



INTERCOM

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2004

Official Publication of the California Association Supervisors of Child Welfare & Attendance

CASCWA RE-ENERGIZES WITH: **TAD KITADA**

**PRESIDENT DEBBIE MORRIS BRINGS
OUR FOUR CASCWA SECTIONS
TOGETHER FOR TODAY & THE FUTURE!**

Leadership is about accomplishments. Debbie Morris is our State President and she is our leader! With the help of Tad Kitada, Debbie has brought our Executive Board together with targeted goals, high expectations and restructuring. Her presidency will positively impact CASCWA for years to come.



SPECIAL 2004-05 CONFERENCE DOUBLE EDITION

In this edition of the Intercom, you will find:

- **State president's message**
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- **The trouble with truancy rates**
- **How to calculate truancy rates**
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**DEBBIE
MORRIS**
**CASCWA
STATE
PRESIDENT'S
MESSAGE**



CASCWA
STATE EXECUTIVE BOARD
2004 - 2005

Dear Fellow CASCWA Members,

Welcome to the 2004-05 school year and to the first edition of the CASCWA Intercom. Please take some time to look through the articles, familiarize yourself with what is going on around the state, and ask yourself, "What talents do I have that I can contribute to the organization?"

I am honored to be this year's State CASCWA President and realize that there have been many skilled and dedicated individuals that have held this office before me. I am a person who recognizes the contributions of many and realize that it is impossible to lead in isolation. That being said, we are very fortunate to have so many talented individuals representing the four sections of CASCWA: Jan Passama in Bay, Sheri Hanni in Delta Sierra, Jerry Hime and Dr. Donna Opoku-Agyeman in the Southern, and Tom Neeb in the San Joaquin Section. All of these Section Presidents have more than shown their dedication and willingness to work with other members of the Board to move CASCWA in a strong and concise direction.

On August 5th, the Executive Board and the Section Board members were invited to attend our 1st CASCWA Board Retreat. Held at the beautiful Sierra Health Foundation in Sacramento, Board members met to define our mission statement, to prioritize our goals for this year, and to set a course which will strengthen an already solid organization. Facilitated by Tad Kitada, a long time CASWA member and former State and Section President, we accomplished our goal. You will find an article, by Frank Boehler, our Intercom Editor, which is designed to give the reader more information about the retreat. Many of us have been through Strategic Planning in our school districts. This retreat resembled that process and is proving to be a great start to this school year and an event that is sure to become an annual occurrence.

My goals for this year include:

- 1) **Membership:** Appoint to the Executive Board a CASCWA member who will maintain and update our membership database as well as the website. I am pleased to announce that Tom Mangione has accepted that appointment and has begun to look into it.
- 2) **Communication:** In an effort to reach a larger audience and to get information out to members in a timely manner, we are working toward being able to communicate via email all correspondence, workshop information, and articles of interest. In addition, in the area of communication, we will develop and distribute a statewide CASCWA brochure that gives information to current and new members about our organization.
- 3) **Organizational Structure:** We will be exploring the possibility of having 6 sections instead of just 4. A subcommittee, headed by Jerry Hime, will begin working on the feasibility of this option and we expect to have a proposal to the Executive Board by May.

In a time of intense teacher and school accountability, coupled with an increasingly difficult and challenging population, CASCWA is moving forward and wants to be a place where we can gain professional support, training, and guidance. I am hopeful about the direction we are moving in and look forward to an exciting year.

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CASCWA'S NEW MISSION STATEMENT

CASCWA is an organization comprised of school and community professionals who are dedicated to improving school climate, safety, and increasing school attendance. We create a network of professional support, mentors and educators and we influence relevant legislation and advocate for the needs of students, families and schools.

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BAY SECTION PRESIDENT'S REPORT – JAN PASSAMA

I look forward to the opportunity to serve as President of the Bay Section for 2004-2005. Joining me to lead our section are: Vice President, Frank Valdez, Gilroy Unified School District; Secretary, Cathy McConnell and Treasurer, Pat Acamo from the Livermore Valley Joint Unified School District; Past-President, Frank Acojido of the Acalanes Unified School District and Scholarship Chair, Alan DelSimone, West Contra Costa Unified School District. The new school year has taken off at its usual hectic pace – kind of like Christmas Eve in retail. I am sure you will agree that all of us will be happy once the start of school is over, all of our students are where they belong, and *on time* – well, we can only hope. Bay Section is looking forward to:

Upcoming Events: “*We are the Champions*” is the title of the Bay Section Fall Conference. The conference will take place on October 29, 200, at the Embassy Suites in Milpitas. We are hosting the conference “down south” in an effort to recruit new members. This annual event will feature **Debbie Staub** of the Casey Family Foundation. Debbie, an active advocate for all children, serves as the Education Coordinator for Casey Family Programs. Her work centers on identifying and implementing best and promising practices as they relate to improving educational outcomes for children and youth in foster care at local, state, tribal, and national levels. Our second presenter is **Walt Kosta**, a retired Captain with the San Rafael Police Department, who operated the Marin County Drug Task Force for several years. Walt’s presentation will focus on drug behaviors – identifying behaviors and dealing with them. The cost of the conference is \$50 for CASCWA members and \$60 for non-CASCWA members. All CASCWA members are welcome to join Bay Section as we continue to “**champion**” child welfare and attendance. For more information, please contact Cathy McConnell at the Livermore Valley Joint Unified School District (925) 606-3206 or at cmcconnell@livermore.k12.ca.us. Plans are also in the works to organize our winter and spring events. Details to follow . . .

The Livermore Valley Joint Unified School District is extremely proud of the accomplishments of the Bay Section Scholarship winner -- Christina Sabatini. Christina is the first in her family to attend college. Christina’s mother,

Cindy, accompanied her to the spring luncheon held at the Poppy Ridge Golf Course in May. Christina will continue her education at Las Positas Community College in Livermore majoring in Art. We all wish her well in her educational endeavors.

Ron Kinninger, Director of Child Welfare and Attendance for the Pajaro Valley Unified School District was the CASCWA Bay Section Award Winner for 2004. He has been a long-time, faithful Bay CASCWA member. Ron has rarely missed a CASCWA event, has several times been a presenter, has brought non-members to events, and has provided valuable input and assistance, including bartending at conferences! He served on our Monterey conference planning committee and was going to be a presenter until he ran into a deer while riding his bike! Ron made sure, though, that the team from Pajaro Valley still made a wonderful presentation. Ron has a wealth of ideas and has been a strong CWA leader in his district and county. Way to go Ron and thanks!

Increased membership will once again be a goal for the Bay Section. We hope that by alternating conference sites throughout the section that we will be able to attract and enroll new members.

DELTA-SIERRA SECTION PRESIDENT'S REPORT - SHERI HANNI

Our Section Board is off to a great start planning the 2004-05 State Conference. We are excited to be hosting the conference at the Sheraton Grand Hotel in downtown Sacramento on April 20th, 21st and 22nd 2005. The theme for this year is "Delta Days in the River City, Bridges to Success." We plan to continue with the informal atmosphere that was such fun in San Diego while bringing together excellent speakers and political representatives to speak on a variety of topics. Mark your calendars now, you won't want to miss this conference.

Our Section Board members for this year include Bob Kruse from Yuba City Unified School District; Debbie Morris and Kate Bishop from North Sacramento School District; Mike O'Leary from Sacramento City Unified School District; Joe Taylor from Sacramento County Office of Education; Rich Davis, Retired Member; Tad Kitada from Placer County Office of Education; Matt Collier from Elk Grove Unified School District; and Jane Claar from Rio Linda Unified School District.

This year, we will continue to focus on offering workshops throughout our section on topics such as SARB, suspension/expulsion, emergency plans, homeless services, etc... and will continue developing and expanding our electronic connection to our members.

Our Section would also like to congratulate the two winners of the Rich Davis Scholarship Award for 2003-04. Both students overcame significant obstacles to graduate from high school and are enthusiastic about continuing on a successful path.

It's an exciting time to be working in the field of CWA and I am looking forward to another great year with CASCWA.

SAN JOAQUIN SECTION PRESIDENT'S REPORT - TOM NEEB

SAN JOAQUIN SECTION: Hello to all of our state CASCWA members and to the fine members that belong to the San Joaquin Section. It is a pleasure to belong to an organization that is dedicated to helping all of us become better at serving the students, parents, and districts that each of us represents whether we are new to our positions or have become long-time veterans. San Joaquin says, "thank you" to all of the experts in our field of work, those CASCWA members that always answer the call to answer a question, solve a problem, or present workshops for the benefit of all of us.

The San Joaquin Section will kick off the year by holding our annual Bass Lake Conference, October 1 and 2. Conference topics will include the McKinney-Vento Act regarding the "Homeless" legislation presented by Laura McBride and "Is it Legal?" by Kevin Torosian. Another highlight of the workshop weekend will be the Friday night dinner. This social event, 'Barbecue by Bill' Stewart is one that never leaves us hungry and always provides a great kick-off for our Friday night activities at Bass Lake.

