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President's Message

By: Greg Nyen



Happy 2013!

Welcome to 2013! Whew! Despite the Mayan "long count" and all the rhetoric surrounding the fiscal cliff, here we are still doing what we have chosen as our profession - advocating for students. As I and many others have said before, the constant variable in our profession from day to day are the students we serve. It is difficult to say, with any degree of certainty, what 2013 will bring to us as far as obstacles, barriers or inconveniences, but for most, if not all of us our sense of commitment will not waiver.

As we get ready for the next legislative session, it is likely we will face the privatization of special education in the form of "vouchers" at the state level. Concomitantly at the federal level, most of us are likely to see the effects of sequestration during what remains of our professional careers sans a balanced approach to reduce the deficit. The myriad of events we will each face on a day to day basis between those state and federal bookends will be

significant, to say the least. Those events in total will, a year from now, be the markers by which we use to define and describe 2013. One thing will remain constant though through all that transpires this year, our resolve as individuals and as an organization to continue to advocate for our respective students.

So as we plunge head first into 2013, with all the personal and professional issues we will face not only as individuals, but as an organization, I can say with absolute certainty that I am proud of my profession, proud of this organization, and humbled to work alongside such dedicated and altruistic colleagues. I wish us all a safe, happy and productive new year. Happy 2013!

Greg
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School Administrators Alliance

Representing the interests of Wisconsin school children

2013–15 Legislative Agenda

The SAA believes that comprehensive education reforms in Wisconsin should emulate the research-based, replicable best practices of the districts, states and nations that have significantly raised academic performance and closed achievement gaps. These districts, states and nations share a number of features needed in a system of education that can routinely educate all children well including: supportive early learning environments; equitably funded schools which provide equitable access to high-quality teaching; well-prepared and well-supported teachers and leaders; standards, curriculum and assessments focused on 21st-century learning goals; and, schools organized for in-depth student and teacher learning.

In pursuit of this objective, the SAA offers the following legislative priorities:

A More Sustainable School Finance System

Wisconsin public schools need the fiscal stability that a more sustainable school finance system affords. In order to create such a system, Wisconsin must align allowable revenue growth with cost increases. To this end, the SAA supports:

- Making annual per pupil adjustments under revenue limits equal to the annual increase in the consumer price index (CPI-U).
- Increasing general school aid by the same increase in CPI to further align revenue growth and cost increases and to recognize the rising costs of education.
- Adopting State Superintendent Tony Ever's Fair Funding for Our Future Plan.

School Technology

The same technological tools and resources that have transformed our personal, professional and civic lives must be part of the learning experiences intended to prepare today's students for college and careers. If we are serious as a state about preparing all students for the future, a concerted state effort will be required to address school-based bandwidth and infrastructure needs as well as out-of-school internet and hardware access for all students. To this end, the SAA supports a Wisconsin School Technology Initiative to include the following:

- A state guarantee of a subsidized 100 Mbps connection for every school district by July 2014, expanding to as much as a 1 Gbps connection by July 2016. Guarantees for larger connections provided based on district size.
- Creation of a new \$100 million state aid program for funding school district technology including, but not limited to, district bandwidth needs, system infrastructure, distance learning upgrades, hardware, software, and IT support.
- Creation of a new revenue limit exemption for school technology needs.

Continues on next page

Educational Accountability for All

The SAA believes that our American system of public education is, has been and always will be the most important institution in the development and success of this great nation. The SAA opposes private school vouchers in Wisconsin.

However, in response to those supporters of alternatives to traditional public education that seek “competition” in K-12 education, the SAA advocates requiring all schools, public and private, that receive state funding to abide by the same public accountability system including, but not limited to, student enrollment, assessment, due process, academic reporting, licensure and other instructional requirements.

Special Education Categorical Appropriation

The SAA supports increasing the current level of state categorical aid funding for special education to reimburse 30% of the prior year’s aidable costs. We also support making the special education categorical a “sum-sufficient” appropriation.

High Cost Special Education

The SAA supports state reimbursements for 90% of all district costs above \$30,000 per pupil. Districts will use federal and state general categorical aid for the first \$30,000 of cost per pupil, with a sum-sufficient high cost appropriation covering 90% of cost above the \$30,000 threshold.

Transportation Aid

The SAA supports increasing the current level of state categorical aid funding for school transportation. The SAA also supports providing districts which transport students the greatest distance proportionally greater aid, using the current method of distribution.

High Cost Transportation Aid

The SAA supports creation of a new state transportation aid program to cover 75% of a district’s transportation costs in excess of 150% of the statewide per pupil average.

Educator Effectiveness

The passage of 2011 Wisconsin Act 166 holds great promise to significantly improve teacher and principal evaluation and positively impact learning in Wisconsin. It is imperative that the State realizes this potential by funding the successful implementation of evaluations that combine measures of student performance and observation of practice. The SAA supports creation of a new categorical aid program to provide \$80 per educator in both 2013-14 and 2014-15 to support local evaluation systems of educator practice to improve student learning.

21st Century Student Assessment System

The SAA has recommended that the state use a combination of online, adaptive tests in grades 3-7 with the ACT Suite at the secondary level. Furthermore, the SAA recommended that the online tests be aligned and benchmarked with the ACT Suite to promote seamless college and career readiness data for all students. The ACT Suite would provide:

- Research based secondary assessments benchmarked for college AND CAREER readiness.
- Students, parents, teachers and external stakeholders **relevant** information about the students' progress towards being career and college ready.
- Powerful annual growth data.

Low Revenue Relief

The SAA supports increasing the low-revenue ceiling to \$9,300 in 2013-14 and \$9,600 in 2014-15.

