



Inkwell

Eau Claire Association of Educators

Affiliated with Wisconsin Education Association Council and National Education Association

Top Stories of 2010

Ron "Duff" Martin, ECAE President

"I am anxious to see what 2010 has to offer our association." That's a quote from my last year's January 2010 Inkwell article. And in keeping with what I started last year— ECAE Top Ten, I again present to you the top ten news stories of ECAE 2010.

10. Summer Building Representative Training
9. NEA Read Across America - Locust Lane
8. United Way Campaign & Success
7. Kindergarten Still Waiting
6. Elementary Art Specialists
5. Zimmerman Grievance
4. Contract Settled—after 30+ meetings!
3. Parent-Teacher Conference Fiasco
2. November Tsunami
1. No Pay—Veterans' Day



10. Summer BR Training. I've been a building representative for a lot of years and rarely have I had the chance to attend the September BR training. September is just a busy and hectic month. ECAE wised up and decided to try a BR training in August prior to school starting! From the evaluations of those who attended, we will continue to offer the training in August and who knows this may become a tradition of ECAE.

9. NEA Read Across America—Locust Lane. The Cat is in the house; that's Locust Lane's house. WEAC selected Eau Claire as the city to kick-off Wisconsin's NEA Read Across America. We were entertained by the Cat, Thing 1 and Thing 2 as well as many guests from the community and Mary Bell, Guy Costello, and Betsy Kippers (WEAC Officers). What a great celebration at Locust Lane!!

8. United Way Campaign & Success. Demonstrating that the employees of ECASD care about their community is evident in the support they have shown over the years for the United Way Campaign and this year it was no different. This year the employees of ECASD gave \$44,283.68—surpassing last years amount of \$39,381.23. In the past six years ECASD has contributed \$916,310.49!

7. Kindergarten Still Waiting! The specialist issue for kindergarten has not been resolved. ECAE was promised at the negotiating table that the current board would review the kindergarten study. As of December 27, 2010, still nothing new! Need I say more? I think there are those that are hoping this issue will go away; that's not going to happen!

6. Elementary Art Specialists. Their time has been cut; they teach more students than any other employees in the district; they have three and quite possibly four classrooms to maintain, report to three supervisors, order supplies, and on goes the list. But more importantly the cut hurts kids—it really hurts kids. We are depriving our youngest learners in the district of an opportunity for them to learn how to creatively express themselves as well as learning about other cultures and other people. If we are really promoting Post Secondary Readiness, then we wouldn't be cutting at the elementary, especially a subject that allows for creativity and expression.

5. Zimmerman Grievance. Ms. Zimmerman is an outstanding veteran building representative and teacher in the ECASD. We believe because she was outspoken and stood up for what was right for teachers at Lakeshore, she was being punished by being moved out of the building she taught in for a number of years. She didn't ask for the transfer, but because she was referred to as "poison to the well," administration felt it best for all that she be moved. ECAE grieved that decision and in June, the Board of Education agreed with ECAE that moving a teacher from one building to another is not an appropriate form of discipline.

4. Contract Settled After 30+ Meetings! A special thanks goes out to the Negotiations Committee for their work and dedication in getting our contract settled. James Martin, Tony Hotujec, Joe Rapacz,

[Continue on page 3](#)



Important Date:

Building Representative Meeting

January 19, 2011
4:15—6:00 PM

American Legion
Water Street

Special Presentation by
Mike Goodness from the
WEA Trust Member
Benefits

Inside This Issue:

Article	Page
President's Message	1,3
Be Computer Savvy; Professional Educators Creed	2
2011 WEAC Winter Conference	3
Education Woes; ECAE Inter-Views	4,6
Poster Contest; ECAE Elections	4
Instructors' Performance	5
Mind the Gap; WEAC Dues WEAC Academy	6
Bargain Blitz	7
	8