Other planned events for the 2004-05 school year include the January workshop in Los Banos at the Woolgrowers Basque Restaurant, January 28; the spring conference held in Clovis, March 11; and the spring scholarship luncheon held in Merced, scheduled for May 20.

Our goals for this year are simple: keep the executive board members well informed; up-date the membership data base; provide value information to our members; reach out to members we have not been in contact with, prepare for the state conference to be held in Fresno, April 2006, and to enjoy and invigorate one another.

Featured Member: Many of you know Dennis Wiechmann. Dennis is the past section president and current “President-Elect of the State CASCWA,” Dennis has been a member of CASCWA for 5 years and has risen to the top levels of the organization because of his organizational abilities and “can do” attitude. Dennis was born in Fresno and is a young man of 35 years. He served as a school psychologist prior to his current position of Director of Child Welfare and Attendance for Sanger Unified. Previously, Dennis has worked for Central Unified and the Fresno County Office of Education. Dennis is a valued member of the section and has pledged to be a member until retirement and beyond. We just want Dennis to know that at 35 years of age, we look forward to his leadership for many years to come.

We look forward to the dedication and the leadership that will be offered by the Executive Board including: Tom Neeb, President, Los Banos; President Elect, Bill Stewart, Clovis; Vice President, Benita Washington, Fresno; Secretary, Mike Robinson, Fresno; Treasurer, Phil Swearingen, Ceres; Legislative Representative, Greg Bass, Clovis; Membership, John Bryon, Modesto; Scholarship, Galen Wright, Madera; Special Events, Kevin Torosian, Fresno; and Wes Sever, Sanger. Additionally, (and always making fine contributions to the section) are past presidents: Dennis Wiechmann, Sanger; Bob Pankratz, Fresno; and John Bryon, Modesto.

SOUTHERN SECTION PRESIDENTS REPORT – JERRY HIME

Several years ago Southern Section of CASCWA amended its Constitution and Bylaws to extend the term of office for the President to two years. Likewise, the President Elect, Vice President, and Past President also serve for two years. In my current presidency, this has a definite advantage.

During my first year in office, Southern Section hosted the annual state CASCWA conference in San Diego in April. I had the privilege of serving as co-chair of the conference with Frank Boehler, state CASCWA president. Now in the second year of my term I get to bask in the “glory” of having been involved in a conference that was extremely successful for the organization both professionally and financially. Many kudos go to the members of Southern Section who worked diligently behind the scenes to ensure that the attendees had access to exceptional presentations and networking opportunities, an outstanding entertainment venue, and excellent food service during the conference. My thanks go to all those who were so instrumental in putting together the conference, and in particular, to the leadership of Frank Boehler.

Now, Southern Section is moving into a new year. At its recent meeting, members of the Board of Directors took on the task of revising the constitution and bylaws. The intent is to provide a document that will make the section more effective and efficient in serving the members. The first draft has been completed and will be published in the section newsletter, “CASCWA Connection,” for members review and approval.

Southern Section has formed a partnership with the law firm of Best, Best & Krieger to provide a series of legal forums during the year. The first of these will address issues of child custody and will be held November 19th. Additional information will be forthcoming.



★ PREVENTION & INTERVENTION SPECIALISTS ★ SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS ★ SOCIAL WORKERS

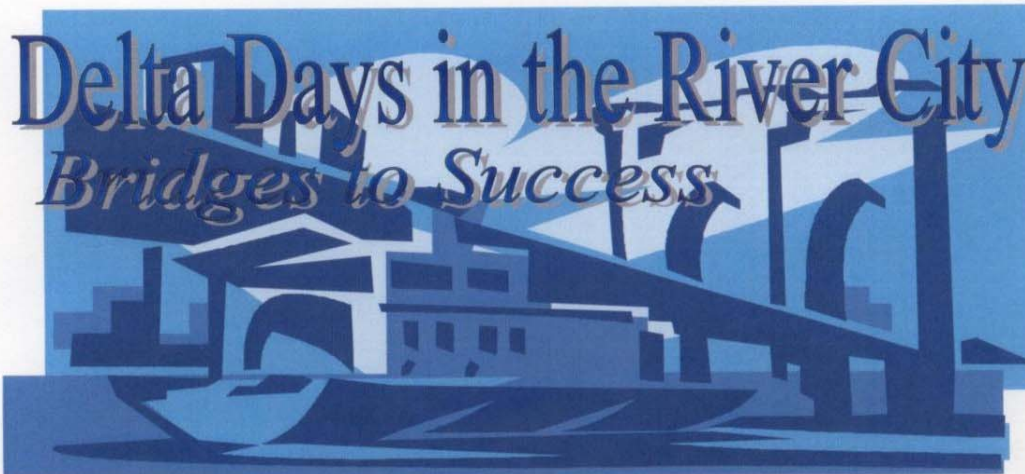


CASCWA



California Association of Supervisors of Child Welfare and Attendance

SAVE THE DATE 2005 State Conference Sheraton Grand Sacramento April 20 - 22, 2005



Wednesday, April 20th

President's Academy

Thursday and Friday
April 21st and 22nd

State Conference

CASCWA is a community of unique school professionals joined together for the common purpose of creating a network of support and professional growth, and advocating for children. Our organization includes four regional sections of California; Bay, San Joaquin, Delta, and Southern Section

★ CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES ★ SECURITY AND SAFETY SPECIALISTS ★ SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICERS ★ HEALTHY START COORDINATORS

★ SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS ★ LAW ENFORCEMENT ★ CHILD WELFARE & ATTENDANCE WORKERS ★ EXPULSION HEARING OFFICERS

★ SCHOOL COUNSELORS ★ SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM SPECIALISTS ★ 504 COORDINATORS

CASCWA INTERCOM INTERVIEWS DEBBIE MORRIS AND TAD KITADA

Intercom: *Debbie you're the new President of CASCWA. What are some of your goals and aspirations for this upcoming year?*

Debbie Morris: I would like to see the board set and define the mission statement, which we have already done. We need to publish a brochure that we can get out to our members. I would like to be sure our membership lists are up to date and accurate and that we have an easy, quick and efficient way to communicate with members.

Intercom: *In order to achieve some of these goals, you have brought the CASCWA Executive Board together with a purpose. Would you please comment on this process?*



Tad: Over 10 years ago at a retreat, the State Executive Board developed a strategic plan in which we reshaped and redefined the mission statement and goals. Unfortunately, we haven't been doing that since that retreat. I really looked at this opportunity when Debbie brought the idea of the first Executive Board meeting, followed by a retreat, that the organization could again start looking again strategically at some broader mission and long-term goals. This also gave us an opportunity of "gelling", as an executive board, which we have done!



Intercom: *You brought us together at a really great place in Sacramento. What was that place?*

Debbie Morris: It was the Sierra Health Foundation and they are a wonderful organization that works with schools and groups who work toward dealing with mental health issues. Their facility is free for folks who are doing in-services, training or conducting meetings in the areas of health.

Intercom: *During part of that meeting, you had assigned Tad the task of bringing the executive board together as a whole.*

Debbie Morris: Yes, we held a committee meeting comprised of Jan Passama, Jerry Hime, Tad Kitada and myself. Together we took a look at what we wanted to accomplish during this year.

Tad: We defined what we call "focus areas", pretty broad areas where we can set about doing some goal development.

Intercom: *Tad, I was impressed with your preparation that day. Describe the process that you went through and discuss some of the results generated by the executive board's session.*

Tad: Very quickly, since one of the things was that we hadn't done any strategic planning in 10 years, we wanted to see what had changed between 1994 to the year 2004. It was kind of an interesting way to start. Jan happened to find some highlights from 1994, and we all kind of chuckled. But what it did was to force us to focus on some significant changes. For example, the notion of safety, is much more in everyone's eyes today then it was 10 years ago in 1994.

We also took a look at trends and shifts in the national culture and the state of the state. From those trends, we looked at how those trends began to impact CASCWA as an organization. How did that impact CASCWA's mission? Then we took a look at the current mission statement. This forced our organization to unify as a "State Organization" and to reflect on the current mission statement. Suggestions were made as to how we might re-write the mission to reflect our organization as of 2004.



Intercom: *We broke our missions down into separate areas. What were those four areas?*

Debbie Morris: Yes, the executive board came to consensus that our efforts need to be in four main areas. The areas are (1) Membership, (2) Legislation, (3) Communication and (4) Organizational Structure.

Intercom: *Each of the members of the Executive Board had an opportunity to work on each of these areas and provide their input. What about the individual CASCWA Sections, Bay, Delta-Sierra, San Joaquin and Southern?*

Debbie Morris: Additionally, most of the sections have actually "piggybacked" on the state's organizational meeting. They have done their own mini-version for those sections that couldn't bring executive board members to the state's retreat because of scheduling or other conflicts. Basically, they took the same format, brought it back to their sections and are focusing on our organizational focus at the section's level. I am proud of the steps taken by our local executive boards.