English Language Learners

The SAA supports increasing the current level of state categorical funding and extending that funding to all school districts that serve limited English proficiency (LEP) students.

School Calendar Flexibility

The SAA supports flexibility in the 180-day requirement to pursue innovative instructional programming and customized learning for all Wisconsin school children and staff. In so doing, the SAA supports retention of the minutes of instruction requirement.

Milwaukee Public Schools

The SAA supports the imperative for thoughtful, reasonable interventions to improve academic achievement in the Milwaukee Public Schools.

State School Aid Distribution

The SAA supports a school equalization aid formula as the primary aid distribution mechanism for state aid, and a system of categorical aid for targeting state financial support to specific student services, programs and/or costs.

Children With Extraordinary Needs

The SAA supports funding greater access to community services that address the extraordinary needs of students with mental health and drug and alcohol problems.

Early Learning Opportunities

The SAA supports significant investment in high quality early learning opportunities for disadvantaged children as a means of preventing the achievement gap before it develops.

Special Needs Vouchers: An Empty Promise for Neighborhood Schools and Parents

As a new legislative session gets underway, a statewide group concerned about the education of students with disabilities is waving a yellow caution flag.

Parents often say what is most important to them about their child's education is that they receive quality instruction, they are safe, and feel like they belong. Parents of children with disabilities are no different.

There is statewide disagreement about what ingredients go into creating a successful education for students with disabilities, but there is now a threat to students with disabilities that has the potential to harm not just them, but all public school districts in Wisconsin.

Key legislative leaders have indicated that a proposal to expand "school choice" through "special needs scholarships," commonly known as vouchers, is in the works. We, Wisconsin proponents for quality education for students with disabilities, believe this is a shallow solution that funnels public funding to private schools without accountability.

Children with disabilities have a right to an Individualized Education Program or IEP, where educators and parents collaborate to design a successful educational program. This includes expectations and accountability for what children learn, how they will learn it, and the supports required. These rights are the result of decades of parent struggle and advocacy to move children with disabilities out of church basements and kitchen classrooms to the neighborhood school where they are included and educated alongside their siblings and neighbors.

Today, parents of children with disabilities are fighting to preserve their right to this education with adequately-funded supports in their local school. If special needs vouchers are permitted in Wisconsin, funding for the voucher program would come directly out of the pockets of already financially stressed local public school districts. This will create particular hardship for small local districts. In addition there is documentation that similar programs in other states have been wrought with fraud.

Special needs scholarships/voucher proposals jeopardize all hard-fought parent rights. There is no promise of an

individualized program delivered by qualified staff, or provisions for necessary therapies, or even a real curriculum. There is also no guarantee a child will even be accepted. Students who are accepted can be sent back to the public school at any time— and the private school keeps all the tuition money.

Private schools are not accountable to resolve conflicts with parents. There is no state or federal oversight for their actions. Courts have even ruled that child protection agencies are limited in their ability to access a private school while investigating abuse or neglect.¹

What perhaps is most surprising about the interest in special needs vouchers is that Wisconsin doesn't need them. No statewide disability or parent organization is asking for them. Wisconsin has one of the strongest public education systems in the country – and that goes for students with disabilities as well.

We urge lawmakers to ensure that a special needs scholarship/voucher provision will not be inserted in the biennial budget bill in the eleventh hour with limited public scrutiny. This proposal represents such a significant education policy change that it must face the scrutiny of a full public hearing. Legislation affecting all students, particularly our most vulnerable students, must be considered in the light of day.

We are committed to working together to create safe and thoughtful school choice solutions that preserve rights of children. We do not support any effort to decimate our proud history of strong public schools that are the heart of many small-town Wisconsin communities.

- Gary E. Myrah, Executive Director - Wisconsin Council of Administrators of Special Services
- Janis Serak, M.A., Executive Co-Director - WI Family Assistance Center for Education, Training and Support, Inc.
- Lisa Pugh, Public Policy Coordinator - Disability Rights Wisconsin

¹ Michael C., Cherita C., Kimberly W., et al v. Dana Gresbach, No. 07-1756 (United States Ct. of Appeals For the Seventh Circuit 2008).

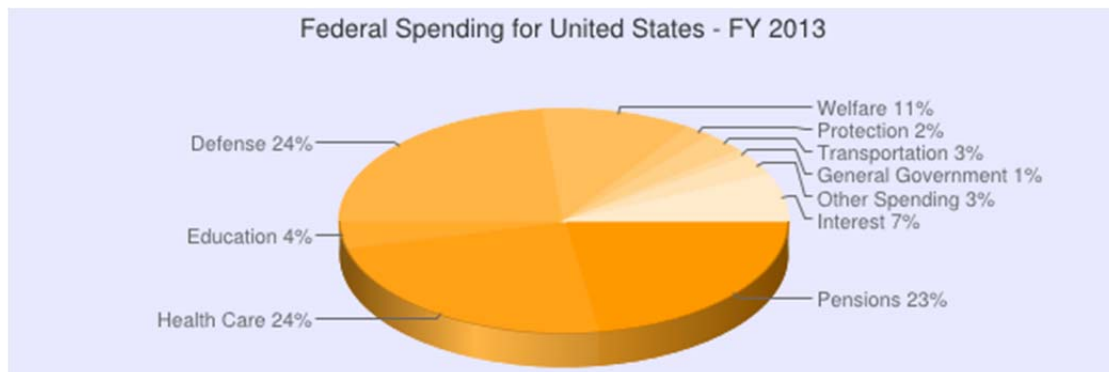
Fiscal Cliff

Fiscal Cliff/Sequestration Perspective (Figures used are rounded off for this demonstration)

U.S. Annual Tax Revenue	\$ 2,170,000,000,000
Annual Federal Budget	(\$ 3,820,000,000,000)
New Debt	(\$ 1,650,000,000,000)
National debt	(\$ 14,271,000,000,000)
Recent Budget Cuts (prior to 1/1/13)	\$ 38,500,000,000

To bring these figures down to a level we can understand in relation to our daily lives, remove 8 zeros.

