



## President's Message

By Tim Gantz

A reflection on the 2006–07 school year thus far (in chronological order):

- Successfully resolve DPI complaint
- District forms revised to maintain compliance
- New procedures drafted and staff inserviced at start of school year
- Learn at State Superintendent's Conference that there are new forms and a bunch of revisions to existing forms to bring state into compliance with final federal regulations
- Rework district forms (again) and procedures to bring district into compliance
- Receive notice from DPI of a follow-up complaint, and conduct investigation
- Get call from Renae Aldana regarding another case (that can't be good news!)
- And most recently, establish district special education staffing projections for the 2007–08 school year (already!).

Filtering between all of these are the countless emails, phone calls, drop-in answer-seekers, meetings, staff observations, candidate interviews, and crises. So, when I was only 15 minutes into a procedural update with our psychs and PSTs last week and was handed a comic with modified text that had circulated the room, I was able to identify with it as well. In the comic, a

student raises his hand to be excused because his "brain is full." The teacher's surname (the student in the comic referred to him as Mr. Osborne) had been scratched out and written below it was "Gantz," my surname.



Why do I do this job?!? Well, in part because I am a bit of an adrenaline and change junkie and thrive on the controlled chaos, but, most importantly, because every email, phone call, drop-in answer-seeker and procedural update is an opportunity for me to help someone resolve an issue, and indirectly have a positive impact on all the students they will come into contact with. To me, that is pretty exciting!

So, as I contemplate one of the next big items for our organization to give consideration to—revised LD criteria and the onset of Response to Intervention (RtI)—I get excited about the future potential for a real positive impact on so many children by having a process for getting services to struggling students much earlier. I don't want to be involved in any more meetings where the implicit message is that the student needs to fail more before any real services are provided. We will have to work hard with our general education colleagues to build this capacity, but the potential is awesome.

Join us at the WCASS Conference where this will be one of the topics you can "fill up" on!

## Executive Director's Comments . . .

On December 29, 2006, WCASS went live with a new look on the Web site. We anticipate this as the beginning of being able to provide our members with several new services. For the first time the Winter Conference registration could be done online. In addition, the registration fee could be paid via a credit card, check, or purchase order. The credit card payment will now be available to members for all WCASS activities, including membership dues. We were pleased that many registrants for the conference used this option, and we look forward to using this for future events.

The website also has a member's-only section, where we will be posting information that will only be available to current members of WCASS by using a member login. In this section we will be posting handouts from the conferences, so those of you that may not be able to attend the conference will be able to review the materials made



Phil Knobel

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available to those attending. We see this resource as of growing importance and value to our membership.

For those of you that like to shop online, the members-only section also has a WCASS Member Mall, where you can purchase a wide variety of items through our website. We have heard that several members have checked this out already and enjoyed the experience, so please take a look at it. Our as-

sociation receives some non-dues revenue for items purchased through our site.

We now need your help in making the Web site a success. So go out and take a look at <http://www.wcass.org> and tell us what you like, what you would like added, and what you may not like. Your input is the only way we can find out what your needs are and improve services to you.

We hope to see you at the Spring Conference.



**Check out the The SAA Web site....**  
**<http://www.wsaa.org>**

**Please also see the study committee's review of the School Aid Formula on the Legislative Council's Web site for any additional information.**

**If you have any questions, please feel free contact our office.**

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**Message from Gary Myrah, President-Elect:**

**TOPIC: Integrity**

As I last mentioned in the newsletter article, there is little to report when one is in the position of president-elect. So I am taking the opportunity to discuss issues that directors encounter in their careers from time to time. In this issue I would like to address the issue of professional integrity. Through my career I have been surrounded by colleagues with incredible integrity, especially when it comes to educational programming for children.

As a director, we are faced with many issues that surface without warning. One such challenge that has been faced by most directors is the student that transfers into the district with high-cost needs. As the director, you must champion the program that best meets the child's needs, regardless of your personal feelings of how this is going to impact the plans that you had for money you had budgeted for your department. In some cases it is necessary to bring the issue to a superintendent who is not supportive or a board that may have members that are biased in their opinions on services for children in need. This then becomes a true test of your mettle.

