# WSSWA eNewsletter

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## A Letter From Our President

Dear colleagues:

A lot can happen in a short period of time, as we have seen in Wisconsin since the last WSSWA newsletter was sent. Wisconsin School Social Workers have been actively participating in the political process, advocating for the needs of the children and families we serve. Governor Walker's budget proposes unprecedented cuts to public education at all levels. His and the legislature's pending legislation to significantly limit local public employee unions in their efforts at collective bargaining has raised the concern of public employers, employees, and citizens throughout the state. Thank you for your participation in the legal process at whatever level you have involved yourselves … writing letters, contacting legislators, participating in peaceful demonstrations, talking with colleagues and friends and neighbors, etc. So here are some important matters that I would like to bring to your attention.

Midwest Council resolution in support of Wisconsin's Collective Bargaining Laws: Wisconsin is not the only state that going through these tough times. Wisconsin is a member of the Midwest Council of School Social Workers. The 11 Midwest Council states stand in solidarity and in support of the important work of School Social Workers. The Midwest Council has drafted a resolution, which is included in this newsletter. Special thanks to Jim Raines, president of the Midwest Council, for his work on drafting this resolution. WSSWA sent the resolution to key legislators in the state…specifically the senate and assembly majority and minority leaders, the assembly speaker, the members of the senate and assembly committees on education, and the governor. It was also sent to WEAC. We are encouraging members to send the resolution to your local collective bargaining units, local newspapers and local legislators, and include a personal note from yourself as you send it. In addition to this resolution, those of you who are members of SSWAA, NASW, and ACSSW have undoubtedly read other position statements of support.

WSSWA Partners with NASW on Lobby Day, April 13: If you have not yet signed up for NASW Lobby Day (April 13), I strongly encourage you to do so. WSSWA is proud to partner with NASW WI in this Lobby Day, and we are grateful to Marc Herstand (executive director of NASW WI) and his staff for inviting us to partner with them. WSSWA is once again bringing forward the issue of school finance reform. Other issues for this year's Lobby Day are: Wisconsin State Budget, Child Victim's Act, Loan Forgiveness of Social Workers, Change the Age of Mandatory Referral to Adult Court from 17 to 18, and the Patient Abandonment Act. You do not have to be a member of NASW to attend, but you must pre-register. Further information can be found on the NASW WI website. Here is the direct link for the registration form: http://www.naswwi.org/wp-content/images-docs/LobbyDay2011registration.pdf

School Funding Information: Another way to keep in touch with current legislative issues for school funding is to request that you receive the newsletters from the Wisconsin Alliance for Excellent Schools (WAES) at http://www.excellentschools.org/. WSSWA is a partner member of WAES. Tom Beebe, the Executive Director of WAES, has spoken at our fall conferences on several occasions, and is highly regarded as a knowledgeable expert and strong advocate for educational reform. We have arranged for Tom to present at Lobby Day on behalf of School Funding Reform.

Congresswoman Moore introduces SSW Bill…here is what contacting legislators can accomplish: One final note regarding legislative issues … and this is good news. SSWAA sent out an e-mail to members re: the introduction of a School Social Work Bill by Congresswoman Gwen Moore of Milwaukee: "**School Social Workers Improving Student Success Act**," H.R. 1138. Congresswoman Moore introduced this legislation to amend the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) to establish a grant program to fund additional school social workers and retain school social workers already employed in high-need local educational agencies. In her press release, she states: "Kids face big difficulties at home even before they show up to school. These affect their learning and can make them act out, withdraw, or even skip school altogether. School Social Workers have a proven track record of helping students overcome obstacles in their lives and succeed in school, which we know is necessary for future success." The most pressing task at this time is to encourage other members of congress to cosponsor the bill, and work toward a companion bill in the senate. The bill came about after the Wisconsin delegates, myself and Catherine Fouliard, visited Senator Moore's office this past summer during SSWAA lobby day. I mention that not to take credit for any accomplishment, for it was really SSWAA's lobby day that made the visit possible in the first place … but rather to show what can be accomplished through contacting our legislators. Once again, I encourage all WSSWA members to let their voices be heard and to be active advocates for the children, families and schools that we serve. One idea sparks another, and positive actions can be the result.