Annual Family Budget	\$ 21,700
Money spent by the family	\$ 38,200
New Debt on credit card	(\$ 16,500)
Outstanding debt on credit card	(\$ 142,710)
Total Family Budget Cuts (prior to 1/1/13)	\$ 38.50



Impact of Sequestration, FY 2013¹

The failure of the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction to produce a bill identifying budgetary savings of at least \$1.2 trillion over ten years (fiscal years 2012-2021) has triggered an automatic spending reduction process that includes sequestration (the cancellation of budgetary resources) to take effect on January 2, 2013, as stipulated in the Budget Control Act of 2011 (Public Law 112-25). For fiscal year 2013, automatic, across-the-board budget cuts will be applied to most programs, including all discretionary education programs, except Federal Pell Grants. The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) has estimated that nonexempt discretionary programs would be reduced by 7.8 percent in fiscal year 2013. A more detailed analysis conducted by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP) indicates that nonexempt, nondefense discretionary programs would be reduced by 9.1 percent in 2013.

Applying CBO's Estimate				Applying the Center on Budget & Policy Priorities Estimates		
	Funding Cuts (in millions)	Students	Job Losses	Funding Cuts (in millions)	Students	Job Losses
IDEA Part B-611	16.4	8,567	199	19.1	9,994	232
ESEA Title I	17.7	17,024	215	20.6	19,861	250
ESEA Title II-A	3.1	---	38	3.6	---	44

¹Source: NEA calculations from U.S. Department of Education budget data based on analysis from the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) and the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. For more information, contact Tom Zembar at 202.822.7109 or TZembar@nea.org. As of January 31, 2012.

**Executive Director's Tidbits****By: Gary Myrah**

Wisconsin continues to be involved in many educational initiatives including:

- School Accountability (the School Report Card)
- Educator Effectiveness
- SMARTER Balanced Assessment
- Dynamic Learning Maps (alternate assessment for 1% of the school population)
- Student Information System (SIS)
- Multi-tier System of Support (MSS) [includes RtI & PBIS]

Throughout this newsletter you will find “snippets” of information regarding these topics, some of which are hyperlinked to WDPI webpages as well as other resources in the event that you wish to drill deeper for more information. I believe it is difficult for a local director to sit and have time to read an article, but may capture a snippet each time they look at the newsletter. I also trust if there is a topic of interest, you will connect to the webpage to gain more information. Please provide feedback regarding this method of sharing information with you, since I am trying to make improvements that will be beneficial to you as a member of WCASS.

Gary
(608) 245-2511

Where is Education Heading in Wisconsin?

Dr. Tony Evers has announced his focus/agenda for the next four (4) years. Below are the four topic areas.

WDPI/Tony Evers Agenda 2017

1. Every Child a Graduate
 - a. *What and how should kids learn?* [\[Standards and Instruction\]](#)
 - b. *How do we know if they learned it?* [\[Assessments and Data Systems\]](#)
 - c. *How do we ensure kids have highly effective teachers and schools?* [\[School and Educator Effectiveness\]](#)
 - d. *How should we pay for schools?* [\[School Finance Reform\]](#)



News Release

Education Information Services ■ 125 South Webster Street ■ P.O. Box 7841 ■ Madison, WI 53707-7841 ■ (608) 266-3559

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DPI-NR 2013-03 B

Monday, January 7, 2013

Contact: Patrick Gasper, DPI Communications Officer, (608) 266-3559

Evers' education budget request would boost math, science, technology, and career-readiness opportunities for all students

MADISON — Transforming education so students graduate ready for college and careers requires a broad approach that boosts math, science, technology, and career and technical education (CTE) opportunities for all students.

"Innovation grows economies," said State Superintendent Tony Evers. "Providing young people a strong foundation in the math, science, and technology that drives much of our innovation and economic growth, will help them chart a path to a successful future."

The state superintendent's 2017 education agenda guided the 2013-15 education budget request, which seeks reforms the state's school finance system through "Fair Funding for Our Future" and several proposals to invest in innovative education for students. Evers already is working with business and education leaders across the state to expand CTE opportunities and create personalized academic and career plans for every student. His budget proposal calls for reinvigorating CTE, strengthening science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education, and improving career readiness.

Business and industry in Wisconsin have reported current and projected skill shortages for a number of information, manufacturing, technical, health care, and STEM occupations. Recommendations from the Governor's Council on College and Workforce Readiness, Be Bold 2, and the Wisconsin Technology Council call for policies and programs to improve students' college and career readiness and improve career and technical education. Many of the high-need occupations require some postsecondary training, but not necessarily a four-year bachelor's degree.

"A bachelor's degree is an important path to lifetime success and a family-supporting career. But it is not the only route. Diploma and apprenticeship programs, technical college degrees, and industry certifications also lead to a good life and a successful, rewarding career," Evers said. "Reinvigorating CTE and investing in STEM education is not just training for high-demand jobs. These programs are academically rigorous and develop skills for success in college, career, and civic life."

