



WISCONSIN COUNCIL OF
ADMINISTRATORS OF SPECIAL SERVICES,
LTD.



WCASS, 4797 Hayes Rd., Ste. 101, Madison WI 53704 608-245-2511 wcass@chorus.net

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

President's Message.....1	Region News.....7
Executive Director's Comments.....3	Calendar.....7
President-Elect Comments.....4	Directory.....8
Rural Education Package5	

President's Message by Gary Myrah



My term as president of WCASS is coming to a close. The past two years have flown by and WCASS has been active during this time. As I have stated before, I would encourage everyone to seek a more active role in this association at some time during your career. Our executive board is dynamic and has regular new members joining. If you are interested in becoming more active, contact Dave Kwitkowski. 920-855-2114 or davek@cesa8.k12.wi.us

WCASS continues to be involved in the proposed regulation changes for SLD and issues related to restraint and seclusion. Below is a brief summary of current status.

Specific Learning Disabilities & Response to Intervention

The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction is currently wrapping up the public hearings related to the proposed rule changes for Specific Learning Disabilities. A significant change within the proposal regulations is the elimination of the discrepancy model and procedures related to response to intervention. The WCASS Executive Board has spent considerable time reviewing this information and has prepared a position statement indicating support as well as noting concerns related to implementation.

It is my understanding that there has been testimony from individuals representing parent advocacy groups stating the timeframe for implementation should be reduced from five years. It is our understanding that their wishing to have full implementation as quickly as possible.

It is also interesting to note that the group entitled the Wisconsin Meeting Coalition has requested a Legislative Study Committee on RTI. You can learn more about this organization by going to wisconsinreadingcoalition.org. This group has also supported legislation that focuses on the use of the term dyslexia in schools and the need for additional teachers in the area of dyslexia.

The second annual RTI Summit was again a success this year. There were over 1000 people registered for the conference. It is encouraging to see that this conference is attended by regular and special educators and administration.

Continues next page

President's Message continued from pg. 1

There has been an RtI Communication Council created by WDPI comprised of various educational groups, including WCASS. I attended the first organizational meeting in March. The purpose of the group is to provide suggestions on how to continue the momentum that has begun with the first two RtI Summits. Since the first meeting was simply organizational and brain-storming of how to proceed, there is little to report at this time. I will provide updates in future newsletters.

Restraint & Seclusion

At this time, it is our belief that the proposed legislation related to restraint and seclusion in Wisconsin will not be passed during this legislative session. Senator Lehman has suggested there should be a consideration of starting with the current WDPI directive as a basis for statutory language. It is anticipated the groups that have brought this issue to the legislature in the past will continue to bring it forward until there is a bill passed. If this is a possibility, it is important to be proactive and design legislation that will protect children while keeping it manageable for schools to implement.

In closing, there are many innovations and challenges in education. Members of WCASS need to remain active to have influence. Our association will remain influential if our members pitch in and share the load. There are many ways you can help. If there is a legislative alert requesting action by our members, it is amazing how influential our group can be if each of us write our representatives.

In many cases people choose not to write a message, believing it will have little influence in changing the course of action. The response of our collective group of administrators throughout the state resulted in slowing down the movement to pass AB 468 on restraint and seclusion. In addition to reacting when there is a legislative alert, it pays to periodically send a letter of thanks/support on issues that your representative/senator supported.

As I come to the end of my presidential term, I wish to thank all of the membership for their active support. Specifically, I wish to thank members of our executive board for the extra effort in providing service to all of you. I look forward to seeing all of you at the WCASS Spring Conference in May.

— Gary

e-mail: gary.myrah@pwssd.k12.wi.us
<<mailto:gary.myrah@pwssd.k12.wi.us>>

Office: 262-268-6079

WCASS Spring Conference

Wednesday – Friday
May 5 -7, 2010

Crowne Plaza, Madison

Register online at <http://wcass.org>

Executive Director's Comments by Phil Nobel

The last couple of week's spring has been in the air and we are ready for our Spring Conference to be held in Madison on May 5-7, 2010. The line up for the conference looks great and all attending will find keynote presentations and sectionals that will benefit you in your day to day activities working with Wisconsin students.



In addition to the conference offerings on Wednesday afternoon, at 4:00 pm we will hold our 13th annual golf outing at the Oaks Golf Course not far from the Crowne Plaza. This is a fun nine hole outing for all types of golfers; beginners and all. Following golf there will be a cookout. We encourage non golfers to join us to network with other WCASS members and retirees. On Thursday following the conference and membership meeting, Davis and Kuelthau will again provide a social from 5 to 7pm for all conference attendees. Register for the conference and golf outing at www.wcass.org.

