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### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

President's Message	1-2	Special Needs Voucher Bill Will Not Move Forward	8
Credit Flexibility Discussion	2	Honor the Very Best in Special Education	9
Dropout Early Warning System	2	WCASS Region News	10-12
Past-President's Comments	3-4	Upcoming Training Dates & Events	12
Stop Special Education Vouchers Blog	4	SLP Technical Assistance & Best Practices Work Group	13
Updates from Executive Director	5	WCASS Membership Corner	14
Seclusion & Restraint	5	WCASS Directory	15
CASE Endorsed Products & Member Benefits	6-7		

**\*\*Click on the name of the article to be taken directly to it\*\***



### President's Message

By: Greg Nyen

### The Battle for Resources in Public Education

When the current administration successfully passed and implemented Act 10, the Collective Bargaining Agreements as we knew them went away. This impact to education, in and of itself, was significant. However, there was another, perhaps even more significant impact to public education in Wisconsin. Millions of dollars that were once pumped into the state-wide education-related lobbying efforts have now vanished as union membership has waned thereby reducing the resources of the Wisconsin Education Association Council (WEAC). Concomitantly with the reduction in resources funneled toward education related legislation from WEAC was a significant increase in resources from those who support a privatized education model. Voucher supporters, Charter supporters, and educationally related big business have more than filled the vacuum of resources that was vacated by WEAC. It is no wonder that we are realizing more and more traction away from public education when the resources dumped into lobbying efforts and

campaign contributions cannot be matched by educationally sensible advocates.

The School Administrators Alliance is an umbrella organization comprised of the following four state-wide organizations: Wisconsin Association for School Business Officials (WASBO); Wisconsin Association for School District Administrators (WASDA); Association for Wisconsin School Administrators (AWSA); and WCASS. Together, these organizations provide legislative leadership to our education lobbyist, John Forester. Most likely, if you have attended any of the WCASS business meetings, you have heard John speak in regard to current education-based legislation. You may also have heard John make a plea to raise money for the SAA Political Action Committee, or PAC, and the SAA conduit (SAADirect). The SAA conduit is an organization that receives money from individuals, deposits it in a financial institution, and then transfers contributions to a candidate or campaign

Continues on next page

**President's Message continued from p.1**

committee at the request of the original contributor. The contributor to the conduit retains absolute control over when and where their contributions are distributed. SAA PAC funds, on the other hand, are funds used for campaign contributions designed to help reelect "friends of education," strengthen our relationships with key legislators and, ultimately, to influence legislation.

Conduits are an important complement to PACs because many of the candidates that we wish to support for reelection reach their PAC limit very early in an election cycle. Therefore, the only way that we can hope to strengthen our relationship with these candidates is via individual or conduit contributions.

The SAA PAC and conduit will never compare to the contributions previously made by WEAC or the contributions made by those in favor of privatizing public education. That said, the SAA has worked tirelessly over many years to establish important relationships with those legislators who are "friends

of education." While our support may not come in the form of large campaign contributions, the contributions, nonetheless, are recognized as a codification of our commitment and partnership to intelligent and thoughtful education-based legislators.

As outlined on the SAA website, PACs and conduits each have their distinct advantages, so you should participate in both programs if possible. Many restrictions that apply to PACs do not apply to conduits. The SAA intends to use both programs to maximize SAA political influence. If you wish to "direct" where your contribution goes, and you don't mind being listed as a contributor on that candidate's campaign finance report, you may wish to support **SAADirect**. If you wish to remain more anonymous in your support of the candidates the SAA chooses to support, you may prefer **SAA PAC**.

For more information on this topic please go to: <http://wsaa.org/saainfo/> or contact John Forester.

**Credit Flexibility Discussion**

Michael Thompson and Rebecca Vail, Director of Content and Learning, Division for Academic Excellence provided a report on Credit Flexibility for students (focused on HS students). A report has been developed that describes the array of flexible programming for students, especially students that are best served in an alternative program setting. This is a great document that is available from WDPI.

**Dropout Early Warning System (DEWS)**

Doug White, Director of Student Services and Jared Knowles, Research Analyst provided a review of the new Dropout Early Warning System (DEWS) at the WCASS Winter Conference. This is a system that is designed to flag students that may appear to be at risk of not graduating based on a complex system of analyzing a variety of factors. This is already occurring and you will see it if you analyze individual students using the new WISEdash system. There was considerable discussion of how this information needs to be treated carefully and anyone using the system must avoid labeling a student based on being flagged through this system.



