Message from our President

These are some very uncertain times within the State of Illinois. There does not appear to be clear direction and leadership from Governor Rauner on managing the State’s fiscal problems. Every day we read statements or hear reports about how proposed budget cuts will reduce funds for Early Childhood Intervention, municipal revenue sharing and other programs. These revenue losses have implications on multiple levels e.g. parents may need to quit work to care for their children and the loss of income may result in the parent needing to apply for welfare. There are forecasts of job losses when state funding is cut to agencies and organizations which rely on that funding to manage their infrastructure and salaries.

These are the days and months to be very proactive with your legislators. It is critical that your legislators know the full impact of budget cuts. Again, budget cuts don’t just mean job loss. So now is the time to call your legislators, write your legislators or email your legislators to help them understand how important their decisions are in the lives of their constituents. Provide them with stories and narratives about how the current budget cuts are impacting individuals and families. These narratives are powerful and help the legislators understand the human impact.

Now is the time to tell your legislators that the state income tax level needs to return to the 5% rate. While this change would not alleviate all of the fiscal problems of the state, it would provide the revenue that is so crucial to social service agencies and organizations that provide critically needed assistance to individuals across the state.

I also invite you to join with IASSW and NASW for the 2015 Advocacy Day. This event will be held on
I came across this fantastic website article on the latest dangerous apps for youth. I work in a middle school and many, many of my students are using these apps. I am also a mom so this information was useful at home and at work. I hope you find this information very valuable.

In 2013, a twelve-year-old girl was lured away from her home by a 21 year-old man. Once they met, he took her to a motel and took advantage of her. How did this little girl meet this terrible stranger?

Through an app called Whisper on her handheld device (yep, the one her parents bought her). And Whisper is only one of many dangerous apps, apps that every parent should be aware of.

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**YikYak** - All Yik Yak users are anonymous. They don’t create a profile or account, but they can post comments that are accessible to the nearest 500 people (within a 1-5 mile radius). A psychiatrist called this the most dangerous app he’d ever seen because it “can turn a school into a virtual chat room where everyone can post his or her comments, anonymously. Untruthful, mean, character-assassinating short messages are immediately seen by all users in a specific geographic area.”

Why It’s Dangerous: This app is causing problems in schools across the United States, with students maliciously slandering teacher, staff, and other students. In fact, several schools have now banned smart phones from campus because of this particular app.

**Contributed by: Keli Swierczek**


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**Contact your representatives in advance to let them know you will be in Springfield for Advocacy Day on Tuesday, April 14, 2015. This may increase your chance of speaking directly with your representative or senator or someone from their respective offices. If there is a particular issue or proposed legislation, familiarize yourself with the issues or the content of the legislation. Think about how you might start a conversation concerning this issue and how you will present the information in a quick and cogent method.**

Additionally, if you know of school personnel who are losing their jobs because of budget cuts, please forward that information to me tebbe_1948@comcast.net. IASSW has begun forming a coalition with the Illinois School Psychologists, Illinois Speech and Hearing Association, Illinois School Counselors Association and Illinois Association of School Nurses. Although the coalition is in just beginning, our hope is that the coalition can be a stronger voice in Springfield by having a large group of constituents who are serving Illinois children in schools.

**Contributed by: Tom Tebbe**

IASSW President
IASSW to Offer New FREE Member Benefit!!!

IASSW will offer several FREE to MEMBERS webinars. The first two are a series on Erin’s Law. As school social workers, we often talk about being visible, viable, and valuable. Taking the lead on implementing Erin’s Law is a great way to do just that and involves a subject matter in which we are familiar. If you do not know what Erin’s Law is or have not heard it discussed in your school, then please consider signing up for this exciting webinar series.

The Erin’s Law webinar series will be in two parts. The first will cover an overview of Erin’s Law and the second will cover implementation and sample lesson plans. Together, the two parts will give you everything you need to get your school in compliance with Erin’s Law.

So mark your calendars! Part One will be Wednesday, April 1 from 1-2pm and Part Two will be Thursday, April 16 from 10am-12noon.

Online registration will begin in March. Make sure your email address is up-to-date on our Member’s only area as we will be sending out email announcements with more information and registration instructions.

Contributed by: Phil Koehl, IASSW Executive Director

The IASSW Nominations Committee adopted the following slate for the IASSW 2015 election, for open positions. According to the IASSW Bylaws, the election of officers shall be determined by the plurality of the membership. Members eligible to vote must hold IASSW membership in good standing as of March 2015. Email addresses must be current, as voting will be entirely electronic. To update your email address, please contact Scott Carchedi. Voting will be open from March 23 - April 15, 2015.

