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President's Message

By: David Kwiatkowski



My Top Priority!

As I write this article, I am looking back on the year gone by and considering the brand new year ahead, addressing the really deep and meaningful questions like: Did I accomplish all that I could in the past year?; and What should be my top priority in the new year?; and Why can't the Packer secondary prevent the "big play"!?

Although neither I nor Dom Capers seem to have the answer for the Green and Gold, I have nothing but pride and gratitude for the year just past for WCASS and high hopes for the year to come!

Looking back, by far the most impactful event in the past year was our having to bid farewell to Phil Knobel as he moved on to a well-deserved "real" retirement! I believe we sent Phil off with the dignity and honor that he so greatly deserves, and I hope he feels the same! Although we will certainly miss Phil, I don't believe we missed a beat in our selection and the first six months of service with our new Executive Director, Gary Myrah! Gary has hit the ground running and hasn't looked back since July, and I greatly appreciate how he has broadened our influence at the regional and national level, as well as facilitating many new and promising partnerships with educational stakeholder groups here in Wisconsin.

As we too often take for granted, our conference committee again put on excellent programs at both the winter and spring events! And, 2012 looks to hold even more promise for cutting edge and relevant professional development, and relaxed but valuable networking opportunities with our colleagues. We also contributed to and benefitted from powerful collaborations this year with our SAA partners and the DPI in sponsoring the 3rd Annual Rtl

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

President's Message	1
Executive Director's Comments	3
The Kids Keep Coming	4
WI Federal Funding Conference	5
Wisconsin Education Research Advisory Council	7
The Value of WCASS Membership	7
SAA Supports Consensus Seclusion & Restraint Bill	8
Rtl Article	9
WCASS Region News	11
WCASS Upcoming Training Dates/Events	12
Directory	13

Summit in March and in initiating the first WI Federal Funding Conference in November, with the latter being so successful and sought after, that a second offering on February 27 and 28, is already near full capacity.

Our visit to Capitol Hill this summer, although frustrating related to the legislative gridlock, did make our presence known to our new and continuing congressional representatives, and our input has been sought out on important educational issues since. We also helped to initiate a Midwest Regional Summit of Special Education Leaders from that visit, and a second meeting of the participating state leaders will be convening in Wisconsin Dells at our Federal Funding Conference in February. Greg and Gary represented us well at the CASE National Conference and Board of Directors meeting, and Gary has stepped up as a candidate for President of CASE in the coming term. I know we will all support him with our votes in Wisconsin. If you haven't already joined or renewed your CASE membership, now is the time to do so and cast your vote for Gary (and WCASS) in the CASE elections.

At the state level, we are closing in on a powerful, yet reasonable legislative bill for the safe and appropriate use of seclusion and restraint in public schools, and we are helping to inform federal S & R legislation that ensure student and staff safety without placing unreasonable and litigious burdens on public schools and the taxpayers. Perhaps most importantly, we have made much progress toward improving the availability of hard to staff special education services to all special education students across Wisconsin through legislation allowing for the use of state and federal funding for contracted services of SLP's, OM Specialists, Ed. Audiologists,

Continues on next page

President's Message continued from p. 1

etc., and also through pending alternative licensure options for SLP's and new certifications of SLP Assistants in Wisconsin. Finally, our Executive Board has sought out your input on important issues and the value of our WCASS services to our members, and is using that information conscientiously to define and refine our strategic plan for a strong and vibrant WCASS in the near-term and for the long haul!

Not a bad year all and all!

Now what of the future...?

If I had to limit myself to one priority for the remainder of my term, which I could call my "TOP PRIORITY" it would be to help YOU, the individual member of WCASS, to be and feel more involved and connected to our statewide activities! I so deeply believe that the promise of a strong WCASS in the future lies in the grassroots of our all our members' engagement and commitment to our strategic activities now! And this can begin quite easily within the next several months, as numerous opportunities to be more engaged and involve arise!