The 2013-15 education budget proposal calls for the Department of Public Instruction to work with the state Department of Workforce Development and Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS) to identify occupations with potential skilled worker shortages. The proposed budget would provide school districts with \$1,000 for each student who graduated from high school with an industry-recognized credential for a high-need

(more)

Continues on next page

Budget Request: College & Readiness continued from p. 8

2013-15 budget request for STEM, CTE, and career readiness – Page 2

occupation. Accounting for students earning industry certificates would become part of the college and career readiness data point for School Report Cards.

The state superintendent has already put in place a number of ways for high school students to be on a faster track to earn industry certification and get a jump start on technical careers that are in high need. Evers worked with University of Wisconsin Colleges and the state's technical college system to smooth students' ability to earn college-level credits while in high school. Dual enrollment and transcribed credit as well as the Youth Options program allow many students to shave a year or more off of their postsecondary training.

"When I visit schools throughout the state, I see amazing partnerships that provide students with real-world experiences in science, mathematics, and technology," Evers said. "We have pre-engineering classes in hundreds of schools, including those I visited recently in Hartford, Superior, and Wausau. We need to expand these opportunities. Mercury Marine is supporting elementary science through a charter school in Fond du Lac and Johnson Controls donated to the automotive technology program at Pulaski High School in Milwaukee. The common theme in the success of these programs is community connections."

The proposed \$1 million in STEM grants for the 2015 fiscal year would help school districts enhance STEM course offerings and opportunities. A new DPI position and statewide STEM Advisory Council would advocate for STEM education and partnerships as well as leverage private and nonprofit funding. "Our vision for STEM education builds partnerships and emphasizes that STEM is for all students," Evers said. "We want to boost participation in STEM because the underrepresentation of some groups of students in STEM education has the potential to widen achievement gaps."

To provide better data on student achievement, the department's budget requests funding for new assessments in grades three through eight and the four-test ACT suite for high school students. The ninth-grade EXPLORE assessment would let students look at both high school and post-high school options, helping to identify academic strengths and areas where intervention may be needed. In 10th grade, the PLAN assessment would help students continue coursework selection and planning for college and career readiness. Both the EXPLORE and PLAN assessments prepare students to take the ACT in 11th grade. The ACT is benchmarked for college readiness.

Also in 11th grade, students would take the WorkKeys assessment. Part of the ACT suite, WorkKeys is a job skill assessment that helps students prepare for the workforce whether they plan to go directly into employment, train for a trade, or pursue a technical college or university degree before working. Additionally, students could earn a National Career Readiness Certificate based on results of three WorkKeys assessments: Applied Mathematics, Locating Information, and Reading for Information.

"Our Agenda 2017 goal is for all students to graduate from high school ready for college and careers," Evers said. "This goal is built into my Fair Funding plan and biennial budget request. It calls for investing in our students while holding the line on property taxes."

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NOTE: This news release is available electronically at http://news.dpi.wi.gov/files/eis/pdf/dpinr2013_03.pdf. Additional information about the Department of Public Instruction's 2013-15 budget request is available at http://news.dpi.wi.gov/news_2013-15-state-budget-information.

Smarter Balanced Information

When will the new assessments be in place?

Smarter Balanced is committed to delivering a fully functional assessment system that will be ready for implementation in the 2014-15 school year. In addition, Smarter Balanced is supporting member states as they implement the [Common Core State Standards](#). Tools and resources for educators will be posted online in 2012 and incorporated into the digital library as part of the assessment system.

Do the Smarter Balanced assessments support English language learners, students with disabilities, and other students with special needs?

The Smarter Balanced assessment system will provide accurate measures of achievement and growth for students with disabilities and English language learners. The assessments will address visual, auditory, and physical access barriers—allowing virtually all students to demonstrate what they know and can do.

To what extent will the assessments measure 21st-century skills?

The Smarter Balanced assessment system will measure the full depth and breadth of the [Common Core State Standards](#) in ELA/literacy and mathematics. The authors of the Common Core explicitly focused on the cognitive skills and knowledge that students need to be ready to succeed in entry-level, credit-bearing, academic college courses and in workforce training programs. Critical-thinking, problem-solving, and communication skills are a

major focus in the standards. Through innovative items and performance tasks, Smarter Balanced will measure these important skills.

However, the Common Core authors also note that the standards are not meant to encompass everything a student should learn, or describe all of the skills that students need in the 21st century. Indeed, academic readiness—as defined by the Common Core—is only part of a more comprehensive set of knowledge and skills that contribute to college and career readiness, such as work habits, persistence, and postsecondary planning

What is a performance task?

Performance tasks challenge students to apply their knowledge and skills to respond to real-world problems. They can best be described as collections of questions and activities that are coherently connected to a single theme or scenario. These activities are meant to measure capacities such as depth of understanding, research skills, and complex analysis, which cannot be adequately assessed with selected- or constructed-response items.

Performance tasks in reading, writing, and mathematics will be part of the Smarter Balanced summative, year-end assessment. Performance tasks can also be administered as part of the optional interim assessments throughout the year. The performance tasks will be delivered by computer (but will not be computer adaptive) and will take one to two class periods to complete.

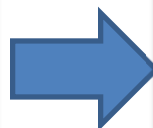
What is a Learning Map?

(Related to Dynamic Learning Maps)

A learning map is a network of sequenced learning targets. Dynamic learning maps are designed to show not only the mastery of a single tested skill but also all the related skills that the student needs to master to get to that skill. When we typically think of learning, we think of one skill building on another single skill. A learning map, by comparison, shows a learning landscape in which multiple skills are related to many other skills. Because learning maps show multiple relationships between skills, they also illustrate more than one way to learn tested skills. Learning maps give teachers and parents a clearer view of a student's knowledge. To learn more about dynamic learning maps, see [Dynamic Learning Maps](#).