Intercom: *What were some of the outcomes that eventually came out of our major areas? What were some of the objectives that we finalized?*



Debbie Morris: The number one goal and the number one focus area had to do with membership and effective communication to all of our CASCWA members. The biggest goals of the year are to absolutely have a solid database of the active and inactive members and then come up with a plan to effectively communicate on a constant basis. So to do that, the sections have taken on the responsibility of assigning a membership and communications chair, a person that will, through his/her section, be the one responsible to communicate via the president and the other members at the section level.

The thing that came out for me at the retreat was an overwhelming response from everybody to solidify our database and membership and the tremendous desire to increase communication and connect at the local level regarding legal forums, local activities, assembly and senate bills and our success stories, CASCWA scholarships! We put on a great conference every year, but CASCWA is much more than a state conference. Our membership has a lot to be proud of and our CASCWA superstars will be recognized!

Intercom: *You also asked everyone to work on a new mission statement.*

Debbie Morris: We did. We updated it. Tad began the retreat by looking at the trends. We also looked at the mission statement, where we are today and thought, well, does the mission statement need to change. It did. It reflected the changes that Tad mentioned already in the areas of safety, but also taking a look at expanding the fact that we not only work with children, but that our roles include efforts with families and the community. So, the mission statement is reflective of that.

Our new mission statement now reads, ***“CASCWA is an organization comprised of school and community professionals who are dedicated to improving school climate, safety, and increasing school attendance. We create a network of professional support, mentors and educators and we influence relevant legislation and advocate for the needs of students, families and schools”.***

Intercom: *Tad, you have been around CASCWA for many, many years. In fact, last year you received the “Lee Lundberg Service Award”. This is the award given to the individual who represents the tradition of the great child advocate, Lee Lundberg, and to an individual who has provided exceptional service to STATE CASCWA. We are glad that you are serving once again on the executive board. Can you please share with our membership a few reflections on CASCWA as you look back on all the years that you have served this great organization?*

Tad: CASCWA has been a mentor to me professionally throughout my career. This is a true profession and the CASCWA networking that I have experienced has been exceptional. Words cannot properly describe the importance of professional interaction. Over the years, I have worked side by side with phenomenal educators and many of my proudest moments are working with numerous “CASCWA Child Advocates” in school districts, law enforcement, psychologists, and other CASCWA alliances. I am indebted to those CASCWA legends, who welcomed me to this great profession, and encouraged me to remain true to my convictions!

Debbie Morris: In this age of teacher and school accountability, CASCWA must equally be accountable to its members. We often talk to our students and families about setting goals, writing them down, reviewing them regularly, and celebrating when they are accomplished. We have modeled that same process through this retreat. We have set goals, written them down and are now sharing them with our members. We will review them and report on their progress and expect that members will give us feedback either through section communications or by talking directly to state board members. In the end, we fully intend to celebrate our accomplishments and set a course for the next year. It is an exciting time and we welcome everyone’s participation and feedback.

I wish to thank the “Intercom” for presenting this article for our members. CASCWA is truly a unique organization and I am proud to represent each of you as your president. We hope that we will look back at the end of this year with accomplishments that you can be proud of for years to come.

We have a strong executive board, outstanding section leadership and our state conference will deliver sessions to our membership that only the State Capitol can deliver. I hope that before the year is over you we can take the time to smile at each other and reflect back on a great year



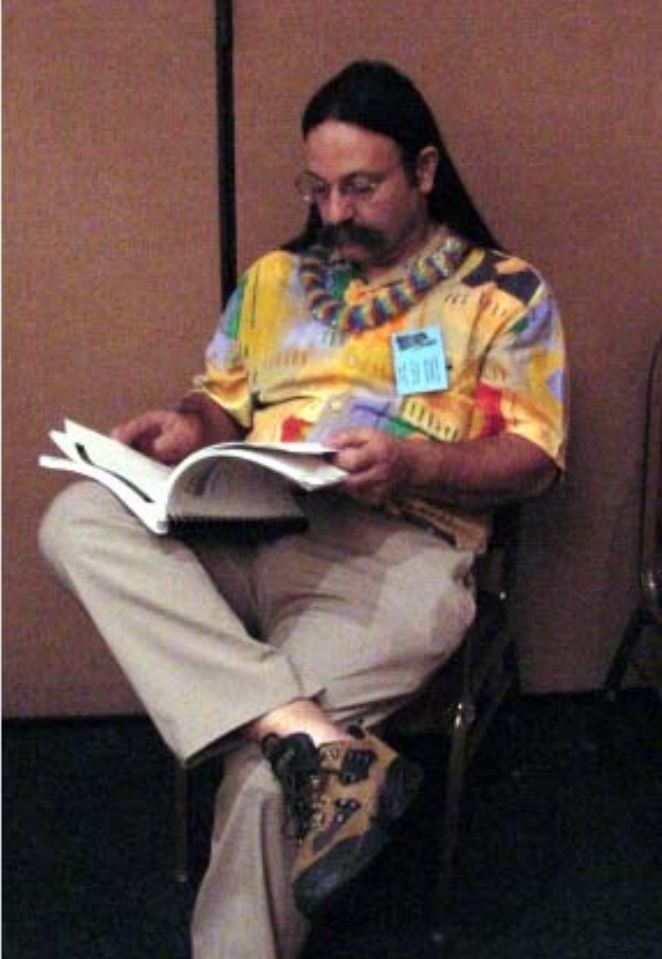
"CAN WWW.CASCWA.ORG HELP YOU?" BY TOM MANGIONE

The CASCWA website includes organization information from the of the Bay Section, Delta-Sierra Section, San Joaquin Section and the Southern Section featuring information to their members. A message from each Section President, the members of the Executive Board, current events, workshops, and general section information, can be found.

CASCWA's website is designed for CWA professionals to assist them in their everyday needs. This website has the latest CASCWA organizational information, late breaking notices and alerts in the field of CWA, as well as the CWA Research Portal.

Need some specific CWA information? The CWA Research Portal has a wealth of information. This Portal section has 17 important links that help you gather CWA information from such sites as John Burton's Bookmarks, Federal Dept. of Education, State Dept. of Education, California County Offices of Education, and individual districts with CWA sites. In addition, auxiliary information is available such as Education Codes, Legislative Bills, California Legislators, NCLB information, and more.

Need a specific CWA question answered? "Ask An Expert" is a popular link. Your question is relayed to the CASCWA experts to answer. This web site offers much more in the area of CWA than listed here. Please go to www.cascwa.org to find out all of the CWA information provided. Happy "web surfing."



The CASCWA Intercom Editor considers Mr. Tom Mangione to be one of the true quiet giants in our field!

SPECIAL EDITION: TRUANCY RATES - FACTS OR FICTION

If we were running a furniture building company, we would probably count the number of chairs sent to stores for sales. If we were running a bakery, we would probably count the number of cakes sold each day. If we were running a barber shop, we would probably count the number of haircuts each day! However, we are in the school business and when it comes to counting educational statistics, we sometimes make things so difficult that important data, which could be of significance, becomes useless. Thus is the case of "Truancy Rates".

Schools throughout the state are reporting the following. On one day of the year, they are asked for their truancy rate. Of course, no school district wants to report a high truancy rate. In fact, it is not unusual for the reporting person not to be in CWA or the supervisor of attendance. They report a low number. Later, the same district makes a "Mandated Claim" for truancy notifications mailed home during the year and reports a much higher number to recoup the money that the district rightly deserves. In today's age of computerization, these rates could be easily generated as part of the attendance auditing process and there would be no statistical deviation. This portion of the Intercom focuses on this important topic facing all school districts today. What is your district reporting?

"The trouble with truancy rates" by Tad Kitada

At the State SARB meeting on August 19, 2004, preliminary data was released regarding the truancy rates from all schools and districts in the State. As you know, under NCLB requirements, states are required to report truancy rates. California chose to report truancy as defined in EC 48260. The report distributed to State SARB reflects wide variation in reports. Many schools reported a 0 truancy rate while many other schools reported wildly high rates 2000% or more. What the truancy rates reflect is a statewide problem in application, data collection and defining the real issue.

1. The truancy rate as defined is a moving target, at best, in interpretation. Schools vary widely in applying the law especially as it relates to tardiness and period absences.
2. The truancy report using a fixed denominator of the CBEDs enrollment date is not a true rate as it divides a year's cumulative total by a single point in time snapshot of enrollment.
3. The truancy rate, like the drop out rate, compels schools and districts to make negative reports on themselves. When asked to look bad, most people will try to paint a better picture. It is only human nature and the nature of institutions.
4. The truancy rate, like the drop out rate, is a meaningless number as currently reported. It allows districts to play shell games with numbers. Actual attendance like the graduation rate speaks to the more important outcome. These are our true goals. "Bottoms on seats and diplomas in hand". Reducing school truancy can be done on paper (as we see in this report) as can reducing dropouts but nothing actually gets better.
5. Truancy is not the issue. The issue is about improving attendance. The procedures in EC 48260.5 and EC 48262 outline notification processes and attach a label to a child who is absent without valid excuse. Upon notification, the E.C. outlines procedures for follow up including legal interventions. These interventions are only a piece of the pie in terms of raising school attendance. CWA colleagues report greater concern for all children with **excessive** school absence whether or not they are labeled truants.



