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President's Message

By: Greg Nyen



The End of Public Education?

When we think of public education in Wisconsin we think of education being available to all children, we think of acceptance for students with disabilities, we think of the hard-won rights of 1975 under PL 94-142, we think of the relief on a new parents face as they hear the support outlined in their child's first Individual Education Plan (IEP), all embodied in the acronym FAPE – Free Appropriate Public Education. Public education in Wisconsin has had a long-standing history of inclusion, mainstreaming, diversity, acceptance and accessibility that complement our high rates of test participation, student achievement, and graduation. Could all that come to an end with the expansion of private-school vouchers?

The school report card, an initiative of Governor Walker, is being proposed to determine eligibility for

voucher expansion after only being implemented for the first time in 2012. The school report card was touted as a vehicle to improve student achievement, not to make high stakes funding decisions and expand vouchers. Although numerous state educational leaders have stated that revisions need to be made to the school report card, school districts will be permanently subject to voucher expansion regardless of future improvement.

State payments to private voucher schools would increase by \$73 million under Governor Walker's proposed budget despite serving fewer than 30,000 students, an increase of \$2,433 per student. Conversely, public schools serving more than 870,000 students stand to receive \$39 million, or \$44.82 per student. This gross inequity in funding reveals the true attempt to privatize our public

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education system, destroying a system that has successfully served so many students, for so many years.

The alternative budget proposal, put forth by Senators Olsen and Ellis, increases the revenue limit per pupil expenditure by \$150 in each year of the biennium, an amount still significantly below the cuts to education realized in the last biennial budget. The Stevens Point Area Public School District, no doubt similar to your own district(s), continues to be fiscally responsible and conservative, but must get the additional funding to continue to avoid gutting and eliminating current programs.

A public education and a publicly funded education are not synonymous despite the proposed biennial budget put forward by Governor Walker. How can we change an educational system that has been steeped in success for so many students, for so many years, with a biennial budget? This veiled attempt to privatize public education will be done at the expense of our most vulnerable population.

While our public school systems feel the economic impact of a state and national effort to privatize

education, some parents will be duped by scholarship rhetoric. Whose responsibility will it be to explain to our parents what they will give up when they choose to take the scholarship instead of FAPE? Who will tell the parent that there are no special education teachers, no due process, no procedural safeguards, no accessibility requirement, no best pedagogical practices, and most of all, no regulation or oversight by the Department of Public Instruction?

Time is limited and the failure to remove this language from the budget will result in an unconstitutional denial of FAPE, and the destruction of a public education system that has worked so well, for so many, for so many years. Please do not support this language, urge your State Representatives to revise the proposed budget, and continue to help illustrate that public education works in Wisconsin! Thank you for your dedication to the students in Wisconsin.

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The School Administrators Alliance (SAA) and Wisconsin Retired Educators' Association (WREA) have formed a strategic alliance designed to jointly lobby Wisconsin lawmakers on school funding, private school vouchers and other public education issues. SAA and WREA will also collaborate on efforts to promote public education throughout Wisconsin.

For SAA Talking Points on Private School Voucher Expansion, Special Needs Vouchers and Charter School Budget Proposals, click [here](#).



Executive Director's "Snippets"

By: Gary Myrah

In the last newsletter, a new approach was started – using “snippets” of information, including hyperlinks to pertinent webpages as resources to you. Key issues that are surfacing at this time include some of the issues reported in the past newsletters:

- School Accountability (the School Report Card): The Governor is using the initial Report Card as a means to reward high performing schools and identify the schools that are performing significantly below the other schools in Wisconsin;
- Educator Effectiveness: WDPI has not yet established work groups to discuss the evaluation procedures to be used for faculty that are not considered “core subject teachers”;
- SMARTER Balanced Assessment: More information is coming forward regarding the assessment and the procedures. This appears to be a test that is more sophisticated than what we have been experiencing in the past. Concerns are developing regarding the administration time for these tests;
- Dynamic Learning Maps (alternate assessment for 1% of the school population): This is still in the developing stages;
- Student Information System (SIS): Infinite Campus has been chosen to be the company that will hold the contract. Skyward has launched opposition to the selection process. Other software companies have also been raising question regarding the procedures used in the process;
- Multi-Tier System of Support (MTSS) [includes RtI & PBIS]: There continues to be a transformation toward the use of MTSS.