What Is a Dynamic Learning Map?

A learning map is a network of sequenced learning targets. Often, we think of learning as one skill building on another single skill. A dynamic learning map, by comparison, shows a learning landscape in which multiple skills are related to many other skills. Dynamic learning maps not only show the relationships between skills but also show multiple learning pathways. Instead of assuming that all children learn a skill in the same way, allowing for multiple pathways recognizes that there are alternate ways to learn the same skill. By using dynamic learning maps as the basis for assessments, the DLM system will give teachers a clearer view of each student's knowledge.

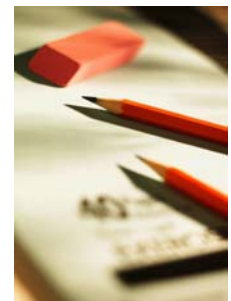
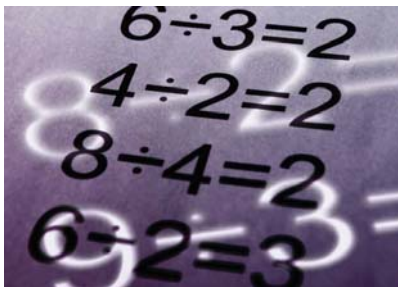


Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) Defined

It is anticipated that besides a Value Added Model for determining Educator Effectiveness for “non-core” teachers/faculty (e.g. special educators, pupil services, etc.) there will be Student Learning Objectives developed for students you will be involved with in their instructional day.

Student Learning Objectives are detailed, measurable goals for student academic growth to be achieved in a specified period of time (typically an academic year), and developed collaboratively by educators and their supervisors. SLOs are based on student learning needs identified by a review of data reflecting students’ baseline skills. SLOs are intended to provide educators with opportunities to demonstrate their students’ academic growth by setting rigorous, attainable goals for student achievement that are aligned to standards and to the instruction that teachers provide on a daily basis.

Sources of evidence that can be used to measure student learning under a SLO approach vary widely, from standardized assessments such as common assessments, end of course exams, etc., to more teacher-specific measures, such as performance demonstrations and portfolios of student work. SLOs can be established for an entire class, for a subset of students, or for an entire school in the case of School Learning Objectives established by principals.



Past-President's Comments

By: David Kwiatkowski



Just a Couple of Things!

Happy New Year to all! I hope that 2013 is off to a good start for everyone! I have a hard time believing it is January already and our Winter Conference is just around the corner! That means it is time to again exercise my duty as WCASS Past-President to remind our general membership of the WCASS Election of Officers which will be finalized at our Spring General Membership Meeting on May 2, 2013. This year we will be seeking candidates for election to the office of WCASS Secretary. If you would like to nominate a candidate for that office or would like to seek the position yourself, please contact me at your nearest convenience by either phone (715) 927-1349 or by email at davek@cesa8.k12.wi.us. Or, if you prefer, you may make a nomination or inquire about the position through your local WCASS Region Chair.

We would like to receive all nominations for the office of WCASS Secretary by March 15, 2013. This will give us ample time to send the general membership biographical information on the candidates and conduct electronic balloting before our Spring General Membership Meeting, when the winner will be announced. So please, consider your ability to serve or recognize that in a colleague and get your nominations in!

Being mid-year, it is also timely for me to ask your help with another of my duties, that of advising the WCASS President and the Executive Board of potential changes to the WCASS Constitution and By-Laws. This year, our Executive Board has initiated a re-organization of the WCASS Regions creating seven from the previous four. This re-organization was planned to be a one-year trial, allowing the Executive Board to evaluate its effectiveness in improving the general membership's active involvement and increased satisfaction with WCASS regional functions. So, I would like to hear from you about your perceptions and ideas related to our newly re-organized WCASS Regions so that I may pass these on to our Executive Board, as we consider making this re-organization permanent through our Constitution and By-Laws, or consider alternative strategies to get our membership better informed and more involved at the grassroots level. Please feel free to contact me by email or phone, or better yet, let's chat at one of our up-coming conferences!

Thanks in advance for your help...and as always, thanks for listening!

Dave

WCASS Region News

Region 1 Chair: Mardi Freeman

freema@hamilton.k12.wi.us

Happy New Year to all of you! WCASS Region 1 has had a busy start to the 2012-13 school year. We have had two meetings so far this school year where we had excellent attendance. We have had presentations and discussions on the new WI ACT 125 on Seclusion and Restraint and the new online Post-Secondary Transition Plan. By now, I am sure you have all implemented both of these new processes and they have become just part of the routine.

We are very fortunate to have Rachel Zellmer coming to present to all of us on Budget Insights at our next meeting on January 10th at CESA #1. Most of you are likely involved in the procedures for claiming your "High Cost Students," which has changed somewhat again this year! That is one of the advantages of our directors' positions; we will never be bored because things are always changing. 😊

Most of us, me included, are typically running from one crisis to another throughout the year. We don't have much time to think about the benefits of our positions. As we begin the new calendar year, it is a good time to reflect on the many positive aspects of our positions. Every day is different for us. We don't have to worry about doing the same thing over and over. That is a good thing! Another plus, we don't have to feel that any of our co-workers are out to take our jobs. I know I hear repeatedly from other administrators, "I couldn't do your job!" We are all in the position to make a difference every day. We can enhance a teacher's skills, assist a parent, help a student advocate for their needs, train staff and/or parents on the advances of assistive technology. We can make a difference just by smiling to a co-worker and asking how they are doing. As we move forward into a new year, let's all remember that we are fortunate to have the jobs that we have, because they offer us many opportunities to make a positive difference.

