



# WEST CENTRAL ILLINOIS SPECIAL EDUCATION COOPERATIVE NEWSLETTER

October 2007

“EDUCATING EVERY CHILD”

Volume 4, Issue 2

**“KIDS GO TO SCHOOL FOR A LIVING, IT’S THEIR JOB - THEIR WORKPLACE. AND SHE WAS FAILING DAILY AT HER JOB.”**

**INSIDE THIS ISSUE:**

“On The Edge” By: Lou Pruett	3
Business Office Bits	4
Fishing At Camp Big Sky	4
Olweus Bullying Prevention Program	5
Beginning Boardmaker Class	5
October Executive Committee	6

## View From The Corner Office . . . . By Bill Pumo



As I readied myself to compose an article for this month’s newsletter, I took some time to reflect on my current responsibilities, and I must admit that I was feeling a little overwhelmed with the seemingly endless challenges that were coming my way. I usually view my work day, a day often comprised of resolving complicated, sometimes sensitive, problems, as an opportunity to rise above and help others. It was not at all pleasant to face the realization that the thought of dealing with yet another difficult challenge felt more like a burden and not at all like an opportunity to soar. As I seemed to lose focus and drift into a state of confusion, I took a break to read a new book. Amazing! Kismet! Richard Lavoie, the author of The Motivational Breakthrough, touched my soul. Lavoie outlines the secrets to turning on the tuned-out child. His words helped me refocus.

I met Mr. Lavoie last month and was impressed by his insights. The following excerpt from the preface of his new book relays an experience from his life that I find both moving and motivating. Please read it and decide for yourself.

***“I was successful because you believed in me.”***

I have been informed and inspired by innumerable colleagues and students over the past thirty

years. There are two people who have been greatly on my mind as I’ve written this book. One is a teacher. The other is a student.

Our daughter, Meghan, confronted significant struggles with language in her elementary school career. Spelling and reading were a particular challenge for her and she had great difficulty breaking the code. Schoolwork was a daily struggle, but her ebullient personality and her irresistible charm carried her through the first three years of school. She had friends who embraced her, a family that adored her, and a personality that earned her admirers wherever she went. She was a winner. We knew it...and so did she.

Her world began to unravel when she reached 4<sup>th</sup> grade. She had an overly stern, inflexible teacher who did not find Megg’s shenanigans particularly endearing. She was a stickler for spelling accuracy and was renowned for her fifty-word Friday spelling tests. Megg began to fail. She failed often and publicly. The sparkle began to leave her eyes. “Monday morning tummy-aches” became commonplace. She had trouble sleeping. She lost confidence. She became sad and introverted and no longer carried tales of school to the dinner table to entertain her parents and her adoring brothers.

Kids go to school for a living. It’s their job—their workplace. And she was failing daily at her job.

We tried to intervene, but with minimal success. The teacher had her policies and procedures and saw no compelling reason to modify these to meet our daughter’s needs.

*(Continued on page 2)*

(Continued from page 1)

She was intransigent, and Megg went through each school day with the fear of impending failure and the wrenching knowledge that the adult in her classroom simply did not like her. Megg's attempts to please her teacher were fruitless. Praise or encouragement was simply not part of the teacher's repertoire.

We tried to "ramp up" the praise and reinforcement that we provided Megg at home in order to offset her daily rejection and failure at school, but we were fighting a losing battle. Our joyful little girl was becoming sad. My wife, Janet, and I had five education degrees between us and were professional teachers, but our daily doses of success, praise, and encouragement were offset by the rejecting and critical comments that Megg received at school every day.

One Friday, Megg disembarked the school bus and slowly opened the door to the kitchen. She had invested several hours in studying for that day's fifty-word spelling test, and her teacher had returned the test to the students that same day. Megg's efforts had paid off. She'd gotten forty-nine words correct!

But the only written comment on the paper, in bright red ink, read, "one wrong—write misspelled word ten times."

It has been said that "A mother is only as happy as her unhappiest child." The teacher's insensitive response to Megg's effort propelled Janet to action. Megg had previously begged us not to intervene in her school situation because she feared that the teacher would retaliate against her, but Janet could no longer contain her maternal instincts.