On the legislative front, the Spring 2010 session is scheduled to end on April 22nd. They will not return for a scheduled session until January 2011. With elections in November 2010, the make up of the legislature and governor's office may look much different by the January session than it does now. We know the seclusion and restraint legislation is not going to be passed during this session but will be back again during the next session. In addition to that legislation, we have been working on the following legislative items that will carry over into 2011. They include open enrollment, private contracting using federal dollars, and flexibility in using special education staff in RTI efforts just to name a few.

The SAA legislative committee will begin meeting in May to set its 2011-13 SAA legislative agenda. This process will continue until December to be completed with several meetings scheduled during this time. WCASS has six voting members on the legislative committee. We are looking for members to serve on the committee as members and alternates. If you are interested in participating, please contact Kurt Eley keley@waunakee.k12.wi.us or myself at philknobel@wcass.org.

We look forward to seeing you at the Spring Conference in Madison on May 5-7th. I would like to also thank WCASS members and others for all you have done for the students of Wisconsin during this past year and for your support of WCASS.

— Phil

608-245-2511

philknobel@wcass.org

Three things in human life are important:

The first is to be kind.

The second is to be kind.

And the third is to be kind.

Henry James, Writer (1843-1916)

President-Elect Comments by David Kwiatkowski



During this very productive term, our distinguished WCASS President Gary Myra has done a remarkable job of providing a strong foundation for our organization's continued strength and vitality in the future. I believe that Gary has been very thoughtful and proactive in his leadership for strategic planning for WCASS over the next two decades. Beginning with our Executive Board Retreat in October, 2009 and continuing in all our Executive Board activities throughout this year, Gary has lead us to clarify and focus on a set of priorities that will be the building blocks for the future of WCASS. In a nutshell, those priorities are:

WCASS will remain and thrive as the trusted and highly respected front line advisory organization related to special education issues at the state and national levels;

WCASS will recruit, sustain and nurture a well-informed and active membership, keeping in mind the high percentage of members and organizational leaders moving toward retirement;

WCASS will continue to develop and advance standards and structures for leadership development within special education and in collaboration with other educational leadership partners.

I feel very fortunate that Gary has been willing and able to take on this challenging, but essential groundwork for our prosperity. Now, however, it is my place to pick up the toolbox and start building upward on this foundation. To do this well in the short time I have as your "crew boss", I am going to need all of you to help! I would liken the next two years of WCASS to an old-fashion country barn-raising and I need every one of our members to "Get Neighborly" and pitch in with your particular skills and propensities!

I need to clarify that by this writing in April, I don't wish to hurry Gary to the door and claim my foreman duties prematurely! However, I believe my call to action is timely this Spring. The reason resides in my belief that the WCASS Regions are going to be very crucial in organizing and accomplishing the good work we have ahead of us in the next two years. I wish to strengthen and energize each of our four regional groups during my terms and so maximize the involvement and input of all our members in the building of an even stronger WCASS organization.

So we are able to come to this challenge "tool-ready" and organized in the Fall, I would like to challenge each of the WCASS Regions to set your meeting schedules for next year now and ask your neighborhood of members to make them a priority on their schedules for the coming year. Also, let's make a redoubled effort to reach out to our colleagues in our neighborhoods who have yet to join WCASS, so we can add more members to the crew. As for my part, I have set a personal goal to visit each one of our Region's meetings at least once during my two year term, so please email me your meeting schedules as soon as you are able, and I promise to get you on my calendar too!

Continues next page

President Elect Message continued from pg. 4

Remember... many hands make for light work! So what do you say... LET'S GET NEIGHBORLY!!

As always, thanks for listening!

— Dave

920-855-2114 Office
davek@cesa8.k12.wi.us

Rural Education Package Advances in Legislature

The School Administrators Alliance (SAA) has been working for months with rural Democrats on a package of bills that will benefit schools throughout Wisconsin. In the past couple of weeks, bills relating to SAGE flexibility, transportation aid, transportation of private school students, consolidation grant funding and consolidation referendum date flexibility have cleared both the Senate and Assembly Education Committees and await scheduling for floor action in both houses. Time is running short as the current legislative session will end on April 22nd. However, prospects for passage of some or all of this legislation currently look good. The SAA is grateful for the efforts of the Rural Democratic Caucus as well as the support of Representative Sony Pope-Roberts and Senator John Lehman, the respective chairs of the Assembly and Senate Committees on Education.