As David Kopperud, State SARB Chair has stated: "I think this issue of the truancy rate is crucial to the mission of the State School Attendance Review Board. Until the truancy rate and dropout rate are accurate measures, we cannot expect policymakers to take the matter seriously. Test scores will be the focus of all attention because those numbers have more meaning. State resources will never be reprioritized to meet the needs of truants or dropouts if there are not accurate counts of students in those groups. When schools underreport truants and dropouts, the effect is to continue the status quo for those student groups. I think we have a daunting challenge."

State SARB has appointed a committee to work towards the improvement of accurate truancy rate reporting. The committee is co-chaired by Dave Soper, El Dorado County Office of Education and Tad Kitada, Placer County Office of Education. Members include Craig Borba, Palm Springs Unified, Sherman Garnett, San Bernardino County Office of Education, Joe Taylor, Sacramento County Office of Education, and David Kopperud, California Department of Education. If you are interested in assisting in this effort please contact David Kopperud (916-327-6061), Tad Kitada (530-745-1392) or Dave Soper (530-295-2296).

Lois Baer, Deputy District Attorney, Santa Clara County, Truancy Program Director, made an excellent presentation on truancy and truancy prosecution at the State Conference in April, 2004. It was standing room only and there were not enough handouts to go around. If you did not receive the handout, please go to our CASCWA website at WWW.CASCWA.ORG.

Definitions: Truancy and how to calculate truancy rates
(previously published in the Intercom)

We asked David Kopperud (shown here with Shirley Abrams), Education Program Consultant, California Department of Education, to provide us with the calculation method to determine truancy rates. He provided the following information:



California's definition of the truancy rate is defined on our website at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/spbranch/ssp/truancy.htm>. After defining a truant and the first notification mandate, the web site discusses truancy interventions and penalties. It then defines the truancy rate. The State SARB has made a recommendation about modifying the truancy rate formula to take into account students not present on the CBEDS Information Day, but we do not know what the response to that recommendation will be. Many schools have truancy rates exceeding 100% because students not counted by CBEDS become truant during the course of the school year. There is also a huge problem in secondary schools where many students have numerous unexcused absences of more than 30 minutes due to period "ditching" as well as a significant amount of teacher error (especially in changing attendance marks for students who are late).

I think CASCWA members will be interested in the LAO Report on Compulsory Education which concurs with most of the State SARB recommendations. We are particularly pleased that the LAO is recommending that all SARBs implement Education Code Section 48273 for reporting SARB referrals and outcomes to the county superintendent. While many SARBs already collect the data as required by Education Code Section 48273, there are many more SARBs in a number of counties that are still lagging behind. Having a governing board-approved system to gather and transmit SARB data ensures that SARBs will not be marginalized as programs without accountability. To order the handbook from CDE press, call 1-800-995-4099. In addition, the *SARB Handbook* may be downloaded free at any time from:

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/ai/sb/documents/sarb02.pdf>

Other important CDE SARB websites are:

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/ai/sb/>

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/ai/>

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/ai/tr/>

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/ai/cw/>

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/ai/cw/attendstrategy.asp>

(THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION IS FOUND ON THE CDE'S WEBSITE)

Truancy:

Information and resources that define truancy & truancy penalties and other related information.

Definition of a Truant

The California Legislature defined a truant in very precise language. In summary, it states that a student missing more than 30 minutes of instruction without an excuse three times during the school year must be classified as a truant and reported to the proper school authority. This classification and referral helps emphasize the importance of school attendance and is intended to help minimize interference with instruction. The *Education Code* Section that defines a truant reads as follows:

Education Code Section 48260 (a): *Any pupil subject to compulsory full-time education or compulsory continuation education who is absent from school without a valid excuse three full days or tardy or absent more than any 30-minute period during the school day without a valid excuse on three occasions in one school year, or any combination thereof, is a truant and shall be reported to the attendance supervisor or the superintendent of the school district.*

First Notification Mandate

In addition to the reporting requirement, the law states that the school district must notify the parent or guardian of the truant by first-class mail or other reasonable means, and that the notification must include specific information related to the student's unexcused absences. The *Education Code* Section regarding notification reads as follows:

Education Code Section 48260.5: *Upon a pupil's initial classification as a truant, the school district shall notify the pupil's parent or guardian, by first-class mail or other reasonable means, of the following:*

- (a) *That the pupil is a truant.*
- (b) *That the parent or guardian is obligated to compel the attendance of the pupil at school.*
- (c) *That parents or guardians who fail to meet this obligation may be guilty of an infraction and subject to prosecution pursuant to Article 6 (commencing with Section 48290) of Chapter 2 of Part 27.*
- (d) *That alternative educational programs are available in the district.*
- (e) *That the parent or guardian has the right to meet with appropriate school personnel to discuss solutions to the pupil's truancy.*
- (f) *That the pupil may be subject to prosecution under Section 48264.*
- (g) *That the pupil may be subject to suspension, restriction, or delay of the pupil's driving privilege pursuant to Section 13202.7 of the Vehicle Code.*
- (h) *That it is recommended the parent or guardian accompany the pupil to school and attend classes with the pupil for one day.*

Habitual Truant Mandate

The law further requires that after a student has been reported as a truant three or more times in one school year and after an appropriate school employee has made a conscientious effort to hold at least one meeting with the parent and the student, the student is deemed a *habitual* truant. The intent is to provide solutions for students who failed to respond to the normal avenues of school intervention. The *Education Code* Section outlining habitual truancy reads as follows:

Education Code Section 48262: *Any pupil is deemed an habitual truant who has been reported as a truant three or more times per school year, provided that no pupil shall be deemed an habitual truant unless an appropriate district officer or employee has made a conscientious effort to hold at least one conference with a parent or guardian of the pupil and the pupil himself, after the filing of either of the reports required by Section 48260 or Section 48261.*

Interventions

When a student is a *habitual* truant, or is irregular in attendance at school, or is habitually insubordinate or disorderly during school, the student may be referred to a school attendance review board (SARB) or to the county probation department pursuant to *Education Code* Section 48263. The student may also be referred to a probation officer or district attorney mediation program pursuant to *Education Code* Section 48263.5. The intent of these laws is to provide intensive guidance to meet the special needs of students with school attendance problems or school behavior problems pursuant to *Education Code* Section 48320. These interventions are designed to divert students with serious attendance and behavioral problems from the juvenile justice system and to reduce the number of students who drop out of school.

Penalties (student)

The law provides schools and school districts with discretion regarding student penalties for truancy as long as they are consistent with state law. The penalties for truancy for students defined in *Education Code* Section 48264.5 become progressively severe from the first the time a truancy report is required through the fourth time a truancy report is required. The *Education Code* Section regarding penalties for students who are truant reads as follows:

Education Code Section 48264.5: Any minor who is required to be reported as a truant pursuant to Section 48260 or 48261 may be required to attend makeup classes conducted on one day of a weekend pursuant to subdivision (c) of Section 37223 and is subject to the following:

(a) The first time a truancy report is required, the pupil may be personally given a written warning by any peace officer specified in Section 830.1 of the Penal Code. A record of written warning may be kept at the school for a period of not less than two years, or until the pupil graduates or transfers, from that school. If the pupil transfers, the record may be forwarded to any school receiving the pupil's school records. A record of the written warning may be maintained by the law enforcement agency in accordance with that law enforcement agency's policies and procedures.

(b) The second time a truancy report is required within the same school year, the pupil may be assigned by the school to an after school or weekend study program located within the same county as the pupil's school. If the pupil fails to successfully complete the assigned study program, the pupil shall be subject to subdivision (c).

(c) The third time a truancy report is required within the same school year, the pupil shall be classified a habitual truant, as defined in Section 48262, and may be referred to and required to attend, an attendance review board or a truancy mediation program pursuant to Section 48263 or pursuant to Section 601.3 of the Welfare and Institutions Code. If the district does not have a truancy mediation program, the pupil may be required to attend a comparable program deemed acceptable by the school district's attendance supervisor. If the pupil does not successfully complete the truancy mediation program or other similar program, the pupil shall be subject to subdivision (d).

(d) The fourth time a truancy is required to be reported within the same school year, the pupil shall be within the jurisdiction of the juvenile court which may adjudge the pupil to be a ward of the court pursuant to Section 601 of the Welfare and Institutions Code. If the pupil is adjudged a ward of the juvenile court, the pupil shall be required to do one or more of the following:

(1) Performance at court-approved community services sponsored by either a public or private nonprofit agency for not less than 20 hours but not more than 40 hours over a period not to exceed 90 days, during a time other than the pupil's hours of school attendance or employment. The probation officer shall report to the court the failure to comply with this paragraph.