Janet met with the teacher, and as a result, the situation improved a bit. Megg received no support or praise at school, but she was no longer publicly embarrassed or chastised in front of her classmates. Small steps.

Megg completed fourth grade. The joyful little girl who loved school was lost to us. Our only hope was that her sadness and melancholy were temporary.

In early September of her fifth-grade year, she began to dread and obsess about her first day of school. She was worried.. and so were we. I was unsure that she could handle another difficult school year. She was a rough-and-ready kid in many ways and I would never have described her as "fragile." But as she walked toward the bus on her first day of fifth grade, that adjective fit her perfectly.

We waited anxiously for her to return home that day. We watched her get off the school bus. There was a bit of a bounce in her step—a bounce that we had not seen for a while. We asked her the inevitable "first day of school" question: How was your teacher?

"Pretty nice. Her name is Miss Nunes. She smiles a lot... and she smiled at me. She said that she liked my shoes and told us about her pets. Yeah... pretty nice."

Each day that week, Megg shared tales of Miss Nunes. Megg was

beginning to enjoy school again. She smiled at supper. She laughed when getting ready for school. She ran to the school bus. We were cautiously optimistic.

On that Sunday evening, Megg went to her room to do her homework. Within five minutes, she returned to the kitchen. She was beaming.

"Look, Dad," she said. "Look at what Miss Nunes sneaked into my math book."

Megg had a weekend math assignment on page 16 of her computation notebook. Unbeknownst to her, Miss Nunes had secreted a twenty-eight word note between page 15 and page 16, so it fell into Megg's lap when she opened the book. It read: ***You had a great first week, Megg. I think that this will be a good year for all of us.***

***See you Monday,***

***Miss Nunes***

***P.S. Love those shoes!!***

Now, perhaps Miss Nunes did that for every one of her students. I don't know. And I don't care. She did it for my kid and it brought a smile to Megg's face that we hadn't seen in months. Through similar random acts of kindness during the year, Sue Nunes made Megg happy again. Megg was back!

Sue taught Megg's dad something that year as well. She taught me the Power of One. She showed me that one skilled and compassionate teacher can make a difference. Just like in the fairy tales, one caring adult can change and save the life of a child.

I know that the increased responsibilities and challenges we place on teachers, coupled with the expectation that they fulfill all duties while maintaining a high degree of excellence and professionalism, can make the teaching task seem burdensome and endless, especially to the teachers. I would like to say that the teacher who demonstrated an inflexible, sterile approach to teaching was just one isolated incident. I hope so, but at the same time, I don't believe that is the case. Teachers play such an important role in the lives of their students. They also impact the lives of their students' families. Wow! When reflecting on the two teaching approaches described above, I hope we can all see that only one is motivating and humane. No matter what challenges you face, please do not allow yourself to behave as the stern, inflexible teacher described here by Richard Lavoie.

**NEEDED:**

2 Adult Older Bicycles without hand brakes and gears  
for 2 Adapted Physical Education Students.

**ALSO NEEDED:**

2 Sets of Training Wheels

If anyone has these in your basement or garage, please contact Bill Pumo and he will make arrangements to pick them up.

# On The Edge . . . . . By Lou Pruett



Yes, you guessed it!!! I'm talking about RTI again this month. We're going to be using our newsletter as one avenue in which we can disseminate information about RTI (Response to Intervention) to all of our districts. Last month I shared with you information on RTI from the Illinois 226. Rules and Regs that were finally passed in June. The Illinois Rules and Regs do provide us a basic time frame for implementation of the basic components of RTI which I feel should be developed through a broad-based general education reform. The coop made a decision to start with RTI in the content area of Reading this year even though this process can be applied in other academic areas and as well as behavior.

