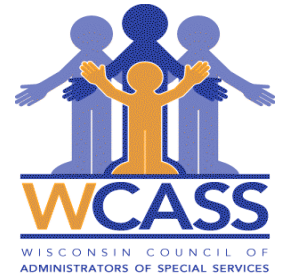




Newsletter

WISCONSIN COUNCIL OF
ADMINISTRATORS OF SPECIAL SERVICES, LTD.

Winter 2009



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

President's Message by Gary Myrah



Today I have the luxury of having a quiet day at the office because school has been called due to cold weather. Humoring me of this event is the fact that it is too cold for children to walk to school or to wait for a school bus at the corner, yet throughout the community, we see children playing in the snow sledding, and having a good time in this treacherous cold weather. Also, interestingly 12 months ago, I observed loads of people with their children sitting in the brutal cold to watch the NFL championship game between the Packers and the New York Giants. I also realize that our friends to the north would probably find our temperatures today to be balmy compared to what they have to face on a regular basis. However, I will not complain because the timing was perfect to have a quiet day at the office.

Since my last message, there have been a few continuing developments related to meetings that I have been involved with. First is the Legislative Council's Special Committee on School Safety. Several experts provided testimony regarding various aspects of School safety with recommendations for making improvements in statutory language. The committee endorsed changes in several statutes. These changes and other related issues may be found at the following website: <http://www.legis.state.wi.us/lc/committees/study/2008/SAFE/index.htm>

- [WLC: 0344/1](#), relating to pupil records.
- [WLC: 0348/1](#), relating to school safety plans.
- [LRB-0554/P1](#), relating to school policies on bullying.
- [WLC: 0345/1](#), relating to revenue limits.
- [Memorandum](#), from Sheri Krause, Government Relations Specialist, Wisconsin Association of School Boards (December 9, 2008).
- [WLC: 0345/2](#), relating to revenue limits (distributed at the meeting on December 10, 2008).

Based on information that we received on this committee, recommendations made to the legislature to study committees of this type, received considerable support. I would encourage you to go to this website and click on the links for the various bills to review what is being proposed for changes. If you have a particular concern regarding any aspect of the recommendations, please contact me.

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As many of you are aware, there is considerable discussion regarding how the state of Wisconsin will survive \$5.4 billion deficits. Whereas, we are still awaiting definitive decisions by each of the state agencies, it is my understanding that there is currently a hiring freeze for any vacancies that occur. It is anticipated that this will have an impact on the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. One change that will occur is the inability of consultants to receive reimbursement to attend state conferences, unless they are presenting. I anticipate that by the Winter Conference in Appleton we will receive more details regarding the budget impact to WDPI.

C.A.S.E. national conference was held in November 2008. The focus of this conference was on the Response to Intervention as demonstrations of how areas districts throughout the nation are implementing this concept. There were discussions related to concerns of how the current economic dilemmas across the country will impact schools and specifically children who have special educational needs. It is clear that it is important for C.A.S.E. having strong membership and the presence in Washington DC as a new administration takes over. It was encouraging to hear from the directors from Illinois that they are optimistic about President Obama's perspective on education.

I also want to complement Phil Knobel and the other executive directors of the SAA organization for the efficient method of seeking the endorsement of all of the organization's executive boards for Tony Evers for state superintendent. The SAA organization was the first to make an endorsement for the selected position. Based on information that Phil provided to the executive board, we believe Tony will be a positive force for change and improvement. We encourage all of our members to take an active role in endorsing Tony locally as well as supporting him in whatever way you feel comfortable for the primary election in February as well as the state election in April.

The WCASS executive board will be meeting on Tuesday, February 3, 2009. If there are issues or concerns that you would like to bring to our attention, please contact any one of our executive board members prior to that time. I look forward to seeing everyone in Appleton where I predict we will likely to see more snow during our stay (smile). Until then I hope you all stay warm and safe.

— Gary

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Executive Director's Comments

by Phil Knobel

I am writing this on the coldest morning I can remember in the last several years. The WCASS Winter Conference is coming up in 3 weeks and we can only hope that by that time our weather has all of this snow and cold out of its system. That would give our conference attendees an opportunity to have good travel conditions for the conference. I think after last year we have that coming. Tammy Fruik and Greg Nyen have put together a great conference so we hope you can attend. Registration information can be found on our web-site at www.wcass.org.