Be 'Computer Savvy' When Using Your Employer's Computer

10 things you should know

1. Read your employer's computer use policy, follow it and re-read it during the year. Make sure your members know the policy.
2. If you have questions about your policy, ask your school district for clarification and/or attempt to bargain a better policy.
3. Assume you have no privacy regarding e-mail you send and receive on your employer's computer system. Only send e-mails that you would feel comfortable reading on the front page of your local newspaper.
4. A "deleted" computer file, including e-mail, can often be accessed by an experienced IT person.
5. There is a trail on computers showing what Internet sites you accessed.
6. Assume that what you see on your computer screen is what your employer gets.
7. Copyright law applies to material on the internet. Online information is available from the Library of Congress, U.S. Copyright Office: www.copyright.gov.
8. What you post on personal blogs and Web sites may be seen by many people, including your employer, and it could result in adverse employment action.
9. Unless your school policy provides otherwise, do not give away your password, do not let others see your password, and change your password often. Turn off or lock your computer when you leave your work area.
10. For more information about technology and computer issues in education go to: www.nea.org/he/techno.html



PROFESSIONAL EDUCATORS CREED

Mission: As a professional educator, I believe that education is a noble profession with the power to transform lives and empower human beings to thrive and improve our democratic society and diverse, changing world. I help change the world and create our future. I understand the unique privilege and accept the great responsibility that comes with this charge.

To the best of my ability, I will....

- Act on the belief that all students are unique, have worth, and can improve their lives and their world.
- Support and protect the right of every student to a free, quality, public education with meaningful and equitable opportunities to learn.
- Provide an education directed toward the development of the dimensions of human potential and personality.
- Educate with the understanding that public education is the cornerstone of a free and functioning democratic society.
- Provide rich, meaningful, engaging, and challenging experiences that empower the whole person to think, communicate, and interact so they can improve their lives and the lives of others.
- Create caring, supported, and democratic learning communities that ensure the rights of all students are respected, including those who lack the means to make their needs known.
- Provide an education that strengthens respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms of all human beings.
- Eliminate ignorance and further understanding and caring.
- Advocate for the well being of students and families.
- Collaborate constructively with colleagues to improve the craft of educating and to build the learning communities that benefit the growth and development of all.
- Collaborate with our school communities and others to inform and shape healthy deliberations about the future of our schools.
- Actively resist and work to change policies and practices that devalue or harm students, the education profession, or public education.
- Exercise my professional judgment independently to benefit students.
- Never cease seeking further education for my continual growth.



NOTICE:

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

“Top Stories” Continued from Page 1

Gretchen Beckstrom, Michelle Peplinski, Matt Kulasiewicz, Chris Hambuch-Boyle, Sherry Soper, and Brian Wiltgen are the individuals who gave up at least two hours (if not more) for 30+ meetings.

3. Parent-Teacher Conferences. It really doesn't matter who you speak to—teachers or parents, neither were overly excited about the first round of parent-teacher conferences. “It just didn't make sense” commented a teacher who would like to remain anonymous, “it wasn't at all friendly to someone who has kids at multiple schools nor was it friendly to the teachers in the district who found it difficult to attend their own child's conferences.” But, no fear, Round 2 of PT Conferences has been fixed. Hopefully a lesson was learned!

2. November Tsunami! Need I say more? The elections of 2010 could and probably will have great impact on education in Wisconsin. I am hopeful that the legislators will be wise enough to recognize the accomplishments of Wisconsin Public Schools and also be able to respect the state collective bargaining laws. Only time will tell. Now more than ever we will have to be involved and organize our membership to make contact with our newly elected representatives. Hang in there, we still have Senator Kathleen Vinehout and US Congressman Ron Kind!!

1. No Pay—Veterans' Day. Since being ECAE president, I have learned how to deal with lots of e-mails and on November 12, I would have never expected to receive the number of e-mails I received. But when someone's pay check doesn't show up like it normally does, you can bet there was a little panic out there! Apparently it was the Federal Reserve's fault, just like the last time—coincidence it was the same holiday? Rest assured Administration is aware of the rest of the holidays that fall on a pay period. I think perhaps they must have set up a direct line to the Federal Reserve hmmm.....

So there you have it—what I consider the top news stories of ECAE for 2010. As we look back on 2010 and welcome in 2011, we must never forget that we are agents of change and although 2010 is in our past and there is not a whole lot we can do about that, we must not forget that we, as educators, are important to the young people we work with. At times we can disagree with what is happening, but we must never forget the reasons we went in to education.