There are three basic components of RTI: (1) data collection and assessment systems, (2) problem-solving methods; and (3) multiple tiers of intervention service delivery. One question that always surfaces in many discussions is—so just how do we get started? The basic components of RTI are applied first to all students in a building to determine what percent of the students are responding to the “core curriculum. Each school needs to establish a baseline by administering Universal screenings three times a year to all students in the grade levels that have been identified for implementation. WCISEC purchased subscriptions to AIMSWEB PRO READING for all students in grade levels K,1, & 2 for any district that wanted to participate in Universal Screenings for reading. As a result from the first screening (benchmarking), we are now into analyzing the data and are asking ourselves two basic questions:

- ❖ Is the core curriculum effective? (80% of students making benchmarks)
- ❖ Which students are at risk for failure?

A decision must be made regarding levels of effectiveness in the core program. If there is evidence that 80% are not reaching benchmarks, then modifications must be made to the core instructional programs. If the core instruction is effective, then Tier 2 (Supplemental) interventions are provided to those students identified as “at-risk.” Three aspects of Tier 2 interventions include:

- ❖ Interventions are delivered to smaller groups of students either in the general education classroom or outside of the general education classroom.
- ❖ Interventions must be provided in addition to core instruction. Academic Engaged Time (AET) predicts achievement better than any other variable. (Dr. George Batche)
- ❖ Interventions focus on particular skill areas that need improving.

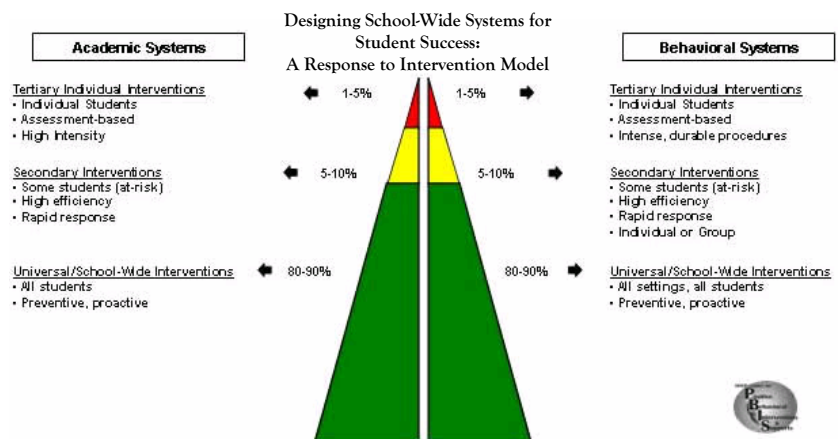
With Tier 2 we begin progress monitoring student performance frequently with the same measures used to assess Tier 1 performance. In an effective Tier 2 intervention, approximately 70% of the students receiving Tier 2 instruction should have a positive response to intervention by displaying progress that is converging towards benchmark performance. A small percent of students who are not responding to Tier 2 levels of instruction will require more intensive instruction (Tier 3).

Tier 3 interventions are based on individual student needs following a problem-solving process. Progress monitoring of interventions is the same for Tier 3 as in Tier 2— just more frequently. Characteristics of Tier 3 interventions are:

## “ONE QUESTION THAT ALWAYS SURFACES IN MANY DISCUSSIONS IS - SO JUST HOW DO WE GET STARTED?”

- ❖ Interventions are delivered to very small groups of students or to students individually.
- ❖ Interventions must be provided in addition to Tier 1 instruction. Tier 3 children should be receiving the most instructional minutes. It is critical that Tier 3 instruction does not supplant the core instruction.
- ❖ Interventions focus more narrowly on defined skill areas.

As you can see, the tiers of instruction vary in *minutes of instruction, number of children in the group, frequency of assessment and the focus of instruction*, ranging from a broad focus in Tier 1 to a very narrow focus in Tier 3. This process cannot be implemented by a one man team, but a team that uses the skills of professionals from different disciplines to develop and evaluate intervention plans that improve the school performance of students significantly.



## Business Office Bits

... By Denise Ratermann



It seems that each article lately has been consumed with updates related to our insurance and this month is no exception. The name of our Third Party Administrator has changed from CCMSI Midland to Sage Technology. There is no change in the phone number that you use to call (1-800-634-3506) or the address where claims should be sent. New insurance cards will be issued within the next three months because of the name and logo change.