(2) Payment of a fine by the pupil of not more than one hundred dollars (\$100) for which a parent or guardian of the pupil may be jointly liable.

(3) Attendance of a court-approved truancy prevention program.

(4) Suspension or revocation of driving privileges pursuant to Section 13202.7 of the Vehicle Code. This subdivision shall apply only to a pupil who has attended a school attendance review board program, or a truancy mediation program pursuant to subdivision (c).

Penalties (parent)

Penalties against parents apply when any parent, guardian, or other person having control or charge of any student fails to compel the student to attend school. The penalties against parents in *Education Code* Section 48293 (a) become progressively severe with a second and third conviction. The *Education Code* Section regarding penalties for parents of a truant reads as follows:

Education Code Section 48293 (a):

Any parent, guardian, or other person having control or charge of any pupil who fails to comply with this chapter, unless excused or exempted therefrom, is guilty of an infraction and shall be punished as follows:

(1) *Upon a first conviction, by a fine of not more than one hundred dollars (\$100.*

(2) *Upon a second conviction, by a fine of not more than two hundred fifty dollars (\$250).*

(3) *Upon a third or subsequent conviction, if the person has willfully refused to comply with this section, by a fine of not more than five hundred dollars (\$500). In lieu of the fines prescribed in paragraphs (1), (2), and*

(3), the court may order the person to be placed in a parent education and counseling program.

Truancy Rate:

The truancy rate of a school is determined by the number of students in a school who are classified as truants pursuant to *Education Code* Section 48260 during the school year compared to the enrollment of the school as reported to the *California Basic Educational Data System* (CBEDS) in October of that school year. For example, if the school has an enrollment of 600 students, it will have a 50 percent truancy rate if it has 300 students classified as truants during the year.

How One California Company Is Helping School Districts Win the War on Truancy

This edition on truancy rates would not be complete if we did not include an article on the topic of truancy notifications and mandated costs. CASCWA turned to our friends at “SCHOOL INNOVATION AND ADVOCACY” (FORMERLY KNOWN AS MCS EDUCATION SERVICES”. The staff of School Innovation and Advocacy have been CASCWA friends for years and are experts on truancy and truancy notifications. We shared with Jeff Owen, Product Manager, our concern regarding truancy rate reporting and truancy related mandated cost claims and Jeff shared with CASCWA the following comments:

For school district officials, absence most definitely does not make the heart grow fonder.

With the tough fiscal situation in the State of California, district officials have a lot on their minds: budgets, staffing concerns, class size reduction and complex new programs like Highly Qualified Teachers and No Child Left Behind.

Yet truancy remains a major topic of conversation when speaking with district Superintendents. Besides the fact that truancy costs districts hundreds of thousands - and for some districts, millions - of dollars in lost ADA revenue, the California Department of Education has found a correlation between truancy and low academic achievement, behavioral problems, class disruption, dropping out of school, not graduating, joblessness and crime.

With this in mind, I set out earlier this year to develop a product that would meet all of the compliance standards - and one which school districts could easily incorporate into their current truancy process.

It Started With The Mandate

First, some personal background. I came to work for MCS education services (whose name recently changed to School Innovations & Advocacy) five years ago. For the first four years, I consulted with School Districts on State reimbursable mandates as well as on gathering the needed documentation to prepare the claims.

Two of these mandates revolve around the California Education Code sections that requires the notification of initial truants and the reclassifying of habitual truants. After spending these years working with attendance staff at the sites, as well as with Directors of Pupil Services and C.W.A.s, it became apparent that truancy programs varied from district to district and from site to site.

Of the more than 60 districts with which I worked, I never found two with exactly the same truancy procedure. For example, when it came to the mailing of initial truancy letters, some districts were centralized through the district office, some were managed through the sites and some simply didn't mail any letters out.

The managing of Habitual Truancy was similarly inconsistent. The amount of time dedicated to truancy conferencing varied dramatically: some districts claimed zero time and some claimed exorbitant amounts of time in follow-up and scheduling of conferences. I also observed that while many districts used some sort of attendance software, data was never readily available or in an easy-to-understand format; in addition, few staff knew how to operate the system well enough to retrieve it.

I began to identify areas in which school districts either lacked the knowledge or did not have the resources available to implement an effective truancy program.

From Mandate Solution to Truancy Solution

In the beginning, our truancy program revolved around the notion of reimbursement for sending the initial truancy letter. We would not only get the district in compliance and maximize the Notification of Truancy mandate claim, but we would also be helping districts create awareness with parents that their sons or daughters had truancy problems. Many of you may have heard or read about our initial truancy offering known as "First Step" which was rolled out at the end of the 2003/2004 school year. The name of our initial product was correctly named: what we had done was take the first step in understanding truancy and what is needed to truly manage it.

I took over development of our company's truancy product in April of 2004. I spent the next three months refining the process of producing and mailing out the initial letters for clients that had signed up for First Step. I began meeting with various district officials to discuss our First Step program as well as reading various reports that were published regarding truancy.

I found out how much truancy weighed on the minds of every department within a school district: Chief Business Officers saw how much their district was losing in ADA every year; Directors of Curriculum witnessed the impact truancy had on test scores; School Resource Officers spoke about the high amount of community resources that were tied up with truancy; and Directors of Pupil Services had limited resources and readily accessible data to manage the districts truancy problem.



I also looked at the number of truants that were reported to the State Controllers office and found that the average district in California sent 10 percent of its enrollment an initial notification of truancy letter. I took that state average and compared it with districts that had a highly organized and compliant notification process and found that they were sending 30 to 40 percent of their enrollment initial notices. I also began to look at various reports that were published on truancy, including Grand Jury findings.

It was reported that many schools lacked the ability to effectively enforce the state compulsory attendance law and that school districts that were able to experienced significant improvements in their truancy numbers. (Even with the No Child Left Behind requirement for reporting the number of truants, school districts are still showing up with either zero or, when followed up with, report that they don't have a way of tracking that information or don't classify their students as being truant.)

E - Truancy

From speaking with districts regarding what their truancy programs lacked and what could really make a difference with their truancy problem, I narrowed it down to three functions:

- letter production
- habitual truancy management
- analysis of data.

The first part would still deal with letter production. Initial truancy letters on their own will not significantly improve truancy rates; but for some parents, receiving the initial notification of truancy is an eye opener that their sons or daughters have been cutting school.

The second part would be to give the sites a tool that sets up a workflow for scheduling truancy conferences. The biggest impact on truancy is made by conducting truancy conferences. It is in through these conferences that parents and school officials can identify the issues that may be causing the student to be truant, and work together to formulate solutions to get the student back in the classroom. Through the attendance data that is tracked through the district's attendance program and the criteria determined by the district, we identify for the sites the students for whom a truancy conference is needed.

Attendance clerks, secretaries, counselors and other appropriate personnel are now able to track the students through the process of scheduling, conferencing, and reclassifying, including the amount of time taken for each step as well as a notes function for later reference. Simply put, this function prevents students from falling through the cracks.

In speaking with attendance clerks, we have found that much of the time they would have a list of students - but that follow-up notes were kept on note pads, Post-Its and desk calendars. Consequently, when it came time for another round of follow-ups, some kids got missed.

Finally, we found that districts had limited access to reliable and timely truancy data. Having up-to-date hard data allows districts to become proactive during the school year by being able to know where to focus its resources. Not only do we provide school districts with easy-to-read graphs - with information such as comparisons between sites and grade, demographic data, conferences held, students reclassified and more -but we also review the data with our clients throughout the year.

Sense of Community

School districts, parents and the community are all affected by truancy. Parents want to know that their children are safe at school, receiving the best education possible. Local places of business don't want the burden of dealing with students hanging around their shops during school hours, and school districts want to find a way to keep children in their seats.

E - Truancy is one way to demonstrate to the community and to school site employees that the district acknowledges the problem of truancy and is working on definitive ways to alleviate it.

It also works. While doing our research, we found that those districts in California and in other States that implemented comprehensive truancy programs increased their ADA from 2 -6%. Now there's a thought to make the heart grow fonder.

If you have any questions for Jeff, you may contact him at:



***Jeff Owen
Product Manager
School Innovation and Advocacy/MCS education services, Inc
11130 Sun Center Drive, Suite 100
Rancho Cordova, CA 95670
(916) 669-5159 direct phone
(800) 487-9234 toll free
(916) 669-0889 fax***

JOE BRUCIA

Keynote Speaker

CASCWA Conference

April 25, 2004

San Diego Marriott Hotel

Good afternoon fellow CASCWA members. Well, I am finally glad that CASCWA has reached a point in time that it can pay it's keynote speaker a \$1,000 speaking fee...so here I am! *(for the record, Joe spoke out of the goodness of his heart!).*

You know, my daughter is a senior at Sacramento State. She is earning her Bachelor's Degree. Her major is something called organization communication. I have never heard of it, but I had a nice meeting with her because she is ready to graduate. I said, "Gina, what are you going to do with your future?" I said I am not sure what your major is. What can you do? Gina said, "Well, Dad, I can do a lot!"