## Past-President's Comments

By: David Kwiatkowski

I hope you all had a great Christmas and are looking forward to a Happy New Year! In the New Year, I am very excited to follow through on my promise to help our membership address the needs of a most challenged and challenging group of students within our public schools and the special education and pupil services programs we lead. Those being students with extreme emotional, behavioral, social and learning needs related to mental health concerns, within themselves or in their personal environments. In that effort, it has been my privilege to become a participant in a statewide effort, initiated and led by the WDPI and the Wisconsin Department of Health and Human Services, to promote, coordinate and implement Trauma Sensitive Schools practices in all Wisconsin public schools. It has been very enlightening and encouraging to collaborate with representatives from these state agencies, as well as community mental health professionals and university trainers to better serve children and families across Wisconsin.

In my previous newsletter article, I referred readers to the Trauma Sensitive Schools Toolkit which was available at the WDPI website as an excellent compilation of resources to understand and serve students with extreme emotional, behavioral, social and learning needs. Since that writing, our statewide TSS Taskforce led by Nic Dibble at the WDPI, have replenished, revised and re-organized that website to provide even more comprehensive and easily accessible resources, specific to the needs of the reader and the students they serve. The new improved website is available at the new WDPI Mental Health webpage at following link:

[http://sspw.dpi.wi.gov/sspw\\_mhtrauma](http://sspw.dpi.wi.gov/sspw_mhtrauma)

Although that website provides a very comprehensive network of resources, I would also recommend three very informative but practical and easy to read books, which are not easily accessed through the website (but are through amazon.com or other sources).

Two of these by Bruce D. Perry and Maia Szalavitz:

*The Boy Who Was Raised as a Dog: And Other Stories from a Child Psychiatrist's Notebook - What Traumatized Children Can Teach Us about Loss, Love and Healing;* and *Born for Love: Why Empathy is Essential--and Endangered;*

and one by Ross W. Greene:

*Lost at School- Why Our Kids with Behavioral Challenges Are Falling Through the Cracks and How We Can Help Them.*

Let me know what you think of these! If you would like more information or know of other resources we have overlooked, please contact me, as well. I look forward to hearing your perspectives and will gladly carry them on to our statewide taskforce.

In my previous article, I also wrote of my good fortune over the last three years to develop a very valuable partnership with a mental health agency, Advocates for Healthy Transitional Living, LLC (AHTL) for the purpose of designing and offering alternative special educational services for students with severe and/or extreme emotional, behavioral and learning needs in CESA 8 and the Green Bay (Brown County) area schools. We continue to grow in our second year of operation of our trauma-sensitive "Brand New Day" special educational alternative program and currently serve 24 students from 10 school

Continues on next page

**Past-President's Comments continued from p. 3**

districts in northeastern Wisconsin. We are finding such promising results working with both elementary and secondary students with these severe needs, we wish to share the model with WCASS members and guests at our Spring Conference, May 7-9, 2014 in Wisconsin Dells. I look forward to bringing Dan Holstead's Pro-active / Active / Diversion approach to learning environment analysis and intervention and the Brand New Day network of support to our membership at that conference. We also hope to have WCASS members who have utilized our programming model to benefit their students on hand to provide their perspective on this model of interventions and support.

Until that time, I continue to invite anyone interested in a more in-depth discussion or sharing of resources related to addressing the learning and safety needs of students with challenging behaviors to email me at [davek@cesa.k12.wi.us](mailto:davek@cesa.k12.wi.us). I truly appreciate this opportunity to "pay it forward" for the tremendous opportunities that you have afforded me as a leader of WCASS. I look forward to seeing all of you at our Winter Conference in Appleton, February 5-7, 2014!

Happy New Year, again and as always... thanks for listening!

Dave

### Stop Special Education Vouchers Blog

Recently the following entry was made in the blog that has been set up to discuss the elements of why we must be opposed to Special Education Vouchers. This entry is a positive of why there is a significant number of parent advocates that are opposed to the Special Education Vouchers. Ultimately, parents do recognize that even if they have had battles regarding their child's program, they have a respect for the directors and personnel in a public school system. This entry is a statement of support and encouragement.

*From a contributor in Madison: "So we just got out of a two hour meeting on my son's annual IEP for school. This meeting can be contentious for many families of special ed children and can require mediators and sometimes even lawyers.*

*I'm beyond blessed with the phenomenal public ed team working with my son. I really do love our principal, physical therapist, occupational therapist, and special ed staff, especially the SEAs.*

*They do an outstanding job. Truly.*

*(And there's just no replicating this in a voucher school. Sorry. There's not.)"*

Joanne Juhnke, Steering Committee Chair, Stop Special Needs Vouchers Wisconsin asked that when I forward the quote around, she wanted me to add that I found it on the Stop Special Needs Vouchers Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/StopSpecialNeedsVouchers>, and asked that I encourage other WCASS folks to like the page as well.