First of all, make a commitment now to seek out and attend a WCASS regional event during the spring semester! If your region doesn't have one scheduled, contact your Region Chair and ask about opportunities to network with them and other local WCASS members at CESA RSN meetings or at one of the state conferences, perhaps having a meal or some social time together. Since several of our Regions will be seeking new Chairs in the coming year, consider offering yourself as a candidate for that position. If you are not able or interested in a formal position, volunteer to help your Region Chair in organizing events and local communications among members, welcoming new directors into your region or mentoring "fledgling" directors in your area. Our Executive Board will be acting this spring to re-organize our WCASS Regions to make them smaller geographically and hopefully more responsive to local members' needs. Please help to make those efforts most effective by taking advantage of the less travel time and multi-purpose

meetings to become more involved!

Second, watch for WCASS updates from Gary and/or SAA Updates from John Forester and respond with your input or your actions as requested. We need your perspective to make wise decisions for our organization and we will often need your voice to be heard at the State Capitol or at the DPI. Please don't make the mistake of thinking that your opinion doesn't matter or that others will act in your place. We are stronger together and strongest ALL together!

We are also currently seeking nominees for the offices of President-Elect and Treasurer. Take the time to consider a worthwhile candidate to nominate and support with your vote! It may even be you!?!

Finally, don't forget to mark your calendars and plan to participate in one or all of the coming events in the Spring of 2012:

WCASS Winter Conference, February 1-3, 2012
Radisson Paper Valley, Appleton;

2nd WI Federal Funding Conference, February 27-28, 2012, Kalahari Resort, Wisconsin Dells;

The 4th Annual WI Rtl Summit, March 7-8, 2012
KI Center, Green Bay;

WCASS Spring Conference, May 2-4, 2012 Chula Vista Resort, Wisconsin Dells

In 2012, please remember... WCASS needs you to help steer the ship of special education leadership to new horizons, but you have to come onboard to take hold of the wheel! We can do this together! Please make it a point to reach out and network in your local regions or at a statewide event this Spring! If you do, I promise you will be my "TOP PRIORITY!!!"

Thanks for listening!

Dave

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Executive Director's Comments

By: Gary Myrah

The last article discussed some of the initiatives that are underway in Wisconsin. The reports for Read to Lead and Educator Effectiveness have been rolled out and there are continuing meetings to discuss the elements that need to be implemented. The School Accountability report is scheduled to be out in early February. The WDPI has teams that are researching the most effective strategies in these areas based on what is currently happening across the nation.

There are conservative members of our state government that are proponents for adopting the procedures that have already been established in states such as Florida and Arizona. It is reassuring that our leaders within WDPI offer reasonable balance as we move forward with these initiatives. It is also reassuring the four organizations of the School Administrative Alliance are also together on the positions that we have taken as members of some of the design teams.

Collectively we realize there will be a system established for reporting on the performance of school buildings as well as school districts. We believe this will involve descriptive terms as opposed to a letter grade for performance. The current design for educator effectiveness is focused on general education teachers and principals. There are plans for developing a design for support staff that include faculty that fall under the supervision of special education/pupil services; however the initial effort will be designed for the regular classroom teacher.

Having participated in the CASE Winter Conference, we heard from directors from Miami-Dade Public Schools, Orange County Public Schools (Orlando) and Hillsborough County Public Schools (Tampa-St. Petersburg) regarding their initial steps in developing a pay for performance system. We heard that there are many issues that will need to be ironed out. It is

important to pay attention to this since it appears Wisconsin is traveling down the same path in the future.

Another presentation we heard was from Dr. Julie Underwood, Dean of the School of Education at UW-Madison. Her topic was the privatization of public instruction. She spoke of the American Legislative Education Council (ALEC) and the organized effort that is focused on changing public education. With more than 2,000 members, ALEC is the nation's largest, non-partisan, individual public-private membership association of state legislators. The following weblink:

<http://www.alec.org/ammmap/reportcard/wi2010.pdf>

provides the Wisconsin report card on educational reform. According to ALEC we have an education reform grade of 'C' and we are ranked 21st in the nation regarding educational reform.