Now, bear in mind that my daughter, Gina's, Bachelor's Degree has taken five years. So when she said she could do a lot, I wasn't quite sure. I said, "What exactly can you do?" She mentioned two or three jobs and then she said, "A CONSULTANT."

Gina, I said, "A consultant?" I'm a consultant! Thirty-five years of education, what can you consult in!" She said, "Dad, but I do have 5 years of a college education." You know, if it was only that easy....but she did mention one thing that was so important to us in our job and that's communication, so we all need that in our job and we need to know that.

If I were to name three items that CASCWA needed to be a success in our job, it would be: One: *Knowledge of Child Welfare & Attendance Laws.* Two: *communication skills;* and three, *a genuine feeling for others - I care.* We're going to spend some time talking about these.

You know, let's talk a little bit about knowledge. I came to CASCWA some 15 or 18 years ago. The first conference I went to was at the Holiday Inn in San Diego. It was put on by Karen Saunders. It was a tremendous success. I was so excited and I went to all those district meetings because I was brand new in Child Welfare & Attendance and the last thing I wanted was to be embarrassed when I went back to my district.

Well, as with many of you, I went to a presentation by some guy named, John Burton. If any of you know, when John talks, he can recite education codes inside and out. And he is up there talking about Ed. Code 48900, which, as you know is different that Ed. Code 48915, the whole process is put together by Ed. Code 48918 and don't forget, folks, don't forget that 601 child and 602 child!!

I had no idea what the hell a 601 or 602 child was! As a matter of fact, I immediately went over to that "California Laws Relating to Minors" when I got home and let me tell you, it was a lot thinner than this book right here, but to me, it was great guidance. I looked at every Ed. Code in the world to find what a 601 or 601 child was, but I finally found it! And I finally found out the difference between Ed. Code 48900 and 48915. Now I was ready to go back to my district. When I got back home, I was able to have answer for all of my district's vice-principals.



The other place I got all the knowledge in the world was from the Los Angeles County Office of Education Student Services. They present stuff, material so much better than the State Department....I couldn't get anything from the State Department. They had so much material and great stuff that I needed.

All of you remember, especially if you are new to this organization, you can get a hold of them through the CASCWA web page and request information. People from L.A. County get all kinds of information from them, but here in Northern California, we can also get that knowledge and that knowledge is on the web page at CASCWA.org. You go in there and you can find everything. Just get to that Research Portal and I can get into any of your districts and L.A. Unified has all kinds of stuff; John Burton's Cyberspace Bookmarks, it's all there. The only thing you need to hit.

Communications skills is something we are losing. All they do is start talking before I can say a word, so I just listen, listen, listen, let him wind down and say what can I do for you. Genuine feelings.....it's a hard skill to learn...you can't learn that here in CASCWA. It takes time. You've got to have that genuine feeling for others. You've got to have it here in your heart and I know that when you are just talking and meeting with people out there that you acquire this feeling. So when a parent comes in, you do look sincere. So believe me, if you do not have those feelings, if you do not care for the child, if you do not care for that parent, FAKE IT! When you fake it enough, you will soon start caring.

I want you to all remember the incident that the child was brought in for. Don't blame the parent. It's always nicer when you can kind of relate to them through your experience, with your own family. Remember, kids do make mistakes and that we are effective when we work from the violation forward.

One thing important to me in CASCWA are the people right here. That person sitting right next to you is a great person. Their number one feeling for anything or their number one goal is not a promotion, it is not a raise. They truly, truly believe the number one reason they are here is for that child sitting right across from them and I applaud everyone of you.

They call us the California Association of Supervisors of Child Welfare & Attendance. Really the "S" stands for "specialists"...we are all specialists. California Association of Specialists of Child Welfare & Attendance.

So remember, to be a success, have knowledge of the laws, communication skills and genuine feeling for others. It's been a great 35 years for me in education and even better, 18 years in Child Welfare & Attendance. I hope that this message has given you a bit of a uplift and being proud to be in the Child Welfare & Attendance field. It's been a great ride. Thank you very much and "Happy Trails."

"Joe Brucia retired in 2004 from the Merced Union High School District. His mark on CASCWA, as section president, executive board member, past state president and conference organizer will last for generations. As the Intercom Editor, I consider Joe Brucia to be an exceptional individual and a loyal friend".

PURCHASE ORDERS

From: Jerry Hime [gjhime@earthlink.net]
Sent: Thursday, September 09, 2004 12:53 PM
To: Intercom Editor
Subject: Newsletter Article

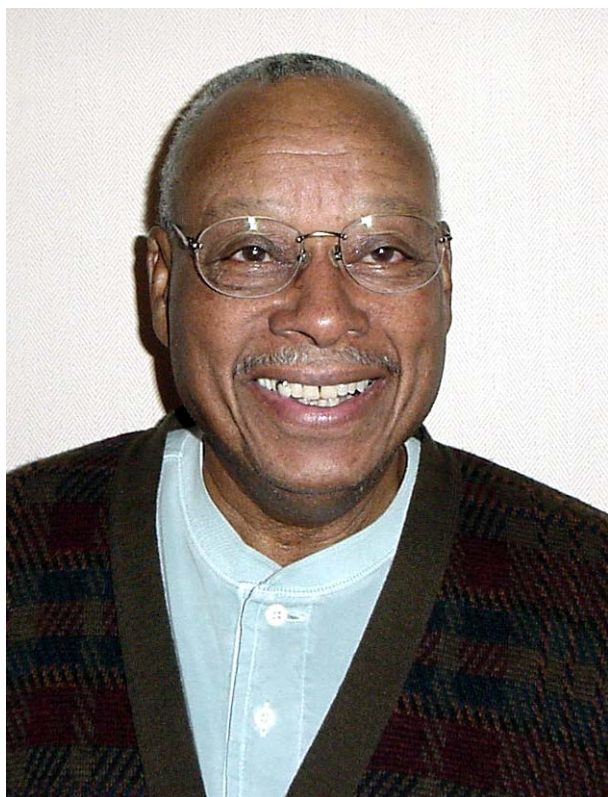
Here's a short one:

PURCHASE ORDERS ACCEPTED FOR MEMBERSHIP, FORUMS AND STATE CONFERENCE

Memberships, new or renewal, may now be submitted through a school district purchase order. These should be forwarded to:

CASCWA - Membership
Post Office Box 4223
Huntington Beach, CA 92605

RICH DAVIS SCHOLARSHIP DELTA-SIERRA SECTION



The “Richard C. Davis Scholarship Award” was established in 1986 by the Delta/Sierra section of the California Association of Supervisors, Child Welfare and Attendance.

Two “Five Hundred Dollar” scholarships are given annually to a Continuation or Alternative school graduating senior planning to continue their education in college or a vocational training school. The scholarship award was designed to recognize the resiliency of a student to overcome personal obstacles to graduate from high school and is planning to continue their education.

Scholarship Awards were presented this year to:

“**Hope Marie**” from Stronghold High School in Camby California, Modoc County. Stronghold is a group home run by the Modoc County office Education. Hope enrolled in stronghold after having a difficult time staying in high school and running away from home. Hope finally returned home and decided , “I need help to get back on my feet”.

She said that she was inspired by someone who was there for her through all of her mistakes. She is now ready to graduate and due to start at Shasta College in Redding. Her goal is to become a social worker. We were all impressed by Hopes’ emotional reception of this award and humbled by the experience.

Krystal F. from Independence High School Diamond Springs, El Dorado County.

Krystal decided that the only way to secure a comfortable future was to return to high school and obtain a diploma. She realized that to be the first in her family to graduate was very important. She is planning to pursue a program in Child Psychology. Her ultimate goal is to become a social worker to help children in foster homes.

Krystal said “I have been through a lot not having been raised in proper families. I have also learned a great deal through my struggles. I want to give something back”. She is planning to enroll at Consumnes River College this fall.

THREE ARTICLES BY ROBERTO CASAS, Ed.D.

Roberto Casas is the Director of Alternative Education and Programs for the Chino Valley Unified School District. He has written several articles on authentic assessment and presented at national at-risk conferences. He currently serves ACSA Region 12 as the representative on School-to-Career Committee and has served as a chair for the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) accreditation reviews He received an Ed.D. through Nova Southeastern University.

Roberto’s presentation at the recent state conference was outstanding. Dr. Casas is a true child advocate and one of “Southern Section’s” MVP’s. We thank you for your contribution to this edition of the Intercom and for all that you do for “Southern Section!”



“Levity and humor – Keeping our jobs in perspective” by Roberto Casas, Ed.D.

In our daily routine as school and district level administrators, we often do not have time to reflect on the scope of our leadership and the impact we have on determining the direction of *our* schools. Further, I find myself taking *everything* much too seriously.

During the course of *my* readings of professional journals and articles, I find much enjoyment in reading about and reflecting on the lighter side of our profession and the humorous situations I find in the educational arena.