Some of us teach, some of us counsel, some of us provide therapy, some of us coordinate activities, some of us support our colleagues, while some of us nurse and care for young people—but all of us, together make up a wonderful group of people called EDUCATORS.

So, make the most of 2011 and always remember why you are doing what you do for a living!

Happy 2011!

Educationally yours,

Gonald E. Martin

Ron “Duff” Martin



How Do You Say January In:

Spanish: Enero

Italian: Gennaio

French: Janvier

German: Januar

Polish: Stycznia

Latin: January

Source: <http://www.thefreeresource.com/january-fun-facts-trivia-and-resources-about-historical-events>



2011 WEAC WINTER CONFERENCE

March 4-5, 2011

Friday—Howard Johnson, Wausau
Saturday—Westwood Conference Center, Wausau

Conference Fee \$25.00
Lodging—Double \$30.00 and Single \$60.00

For detailed information and to register go online at: www.weac.org/winterconference or contact Gayle Isermann at isermanng@weac.org or

EDUCATION WOES: Parents Get Most Blame, Not Teachers!

Blaming teachers for low test scores, poor graduation rates and the other ills of American schools has been popular lately, but a new survey wags a finger closer to home. An Associated Press-Stanford University Poll on education found that 68 percent of adults believe parents deserve heavy blame for what's wrong with the U.S. education system — more than teachers, school administrators, the government or teachers unions.

Only 35 percent of those surveyed agreed that teachers deserve a great deal or a lot of the blame. Moms were more likely than dads — 72 percent versus 61 percent — to say parents are at fault. Conservatives were more likely than moderates or liberals to blame parents. Those who said parents are to blame were more likely to cite a lack of student discipline and low expectations for students as serious problems in schools. They were also more likely to see fighting and low test scores as big problems. Nobody is too busy to raise a child for a successful future," said Wilfred Luise Vincent, 65, of Coppell, Texas. Vincent worked early or late shifts for Delta Airlines during most of his career so his two daughters would have a parent at home after school. Now he's retired and home after school to help guide his granddaughter while his daughter works.

The problems children and their parents deal with inside and outside of school every day are growing, said Julie Woestehoff, executive director of Parents United for Responsible Education, a Chicago advocacy group. Children are tired, they're hungry and they need someone to help with their homework. Some kids face violence at home or in their neighborhood. Some parents are trying so hard to keep a roof over their family that they can't help with school.

More than half of those polled said student discipline and fighting, violence and gangs were extremely or very serious problems in schools. Nearly as many expressed concern about getting and keeping good teachers. Most said education in their local public schools is excellent or good, but 67 percent also believe the U.S. is falling behind the rest of the world when it comes to education.

But a majority of parents see improvement in the system since they were in school: 55 percent believe their children are getting a better education than they did, and three-quarters rate the quality of education at their child's school as excellent or good. Most say their child's school is doing a good job preparing students for college, the work force and life as an adult.

A variety of research in past years backs up the poll respondents' sense that parenting plays key roles in school performance.

One in 10 kindergarten and first-grade students misses a month of school every year, which can put them behind their classmates for years, according to Attendance Counts, an advocacy group. By ninth grade, missing 20 percent of school is a better predictor of a student dropping out than test scores are, said Attendance Counts director Hedy Chang. In the poll, 41 percent said students not spending enough time in school is a serious problem.

Exposing kids under 2 to too much television can cause them to develop language skills later, researchers at the University of Washington have found.

Hungry students do worse on standardized tests and are absent more often, according several studies that have connected poor nutrition with students who have trouble concentrating.

Educating parents about how the school system works and welcoming them to get involved may also help their children, according to Joyce L. Epstein, research professor of sociology at Johns Hopkins University, who focuses on school, family and community partnerships. "Without programs to educate parents, everyone is working in some stage of ignorance." Epstein said.

(Continue on page 5)

ECAE went out in the field and asked six educators from South Middle School: "How important is parental involvement and participation with their child's school to the development of the whole child?"

