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President's Message THE FUTURE OF WCASS AND THE NEED FOR A FULL TIME EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

By John Peterson

The WCASS Board of Directors held our summer retreat, and we discussed several topics that will impact the future of our organization. Our Board met again in October to conduct our strategic planning. Part of this process will not only be creating organizational goals, but also focusing in on who we are as an organization and highlighting our mission. This is important for a number of reasons. In particular, by revisiting our organization's goals and mission, the Board will be able to create a plan of succession for our Executive Director position. Gary Myrah has served our organization well and has played a significant role in WCASS for over 20 years. The Board of Directors wants to ensure that when Gary retires in the future that we have a clear plan to recruit, screen, select, and train his replacement. To make this plan of succession possible, we need to clearly lay out our organization's goals, identify challenges that we will be facing in the future, and identify critical issues in our profession and WCASS' position on these issues.

Upon much reflection and discussion by our Board of Directors, it is clear that we are moving towards increasing our Executive Director's

time with the goal of making this individual full time within the next five years. Currently, WCASS is the only branch of the School Administrator's Alliance (SAA) who has an Executive Director who is a purchased service who serves on a part time basis. The remaining three branches all have full time Executive Directors. Over WCASS' history, we have had two Executive Directors: Phil Knobel and Gary Myrah, both of whom have served the organization well. Since Gary has served in this capacity, the hours and workload of our Executive Director have increased. This increase is mainly due to WCASS' increased role within our state regarding legislative and advocacy related issues. Our presence and voice regarding advocacy and legislation is not only needed, but it is one of our most critical roles that we play. Furthermore, there are several legislators within our state who view the SAA – including WCASS – as the voice of public education.

With this in mind, the Board of Directors only sees the hours and responsibilities of our Executive Director increasing in future years.

Continued on page 2...
President's Message continued...

Inside this issue:

President's Message	1-2
Upcoming Training & Events	2
Past President	3
Executive Director	4
Awards and Social	5
Membership	5
Legislative Update	6-7
Conference Committee	8
WCASS Region News	9-11
WCASS Directory	12

Our goal five years from now is to put WCASS financially in a position to successfully sustain a full time Executive Director. Part of our plan to make this a reality for years to come is making reasonable membership dues increases over the next five years. As you may know, WCASS' membership dues are the lowest in the SAA and have not been increased for the past 6 years. For the 2017-2018 school year, professional membership dues will increase from \$350 to \$400. This amount will go up in manageable increments every two years to help push our goal for a full-time Executive Director. Even with these manageable increases in the future, WCASS' membership dues are and continue to be the lowest dues in the SAA.

Besides the reasonable increase in dues, the Board of Directors is looking at other ways to increase our revenues to help pave a path of sustainability for a full-time Executive Director. In particular, the Board of Directors is looking at

ways to increase our professional membership total and to potentially partner with other organizations to offer reduced membership rates for an Educational Leader who needs to join two professional organizations due to the fact that they themselves serve in a dual role (e.g., School Psychologist and Director of Student Services). The Board of Directors is also exploring possibilities to extend professional learning opportunities around our winter and spring conferences for other professionals who serve students with disabilities and other diverse needs.

The Board of Directors is committed to keeping WCASS a thriving and vibrant organization: one that educators, families, and advocates look to for leadership, and one that is able to provide a strong voice for our students who have diverse backgrounds and needs. A full-time Executive Director helps us achieve this goal. I look forward to another year serving as your President and wish you a happy and successful school year.

