



# WSSWA

eVolume#:2

eIssue#:3

July 2011

## A Letter From Our President

Dear Colleagues:

Summer is upon us, and with that usually comes an opportunity to relax and focus our attention on things other than our jobs. This year seems different. The entire state seems to be under a climate change. The cold weather throughout the state has only recently ended and the summer heat is upon us. It feels like summer just started. However, that is certainly not true of Madison, where the heat has been on since the November elections, and the climate seems to be getting even hotter in recent weeks. The state budget reflects significant cuts to public education. Programs we value are being impacted. Some of our colleagues are losing their jobs. If ever there was a time for SSW's to pay attention to politics, this is it. I encourage you to keep informed on what is going on, and let your voice be heard.

Education is also in the spotlight on the national scene. Here too we will likely continue to see the fiscal impact on programs and services to children and families. Funding for school counseling programs, drug and alcohol prevention, and medicare benefits for children and families most in need, are just a few of the program areas that have been hard hit. One bill to watch and support is the School Social Workers Improving Student Success Act (SSWISSA), H.R. 1138. This bill, introduced by Congresswoman Gwen Moore of Milwaukee, will provide funds through a federal grant to retain and increase School Social Workers in high-needs schools. It is the first piece of federal legislation that specifically highlights school social workers.

You will be able to hear more on important legislative issues at our annual conference this fall. We are pleased to have Myrna Mandlawitz and Jack O'Meara share their expertise at a general assembly on Friday, the second day of the conference. Ms. Mandlawitz comes to us from Washington DC, where she represents a number of pupil services organizations, including the School Social Work Association of America (SSWAA). Mr. O'Meara, WSSWA legislative consultant, is our voice in Madison!

On June 27 I had the opportunity to attend an Educator Effectiveness Symposium in Madison, as the WAPSO (Wisconsin Alliance of Pupil Services Organizations) representative. WAPSO is made up of the following pupil services groups and their respective state associations: School Social Workers, School Counselors, School Psychologists and School Nurses. The purpose of the Wisconsin Educator Effectiveness Symposium was to:

- inform stakeholders on the guiding principles of the Wisconsin performance-based educator evaluation system and the definition of an effective educator;
- inform stakeholders and elicit feedback on how student achievement data will be used in the context of the Wisconsin performance-based evaluation system;
- elicit stakeholder feedback on the implementation of the educator effectiveness system, and;
- elicit feedback for methods to support improvement and recognize performance.

The Wisconsin Performance-Based Educator Evaluation System is specifically intended for evaluation of teachers and principals. Pupil services personnel has not included. However, WAPSO was invited by the State Superintendent in order to seek our input. Many schools and districts evaluate pupil services personnel with the same tools that are used for teachers. Everyone seems to agree that this does not adequately or appropriately reflect our unique roles. Administrators and school boards generally do not have evaluation tools for pupil services staff, would like to have more appropriate evaluation tools for SSW's and other pupil services staff. It was refreshing to hear participants voice this concern. I was also encouraged to hear many participants speak up about the need to evaluate educators using a variety of student performance indicators in addition to

academic achievement. One thing was clear, however, and that is importance of evaluating educators based upon clearly defined indicators of student performance.

That brings me to my final comments...the importance of using Evidence Based Practices in our work as School Social Workers. This will be the focus of this year's SSW conference. Michael Kelly, PhD, will be our keynote speaker on Thursday, November 10. He is a nationally recognized expert on Evidence Based Practice. An Assistant Professor at Loyola University School of Social Welfare, he has written extensively on this topic. Many of you have read his books on this topic. In addition, there will be extended trainings on PBIS and Trauma Informed Care, as well as a variety of workshops highlighting evidence based practices for School Social Workers. Registration information will be available at the beginning of the school year.