Another site that you may find interesting is ALEC Exposed http://alecexposed.org/wiki/ALEC_Exposed which provides additional information regarding their interpretation of the purpose of ALEC. Both of these sites provide information that helps provide an understanding of some of the issues that we are experiencing in Wisconsin.

As an organization we need to become active in understanding what is developing politically in our state and country. We need to become active in supporting political candidates that have a platform that supports public education. The School Administrative Alliance continues the support of Tony Evers as he prepares to run for re-election to the position of State Superintendent in 2013. At the WCASS Winter Conference we will be collecting member's personal e-mail for the purpose of providing political updates. The role of executive director of WCASS is also a licensed lobbyist position. So for me to share any politically sensitive

Executive Director's Comments continued from p.3

information, I am not permitted to send it to your office if it is an e-mail account associated with a public funded entity.

I hope you plan to attend our Spring WCASS Conference scheduled for the first week in May at the Chula Vista Resort in Wisconsin Dells. Our Conference Committee has already started lining up presentations that will be valuable resources to your position. If I can be of service to you, please do not hesitate to contact me at your convenience. As many of you know, my position is a part-time position. vet

The Kids Keep Coming...

By: Greg Nyen

Amidst all the campaign advertisements, literature and propaganda, school districts in Wisconsin inevitably find themselves in one of two scenarios, those that agreed to a successor agreement and have some semblance of a collective bargaining agreement, and those that are now operating under an employee handbook. No matter what your political affiliations may be, and regardless of whether you agree or disagree with the basic tenets of Act 10 – Budget Repair Bill, you are, without doubt, aware of the turmoil across the state as educators, administrators and school boards muddle through this historic time. Whether your district or agency has embraced or shunned the new political landscape, you likely have a story you could share about how Act 10 has changed your job, district, relationships, or perhaps even your livelihood. Somehow, through all of the recall efforts, petitions and uncertainty with new procedures – the kids keep coming to school.

As directors of special education and/or pupil services, the manner in which we deal with or address our staff may have been altered by Act 10 but the charge to us remains the same. We continue to strive to provide the same high quality services now as we did prior to February of 2011. Although there may be an ongoing dialogue at the local and state level regarding the impact or future implications of Act 10, many of the students we serve are unaware of this sweeping legislation. Our students trust that no matter what may be happening in our lives away from the

I try to be accessible at any time someone contacts me. Voicemail messages are sent to me electronically via e-mail, so I will try to respond in a timely fashion if you call.

May you have manageable stress until the spring break and the Spring Conference.

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classroom, life in the classroom will be a safe, predictable and reliable place for them to learn.

During a time of year that can typically be difficult for staff and students due to fewer daylight hours, colder temperatures, and longer spans of time between scheduled breaks – we now have the added pressures and distractions of recall election efforts, employee handbook development, contract renewals and strained employer-employee relations. Yet, through all of the distractions, the IEP meetings continue, self-assessment processes continue to unfold and special education services continue to be delivered according to student need. Although for many of us significant events are unfolding behind the scenes, the students find solace in the fact that their daily lives have been seemingly unaffected.

I hope that as we enter what some refer to as “tunnel season,” we all find an unparalleled level of strength and determination to lead those who depend upon us, teach those who count on us, advocate for those who don't have a voice, and be the light at the end of the tunnel. I wish you all a very Happy New Year!



Wisconsin Federal Funding Conference November 1-2, 2011, Wisconsin Dells

When Lori Ames and Rachel Zellmer from the Department of Public Instruction came to WASBO and

The second day addressed Utilizing Existing Resources to Fund RtI, Title I Comparability, IDEA Funding - Coordinated Early Intervening Services, and The Ins and Outs of the New ESEA Consolidated Application.

WCASS with the suggestion to offer a joint conference for business office staff and special education/Title I staff we thought it was a good idea. What they had discovered was that one person would attend a conference and bring back information to the other. Then the DPI would get phone calls from the person who was not in attendance asking to clarify the information that was brought back to them. The DPI really saw a need for teams to attend a conference together, so they could work more effectively back in their districts.