Save the Date for WSSWA Fall Conference: I would like to once again remind everyone to mark your calendars for the 2011 **WSSWA fall conference**, Nov 10-11, at Heidel House in Green Lake. Information about the conference will be routinely updated on our website: http://wsswa.org. We are still looking for presenters. If you or someone you know is interested in presenting, please complete the Call for Presenters form found on the website.

Best wishes for a well deserved spring break!

*Tim Schwaller*

# Updates from the Capitol

**Jack O'Meara, WSSWA Government Relations Representative**

**Governor's Budget Includes Big Cuts to Education;**
**Join Other Social Workers for April 13 Lobby Day!**

To say that Wisconsin's political landscape has undergone some changes in the last month and a half is a massive understatement. We have been on center stage of a national debate over collective bargaining and how to balance state budgets. Many of us have taken part in the huge rallies in Madison and across the state. One thing is certain: we live in interesting times.

So, where do things stand at the time of this writing? The lawsuit over Governor Walker's anti-collective bargaining bill, and whether the Republicans who run the Legislature violated the state's open meeting law, is headed to the Wisconsin Supreme Court.

That has not stopped legislative leaders from "publishing" the bill and saying it is now law, even though the Legislature's own attorney says the responsibility to publish lies with the state's Secretary of State, Doug La Follette. He is not able to publish the law because of a restraining order issued by a Dane County judge.

Interesting times indeed. What happens next is hard to predict.

Even if the governor and his Republican allies win this battle and the bill officially becomes law, the fight will be far from over. One attorney said recently there will be a "tsunami" of lawsuits over the law if and when it is enacted. That could end up voiding key elements down the road.

What exactly does the repair bill do? Among other things, it includes a requirement that state and local employees, including school employees, pay 50% of their pension payments (generally 5.8% of pay) and at least 12% of the cost of health insurance. For most employees, that will be a cut in take-home pay of at least 8%. The bill would also decimate public employee unions by severely limiting what they can bargain on, placing onerous requirements on how they are certified by members, and prohibiting government employers from deducting dues.

**Governor Walker's Budget:** That brings us to the debate over the 2011-2013 state budget, which will run from July 1, 2011 through June 30, 2013. On March 1, in the midst of the rancor at the Capitol, Governor Walker introduced his version of the state budget. It would cut funding for schools like it has never been cut before, including:

- Slashing funding for "equalized aid" to school districts by $750 million (an 8% cut).
- Cutting an additional $655 million under the revenue caps that the state places on school districts while placing a tight freeze on property taxes.
- Repealing exemptions from the revenue caps for the costs of school nurses, school safety and transportation, meaning these costs will cut into other education programs.
- Eliminating 10 "categorical aid" programs, including the P-5 class size reduction programs in Milwaukee, Kenosha, Beloit and Racine; programs for at-risk students; grants for school nursing; and grants to advance science, technology, engineering and math (STEM).
- Reducing funding for other categorical aid programs by 10%. These include Head Start; food and nutrition initiatives; and bilingual education and transportation.
- Repealing a number of mandates that the state places on school districts, including the requirement that there be a school year of at least 180 days and that schools employ reading specialists.

While cutting funding for public education, the budget would increase funding for the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program, which provides vouchers for children to attend private schools. It would repeal the enrollment cap for the program, allow any school in Milwaukee County to participate, and drop income eligibility requirements.

In the area of taxation, the proposal would cut taxes for the wealthy and businesses by expanding the tax break for capital gains investments and allowing businesses to expand combined reporting. It would raise taxes for some of the working poor by scaling back the Earned Income Tax Credit.

**Come to NASW WI Lobby Day:** Not happy with the proposed budget? Don't just complain. Get out and lobby! The National Association of Social Workers Wisconsin Chapter is providing us with a great opportunity. On Wednesday, April 13, the organization is holding its Lobby Day 2011. This year, school funding is one of NASW WI's priority issues.

Sign up today. Go to the NASW WI Web site at www.naswwi.org to register. The official deadline for registering is March 30, although I bet you could still participate if you contact the office after that date.

As always, please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or concerns. I can be reached at jack@omearapublicaffairs.com or (608) 294-8746.

