



Inkwell

Eau Claire Association of Educators



www.ecteachers.org

Volume 2009-2010

Issue 2

Affiliated with Wisconsin Education Association Council and National Education Association

A Plethora of Opportunities for ECAE Members to be Involved! Ron "Duff" Martin, ECAE President

I am so excited about what is happening in our association, and I have never been more proud of being a teacher in Eau Claire than I am right now! We have some of the best educators right here in Eau Claire, and we do great things knowing that it benefits the young people we work with. We know that great schools benefit everyone!

There are many opportunities for you to become involved in the work of your association that I would like to share with you. Some require a great deal of your time and some won't take up much at all, the level of involvement is really up to you! These opportunities have been created to make us a stronger association and to carry out the mission of our organization.

Staff Development—Educator Support Seminars: October 14, November 11, December 9, and January 13. These are opportunities for you to grow professionally in an area that you choose and are a collaborative effort between the district and your association (read more about it in this issue of the *Inkwell*).

ECAE Information Sessions: December 16th we will be offering information sessions on two very important topics: 1) A 403(b) Vendor Fair where representatives from the approved financial vendors will be present to answer questions you might have. 2) A focus on those who are considering retirement within the next five years. I receive many questions on retirement, and this early session will hopefully assist individuals with their questions.

Committee Representation: Are you interested in serving on one of ECAE's committees? We are looking for a diverse group of individuals who would be willing to serve on one of the many committees of the association. Our committees include Legislative Committee, Scholarship Committee, Read Across America Committee, Special Education Committee, Increment Study Committee, Seniority Bands Study Committee, New Teacher Concerns Committee, Calendar Committee, Service Model Task Force Committee, Audit Committee, and the Cookbook Committee! We are going to be asking building representatives at the October meeting to identify individuals from their buildings who might be interested or make good committee members—don't be surprised if you get a call inviting you to participate!

Leadership Training Opportunities: The Midwest Leadership Conference is in Minneapolis January 22-24, 2010—ECAE will fund members to attend, and WEAC/NEA will fund first time attendees. This is an excellent opportunity for ECAE members to participate in some really outstanding workshops (Merit Pay, Health Care Reform, Bully Prevention programs, leadership training and development). Because it is so close I am hoping we can get at least 15 people from ECAE to attend!! Of course the WEAC Winter Conference always offers some exciting workshops. This year they are offering a northern session (Wausau) and a southern session (Madison). The northern session is March 5-6, 2010. If interested in attending either of these events, please contact me. And as always there are officer/executive board elections in April/May!

There are so many ways in which you can participate, and I hope you take advantage of some of these experiences. We need your input, your ideas, your expertise, and your energy! I am lucky to be surrounded by such great, talented, and outstanding people—ECAE!

Enjoy your October!

Ron "Duff" Martin, ECAE President

Email Duff Martin at martinr@weac.org if you would like to volunteer to serve on a committee, or if you know of someone we can invite to serve on a committee.



Important Dates:

- 10/4-10/10 Bullying Prevention Week
- 10/07 Exec. Board Meeting
- 10/18-10/24 Character Counts Week
- 10/19 BOE Meeting
- 10/21 Committee Meetings 4:00
- 10/21 BR Mtg. 4:30



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Read Across America on SchoolTube

SchoolTube has created a Read Across America channel designed to showcase student and educator videos from around the country. To see some great celebrations, go to:

<http://www.youtube.com/user/NEAreadacrossamerica#play/uploads/4/3ZuR-NsnXr8>

To sign up and share videos, go to: www.schooltube.com.



NEA's Read Across America—Building a Nation of Readers

Start Planning Your Activities Now

Carole Galloy

The National Education Association annually sponsors Read Across America. Now in its twelfth year, it focuses on motivating children to read, in addition to helping them master basic skills.

The reading celebration takes place each year on or near March 2, the birthday of Dr. Seuss. Across the country, thousands of schools, libraries, and community centers participate by bringing together kids and books, and you can too!

Plan Ahead! Go to: <http://www.nea.org/grants/30487.htm> for information from Read Across America's partners, such as Reading Is Fundamental and Get Caught Listening.



On March 2, the National Education Association calls for every child to be reading in the company of a caring adult.

Take the Pledge! Go to: <http://www.nea.org/grants/2687.htm> to pledge to participate in Read Across America. Help spread the good word about your reading events! Fill out the form and NEA will highlight your plans within the State Contacts & Activities section so that others can be inspired by your ideas. Please be as specific as possible. Check it out!

Read Across America
www.nea.org/readacross

Get Connected! NEA's free e-newsletter provides the latest news in reading from Read Across America and partner organizations. You'll find links to grant information, classroom and parent materials, and more. Go to: <http://www.nea.org/readacross/> and enter your email address at the bottom of the page.