Dr. Michael Thompson, Deputy State Superintendent, offered a lunch address. There was also a general session that provided an overview of federal funding requirements and explained the technical assistance that is available through the DPI.

For this initial conference we thought we may have 100 people register. We were wrong! Instead of 100 attendees, we had over 330 attend and another 150 were quickly added to a waiting list. (See registration information for the February 27-28, 2012 repeat conference on the next page.)

Attendees at this conference had an opportunity to submit questions to DPI staff through a specific online site. Some were answered at the conference and more complicated questions were taken back to the DPI to address individually. The Special Education Team also launched a new Webinar Training Series at this conference. You can check it out at <http://dpi.wi.gov/sped/pdf/tech-asst-calendar.pdf>.

What made this conference special? This conference was completely dedicated to the maze of Federal Funding requirements. There were Introductory sessions on Title I and IDEA Funding, as well as sessions on Special Education Funding Sources, Common Audit & Monitoring Issues with Title I and IDEA, IDEA Maintenance of Effort, Title I Schoolwide and Targeted Assistance Programs, Title I Private School Participation, and IDEA Funding - Title I Schoolwide Set-Aside - and that was just the first day!

The conference wrapped up with a hands-on facilitated practicum on Funding an RtI System. Nearly 70 stayed for this very successful post conference session which was facilitated by the DPI Special Education Team, RtI Center and PBIS Network Staff.

We thank Oasys, LLC for providing conference lanyards.



Lori Ames, Rachel Zellmer, Jennifer Waldner and Shelley Babler of the DPI



Dr. Michael Thompson, Deputy State Superintendent, Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction



Gary Myrah, WCASS Executive Director



Learning about Funding an RtI System at the post conference practicum.



The Black River Falls School District business office and special education team



The DPI Team fielded questions on Title I and Special Education Funding.





**WASBO, WCASS and DPI
Wisconsin Federal Funding Conference**

REGISTER at WWW.WASBO.COM/FEDERALFUNDING

February 27-28, 2012

Kalahari Resort & Conference Center



With the increased focus on the necessity for transparency and accountability of federal funds, school districts find that they must increase their understanding of federal requirements to remain in compliance with program regulations. But the silver lining of fiscal monitoring is a deeper understanding of how federal funds may be used. With this knowledge, districts have the tools to rearrange existing revenue sources to close gaps and fund new initiatives. To provide school districts with the information they need not only to be in compliance, but also maximize their federal resources, WASBO, WCASS and DPI are hosting the Wisconsin Federal Funding Conference on February 27 and 28, 2012, in Wisconsin Dells.

All too often, conferences provide information that is of vital significance to school district staff...but the individuals attending realize that half of their work equation is missing. An individual who is an expert in their program area may go to a conference and hear a fiscal presentation, and then realize they need not only to understand the subject matter but be able to return to the district and report to the business office. To "get everyone in the same room," school districts should commit to send a team of individuals: a special education program coordinator, a Title I program coordinator and business office staff that works closely with special education and Title I funding. The purpose is to have program and business office staff attend sessions together.



Session topics include:

- Overview of Federal Funding Requirements
- Wisconsin Uniform Financial Accounting Requirements
- Federal Time & Effort Reporting Requirements
- Overview of Title I Funding and IDEA Funding (allocation and per pupil amount determinations, obligation periods, allowable costs, supplement not supplant requirements, application and claim process)
- IDEA – Maintenance of Effort (MOE)
- IDEA – Coordinated Early Intervening Services (CEIS)
- IDEA – Equitable Services Requirement (Private School Set-Aside)
- IDEA – Title I Schoolwide Set-Aside Option
- Title I – Maintenance of Effort (MOE)
- Title I – Schoolwide and Targeted Assistance Programs and Use of Funds
- Title I – Private School Participation
- Title I – Comparability
- Special Education Funding Sources (High Cost and Categorical Aid)
- Common Fiscal Issues with Title I and IDEA
- Utilizing Existing Resources to Fund Response to Intervention Systems, including PBIS



For those districts that are interested in learning the different ways to utilize existing resources to implement or expand a Response to Intervention system, there will be an optional hands-on practicum on the afternoon of Day 2. The practicum will keep districts in teams to work through "story problems" with the end goal of learning how to utilize the various funding sources and situations to maximize a district's ability to fund RtI while learning how to avoid the pitfalls of federal funding non-compliance.