As a director, you also need to be sensitive to a child's needs, a parents desires, and a realistic approach to meeting the child's needs. In many cases it may seem easiest to just acquiesce to the parent's demands regardless of the impact to others within the district. We are told that availability of resources is not to be considered when decisions are being made regarding services to children in special education. Yet we need to provide leadership to have everyone realize that there is not a bottomless pit of money that we can draw on to resolve any issue. In today's economy we are continually faced with the challenge of reductions in the general education program offerings, which can be partially due to some decisions related to unique special educational needs. As directors, we need to be sensitive to all of the implications related to decisions regarding children receiving special education.

Directors need to establish a firm resolve regarding how we provide educational opportunities to all children. It is best to have opportunities to establish this belief system prior to facing the force of an angry parent, teacher, principal, superintendent, or board member. This aspect of our job was never discussed in graduate classes.

I have had the opportunity to hold firm to my beliefs several times in my career. In some cases it was at the risk of being reprimanded or possibly even fired. However I found that you can hold true to the course and maintain a logical approach to providing necessary and adequate service for children. These issues are, again, great discussion points during the casual

times at a conference. To be able to discuss your experiences and dilemmas helps to form your resolve over the years. I look forward to seeing all of you at the Winter WCASS conference.

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## WCASS Region News

### Region 1 Chair: Mary Cimbalnik ([Mary.Cimbalnik@pewaukee.k12.wi.us](mailto:Mary.Cimbalnik@pewaukee.k12.wi.us))

Region 1 and CESA 1 combine the WCASS and RSN meetings for five joint meetings this year. In September we had Mary Hubacher and Daniel Chanen of Davis & Kuelthau provide an update on the IDEA final regulations, on January 18 we will focus on the 20 Indicators and the Self-Assessment using a panel of "first-timers" from our region, on March 22, we will have a legal update from Renae Waterman Aldana of Quarles and Brady as well as our annual Awards cer-

emony, and on April 25 we are looking forward to a DPI update. We will also be including our administrative assistants and offering them both an informational and fun program.

Dr. Barb Van Haren is in her first year as director at CESA 1, and we have had a great time planning and arranging these programs. Barb has a wealth of experience and contacts and we are very excited to be a working team.

### Region 2 Chair: Dave Kwiatkowski ([davek@cesa8.k12.wi.us](mailto:davek@cesa8.k12.wi.us))

Region II held their second meeting of the year on January 25, 2007, at the CESA 6 offices in Oshkosh. John Humphries of the WI.-DPI provided the professional program on the topic of Mental Health Issues in the Public Schools

John Forester and Phil Knobel also provided excellent updates from the SAA and WCASS statewide. As always, our RSN Directors: Barb Behlen-CESA 6, Dorie Pagel- CESA 7 and Chuck Hastert-CESA 8 informed us of new events and resources available through the DPI-RSN. The main concern of our business meeting was to plan for the succession of the Region II chair position for the 2007-08 school year. Several well-qualified Region II members have expressed some interest, but there is still time and need for candidates for election of this position at our Spring meeting in April. That meeting will also be our annual WCASS Region II Awards Day, the highlight of our schedule each year. This year's event will be held at the Comfort Suites in Green Bay on Thursday, April 19, 2007.

Any Region II member who would like to nominate a candidate for a Region II Award for the 2006-07 school year, should contact either of our Region II Award Co-Chairs: Sue Goron at 920-336-5754 or Don Zander

at 920-492-2905 x1010. Nominations can be made in the following categories: Persons with Disabilities; Special Ed. Teacher; Regular Ed. Teacher/Integration Team; Special Ed. Para-Professional; Pupil Service Professional (e.g., nurses, social workers); Support/Related Service Professionals (psychologists, counselors, at-risk teachers); and Administrators.