"Our lives are not determined by what happens to us, but how we react to what happens; not by what life brings to us, but by the attitude we bring to life."

Region 2 Chair: John Peterson

petersonj@mail.fortschools.org

For those of you who have not had the opportunity to

send a team of educational leaders from your school district to the workshops on the specific learning disabilities rule that Wisconsin's Department of Public Instruction have been hosting throughout the state, do yourself a favor and register for this event. The specific learning disability rule workshop was facilitated by Scott Brown, DPI Consultant, and Dana McConnell, Consultant from the Wisconsin RtI Center. Scott and Dana did a great job of presenting the ins and outs of the specific learning disability criteria and the requirements that districts will need to have in place by next school year. What has been somewhat frustrating over the past three or four years for me is that there have been so many workshops telling you how to "do" RtI. It is hard to do something if all of the key players involved – especially your building principals and Directors of Instruction – don't know exactly what is required of them.

Along with a team of educators, I had the opportunity recently to attend the SLD workshop in Janesville. My team of leaders walked away with a greater understanding of how RtI is a general education goal that has a very specific special education component. This has triggered the process of answering the following questions:

- What interventions do we have in place?
- How are intervention-pathways defined and communicated to internal and external stakeholders?
- Who is delivering these services?
- What assessments are we using to evaluate the effectiveness of our evaluations?
- What are our research-based services in special education?

Although we don't have all of the answers to these questions, at least the right people are beginning to reflect on what we do. Whereas before, all I was hearing were debates about specific assessments and how other districts are "doing" RtI. Congratulations to Scott and Dana for facilitating these trainings. I am very thankful to DPI for putting these presentations together and getting districts to answer these big questions.

If you need to contact me regarding any WCASS-related questions or concerns, feel free to reach me via email at petersonj@fortschools.org or phone (920-563-7804).

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WCASS Region News continued from p. 13

Region 3 Chair: Katherine Strongkstrong@cesa3.k12.wi.us

For information from this region, please contact Katherine Strong.

Region 4 Chair: Marcena Thirythiry@mjsd.k12.wi.us

The new Region 4 will be meeting for the first time on March 22nd. The region will be nominating a new region chair and hosting and award luncheon. Award nomination forms, meeting agenda and details will be coming soon.

Region 5 Chair: Lisa Miscolamisco@pulaskischools.org

For information from this region, please contact Lisa Misco.

Region 6 Chair: Diane Knudsenknudsend@esschools.k12.wi.us

For information from this region, please contact Diane Knudsen.

Region 7 Chair: Karen Bakerkbaker@ashland.k12.wi.us

For information from this region, please contact Karen Baker.

News from Your Awards Committee...

By: Jan Chapman

The WCASS awards committee has set up a new and exciting timeline for honoring our members. During February, Region Chairs will present to their Regions new information for nominating individuals for Individual Region Awards.

Nominations can be made in any of the following categories:

- 1. Mainstream Teacher Award or Integration Team Award**
- 2. Administrator Award**
- 3. Special Education Teacher Award**
- 4. Pupil Services Award** (nurse, social worker, psychologist, counselors, at-risk)
- 5. Special Education Paraprofessional Award, Related/Support Services Award** (OT, PT, Speech & Language, Interpreter, Adaptive PE)
- 6. Personal Achievement Award** (student disability award).

Region Chairs will then hold a Regional Awards Recognition that will take place in spring at their RSN/Region meeting. Award recipients from ALL

Regions will then be presented to the WCASS Executive Board at the summer board retreat. The Executive Board will then choose those award recipients they would like to pass on to the Fall State or National CEC.

A similar process will also be used for our ***Outstanding Special Services Administrator Award***. Nominations will be solicited in March and due in May at the WCASS conference. An awardee will be selected and presented the award at the Fall DPI Leadership Conference. WCASS Executive Board will then consider nominating our *WCASS Outstanding Special Services Administrator Award* winner for one of the distinguished service awards through CASE.

Watch for more information from your Region Chairs on all these exciting new opportunities to honor our own.

The WCASS awards committee is always looking for more committee members. Please contact Jan Chapman at jchapman@germantown.k12.wi.us if interested.

Dr. J's Philosophical Corner**Waves of Advocacy: Addressing Not Owning the Disconnect****Wave One: Elementary**

Why does the Bat Phone seem to ring more in an elementary? Although I do not have the exact answer I will try to shed some philosophical reflective light on the subject. Let's start with the obvious. Research clearly indicates a solid drop in volunteers starting at the middle school level. Much of the hypothesis confirmed and not confirmed speaks to the rigor of the curriculum and the fear of not knowing how to help children academically. Students at that age also have a commitment like no other to faulty logic which may have something to do with desirability to work with that age level. One theory is that parents feel as smart as or perhaps smarter than elementary school teachers. That being said parents will likely be a more vocal advocate feeling more confident in their opinion. Regardless of the research, I have been to enough IEPs to see a drastic difference between the different age levels and many seasoned directors will be likely nodding while they are reading.

I would estimate the numbers of calls preparing for what to say or how to deal with a parent at an IEP are twice as much in grades EC-6. Qualitatively speaking there is a difference between personalities between teachers at each level and someone (not me) could draw some conclusions about why these similarities occur. There seems to be a level of conflict resiliency built into middle school staff not typically found in elementary teachers. The why, a variety of reasons no doubt, is likely societal expectation of smaller kids being easier which most practiced administrators can tell you could not be further from the truth! Parents of elementary aged kids seem to be edgier prior to and during meetings. They also seem to ask for things that are not educationally appropriate which causes elementary teachers to get nervous and lose confidence in their opinion as an educator to determine nice over necessity. Teachers at the elementary level also have

this sense that they have to follow what the parent states which is perhaps the most dangerous thinking that can actually truly get them **and you** into a pickle.