This brings to mind a story I read entitled, The Art of Communication, published in the Thrust Maine, October 1983-No.19. I've used this story when speaking before teachers and groups. Communicating with others can sometime be a challenging task. I'd like to share The Art of Communication with you.

The **school superintendent** told the assistant superintendent the following: "Next Thursday, at 10:30 a. m., Halley's Comet will appear over this office. This is a phenomenal event that occurs only once every 75 years. Call the principals and have them assemble their classes on the athletic fields. If it rains, cancel the day's observation and have the classes meet in the auditorium to see a film about the comet. "

The **assistant superintendent** said to the principals: By order of the superintendent, next Thursday at 10:30 a.m., Halley's comet will appear over our athletic fields, If it rains, cancel the day's classes and report to the auditorium with your classes where you will be shown films, a phenomenal event which happens only once every 75 years."

The **principals** said to the teachers: "By order of the phenomenal superintendent, at 10:30 a.m. next Thursday, Halley's Comet will appear to our auditorium. In case of rain over the athletic field, the superintendent will give another order, something which happens only once every 75 years."

The **teachers** told the students: "Next Thursday at 10:30 a.m. the superintendent will appear in our auditorium with Halley's Comet, something which happens only once every 75 years. If it rains, the superintendent will **cancel** the comet and order us to our phenomenal athletic field."

The **students** said to their parents. "When it rains next Thursday at 10.30 a.m. over the athletic field, the phenomenal 75 year-old superintendent will cancel all classes and appear before the school in the auditorium with Bill Haley and the Comets."



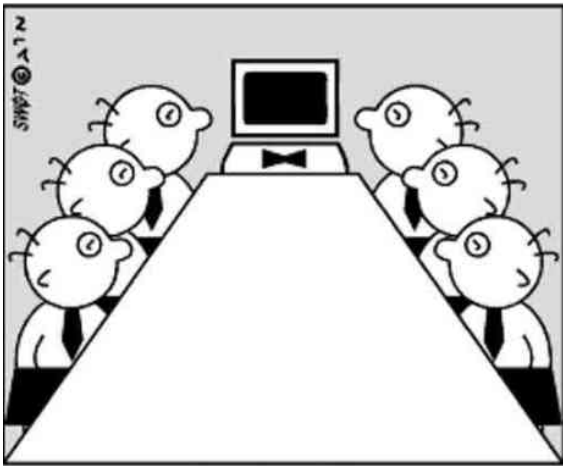
“Leadership: Developing vision through reflective practice” by Roberto Casas, Ed.D.

On a daily basis, I think of my leadership and the impact it has on the on-going operations of the Student Support Services offices of the Chino Valley Unified School District. I am a firm believer in the art of reflective practice. Reflective practice provides an informal evaluation and assessment toward improvement of our educational leadership functions.

Reflective practice frames the process of continuous improvement. It addresses questions about leadership, authority and tackling hard problems. Reflective practice helps us to adjust, fine-tune and change the way we do business through daily experiences and "real-life" situations. Reflective practice has a direct impact on our leadership style. It recognizes "conflicts over values" and establishes purpose.

Leadership requires learning strategies. With this in mind, I have developed some practical ideas/thoughts about the practice of leadership:

- Leadership takes place everyday
- Leadership helps us develop conceptual frame works for practice
- Leadership is the ability to effect change, even through adversity
- Values play a key role in the development of authority and leadership experiences



leadership

forward position

- Leadership conjures up images of social contract. The ability to mobilize and develop our own focus
- A key to leadership is the contingency theory, where a leader earns influence by adapting to various situations
- Leaders, through reflective practice develop value systems. People with competing values engage one another as they confront a shared situation from their own point of view
- Leadership is setting the frame, establishing the bottom line, making un-popular decisions.
- Leadership is the ability to adapt by using restraint
- Leadership is dealing with tough realities
- Leadership means having a clear vision and the capacity to persuade people to move in a positive and

- The anguish of leadership is derived by what we learn through experiences
- Leadership oftentimes is a passionate and consuming activity, yet the practice of leadership requires a sense of purpose.

Thus, reflective practice cannot be used to maintain the "status quo". Leadership as it relates to reflective practice helps us learn that only by changing ourselves do we have the ability to change others or the course of direction.

“Creating an assessment culture: The ten assessment initiatives that improve student performance” by Roberto Casas, Ed.D.

The political ramifications of mandated "high-stakes" assessment have become a fundamental reality as has any other irresistible movement that sweeps over our politics and society itself, forcing aside all that stands in its way.

The educational agenda has become political folly for politicians and lawmakers. "High-stakes" assessment and standardized assessments reflect a revised ideology for accountability. Defenders of standardized testing do not try to deny that it forces schools to reconfigure the written, taught, and tested curriculum."

The whole concept of "curriculum alignment" is a euphemism and is a relatively new idea-that tests should be used not only to measure performance but also to mandate what is valued. According to Freedman (1993), it seems that it's done deliberately because it offers policy makers "one of the few levers on the curriculum that they can control," (p. 49).



One would think that when officials sit down to formulate an education policy, they would begin with the "end in mind," and they would start by agreeing on some broad outlines of what students ought to know and be able to do and then address the question of measuring how successfully this is happening. The reality, though, often seems to be exactly the opposite. As we all become spectators to the "political football game" of the California High School Exit Exam (HSEE), we need to sit patiently and wait for the dust to clear to see what will be the final results of this "high-stakes" testing program. At this point, high school administrators don't know whether to punt,

pass, or kick because they don't know the political outcome of this educational reform "policy window" It seems that litigation will reign when students who complete high school will not receive a diploma.

This assessment "policy window" has afforded an opportunity for the Governor to advocate for accountability in schools, using monetary rewards as the carrot. This accountability thrust has even impacted alternative schools and those who work in the alternative education arena. As we all know by now, this is the first year of the Alternative Schools Accountability Model (ASAM) that was recently legislated by the State of California. This mandate states The Schools Accountability Act, chapter 3, [Article 2, Section 52052(g)] requires that by July 1, 2000, the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, with approval of the State Board of Education, shall develop an Alternative *Schools* Accountability Model for schools with fewer than 100 pupils, and for schools under the jurisdiction of the county board of education or a county superintendent of schools, community day schools and alternative *schools*, including continuation high schools and independent study schools (Advisory Committee for Public Schools Accountability Act, p. 1).

Unlike the SAT-9, Accountability Performance Index (API), the ASAM does not have the same monetary rewards as the API. Clearly, an ASAM that does not provide for a model of recognition and reward is unfair and penalizes those at-risk students, teachers, and schools that need the most encouragement.

Knowing that rewards are not attached to the ASAM, we all must prepare for an "assessment culture" regardless of rewards. Further, we must have enough political savvy to know that an ideological shift about "what ought to be" fluctuates over time as a consequence of the tension of prevailing values- Because standardized tests, high-stakes assessments, and accountability are the only games in town, those in education will continue to hear words to When these principles and practices become habits in an organization or school, people apply them to both the internal curriculum and external curriculum. Then, they have created "an assessment culture."

"CASCSWA CWA GROUPS KEEP GROWING AND GROWING" BY JOE TAYLOR



Two years ago, I attempted to expand on a good idea that was occurring in Southern California. I attended a meeting of CWA's from several of the Counties in Southern California. The meeting was very worthwhile and the information sharing was great! I decided to try and have a meeting in Northern California to also get that same information sharing from colleagues up North. That meeting was also very successful and resulted in the formation of a statewide informal information sharing group of CWA's. Most of the members are CWA's at the county level but some are also representatives from District level CWA's. In some areas around the state, there is not a county CWA but instead active CWA's in local school districts. Anyone who is a CWA is, of course, welcome to participate.

Last year, the group held its first statewide meeting at the Sacramento County Office of Education. In addition to the information sharing that was provided, there were also updates provided by representatives from the California Department of Education (CDE) on No Child Left Behind issues and a great overview of the California legislative process by Jamillah Moore from the Los Angeles County Office of Education. This group that met made several resolutions to continue to have an annual statewide meeting, expand the membership to other

CWA's statewide and further develop a directory of all of our CWA's. The group also planned an activity that would continue our statewide information sharing and be a forum on a CWA topic of interest.

Back in May 2004, our first statewide Teleconference was held. The Teleconference was broadcast from the Sacramento County Office of Education to eleven other County Offices of Education. They were Shasta, Sonoma, Butte, Placer, Contra Costa, Santa Clara, Fresno, San Luis Obispo, Ventura, Los Angeles and San Bernardino. Other Counties actively participated and over one hundred people attended at the various sites. The Teleconference highlighted showcase District Attorney Mediation programs around the state. As part of the Teleconference, each participating site had the opportunity to interact with each showcase programs to ask questions and find out information. The second half of the Teleconference was an interactive discussion on various

CWA issues. The Teleconference was a great success and provided a forum for discussion on a statewide basis on an important CWA issue. I received and continue to receive many inquiries on issues that came out of the discussions as a result of the Teleconference. A videotape of the Teleconference is available.