Major issues that have arisen since the last newsletter are associated with the budget proposal created by Governor Walker. Of greatest concern to us is the proposal related to special education vouchers/scholarships. Since this is currently within the governor’s budget, the proposal is not open to debate through the normal hearing process. By the time you read this newsletter there will be more clarity regarding the development of the special education voucher/scholarship issue.

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The Wisconsin Department of Administration (DOA) has made the Executive Budget documents available. You can access a Budget in Brief as well as the complete Executive Budget document [here](#).

The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (WDPI) recently posted its summary of Governor Walker’s 2013-15 Biennial Budget proposal with the focus on proposed education provisions. Keep in mind that fiscal items that are not highlighted in the WDPI document (i.e., Sparsity Aid and SAGE) likely were not changed by the Governor and funding remains at the current year level.

To access the WDPI summary, [click here](#).

A Collaborative Problem Solving Model

By: Dr. Eric P. Hartwig, Ph.D.

IDENTIFYING WHAT MATTERS MOST: A STATEMENT OF NEED

A climate of performance for school instruction must be “highly effective” (Vaughn & Fuchs, 2003¹), “high quality” (Mellard, Byrd et al., 2004²), “research validated” (Fuchs, 2003³), and “scientific, research-based” (Idea, 2004). Lack of responsiveness by staff is not independent of performance (e.g., Gerber, 2005⁴) nor attitudes. A true climate of performance requires a “seismic shift in beliefs, attitudes, and practice” (Fuchs et al., 2002, p. 40⁵) and collaborative thinking.

Eighty percent of the variation in student achievement can be attributed to four student-level variables (Marzano, 2000⁶) home environment, prior knowledge, aptitude, and interest/motivation. The most apparent link to student success is the “opportunity to learn.” Ongoing behavior concerns limit the opportunity for teachers to teach and children to learn (Marzano, 2000⁷).

Problem solving, like policy issues can become ideological debates that represent and what Sowell (1995⁸) termed a “conflict of visions” without an empirical foundation and a process in place, on one side, “vision of the anointed,” on the other side, “vision of the benighted.”

Relevance to Need

Although the skills needed for successful problem solving can be taught and learned (Cramer, 2006⁹; Stivers, Lavoie, Perner, & Kinn, 2003¹⁰), even intelligent and well-intentioned teachers, diligently trying to work together, at times may find that genuine collaboration eludes them. Teachers can problem solve and collaborate effectively with people who are quite different from themselves and find a common ground (e.g., Mastropieri et al., 2005¹¹) (e.g., Drucker, 1994¹²)

¹ Vaughn, S., & Fuchs, L.S. (2003). *Supra*.

² Mellard, D.F., Byrd, S.E., Johnson, E., Tollefson, J.M., & Boesche, L. (2004). *Supra*.

³ Fuchs, L.S. (2003). Assessing intervention responsiveness: Conceptual and technical issues. *Learning Disabilities Research & Practice, 18*, 172-186.

⁴ Gerber, M.M. (2005). Teachers are still the test: Limitations of response to intervention strategies for identifying children with learning disabilities. *Journal of Learning Disabilities, 38*, 516-524.

⁵ Fuchs, D., Mock, D., Morgan, P.L., & Young, C.L. (2003). *Supra*

⁶ Marzano, R.J. (2000). *A new era of school reform: Going where the research takes us*. Aurora, CO: Mid-Continent Research for Education and Learning.

⁷ Marzano, R.J. (2000). *A new era of school reform: Going where the research takes us*. Aurora, CO: Mid-Continent Research for Education and Learning.

⁸ Sowell, T. (1995). *The vision of the anointed: Self-congratulation as a basis for social policy*. New York: Basic Books.

⁹ Cramer, S.F. (2006). *The special educator's guide to collaboration*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

¹⁰ Stivers, J., Lavoie, J. Perner, D., & Kinn, B. (2003, October). *Human relations skills for inclusive education*. Paper presented at the annual conference of the Northeastern Educational Research Association, Kerhonkson, NY.