On January 7th, the WCASS Executive Board voted to endorse Tony Evers as our candidate for State Superintendent. On January 8th, the Executive Directors of the SAA and John Forester had a meeting with Tony and informed him the SAA is endorsing him. In the past 2 months we have had 3 meetings with Tony to discuss his leadership qualities, vision and goals for the DPI if elected State Superintendent. After each meeting, I was more impressed and convinced that he is the right and only candidate to lead the DPI for the next 4 years. I encourage all WCASS members to get 100 percent behind Tony Evers for the constitutional office of State Superintendent of Public Instruction.

A primary election will be held on February 17th with the general election on April 7, 2009 so mark your calendar and make sure to vote.

I look forward to seeing you at Appleton on February 4-6. If there is anything WCASS can do for you, please feel free to contact our office at any time.

— Phil

608-0245-2511

philknobel@wcass.org

SAA Report

School Finance Network to Release School Funding Plan This Week

Dear SAA Members:

As you know, the SAA is a partner in the School Finance Network (SFN). The SFN partners have been working for over two years on a new school funding plan. The SAA formally approved the plan late last year. SFN is ready to unveil that plan to the public.

Ten media events are planned for Tuesday and Wednesday, February 3 and 4, in Green Bay, West Allis, Verona, Altoona, La Crosse, Superior, Wausau, Rhinelander, Racine, and Janesville. If you can attend any of these events and show your support, please do. We have traveled a long way to get to this point and we would love for you to be a part of it. I will be at the Wausau event on Tuesday and the Superior event on Wednesday. Event locations:

- Tuesday, Feb. 3, 10 a.m., Green Bay West High School Library, 966 Shawano Ave., Green Bay.
- Tuesday, Feb. 3, 12:30 p.m., West Allis Nathan Hale High School, 11601 West Lincoln Ave., West Allis.
- Tuesday, Feb. 3, 12:30 p.m., Glacier Edge Elementary School, 800 Kimball Lane, Verona (this event will include comments from Rep. Pope-Roberts).
- Tuesday, Feb. 3, 12:30 p.m., Wausau West High School, 1200 West Wausau Ave., Wausau.
- Tuesday, Feb. 3, 12:30 p.m., Altoona High School Library, 711 7th Street West, Altoona.
- Wednesday, Feb. 4, 10 a.m., Rhinelander High School main lobby, 665 Coolidge Ave., Rhinelander.
- Wednesday, Feb. 4, 10 a.m., LaCrosse Central High School, 1801 Losey Blvd., LaCrosse.
- Wednesday, Feb. 4, 10 a.m., Racine's Walden III High School, 1012 Center St., Racine.
- Wednesday, Feb. 4, 10 a.m., Superior High School, 2600 Catlin Ave., Superior.
- Wednesday, Feb. 4, 10 a.m., Janesville's J.A. Craig High School, 401 South Randall Ave., Janesville.

As always, thanks for everything you do on behalf of the kids in your district.

— John

John D. Forester

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Seclusion and Restraint Update

As we are all aware, Disabilities Rights of Wisconsin has been actively pursuing legislation to prohibit the use of any form of seclusion and restraint in our schools. WCASS, in collaboration with several other educational organizations, opposes this type of legislation and has worked cooperatively to create a model of training for all public schools in Wisconsin. Despite these efforts, the National Disability Rights Network published an investigative report in January outlining the "horrors" caused by the use of restraint and/or seclusion. The report provides state-by-state accounts of misuse of these techniques. Recently, in a press release out of Washington D.C., Chairman Miller of the U.S. House of Representative requested an investigation into cases of abuse and neglect of school children. Below is the reprint of that article including a link to the bill H.R. 6358, Stop Child Abuse in Residential Programs for Teens Act of 2008 (H.R. 6358), which the House passed in June.

Chairman Miller Asks GAO to Investigate Cases of Abuse and Neglect of Schoolchildren

WASHINGTON, D.C. - U.S. Rep. George Miller (D-CA), the chairman of the House Education and Labor Committee, today asked the U.S. Government Accountability Office to further investigate recent reports of seclusion and restraint of children in public and private schools across the country. Miller's committee plans to hold a hearing on these practices in the coming months.

Earlier this month, the National Disability Rights Network released a report detailing hundreds of cases where abusive uses of seclusion and restraint by school staff injured or traumatized schoolchildren, many with disabilities. The report revealed cases where students were abusively pinned to the floor, handcuffed, locked in closets, and subjected to other acts of violence. In some of the cases, children died.

As Miller noted in his letter to GAO today, a prior GAO investigation conducted at Miller's request uncovered thousands of similar cases of abuse at teen residential treatment facilities across the country. GAO's work laid the groundwork for legislation to address these abuses, the Stop Child Abuse in Residential Programs for Teens Act of 2008 (H.R. 6358), which the House passed in June. "Unfortunately, vulnerable children and teens are being abused all too often in other contexts," Miller wrote. "To assist in the Committee's ongoing efforts to help protect our children, I specifically request that FSI investigate the use of restraint, seclusion, and harmful aversive handling of children and youth in private and public schools."