The Rural Education Package includes:

SAGE Flexibility

If enacted, AB 808/SB 593 would allow existing SAGE schools to satisfy the class size requirement by reducing the class size to no more than 18 pupils, and combine two classes with two teachers to achieve a total class size of 30 pupils. The bill also, in the 2010-11 school year, opens the program to schools not currently in the SAGE program if a number of criteria are satisfied. Finally, under the bill, DPI may not waive SAGE requirements in any SAGE contract entered into or renewed after the effective date of the bill. Simply put, SB 593 is designed to help save the SAGE program in many Wisconsin school districts.

Transportation of Private School Students

A provision adopted in the 2009-11 budget provides that in the Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS), if two or more pupils reside in the same household and attend the same private school, the contract may, at the discretion of the school board, provide for a **total annual payment for all of the pupils instead of for each of the pupils**. AB 809/SB 595 extends this "one trip, one payment" provision to all school districts.

Continues next page

Rural Education Package continued from pg. 5

This bill also moves the current date by which private schools must notify public schools of the number of children needing transportation each year from May 15th (current law) to July 1.

School Transportation Aid

Under current law, the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) must prorate state aid payments to school districts for transportation costs if the amount appropriated is insufficient to cover all eligible costs. Under AB 807/SB 596, beginning in the 2010-11 fiscal year, if there is a balance in the appropriation after all claims have been paid, DPI must distribute the balance to school districts on a prorated basis.

In this environment of rising transportation costs, the current annual state appropriation of \$26,337,300 represents less than 7 percent of total school district transportation costs statewide (currently over \$400 million annually). But, because of declining bus ridership and a fixed reimbursement formula, the school transportation appropriation is projected to lapse more than \$2 million to the general fund in 2009-10.

At a time when school districts are cutting teaching staff and instructional programming in order to balance school budgets, it seems to me the least we could do is give DPI the authority to fully expend the school transportation aid appropriation.

District Consolidation Referendum Date Flexibility

AB 806/SB 598 provides two alternative timelines for school district consolidations if the school boards considering consolidation specify in their initial resolutions which alternative timeline applies.

Consolidation Study Grants

AB 805/SB 599, as amended, authorizes the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) to award grants of up to \$10,000 to consortia of two or more districts to study the feasibility of consolidating the school districts.

If you should have any questions regarding the SAA's work on these bills, please call me at (608) 242-1370. Thanks for listening and, as always, thank you for your efforts on behalf of Wisconsin school children. For up-to-date reports on legislative activities, please visit the SAA's website at www.wsaa.org.



WCASS Region News

Region 1 Chair: Mardi Freeman freema@hamiltondist.k12.wi.us

For information from this region, please contact Mardi Freeman.

April 29, 2010 -- Specific Learning Disabilities/ WCASS Awards

Region 2 Chair: Bob Geigle Robert.geigle@oshkosh.k12.wi.us

For information from this region, please contact Bob Geigle.

Region 3 Chair: John Peterson jpeterson@waterforduhs.k12.wi.us

For information from this region, please contact John Peterson.

Region 4 Chair: Diane Knudsen knudsend@esschools.k12.wi.us

For information from this region, please contact Diane Knudsen.

Mark Your Calendar

2010

May 5-7 **WCASS Spring Conference**, Crowne Plaza, Madison

DIRECTORY WCASS

4797 Hayes Rd., Ste. 101
Madison WI 53704
608-245-2511
www.wcass.org

President

Gary Myrah
262-268-6079
262-268-6020 fax
gary.myrah@pwssd.k12.wi.us

President Elect

David Kwiatkowski
920-855-2114
920-855-2299 fax
davek@cesa8.k12.wi.us

Executive Director

Phil Knobel
608-245-2511
608-249-3163 fax
philknobel@wcass.org

Director of Government Relations

John D. Forester
608-242-1370
608-242-1290 fax
www.wsaa.org

Research & Special Projects

Barbara Van Haren
262-787-9500
262-787-9501 fax

Nissan Bar-Lev
920-849-9384

Past President

Tim Gantz
920-448-2000
920-448-3562 fax

Secretary

Dawn Western
715-294-4180 x329
715-755-3649 fax

Treasurer

Ken Kassees
414-766-5041
414-766-5005 fax

Legislation

Kurt Eley
608-849-2015
608-849-9746 fax

Constitution & Policies

Howard Kallio
262-560-2156
262-560-2103 fax

Membership

Steve Smith
715-422-6015
715-422-6070 fax

Programs

Tammy Fruik
715-261-0532
715-261-2580 fax

Greg Nyen

715-345-5454
715-345-7302 fax

Social & Awards

Jan Chapman
262-376-6143
262-376-6110 fax

Newsletter

Kelly Kapitz
715-261-1980
715-261-1981 fax



Articles . . . News . . . Announcements

Please contact Kelly Kapitz,
WCASS Newsletter Editor
kkapitz@mcspecialeducation.com
715-261-1980