National Day on Writing—October 20, 2009

Contribute your writing today. Local writing project sites can create their own galleries featuring the writing of teachers, students, and community members. This is for the National Gallery of Writing, a digital archive of compositions available through a free, searchable Web site. The Gallery will be "unveiled" to the public on the National Day on Writing, October, 20, 2009. Learn more at the [National Writing Project Web site](#).

Bullying Prevention Week—October 4–9, 2009

Sponsored by the PACER Center—a parent center for families of children and young adults with disabilities—and cosponsored by NEA, the National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education, and National PTA, this weeklong event encourages communities to work together to increase awareness of the prevalence and impact of bullying on children.

Character Counts! Week—October 18–24, 2009

Celebrate the six pillars of character: trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship. Register now for free lesson plans and handouts. For more information, visit the [Character Counts Web site](#).

NOTICE:

Please send your home emails to Carol Miller at: miller@weac.org

Get Your Flu Shots at an Authorized Flu Shot Clinic

Be sure to get your flu shots this year. All N1H1 flue shots are free, and are covered by the US government. However, traditional flu shots are free only if you receive them at one of our authorized health care providers. Also, in order to get free traditional flu shots, you must get them at a Flu Shot Clinic. If you make an appointment with your doctor for a flu shot, you will be charged for an office visit. Mayo/Luther Flu Shot Clinics begin October 26th at the Clairemont Campus. If you get your flu shots at some other location, they will not be covered by your insurance.

Remember to Complete Your Health Wellness Assessment!

If you do not complete the three wellness steps, your premium will increase 3% on November 1st. For teachers, assuming you have taken Option #1 from the Group Health options, will see the following increase automatically deducted from your check on November 1st (or really on the first November paycheck, which is November 13th):

- Single's will pay \$20.32 more each month.
- Limited Families will pay \$42.53 more each month.
- Families will pay \$52.63 more each month.

These Fitness Centers Offer Discounts For ECASD Employees

Call, email, or check out the websites of the following locations for great fitness deals:

Curves Eau Claire, King's Plaza at 3198 London Road, www.curveseauclaire.com.

Optimum Therapies, www.optimumtherapies.com

Eau Claire YMCA, www.eauclaireymca.org, or call Nate Jahn at 836-8460

Anytime Fitness, www.anytimefitness.com, or call 831-6400 (Water St), 831-6200 (Waterford).

Highland Fitness 833-2100, info@highlandfitness.com, or www.highlandfitness.com

Golds Gym, www.Goldsgym-EC.com

Attention All Itinerant Staff!

If you are traveling between buildings during the school day, you are considered an itinerant staff member. According to Wikipedia, an itinerant is a person who travels from place to place with no home.

This does not mean you should feel like you have no home. Get to know the teachers around you. Attend staff meetings. Join a book group. Eat lunch with your colleagues, not in your room.

Remember, lines 44 and 45 of the Contract between the Eau Claire Board of Education and the Eau Claire Association of Educators state: "Traveling teachers will not be assigned extra duties and will be guaranteed 30 minutes for shuttle time. Be sure you have time to travel safely."

ECASD Fundraiser

ECASD is raising scholarship money through the publication of our own cookbook.

Anyone willing to serve on the Cookbook Fundraising Committee please contact Carole Galloy at: cgalloy@ecasd.k12.wi.us

Before the cookbooks can be published, we need at least 200 recipes from our members. Recipe Categories include: Appetizers & Beverages, Soups & Salads, Vegetables & Side Dishes, Main Dishes, Breads & Rolls, Desserts, Cookies & Candy, This & That.

Please type your recipes in a Word Document and send it as an attachment to Carole Galloy at: cgalloy@ecasd.k12.wi.us. Please include your name, the title of the recipe, the ingredients, and directions.

Or you can access a recipe form on our website www.ecteachers.org Print it, fill it out, and send to Carole Galloy at South M.S. through district mail.



A Message from GroupHealth

As a friendly reminder, you have until the end of October to complete all three steps of the ECASD wellness program. By completing the program, you will receive a total of \$50 in Eau Claire Chamber gift certificates in addition to continuing at a lowered health insurance premium!

We need 90% of all ECASD employees to complete all three steps or everyone's insurance premiums will increase.

"It's bizarre that the produce manager is more important to my children's health than the pediatrician."

-Meryl Streep

"Life expectancy would grow by leaps and bounds if green vegetables smelled as good as bacon."

-Doug Larson

"My own prescription for health is less paperwork and more running barefoot through the grass."

-Leslie Grimmer



Hi again everybody. For those of you that don't know me yet, I am a Spanish teacher at Memorial and an elected member of the State Teacher's Retirement Board. Here is some good news and bad news from our fall meeting.