For more information on the report documenting these abuses, click here. For more information on H.R. 6358, click here <http://www.house.gov/apps/list/speech/edlabor_dem/rel062508c.html>



WCASS Region News

Region 1 Chair: Mary Cimbalnik Mary.Cimbalnik@pewaukee.k12.wi.us

For information from this region, please contact Mary Cimbalnik.

After many (we're not sure HOW many) years of serving as Chairperson for Region 1, I am turning the reins over to Mardi Freeman who is the Supervisor of Special Services for the Hamilton School District in Sussex. She is in her 4th year in that capacity, having served as Director in Greenfield for 4 years before that. In the past she has taught both regular and special ed and received her masters and administrative licenses from UW Milwaukee. Mardi lives in Brookfield with her 3 sons and enjoys running and being outdoors. I wish Mardi all the luck in the world and want her to know she is coming on the board at a much better time than I did. I can recall 5 hour+ meetings with only water and no heat!

I would personally like to thank Phil and the past and present officers and other board members for their years of collegiality and humor. I always learned something new at the meetings and appreciated the integrity and professionalism I found there. I've seen WCASS go from being in the red and wondering how to get to the next level to a vibrant professional organization that seeks out new and better ways to serve its members. Thank you for the opportunity to be a part of it all.

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.



WCASS Projects

Self Assessment in Special Education

The third year of the Self Assessment in Special Education has just been completed in Wisconsin. We recognize that our Directors of Special Education/Pupil Services have worked diligently on completing the self-assessment and Indicator tasks and many have learned “tricks of the trade” along the way.

The WCASS Special Projects/Research Committee would like to assemble a Self-Assessment Best Practices manual or toolkit for our membership.

Examples may include “lessons learned” or “tips”, such as sample letters to parents, board of education involvement, Ad Hoc committee make up, creative corrective action plan ideas, etc. If you have developed or implemented a practice proven to be helpful and effective, please share by sending your information to:

Barb Van Haren – bvanharen@cesa1.k12.wi.us or Nissan BarLev – nbarlev@wi.rr.com.

RTI Summit Planned For March

WCASS, in collaboration with other education organizations in Wisconsin, is sponsoring an RTI Summit. You are cordially invited to the Wisconsin Rtl Summit being held in Green Bay on March 11 and 12 at the KI Convention Center (www.hotel-sierra.com), 333 Main St., Green Bay.

This Rtl Summit continues the collaborative work we began a year ago by again convening diverse stakeholder group and educator teams to showcase how local schools and districts are building successful Rtl systems. This Summit seeks to answer the question: What does Rtl look like in Wisconsin?

Our collaborative planning group has put together a fantastic two-day program of national and local presenters showcasing schools and districts in various stages of implementation. We have built the Summit with diverse participants in mind with sectionals for district and school leaders, educators, and support services staff and encourage teams, or single participants to attend. There will also be opportunities to work in school and district teams.

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Awards and Recognitions

At the November DPI Leadership Conference, several WCASS members were honored for their outstanding contributions to the profession and the organization.

Jan Chapman presented Tim Gantz a past President award.



Left to Right: Jan Chapman, Tim Gantz

Sue Danmiller received a past Treasurer award.



Above: Sue Danmiller



**Check out the Web . . . for pictures of recent events.
www.wcass.org**

Articles . . . News . . . Announcements

Please contact Kelly Kapitz,
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National Wear Red Day

Friday, February 6, 2009

As perhaps many of you know, I am a heart attack survivor. Two years ago I had a heart attack while at work. Since that time, I have become an advocate for the American Heart Association as I have learned that there are many people that have no idea how prevalent heart disease is. Making informed decisions about lifestyle choices can make a difference in decreasing the often-devastating impact of this disease.

National Wear Red Day is Friday, February 6, 2009. Go Red for Women is dedicated to building awareness of heart disease among women. Heart disease is the No. 1 killer of women age 20 and over, but it is largely preventable. 1 in 3 women has some form of cardiovascular disease. More women die of cardiovascular disease than the next five causes of death combined, including all forms of cancer. However, only 1 in 5 women believes that heart disease is her greatest health threat. Research shows that women who "Go Red" are more likely to make healthy choices.

To learn more go to: http://www.goredforwomen.org/national_wear_red_day.aspx

I have made a pledge to donate one dollar to the Heart Association for every conference participant that wears red on Friday the 6th to support the cause!

Thank you.

— **Ann**

Ann Wicklund

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