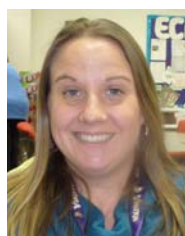
"I think parental involvement is huge. If parents aren't involved, kids don't see the importance of an education."
Colleen Morgan, 6th Grade Teacher



"Involvement is very important right from the early years. We are all teachers—even the parents."
Donna Goodman, 7th Grade Teacher



"I've noticed that parents who are involved—those students have a higher success and are probably held more accountable."
Reed Pecha, 8th Grade Teacher



"It is important for parents to connect with their child. As an educator I love when parents are involved and engaged which supports the educational process."
Renee Moorehead, F/CE Teacher

Parental involvement really is everything. If parents aren't involved with their child's education, the learning doesn't continue and it needs to. We instruct and we need parents to reinforce what was taught."
Jake Skalitzy, Student Teacher, Grade 7



"Parents need to have high academic expectations for their children and be able to help their children see the connection between home and school."
Kate Perry, Teacher of ED/BD



21st Annual Poster Contest 2010-2011

The Dance of Nations Lives Today

WEAC - Human Relations Committee 4th Grade Poster Contest

The purpose of the poster contest is to promote the celebration of the Native American culture and to address the issue of racism directed at Native Americans. The theme chosen for this year's contest is: The Dance of Nations Lives Today!

If you teach 4th grade or elementary art and are interested in participating in this contest, please contact Ron Martin at martinr@weac.org for a list of the poster contest rules and submission deadlines!

ECAE ELECTIONS 2011

The following positions are up for election by the ECAE membership and will be elected by the May General member meeting. A slate of officers will be presented by the Executive Board at the April Building Representative meeting. Nominations will also be allowed from the floor of the BR meeting. All names submitted for candidacy must be done only with the prior consent of said nominees.

The elections will be conducted by secret ballot.

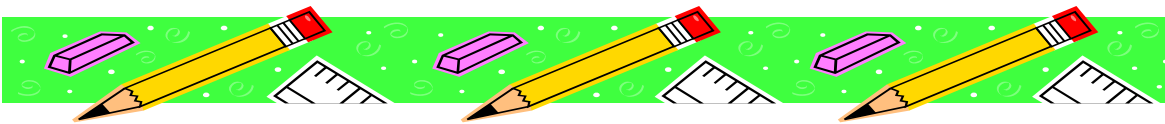
The positions are:

- ◆ Vice President
- ◆ Public Relations Chair
- ◆ High School Representative



For all three positions any eligible ECAE member may be nominated. All three positions are required to attend a monthly Executive Board meeting and all Building Representative Meetings. There are other duties and responsibilities of each office. If you are interested in receiving a detailed job description of each position and the ECAE compensation contact Ron Martin (martinr@weac.org).

To nominate an individual (including yourself) please contact Pat Geraghty (pgeraghty@ecasd.k12.wi.us). Nominations should be received by April 19, 2011.



(continued from p. 4)

EDUCATION WOES: Parents Get Most Blame, Not Teachers!

Some things just can't be fixed by schools or even the community, says Mike Principe, 62, of Melrose Park, a suburb of Chicago, Ill. In addition to worrying about school violence, a lack of student discipline, low expectations for achievement, difficulty attracting good teachers and unimpressive student test scores, Principe is concerned about divorce, the economy, single parents and the national debt. "These are tough times we're living in," Principe said. "What's our world going to be like when our 2-year-old is an adult?"

The AP-Stanford Poll on Education was conducted Sept. 23-30 by Abt SRBI, Inc. It involved interviews on landline and cellular telephones with 1,001 adults nationwide and has a margin of sampling error of plus or minus 3.9 percentage points. Stanford's participation in this project was made possible by a grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

January
Trivia.....

January is
National What
Month?

Eye Care Month

Hot Tea Month

National Blood
Donor Month

National Braille Lit-
eracy Month

National Hobby
Month

National Soup
Month

National Staying
Healthy Month

National Thank You
Month

Birth Stone for
Someone Born in
January?

January's birth-
stone is the garnet
which represents
constancy.

What is January's
Zodiac Sign?

Capricorn: Decem-
ber 22 – January 19

Aquarius: January
20 – February 1

Source: <http://www.thefreeresource.com/january-fun-facts-trivia-and-resources-about-historical-events>

Every kid deserves a great school!