Awards will be presented at a noon luncheon event on April 19. Also scheduled for the morning of that day will be a Dr. Lynn Boeson of the WI-DPI on the always hot topics of the use of seclusion and restraints for special education students and other student discipline issues. A business meeting for election of 2007-08 officers and presentation planning for the coming year will follow lunch. RSN updates for CESA 6,7, and 8 will conclude that day.

Our Region II group is always searching for relevant topics and presentations from our colleagues. If anyone is interested in presenting on a topic or would like to recommend a presenter, please contact Dave Kwiatkowski at CESA 8 at 800-831-6391 x 233 or by e-mail ([davek@cesa8.k12.wi.us](mailto:davek@cesa8.k12.wi.us)).

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### Region 3 Chair: John Peterson ([jpeterson@waterforduhs.k12.wi.us](mailto:jpeterson@waterforduhs.k12.wi.us))

After attending the State Superintendent's Fall Leadership Conference in October, every Director that I have been in contact with indicated that the conference was a success, as it made them rethink how they deliver special education services within their respective districts. Hearing Dr. George Baetsche present on Response to Intervention (Rtl) was an eye-opener for many of us, and there was a deep sense of appreciation for those who had planned the conference. A common concern that I heard from Directors after attending the fall conference was the level of involvement and knowledge of Rtl from general educators in leadership positions. Also, many expressed frustration that Rtl was falling solely into the laps of special education leaders. Regardless of who shoulders the burden of the education and implementation of Rtl, one thing is clear: Rtl affects our entire education community, as it calls for a district-wide problem-solving model.

To assist in informing our educators in leadership roles (e.g., Superintendents, Directors of Curriculum and Instruction, Principals, General Educators, etc.) about Rtl, CESA #2 (working in conjunction with CESA #1) has arranged for Dr. Baetsche to come back to Wisconsin on the afternoon of February 28th. Dr. Baetsche will conduct an in-service on Rtl to our general educators in leadership roles at the Sheraton Inn in Brookfield. Teams of educators from each district are encouraged to attend.

There will be a follow-up presentation on Rtl to this same target audience the following morning (March

1st) at CESA #2. At this follow-up meeting, educational leaders will hear representatives from the Monona Grove School District discuss their problem solving model and illustrate how Rtl applies to school districts in Wisconsin.

Also in Region 3, there will be another Rtl professional development opportunity for educators in leadership roles: Tom Shorter will be presenting information on Rtl to both Superintendents and Directors of Special Education on February 1st at CESA #2. This meeting will not only serve as an informational meeting but also as a springboard to encourage attendance at Dr. Baetsche's workshop.

On February 1st, Region 3 will be meeting to discuss the Final Report: Stakeholder's Task Force on EIS-Rtl-SLD and a variety of other issues. Another agenda item that Region 3 will be discussing at this meeting is the self assessment process. Several districts in Region 3 are going through the self-assessment process this year and have a lot of valuable information that could benefit other school districts. It is our goal to provide districts that will be going through the self-assessment next year with a variety of information to consider so they can plan accordingly and understand the time commitment associated with this process.

I look forward to seeing many of you at the WCASS Winter Conference up in Appleton and continuing on our conversations regarding Rtl, self-assessment, and other relevant topics in the months to come.

### Region 4 Chair: Diane Knudsen ([knudsend@esschools.k12.wi.us](mailto:knudsend@esschools.k12.wi.us))

If you are from Region 4 and need some information on the happenings in your Region, contact Diane.

#### Articles . . . News . . . Announcements . . .

Please contact Jan Chapman,  
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## From our Co-conference Chairs

Tammy Fruik ([tfruik@greenbay.k12.wi.us](mailto:tfruik@greenbay.k12.wi.us))  
and Greg Nyen ([gnyen@phillips.k12.wi.us](mailto:gnyen@phillips.k12.wi.us))  
Please contact us and continue to provide us with your thoughts and ideas for upcoming conferences, as they are greatly appreciated.

**"Save the Date" – Spring 2007  
Conference Dates: May 9, 10, 11  
at the Crowne Plaza in Madison**

**Hope to see you all there!**