

WSSWA
NEWSLETTER
Winter, 2015/16



Connecting and serving practitioners as they care for students, families and schools

Highlights from the WSSWA Conference

Nov 12-13, 2015 - Heidel House Resort – Green Lake, WI

Theme: PBIS, School Mental Health, and Trauma Sensitive Schools: Pieces of the Same Puzzle

Dr. Lucille Eber, in her keynote on Thursday morning, shared an Integrated Systems Framework (IFS) ... integrating mental health within PBIS. In her two workshop sessions following the keynote, Dr. Eber addressed (1) building interventions for students with serious problem behaviors via a school-wide system of PBIS; and (2) focusing on outcomes, progress monitoring within the multi-tiered system. Breakout sessions throughout the conference further expanded on the conference theme, and participants walked away with a better understanding of each of these three initiatives (PBIS, School Mental Health, and Trauma Sensitive Schools), and with solid information about how best to integrate these three interconnected frameworks.

At the **WSSWA annual meeting**, the school social worker of the year award was presented to Janelle Peotter from the Green Bay school district. Friend of School Social Work awards were given to two state legislators who are strong supporters of school social work, and who helped advance the legislation that was initiated by WSSWA on changes in the truancy laws in Wisconsin. Board members and regional reps were introduced, and Julie Incitti began serving in her new role as president of WSSWA.

Planning and implementing a successful conference is a year-long collaborative process involving many individuals who work hard to provide a worth-while professional development event. **Thanks to those who helped** plan the conference, to all who pitched in to help with various tasks at the conference, to the presenters and exhibitors, to the staff at Heidel House who provided a friendly and hospitable environment and who attended to our needs, and especially thank you to the approximately 130 attendees at this year's conference.

We hope to see you at next year's conference, Nov. 10-11, 2016.

WSSWA Board of Directors

Julie Incitti, President
Sonja Nelson, Past President
Karen Zimmerman, secretary
Cathleen Pollock, treasurer
Susan Baumann-Duren
Jenny Braunginn
Nic Dibble
Nichole Grube
Jackie Jackson
Leticia Kubisiak
Katie Larsen-Klodd
Murrene Payton
Tim Schwaller
Wendy Volz-Daniels

WSSWA REGIONAL REPS

Central Wisconsin:

Susan Baumann-Duren

Madison: Katie Larson-Klodd

Milwaukee Public Schools:

Dena Radtke

Milwaukee Non-MPS and Charter:
vacant

Suburban Milwaukee:

Karen Zimmerman

Northeast: Megan Baranczyk

Northcentral: Lisa Morgan

Northwest: Deanna Ndebele

Southcentral: Mary Ellen Wright

Southeast: vacant

Western: Tabatha Veum and
Timothy Hanson

*See Website for Contact Information
and Listing by School Districts*

WSSWA on Facebook!

Have you checked out the WSSWA Facebook page! The link is: <https://www.facebook.com/wsswa.org>.

Janelle Peotter, WSSWA 2014-15 School Social Worker of the Year

Janelle Peotter, a long-time social worker in the Green Bay school system, was awarded the School Social Worker of the Year award at the 2015 annual WSSWA school social work conference. In addition to her role as a school social worker in Green Bay, Janelle served as the WSSWA regional rep for the Northeast Wisconsin region. She was an active participant on the WSSWA legislative committee, and was a strong proponent of helping shape and advocate for the changes in state law regarding truancy, which Governor Walker signed into law on July 1, 2015 (see article below). Janelle was unable to attend the conference, but received the award via teleconference from Washington DC, where she was lobbying on behalf of school social work. Congratulations Janelle for this well-deserved award.



Friend of School Social Work Award

Rep. Eric Genrich, Green Bay and Sen Nikiya Harris Dodd, Milwaukee

At the 2015 annual WSSWA school social work conference, we were pleased to present Rep. Eric Genrich (Green Bay) and Sen. Nikiya Harris Dodd (Milwaukee) with the “Friend of School Social Work” award. These legislators worked closely with Jack O’Meara and members of the WSSWA Legislative Committee, and they both led the way in getting the state truancy statute changed so that we no longer are required to use registered or certified mail when notifying a parent or guardian that their child is habitually truant. The new law also gives specific statutory authority to use electronic means when contacting parents and guardians.