Wave of Advocacy: Initially parents are learning the process and are skittish around educators. The aforementioned dynamic seems to create a big parental push two grades prior to the transition to middle school. About when they become a knowledgeable advocate seems to be right when they can see their window of opportunity to advocate with a "lesser" opponent slipping away. During this wave of advocacy is when it seems as though every issue they or the child has been having falls squarely on the shoulders of the teacher.

Potential Strategies: Remember, 90% of reality is based on perception. Teachers should not pretend all is well and be prepared to openly recognize that the relationship is going south and address it prior to the IEP. Even if the director comes to the teacher's rescue the **teacher** still has to work with the student making solid relationships with parents necessary. Use positive communication strategies but be honest with the parent about these concerns. Make it clear that the issues need to be resolved prior to middle school. If the parent is really frustrated and not clearly using logic, bring the middle school teacher down for a meet and greet or to the IEP. This brings the potential unfounded fear of the unknown out of the parent's brain stem and into the frontal lobes. If that does not work make sure that the principal from the receiving middle school is there to address concerns. I cannot tell you how many IEPs that I have been to where parents were convinced of the unfounded and impending middle school doom that just never happened. Do not fall into the "wait it out trap" as ethics binds us to doing the right thing even though it is tough!

Dr. Jesse Jackson

DHH Council Update

To help assure that the educational and social challenges faced by students with hearing impairments are understood, the State Superintendent's Advisory Council, Deaf and Hard of Hearing is working on a project that will provide essential information to school personnel on behalf of these students. Our goal is to educate, by making information and resources related to DHH easily accessible and tailored to users. Our first target population is building administrators and Student Services personnel such as school psychologists and school social workers. Information being developed will be web-based, ranging from brief overviews of the "must-knows" to more detailed resources that will support deeper understanding. We want this information to be at the fingertips of all who play a role in serving students that are deaf or hearing impaired and are exploring technologies to place it there. Watch for updates on our progress with this project –

Brian J. Anderson
Director of Special Education
Appleton Area School District
Office: 920.832.4396

Wisconsin Survey of District Level Adapted Physical Education Eligibility Criteria

Dear Special Education Director:

According to IDEA, physical education is a required part of special education. Therefore, criteria must be used to determine eligibility for specially designed or adapted physical education services for a student with a disability. The purpose of this brief online survey is to determine what **eligibility criteria** are used in your district for specially designed or adapted physical education services for special education students.

Your participation in this study is extremely important since we are only surveying district/agency level directors of special education in Wisconsin. The questions are designed to determine what factors are used for eligibility decisions in specially designed or adapted physical education.

Participation in the study is voluntary. You may choose not to answer certain questions, or to discontinue your participation at any time. Completion and return of this survey indicates your informed consent. No personal or district identifiers will be used when reporting results of the study. This study has been approved by the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse Human Subjects Review Board.

[Please click here to access the survey.](#)

PLEASE NOTE: If you are unable to answer questions on this survey, please forward it to the appropriate staff member(s) within your school district. We understand that different staff members have responsibilities for various content areas, including adapted or specially designed physical education.

Thank you very much for completing this survey. Contact Katherine White (608.785.8695; white.kat2@uwlax.edu) or Dr. Garth Tymeson (608.785.5415; gtymeson@uwlax.edu) if you have questions.

Regards,

Katherine White
Adapted Physical Education Graduate Student
Department of Exercise and Sport Science
University of Wisconsin-La Crosse

Garth Tymeson, Ph.D.
Adapted Physical Education Teacher Preparation Program

Secret Service Safe School Initiative

The Safe School Initiative study reinforced the findings of the Secret Service's ECSP study concerning the thinking and behavior of attackers. In particular, like the ECSP, the Safe School Initiative concluded that most attackers did not threaten their targets directly, but did engage in pre-attack behaviors that would have indicated an inclination toward or the potential for targeted violence had they been identified.

Findings about the pre-attack behaviors of perpetrators of targeted violence validated the "fact-based" approach of the threat assessment process. This process relies primarily on an appraisal of behaviors, rather than on stated threats or traits, as the basis for determining whether there is cause for concern. These findings argue favorably for pursuing adaptation of this threat assessment process for use by school administrators and law enforcement officials in responding to the problem of targeted school violence.

The Guide is intended to provide school administrators and law enforcement officials guidance in incorporating the threat assessment process for investigating, evaluating, and managing targeted violence into strategies to prevent school violence. The purpose of the Guide is to contribute to achieving the broader goal of creating safe and secure school environments by helping school and law enforcement officials respond responsibly, prudently, and effectively to threats and other behaviors that raise concern about potential violence.

Major Components and Tasks for Creating a Safe/Connected School Climate

The major components and tasks for creating a safe school climate include:

- Assessment of the school's emotional climate;
- Emphasis on the importance of listening in schools;

- Adoption of a strong, but caring stance against the code of silence;
- Prevention of, and intervention in bullying;
- Involvement of all members of the school community in planning, creating, and sustaining a school culture of safety and respect;
- Development of trusting relationships between each student and at least one adult at school; and
- Creation of mechanisms for developing and sustaining safe school climates.

