

Washburn Academy History

Since 1994, Washburn Academy has offered western Wisconsin's premier venue for teachers to build their repertoire of hands-on activities that would contribute to higher levels of student achievement and problem solving capability.

While our focus on best practices and hands-on learning has remained constant, the Academy has evolved in many ways:

- From 10 workshops to over 30 workshops annually
- From math-science-technology to all subject areas, including art, music, special education, and classroom management
- From teacher workshops to programming including administrators, paraprofessionals, and substitute teachers
- From 140 participants the first year to over 5,000 during its history

Just imagine how many students have now been impacted by their teacher's attendance at Washburn Academy!

Without the inspiration of local business leader, Dan Gelatt, working with leaders from CESA #4 and UW-La Crosse, Washburn Academy would not have come into existence. Other local businesses, too numerous to mention, made significant contributions to provide start-up funding for the Academy, and the Onalaska and Holmen School Districts have generously hosted the Academy.



Cadwallader Washburn
Namesake of the Washburn Academy

Cadwallader Colden Washburn was born in Maine in 1818, completing preparatory studies and teaching school there before moving to the Midwest in 1839. After a brief career in Iowa and law studies in Illinois he moved to Wisconsin. His varied and illustrious career in Wisconsin included five terms as a congressman, heroic service during the Civil War, a term as governor, and designation as a lifetime regent on the UW Board of Regents. He lived in La Crosse before and after his service in the Civil War.

Washburn was also a successful entrepreneur, engaged in the lumber and milling industries, and utilized science and technology to create new efficiencies. His company became known as Gold Medal Flour after winning medals in an international milling exhibition. As a friend of education and learning, Washburn donated \$50,000 to build the La Crosse Public Library.

As the namesake for this Academy, Cadwallader Washburn continues to be recognized for his commitment to education, science, technology, and public service.