## Updates from Executive Director

By: Gary Myrah

**\*\*Additional updates can be found throughout the newsletter\*\***

Several important issues have developed that may be of interest to WCASS members.

1. **WCASS Winter Conference:** We have a great lineup of presentations for the WCASS Winter Conference scheduled for February 5-7, 2014 at the Paper Valley Inn in Appleton. Check out the [WCASS website](#) for the agenda and the registration information.
2. **WCASS Scholarship** to attend CASE Leadership Conference in Washington, D.C., July 13-16, 2014. WCASS Board of Directors will again offer a \$500 scholarship to defray the cost of attending this program. If you are interested in participating in this event, we will have a random drawing at the WCASS Membership meeting in Appleton. We ask that the selected individual confirm their commitment to attend by the May WCASS Conference.
3. **WDPI/WASBO/WCASS Federal Funding Conference:** Kalahari Resort, Wisconsin Dells, February 24 & 25. There is still some space available for this conference. However we are close to reaching our capacity so I would encourage you to sign up soon.
4. **CASE Winter Hybrid Conference:** Orlando, Florida & Web-based, February 24-26, 2014. Check out the website for more information regarding hosting a conference site (one fee for the site). Themes for the three days include: Common Core & Assessment Related to Special Populations; Educator Effectiveness; and Will Public Education Survive?
5. The [Education Effectiveness](#) Team from WDPI has released a [flow chart](#) related to what positions are mandated by state statutes to be evaluators. It also helps define what positions are required to be evaluated. You may find this chart at the Educator Effectiveness website.
6. **WCASS Nominations** for elected positions. We will be seeking nominations for president-elect as well as treasurer. Nominations will be due by February 21, 2014 with elections occurring in April. Perks for the role of president includes paid travel expenses to the CASE Board of Directors meeting and Fall Conference as well as participation in the annual CASE Leadership Summit held in Washington, D.C. in July.

## Seclusion & Restraint

Wisconsin News (sent to all WCASS members daily) had a compilation of articles that appeared throughout the state during the Thanksgiving week. Gannett publications issued a series of articles regarding their investigation of Seclusion & Restraint in several districts in north central and northeast Wisconsin. We are not sure what residual impact these articles will have on this issue. The Disability Rights Wisconsin will be presenting a breakout session during the Winter Conference.

**Endorsed Products & Member Benefits**

<b>Product</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Company</b>	<b>Countries</b>	<b>Benefits to Members</b>
<b>ELSB Early Literacy Skills Builder</b>	A literacy curriculum for children ages 5 to 10 with moderate to severe developmental disabilities	Attainment Co Bridges	USA Canada	<b>10% Discount</b>
<b>Autism Pro</b>	Professional development and case management resources on Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASDs), developmental delays and challenging behaviors.	Trumpet Behavioral Health	USA Canada	<b>Additional Training</b>
<b>Brigance-Special Education</b>	Assessment, screening, and instructional tools	Curriculum Associates	USA Canada	<b>MOU in progress</b>
<b>Caselite</b>	Web-based intervention scheduling and documentation for special educators	Caselite	USA Canada	<b>10% Discount</b>
<b>SEAS</b>	A Special Education Web Based management system	Computer Automation Systems	USA	<b>10% Discount</b>
<b>Classworks</b>	Comprehensive K-12 instructional software	Curriculum Associates	USA	<b>10% Discount</b>
<b>eStar</b>	Web-based special education management applications	eSped	USA	<b>Additional Training</b>
<b>iStation Reading</b>	Internet-based reading and intervention program	iStation	USA Canada	<b>20% Discount</b>
<b>Special Ed Connection</b>	Web based publication on special education legal issues	LRP Publications	USA	<b>2 additional months</b>
<b>Lexia Reading</b>	Technology –based reading program grade level K-4	Lexia Learning Solutions	USA Canada	<b>3 months additional hosting service</b>
<b>Lindamood-Bell Seeing Stars</b>	Symbol Imagery for Phonemic Awareness, Sight Words and Spelling Program	Lindamood-Bell Gander	USA Canada	<b>MOU in progress</b>
<b>Lindamood -Bell Visualizing and Verbalizing</b>	A language comprehension and thinking program that stimulates concept imagery and applies that imagery to understanding written and oral language	Lindamood-Bell Gander	USA Canada	<b>10% Discount –products 5% Discount - workshops</b>
<b>ParaEducator PD Now</b>	Research-based online courses for para-educators	The Master Teacher	USA Canada	<b>10% Discount</b>
<b>TieNet IEP</b>	A Program to manage (IEP) development, service documentation and reporting to parents.	Maximus	USA Canada	<b>10% Discount</b>
<b>eIEP PRO</b>	A customizable web-based software for educators to manage the special education process	Media Net Solutions	USA	<b>30% Discount on initial year</b>
<b>MindPlay Virtual Reading Coach</b>	A self-paced, mastery based on-line reading intervention program	Mind Play	USA Canada	<b>Free 6 months RAPS 360 with purchase of MRC</b>