Teachers Union President Says: Don't Release Value-Added Test Score Data on Instructors' Performance!

By [Dennis Van Roekel](#), President of the National Education Association (NEA)

At a forum on public education last month, outgoing city [Schools Chancellor Joel Klein](#) challenged educators who don't think it's a good idea to evaluate teachers on the basis of gains in student test scores. "If you don't like test scores, come up with something better," he said. We can expect incoming [Chancellor Cathie Black](#) to echo that message.

The [National Education Association](#), of which I am president, accepts the challenge. The alternative won't be a simple sound bite, because there is no easy way to evaluate someone whose profession combines many different tasks, from explaining content to inspiring students to maintaining order in class. No single indicator can measure whether a teacher is doing this complex job well.

Yet that's exactly what some people are now trying to do by promoting "value-added" data that use test score improvement to judge teachers. Last summer, the [Los Angeles Times](#) published value-added rankings for thousands of teachers. Now the Daily News and other news outlets are attempting to obtain similar data for [New York City](#) teachers.

A court hearing to determine whether the city's information should be made public is set for today.

Value-added rankings of teachers appeal to people because they remove the ambiguity from a complex process, but that is precisely why they have the potential to do more harm than good.

The concept has been used in other fields such as agriculture to determine the effects of different variables on production. But a classroom of students is nothing like a row of soybeans or corn; each student grows and progresses in his or her own way. A teacher is a powerful influence, but other factors such as poverty, broken homes and parental literacy also determine students' growth.

So as Klein asked, if we don't like value-added, what would be better? If we want a clear picture of how teachers are doing, we must look at the work they actually do in their classrooms, day in and day out.

A good teacher evaluation system should begin by examining evidence of a teacher's preparation, including lesson plans, class assignments and scoring protocols. Teachers might be asked to assemble a portfolio - including videos of classroom discussion and notes or messages from parents.

There should be frequent, independent and thorough observations to determine whether the teacher is meeting high standards for teaching the subject. Finally, we should look at evidence of student learning, including homework assignments, classroom tests, essays and projects. Taken together, these elements can provide a far more detailed - and accurate - picture of teacher effectiveness than scores on a standardized test.

Those test scores are better used as a tool to help teachers become more effective by indicating which students are struggling. In fact, because we know the scores can be helpful in that way, NEA affiliates in some states - including [New York](#) - have adopted teacher evaluation plans employing value-added scores as one of several elements in performance reviews. We all agree, however, that they should not be the sole or predominant measure.

The emphasis on standardized tests in our nation has distorted the education of our children. Subjects that aren't tested, such as the arts, history, civic education, foreign languages and physical education, have been squeezed out of the curriculum. Some schools stage pep rallies to motivate students before a big test.

After all this, the tests are an imperfect reflection of what students have learned. Using scores from these flawed tests as the overwhelming measure of a teacher's worth would raise the stakes even further, and compound the damage that has already been inflicted on public education.

[Van Roekel](#) (pictured above) is president of the National Education Association and a 23-year high school math teacher.

Mind the Gap

By Matthew Call, WEAC Staff

Before he threw his political career away John Edwards would talk about “Two Americas” and the growing divide between the haves and have-nots. It was 2004 when he started talking about that. Flash-forward to 2010 and the Federal Reserve chairman is talking about America’s “two societies.”

In a [HuffPo piece from this week](#) – brought to our attention by WEAC’s Jeff Leverich – Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke’s profile on “60 Minutes” is linked, where Bernanke talks about his childhood home going into foreclosure and his hometown’s unemployment rate now hitting 14.8 percent. Here’s this sobering point from the HP: “In September, new Census figures showed that the income gap between America’s richest and poorest was the widest on record.”

That income gap, and the overall state of employment, [has a Madison columnist](#) contemplating working “until we die” or retiring “to poverty and ill health.” The Wisconsin State Journal writer runs over some economic figures and ponders the strategy of state Republicans – who will soon be in control of the state Legislature and governor’s office – to bust unions and the livable wages they seek. Why, in the face of deficits, is the question How can we spread the pain, Chris Rickert asks, and not “How can we subject everyone to an equal level of pleasure?”