## Wisconsin Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) Network

The Department of Public Instruction has provided funds to the Cooperative Educational Services Agencies (CESAs) to provide professional development and technical assistance to school districts in both academic and behavioral Response to Intervention (RtI) practices. The core reason that the Wisconsin RtI Center (http://www.wisconsinrticenter.org/) exists is to develop, coordinate, and provide high quality professional development and technical assistance, as well as to gather, analyze, and disseminate RtI implementation data to enhance the support of schools' implementation.

Wisconsin has chosen to move forward with a specific behavioral application of RtI known as Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS). The next state-wide PBIS training will be August 16-17 at the Kalahari Conference Center in Wisconsin Dells. The Wisconsin PBIS Network is partnering with the Department of Public Instruction and the Illinois PBIS Network to determine how the PBIS Framework can be used to helps schools meet the needs of students with mental health challenges, as well as behavioral difficulties. More information about PBIS in Wisconsin is available through the Wisconsin PBIS Network (http://www.wisconsinpbisnetwork.org/).

The Wisconsin RtI Center's vision is to bring about systems change in Wisconsin school communities in order to maximize opportunities for all students to achieve academic and behavioral success. The Center seeks to help schools address the needs of all students through a quality RtI system that will become standard practice. The Wisconsin RtI Center accomplishes this by supporting schools through the phases and sustainability of their RtI system implementation.

## Reporting Requirements for Sexually Active Adolescents

State statutes regarding the mandatory reporting of sexually active adolescents are complex with different directions dependent upon the nature of the sexual contact, age of the adolescent, and access to health care services. The Department of Public Instruction (DPI), in cooperation with the former Department of Health and Family Services (DHFS) and the Department of Justice (DOJ), has developed a summary to help school districts, in collaboration with their county child protective services (CPS) and law enforcement agencies, develop policies and procedures to address situations where a school staff member becomes aware that a student is sexually active. Applicable statutory definitions are included for reference and statutory references are electronically linked. You can find this updated resource at http://www.dpi.wi.gov/sspw/pdf/rrfsaa.pdf.

## ACSSW National Summit

The American Council for School Social Work will be holding its second annual, national Summit June 26 – 28 in Bloomingdale, Illinois. The Summit is a forum in which to 1) learn about current research projects and 2) become familiar with research models you can apply in your setting and practice, and 3) showcase your projects to your colleagues. The Summit will feature a panel discussion and interactive dialogue on the changing role of school social workers. Opportunities will be provided to participate in a discussion about the national school social work research effort. More information will be available at http://www.acssw.org/.

## Trauma Informed Schools

The Department of Public Instruction has received funding from the Department of Health Services to provide resources and professional development to help schools become more trauma-informed. A new home page has been established (http://www.dpi.wi.gov/sspw/mhtrauma.html) that offers links to a variety of resources, including webcasts, a brief question and answer (Q and A) paper, an annotated list of resources specific to schools, a PowerPoint presentation designed to be used in a school building in-service, detailed speaker notes for the PowerPoint presentation, contacts for further training and technical assistance, and a flyer that describes how schools can use Response to Intervention (RtI) to better meet the needs of students who have been impacted by trauma.

The Department of Public Instruction (DPI) is sponsoring four regional trainings through the Cooperative Educational Service Agencies (CESAs). Dates and contacts for more information are below.

April 8 – CESA 1, Pewaukee – http://www.solutionwhere.com/cesa1/cw/showcourse.asp?343

## Wisconsin School Social Work Home Page

The School Social Work Home Page (http://www.dpi.wi.gov/sspw/socialwork.html) on the Department of Public Instruction website has been re-formatted and includes new links and information. Topics include school social worker roles, school social work practice guides from Wisconsin and other states, licensing and continuing education, DPI publications of interest to school social workers, the Wisconsin School Social Worker Survey, demonstrating accountability, and professional school social work associations. Take some time to check it out!

## News from the Regions: Milwaukee

My name is Dena Radtke and I am the WSSWA Region Representative for Milwaukee as well as the proud Coordinator for School Social Work Services in the Milwaukee Public Schools. The Milwaukee Region encompasses all SSWs in the City of Milwaukee including public, private and charter schools. Our city is diverse and has a wealth of cultures. This is a wonderful thing, and it causes the SSWs in this region to be creative and step up their cultural competency among other skill sets in order to meet a vast array of student and family needs. With that said, there is a strong, professional group of SSWs to not only consult with, but to support each other. As in all parts of the state, we are facing new challenges and having to determine how our services may or may not change. I would encourage all SSWs to educate their respective communities on how SSW services support student learning as well as how we bring funding into a school/district. Now is not a time to be humble but a time to use your strong advocacy skills for our profession.