**SAVE THE DATES:** November 10-11, and plan to join your professional SSW colleagues in what is sure to be an enriching experience. To reserve your room at the discount rate and see more about the conference site, go to <http://heidelhouse.com/>

Enjoy these summer days. I look forward to seeing you in Green Lake in November!

*Tim Schwaller*  
President of WSSWA



### 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](http://www.wsswa.org) in order to find out more about our committees and what you can do to help!

## The Recall Elections Are Here: Get Involved!

In the legislative world, odd-numbered years, like 2011, generally involve work on the state budget, a summer break and then a fall legislative session. Legislators usually don't need to worry too much about elections during odd-numbered years because elections are held in even-numbered years.

Things are different this year. Yes, the state budget debate did take place and there will be a fall legislative session. But forget about the summer break. It's election time, as high-stakes recall elections are being held in nine State Senate districts throughout Wisconsin. Control of the Senate is in the balance. Republicans currently control the chamber with a 19-14 majority. You know the story. Back in February, Governor Scott Walker introduced a "budget repair bill" that severely restricted collective bargaining rights for public employees.

To fight the anti-collective bargaining provisions, the 14 Democratic senators (a.k.a. the "Wisconsin 14") left the state to prevent a vote on the bill. Governor Walker and his legislative allies responded by stripping the anti-collective bargaining language out of the bill and passing it as separate legislation. Initially, the law was not published because a judge ruled that legislators violated open meeting laws when passing the law. But the Wisconsin Supreme Court, in a deeply divided 4-3 decision, overturned the judge's ruling and the law has now been published.

The events in Madison motivated many people in this state to take part in an unprecedented effort to recall the senators who voted for the bill. Efforts were also started to recall some of the senators who opposed the legislation. According to the state constitution, a year must pass before Governor Walker and other officials who took office in January can be recalled.

Ultimately, signatures were successfully filed against six Republican and three Democratic senators. In the districts held by Republicans, Democratic primaries will be held on July 12, followed by general elections on August 9. In two of the three districts held by Democrats, Republican primaries will be held on July 19, with general elections on August 16. In one Democratic seat, the 30<sup>th</sup> Senate District in the Green Bay area, held by Senator Dave Hansen, there will only be a general election between Hansen and one opponent on July 19.

As with all legislative elections, the recall elections are an opportunity for school social workers to have an impact on the Legislature. Elected officials remember the people who helped get them where they are. So consider getting involved in one of the campaigns. I suggest two ways:

- 1) Make a campaign contribution. You don't have to make a large contribution to have an impact. A contribution of \$100, \$50, or even \$25 can make a difference.  
The best way to make a contribution is to go to a fund-raising reception and talk directly with the candidate. Get to know the candidate on a personal level and make sure he or she knows you are a school social worker. You can also make contributions on line.
- 2) Volunteer to help with a campaign. Activities can vary from simply displaying a campaign sign at your house or having your name listed as a supporter to making phone calls or stuffing envelopes. Candidates really appreciate the support and assistance. Just a few hours between now and the primary or general elections is all it takes.

**State Budget Slashes Funding for Education:** On June 27, Governor Scott Walker signed the 2011-2013 state budget into law. While slightly better-than-expected tax revenues allowed legislators to put a bit more money into education than was originally proposed by the governor, the budget still cuts funding for schools like it has never been cut before, including:

- A reduction in revenue available to school districts of \$1.6 billion, including nearly \$800 million in cuts to state aid;
- Elimination of 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 Advanced Placement (AP) courses; and grants for science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) programs.
- 10% reductions in funding for other categorical aid programs, including Head Start; food and nutrition initiatives; and bilingual-bicultural education.
- Repeal of exemptions from the revenue caps for the costs of school nurses, school safety and transportation.

While cutting funding for public education, the budget increases funding for the program that provides vouchers for children to attend private schools. It repeals the enrollment cap for the program, dramatically increases income eligibility for participating families, allows private schools in Milwaukee County but outside the city limits to participate, and expands the program to Racine.