Good news: The core fund is up 14.2% year to date (12.5% benchmark) and the variable is up 21.5% year to date (20.1% benchmark). Bad news: Core fund retired members need to see a yearly gain of 30% to avoid negative dividends for the next four years. This will be frustrating because even as the market slowly rebounds core members will see their monthly checks cut potentially for the next four years as last year's horrific losses are recognized by the smoothing mechanism, so remind your retired friends to keep tightening their belts.

Good news: If you are in the variable, you recognized 100% of the losses last year in the variable portion of your account. This means variable retired members will get a dividend added to their checks if we stay up like we are right now. Bad news: Very few people are in the variable.

Good news: It's good that you're not in the variable because you lost up to 40% of your benefit last year and the variable will be phased out as an option for members who are not already in it. I recommend that active members and new members do NOT elect to join the variable. The current state plan calls for legislation to be introduced that will close the variable to new members in the coming years. Also, please read on to note the changes that Wisconsin is making that will make the variable a very bad deal indeed down the road.

The State of Wisconsin Investment Board (SWIB) is going to boldly (and positively) go down a new path. Their new focus is on risk allocation. SWIB would like to see gains and losses follow a narrow variance and they are thus looking to cut way down on equity risk exposure. This means that the focus of SWIB will be much less on the traditional buy and hold stock market strategy and much more on alpha and leveraging. This is good and bad, but more good than bad. The bad is that when the market has a gangbusters year and is up 40%, SWIB might only be up 15-20%, although they could also be up huge due to other factors. The good is that when the market tanks hard and is down 40%, SWIB might only be down 10% or even be close to break even or up for the year. This is going to require some psychological adaptation from us (the members) but it will mean that retirement checks won't be drastically cut as much as they are now (conversely we will no longer see the huge gains made in the 1980s and 1990s by variable members either). The goal is to get our portfolio to perform more consistently across ANY AND ALL market environments so that it provides STEADY and POSITIVE dividends every year for retired members. How are we going to do this?

- #1. We are going to leverage fixed income. Bonds, futures markets, derivatives, and TIPS will be overweighted.
- #2. We are going to diversify risk away from equities. We will still hold tons and tons equities, just not in the traditional sense of owning a couple million shares of Microsoft or Merrill or what have you with a 50 year time horizon for every stock.
- #3. We are going to overweight small cap stocks and underweight large caps. Skilled money managers will look for undervalued quality and take the profits when they come.
- #4. SWIB will employ hedge funds to maximize short term returns and to win in an up or down market.
- #5. SWIB will heavily utilize the futures market and derivatives (the good conservative cover your bets kind not the mortgage crappy stuff that everybody assumes is what derivatives are all about)

These changes will be SLOWLY implemented over time. The goal is to better manage risk and better control income. The WRS is a mature pension fund. It is one of the top 10 public pension funds in the entire WORLD (I think we're about #7 today). Wisconsin is taking the lead in this, but in my opinion, nobody should be scared as the changes being implemented are sound practice, and I think we'll see the pension funds that are LARGER than us (Calpers, etc.) follow our lead as they suffered much worse than we did during the last crash. For one applaud these changes and I think they are long overdue and I have been fighting for these changes for almost ten years. SWIB now has all the tools to operate like the major investment house that it is.

See me if you'd like to discuss this further. Also send me your email address or the email address of anyone that would like to be added to my quarterly email list. Thanks.



We are pleased to let you know that our local dues are down \$3.00 this year. Dues went from \$179.00 to \$176.00 as of September 1, 2009.

Children of Poverty Deserve Great Teachers

Mary Bell, WEAC President

Last week, NEA President **Dennis Van Roekel** testified before the House Committee on Education and Labor at a hearing examining how to ensure effective teachers in high-needs schools. His testimony focused on NEA's new report, *Children of Poverty Deserve Great Teachers*.

Members of Congress and press in attendance were most interested in his statement that:

NEA commits to address barriers in collective bargaining agreements by requesting that every local NEA affiliate enter into a compact or memorandum of understanding (MOU) with its local school district to waive any contract language that prohibits staffing high-needs schools with great teachers. These compacts should also add commitments that would enhance this goal. Similarly, NEA would promote compacts or MOUs for its non-collective bargaining local affiliates that have high-needs schools in their districts.

A Wall Street Journal article, *Teachers Union Shifts Stance, Backs Looser Staffing Rules*, reflects both skepticism that the union is serious about getting the best teachers into high-needs schools, and the pressure from the Obama administration and long-time friends in Congress like George Miller (D-Calif.) to make change happen in the lowest performing schools. This national battle in the Congress and in the press is reflected in our own controversies here in Wisconsin, both around Race to the Top and school reform efforts in general.