Our first ever Region meeting is currently in the planning stages. We have a tentative "yes" from State Representative Tamara Grigsby (18th Assembly District) to speak at this meeting. What makes her even more interesting is the fact that she is a social worker! I will be sharing the details of the meeting once they are confirmed. Although I have received some contact information for SSWs in our Region, I do not know that it is complete in nature. If you want to make sure that you receive Region updates and meeting information, please feel free to send your email address to denaradtke@yahoo.com

## WSSWA Standards and Practice Committee

Hi all. My name is Sonja Nelson. I am a school social worker in Wauwatosa, a WSSWA board member, and now the chair for the newly Standards and Practice Committee. The purpose of this committee is to review and evaluate all matters pertaining to professional practice, including development and updating of position papers. I am looking for folks who want to contribute to their profession and have a passion for best practice. If you are interested in active membership or would like to occasionally offer your opinion and suggestions about how this committee can help your personal practice, please contact me at nelsonso@wauwatosa.k12.wi.us or madsonja@yahoo.com. I look forward to meeting colleagues, geeking out on best practice, and sharing an odd sense of humor that only school social workers can get away with. Cheers!

## Milwaukee Involvement at the Madison Rally

On Friday, February 18, 2011, Milwaukee Public Schools cancelled classes due to the overwhelming number of teachers calling in sick in order to attend the rally at Madison's Capitol to oppose Governor Scott Walker's Bill. Pictured here are 2 MPS School Social Workers and 1 UWM Intern with MPS, rallying and supporting teachers and educators in our state!

*Good Work*

Kelly Schmelzer

Joe Viste

And

Cory Zimmerman

## Involvement in WSSWA Board and Committees

Would you like to get more involved in your statewide professional organization? WSSWA and your profession need you and your talents!
Please visit www.wsswa.org in order to find out more about our committees and what you can do to help!

## Healthy Sleep Tips

The following ten tips can help you achieve sleep and the benefits it provides. These tips are intended for "typical" adults, but not necessarily for children or persons experiencing medical problems. Finally, if you have trouble falling asleep, maintaining sleep, awaken earlier than you wish, feel unrefreshed after sleep or suffer from excessive sleepiness during the day or when you wish to be alert, you should also consult your physician. Be sure to tell him/her if you have already tried these...

1. Maintain a regular bed and wake time schedule including weekends.
2. Establish a regular, relaxing bedtime routine such as soaking in a hot bath or hot tub and then reading a book or listening to soothing music.
3. Create a sleep-conducive environment that is dark, quiet, comfortable and cool.
4. Sleep on a comfortable mattress and pillows.
5. Use your bedroom only for sleep and sex.
6. Finish eating at least 2-3 hours before your regular bedtime.
7. Exercise regularly. It is best to complete your workout at least a few hours before bedtime.
8. Avoid caffeine (e.g. coffee, tea, soft drinks, chocolate) close to bedtime. It can keep you awake.
9. Avoid nicotine (e.g. cigarettes, tobacco products). Used close to bedtime, it can lead to poor sleep.
10. Avoid alcohol close to bedtime

*Sweet dreams!*

## Important Upcoming Dates

April 13, 2011 NASW WI Lobby Day

April 8, 2011 Trauma Informed Care Training CESA 1

May 14, 2011 WSSWA Board Meeting

June 26-28, 2011 ACSSW National Summit

July 1, 2011 WSSWA Summer Newsletter distributed

July 17-20, 2011 SSWAA Leadership Conference

August 1, 2011 WSSWA Board Meeting and Retreat

September 29-20, 2011 Midwest SSW Conference in Indianapolis, WSSWA will be hosting a reception

October 15, 2011 WSSWA Board Meeting

**November 10-11, 2011 WSSWA Annual Conference**

If you have any articles or information you would like to see in our quarterly newsletters, please submit information to wsswa_board@yahoo.com by June 26, 2011.