WCASS Upcoming Training Dates & Events

October 17-18 , 2017	<i>State Superintendent's Conference:</i> 2 days, Wilderness Resort, Wisconsin Dells
January 24-26, 2018	<i>WCASS 2018 Winter Conference:</i> 3 days, Paper Valley Hotel, Appleton
February 26-27, 2018	<i>Wisconsin Federal Funding Conference:</i> 2 days, Kalahari Resort & Conference Center, Wisconsin Dells
March 13, 2018	<i>WISEdata Conference:</i> 1 day: Central Wisconsin Convention & Expo Center, Rothschild, WI
May 2-4, 2018	<i>WCASS 2018 Spring Conference:</i> 3 days, Best Western Premier Hotel, Oshkosh, WI

Please visit our website at <http://www.wcass.org/wcass-events>



Kurt Eley, Past President

Public Education Is The Best

By Kurt Eley, WCASS Past-President

I hope everyone's school year is off to a great start. For me a new school year always brings a sense of renewal and a boost in energy. This year the governor and legislature developed a state budget for the next two years. While this budget appears to be good for public education, the special needs scholarship is disconcerting. Advocating for children is why we chose a career in education in the first place. We need to collectively use this energy to tell the story of public education.

While assessment results and school and district report cards are the primary method used to hold districts accountable, these indicators do not tell the whole story. One of the most effective ways to tell the story is by sharing information with our parents and community. As we share the successes in our districts, we also need to inform anyone who will listen to us why we are sharing these stories. We cannot be shy about the attack on public education as we talk to parents and the public. We also cannot be shy about how taking away dollars from public schools and giving them as subsidies to private schools will negatively impact a district's ability to provide services and programs to all students.

Informing parents and the public about the great work we do in combination with the negative impact of losing funds, we hope will result in positive movement to supporting public schools again. Taking funds away from struggling districts is not the way to help improve outcomes for children. These districts need more financial support so they can expand the services and programs for students who are struggling to learn.

This transformation of the perception of public schools will take time, but we must sustain the effort. In survey after survey, the overwhelming majority of people of all ages support public education. This support is also evidenced by the support districts find when they ask the public to support a public school referendum. Oh by the way, the legislature has now limited when districts may ask the public for support through referenda to the general elections. The focus needs to be on children and the future of the country. Public schools have and continue to best prepare students for the jobs of the future.

Let's continue to tell the story of public education on behalf of children. Everyone wants to have a great public school in their community. We can make this happen if we all work together.

**What's
Happening**



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Executive Director's Report
By Gary Myrah

Building Citizenship: Pillars of Good Character

Citizens of every community are developing increasing concern for their safety and their future. The media reports on outlandish behavior by younger and younger children. There is a call for change with hopes of returning to a simpler and safer time. Many wish for quick solutions since to some we are on the brink of an apocalypse.

It is first important to realize that reviewing quotes from our past, we are able to find one of the earliest quotes regarding young people: *"The children now love luxury. They have bad manners, contempt for authority; they show disrespect for elders and love chatter in place of exercise."* Socrates. Reports of our youth behaving poorly have been recorded throughout our past and across all nations. Yet our concern is the increase in amoral behavior and acts of harmful, even homicidal behavior of our youth. There is a sense that we have lost our moral compass as well as our responsibility to all pitch in to do our part to help guide our youth.

There are a variety of packaged programs that may be purchased and infused within a school curriculum, all with lessons designed to have a moral code of how to behave. Yet the use of these programs in isolation of raising the moral standards of a community has spotty success. It is important for the children that are learning the lessons to have adults that model the same standards in everyday life.

One program that is designed for a total community involvement is Character Counts. The design of the program is to have agencies, such as schools, city government, police, churches, social services, etc. partnering with

community businesses and parent groups with a common focus. The infusing the six pillars of character, Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility, Fairness, Caring, and Citizenship throughout the community has great impact on how young people develop. It is amazing to see the window stickers of the six pillars in doorways as you enter a store, a school, a church, a library, as well as see the six pillars on police cars and fire trucks. Couple this with lessons taught in schools and in churches as well as material that goes home in the student backpacks, the result is quite remarkable.

It is also important to have periodic celebrations that include an annual signing of the compact by the various governmental units as well as celebrating the accomplishments of citizens that demonstrate true altruism or citizenship. Schools also have celebrations for students that have demonstrated caring behavior to their classmates and teachers. All of this can also be coupled with the positive impact of PBIS in schools.