Conference offered by



State Superintendent Evers Establishes Education Research Advisory Council

By: Matt Collins

A group of educators, researchers, and education advocates met on October 13th in Madison to establish a statewide research agenda for prekindergarten through 12th-grade education in Wisconsin.

Appointed by Evers, the State Superintendent's Wisconsin Education Research Advisory Council (WERAC) will identify research projects for the next three to five years, foster collaboration among education stakeholders involved in research, serve an advisory role to the Department of Public Instruction, and support broad dissemination of research results that can be acted on in classrooms to improve student learning. Among the appointees to WERAC are WCASS members Jim Nelson, CESA #3 and Matthew Collins, CESA #9.

During the inaugural meeting, representatives from the Regional Education Laboratory Midwest and the Chicago Consortium on School Research reported on their work and the efforts of other states to collect and report data. Council members also heard about the status of the DPI's data collection and reporting system.

Wisconsin has won several federal grants in the past five years to build a longitudinal data system. In addition to linking school and student data from a variety of sources, the system will provide analysis and reporting tools. Selected topics for the initial

phase include enrollment, attendance, assessment, and student growth percentiles through the Wisconsin Information System for Education Dashboard (WISEdash). Continued development will increase the number of dashboards and reports available on additional topics such as postsecondary enrollment. Though only being released initially to authorized school district personnel, public reporting tools for researchers, parents, and citizens also will be developed to replace the School District Performance Report (SDPR) and Wisconsin Information Network for Successful Schools (WINSS).

Please visit the newly created WDPI webpage for WERAC information which can be found here <http://dpi.wi.gov/researchdpi/> for updates and additional information. The next meeting will be held on March 27 where topics will include, updates on current research projects at DPI, research agenda development and alignment with DPI strategic plan, WERAC governance discussion (committee structure, committee chairs, roles and responsibilities), WERAC projects for 2012 and Instructional Practice Survey statewide / Program evaluation consortium.

Respectfully Submitted By,

Matthew C. Collins

The Value of WCASS Membership

Membership in WCASS has many benefits, including:

- *Strong voice of advocacy to state legislature
- *Professional development opportunities
- *Viterbo University graduate credit for conference participation
- *Interpretation of new legislation
- *Committee participation
- *Newsletters and professional publications
- *Workshops and seminars
- *Networking with peers

Regular membership is open to anyone who is a current member of CEC and holds licensure as Director of Special Education and Pupil Services (80) or Supervisor of Special Education (81); or college faculty whose major responsibility is the preparation of administrators or special education/pupil services. Regular membership entitles the member to attend all meetings, vote on all questions presented to membership, to hold office and to receive the WCASS newsletter.

The Value of WCASS Membership continued from p. 7

There are other categories of membership for interested professionals who do not meet the criteria for regular membership. Some of these include: educational leadership associate membership, law associate membership, commercial associate membership and student membership.

WCASS members are encouraged to invite professionals who are working in leadership roles in education to join WCASS. If anyone has questions or would like additional information, please contact Steve Smith at steve.smith@wrps.org or 715-424-6724.

SAA Supports Consensus Seclusion & Restraint Bill

By: John Forester

On Tuesday, January 10, 2012, the SAA testified before the Assembly Committee on Education in support of Assembly Bill 455 relating to the use of seclusion and restraint on pupils in the public schools. The SAA worked very hard with the DPI and other interested stakeholders to develop a consensus bill that has the support of educators as well as parent-advocates. The bill builds from the current practice of the DPI guidelines to help provide staff with clarity of operation and parents with transparency of proceedings.