My contention has been from the beginning that we support sound policy, not a series of policy "fixes" that result in overall damage to the education system of the state. We may or may not get Race to the Top dollars, but if as a result of trying we institute a legacy of bad policy, we lose in either case.

We continue to work with MTEA to address the Governor's proposal to have the mayor appoint both the Superintendent and the Milwaukee school board. We need real solutions to the problems that confront not only our urban districts, but children who live in poverty throughout our state. Change may be dramatic, but not all drama produces results that are best for our students and public education.

Your Building Reps at Work For You

Carole Galloy

September's Building Representative meeting is usually centered around an evening of training and enjoying a meal together. As we gathered together for the first time this year, there was talk about negotiations, health insurance costs, and budgets. But most of the meeting was spent discussing the duties and responsibilities of being a building rep. Look for your BR and thank them for their hard work.



Cleaning closets or garages?
Looking for a bargain?

BARGAIN BLITZ

List your items in the
Inkwell Bargain Blitz!

Deadline for submitting materials is the 20th of each month. Sorry, no personal ads.
Send items to Carole Galloy at: cgalloy@ecasd.k12.wi.us

SELL: 2007 Yamaha FX HO personal watercraft, 3 seater, with an '07 Triton single place trailer. Only 43 hours on the machine. It's been very well maintained and had annual maintenance by a local dealer. The machine has been stored indoors and is in excellent condition. I bought the PWC new in 2007. The machine has lots of storage capacity for being on the water all day. Asking \$7400, OBO. For more information, pictures, etc. call Chaz 715.829.6695 or email me at cwalton@ecasd.k12.wi.us.

SELL: Solid oak entertainment center \$150. 5 shelves behind glass door, one slide out drawer, one shelf under TV opening. Entertainment center is on wheels for easy moving. Call Karla @ 833-1371 or email kanibas@ecasd.k12.wi.us

SELL: 2007 Silver Saturn Sky Convertible, 11,800 miles. Still under factory warranty. EXCELLENT CONDITION!!! For more information, please contact Liz Poteete at epoteete@ecasd.k12.wi.us or 715-514-1656.

SELL: Oak firewood. Split, dry and clean. \$60.00. Call: 835-3180.

SELL: Story & Clark 36" spinet piano for sale, good condition, nice size for living room \$300. Email Jean at: jchristenson@ecasd.k12.wi.us

SELL: Beautiful Oak L shaped computer desk, \$500.00. In excellent condition. Picture available. Email Liz at: emosher@ecasd.k12.wi.us or call 835-3481

SELL: Brown leather swivel desk chair, very comfy!! Asking \$50.00. In very good condition. Picture available. Email Liz at: emosher@ecasd.k12.wi.us or call 835-3481

SELL: \$239,900—3 br 2 story home on 15 1/2 acres Looking for privacy and wildlife? This home is located on a heavily wooded 15 1/2 acre lot. Built in 2004 it features a large open floor plan, main floor w/d, master suite, warming tiles in master bath, sunken kit, wood floors, and walkout lower level. Gas fireplace on the main floor. Option for wood fireplace in family room. Lower level is rough plumbed for a third bath. Has an abundance of natural lighting (in the winter it feels like you are in a snow globe!) and located on a dead-end road, very safe and ideal for children with a very large plush green yard. 2 1/2 car attached garage. In-floor heat in the walk-out level and also in the garage. We are exactly 35 minutes from Eau Claire's west side. Motivated to sell. Must sell by the 2010-2011 school year. Please call Brianna at (715) 505-0709 or email bkoleski@ecasd.k12.wi.us for pictures or

SELL: 2006 Saturn Ion 2 Sedan 4D, 35,000 miles, 4 Cyl., 2.2 liter, 5 speed manual transmission, Power steering, power locks, power windows, remote keyless entry, tilt wheel, Air, AM/FM/



CD, Cruise, Dual Front Air Bags. \$7,500 call Karla at 833-1371 or email kanibas@ecasd.k12.wi.us

SELL: Pheasants for sale. These birds can be released on your rural property. Delivery is available! Call Chad with any questions you may have. 715-533-3509.

WANTED: Old yard barn 8 ft by 10 ft or larger. Will move. Email Lars Long at: llong@ecasd.k12.wi.us or call: 715-514-1638

WANTED: Old kitchen cabinets—uppers and lowers of various sizes. Any condition. Email Lars Long at: llong@ecasd.k12.wi.us or call: 715-514-1638

WANTED: LEGOS! Would you like to part with any old Legos? We are starting a new youth group at our church and need Legos. Please contact Dennis at dloginbill@ecasd.k12.wi.us



Chris Redman
Realtor

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