The only caution is for those individuals that believe this is too much control over a child's development. It reduces the opportunities for independence or it is a form of mind control. Yet this program is based on positive experiences and positive outcomes. If we wish to look to improve the outcome of our youth, we really all need to pitch in to demonstrate and model the behavior that is acceptable in our communities.

For more information go to this website:
<https://charactercounts.org/home/index.html>



Awards and Social

By Sara Totten

As we enter into the 2017-18 school year I am excited to have the opportunity as a new addition to the WCASS Board. I will be supporting the area of Awards and Social and look forward to the experiences Board membership will provide.

As a director it is easy to get caught up in the day-to-day wheel of meetings, emails, phone calls, meetings, reports, meetings, legal issues, did I mention meetings?? As a result, the importance to take pause and recognize there is an organization of colleagues ready and willing to support you serves as a reminder that you are never alone. Further, there are colleagues and staff who recognize the significance of the work you do, just as you recognize the significance of the work they do. As award nominations filter into your inbox this year, I hope you are able to take pause and recognize someone who has made an impact in your district or perhaps has impacted you professionally.

In closing, while our work presents various stressors and challenges, I am reminded that each day we are in a position to have a positive impact on students. That said, to best support our students, we must also support one another. Hopefully, you find many moments to celebrate and appreciate the opportunities our roles provide. Best wishes for the upcoming school year!

"In the middle of every difficulty lies opportunity."
~Albert Einstein

Membership



Don't miss out on the opportunity to connect with professionals around the state and country!

By Tammy Nicholson

Thanks to everyone who has already renewed their WCASS membership for the 17-18 school year. Please reach out to new directors in your area and encourage them to join our WCASS organization.

Contact me at tlampereur@ashwaubenonk12.org for information or put them in contact with your WCASS region representative.

Let's all help support our new members!

Register for WCASS

<http://www.wcass.org/join-renew>

Register for CEC/CASE

<http://www.cec.sped.org/Membership>

- make sure to select the WI CASE division*
- check out the CASE link to see all it has to offer
<http://www.casecec.org/>



Hello from your Legislative Chair

By Barb Buffington

My name is Barb Buffington. I serve as the Director of Pupil Services for the DeForest Area School District and serve as your Legislative Chair for WCASS.

I am not new to policy advocacy, I currently serve as a member of the Governor's Council for Mental Health and the Council's subcommittee for Children and Youth. I also am an active member of the Dane County Children's Mental Health Collaborative.

Want more mental health services in your area? Create a collaborative relationship with your County Executive. In Dane County our County Executive, Joe Parisi; is extremely passionate about mental health in youth. Three years ago, he fully supported a pilot program called [Building Bridges](#) in three school districts (Verona, Madison and Sun Prairie). Building Bridges is a 90 day school-based mental health stabilization program. One year later, area Directors then spoke at the County's public budget hearings for the Department of Human Services asking for the expansion of this program to other area school districts. Mr. Parisi and other County Supervisors heard our message as Dane County then expanded funding to two more area school districts. Currently, Building Bridges is now in 10 school districts in Dane County. To date, I still attend the public County budget hearings so that County Supervisors understand that youth mental health needs to remain a budget priority.

If you are a Director wanting more assistance with mental health, I strongly advise that you contact your County Executive and County Supervisors and share your concerns. To find out who your Executive and Supervisors are in your area, click [here](#).

WCASS Legislative-TAKE ACTION

Click [here](#) for information on how to take action and be the voice for students. Click [here](#) to find your legislators.

Click [here](#) for members of the Joint Finance Committee.

Click on their names and email them your communication directly. It's simple and easy!

Legislative Update continued on page 9...

Boardman & Clark: Annual Notices Information

The Boardman & Clark law firm recently published this [School Law FYI](#) regarding the annual notices that school districts are required to provide to students, parents, and/or the public. The SAA regularly receives these updates and we believe this is valuable information for SAA members. We are distributing this update to SAA members with the permission of Boardman & Clark.



For the latest legislative and political news, see the SAA Blog at <http://wsaa.org/saainfo/>.

