

Elevating Education

August 2025



A MESSAGE FROM MARK

"What is a West40?"

I used to hear that question all the time. It wasn't that long ago that we were a mystery. But consider the exciting things people are saying about us now.

- *West40 is always there to support us.*
- *We always look to West40 to be cutting edge and innovative!*
- *What an amazing organization!*



These days West40 is knocking at the door of 300 employees and a \$45M budget. But far more important is that we are making a huge difference in the region, area, state, across the country and scratching the surface of impact on a global scale!

We have always said that we will change the world one life at a time. For years, that phrase was meant to be inspirational. Now it is literal.

West40 believes that sound education holds promise for the future. If we truly adhere to this mindset, we need to constantly be improving, growing, learning and innovating! I am proud to share that these ideas are part of our organizational DNA. As we live our mission, we consistently find new ways to serve and find ways to be innovative. We look forward to continuing on this trajectory to change the world with Hope and Vision.

Welcome to the new school year and enjoy our newsletter.

Mark

Why All Professional Learning is Continuous Improvement

WALKING ALONGSIDE YOU

Continuous improvement is a mindset designed to create lasting and meaningful change and it's something the West40 Professional Learning team factors into every service we offer.

It involves focusing on your current reality, creating a clear vision of where you are heading, and making progress toward your goal. West40 can help a district focus on almost anything it wants to strengthen. No matter if it's raising test scores or supporting students with specific needs or coaching teachers to work as a team.

In fact, one recipient of our continuous improvement support said it fostered a culture of growth at their school. Another said, "It is nice to have a third party to consider all sides whose only intention is to be helpful and honest."

West40's continuous improvement support will help your district identify challenges by using data, plan for solutions, act on those ideas, reflect on progress, and make adjustments so every student and staff member has an opportunity to succeed.



"We prefer to show up as thought partners. They know us. They trust us. And we know what their concerns are."

-Suzy Dees, Senior Director of Professional Learning

While districts have a choice as to who provides them professional development, why not choose the local team that knows your districts and communities?

"We're less expensive than the big companies that are for profit. We exist in school code and statute. The reason we exist is to serve you," Dees said.

Helping schools, administrators, and educators get better. It's what we do!

To learn more, visit us at <https://www.west40.org/continuous-school-improvement>

New School Year Brings Endless Opportunities



BEING WHAT THEY NEED

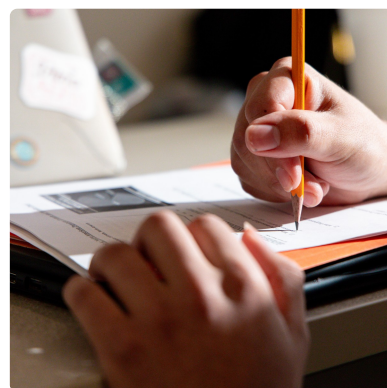
West40 student advocates describe what they are most looking forward to at the start of the school year.

"One of my favorite things about starting the school year is the endless opportunities it presents. The beginning of the school year allows each student a fresh start, without judgement, giving them the ability to truly believe they can be successful. It gives them the ability to focus on the future, rather than being preoccupied by the past." - Jackie Lasselle (Student advocate at West Leyden High School)

"I'm most looking forward to getting back into our school year routine and building even stronger connections with students, families, and school staff." - Lisbet Aguirre (Student advocate at Garfield Elementary School)

"What we're most looking forward to is reconnecting with our students and hearing about the goals they've set for themselves this school year." - Sheena Elmore, Christian Tovar, and Eden Foreman (Student advocates at Roosevelt Middle School)

"What I'm most looking forward to is seeing the freshmen I started with as an advocate graduate as seniors." - Anayancy Nunez (Student advocate at DREAM program at Proviso East High School)



"I'm most looking forward to growing in my role, learning from every challenge, and giving our students the very best I can—while still remembering to pause, enjoy the journey, and maybe even smell the roses along the way." - Jorge Ortega (Site Coordinator at Morton West High School)

Introducing Global Connections



WALKING FURTHER

This year West40 is excited to introduce Global Connections, our way of providing transformative and cross-cultural experiences for educators and students.