Another result of the Teleconference put on by our CWA group is interest in our group continues to grow. New CWA's from around the state are joining and getting involved with our group. The next statewide meeting of the CWA's will take place November 5, 2004, at the Sacramento County Office of Education. The agenda will include presentations from CDE staff on issues including: Persistently Dangerous Schools, Truancy Definitions, State SARB, and High School Reform. Jamillah Moore has been invited to again provide a perspective on what's really going on with our legislators. There will be planning for the next statewide Teleconference to be hosted by Los Angeles County Office of Education. And of course, there will be lots of great information sharing and discussion about multiple CWA issues. Much has happened with our CWA group in the past two years and we look forward to continuing our growth and providing more information to CWA's all over the state!

"TEN" COMMON SENSE TIPS FOR YOUR PROFESSIONAL PROTECTION"

- 1. If it's not in writing, it doesn't exist.***
- 2. Whenever you write anything, pretend it will be on the front page of your daily newspaper.***
- 3. Before making decisions make sure you are following your local employee contracts, district policies and State of California regulations.***
- 4. Keep your staff, superintendent, supervisors, and board informed --- no surprises!***
- 5. Use your email professionally and prudently at all times.***
- 6. Treat ALL people with respect at ALL times.***
- 7. Make sure all confidential matters remain confidential.***
- 8. Be proactive, not reactive.***
- 9. LISTEN to what your staff and colleagues have to say... Sometimes you'll hear things you should know, even if these things may be unpleasant to hear.***
- 10. Pay attention to details.***

These tips are from the work of Bill Tschida, ACSA Professional Standards Advocate.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE - WHAT'S GOING ON IN SACRAMENTO? UPDATE

The intercom continues to rely on the expertise of Joe Taylor, Sacramento C.O.E., jtaylor@sacoe.net and Sherman Garnett, San Bernardino C.O.E., sherman_garnett@sbcss.k12.ca.us, to provide our membership direct legislative information. Our next edition of the intercom will focus on legislation and the legislative process. Also, one of the primary goals of this year's state conference is to focus on Sacramento and the legislative process.

Did you know that there were 50 bills authored and introduced that included text pertaining to school safety during 2004?

The Assembly bills include AB X1, 38, 42, 86, 96, 97, 100, 115, 298, 300, 349, 356, 424, 435, 490, 825, 1017, 1129, 1137, 1266, 1419, 1554, 1650, 1754, 1765, 1769, 1800, 1858, 1860, 1987, 2066, 2117, 2122, 2153, 2274, 2377, 2525, 2584, 2756, 2824, 2841, 2855, 2860, 2970, 3001, 3037, 3049, 3082, 3105, and 1038. Of course they were not all approved and signed into law by the governor, but we need to know what the tone and direction the legislature is taking regarding CASCWA.





Joe Taylor and Sherman Garnett are busy preparing for the next Intercom Edition. This will be a special legislative update and we are planning to interview one of the most outstanding legislative analyst, Jamillah Moore.

CASCWA took interest on AB 1012, Steinberg. Pupils: interrogation. This bill that was supported by the PTA and opposed by several districts and ACSA. This bill, with certain exceptions, would have required the principal of a school to take immediate steps to seek the consent of the parent or guardian of a pupil prior to making the pupil available to a peace officer for questioning, with certain exceptions, and would have prohibited making the pupil available for questioning if the parent or guardian requests that the pupil not be questioned until he or she can be present.

Governor Schwarzenegger did not sign the bill. He stated, *"I believe parental involvement is an important part of ensuring a pupils academic success. This includes informing parents when their child is involved in a disciplinary or school safety investigation. Currently, there are a number of constitutional and statutory protections that shield juveniles from excessive and unreasonable interrogations. However, I am concerned that the procedures required by this bill are too broad and may result in a number of safety and liability issues. The requirements of this bill would apply to principals when making pupils available for any questioning by a peace officer, including cases where a pupil is a witness and where a pupil is not suspected of delinquency. These broad parameters may result in significant delays in investigation and could jeopardize the safety and security of the school and the surrounding community"*. We will be looking to Joe and Sherman for more legislative information in our next edition.

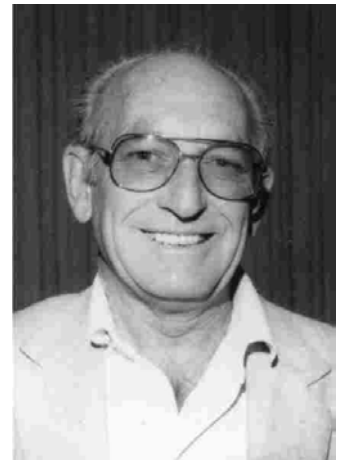
MR. JEAN STOVALL "A GENTLE MAN AND A CASCWA LEGEND"

A few days ago, Mr. Gil Awalt, Past CASCWA State President, contacted the Intercom and delivered the sad news of the passing of Mr. Jean Stoval.

Mr. Stovall has been instrumental in the way child advocates function throughout the State of California and has been a strong influence to the careers of hundreds of school administrators and CASCWA membership.

There would be no CASCWA if it weren't for Jean Stovall. There was a time when CASCWA could not meet its financial obligations and was about to go under. Jean Stovall not only stepped forward and provided true leadership, he personally financed the organization until CASCWA was solvent and could meet its obligations.

As the editor of the Intercom, I am sure that Jean has joined Lee Lundberg, Milton Dooley, and Jack Erickson in that special place in heaven for the advocates of children. He truly is deserving.



Jean's family asked that we share the following with our membership: *"Jean Stovall was born Dec. 9, 1934, in Cordell Oklahoma, and passed September 17th surrounded by his family and loved ones, due to complications related to ALS. He settled in Delano, California, with his parents, Jack and Bobbie Jean Stovall, when he was 12 years old where he helped build the family home. He attended grade school in Delano and later graduated from Delano Joint Union High School in 1946. He went on to attend college at the College of the Sequoias and eventually graduated from Fresno State University. He later obtained a masters degree from CSUF, and attended San Joaquin College of Law where he earned his Doctorate in Law.*

Jean worked for Clovis Unified School district for 40 years, where he served as Supervisor of Child Welfare and Attendance. He was passionate about education and made a lifelong commitment to creating safe schools and

enriching environments in which children could learn and thrive. He served as President of the California Association of Supervisors of Child Welfare and Attendance and worked to influence legislation that would impact schools across the state.

After being diagnosed with ALS in 1997, Jean fought against his disease with grace, dignity and great insight. His wisdom influenced the lives of many and his passing will leave an imprint on all who knew him.

He is survived by his devoted wife Linda, and his three daughters and their families; Alison and Rusty Moon and their children Lacey, Cody, Riley, and Cordell, Cynthia Stovall and Jaak Sanders and their children Dianna and Drew, and Cherise and John DeLucia and their son Dominic. He is also survived by his mother, Bobbie Jean Stovall of Redding, and his three brothers, Jim, of Tulare, Jerry of Redding and Jan of San Diego.



ALS slowly robbed him of his mobility, but it never took away his spirit, presence or tenacity.

A Memorial Service was held Friday October 8th at 3:00 pm at the Veterans Memorial Building in Clovis.

In lieu of flowers donations can be made on Jean's Memory to the ALS Association/Bay Area Chapter 140 Geary Street San Francisco CA 94108 (415)392-2572.

Thank you Jean for your leadership and influence!

"10th ANNUAL CASCWA BAY SECTION MINI-FALL CONFERENCE"

"WE ARE THE CHAMPIONS"

October 29, 2004, Embassy Suites, Milpitas 8:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Presenters: Debbie Staub, Casey Family Foundation & Jim Wesson, J.D. Wesson & Associates

Debbie Staub, an active advocate for all children, serves as the Education Coordinator for Casey Family Programs. Her work centers around identifying and implementing best and promising practices as they relate to improving educational outcomes for children and youth in foster care at local, state, tribal and national levels.

Jim Wesson is a motivating, humorous, and down to earth professional trainer who uses personal and professional experiences to deliver his dynamic messages. His sole focus is to provide quality training and consulting services to agencies and organizations across the country.

Please register by October 15, 2004. Please contact **JAN PASSAMA** at (510) 670-4225 (510) 670-4146 Fax jpassama@acoe.k12.ca.us for details.

This conference is an authorized expenditure of School Safety, Safe and Drug Free Schools, Title I, Title VI, and SIP Funds.



California Association Supervisors of Child Welfare and Attendance

First Name	Last Name	School Year	Today's Date
Mailing Address	City	Zip	County
Name of School/Place of Employment	School and District	County	
Email Address			

() _____ Home Phone Number
() _____ Business Phone Number
() _____ Fax Number

New Membership Renewal: Section Affiliation (Check One): Bay Delta San Joaquin Southern

Send Application Form to:	Annual Dues: Please Make Checks Payable to: CASCWA MEMBERSHIP (Purchase Orders are Accepted)
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