Legislative Update continued...

To receive current legislative updates, go to John Forester's blog, which you can find [here](http://www.wsaa.org/). (<http://www.wsaa.org/>) on the Wisconsin School Administrators Alliance (SAA) website. Here's a summary of what is going on right now from John's blog:

DPI releases 2017-19 State Budget, the full summary can be found [here](#). Some highlights are as follows:

- Revenue limit per pupil-No adjustment to the per pupil revenue limit amount in FY18 and FY19.
- Categorical Aid: Provide an increase to the Per Pupil Aid in the amount \$188 in FY18 and \$380 in FY19 (total per pupil payments of \$438 in FY18 and \$630 in FY19).
- Mental Health Categorical Aid- Beginning in FY19 a new categorical aid program (\$3,000,000 GPR) to support school district and independent charter schools in the provision and expansion of mental health services, by reimbursing school districts for expenditures on social worker services (district employees or contracted services).
- School-based Mental Health Collaborative Grant Program-Beginning in FY19, a new grant program (\$2,500,000 GPR). The Department would award grants for the purpose of providing mental health services to pupils, in collaboration with community health agencies. Strategies may include co-locating community mental health clinics in schools and providing screening and intervention services.
- Pupil Transportation Aid-Increase to the reimbursement rate for pupils transported over 12 miles from \$300 to \$365 per pupil beginning in FY18.
- High Cost Pupil Transportation Aid-Increase the reimbursement rate for high cost transportation aid from 60.4 percent (in FY16) to 100 percent of eligible costs.
- Special Education funding-no increase, maintain base funding (\$368,939,100 GPR annually).
- Additional High Cost Special Education Funding-no increase, maintain base funding (\$1,750,000 GPR annually).
- Special Education Transition Incentive Grants-fully fund the Transition Incentive Grant program, which provides payment to school districts based on postsecondary education and employment outcomes for pupils with disabilities.
- Special Education Transition Readiness Grant-new grant program that would expand the capacity of school districts to provide transition services for pupils with disabilities.
- For more information on what the Governor vetoed in the proposal, please click [here](#). Vetoes for the DPI budget proposal start at item #32 on page 8.
- Special Needs Scholarship Program-Increase the appropriation by \$4,276,000 GPR in FY18 and \$6,217,000 GPR in FY19, to reflect projected enrollments and estimated per pupil payments.



By Jeff Lindell

The conference committee is beginning the process of building the Winter Conference agenda. We can't be successful without your support. As Gary shared in previous emails, we are currently in our "Call for Proposal" process. Please consider sharing some of the great things going on in your districts. We all value in learning from our colleagues around the State.

Examples of topics that will draw interest:

Mental Health – strategies that have been implemented to improve the mental health climate within a school/district

Examples of successful implementation of third party counseling services

Practical strategies around mental health and wellness

Wellness and self-care for staff

Creative Funding

IDEA funding

Title funding

Medicaid funding

Use of blending funding sources

Effective practices

Results Driven Accountability – demonstrations of closing the gap

Co-teaching experiences

Transition Services

Parent advisory activities

Collaboration with County Services

Collaboration with local first responders (e.g. police, fire, EMT)

Multi-tiered/levels of Systems of Support

These are examples of topics of interest among our members, but the list is not exhaustive. If you have had success with various elements of your responsibilities, consider sharing with your colleagues. You can find the link to submit a proposal on the WCASS Homepage until the middle of October.

WCASS Region News

Region 1 Chair: Amanda Mack

amack@sfsd.k12.wi.us

For information from this region, please contact Amanda Mack

Region 2 Chair: Gail Anderson

gail.anderson@cesa2.org

New Region 2 Chair



Gail Anderson, Ed. S. is the RSN Director and Effective Practices for Instruction Center Leader at CESA 2. Gail is passionate about keeping learning at the center of her work with school leaders and empowering school boards, administrators and teacher-leaders to do the same. As a school psychologist and administrator with over 25 years of professional experience, Gail provides leadership coaching, professional learning and systems consulting that ensures educators and students achieve success. Outside of work, she serves as a Baldrige examiner and served her community as school board president, EMT and EMS board member.

