



## President's Message

By Tim Gantz

On behalf of WCASS, I would like to CONGRATULATE the following Directors on their Retirement . . .

Greg Dietz, Mike Lackas, Don Zander, Dorie Pagel, Janis Sinor, Eileen Dagen, Anita Husby, Kristine Meunier, Peg Bavin, and Joe Overturf

Also CONGRATULATIONS to our 2007 WCASS Administrators of the Year Award Recipients:

Gregory Dietz and Tom Potterton



## Executive Director's Comments . . .

As I am writing this we in the WCASS office are busy getting ready for our spring conference. By the time you receive the newsletter, the spring conference will be history and all of us will be heavy into planning for the 2007-08 school year. I would like to thank all of you who attended our 2 conferences this year and hope that you walked away with much useful information. I would also encourage you to let the conference committee and our office know if you have items you would like included in the conferences for next year. We value your input.

One major thing that will not be completed when you receive this will be the state budget for 2007-09. The budget proposed by the governor has \$54 million additional funding for special education in it. We will be working hard to keep that funding in the budget. But I would also advise you not to count on it for next year. At this time we do not know of any other items in the budget or proposed bills that would have a great effect on special education. I anticipate the budget process to be a long one this year and guess that school will be started in the fall before we have a new state budget. The SAA will keep you posted on current happening in the legislative budget process through the Capital Report. We will also send you alerts when necessary from our office.

With budget discussions taking place, the Association for Equity in Funding has again been pushing their proposed special education funding. They propose the elimination of most categorical aids including special education and would create an equalized aid weighting system for special education. This is the same proposal this group has pushed for the last several years. For the past year, Allen Odden has chaired a group looking at Wisconsin School Finance Adequacy. This group has suggested that the state should reimburse all costs for the top 2% of special education students who are considered severe and profound. In addition they would create a foundation system for high-incidence, lower cost students. We will keep a watchful eye on the discussions of funding systems changes for special education and the state of Wisconsin.



Phil Knobel

We would like to thank you for all that you do for Wisconsin students and for being a member of WCASS this year. We look forward to you joining for the 2007-08 school year, so watch your email for dues renewal.

## Message from Gary Myrah, President-Elect:

**SERENDIPITY:** As I prepared to write this entry for the WCASS newsletter, I pondered on a way to speak on the issue of the value of time. As directors, we devote a great deal of attention and time to fulfilling the requirements of our job. At this point in my career, I realize the impact of night meetings and going into the office on Saturdays to get caught up. I believe many of you find yourselves doing the same.

I was not sure how I was going to address this issue in this article, until I received the following e-mail from my dear friend Ron Krueger, retired director from Chippewa Falls. This story and the fourteen points at the end tell the message better than I could. One bit of advice that I offer is to keep an electronic file of e-mails with messages like

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this. I have done this over the years and have organized them into a booklet that I call "The GEMS of Life." I print this off and share it with friends during times of need.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF TIME

A young man learns what's most important in life from the guy next door.

It had been some time since Jack had seen the old man. College, girls, career, and life itself got in the way. In fact, Jack moved clear across the country in pursuit of his dreams. There, in the rush of his busy life, Jack had little time to think about the past, and often no time to spend with his wife and son. He was working on his future, and nothing could stop him.

Over the phone, his mother told him, "Mr. Belser died last night. The funeral is Wednesday." Memories flashed through his mind like an old newsreel as he sat quietly remembering his childhood days. "Jack, did you hear me?"

"Oh, sorry, Mom. Yes, I heard you. It's been so long since I thought of him. I'm sorry, but I honestly thought he died years ago," Jack said.

"Well, he didn't forget you. Every time I saw him he'd ask how you were doing. He'd reminisce about the many days you spent over on 'his side of the fence,' as he put it," Mom told him.

"I loved that old house he lived in," Jack said.

"You know, Jack, after your father died, Mr. Belser stepped in to make sure you had a man's influence in your life," she said.

"He's the one who taught me carpentry," Jack said, "I wouldn't be in this business if it weren't for him. He spent a lot of time teaching me things he thought were important . . . Mom, I'll be there for the funeral."

As busy as he was, he kept his word. Jack caught the next flight to his hometown. Mr. Belser's funeral was small and uneventful. He had no children of his own, and most of his relatives had passed away.

