



Inkwell

Eau Claire Association of Educators



www.ecteachers.org

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When Will It Be Over?

Ron "Duff" Martin, ECAE President

Have you ever had a nightmare you couldn't get out of, or didn't seem like it would ever end? It is one of those dreams that while you're in it, it's horrible and when it is over you are relieved that it was only a bad dream and not reality. I am hoping what we are going through as a district is merely a bad dream, and when we wake up everything will be normal. I am hoping.

For over ten years we have lived cut after cut; cuts that have dramatically affected our working conditions. We have seen the loss of programs, facilities, and even jobs. I can't help but think there is nothing left to cut, so in essence the next cut could ultimately be the closing of the Eau Claire Area School District. Wouldn't that be something; the state's 8th largest school district closing its doors of operation?

The question asked most often is, "How did we get here?" I could certainly give you my take on it; however the real question that should be addressed is, "How are we going to solve this?" Yes, I say how are WE going to solve this, because we have to be part of the solution.

At the end of June, as I was heading to San Diego for the NEA's 147th Annual Meeting, taking the Airport Shuttle out of Eau Claire to Minneapolis, the driver asked me what I did for a living. I proudly told him I was a teacher in the Eau Claire Area School District. His response was, "Wow, I feel sorry for you teachers." I wondered what he meant by that, so I inquired. His said he thought it was unfair that we were being asked by the board and administration to take a pay freeze to solve the district's financial crisis. I felt compelled to help him better understand the district's situation and how school funding is broken and needs to be fixed. He listened intently and at the end of my explanation he said, "That may all be well and true, but it comes down to the community having no respect for the district administration." I asked him, "How do you fix that? It's not like an elected office where you fix the problem by replacing the problem—you start over new." He agreed. After more discussion we both came to the conclusion that it comes down to the Board of Education—those that are elected by the taxpayers of this community—to put their mark on this district and fix what needs to be fixed. The board needs to have the courage to make the right decisions, and I believe the number one priority is establishing credibility to our district, to get back the respect this district once had.

I also am firmly committed that respect must begin toward the staff—an internal healing of the hurt, distrust, and lack of respect we have felt over the past 10 years. We demand the kind of respect that is essential to developing a good and positive relationship, beginning with the board and administration believing what we do is important and that we are a valued group of employees in the district—saying it is good, but showing it is better. We are committed employees who deserve a fair and equitable pay. We have been reminded over and over about the economic situation our nation is in. Is our community really asking us to do less for the young people of this district? The companies that are laying off employees and offering zero pay increases or benefits are doing so because the companies' profits are low and the product they are producing has decreased in demand. That is not the case in the school system. We are still responsible for educating 11,000 students. We are responsible for preparing the young people of this community for the 21st century and helping them attain the necessary skills to be productive members of our community and the world!

So will it ever end? Is there hope in sight? I am confident in the legislators we have elected and am hoping they will address the school funding formula, so we can continue to make education a priority in the Eau Claire community. Eau Claire has great public schools!

Ronald G. Martin

Ron "Duff" Martin
ECAE President



Important Dates:

- 07/26 Parents Day
- 07/26-29 WEAC Summer Academy
- 08/03 BOE Mtg.



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Young Pele, Soccer's First Star,
by Lisa Cline-Ransome, illustrated
by James Ransome.

In bold, bright colors, this picture book biography tells the story of one of the world's greatest soccer players and his rise from poverty to international stardom.

Schwartz and Wade,
www.randomhouse.com/teachers



NEA's Read Across America—Building a Nation of Readers July is Get a Kick Out of Reading Month

Carole Galloy

Tip of the Month: Summer is the high season for movies. But if you've seen the film, why not read the book as well? Many of today's popular films are based on children's books and novels. Find out what the author really wanted to do with the characters.

Link of the Month: Leading to Reading is an early literacy site created by Reading Is Fundamental. Leading to Reading offers articles, parent tips, and activities for early readers. Go to www.rif.org/leadingtoreading.

Activity of the Month: Summer is the perfect season for soccer and reading. Get a kick out of reading with books and activities from Major League Soccer and NEA's Read Across America. Go to www.nea.org/readacross for more details.

July Literacy Dates:

July 2 National Literacy Day—www.nifl.gov

July 10 National Summer Learning Day—

www.summerlearning.com

July 28-31 World Congress on Reading—www.reading.org

Read Across America
www.nea.org/readacross

Ethnic Leaders Meeting and Joint Conference for Women and Minorities NEA 147th Annual Meeting—June 27-29, 2009

Duff Martin

Four delegates from Wisconsin participated in the Ethnic Leaders meeting held in San Diego on June 27 including your local president, Ron "Duff" Martin.