¹¹ Mastropieri, M.A., Scruggs, T.E., Graetz, J., Norland, J., Gardizi, W., & McDuffie, K. (2005). Case studies in co-teaching in the content areas: Successes, failures, and challenges. *Intervention in School and Clinic, 40*(5), 260-270.

¹² Drucker, P.F. (1994, November). The Age of Social Transformation. *The Atlantic Monthly, 274*, 53-80.

Collaborative Problem Solving Model continued from p. 4

creating an outcome that is acceptable to both parties (Fisher, Ury, & Patton, 1991¹³). However, no single problem solving approach works for everyone. Although many effective models exist (Bauwens & Hourcade, 2003¹⁴; Drucker, 1994¹⁵; Friend & Cook, 2007¹⁶); there are a number of stumbling blocks to collaboration and effective problem solving that can be conceptual and pragmatic:

- 1) A climate of competition rather than cooperation;
- 2) A lack of clarity about underlying values and beliefs;
- 3) Inadequate administrative support; and
- 4) Lack of planning time, and opportunities for professional development in collaborative problem-solving skills (Leonard & Leonard, 2003¹⁷).

Although, experienced teachers are significantly more likely to refer to problem solving as a strategy that helps enhance student outcomes (Stough & Palmer, 2001¹⁸; Stough, Palmer, & Sharp, 2001¹⁹), first year teachers have one basic goal – survival (Mandel, 2006²⁰). Experience alone is insufficient to ensure success (Trent, 1998²¹) and little can be accomplished if only one person is invested in making the relationship more effective (Cramer, 2006). When both people stay in the same positions in relation to each other, there is little likelihood of change. When one moves, both are influenced (Cramer, p. 9²²).

There are, however, two qualities that Bauwens and Hourcade (2003²³) identify in teachers as important for effective collaboration and efficient problem solving behavior: an inner pressure to achieve results and a high level of confidence in your own ability.

¹³ Fisher, R., Ury, W., & Patton, B. (1991). *Getting to yes: Negotiating without giving in*. (2nd ed.). New York: Penguin Books.

¹⁴ Bauwens, J., & Hourcade, J.J. (2003). *Cooperative teaching: Rebuilding the schoolhouse for all students* (2nd ed.). Austin, TX: Pro-Ed.

¹⁵ Drucker (1994, November). *Supra*

¹⁶ Friend, M., & Cook, L. (2007). *Interactions: Collaboration skills for school professionals*. (5th ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

¹⁷ Leonard, L., & Leonard, P. (2003, September 17). The continuing trouble with collaboration: Teachers talk. *Current Issues in Education* 6(15). Retrieved June 5, 2006, from <http://cie.ed.asu.edu/volume6/number15/>

¹⁸ Stough, L.M. & Palmer, D.J. (2001, April). *Teacher reflection: How effective special educators differ from novices*. Paper presented at the annual Council for Exceptional Children conference, Kansas City, MO. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED463279)

¹⁹ Stough, L.M., Palmer, D.J. & Sharp, A.N. (2001, February). *Teachers' reflections on special education students' cognition*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Southwest Educational Research Association, New Orleans, LA. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED452626)

²⁰ Mandel, S. (2006). What new teachers really need. *Educational Leadership*, 63(6), 66-69.

²¹ Trent, S.C. (1998). False starts and other dilemmas of a secondary general education collaborative teacher: A case study. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 31(5), 503-513.

²² Cramer, S.F. (2006), p. 9, *id*.

²³ Bauwens, J., & Hourcade, J.J. (2003), *Supra*.

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Do Lunch or Be Lunch

The first step in problem solving is to assess the level of agreement among participants along two critical dimensions:

1. **The extent** to which staff agree on *what they want*; **the results** they seek from their participation, their values, priorities; and, **which tradeoffs** they are willing to make in order to achieve those results.
2. **The extent** to which staff agree on *cause and effect* that is; which actions will lead to the desired outcome.

Everyone has two kinds of interest: in the substance and in the relationship²⁴. The relationship is determinant of how successful the problem solving approach and subsequent intervention will be. Maintaining the relationship while assessing the concerns and finding a common interest is critical to any problem solving approach that will result in an intervention implemented with fidelity across staff.