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## CASE Endorsed Products continued from p. 6

<b>Success Maker K-8 Reading</b>	An online K-8 reading program that identifies gaps, adapts instruction to meet individual needs, builds mastery and aligns to provincial/state curricula.	Pearson	USA Canada	
<b>Positive Action</b>	Evidence-based program that improves academics, behavior, and character	Positive Action Inc.	USA Canada	<b>10% Discount</b>
<b>Review 360</b>	A web-based, positive behavior management software system	Psychological Software Solutions	USA Canada	
<b>Safe and Civil Schools Series</b>	Programs and staff development on positive behavior management for K-12 educators	Safe and Civil Schools	USA Canada	<b>15% Discount</b>
<b>Read 180</b>	Curriculum, instruction, and assessment for struggling readers in grades 4–12+.	Scholastic, Inc.	USA Canada	<b>15-20% Discount</b>
<b>Synergy SE</b>	Web-based program that generates and stores IEP's and related forms	EduPoint	USA Canada	<b>5% Discount -workshops</b>
<b>System 44</b>	A reading and phonics intervention technology program for challenged readers in Grades 3–12+.	Scholastic, Inc.	USA	<b>10% Discount</b>
<b>Academy of Reading</b>	Web-based reading intervention grades 2-12	School Specialty Intervention/ AutoSkill	USA Canada	<b>6 months technical support and access to PD webinar</b>
<b>Academy of Math</b>	Web-based mathematics intervention for at-risk elementary, middle and high school	School Specialty Intervention/ AutoSkill	USA Canada	
<b>Language! (3-12)</b>	An intensive mastery-based language arts intervention that targets the needs of non-readers, struggling readers, and English learners	Voyager	USA Canada	<b>Onsite Consultation or Free Summer Institute Registrations</b>
<b>Voyager JOURNEYS (MS)</b>	A Middle to High School Reading intervention Program	Voyager	USA Canada?	<b>Online PD 10-15 hours</b>
<b>Voyager Passport Reading</b>	A K-5 reading intervention that meets the needs of struggling readers	Voyager	USA Canada	<b>Online PD 10-15 hours</b>
<b>Read Well (K-1)</b>	A primary reading curriculum that adjusts to the needs of each student	Voyager	USA Canada	<b>Onsite Consultation or Free Summer Institute Registrations</b>
<b>Response Card RF</b>	Interactive audience participation keypads (clickers)	Turning Technologies	USA Canada	<b>10% discount</b>
<b>Voyager Transmath</b>	Comprehensive research based 5th - 10th grade intensive math intervention	Voyager	USA Canada	<b>Free Registrations</b>
<b>Voyager Vmath</b>	A grade 2-8 Math intervention program	Voyager	USA Canada	<b>Online PD 10-15 hours</b>

Please view endorsements on CASE website to learn more <http://www.casecec.org/>

updated May 2013

**Key Senators: Special Needs Voucher Bill Will Not Move Forward**

By: John Forester

On January 21<sup>st</sup>, Senators Leah Vukmir (R-Wauwatosa) and Alberta Darling (R-River Hills), and Representatives Dean Knudson (R-Hudson) and John Jagler (R-Watertown) unveiled a revamped special needs voucher bill that would offer special needs students who have been denied open enrollment a taxpayer-funded voucher (reportedly worth up to about \$14,000) to attend another school district, a charter school or a private school.

Key GOP state senators immediately signaled that the bill would not move forward in the Senate. Senate President Mike Ellis (R-Neenah) said the bill was not a priority for him and staff for Senator Luther Olsen, Chairman of the Senate Education Committee (R-Ripon) announced that Olsen was not interested in making the bill law in Wisconsin. Of particular concern to these senators was the recent case of LifeSkills Academy, a poor-performing Milwaukee voucher school recently closed by its operators. The operators then turned around and opened a voucher school in Florida supported by that state's special needs voucher program.