Senator Harris Dodd was the lead author of Senate Bill 122, which became 2015 Wisconsin Act 52. When WSSWA first talked with Senator Harris Dodd about our concerns with the statute, she



immediately said she would take the lead in advancing legislation. She and her staff talked with the Department of Public Instruction (DPI), the school boards association and other education-related organizations. She developed a strong piece of legislation, and successfully attracted many other legislators from both sides of the political aisle to co-sponsor the bill.

Representative Eric Genrich was the lead Assembly author of the SB 122, and the lead author of the Assembly companion, AB 172. Representative Genrich played a pivotal role in getting the bill through the State Assembly. He and his staff worked with the Assembly Majority Leader’s office to ensure the bill was brought up quickly. This ensured the bill took effect prior to the current school year.

Both legislators are strong supporters of public education and social work, and have expressed a desire to continue to work with WSSWA on issues.





WSSWA Board Members and Regional Reps at the annual meeting on Saturday, Nov 14, at Heidel House



Capitol Update: Wisconsin

Jack O'Meara, WSSWA Government Relations Representative

Legislature Rushing to Wrap Up Session; Committees Are Busy Working on Legislation

If you were to look for the official session calendar for the 2015-16 Wisconsin Legislature, you would see that the last regular floor period is supposed to end in April of this year. But given a tough budget situation (tax revenues are coming in below predictions) and an unclear political landscape, legislative leaders would just as well get out of Madison. The Assembly says it will wrap up work on February 18, while the Senate is expected to finish on March 15.

It is always possible that the Legislature will be called back for a special or extraordinary session (one called by the governor or legislative leaders), and it is even possible the regular session could be extended. But for now at least, we need to assume the session will be completed in just a matter of weeks.

And if you've been to the Capitol recently, you may have seen legislators (and lobbyists) running from committee meeting to committee meeting. Committees are holding many public hearings and executive sessions, trying to get bills ready to be taken up on one of the last floor period days.

So what are some of the bills that are being fast-tracked? They include a package of college affordability bills that Governor Walker highlighted in his State of the State speech on January 19. Among other things, the legislation would increase the maximum tax deduction for student loan interest on state tax forms. Democrats, who have been pushing for the state to refinance debt, say the package is too little.

Another is a package of bills that came out of the Assembly Speaker's Task Force on Alzheimer's and Dementia. Along with other speaker task forces, this one was very bipartisan, and the Democrats are expected to support the package. The only question is whether the Senate will go along with what the "lower house" produced.

The Legislature is also looking separately at both urban and rural schools. One of the speaker's task forces is focusing on city schools, while some rural legislators are trying to help their schools. Given the state's tight finances (we're just \$5 million over the statutorily-mandated minimum budget balance) and a lack of willingness to raise taxes, it is hard to see where these legislators will be able to provide any real help, but they're working on ideas.

WSSWA Supports Mental Health Legislation: As far as what WSSWA has been up to, after extensive discussion and review, the WSSWA Legislative Committee chose to support legislation (AB 664/SB 591) that would prohibit the state's Department of Health Services (DHS) from requiring a mental health clinic or a licensed treatment professional to designate a school site as a clinic office in order to provide outpatient mental health services at the school.

The Legislative Committee weighed the opinions of school social workers from both rural and urban areas before making the decision. It was not an easy choice, but ultimately a majority of committee members voting decided it makes sense to reduce red tape and make it easier to get much-needed services into schools across the state. The committee believes there is still enough flexibility for those programs in urban areas to continue to succeed essentially as they currently do, just without a mandate from the state level.

The Legislative Committee has also spent a great deal of time looking at possible changes to **child abuse and neglect laws**, and specifically some ideas relating to reporting of domestic violence. Some proposals along these lines are being considered in the Legislature, but the more sweeping proposals appear to be not be going anywhere.

If you have any interest in these topics and want to help us plan for the next legislative session, please join the Legislative Committee. It is important work and a fun group! And we almost always wrap the meetings up within an hour.

Habitual Truancy Bill Signed Into Law; More Work on the Way

In case you missed it last year, one of the bills that came out of the WSSWA Legislative Committee's work passed the Legislature and was signed into law by Governor Walker. 2015 Wisconsin Act 52 eliminated the previous requirement in state law that parents of habitually truant students be contacted via registered or certified mail. The law gives school districts the option of using the much-cheaper regular U.S. mail, along with electronic means like email and texting.

WSSWA is committed to keeping momentum going on the truancy issue now that we have the attention of interested legislators. The WSSWA Legislative Committee's Truancy Subcommittee has

heard in recent months from a Minnesota school social worker and an official from the California Department of Education about how their states' respective truancy laws work.