Corcoran, Fuhrman, & Belcher (2001²⁵) found that when decisions were primarily teacher based, “school staff members paid lip service to the use of research,” and “were more interested in designs that drew on research about practices that they already felt were ‘good’ than in designs that were producing results” (p. 81). Staff then, use what they know without regard to whether it is methodologically sound. Decision making without a sense of evidence based practice appear(s) to undermine the use of knowledge rather than promote it (p. 81). The power of predictability in understanding why people behave as they do is a crucial component of problem solving.²⁶

The point? Staff need to be explicitly taught to:

- * Work together toward a common understanding.
- * Listen to understand, find meaning and agreement.
- * See all sides of an issue.
- * Admit that others’ thinking can improve one’s own.
- * Search for strengths and value in others’ positions.
- * Discover or create new interventions that effectively change and teach new behavior.

²⁴ Fisher, R., Ury, W., & Patton, B. (1991). *Getting to yes: Negotiating without giving in*. (2nd ed.). New York: Penguin Books.

²⁵ Corcoran, T.B., Fuhrman, S.H., & Belcher, C.L. (September 2001), The District Role in Instructional Improvement, *Phi Delta Kappan*, Volume 83, Issue 1, pages 78-84.

²⁶ Stevenson, Howard H., & Cruikshank, Jeffrey L. (1986), Do lunch or be lunch: The power of predictability in creating your future. *Wall Street Journal*.

WCASS Outstanding Special Services Administrator Award

Dear WCASS Member,

Please consider nominating a fellow WCASS member who is deserving of the "WCASS Outstanding Special Services Administrator" award. The WCASS Outstanding Special Services Administrator Award is presented annually at the Fall WCASS Membership Meeting, held during the DPI Leadership Conference. Recipients of the award are individuals who have:

- Actively participated in WCASS as office holders, committee members or in activities of other professional organizations
- Developed and implemented innovative and effective programs that have positively influenced the field of special services administration
- Positively impacted the administration of special services programs and/or the preparation of special education administrators
- Contributed to his or her colleagues' successes
- Participated in local, state and national legislative matters that affect the delivery of special services

- Dedicated years of service to Special Education and/or Pupil Services

Nominations are not secret and the nominated individual is asked to provide a Candidate Statement as part of the process. The individual making the nomination requests letters of support for the nominee and compiles the nomination packet. Information and the nomination packet can be found on the WCASS website under the Professional Development tab, <http://www.wcass.org>.

Nominations should be sent to Jan Chapman, WCASS Awards chairperson, by June 10th. More than one candidate may receive the award. Questions regarding the WCASS Outstanding Special Services Administrator Award can be directed to:

Jan Chapman
Director of Pupil Services
Germantown School District
N104 W13840 Donges Bay Rd
Germantown WI 53022
Phone: 262.253.3920
Fax: 262.253.3585
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Congratulations Retirees!!



Pictured are: Carla Spice - Lena, Ann Christopherson - New London, & Claudia Dempset - Chippewa Falls. Also recognized for their retirements were David Burke - CESA #10, Karen Lietzow - CESA #5, Joan Schultz - Hartford, Tammy Cummings - Portage and Jan Cope-Kasten - Ripon

WCASS Region News

Region 1 Chair: Mardi Freeman

freema@hamilton.k12.wi.us

I am writing this on April Fools' Day, and it seems that we have all been "fooled" by our wintry spring weather. Today it is supposed to reach a high temperature of 35 degrees, which isn't much like spring. The weather makes it difficult to believe that the last quarter of the 2012-13 school year is here! Those of us in WCASS Region #1 are working together to be sure our members are informed of all that is going on.

In January we were very fortunate to have Rachel Zellmer present to those in attendance on "Solving the Special Education Funding Puzzle." Rachel is extremely knowledgeable and yet easily understood when explaining the complexities of MOE, IDEA, CEIS, etc. Her presentation was beneficial to all and well received.

For those of us unable to travel to the warm breezes in sunny Florida, an area was reserved for participation/attendance to the CASE Hybrid Winter Conference at CESA #1. This enabled directors to hear from nationally known speakers on hot topics of interest to us all. If this is an option for next year's conference, I would encourage others to participate via technology also.