The School Administrators Alliance (SAA) has long opposed special needs voucher legislation, and we join advocates for disabled children in their opposition to this legislation. It is important to note that no statewide disability group in Wisconsin has endorsed special needs vouchers. In response to the new bill draft, Disability Rights Wisconsin, and Stop Special Needs Vouchers both expressed their strong opposition.

Consider the following:

- Special needs vouchers take tax dollars out of public schools, hurting students who remain in those schools. Under this bill draft, the voucher would be funded as a first draw on the general school aids that would otherwise be payable to all school districts receiving general aid in the state. And because local school districts are allowed to levy property taxes to cover the reduction in state aid, this bill could result in higher local property taxes.
- Voucher schools are not required to employ special education teachers or therapists, and have no obligation to meet a student's specific needs.
- Families who use a special needs voucher to send their child to a private school would give up their child's rights and protections under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), including the right to an enforceable Individualized Education Program (IEP). As Lisa Pugh of Disability Rights Wisconsin said in response to this bill draft, "We haven't seen support for real accountability in the private school sector that would ensure that students with disabilities would be protected."

Even though key state senators have signaled the bill will not move forward in their house, it does appear that the bill will receive a public hearing in February. The SAA will keep members informed of these developments so we can emphatically express our opposition to this proposal. Stay tuned.



# Honor the Very Best in Special Education

News from your Awards Chair, Jan Chapman

**February** is that time of year for Regions to solicit nominations for their individual Region Awards. Nominations can be made in any of the following categories:

- ❖ Mainstream Teacher Award or Integration Team Award
- ❖ Administrator Award
- ❖ Special Education Teacher Award
- ❖ Pupil Services Award (nurse, social worker, psychologist, counselors, at-risk teacher)
- ❖ Special Education Paraprofessional Award
- ❖ Related/Support Services Award (OT, PT, Speech & Language, Interpreter, Adaptive PE)
- ❖ Personal Achievement Award (student with disability award)

Talk to your Region's WCASS Representative for more information. Regional awards ceremonies will take place at your individual spring regional meetings.

In **March** WCASS will be soliciting nominations for **Outstanding Special Services Administrator Award**. These nominations are due by the May WCASS conference for the Board to review. The WCASS Outstanding Administrator awardee will be recognized at the Fall DPI Leadership Conference and will also be forwarded as a nomination for the CASE distinguished service awards.

The Council of Administrators of Special Education, Inc. (CASE) acknowledges the need for a professional association to recognize outstanding individuals among the ranks of its members as well as individuals whose accomplishments have improved the field of special education. CASE has established awards for which nominations are annually solicited from the membership.

An individual may be nominated for one of the CASE awards by a

- CASE member or
- CASE subdivision/unit

Selection will be based on information submitted to the CASE Membership Committee. The selected individual(s) will be honored at the annual CEC convention. Here are the two award categories that WCASS will consider for nomination:

- ❖ The **CASE Outstanding Administrator of Special Education Award** was instituted for recognition of individuals making significant professional contributions to leadership behavior and field practice in the administration of programs for students with disabilities and/or who are gifted. Nominees for this award must have had ten (10) years experience in the field of special education. Nominees **must be a current member of CASE**.
- ❖ The **Harrie M. Selznick CASE Distinguished Service Award** was instituted for recognition of individuals who have been career-long leaders in the administration of special education programs. The intended recipients of the award are individuals who have made significant contributions to the field over extended professional careers. The Harrie M. Selznick Award is the highest CASE honor, and it is accompanied by a cash award. Nominees **must be a current member of CASE**. Note the winner of this award will be nominated by CASE for the **CEC J.E. Wallace Wallin Special Education Lifetime Achievement Award**.

For more information feel free to contact: Jan Chapman at [jchapman@germantown.k12.wi.us](mailto:jchapman@germantown.k12.wi.us)

## WCASS Region News

### **Region 1 Chair: Mardi Freeman**

[freema@hamilton.k12.wi.us](mailto:freema@hamilton.k12.wi.us)

Happy New Year to all! Can you believe we are already half-way through the school year? In Region #1 we have had three meetings so far this year. Our first meeting of the year, held in September, focused on Universal Design for Learning. We had a presentation by Jolene Troia, the DPI Consultant for UDL. We also “Skyped in” George Van Horn, a nationally-known expert on Universal Design for Learning.

Our second meeting of the year was centered on Personalized Learning and Special Education. We had Dr. Jim Richabaugh present on philosophy and benefits of personalized learning, followed by teachers from two CESA #1 districts demonstrating how they use personalized learning in their classrooms.