The SAA also testified (on Wednesday, January 11, 2012) before the Senate Committee on Education on the companion to AB 455, Senate Bill 353. We would like to thank the authors of the bill, Senator Luther Olsen (R-Ripon) and Representative Steve Kestell (R-Elkhart Lake) for bringing this legislation forward. We would also like to thank Nissan Bar-Lev, CESA 7 Director of Special Education, for testifying and fielding questions from legislators on behalf of the SAA.

For more information about the bill, please see the LRB analysis below:

Analysis by the Legislative Reference Bureau

Effective September 1, 2012, this bill prohibits an employee of a public school (including a charter school) and certain other individuals who provide services for the benefit of a public school from using seclusion or physical restraint on a pupil at a public

school except under certain conditions. Seclusion is the involuntary confinement of a pupil, apart from other pupils, in a room or area from which the pupil is physically prevented from leaving. Physical restraint is a restriction that immobilizes or reduces the ability of a pupil to freely move his or her torso, arms, legs, or head.

An individual covered by the bill may use seclusion on a pupil only if all of the following apply:

1. The pupil's behavior presents a clear, present, and immediate risk to the physical safety of the pupil or others and it is the least restrictive intervention available.
2. The seclusion lasts only as long as necessary to resolve the risk to physical safety.
3. A covered individual maintains constant supervision of the pupil.
4. The seclusion room or area is free of objects or fixtures that may injure the pupil.
5. The pupil has adequate access to bathroom facilities, drinking water, necessary medication, and meals.
6. No door connecting the seclusion room or area to other rooms or areas is capable of being locked.

A covered individual may use physical restraint on a pupil only if all of the following apply:

1. The pupil's behavior presents a clear, present, and immediate risk to the physical safety of the pupil or others and it is the least restrictive intervention

SAA Supports Consensus Seclusion & Restraint Bill continued from p. 8

2. The degree of force used and the duration of the physical restraint do not exceed the degree and duration that are reasonable and necessary to resolve the risk.
3. There are no medical contraindications to the use of physical restraint.
4. None of the following maneuvers or techniques are used:
 - a. Those that do not give adequate attention and care to protecting the pupil's head.
 - b. Those that cause chest compression.
 - c. Those that place pressure or weight on the pupil's neck or throat.
5. It does not constitute corporal punishment.
6. Neither mechanical nor chemical restraints are used.

Whenever seclusion or physical restraint is used on a pupil, the school principal must notify the pupil's parent and prepare a written report.

The bill generally prohibits a covered individual from using physical restraint on a pupil at school unless he or she has received training in the use of physical restraint that includes a number of specified components. A covered individual who has not received such training may use physical restraint on a pupil at school only in an emergency and only if a trained covered individual is not immediately available. The governing body of a public school in which physical restraint is used must ensure that at least one covered individual has been trained in its use.

Multi-level Systems of Support through a Culturally Responsive Lens

By: Barbara Van Haren and Courtney Bauder

Response to intervention (RtI) is predicted to decrease bias in identification, prevention and early identification, and to increase outcomes for those experiencing learning difficulties (Fletcher, Coulter, Reschly, & Vaughn, 2004; Vaughn & Fuchs, 2003). RtI is comprised of three salient characteristics: a) scientifically researched interventions and instructional practices based on student need, b) decision-making based on a student's growth and performance on achievement, and c) intensity and duration of intervention is based on student responsiveness (Batsche, et al, 2005).

In addition, the reauthorized Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 provided local education agencies (LEAs) with the flexibility regarding its identification of students suspected of learning disabilities (Section 1414 (b) (6)). Districts will no longer be required to use the significant discrepancy model between achievement and ability when determining eligibility, but may employ a response to intervention/instruction (RTI) model of identification.

In a research summary report on National Implementation of Response to Intervention, the authors cited the work of Gresham (2005) who identified four advantages that RTI holds over the previously used discrepancy model: (a) early identification of learning problems, (b) use of a risk model rather than a deficit model, (c) reduction of identification biases, and (d) focus on student outcomes (Hoover, et. al p. 2 2008).