Candidate information is included in this issue of the IASSW Newsletter. For questions, please contact your IASSW Regional Representative.

Board of Directors

Contribute by: Lindsay Okray

Greetings!

My name is Charles Brooks and I am currently a School Social Worker in Sycamore, Illinois. I have also worked in East Aurora and Rockford mainly with elementary students and these experiences have given me a unique perspective coupled with diverse opportunities. In my experience, there were challenges in conducting behavior intervention plans with integrity. I have enjoyed a diverse experience as it relates to being a school social worker in different districts. I have worked within school districts that provided access to an array of resources, personnel, administrative support, scheduling, contractual obligations, and even district supported programs. There were also instances where there was a demonstrated need for special programming that was unavailable for budget reasons or other issues. There have been many obstacles that fostered differences in the development and execution of behavior intervention plans with integrity. If you like me have experienced similar difficulties in developing and implementing functional behavior assessments and behavior intervention plans, you are not alone, and I am here to help.

Function-based behavior plans have been an innate and growing passion of mine since before I entered school social work. I have a unique background as a school social worker in that I have earned a Bachelor’s of Science in Economics. As a result, I have a hunger for gathering and analyzing data. Data is the piece of the puzzle that makes everything else make sense. My comfort and knowledge of using data and creating behavior plans has evolved mainly from what I have learned from poorly managed systems and attempted strategies that did not work. I have found that strategies can be re-used for different plans, but they need to be tailored to fit the child; which can be contrary to the idea that many educators have about tailoring the child to fit the plan. As social workers, we know this is a big no-no, and this is why function-based behavior plans are the most effective, practical, and insightful. Two students exhibiting the same behavior in class may be doing it for different reasons (in other words the behavior is the same while the function of their behaviors differ), motivated by different rewards, have different settings that do not allow for identical strategies. They may also exhibit behavior at unequal frequencies, durations, intensities, and latencies.
My plan is to offer a series of tips on creating and implementing function-based assessments and behavior intervention plans in future IASSW newsletters. I will begin simplifying the function-based behavior plan process and I will write about the important features of function-based behavior intervention plans, share experiences, and discuss strategies that can change from building to building, or district to district. If you are going to follow the series of articles in hopes of improving your behavior plans, you need to first treat your behavior plan system like other step-based programs.

Think of the Alcoholic Anonymous 12 step program, first you need to overcome denial and admit you or the system your school or districts implements may have a problem(s). Admit that the data gathered and used could be more targeted, you could update more frequently, staff could be better informed of the plan, you could involve more stakeholders, etc. Chances are, if you have read this much; you are ready for the next step. I am willing to guide you through the development of an improved FBA/BIP system and toward better behavioral outcomes. The only thing I need from you is to be open-minded and if there is one thing I would like you to take away from the series of future articles is to be fearless, be willing to move out of your comfort zone, and try new strategies to improve the system of generating, implementing, and improving behavior plans. In congruence with Dr. Seuss “the more that you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn the more places you will go.”

Until Next Time!

Charles Brooks
CURRENT LEGISLATION

Although many bills died last Friday because they failed to advance out of committee, many live bills are pending. Therefore, I have chosen some of the bills I think our readers need to know about, and a more complete report will be prepared next month after the bill passage deadline in the first house. NOTE: A bill on “2nd Reading” has advanced to the floor of the chamber and can still be amended before it is read a third time and voted on by the chamber. A bill on “3rd Reading” is ready for a vote by the full chamber when it is called.

House Bill 3123(Pritchard)

The bill would amend section 10-22.24b of the School Code pertaining to the services of school counselors. It would change a provision of a bill the school counselors passed last year regarding services to students with disabilities. IASSW opposes the bill and is attempting to negotiate language with the school counselors and the sponsor. The bill is on 2nd Reading in the House.

House Bill 1360(Gabel)

This bill would require charter schools to comply with all health and safety requirements contained in statute or regulation that public schools must follow. These requirements include, for example, the provision of home and hospital instruction and the stocking and use of epi-pens. The list of requirements would be posted on ISBE’s web site by September 1, 2015, and updated annually. The bill would not affect charter school curricula. Agreements between charter schools and authorizing districts would have to include provisions requiring the charters to comply with the ISBE’s list of health and safety requirements. This bill is on 3rd Reading in the House. IASSW supports.

SB 1604(McCarter)

This legislation would prevent ISBE from regulating special education class sizes and the ratios of IEP and non-IEP students in a general education classroom. The bill was placed in a subcommittee on special issues of the Senate Education Committee and probably will not advance. IASSW opposes the bill.

