

CHAPTER SIX: EDUCATION

Education in Brookfield is one of the community's most important assets. The School District of Elmbrook enjoys a strong reputation throughout Wisconsin. But the extent and value of education in Brookfield runs beyond Elmbrook schools. Other private educational providers, such as Brookfield Academy, supply unique additional options for area families. Higher educational opportunities also exist in Brookfield and the larger metropolitan area, and Brookfield has a well-educated population with much to share.

Just as the future health of the community is not assured, neither is the health of the local educational system. The educational system must prepare students for the jobs of the future in the rapidly evolving global economy, through such efforts as facility modernization and curricula review. This extends to supporting higher education as a means to satisfying new careers, and often-essential opportunities for continuing education and retraining later in life. Therefore, continued support and advancement in education is a key priority not only for educational service providers, but also for the City.

The purpose of this chapter is to explore the essential connections between the health of the City and education at all levels and at all life stages. It describes the City's desired support role to education providers, and suggests initiatives in which the City could play a meaningful role. The "lead agency" for such initiatives will vary. City government has only a support role in most educational initiatives that affect the community. In most cases, the City's Community Development Department and/or Economic Development Committee will play this support or liaison role on behalf of the City. Education is a fairly unique topic to cover in comprehensive plans; it was not addressed to a significant extent in the 2020 Master Plan.

Education Principle (Goal)

Brookfield is known for outstanding schools and lifetime learning to advance personal success, meet modern workforce demands, and support entrepreneurship.

Education Objectives

1. Recognize the essential link between the continued health of education in Brookfield and the strength of the community.
2. Work with area education providers and other stakeholders to strengthen education on all levels.
3. Retain and attract institutions of higher learning and/or a collaborative, high-technology business training center to the Brookfield area.



Elementary schools provide a foundation for learning in Brookfield, including Brookfield Elementary

Education Policies

1. Support educational initiatives that recognize the changing economy and provide students with the skills to address these changes, extending from elementary school to higher education and lifetime learning.
2. Support inter-generational learning through a strong community education program providing a variety of meaningful opportunities, including managing health care costs for Baby Boomers, care for the aging, and retirement planning; creative options for new entrepreneurs, such as legal advice, managing taxes and business incentives, and international sales; and healthy activities for both the young and the old.
3. Establish regular communication with area education providers to discuss issues of mutual concern including facility location/expansion, impacts of new development, impacts of education facilities and activities on the community, parks and recreation programs, population and growth projections, and involvement in the community.
4. Support private or public early childhood education opportunities in Brookfield as one means to retain and attract young families.
5. Facilitate development approvals and support appropriate capital investments that enable the School District of Elmbrook and other local education providers to upgrade facilities in a manner that supports the City's education principle/goal and objectives.
6. Promote expanded use of educational facilities for community events and adult learning through partnerships among the City, primary and secondary education providers, higher education institutions such as the Waukesha County Technical College (WCTC), and the business community.
7. Work collaboratively with University of Wisconsin-Extension and other existing service providers to encourage ongoing community education programming.
8. Promote community service opportunities, such as Key Club, to benefit both the volunteers and the community.
9. Emphasize training of City employees and officials to enable them to access and understand the latest approaches to City management and administration, including sustainability.
10. Support the appointment of local educators on City boards and commissions that affect education in Brookfield, such as the Plan Commission and Economic Development Committee, and collaboration between the City Council and boards of the area's education providers where appropriate.
11. If the City considers new tax increment financing (TIF) districts in the future, involve representatives of the School District of Elmbrook and the WCTC as soon as possible to help craft the TIF district in a manner that maximizes benefits for all taxing entities.

Education Programs and Initiatives

The City intends to pursue the following initiatives in support of its vision for education:

Collaborate to Strengthen Primary and Secondary Education to Meet Tomorrow's Needs

Recognizing the essential link between good education, a strong community, and a prepared workforce, the City will work with educational providers, businesses, and other partners to:

- Encourage expansion of science and technology-based curriculum and local business involvement in public education. The City will support building on the School District of Elmbrook's excellent science education program, such as through preparatory programs like Project Lead the Way.
- Encourage continued partnerships among the Chamber of Commerce, area businesses, and education providers to strengthen and focus existing programs that link students to businesses, particularly next generation jobs, through career exposure, internships, and career fairs. High schools in the School District of Elmbrook already host well-attended career fairs in conjunction with the Chamber and mentorship programs that pair students up with professionals for career exploration. These programs could particularly emphasize those Brookfield businesses that provide innovation-driven and high-technology career opportunities.
- Consider joint community marketing with public and private education providers, in conjunction with the real estate community, as a way to support the addition of new families with children to the community. This idea is discussed more fully in the Housing and Neighborhoods chapter.

Collaborate to Support Accessible Higher Education for Lifelong Learning

An initiative to support greater access to higher education in and near Brookfield would have multiple benefits. First, it could help retain and attract young families to Brookfield by providing more convenient educational options for busy parents. Second, it can assist local businesses in securing and training the workforce they need to grow and thrive. Third, it can provide an economic opportunity for the City in and of itself.

The City will, therefore, work with others to increase local access to technology-based training and higher education, in part by helping to bring programs and facilities to and near Brookfield. Ideas include:

- Helping to establish a satellite campus and/or a collaborative, high-technology business training center in Brookfield. The Executive Drive area seems to be evolving in this direction organically with the recent introduction of post secondary business schools, but the transformation may be incomplete or disjointed without some coordination. Perhaps the City could take more of a coordinating role in making this happen, starting with the preparation of a proposal and then sharing it with property owners and higher education providers in the region.
- Promoting the use of existing facilities, such as the new Brookfield Academy state-of-the-art high school, as evening and weekend learning centers for higher education institutions in the region.
- Supporting the consideration of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee's plan to bring an engineering campus to the nearby Milwaukee County grounds. Even if not located in Brookfield, this location would indirectly benefit City residents and businesses.

Work to Retain the Knowledge of Brookfield's Boomers

The City will work to retain the knowledge and talent of the Baby Boomers by supporting second career entrepreneurial, mentorship, and teaching opportunities (such as through WCTC and Brookfield Academy). Further strategies are included in Chapter Four: Jobs and Shopping, and in the separate 2008 Economic Development Program.

Support Retail-Related Education and Training Opportunities

A number of years ago, WCTC, in collaboration with the Milwaukee Area Technical College, investigated the viability of establishing a collaborative Retail Skills Centers to support area retailers. This training initiative was intended to offer basic skills in retailing that would be a talent pool for area stores. It was determined that the Retail Skills Center concept was cost prohibitive for the store owners and the technical colleges that would support them.



Waukesha County Technical College helps people develop skills for the jobs of today and tomorrow

Currently, WCTC offers an associate degree in Retail Management and a technical certificate in Retailing Leadership. The City supports exploring additional retail training and education initiatives in the future, considering demand and feasibility.