“There’s a long list of fairly small things that could help bring this about: make unionization easier, raise the retirement age, means-test Social Security and Medicare benefits, put money into job training for the handicapped rather than into disability payments, remove the Social Security cap,” Rickert adds.

Indeed, investment in education is a key way to reverse sluggish economic trends. On Politico, the executive director of the Intel Foundation says [education resources should be enhanced](#) for all students.

“In this climate, some critics suggest that we should focus only on the few, investing in those who show greater aptitude in mathematics and science. That would be a serious mistake,” Wendy Hawkins writes, adding in another section: “As a nation, we can launch an unprecedented effort to invest in science and mathematics education that ensures that all students get a basic level of understanding in science and math. This will equip our next generation with the tools necessary to fuel the modern economy.”



- ✓ Providing High Quality Professional Development for Wisconsin Educators
- ✓ Thinking Professional Development? Think WEA Academy
- ✓ Your Source for PI 34 and PDP Support

Visit Us Online at WEAACADEMY.ORG

Income Tax Information—ECAE DUES FOR 2010

Full Time Employees = \$654.96

Half Time Employees = \$332.56

\$20 is estimated for PAC, so this amount cannot be claimed on income taxes.

Building Representative Meeting

**January 19, 2011
4:15—6:00 PM**

**American Legion
Water Street**

**Special Presentation by Mike Goodness
from the WEA Trust Member Benefits**

Cleaning closets or garages?
Looking for a bargain?

BARGAIN BLITZ

List your items in the
Inkwell Bargain Blitz!

Deadline for submitting your ads is the 20th of each month. Sorry, no personal ads.
Send items to Shirl Ruesch at: sruesch@ecasd.k12.wi.us Please e-mail me when ad has been fulfilled. Thanks.

Sell: 2006 Eclipse GT, red, 72,000mi., 3.8L, 6cyl, auto Loaded plus leather, sunroof, am/fm/cd Ex. Cond., one owner. \$10,200 drone@ecasd.k12.wi.us or 715-835-9318

Sell: Bench upholstered in floral/berry print with 3 matching pillows, \$75. Round end table with quartz top, \$50.00. White plant table, \$25. Glider rocker with blue fabric and matching ottoman, \$100.00. Call 835-3180 and ask for Kathy Campbell.

Sell: Ranch home on prime lot in Hoyem Acres behind Sherman Elementary School. Built in 2004 - 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, 3 car garage, open concept, vaulted ceilings in kitchen and living room, fenced in yard, basement is in the process of being finished. \$179,900 2216 Vesterheim St. Email bethduellman@hotmail.com or call 715-577-6923

House Sitting Wanted: Do you need responsible house sitters this winter or spring? My daughter and her family are relocating across country and are looking for a temporary home this winter/spring. In exchange for a place to stay, they would love to ease your mind and take care of your home, pets, and plants, while you are away. If interested please call Ken Sullivan at 715 834 6675.

Looking to Buy – P90X DVD exercise program. Contact Jim Jeffries at jjeffries@ecasd.k12.wi.us

Day Care: Southside off Cummings Ave. Full-time or Part-time openings available. For more information please contact Kelly at 715-379-1750. Drop-ins welcome also. nkquade@yahoo.com

Sell: King-size, oak waterbed or platform bedroom set. Includes: frame, 6 large under bed drawers, 2 bedside tables with drawer and cabinet, 3 tall shelves above tables and bookcase topper. Very solid and sturdy, disassembled for transportation. Water bladder/mattress not included. Quality furniture for \$450. Call Bob Jankowski 715-456-3405. View on Craigslist.

Sell: A health-club-quality, Tomahawk brand spinning bike. Excellent condition. We are asking \$275.00. If interested contact cboone@ecasd.k12.wi.us or 715.832.4599.

Want: A Christmas Carol Dickens village. Contact sruesch@ecasd.k12.wi.us or 715-834-1524.

Want: Winter storage for sailboat. Approximately 30' in length. Electricity a plus. Contact Jan Martin, North, jmartin1@ecasd.k12.wi.us

Want for free: Need men's ties for a craft project. Need not be in perfect condition. Contact phawkenson@ecasd.k12.wi.us at South Middle School.