We see Global Connections elevating education in the West40 region and beyond through connecting individuals and groups to the best and most comprehensive learning opportunities, either locally, internationally, or virtually.

Stuart Brown will serve as the coordinator of global affairs. Brown taught elementary and middle school students at Union Ridge School for 24 years and he was a West40 Governing Board

member for the last three years.

Brown said his new role is an amazing opportunity and resonates with his lifelong learning values and experiences.

"I look forward to seeing learners having 'a-ha' moments, when the light goes on, they experience awe, and through their new awareness they are inspired to be more connected and empowered participants and leaders in their communities," said Brown.

The Association of Educational Service Agencies (AESA) recently announced its new division, AESA Global, and named West40 as one of the first ESA organizations to create a global connections program.

While we are still developing international programming and activities, rest assured that West40 will invite our partner school districts to take part in these opportunities! Stay tuned for future digital communications.

Youth Soccer Club Partners with West40

It's official! Youth soccer has breathed new life into the St. Joseph athletic fields as a result of West40's partnership with the LG Celtics Soccer Club. Check out this video of the grand opening!

Soccer Club Gives New Life to St. Joseph Fields



UPCOMING EVENTS AND REMINDERS

WEST40 OPEN HOUSE

BEING THE THOUGHT PARTNER YOU NEED

West40 will hold an open house for our district partners and stakeholders on September 22nd from 8:00 am to 10:00 pm at our main office in Maywood (415 Lexington). This is an opportunity for you to engage in meaningful discussions and share your district's unique challenges and priorities directly with West40's leadership.

We are holding this open house as a way for school administrators to discover how West40's services can align with goals in areas such as student support, professional learning, and school safety.

It's also a chance for attendees to build strong connections and exchange ideas by networking with fellow district leaders and West40 teams.

Register for Our Open House

LICENSURE RENEWAL REMINDER

Educators that have a Professional Educator License (PEL) or an Educator License with Stipulations Career and Technical Educator (ELS/CTE) that were due for renewal on June 30, 2025 must do so by August 31, 2025 or the license will be placed in Lapsed status on September 1, 2025. Lapsed licenses are not valid for employment.

HEALTH/LIFE SAFETY REMINDER

Health/Life Safety visits begin September 3. Additionally, we will be hosting a HLS kick-off at West40 on August 28th from 8:00 am - 11:00 am.

SUPPORT STUDENTS' MENTAL HEALTH WITH MTSS TOOL

Superintendents and support staff from West40 districts are invited to learn about Maro's platform that connects students to mental health care when they need it. Maro is a company that partners with districts to support student success through its MTSS tracking tool. West40 will facilitate two "Lunch & Learn" sessions, made possible through the School-Based Mental Health Grant. Register below.

[Wednesday, August 20th from 12:00 pm - 12:45 pm](#)

[Tuesday, September 9th from 12:00 pm - 12:45 pm](#)

UPCOMING ADMINISTRATOR ACADEMIES

- AA4114: Using Student Growth Data for Diverse Populations in Teacher Performance Evaluation
- [Thursday, September 4 from 8:30 am - 3:30 pm](#)
- AA3828: Leading Positive School Culture: Prioritizing Self-Care, Staff Wellness, and Compassion Resilience
- [Friday, September 12 from 8:30 am - 3:30 pm](#)

FAMILY FUN MEETS LITERACY!

Families are invited to West40 to learn through play and discover how music and art boost brain development, language, and early literacy. This free event is designed for families with pre-school aged children. It will take place Saturday, October 18 from 9:00 am - 11:00 am in the West40 gym. Registration information will be released soon!

ILLINOIS SCHOOL SAFETY CONFERENCE

Heighten your safety awareness and hear from experts in school safety and crisis prevention at the Illinois School Safety Conference on October 1, 2025, at the White Eagle Events & Convention Center in Niles. The event is FREE for school personnel, police, fire, emergency preparedness personnel, and public safety officers. You must bring your school ID or agency ID to enter. Register [here](#) by September 22.



West40 Communications Department

West40 is using Smore to create beautiful newsletters