Our March meeting was presented using technology to allow us to interact with Lynn Holdheide, Senior Technical Assistance Consultant with the American Institutes for Research. She discussed "The Use of Student Growth to Evaluate Educators of Student with Disabilities: Issues, Challenges, and Next Steps." She shared with us state and district examples of how others have been addressing educator effectiveness when evaluating special education staff. The information was timely and good background knowledge to have as the state of Wisconsin moves forward with our own educator effectiveness model.

In April we had Renae Aldana from Buehlow, Vetter and Associates present a legal update for all of us.

As special education directors people look to us, confer

with us, defer to us, ask direction and advice. It is sometimes difficult and you can feel as if you are "supposed to know" all the answers. We cannot have all the right information for every situation. Rather than knowing about all the various aspects of special education, I challenge myself to "learn" about all the aspects. I can learn from those around me, and they from each other. Our WCASS organization is a web of interaction that allows us all to learn from one another and grow in our positions as we assist teachers, students and families. Here's to a wonderful end of the 2012-13 school year!

Region 2 Chair: John Peterson

petersonj@mail.fortschools.org

There have been some recent developments out of the United States Congress that have resulted in some improvements for special education funding in the area of Maintenance of Effort (MOE). Most educators became very familiar with the requirements of MOE after the financial impact of both ARRA and Act 10 on special education funding. To achieve MOE, states are required to spend at the same levels or higher than whatever amount they spent the previous year. If Wisconsin or other states fall below the dollar amount they spent the previous year, then they lose that amount (the difference between the two years) in federal funding forever. Obviously, if the state educational agency is receiving less in federal funding, then that impacts us at the local educational agency level.

A recent change by the US Congress significantly improves this permanent cut. Senator Tom Harkin, D-Iowa, the chairman of the panel that oversees education spending, along with others in Congress added a provision to the recent spending legislation clarifying that states that do not meet MOE will still have their federal funding cut; however, this cut won't be permanent. Instead, the reduction would be for just one year (or years) that the state was out of compliance and did not get a waiver. Once the state educational agency meets the requirements of MOE, the state would have its federal funding fully restored.

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The change in the law adds another provision indicating that any of the reduced funding from one state that fails to meet the requirements of MOE is split up amongst the remaining state educational agencies that do meet MOE. These extra monies would be viewed as a type of bonus and should only be budgeted for as a one-time increase.

These changes to MOE are practical and benefit everyone. This provision still forces state educational agencies to keep special education spending an ongoing priority. However, if a state educational agency is unable to meet the requirements of MOE for one year, then they are not permanently punished. Furthermore, when states fail to meet MOE, their reduction stays in the overall pot of money and goes directly back to other states. In turn, the obvious impact is that states that are doing what they should be doing receive extra funding for providing services to students with disabilities. Previously, when a state educational agency failed to meet MOE, the reduction in funding was simply removed from the overall pot instead of shared with others.

In light of some potentially difficult times ahead for public education in Wisconsin, it is refreshing to hear some commonsensical approach to federal funding for students with disabilities. This approach keeps us all accountable and rewards those states that continue to make funding programs and services for students with disabilities a priority.

Outside of the changes to the MOE provision, I wanted to let you know that the chair that I currently hold is up for reelection. It has been a pleasure to be the WCASS Region 2 Representative, and I am very interested in continuing in this role. My intention is to offer my services again and run the Region 2 Chair. However, if there is anybody who is also interested in serving as the Region 2 Chair, please contact Gary Myrah – WCASS Executive Director – at garymyrah@wcass.org or via phone at (608) 245-2511. If more than one candidate expresses an interest in this post, then we will be required to have an election.

I hope you have an enjoyable spring and a great end to your school year.

Region 3 Chair: Katherine Strong

kstrong@cesa3.k12.wi.us

For information from this region, please contact Katherine Strong.

Region 4 Chair: Jessica Williams

williamsj@cesa5.org

I am pleased to inform you that the Region 4 Spring WCASS Meeting held at the Heidel house in Green Lake on March 22, 2013 was a great success!

Mary Gerbig presented legal updates and information on OCR Complaints with interpretation and implications for our districts. She provided information on Complaint Resolution Procedures and a sample complaint letter. Mary also explained our duty of reasonable care in order to ensure student safety as well as the fact that districts are only required to make modifications to their policies and procedures unless it will alter the program or create a completely modified curriculum.

