools to the area concepts was underway. The Green Bay, Sturgeon Bay, and Oconto boards were abolished and the independent city vocational schools at Green Bay and Sturgeon Bay no longer existed.

A new board to oversee the District was appointed by the county board chairpersons of the four counties, and it became a functioning unit with the election of officers at its organizational meeting on June 19, 1967. The power of the local board under the state law includes the authority to levy a local property tax, accept grants, employ a president and staff, own property, build facilities, purchase equipment, and exercise exclusive control of the vocational, technical and adult schools it establishes.

The Seventies brought the transition to the modern school. The compulsory programs, the basis for the old system, had been completely displaced. The District was now empowered to offer associate degrees in two-year technical programs and vocational diplomas in one and two-year vocational programs. The programs in apprentice training, occupational extension, and adult continuing education were expanded.

The stage was set for the new thrust, but District 13 first had to overcome the problems it had inherited from the old city vocational schools. Programs were expanding but they needed guidance in light of the tremendous changes that had taken place. The facilities were deteriorating, and the schools still carried the "trade school" image that remained from the compulsory education days.

The Green Bay school, as the District comprehensive school, was renamed Northeast Wisconsin Technical Institute. The acronym NWTI was adopted to more easily identify the institution and a logotype was designed to portray the newly developing image.

The concept of campus center operations was first put into practice at Sturgeon Bay. The services of the school there were expanded to include the entire Door county area, and the school was renamed Northeast Wisconsin Vocational and Technical School-Sturgeon Bay to reflect its new role.

Marinette joined the District on July 1, 1968, when the Marinette County Board took action to join the growing District. The Marinette city vocational school became Northeast Wisconsin Vocational and Technical School-Marquette, and its service area and responsibility were expanded.

The reorganization was completed on July 1, 1970. when Florence county and the parts of Shawano county served by the public schools at Shawano, Bonduel, and Gillett joined the District. The schools at Marinette, Sturgeon Bay, and Green Bay were now operating interdependently under the three-school concept of the District.

In September, 1971, the names of the Sturgeon Bay and Marinette schools were changed to coincide with the Green Bay school to further the single image concept under the NWTI symbol. The schools were named Northeast Wisconsin Technical Institute-Marquette and Northeast Wisconsin Technical Institute-Sturgeon Bay.

New facilities at all three campuses were next. New facilities were constructed at Sturgeon Bay and Marinette and occupied in 1971. The Green Bay campus was ready in 1972. All three campuses have been expanded since then to meet growing demands. It was during the Seventies that the Institute applied for and received accreditation.

As the Institute moved into the Eighties, it faced new challenges. The growth experienced in the previous decade has continued with an increase in the number of returning adult students and in spite of a decline in the numbers of high school graduates. Programs and number of students have expanded, and the District now offers in excess of 68 post-secondary programs to over 7,647 students and nearly 44,000 adult and continuing education students. With the growth, a reorganization of the administrative functions was necessary to handle the total educational needs of the District at all locations and increase its emphasis on services to

business and industry. In addition, a strategic planning process was instituted to provide for long-range planning in the educational, fiscal, and personnel areas.

Responding to a change of policy enacted by the State Board of Vocational, Technical and Adult Education (now titled the Wisconsin Technical College System State Board) and to better reflect the orientation of the institution, the District Board changed the name of the school on November 11, 1987, from Northeast Wisconsin Technical Institute to Northeast Wisconsin Technical College. The administrative title of the District has since changed to the Northeast Wisconsin Technical College District. Its service area has remained as all of Brown, Door, Oconto, Kewaunee, Marinette, and Florence counties, and part of Shawano county. Small portions of Outagamie and Manitowoc counties are also part of the territory. The adjoining District serves a very small portion of Brown County.

As the College advances into the next decade, more challenges will occur. The college's research reports indicate that change will take place in business and industry needs, the composition of the student population, and physical facility needs. Change has always been part of the College's history, and the college is geared toward managing the approaching changes.

## **Governance and Administration**

### **Governance**

The District Board is the governing body of the Northeast Wisconsin Technical College District. This is in accordance with Chapter 292 of the 1965 laws of the State of Wisconsin. The Board consists of nine members. They are residents of the District, including two employers who have the power to employ and discharge, two employees who do not have the power to employ or discharge, three additional members, a school district administrator of a school district that lies within the District, and an elected official. Of the nine members, each gender must be represented by a minimum of three individuals. No more than two additional members may be employees, and no more than two additional members may be employers. In addition, no two board members may be officials of the same governmental body.

Any adult who is a resident of the District is legally qualified to become a member of the board. Appointments are made by an appointment committee consisting of county board chairpersons of counties having territory within the District. The appointment committee forms a Plan of Representation for the membership of the District Board that takes into consideration the population distribution within the District and considers minority group representation. The Wisconsin Technical College System State Board confirms the appointments.

District Board policies contain specific regulations for Board members regarding private interests and public contracts, gifts, orientation and training, and similar subjects.

Terms are for three years. Officers are a chairman, vice-chairman, secretary and treasurer.