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

If you have any articles or information you would like to see in our quarterly newsletters, please submit information to [wsswa\\_board@yahoo.com](mailto:wsswa_board@yahoo.com) by September 24, 2011.



GEORGE WILLIAMS COLLEGE  
AURORA UNIVERSITY

350 Constance Blvd., P.O. Box 210, Williams Bay, WI 53191-0210

**George Williams College of Aurora University (GWC) is pleased to announce the new Doctor of Social Work program that will begin this fall.**

As one of the few clinical doctorate social work programs in the country, the **Doctor of Social Work** is designed for those wishing to teach at the university level, particularly clinical theory and practice in BSW and MSW programs. It is an outstanding program for social workers who wish to advance their clinical practice knowledge, skills and leadership in the field of social work. The DSW will consist of 64 total semester hours (48 course hours, 12 internship hours, and four dissertation supervision hours) and will be offered in a weekend cohort. For more information on the DSW program, contact the Office of Admission, 815-262-8564 or [GWCadmission@aurora.edu](mailto:GWCadmission@aurora.edu).

## WSSWA and SSWAA Affiliate Members!

Becoming a member of your State and National School Social Work organizations is even EASIER now! WSSWA and SSWAA are now affiliate members! Meaning, when you sign up as a new member (or renew) of either organization, you have the option of joining BOTH for a reduced cost! All the membership benefits with both organizations can be yours!

Visit [www.sswaa.org](http://www.sswaa.org) for more information!

### Important Upcoming Dates

July 17-20, 2011 SSWAA Leadership Conference

August 1, 2011 WSSWA Board Meeting and Retreat  
Christmas Mountain, Wisconsin Dells

September 29-30, 2011 Midwest SSW Conference  
Indianapolis, IN  
WSSWA will be hosting a reception

October 15, 2011 WSSWA Board Meeting  
Location TBD

**November 10-11, 2011 WSSWA Annual Conference**  
Green Lake, WI

### How to Make the Most of Your Summer!

The summertime can be a busy time for a variety of factors: the kids are out of school, it's warm out, and there's both the temptation to relax in the sun or even taking a spontaneous road trip. It can be a crazy and unpredictable time, as there are plenty of activities to do with friends, family, or co-workers, but also a lot of opportunities to enjoy the weather by going to the beach or pool. While being busy, how do you make the most of all of these activities while also relaxing and enjoying what this season has to offer? *Here are some tips for getting the most out of your summer plans:*

- 1. Pick your plans according to your mood.** Since there are only a few months of warm weather left, make sure you get the most out of the outdoors and spend a bit of time in nature. Even if it's just a short walk in the park or a quick trip down to the waterfront, there are a ton of ways you can just enjoy the warm breeze or catch some sun.
- 2. Get caught up on the movies, books, and television shows you've been wanting to enjoy.** Start by making a list or just pick up what feels most interesting at the moment. The point is to find things that are relaxing and fun for you, so that this summer can be the best it can be.
- 3. Road trip somewhere new.** Have you been meaning to get away all year? The summer's the best time to plan an unusual trip that you might not otherwise take while it's cold or during the school year. Get the kids, your significant other, and/or some of your friends together and get packing – find a place you've always wanted to go and make reservations at places along the way. It's the best time to get away and see the scenery, so try to check some new places out. Do some exploring and you'll become more relaxed than you've ever been.
- 4. Rest your mind.** Don't worry as much because it's the summer. Relax a bit and try to be in the moment wherever you are. Enjoy the scenery, warmth, and even if you have to work, make some time to enjoy what the waterfront, vacation areas, and general summer options are in your area.
- 5. Most importantly, have fun.** There is so much to do during the summer, but the trick is to pick and choose what you want to do and then just go with it! Even if there's a lot to do, you still have to enjoy what the summer has to offer and not look back. The point is to enjoy yourself and embrace the stress with the relaxation. Balance what's important and what isn't – the summer is what you make it!