One area we've been focusing on are ways to more narrowly define what "part of the day" means when a student misses school. One idea is to use a specific percentage (maybe 40% or 50%), although we have learned that defining truancy is a challenge in other states as well.

If you would like to be part of the Truancy Committee's discussion, just let me or Wendy Volz Daniels know.

As always, please do not hesitate to contact me with questions or concerns. I can be reached at jack@omearapublicaffairs.com or 608-294-8746.

THANK YOU, WSSWA Members, for your Legislative Advocacy!

There were many school social workers in Wisconsin who helped develop and promote the truancy legislation that was signed into law by Governor Scott Walker on July 1, 2015. The Wisconsin School Social Workers Association (WSSWA) Legislative Committee developed the ideas behind SB 122. WSSWA lobbyist Jack O'Meara then took the proposal to Senator Nikiya Harris Dodd (D-Milwaukee). After talking with legislative attorneys and others, Senator Harris Dodd made some adjustments and convinced Senator Paul Farrow (R-Pewaukee) to serve as her Senate co-author.

Rep. Eric Genrich (D-Green Bay) agreed to be the lead Assembly author, with Rep. Joel Kitchens (R-Sturgeon Bay) as Assembly co-author. The bill had many other co-sponsors from both sides of the political aisle.

A number of WSSWA members testified in favor of the bill before legislative committees. They included Janelle Peotter, Heather Strayer and Christina Gringle of Green Bay; Mallory Knipe of Black River Falls; and Julie Incitti of Stoughton. Jack O'Meara also testified. An e-mail was sent out to WSSWA members, encouraging school social workers to contact Governor Walker to ask him to sign SB 122 into law. This shows that common sense bipartisan legislation can still make it through the Legislature and get signed into law. Thanks to all who played a role.

Jack O'Meara and WSSWA board president Julie Incitti are in the picture below at the bill-signing ceremony.





WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

Resources and Information

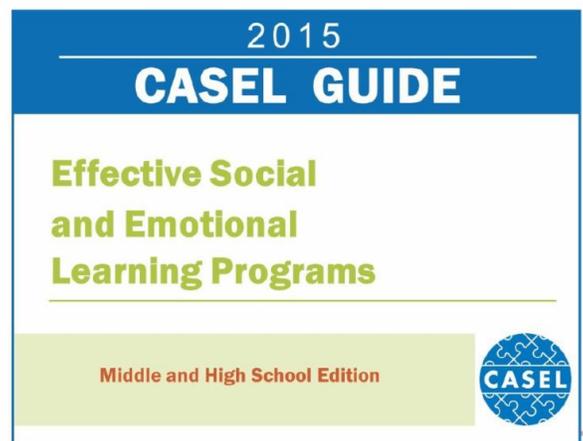
From Nic Dibble: Consultant for School Social Work Services

New Continuing Education Guidelines for DSPS Certified or Licensed Social Workers

This information is important for anyone who presently has a certificate or license as a social worker through the Department of Safety and Professional Services (DSPS). Effective March 1, changes were made that limit what professional development can be used to meet the 30-hour continuing education requirement (https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/code/admin_code/mpsw/19.pdf). In short, professional development must be approved, sponsored, provided, endorsed, or authorized by one of the organizations listed under MPSW 19.03. If you are considering attending a professional development event and want it to count toward your 30 hours, be sure to check to see if that event is approved, sponsored, provided, endorsed, or authorized by one of these organizations. WSSWA will want to work with NASW-WI to have its annual conference and other offerings approved and/or endorsed. Up to 15 clock hours can be provided “in-house” by your school district, if the topic is relevant to social work practice. Note: this does not affect the continuing education requirements for the DPI 5-year school social work license. School social workers who were originally licensed after summer 2004 fulfill the continuing education requirement by completing a professional development plan (PDP). School social workers who were originally licensed before summer 2004 may complete the continuing education requirement by 1) taking six college credits, or 2) completing a PDP.

New Tool Available for Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) has released a new tool to help middle and high schools address secondary students' need for effective social and emotional learning (SEL). The [2015 CASEL Guide: Effective Social and Emotional Learning Programs--Middle and High School Edition](#) provides a framework for examining social and emotional learning (SEL) programs designed for secondary schools and rates well-designed, evidence-based programs in a *Consumer Reports*-style review. CASEL's similar guide to preschool and elementary school SEL programs, published in 2013, has been well-received by educators. Like the preschool/elementary guide, the *2015 Guide* was designed primarily to be accessed electronically. It is an interactive document that will be regularly revised and updated.



Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA) and Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) Toolkit

A [Functional Behavioral Assessment and Behavior Intervention Plan Toolkit](#) has been released and posted to the DPI [website](#). This toolkit is designed to provide schools a resource to guide effective practice in understanding a student's pattern of behaviors, designing proactive interventions to address those behaviors, and ensuring fidelity to quality practice. The process of conducting a functional behavioral assessment and developing a behavior intervention plan will be used to guide this work. This toolkit draws from existing resources, and provides a comprehensive set of options for assessing student behavior and supporting behavior change. Efforts have been made to make the FBA and BIP a more collaborative process that is done with students and their families. The process seeks to understand what is behind the student's behavior, making it more sensitive to students who have mental health challenges and/or have a trauma history.

Crisis Prevention and Preparedness Training Available

PREPaRE (Prevent, Reaffirm, Evaluate, Provide and Respond, Examine) training will be provided throughout Wisconsin in 2015-16. PREPaRE is the only comprehensive curriculum developed by school-based professionals with firsthand experience and formal training. The curriculum builds on existing personnel, resources, and programs; provides for sustainability; and can be adapted to individual school needs and size. More information about PREPaRE can be found at <http://www.nasponline.org/prepare/index.aspx>. A schedule of Wisconsin training can be found at <http://www.wishschools.org/>.

WORKSHOP 1 (one-day) focuses on Crisis Planning

Provides a broad overview of the school safety and crisis team's roles and responsibilities, with a special emphasis on crisis prevention and preparedness.

Demonstrates an overall checklist of needs for environmental and psychological safety.

Target audience: any school professional or community provider/agency who serves on crisis team and/or is involved in establishing/promoting school safety.

WORKSHOP 2 (two-day) focuses on Crisis Intervention/Recovery

Provides a specific examination of the school-based mental health professionals' roles and responsibilities, with a special emphasis on crisis intervention/recovery.

Teach participants how to prevent, prepare, and respond to psychological trauma.

Target audience: Pupil services staff, school-based mental health professionals, community providers who will provide crisis intervention and recovery services.

Thank you, Rogers Memorial Hospital, for your "Gold Level" sponsorship of this year's WSSWA conference

Rogers Memorial Hospital

800-767-4411 - <http://rogershospital.org/>

Providing mental health inpatient and day treatment programs in a variety of locations in SE Wisconsin including Milwaukee, Madison, Kenosha, Brown Deer, and Oconomowoc





School Social Work Association of America

The School Social Work Association of America (SSWAA) would like to invite you to join us in Baltimore, Maryland beginning Wednesday, March 9 until Saturday, March 12, 2016 for the **19th National School Social Work ConferenceSM**. We are excited to be going to the Inner Harbor of Baltimore, MD. There will be over 70 workshop sessions to choose from with the Pre-Conference and Full Conference options. We have a variety of sessions including a new “Research to Practice” track. The conference gives you the opportunity to receive useful professional development and also provides networking opportunities to connect with School Social Workers from across the nation and even International Social Workers. Check out the SSWAA website for all the details.
<http://www.sswaa.org/events/EventDetails.aspx?id=600909&group=> We hope to see you in Baltimore!

School Social Work History Website

www.schoolsocialworkhistory.com is a new website dedicated to preserving and sharing the history and literature of the visiting teacher / school social work movement. Within the site the literature is divided into three time periods (Early Era 1906-1955; New Skills Era 1956-1994; & Current Era 1995-present time). For the first time in modern times the Bulletins of the National Association of School Social Workers (formerly the American Association of School Social Workers; American Association of Visiting Teachers and the National Association of Visiting Teachers) are found in one easily accessible place. The bulletins run from 1924-1955. There is also a **place for your state history documents**. Many, many thanks to **Randy Fisher** for compiling, organizing and making available these historic documents contributed by school social work leaders over time. *Graphics discovered and contributed by Dr. Gary Lee Shaffer, UNC.*

Forget NCLB – It's ESSA Now!

Did you know... the Every Student Succeeds Act was signed into law by President Barack Obama on Dec.15, 2015. President Obama said: "With this bill, we reaffirm that fundamentally American ideal—that every child, regardless of race, income, background, the zip code where they live, deserves the chance to make of their lives what they will."