Senate Bill 100(Lightford)

The bill makes a number of changes with respect to student discipline policies in Illinois. A similar bill was introduced in 2014. For example, when a student is expelled, the school board must issue a written expulsion decision that details the specific reasons why removing the student from the learning environment is in the best interests of the school, and include a rationale as to the duration of the expulsion. The bill encourages school districts to create memoranda of understanding with local law enforcement that clearly define law enforcement’s role in the schools. The bill would prohibit the use of zero tolerance policies with regard to discipline except as required by federal law. Makes other changes. IASSW is reviewing. The bill is on 3rd Reading in the Senate.

House Bill 1458(Welch)

The bills deals with police interrogations of students. It provides that the student may request to have a parent, guardian, school social worker, school administrator or attorney present during interrogation prior to being asked any questions by the officer. Requires notification to the parent or guardian before any questions may be asked. House Amendment #1 provides that the in loco parentis authority granted to teachers under the School Code is not removed by the bill. The bill is on 2nd Reading in the House. IASSW is reviewing. This bill is a work in progress. School management groups have significant concerns about it.
Hello IASSW Members

The Legislative Committee along with the IASSW PAC and NASW-IL will be having the annual Social Work Advocacy Day in Springfield on April 14th.

The day begins at 9 a.m. at the Prairie Convention Center with a panel discussion and our own Tom Tebbe welcoming the participants. At 11 a.m. IASSW leads a break-out session with School Social Worker students and professionals. We will talk about the lobbying process and pending legislation. IASSW board members have a lunch meeting with administrators from ISBE and then meet-up at the Capitol to start lobbying.

This year has many issues pending including the Illinois pensions, public school funding, stopping Conversion Therapy and building our coalition with other school professionals.

Registration for this event is through NASW-IL’s website.

If you have any questions about Advocacy Day 2015 contact Michael Langendorf at crdmike@aol.com or 217-369-4253.

Contributed by: Michael Langendorf
School Social Workers!

Please consider nominating an outstanding School Social Worker, Citizen, or Legislator for recognition at the next Annual IASSW Conference. Is it not too soon to complete a nomination form (found on the IASSW website) and gather letters of support to submit with the nomination.

Consider nominating that special school social worker who has over the years started new programs, incorporated innovative techniques into their practice, and has gone above and beyond an already overwhelming job description. That person should be nominated for recognition. We all have an interest in maintaining the highest standards, and nominating and recognizing the best among us will celebrate those standards.

Consider that special parent, community leader, agency worker, volunteer, teacher, or administrator who has enhanced the lives of Illinois school children. That person would appreciate your support and acknowledgement.

Consider a dedicated legislator who has supported the views and positions of IASSW and is partnering with us to effect policy that best serves the needs of school children in Illinois. He or she deserves our public thanks.

Thank you for your commitment to excellence!

Criteria

School Social Worker of the Year

An outstanding School Social Worker actively practicing, supervising, or teaching in the field of school social work who:

1. Integrates knowledge and experience to provide quality services to students.
2. Demonstrates creativity/innovation in their particular school social work position.
3. Contributes to public knowledge and awareness of school social work.
4. Is an active member of IASSW in good standing.

Citizen of the Year

A public citizen or non-school social worker who has contributed to the enhancement of school social work services through personal support and public action.

Legislator of the Year

A current Illinois state or federal legislator whose work over the past years has benefited our school children, the educational system, and/or strengthened the profession of school social work.

Michelle L. Washington

Awards Committee Chair
Spotlight: Regional Representatives: Janet Craig

I would like to highlight Janet Craig this month. She is the regional rep for region 6, East St. Louis region. Janet has been a child welfare worker, hospice and bereavement counselor. She has worked in the Bethalto School District since 2007 and received the prestigious Peabody Energy Award in 2014. This award is given to educational employees who go above and beyond to motivate students to succeed. In winning this honor she was given a check for $1000, which she of course used to help students. Janet was described as dedicated and as a "saint". She works with students and families during the school day but also after school and on weekends. She trains students in the Lifesavers Program, a retreat which occurs during a weekend. In addition to being a regional representative, Janet has also been on the IASSW conference committee, making the adorable moderator gifts for the last several years.

Janet has been married to her husband Jim for over 30 years and has two daughters. She enjoys making stained glass windows and metal smithing. She says she tries to live her life making a difference one at a time. Thanks Janet! Check next month for our next bio!

Contributed by Rise Davis

IASSW Vice-President