The most recent meeting was held January 9<sup>th</sup>, 2014. We concentrated on the new SLD law and its implementation, “After the Sunset of the Discrepancy Model.” Our CESA #1 members met the new SLD DPI consultant and had the opportunity to ask questions that have arisen regarding our practices since December 1<sup>st</sup>.

We have two more meetings scheduled this school year. We have one scheduled for March 11, 2014 and another on April 10, 2014. At our April meeting we will honor our regional award winners. We are also fortunate to have secured Renae Aldana as a presenter for that meeting.

In our roles as leaders, at times it is tiresome when the problems keep coming. I have found a quote that helps me during those times: “Leadership is solving problems. The day others stop bringing you their problems is the day you have stopped leading them. They have either lost confidence that you can help or concluded you do not care. Either case is a failure of leadership.” Colin Powell

### **Region 2 Chair: John Peterson**

[petersonj@fortschools.org](mailto:petersonj@fortschools.org)

Earlier this fall, I shared an update from Region 2 with you regarding the impact of the Educator Effectiveness initiative, as my district is in the process of going through the pilot. The Educator Effectiveness will have an overall positive impact on how we evaluate our special education and pupil service providers. I would like to share some observations on one big issue that I have encountered while participating in the pilot: the inability for our special education teachers to obtain the highest level of proficiency due to the fact that their students do not have the necessary skill-sets required for this score.

As I have stated previously, the Educator Effectiveness initiative will be a big step in the right direction in evaluating the professional staff that we work with. Ranking staff members on Charlotte Danielson’s framework across her four domains and twenty two components provides much needed consistency across districts and creates awareness of expectations for those being evaluated. Also, using a common reporting tool – Teachscape – will also be beneficial for both the evaluator and those being evaluated.

Despite all of these strengths of the Educator Effectiveness initiative, one issue that has been raised is the inability for some educators to obtain a score of four simply due to the population of students they serve. I currently have a special education teacher participating in the Educator Effectiveness training. She is a very intelligent, compassionate, personable, and hardworking colleague. She also happens to serve students who are significantly impacted by their communicative, cognitive, and adaptive behavior deficits. The issue that she and I are running into after discussing my observations of her in both inclusive and pull-out environments is how an educator obtains a score of a four on Charlotte Danielson’s framework for

Continued on next page

## WCASS Region News continued from p. 10

teaching. Danielson herself describes a score of four as a place where teachers visit, but don't live there. At this point, I'm convinced that my special education teacher – and several throughout the state – won't even have a chance to visit due to the population they serve.

The critical attributes that make up a score of a four often involve student-initiated behaviors and a level of independence where students are guiding the activities and/or discussion. In a sense, the students are fully aware of what is expected of them and need minimal to no prompting from the teacher to guide them through the lesson. Discussing these attributes with all of the staff that are participating in the Educator Effectiveness from my district, we all agree that this is a very high standard to obtain. However, we also noted that not all educators have a legitimate chance of obtaining this score. The special education teacher and I both saw right away that her ability to obtain a score of four on almost all of the observable components found in domains two and three was impossible. Simply put, the students she serves cannot achieve the level of independence and self-monitoring that a score of four requires.

I am fully aware that the evaluator has to review all evidence and determine what the preponderance of evidence indicates. Even with this in mind, the training that administrators received in Teachscape showed that what truly separated a score of three from a four was always the level of involvement of the students in the classroom. Also, I am fully aware that a score of a three is still an excellent score in Charlotte Danielson's model.

However, my concern is that staff members who truly do not have a chance at obtaining the highest level on this scale will be impacted both by how the public perceives them and how their district financially compensates them. There continues to be discussion about teacher report cards. Although they have not come to fruition yet, if they do, the public will most likely pick up on the fact that there are no "distinguished" special educators. This

immediately gives people the perception that special education teachers must be average at best and puts these staff members on the defensive about what they do and how they do it.

Equally frustrating is that for those districts that are utilizing an alternative compensation method – typically based on teacher performance and evaluation – special education teachers will not achieve the highest level of compensation, regardless of how strong they are, due to their students' disability areas. Ultimately this means that special education teachers will be docked financially simply due to the population of students that they serve.

My hope is that WCASS and/or the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction can – at a minimum – talk about potential solutions to the fact that some staff cannot obtain the highest level of proficiency in the evaluation scale simply because of the ability level of the students they serve. I am by no means proposing an alternative scale and/or ranking system for special educators. However, I am hoping that if the skill level of the students prevents a staff member from achieving a four, then perhaps other critical attributes can be weighted more heavily.