The night before he had to return home, Jack and his Mom stopped by to see the old house next door one more time.

Standing in the doorway, Jack paused for a moment. It was like crossing over into another dimension, a leap through space and time. The house was exactly as he remembered. Every step held memories. Every picture, every piece of furniture . . . Jack stopped suddenly. "What's wrong, Jack?" his Mom asked.

"The box is gone," he said.

"What box?" Mom asked.

"There was a small gold box that he kept locked on top of his desk. I must have asked him a thousand times what was inside. All he'd ever tell me was 'the thing I value most,'" Jack said.

It was gone. Everything about the house was exactly how Jack remembered it, except for the box. He figured someone from the Belser family had taken

it. "Now I'll never know what was so valuable to him," Jack said, "I better get some sleep. I have an early flight home, Mom."

It had been about two weeks since Mr. Belser died. Returning home from work one day, Jack discovered a note in his mailbox. "Signature required on a package. No one at home. Please stop by the main post office within the next three days," the note read. Early the next day Jack retrieved the package. The small box was old and looked like it had been mailed a hundred years ago. The handwriting was difficult to read, but the return address caught his attention. "Mr. Harold Belser," it read. Jack took the box out to his car and ripped open the package. There inside was the gold box and an envelope. Jack's hands shook as he read the note inside.

"Upon my death, please forward this box and its contents to Jack Bennett. It's the thing I valued most in my life." A small key was taped to the letter. His heart racing and tears filling his eyes, Jack carefully unlocked the box. There inside he found a beautiful gold pocket watch.

Running his fingers slowly over the finely etched casing, he unlatched the cover. Inside he found these words engraved: "Jack, Thanks for your time! —Harold Belser."

"The thing he valued most was . . . my time." Jack held the watch for a few minutes, then called his office and cleared his appointments for the next two days.

"Why?" Janet, his assistant, asked.

"I need some time to spend with my son," he said, "Oh, by the way, Janet, thanks for your time!"

"Life is not measured by the number of breaths we take but by the moments that take our breath away." Think about this. You may not realize it, but it's 100% true.

1. At least 2 people in this world love you so much they would die for you.
2. At least 15 people in this world love you in some way.
3. A smile from you can bring happiness to anyone, even if they don't like you.
4. Every night, SOMEONE thinks about you before they go to sleep.
5. You mean the world to someone.
6. If not for you, someone may not be living.
7. You are special and unique.
8. When you think you have no chance of getting what you want, you probably won't get it, but if you trust God to do what's best, and wait on His time, sooner or later, you will get it or something better.
9. When you make the biggest mistake ever, something good can still come from it.
10. When you think the world has turned its back on you, take a look: you most likely turned your back on the world.
11. Someone that you don't even know exists loves you.
12. Always remember the compliments you received. Forget about the rude remarks.

13. Always tell someone how you feel about them; you will feel much better when they know and you'll both be happy.
14. If you have great friends, take the time to let them know that they are great.

Have a great end of the year and a relaxing summer.

—Gary

## WCASS Region News

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

Region 1 is winding up the 2006–2007 school year with a DPI update for directors on April 25th at the CESA 1 office in Brookfield. All special ed administrative assistants were also invited to attend and had a concurrent meeting that included a fashion show as well as informational offerings and time for networking.

On March 22, the joint RSN/WCASS meeting involved a legal update on discipline from Renae Aldana of Quarles and Brady followed by our awards ceremony. The following awards were presented: Integration Team Award to Patsy Cordes, Tiny Tech Day Care Director at Waukesha County Technical College; Yvette Schambow,

EC Teacher; Cheryl Walden, Speech Pathologist; and Jill Opie, Paraprofessional from the School District of Pewaukee; Pupil Service Award to Nicole Heller of Mequon-Theinsville School District; Special Education Para Awards to Ingrid Gudlin and Kathy Jicha of Greenfield Schools; and Related/Support Services, speech pathologist Ann Novotny-Gehrke.

Next Year's joint RSN/WCASS meetings will continue to be held at CESA 1 in Brookfield and will be on 9/27/07, 11/27/07, 1/30/08, 3/27/08, and 4/30/08. Please let me know if you have any suggestions for topics or speakers. And have a wonderful summer!

