

WISCONSIN CHAPTER OF NATIONAL AT-RISK EDUCATION NETWORK

Vol. 2, Issue 5 **NEWSLETTER**

May 2006

“We must capture a student’s heart, before we can capture their mind”.

From the President:

This year being president of NARENWICH I have taken the time to visit a few of our member programs. It has been an enjoyable experience as I have been able to get to know members more personally and have been able to talk with them concerning their programs and important needs they and their programs have. One of the things that I did recognize that was true about each of these programs was the relationship they had with their community. Each person talked about the value of this relationship and the characteristics of the community relationship. I took all of these characteristics and grouped them into three major components in order to have a successful community relationship. These components included: community awareness, a community trust and a community support.

Community Awareness – It is important that the community understand what education is today. They need to understand that schools and education is different then when they went to school. That today’s students have more severe needs and therefore how and what we teach is different then when they went to school. We don’t have the same old rigid mental model of what schools were like when they went to school. We must understand that in most of our communities 75% of the community members don’t have children in schools. It therefore becomes a must that we are educating not only our students but also our communities about our programs and the needs of students we are teaching.

Community Trust – The community needs to be able to trust the district in its reporting of information and eventually the information you provide as well. It is very difficult to have any kind relationship with out trust. It becomes a bigger issue for us as we try to preserve our programs and provide for our students. I find it interesting one of the first things we do with our students is to build a sense of trust and respect. We all understand without that trust and respect we are going to go absolutely nowhere in the relationships we have with students. The same is true within the community we work. We need them to trust us, to trust what we are doing is good for students and eventually it will help them to trust our students as well.

Part of building this trust is letting them know what were doing and why. It is sharing with them everything about our programs, the victories and the failures. One person said that they even seek “permission” from the community about major changes they are proposing. He said that if

the trust has not been established or if it has but been broken it does impact the ability to make effective and long lasting changes, which in turn could affect student learning.

Community Support – This needs to be done by building conversations with your community, your board of education, your administration and with your teachers. Talk about your successes. Talk about your failures and share the list of challenges that you might have. Take time to visit Kiwanis, Rotary, Legion Posts, Eagles and Elk clubs and share your story. We need to use community members to help support changes in our programs and our districts. Often times we go about reorganizing curriculum, instruction methods, starting new programs, and changing calendars without talking to community and the result is short lived changes. Then when we need their support for those things that are really important to our programs, our district or our students the support is not there.

These are what I would call as prerequisites in building a solid community relationship. Having a positive and strong community relationship will only be a positive for your programs. That was truly evident with the programs I visited.

Getting to Know Your Board of Directors

To be continued in the next newsletter.

NEWS TO KNOW!

- Take a look at the new NARENWICH website at: www.Narenwich.org.
- **The 2007 NARENWICH State Conference will be March 8 – 9, 2007, at the Plaza in Wausau, Wisconsin.**
- **ALERT** – if you have not been getting your newsletter, or you have moved and/or your email has changed, please contact Betsy Haltinner at haltibet@gscd.k12.wi.us or call (715) 265-4266 ext. 6220.
- Facts from the 2005 Wisconsin Youth Risk Behavior Survey:
 - 31% of students reported riding with a driver who had been drinking alcohol at least once in the last 30 days.
 - 27% of males carry a weapon with them.
 - 22% of males, 33% of females are feeling sad or hopeless, two weeks in a row.
 - 14% of males, 22% of females considered suicide
 - 12% of males, 18% of females made a plan
 - 7% of males, 11% of females attempted suicide

49% of students reported drinking alcohol in the past 30 days

31% of students reported binge drinking (5 or more drinks in a row) in the past 30 days.

27% of males, 32% of females reported had sex in the past 3 months.

The bottom line is even on our worst day when the students are just driving us over the edge, they still need us to be there for them. They need all of our care, all of our ability to listen and most of all, all of our compassion.

Voices from the Conference

The Third Annual Reclaiming the dream conference was held this past March in Wausau. It always amazes me to see the amount of networking that goes on in such a short time. Once again Jennifer Varsik and her committee need to be congratulated on such a wonderful conference. Pat Wolfe was outstanding as was Marcus Gentry. The presenters for the break-outs were practical and very valuable to each and everyone us in the work we are doing. Here are a few thoughts of what others are saying:

“I have been to this conference the last three years and every time I have walked away renewed and energized. I am excited to take back to our students several new ideas!”

“This was a great way to get recharge.”

“Pat Wolfe was wonderful.”

“Was very surprised how great the presentations were.”

“Lots of info in 1 ½ days. Looking forward to next year.”

Here are some words to describe what was being said about the presentations: Fantastic, Interactive, Thought Provoking, the Presenter was Engaging, Well Done, Very Personal and Helpful, Relevant to my Situation were just a few of the comments.