In the state of Wisconsin, educators have identified the core belief that RtI is a process for achieving higher levels of academic and behavioral success for all students. Wisconsin's guiding principles about RtI and the essential elements of RtI include high quality instruction, continuous review of student progress, and collaboration. The three essential elements exist within a multi-level system of support as the structures to increase success for all students. Central to Wisconsin's model is culturally responsive practices or viewing these elements through a culturally responsive lens.

Continues on next page

Multi-level Systems of Support through a Culturally Responsive Lens continued from p. 9



According to the National Center for Culturally Responsive Educational Systems, “culturally responsive RTI frameworks have the potential to address issues of disproportionate representation for diverse students in special education programs by providing access to curriculum and instructional practice grounded in research that attends to the powerful role of culture in teaching and learning.” In fact, “without consideration of how culture mediates and influences everything we do, the potential for inappropriate eligibility decisions are still present if the team does not apply a Culturally Responsive RTI model to such determinations (Murri, King, Rostenberg, p. 781, 2006).

It is within that vein that schools must reflect on the impact of culture on education. Considering the fact that numerous school districts in the state have a disproportionate number of students of color in special education programs, it only seems appropriate that the state and local school districts begin implementing an RTI model with the newly focused component of culturally responsive practices. The benefit of doing this is to determine appropriate placement for students of color rather than falling prey to some of the deficit thinking and identification biases Gresham (2005) expressed concern about. Only by viewing education from this culturally responsive lens can we move towards equity in addressing the changing demographics of our school districts across Wisconsin.

To implement this effectively practitioners need to explore the three previous guiding principles and essential elements through this lens of cultural responsiveness. We would like to make a few recommendations on resources to support how incorporating this addition to the RTI model might be achieved. Educators in the state will benefit from making themselves aware of the Culturally Responsive Classroom Practices component of CREATE Wisconsin which can be found at http://www.createwisconsin.net/classroompractices/classrooms_training.cfm and staying current with the work coming out of the Wisconsin RTI Center <http://www.wisconsinrticenter.org/>. Both this training and this organization are working to provide a framework of how best to support educators in incorporating RTI within a culturally responsive framework.

Resources

Hoover, J. J., Baca, L., Wexler-Love, E., Saenz, L. (2008). National Implementation of Response to Intervention (RTI): *Research Summary*. Retrieved from <http://www.ocde.us/SchoolImprovement/Documents/National+Implementiion+RTI+Summary.pdf> on 12-5-11.

Harris-Murri, N., King, K., & Rostenberg, D. (2006). Reducing Disproportionate Minority Representation in Special Education Programs for Students with Emotional Disturbances: Toward a Culturally Responsive Response to Intervention Model. In *Education and Treatment of Children*. Vol. 29, No. 4, pp. 779-799.

NCCRESt, (2005). Cultural Considerations and Challenges in Response-to-Intervention Models: *An NCCRESt Position Statement*. Retrieved from http://www.nccrest.org/PDFs/rti.pdf?v_document_name=Culturally%20Responsive%20RTI on 12-1-05.

WCASS Region News

Region 1 Chair: Mardi Freeman

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For information from this region, please contact Mardi Freeman.

Region 2 Chair: Marci Thiry

ThiryM@mjsd.k12.wi.us

Region II will hold an RSN/WCASS meeting on March 1, 2012, from 8:00-3:00p.m., location to be determined. Mary Gerbig from Davis & Kielthau will join the region two directors for a legislative update and open dialogue. Topics to be addressed include: abuse/neglect reporting, seclusion and restraint, sharing records with law enforcement, FERPA changes, and bullying and harassment. In addition Mary will provide time for general discussion based on audience questions. RSN updates will include information on the following projects or initiatives: regional service for Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Region Autism Project/Academy, Doctoral Transition Study and Teacher Effectiveness. We look forward to a full day of networking and updates. Region II members will receive registration materials from Marci Thiry, Region II chair. If you have any questions or are interested in attending please contact Marci Thiry, thiryM@mjsd.k12.wi.us.