Bette Carr from the Department of Instruction discussed updates on School Nursing including where nurses must allocate their time, the issues facing the absence of school nurses in schools with the increase in number of students with severe medical problems, school nurse salaries by years of experience and by CESA, as well as the new definition of the school nurse and a template of a School Nurse Performance Review/Evaluation. Bette reminded us that school nurses should be part of the school's Pupil Services Team and can even be part of the Attendance Team. They can make home visits and should be consulting with mental health care providers.

Elections were held for the positions of Region Chair and Secretary. Jessica Williams from CESA 5 has assumed the position of Region Chair, and we are happy to announce that Laurie Schmidt from Winneconne will continue to be

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our Secretary. Congratulations!

Unfortunately, no one was nominated for awards this year, but we plan to look into how to create more enthusiasm in this area for next year, as it is important to recognize all of the wonderful people working with us in education each day. We are thinking maybe we can create a working Google Document in which staff can enter people all year round in order to recognize them for any accomplishments they have made throughout the school year. We will then have a strong candidate pool built by the time the Spring Conference comes around. Please contact Jessica Williams with any feedback on this idea and the categories we should include at williamsj@cesa5.org.

The executive board updates included information on the importance of staying in touch with our local legislators and the location of the WCASS Spring Conference being at the Chula Vista in Wisconsin Dells. Marci mentioned many of the topics to be covered.

Barb Behlen, the CESA 6 Regional Service Network Director and Jessica Williams, the CESA 5 Regional Service Network Director shared information on the new role of the RSN for the 2013-2014 school year. There are many new and exciting changes which will include all of the Discretionary Grants coming together to increase student achievement in our schools.

The next Region 4 WCASS Meeting is set for October 18th at the Glacier Canyon Lodge in Wisconsin Dells.

Region 5 Chair: Lisa Misco

lamisco@pulaskischools.org

The Region 5 meeting originally scheduled for Friday, April 12th has been tentatively rescheduled for Monday,

June 3rd. Nic Dibble will present on records and we will be holding our regional awards.

Region 6 Chair: Diane Knudsen

knudsend@esschools.k12.wi.us

Happy Spring!! FINALLY!!!! For those of us in the northern counties, it seemed like it was never going to arrive. For some of us, we missed the last blast as we spent time in Wisconsin Dells for the WCASS Spring Conference where we had the opportunity to say farewell to the individuals who are leaving our ranks in retirement. For Region 6, those people were Claudia Dempsey, Director for the Chippewa Falls Area School District, Dave Burke, School Psychologist and District Director from CESA 10, and Toni Sturtz from CESA 10. Their expertise and friendship will be missed.

CESA's 10 and 11, which make up Region 6, continue to offer a number of professional development opportunities and I would encourage you to check out their individual websites for the ones that fit your needs and the needs of your district. As always, especially in these days of tight budgets and even tighter schedules, we need to be able to look to our colleagues for ideas and assistance to make sure we continue to provide our students with the best possible opportunities.

Enjoy the last few weeks that we have students in our midst and be sure to take time through the summer to reflect on and reward yourself for all of the great things that you do every day for kids. Have a great summer.

Region 7 Chair: Karen Baker

kbaker@ashland.k12.wi.us

For information from this region, please contact Karen Baker.

CASE Research Committee – Social Media Survey

The CASE Research Committee is conducting a survey to better understand how social media is being used by special education leaders. The survey is designed to collect information regarding 1) Social Media and Leadership, 2) Social Media and Personnel, and 3) Social Media and Policy. The survey will only take about 10 minutes to complete. We appreciate your time to complete the survey and contribute to this research. The survey can be found by clicking on this link:

[Click Here To Take The Survey Now!](#)

WCASS Upcoming Training Dates & Events**2013**

Aug 6th 2013 Academy for New Special Education Leadership: 2 days at Crowne Plaza Madison

Nov 18th State Superintendent's Conference on Special Education & Pupil Services Leadership Issues: 2 days at Madison Marriott West-Middleton Hotel

Please visit our website at <http://m360.wcass.org/calendar.aspx>



11th Annual CASE Educational Seminar	Washington, D.C. July 14-17, 2013	<i>Old Town Hilton</i>
24th Annual Fall CASE Conference	Indianapolis, IN September 26-28, 2013	<i>Indianapolis Hyatt Regency</i>

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