There are other areas that we will need to address with the Educator Effectiveness initiative. For example, eventually we will need to establish common domains and components for related service providers like School Psychologists, Speech and Language Pathologists, and School Counselors. However, until we can solve the problem of all teaching staff being able to achieve the highest level of proficiency (which does NOT guarantee that they will receive that score; they still have to earn it), then we have a faulty evaluation system that favors staff members teaching honors and advanced placement-style courses and punishes staff who serve students with significant delays and challenges. Our special educators deserve better than that.

Continued on next page

WCASS Region News continued from p. 11

**Region 3 Chair: Katherine Strong**

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For information from this region, please contact Katherine Strong.

**Region 4 Chair: Marci Thiry**

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For information from this region, please contact Marci Thiry.

**Region 5 Chair: Lisa Misco**

[lamisco@pulaskischools.org](mailto:lamisco@pulaskischools.org)

For information from this region, please contact Lisa Misco.

**Region 6 Chair: Diane Knudsen**

[knudsend@esschools.k12.wi.us](mailto:knudsend@esschools.k12.wi.us)

For information from this region, please contact Diane Knudsen.

**Region 7 Chair: Karen Baker**

[kbaker@ashland.k12.wi.us](mailto:kbaker@ashland.k12.wi.us)

Happy New Year from the most northern WCASS region - Region 7 which includes CESA 9, located in Tomahawk, and CESA 12, located in Ashland. I hope that everyone was able to enjoy some down time and relaxation over the holiday break and that you have each returned to start the New Year refreshed.

Items of Importance: Individual Region Award Nomination Forms are now available. I would

encourage you to submit nominations for any of the categories listed below. Spring is an awesome time to recognize our peers that contribute to our student's successes and to also recognize a student who demonstrates personal achievement!

**February** – Region 7 will also be soliciting nominations for their individual Region Awards. Nominations can be made in any of the following categories;

- Mainstream Teacher Award or Integration Team Award
- Administrator Award
- Special Education Teacher Award
- Pupil Services Award (nurse, social worker, psychologist, counselors, at-risk teacher)
- Special Education Paraprofessional Award
- Related/Support Services Award (OT, PT, Speech & Language, Interpreter, Adaptive PE)
- Personal Achievement Award (student with disability award)

Regional award ceremonies will take place in the spring. Please encourage your colleagues to participate in this nomination process to recognize our best and brightest adults and students! Please contact me with any questions at 715-682-7080 X6004

## WCASS Upcoming Training Dates & Events

**February 5<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> WCASS Winter Conference:** 3 days at Radisson Paper Valley Hotel, Appleton

**February 24<sup>th</sup> & 25<sup>th</sup> Wisconsin Federal Funding Conference:** 2 days at Kalahari Resort, Wisconsin Dells

**March 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> SAA Rtl Summit:** 3 days at KI Convention Center, Green Bay.

*The first planning meeting was held to begin discussing the format for the next Rtl Summit. The committee recognizes we need to evolve beyond the basics of Rtl. The focus will be to provide an explanation of how all of the WDPI initiatives are interconnected and Rtl is one of the primary threads that weave throughout all of the initiatives.*

**May 7<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> WCASS Spring Conference:** 3 days at Glacier Canyon Lodge at Wilderness, Wisconsin Dells

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

**WCASS SLP Technical Assistance and Best Practices Work Group Update**

By: Nissan Bar-Lev and Barbara Van Haren

Improving effective practices in regard to programming for the provision of speech and language service in Wisconsin public schools has created significant challenges for local school district IEP teams. The need for guidance to assist IEP teams in making recommendations regarding specific aspects of speech and language interventions is recognized as a state-wide area of need.

In response, the Wisconsin Council of Administrators of Special Services (WCASS) Special Projects Committee has convened an Effective Practices in Speech and Language Programming task force. The task force met on November 20, 2013. The meeting was facilitated by Barb Van Haren, Chair of WCASS Research Committee. She used a “World Café” approach for working on the four topic areas listed in the “Short Term Action” listed above. She then split the entire group into four subgroups. Each subgroup then rotated between stations to address each of the four areas of concern:

- Create a document in plain language of S/L eligibility for students that will empower the LEA Rep and other IEP team members to fully understand and better participate in the IEP team discussions.
- Development of a comprehensive document in plain language reviewing how to utilize Paraprofessionals (holding an 883 license) in S/L services.
- Discussion on the use of online S/L services
- Discussion of “No Redundancy” rule. That is when a language-related annual goal can be taught by either a Speech Clinician, an SLD teacher or a regular education teacher, it should not be taught by a Speech Clinician. This will allow the Speech Clinician to concentrate on S/L specific annual goals.
- Recruitment and Retention (added based on subgroup discussion)

On a long term basis, the task force also intends to explore IHE Speech and training programs (in the educational track) include several courses that are not required in the medical track.