Region 3 Chair: John Peterson

petersonj@mail.fortschools.org

Lately, there has been a lot of discussion amongst our colleagues whether or not WCASS (and for that matter, the School Administrator's Alliance) should be sitting at the table with Governor Walker and other representatives on education-related subcommittees. The Wisconsin Education Association Council (WEAC) has taken the stance that they don't trust the Governor after what took place last February and the eventual passing of Act 10. With this in mind, they have been absent from all key conversations regarding 4K-12 public education issues. I have also heard some colleagues in our field state that we should be taking the same approach as WEAC. In other words, show our dissent by boycotting or not acknowledging the Governor and/or any of his taskforces. I couldn't disagree more with this approach.

Whether it is evaluating schools, looking at improving early literacy success in our schools (especially before 3rd grade), educator licensing, and/or other issues, it is always

important to have a voice at the table when legislation is being considered. I applaud Gary Myrah and John Forester for doing just that on behalf of WCASS.

Regardless of where you stand politically and what the political landscape looks like, having a voice at the table will always be a necessity for our organization. Our presence will always let the policymakers of both parties know where we stand on specific issues. This is the obvious reason for being at the table. The more important reason – and the reason we have encountered more recently – is to bring to light valid reasons why we have reservations about specific plans or ideas. Doing so involves not going after a specific person's or political party's integrity, but rather focusing in on specific flaws or concerns within their proposal or recommendation.

A huge benefit of having both Gary and John at the table with Governor Walker's representatives and other legislators is that we have been able to help encourage passage of several items that the SAA has been trying to get passed for years. A great example of this is that the Governor recently signed Senate Bill 95. SB 95 allows public schools to use their flow through funds with greater flexibility pertaining to contracted services. This has been eight long years in the making and we finally had this bill passed.

By sitting at the table, we have been able to share some of the roadblocks and burdens that we encounter in public education with our legislators. If we took the boycott approach, we may not have had some of these items pass, as our relationship would be nonexistent and our influence would be even worse. Hopefully our continued presence on these taskforces and subcommittees will continue to be more and more fruitful for the remainder of this year and beyond.

WCASS may not always agree with the ideas and recommendations that come from our policymakers, but we have to continue to keep talking with them – now more than ever.

Region 4 Chair: Diane Knudsen

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For information from this region, please contact Diane Knudsen.

WCASS Upcoming Training Dates & Events

2012

Feb. 27-28 *WASBO, WCASS & DPI Federal Funding Conference:* 2 days at Kalahari Resort & Conference Center. Register at www.WASBO.com/FederalFunding

Mar. 7-8 *Wisconsin SAA RtI Summit:* 2 days at KI Convention Center. This summit will be a continuation of the 2011 Wisconsin RtI Summit and collaborative efforts that have been underway since that event. We believe the theme “Sustainable Practices for Student Success” takes us the next step from implementation to sustainability. We are seeing individuals and teams from districts to share their experiences in the area of RtI and PBIS.

May 2-4 *WCASS Spring Conference:* 3 days at Chula Vista Resort, Wisconsin Dells

Nov. 13-14 *State Superintendent’s Conference on Special Education & Pupil Services Leadership Issues:* 2 days, location TBD

CASE Webinars

Learn more about Leadership Webinars that CASE is sponsoring this year. For the first time CASE is packaging an option to sign up for all three webinars at the same time and receive a discounted fee.

Please visit our website calendar at:

<https://m360.wcass.org/frontend/portal/viewcalendar.aspx>

Message from Terri Couwenhoven:

Just wanted to let you all know about my newest resource that might be helpful for families you support. My new book is designed for puberty-aged girls themselves who have cognitive disabilities. I am excited we were able to get the reading level down to 3rd grade. It includes lots of pics (same artist as my last book) on body changes to expect, how to handle periods, hygiene, exploitation prevention, comprehension activities, all with an emphasis on social appropriateness. I hope it will be a helpful book for families, and help make puberty a bit more concrete for girls. For more details and some reviews you can go to the publisher web site:

http://www.woodbinehouse.com/main.asp_Q_product_id_E_978-1-60613-026-1

...but it is also available on Amazon.

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