Region 2 Update

Welcome back! Region 2 has seen a lot of changes this summer. Several long-term directors retired after dedicating their careers to improving outcomes for students with disabilities. Thank you for your service! These departures create opportunities for the next generation of directors who are bringing new ideas and energy to the work. Welcome new directors! You are joining a region filled with colleagues who are strong, supportive leaders. Thank you also to Jamie Syvrud who served Region 2 well as the Region 2 WCASS representative last year. As your new Region 2 representative, I look forward to deepening the connection between CESA 2 RSN and WCASS. I believe that collectively we have the power to ensure that each and every student can graduate ready for post-secondary life. I look forward to serving as your WCASS board representative—to listening to and learning with you as we build our collective efficacy.

Region 3 Chair: Trudy DeSimons

DeSimonsTr@rrsd.k12.wi.us

For information from this region, please contact Trudy DeSimons

Region 4 Chair: Regina Siegel

rsiegel@lacrossesd.org

For more information from this region, please contact Regina Siegel

Region 5 Chair: Rebecca Johnson

johnsonr@cesa5.org

For more information from this region, please contact Rebecca Johnson

Region 6 Chair: Marci Thiry

thiry@mjsd.k12.wi.us

Directors in Region 6 attended an RSN meeting on September 21, 2017. The attendance was outstanding. Directors had the opportunity to do some problem solving around transition services with Sarah Lincoln from DVR and Pam Jensen, TIG Data Coordinator. Michelle Polzin and Dan Seaman joined the team to review the new Multi Level System of Support. Discussion centered around the blending of the academic and behavior systems while maintaining a focus on culturally responsive practices. Region 6 directors are concentrating their energies on developing consistent practices whenever possible. Time was spent collaborating on the topics of seclusion and restraint and open enrollment caseload limits. The individual work groups intend to have documents ready for reaction at the next meeting on November 16, 2017.

WCASS Region News

Region 7 Chair: Caroline Mihalski

mihalski@wrightstown.k12.wi.us

Region 7 held its Annual Awards Banquet to honor all the great educators in our area who provide outstanding services to students. There was a total of 21 recipients in a wide array of professional roles. Lisa Misco presented these awards to the 21 recipients along with the individuals who nominated each person on May 12th, 2017. Lisa Misco, previous Region 7 Chair, has recently become the CESA 8 Director of Special Education and has done a fabulous job representing Region 7 with WCASS! I have taken over her new role for Region 7 and hope to perform my duties well for all of the WCASS members in our area. I am the Director of Student Services for Wrightstown Community School District, located between Appleton and Green Bay in the Fox Cities area. I am looking forward to this opportunity to serve all of you!



Region 8 Chair: Brenda Jozwiak-Boldig

bjozwiak@wittbirn.k12.wi.us

As the new Region 8 WCASS board member - I'd like to introduce myself.....It has been my pleasure to work as the Director of Pupil Services for the Wittenberg-Birnamwood School District for the past 14 years and hopefully a many more. Being part of CESA 8 has allowed me to grow and learn as a director over my career and I value the partnerships and relationships formed. I am truly excited to be part of the WCASS board and look forward to serving directors across our region with a voice in the world of special education that we live and work in daily. We know that many challenges face our schools and organization and it is critical that we join together to have unity around supporting legislation or practices that are critical to assist our children and families. You are welcome to contact me at Witt-Birn if needs arise. My e-mail is: bjozwiak@wittbirn.k12.wi.us and phone is (715)253-2213.

CESA 8 Directors are excited to have Lisa Misco join the team as our executive director. We know that she will bring new ideas and energy to the position. Deb Wall, RSN Director, does an outstanding job of supporting directors with training, meetings and mailings to keep us informed and on our toes connected to DPI news and compliance needs. The Director Newsletter created by Deb can be found at this link to keep us informed.