The next meeting will be held the morning of the WCASS Winter Conference on February 5, 2014 at the Paper Valley in Appleton.





## WCASS Membership Corner

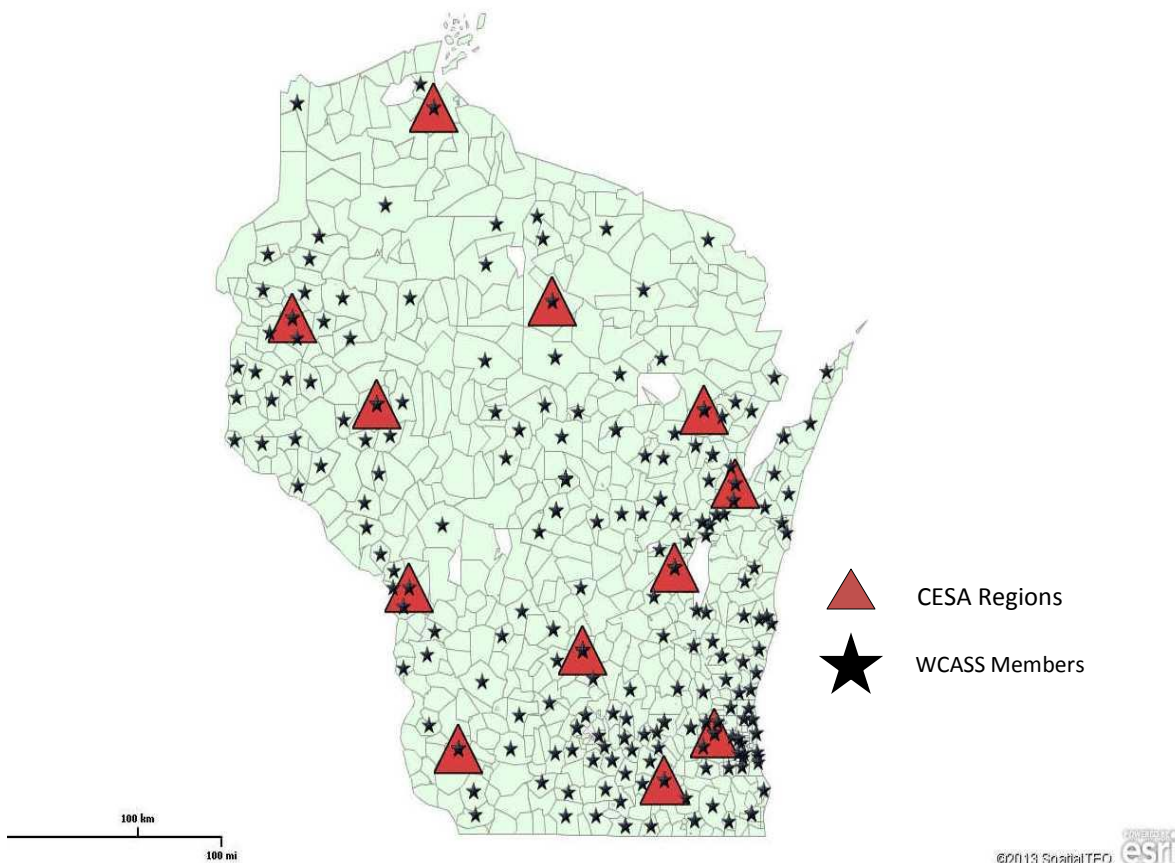
By: Tammy Nyen

Our 2013-2014 WCASS membership has reached an all-time high of 353 members! During our November 2013 general membership meeting, we welcomed and recognized 32 new members, and this number continues to grow on a monthly basis. According to data from our parent organization, the International Council of Administrators of Special Education (CASE), 22% of the current WCASS membership is also affiliated with CASE. The mission of CASE is “to provide leadership and support to members by shaping policies and practices which impact the quality of education.” If you would like to learn more about CASE or perhaps explore the benefits of becoming a member, go to <http://www.casecec.org/>. During these turbulent and unpredictable times in education, it is essential that we unite as an organization and continue to advocate for Wisconsin’s most vulnerable population of students.

I thank you all for your dedication, support and advocacy for students with special needs.

You make a difference every day!

### 2013-2014 WCASS Membership





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