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

For information from this region please contact Dave Kwiatkowski at CESA 8 at (800) 831-6391 x 233 or by e-mail.

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

I am grateful for the work of CESA 1 and 2 in making arrangements to bring Dr. George Baetsche to Wisconsin on February 28th to share his information on student success, the importance of data, and early intervention. It was great to see several districts represented at this meeting. Better yet, it was great to see that the majority of people that were in attendance were general educators in leadership roles. The feedback that I have heard from area Directors has been positive. It seems that this meeting has opened up the door to several discussions on how to set up a Response to Intervention model within buildings/districts.

There will be many discussions taking place at the state level as DPI is looking at defining the criteria for specific learning disability and setting timetables to implement Rtl at the local levels. Though there is not consensus from Directors within the WCASS on what these criteria should look like and what the timetable should be, WCASS' stance on these issues will be of the utmost importance. There are several Directors throughout the state right now who are serving on a committee to try to put together a position paper on these issues to present to DPI. This committee is being chaired by Barb Van Haren, RSN/Director of Special Education CESA 1. If you have ideas, recommendations, and/or concerns on these topics, I would encourage you to contact your

Region chair and/or Barb Van Haren to make your stance known.

Outside of the Rtl timetable and the SLD criteria, another issue that has resurfaced in special education is the Wisconsin Alternative Assessment (WAA). As you already know, the WAA went through many changes this past academic year. The special education teachers that I have been in contact with who have administered this assessment thought that the changes were for the better. Though this same group has expressed some frustration that there are more changes coming to the WAA, there is also a sense of gratitude that DPI is seeking assistance and feedback from educators throughout the state in making their revisions.

In Region 3, we will be discussing the SLD criteria, Rtl timetables, and the WAA at our next Region 3 meeting, on April 26th. Outside of these issues, we will also be discussing the ongoing issue of extended school year. This issue seems to come more into focus during spring. Sometimes it is difficult to meet the ESY requirements for some of the student population due to a variety of reasons. Some districts do not have a general education summer school. Other districts encounter students who have ESY needs that cannot be met within their district. To ensure that Directors know what options are available to them, Region 3 will have six area

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private schools come in to CESA 2 on April 26th to discuss their available summer services as well as their programming in general. Also at CESA 2 on April 26th, Tom Shorter will be

discussing legal issues related to ESY. There appear to be many nuances and subtleties when it comes to ESY, and it will be helpful to have Mr. Shorter clarify the issues that surround this topic.

### 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

## Project Forum on Special Education in Wisconsin

March 14, 2007

The following new Project Forum document was recently prepared under Federal Cooperative Agreement H326F050001:

### Highly Mobile Children and Youth with Disabilities: Policies and Practices in Five States

- The primary focus of this In-Brief Policy Analysis is on a subset of the population of mobile children—children with disabilities and their families who are highly mobile. The document begins with a background section that provides information about policies and practices developed for mobile children at the federal level. The second section is an analysis of interviews with five state directors of special education and their corresponding McKinney-Vento program coordinators regarding how states are addressing the

needs of this population. Interviewees discussed causes of mobility; how they locate mobile children; the number of mobile children and costs of services; features of state programs under McKinney-Vento; how they track outcomes; challenges they have encountered; and policy recommendations.

Additional copies are available from NASDSE; however, there are no restrictions on copying because this document was produced with federal funds. This document is available for downloading at <http://www.projectforum.org>. Additionally, Project Forum's site has over 100 documents available for download. The website has a strong Boolean search engine to find any Project Forum document. Please take a moment to visit and bookmark this site and send to others on your staff.

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#### Did You Know...

As a member of WCASS, you receive free online access to the *Journal of Disability Policy Studies* as a member benefit.

Please follow the registration process as outlined on Ingenta Connect at <http://www.ingentaconnect.com> Partway through the registration procedure; you will be prompted for your subscriber number. Enter WCASS.

Once you've completed the registration, Ingenta will e-mail PRO-ED to confirm and activate your subscription term. If you encounter a problem during the registration process, contact Ingenta's Help desk ([help@ingentaconnect.com](mailto:help@ingentaconnect.com)).

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

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