<https://www.smores.com/w1c07>

The CESA 8 Director Calendar supports directors in planning for the year.

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1vq1kKPPi5y4P4QALqkbWr6-uWvXIKn4sRN8eyeULc24/edit>

Directors have access to a livebinder that Deb creates and updates for us throughout the year. Our first directors meeting was at CESA 8 on September 29, 2017. Deb had Paula Volpiansky talk about the 5 step IEP process and created a Q&A document that directors added questions to for Paula to answer. The conversation and support connected to this was helpful to our work with IEPs. UW-Marquette staff attended and gave updates related to LGBT issues and supports (stories of unity through diversity and inclusion). Updated DPI information and handouts shared

WCASS Region News

Region 8 Continued...

related to multi-level systems of support. CESA 8 also hosted a 504 Meeting/Training for area schools on October 3rd. Deb also shared DPI updates related to the role of RSN, DLM testing, WISE data and discussion was held about supporting staff with new IEP process.

Live Binder for CESA 8: <http://www.livebinders.com/play/play?id=2231157>

Region 9 Chair: Karen Baker

karen.baker@maps.k12.wi.us

CESA 9 members concluded their 2016-2017 school year with their May 19, 2017 meeting. We were fortunate to have guest speakers to share their expertise in their respective areas of special education. Eric Hartwig presented information and updates regarding the B.E.S.T. screener that he has been intimately involved with the development and implementation of this tool.

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

We were also fortunate to have Gary Ruesch & Alana Leffler from Buelow Vetter to discuss various legal issues concerning special education. Of greatest importance was **Andrew F. v Douglas County School District**. The Supreme Court handed down a unanimous decision in the **Andrew F. v Douglas County School District**. The ruling addresses FAPE, raising the standard from "de minimus" to "appropriately ambitious". "A standard more meaningful than just above trivial is the norm today" as quoted by NPR from NASDSE's amicus brief. The decision also emphasized the importance of school personnel expertise in IEP team decisions and sends the case back to the 10th circuit court. https://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/16pdf/15-827_0pm1.pdf.

Region 10 Chair: Lorna Margenau

lmargenau@cesa10.k12.wi.us

For information from this region, please contact Lorna Margenau.

Region 11 Chair: Dawn Western

dawnw@cesa11.k12.wi.us

Welcome back! I hope everyone had a relaxing summer. Along with periodic updates, our meeting dates for this year will be:

August 18	January 12
September 15	March 9
October 6	April 28
December 13	June Summit—TBD

Staff changes that have occurred over the summer include:

- Tony Mayer moved to another district with interim Erin Schiltgen taking over the reins;
- Shannon Donnelly took another position and is replaced by Abby Bohatta;
- Joel Anderson moved to another district. Laurie Johnson will take on his district;
- Amy Schlieve will be replaced by Patti Jakupciak as the special education coordinator;
- Heather Freiss will take over for Laurie Johnson in Cumberland.

If you have any questions/concerns during the year, please feel free to reach out to me. I can be reached at westeda@scfschools.com or 715-294-4180 X 7501.

Take a deep breath, relax, and remember - "*Teachers know there will always be rocks in the road ahead of us. They will be stumbling blocks or stepping stones. It all depends on how we use them.*" - Unknown

Region 12 Chair: Vicki Lemke

vlemke@phillips.k12.wi.us

For information from this region, please contact Vicki Lemke.



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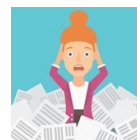
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Membership Opportunities

Thank you to all who have renewed your WCASS and CASE memberships!

Want to join or renew WCASS membership? <http://www.wcass.org/> (click join-renew tab)

Want to join or renew CASE membership? Join CEC and then select the Council of Administrators of Special Education special interest division. <http://www.cec.sped.org/Membership>

Members! There are many new directors around the state this year. Please take time to reach out to them and encourage them to join our organization. Teaming together helps us all become more effective leaders.

Feel free to contact me with any type of membership questions throughout the year.

Tammy Nicholson tnicholson@ashwaubenon.k12.wi.us