The findings of the Safe School Initiative suggest that there are productive actions that educators, law enforcement officials, and others can pursue in response to the problem of targeted school violence. Specifically, Initiative findings suggest that these officials may wish to consider focusing their efforts to formulate strategies for preventing these attacks in two principal areas:

- developing the capacity to pick up on and evaluate available or knowable information that might indicate that there is a risk of a targeted school attack; and,
- employing the results of these risk evaluations, or "threat assessments," in developing strategies to prevent potential school attacks from occurring.

Support for these suggestions is found in the 10 key findings of the Safe School Initiative:

- Incidents of targeted violence at school are rarely sudden, impulsive acts.
- Prior to most incidents, other people knew about the attacker's idea and/or plan to attack.
- Most attackers did not threaten their targets directly prior to advancing the attack.
- There is no accurate or useful "profile" of students who engage in targeted school violence.

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Secret Service Safe School Initiative continued from p. 17

- Most attackers engaged in some behavior, prior to the incident that caused concern or indicated a need for help.
- Most attackers were known to have difficulty coping with significant losses or personal failures. Many had considered or attempted suicide.
- Many attackers felt bullied, persecuted, or injured by others prior to the attack.
- Most attackers had access to and had used weapons prior to the attack.
- In many cases, other students were involved in some capacity.
- Despite prompt law enforcement responses, most shooting incidents were stopped by means other than law enforcement intervention.

Six principles form the foundation of the threat assessment process. These principles are:

1. Targeted violence is the end result of an understandable, and oftentimes discernible, process of thinking and behavior.
2. Targeted violence stems from an interaction among the individual, the situation, the setting, and the target.
3. An investigative, skeptical, inquisitive mindset is critical to successful threat assessment.
4. Effective threat assessment is based upon facts, rather than on characteristics or "traits."
5. An "integrated systems approach" should guide threat assessment inquiries and investigations.
6. The central question in a threat assessment inquiry or investigation is whether a student poses a threat, not whether the student has made a threat.

In addition, three elements guide the development and operation of an effective school threat assessment program. These elements are:

- authority to conduct an assessment;
- capacity to conduct inquiries and investigations; and,
- systems relationships.

Establishing Authority to Conduct an Inquiry or Investigation

A formal policy authorizing school officials to conduct a threat assessment should cover the following topics:

- the purpose and scope of the policy;
- the role of educators and the threat assessment team vis-a-vis the role of law enforcement;
- the identity of, and delegation of authority to, school officials concerning determination that a threat assessment inquiry or investigation should be pursued;
- the definition of the threshold of concern for initiating a threat assessment inquiry or investigation, i.e., a description of the nature and extent of behavior or communication that would trigger a threat assessment inquiry or investigation;
- the description of the types of information that may be gathered during the assessment;
- the designation of the individuals or group of individuals who would be responsible for gathering and analyzing information; and
- the steps and procedures to be followed from initiation to conclusion of the threat assessment inquiry or investigation.

WCASS Upcoming Training Dates & Events

2013

February 6th WCASS Winter Conference: 3 days at Radisson Paper Valley

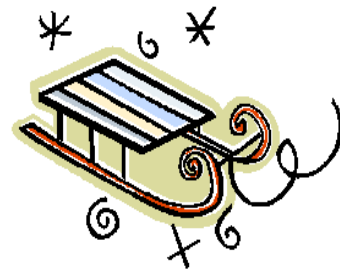
February 28th Wisconsin Federal Funding Conference: 2 days at Kalahari Resort & Conference Center

March 6th Wisconsin RtI Summit: 2 days at KI Convention Center

May 1st WCASS Spring Conference: 3 days at Chula Vista Resort & Conference Center

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>



Spring Full-Day Trainings on the SLD Rule for School Teams

[NOTE: CESA offices will be handling registration for these trainings. Please watch for announcements and further information from your CESA.]

- | | | |
|--------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| ○ April 4: CESA 12 | ○ April 17: CESA 7 | ○ May 10: CESA 1 |
| ○ April 9: CESA 5 | ○ April 30: CESA 10 | ○ May 17: CESA 2 |
| ○ April 11: CESA 4 | | |

CREATE Conference



Presented by:
CREATE WISCONSIN
Teach all Reach all

- Keynote addresses by Dr. Mary Montle Bacon, Lee Mun Wah, and Dr. Jerry D. Weast
- CREATE is funded by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

Visit www.CREATEWisconsin.net for more conference information AND to sign up for our monthly e-newsletter!



CREATE Conference



Save the date!

APRIL 23-25, 2013

Radisson Hotel & Conference Center, Green Bay

Beyond Diversity II Training
APRIL 23-24, 2013

Needs Assessment
APRIL 24, 2013

Conference Sessions
APRIL 25, 2013

Connecting Schools and Communities:
Promising Practices in Culturally Responsive Education

Connecting Schools and Communities: Promising Practices in Culturally Responsive Education

Join your fellow educators from around the state at the dynamic and informative 2013 CREATE Conference at the Radisson Hotel & Conference Center in Green Bay, WI! Beyond Diversity II training will be offered as a preconference activity on April 23 & 24, 2013. Attendance at Beyond Diversity I is a prerequisite for registration. A full day of keynote speakers and sectional presentations will take place on April 25, 2013. Keynote speakers include Dr. Jerry Weast, Dr. Mary Montle Bacon, and Lee Mun Wah. Sectional presenters hail from across Wisconsin and beyond, and include researchers, preservice teachers, and educators in the field. More information and registration can be found on the CREATE website at: <http://www.createwisconsin.net/events/2013createconference.cfm>. Hope to see you all there! Becky Collins

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