The meeting began with NEA President Dennis Van Roekel sharing with the participants an inspiring opening. President Van Roekel reminded participants that "education is all about relationships." He then went on to talk about the theme of the meeting—"Changing the Course of Public Education"—and asked a fundamental question: "How are we going to respond?"

Following President Van Roekel the NEA Vice President, Lily Eskelsen and Secretary/Treasurer, Becky Pringle addressed the participants. Vice President Eskelsen challenged participants "to find the right thing to do and then do it."

Each delegate participated in break out sessions that varied from drop out prevention to English-Language Learners Policies. Following the Ethnic Leaders Meeting was the Joint Conference for Women and Minorities.

GroupHealth BioMetric Read for Spouses

Please remember to have your spouses get their biometrics read by GroupHealth. It is a requirement of our agreement with GroupHealth that 90% of our active employees and their spouses participate in the three step Wellness Program to ensure a 14% rate cap for next year. If you or your spouse did make it to one of the schools, you can make an appointment to go into GroupHealth and take care of all three steps in one 30 minute session. Call 552-4300 for an appointment. Finally, if you and your spouse choose not to complete the Wellness program by Oct. 15, 2009, the 3% discount that has been applied to your premium will cease and your monthly premium will reflect this increase on November 1, 2009.

NOTE: July's Inkwell was short, because we did not receive any items for the Bargain Blitz or any other articles from members. We will try to get out another Inkwell in August, so send in your items for sale as you are cleaning out closets and garages! Carole Galloy: cgalloy@ecasd.k12.wi.us

Have You Joined the Children's Great School Fund Conduit?

The goal of the Children's Great Schools Fund is to send a strong message to candidates for state office: There are a lot of us who care deeply about children and public schools!

The Children's Great Schools Fund is an ambitious, comprehensive and targeted campaign to elect candidates who are pro-public education. The idea is to have as many people as possible contribute a minimum of \$20 per month to the fund.

Your contributions, when combined with those of hundreds of others, will make a major statement about the importance of children and public education.

You have total control over how your money is spent. At any time, you may direct your contributions, in whole or in part, to the candidates of your choosing. They can be candidates from any political party running for whichever office you care about.

If you are interested in participating please contact Ron "Duff" Martin or Chris Hambuch-Boyle, both are members of the Great Schools Conduit.

ECAE/Eau Claire Express Baseball Game Night, June 4, 2009

If you attended the EC Express game on Thursday, June 4th, you know what a good time is all about! Although our group was small, we enjoyed the time we spent together, socializing, eating great ballpark food (especially those potatoes), basking in the sun on the Fan Deck, and of course watching the game. Although the Express lost the game it was exciting to watch, because the score was so close for much of the time. This social event was a wonderful way to end the busy school year. We hope to do more ECAE activities in the future. Be sure to join in the fun!



"Children are the world's most valuable resource and its best hope for the future"

—John F. Kennedy

"Do not train children to learning by force and harshness, but direct them to it by what amuses their minds, so that you may be better able to discover with accuracy the peculiar bent of the genius of each."

—Plato

"Every student can learn; just not on the same day or in the same way."

—George Evans



"Take Me Out to the Ball Game" is an early-20th century Tin Pan Alley song which became the unofficial anthem of baseball, although neither of its authors had attended a game prior to writing the song. The song is traditionally sung during the seventh inning stretch of a baseball game. Fans are encouraged to sing along.

The words were written in 1908 by Jack Norworth, and the words were set to music by Albert Von Tilzer.

en.wikipedia.org



Walk on the Child's Side—Madison, June 16, 2009

Carole Galloy

It was a pleasantly cool day when we left from the Gander Mountain parking lot at 7:45 a.m. Our bus was full of chatter about school finance reform, whether or not our legislators would be there to talk to us, and hopes the rain would hold off until after our march and rally. We walked down State Street toward the capitol building chanting, "Save Our Schools!" and "Revenue Caps Have Got To Go!" We walked up the capitol steps and started chanting. Finally we were greeted by several Wisconsin legislators, including Jeff Smith. Speeches were made by teachers, students, superintendents, union officials and Sandy Pope-Roberts, Chair of the House Education Committee. Then we went inside the capitol to talk with our legislators and tell our stories. We delivered SOS postcards from ECASD staff. We told them if they don't reform school financing we will elect other representatives who will. We can only hope they got the message!