Plan now for next year; make sure that you put into your budget the resources necessary for you to join us at the “Fourth Annual Reclaiming the Dream Conference”.

At the conference the membership approved a new districting plan for representation on the board. The board representation will now be determined by CESA districts. Representation on the board is as follows:

Region 1: CESA 10 and 11

Region 2: CESA 9 and 12

Region 3: CESA 7 and 8

Region 4: CESA 3 and 4

Region 5: CESA 5 and 6

Region 6: CESA 1 and 2

Please look on the last page of this newsletter to determine who your regional representative is.

CONGRATULATIONS to this year's NARENWICH award winners. They are:

Region 1 – Judge June Cicero
Region 2 – Jim Lee
Region 3 – Elizabeth Timmins
Region 4 – Cheryl Hoff
Region 5 – Ken Kortens
Region 6 – Erin Hanson-Baisley
Anthony Dallmann-Jones Award – Jane Haasch

Congratulations to you all and thank you for all you do for at-risk students.

Do you know someone who is deserving of one of these awards? Don't forget to nominate them and provide the honor that is due them for all of their hard work.

A Thought

An unknown poet penned this verse about builders and wreckers:

Builders and Wreckers

I watched them tearing a building down,
A gang of men in a busy town.
With a ho, heave, ho and a lusty yell
They swung a beam and a wall fell
I asked the foreman, "Are these men skilled?
Like the men you'd hire if you had to build?"
He laughed as he replied, "No, indeed
Just a common labor is all I need
I can easily wreck in a day or two
What builders have taken years to do."
I asked myself as I went away
Which of these roles have I tried to play?
Am I a builder who works with care
Measuring life by rule and square?
Or am I a wrecker who walks the town
Content with the labor of tearing down?

Why is it so many of us find it easier to be a wrecker than a builder? A builder sees problems as challenges and seeks solutions; a dismantler sees problems in every solution. A builder sees flaws and tries to fix them; the dismantler sees flaws in every fix. We need more builders.

NARENWICH Needs YOU!

Carole Mottaz had to resign her position as treasurer because of time constraints and personal reasons. I want to thank Carole for her time on the NARENWICH Board. Her contributions were many and she will be missed.

If you are interested in this position please contact me ASAP. The board will be looking to fill this position till the conference next March, when elections can be held for a new treasurer. Please email or call me if you're interested.

Currently Region 3 (CESA 7 and 8) and Region 4 (CESA 3 and 4) are without representation on the NARENWICH Board. If you or if you know of someone who would be interested in serving on the board (two-year term) please contact Jill Gurtner at jillbg@mcpasd.k12.wi.us . Your help in filling these positions would be greatly appreciated.

Committee Work – We can sure use some help! We have three standing committees that are need of some people that are willing to lend a hand in making our organization even better then it is.

1. **Conference Committee** – if you're interested in helping to plan for the annual NARENWICH Reclaiming the Dream Conference please talk with Jennifer Varsik at jrvarsik@yahoo.com . She is always looking for individuals who are creative and interested in helping make our conference even better.
2. **Member Services Committee** – please see Betsy Haltinner at haltibet@gcsd.k12.wi.us . The membership committee has been busy updating and publishing the membership directory and is looking to expand its role this coming year to better serve our members.
3. **Political Action Committee** – is it your feeling the state and federal government ought to be doing more to support at-risk programs and children? Do you have a special interest in issues that are affecting our students and their families? Then this committee is for you. Please contact, Shirley Jensen at skidge47@hotmail.com if you're interested.

Come on; get involved after all it is your organization.

HONORS and VICTORIES

Flea Market

This being our last newsletter till next October, please have a safe an enjoyable summer. Take time for family, for yourself and take time to reflect and grow.

Peace,

Randy

Don't forget to share your ideas and news with us. E-mail Randy Hughes.
hughesr@kaukauna.k12.wi.us. Here is a update list of your Board of Directors.

Randy Hughes, President	hughesr@kaukauna.k12.wi.us	(920) 766-6100
Sally Schulz, President Elect	sschultz@madison.k12.wi.us	(608) 204-2440
Heidi Thuli, Secretary	hthuli@cesa1.k12.wi.us	(262) 787-9545
VACANT, Treasurer		
Jill Gurtner, Past-President	jillbg@mcpasd.k12.wi.us	(608) 829-9641
Elizabeth Haltinner, Region 1 Member Services Committee	haltibet@gcsd.k12.wi.us	(715) 265-4266
Jennifer Varsik, Region 2 Conference Committee	jrvarsik@yahoo.com	(715) 476-0100
VACANT Region 3 Conference Committee		
VACANT Region 4 Political Action Committee		
Meg Zabel, Region 5 Member Services Committee	zabelmeg@asds.k12.wi.us	(920) 997-1399
Shirley Jensen, Region 6 Political Action Committee	skidge47@hotmail.com	(414) 383-3172