Regular meetings of the Board are held on the second Wednesday of each month, with the exception of the July Board meeting, which is held on the second Monday of the month. This meeting is the organizational meeting of the Board, at which time officers are elected. Meetings are held in the afternoon in the NWTC District Board Room located on the Green Bay Campus, 2740 West Mason Street, Green Bay, Wisconsin. Annually the Board alternately holds a meeting on either the Marinette or Sturgeon Bay Campus. This allows Board members to visit the branch campuses during the year. Laws do provide for additional special meetings, budget meetings, and executive sessions. Meetings are open to the public. Agendas for these meetings are prepared by the President of the College, with input from his administrative cabinet, and are

mailed out to Board members on the Thursday preceding the Board meeting day. This enables the Board ample time to review agenda materials sent out prior to the Board meeting.

The District Board has exclusive control over the policy-making operations that govern the District. The Board is responsible for developing policies in accordance with educational needs of the people to be served by the District, furnishing the financial resources by which the educational programs are run, making final decisions concerning appointment, compensation, retention, or dismissal of all staff, reviewing and passing upon the recommendation of the President, and performing other responsibilities as prescribed by state statutes.

The Board is charged with the responsibility of offering full-time and evening programs at each of the three main campuses at Green Bay, Marinette, and Sturgeon Bay, as well as at 30 adult centers where courses are conducted.

A pivotal function of the District Board involves policy and evaluation. The term policy in this context is a strategy for meeting the mission and purposes of the College. In the same manner, evaluation of the policies determines the degree of success to which the mission and purposes are being achieved.

The policy and evaluation function involves the application of critical analysis and review. It is in this process that the Board interacts with the administration and staff to determine policy and the effectiveness of the policy. The Board has at its disposal a variety of information such as the multi-year financial plan, the facilities plan, program and service evaluations, student follow-up programs, and committee data to aid in its decision making.

The successful discharge of the many and varied responsibilities of Board membership is enhanced through an ongoing program of professional development for Board members. Professional development begins for the new Board member with a series of informational in-service meetings designed to acquaint the members with the various functions of the College. These meetings are usually held prior to the regularly scheduled Board meeting and scheduled to last approximately one hour each. The sequence presents the personnel department, finance department, the economic development and community services department, and the campus operations department, each presenting their respective function and operation and answering questions. Incumbent Board members often attend these same sessions as a form of review.

The professional development continues for all Board members with regularly scheduled in-service presentations by representatives of the various educational programs and services of

the College. These presentations generally focus on current activities, future directions, and concerns, and are usually presented by the Dean or Associate Dean with other faculty as appropriate. These presentations are usually scheduled as a part of the regular agenda and last about fifteen minutes followed by questions and answers. Also included in these sessions are special informational presentations of a topical nature responding to items of current interest.

Board members actively participate in the Wisconsin Technical College District Boards Association, the Association of Community College Trustees, and the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges to round out a full and varied schedule.

A unique function performed by Board members is to be an advocate for the College and of vocational, technical and adult education in general. This function is one that has never been reduced to writing, but it has been accepted and performed by every person who has served on the Board. Board members act as a conduit for the College in their own geographic areas and provide strong support for the institution by providing information to the public and direct comments, concerns, and complaints back to the President, who, then, refers the item to the appropriate place for disposition.

Overall, the Board plays a crucial role in the operation of the College and in aiding the College to achieve its mission and purposes. This is reflected in their deliberate and cautious decision-making style that has become characteristic of the District Board and is reflected in a variety of ways such as ensuring that those administrative details involving bidding, purchasing, and other similar functions meet the standards one would expect in the public sector. Also, some decisions are carried from one meeting to the next in order to allow the Board members time to review supportive material and receive input from staff members. This results in a profitable interaction between the Board, the population it represents, and the College.

## **Administration**

The Northeast Wisconsin Technical College District administrative structure includes the District Board, the President of the College, Vice-Presidents, Chief Financial Officer, Director of College Diversity, Chief Information Officer, Deans, Associate Deans, Supervisors, and Managers.

## **Educational Programs**

The College offers occupationally oriented programs and courses at each of its three campuses located in Green Bay, Sturgeon Bay, Marinette, and at regional learning centers located at Shawano, Oconto Falls, Crivitz, Luxemburg, and Niagara. The classifications of programs are: less than one year technical diploma; one year technical diploma; two year technical diploma; Associate of Applied Science Degree which is the highest credential.

Currently, the College offers a total of 73 programs with 48 at the associate degree level, and 27 at the less than one year, one year, and/or two year technical diploma levels. In addition, NWTC offers a 1+3 transfer certificate with the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay and the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh consisting of 32 credits in general education. An associate degree requires a minimum of 21 credits of general studies (math, communication skills, social science, and science), a minimum of 36 credits in the technical core, and a maximum of 6 credits of electives. The range for the Associate of Applied Science Degree is 60-70 credits. The technical diploma programs require a minimum of 70 percent occupational subject courses and a maximum of 30 percent general studies and related courses. The adult and continuing education and apprenticeship courses offer a flexible delivery mode to support continuing training in a variety of technical fields for businesses, government, and industries.

In addition, NWTC offers customized training to businesses and industries within the District. The training is designed to raise the performance of organizations and workplace learners through consulting and providing high level training anytime, anywhere, anyway. The training is flexible, customized, convenient, and cost effective.

NWTC also offers over 84 credit certificates. Certificates range from 6-18 credits and are designed to meet local needs. Several of the Certificates ladder to Associate of Applied Science Degrees.