Information on the NEA website states: “For 14 long years, students and educators have lived under the deeply flawed No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act. The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) returns decision making for our nation’s education back where it belongs - in the hands of local educators, parents and communities - while keeping the focus on students most in need. Simply stated, the Every Student Succeeds Act will help ensure that all students, regardless of their ZIP code, will have the support, tools, and time to learn that they need to succeed and that educators’ voices are part of the decision making process all levels.”

For more information, go to: <http://www.nea.org/essabegins>

Join Us in Supporting All Students!

WSSWA Supports Transgender and Gender Nonconforming Youth Policy Advancements

The WSSWA Board urges school social workers to provide leadership to their districts around recent policy advances focused on discrimination of transgender youth. We also encourage school social workers to get involved in supporting these policy efforts on state and national levels.

While bullying and the need for LGBT youth support systems have become a national conversation, much of the real change is happening in local school districts, because of the hard work of school social workers, parents, youth, educators, and state equality advocates. These efforts have included adopting anti-discrimination and anti-bullying laws and policies that explicitly include gender identity and expression, as well as developing specific policies and training that spell out what nondiscrimination means in key areas such as dress codes, athletic participation and access to school facilities.

Prior to 2005, no Wisconsin school district provided clear nondiscrimination protections for transgender and gender nonconforming students. In 2015, at least 67 Wisconsin School Districts have adopted these protections, with more and more districts considering similar changes. Additionally, in 2014 the Wisconsin Association of School Boards developed both a sample transgender-inclusive nondiscrimination policy and administrative rule to guide policy implementation. The school districts of Shorewood and Menasha have both adopted both the policy and the administrative rule and guidelines. They joined the Madison school district as the only three known Wisconsin school districts that provide clear guidelines on how to address the safety and support needs of transgender and gender nonconforming students. With your leadership, your district could be the next to take an important stand in providing legal protections for transgender and gender nonconforming students, as well as instituting clear guidelines for implementing these policies.

Key Policy Advances

- The Department of Justice (DOJ) filed a first-ever court brief arguing that denying a transgender student access to restrooms consistent with their gender identity may constitute sex-based discrimination under Title IX. (2015)
- The Department of Education issued guidance stating that, under Title IX, transgender students must have the opportunity to participate in single-sex classes and extracurricular activities consistent with their gender identity. (2014)
- The Department of Education issued guidance stating that the federal Title IX sex discrimination law protects transgender students from discrimination and harassment. (2014)

Needed Policy Advances

- Congress should pass the Safe Schools Improvement Act, which would ensure that all schools and districts implement comprehensive and effective anti-bullying and anti-harassment policies that specifically include gender identity and sexual orientation.
- Congress should pass the Student Non-Discrimination Act, which would prohibit discrimination in K-12 public schools on the basis of gender identity and sexual orientation.

Additionally, faculty from UW-Madison's School of Social Work and Communications collaborated with GSAFE, a Wisconsin non-profit organization focused on creating just schools for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning, and other (LGBTQ+) students, collaborated to produce the report School Experiences of Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming Students in Wisconsin, a first-of-its-kind qualitative research study that looked deeper at the experience of transgender students in Wisconsin K-12 schools. The first version of the report, released in December 2014, highlighted common themes and challenges faced by transgender youth in our schools. The report recommended key steps schools could take to address the safety and support needs of transgender students, including adopting and implementing comprehensive policy, providing training for all school staff and leadership, providing affirmative school organizations, educating the community, adopting restorative discipline practices, and trans-inclusive health curriculum.

Knowing that transgender and gender nonconforming students and their families will continue to come out in greater numbers in the coming years, we want to make sure that Wisconsin school staff are equipped and ready to ensure the success and well-being of these students. If you have questions on how to start or continue this important work, please contact Brian Juchems, Senior Director of Education and Policy, at GSAFE, phone: 608-661-4141, email: brianj@gsafewi.org, or a WSSWA Board member.

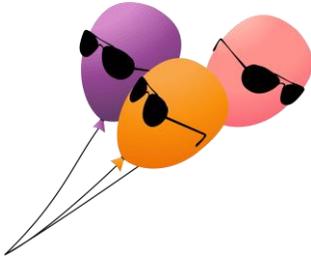
Upcoming Events:

2nd Annual one-day WSSWA spring conference –Tuesday, April 19

Earn 6 CEU's

- Poverty and Privilege (3 hours)
- Overcoming Compassion Fatigue (3 hours)

More information to come!



CELEBRATE SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK WEEK
March 6-12

Watch your e-mails for more information!