I would also like to remind everyone that your sick and personal days may be taken in ¼ day increments. To figure this you need to take the amount of time that you work in a day and divide that by 4. That will let you know what is the allowable amount for ¼ day. For example a person who works 7 hours per day would count 1.75 hours as ¼ day. If you have any questions please contact your supervisor or call me at the office.

### WCISEC Calendar For November, 2007

Nov 1	AIMS Web Training
Nov 5	Administrator Meeting, 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM
Nov 7	OT/PT/APE Meeting, 12:30 PM to 4:00 PM
Nov 8	SSW Meeting, 1st floor, 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM
Nov 12	Administrator Meeting, 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM
Nov 14	Boardmaker Training, 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM
Nov 15	SLP/HI/VI/Audio Meeting, 2nd floor
Nov 15	TPC Meeting, 1st floor, 12:00 PM to 1:30 PM
Nov 16	CPI at Southeastern HS, 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM
Nov 16	BIC Meeting, 1:00 PM to 4:30 PM
Nov 19	Administrator Meeting, 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM
Nov 22,23	THANKSGIVING, OFFICE CLOSED
Nov 26	Administrator Meeting, 1:00 to 4:00 PM

## Parent Support Group At P.I.

The October meeting of the Project Insight Parent Support Group was held on October 18, 2007. The speaker for the evening was Alyssa Cabrera, School Social Worker for the West Central Illinois Special Education Cooperative. Ms. Cabrera's presentation was on Bullying-Recognition and Prevention. Approximately 50 parents, students and staff attended.

## Fishing At Camp Big Sky

Denita Johnson's class from the SPARKS program recently visited Camp Big Sky, a division of Why Not Now, Inc. The mission of Why Not Now Incorporated is to provide accessible fishing, camping, boating and other related outdoor opportunities to children and adults with disabilities. It is a 100 acre accessible camp in northern Fulton County near Farmington offering accessible fishing, camping, picnicking, nature study, and boating at no cost to the participants and their guests. Any person of any age with any disability that limits or otherwise restricts their access to the outdoors is eligible to visit the camp. Both individuals and groups are welcome. As you can see by the photos, the kids had a great time and "the big one" did not get away!



*Samuel caught a turtle*

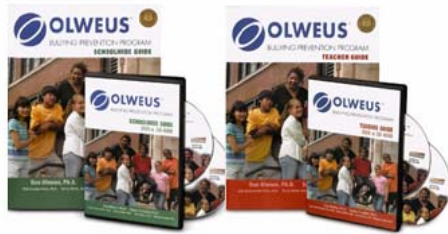


*Jenna caught the biggest fish*

## Olweus Bullying Prevention Program

Hello, my name is Alyssa Cabrera and I am a social worker here at WCISEC. I attended a training this summer on the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (OBPP). I am now a practicing trainer with this program, so I may train the Bullying Prevention Coordinating Committees in schools. The OBPP started in Norway by Dr. Olweus. The OBPP is a research-based program that has shown since the early 1980's to have reduced the percentages in bullying in schools. This program is a comprehensive, school-wide program designed for use in Kindergarten to 10<sup>th</sup> grade. The OBPP is a multi-level, multi-component program that works with four components: the classroom, school, independently and the community. This program also helps to get parents involved. The goals of this program are to prevent bullying problems as well as reduce bullying in school. This program is also designed to help improve peer relations at school. This program has been shown to reduce bullying among children, improve the social climate of classrooms, and reduce related antisocial behaviors, such as vandalism and truancy.

This program has been recognized by:

- ❖ The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention & the Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence (university of Colorado), as one of only 11 Blueprints for Violence Prevention
- 
- ❖ The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, as an Exemplary Program
  - ❖ Fight Crime: Invest in Kids, as a proven program for prevention of bullying
  - ❖ U.S. Department of Education, in its televised show, "News Parents Can Use"

I feel strongly about this program and have already trained West Central #235 Elementary and the Middle School Bullying Prevention Coordinating Committees. We are in the process of training the whole staff at this time in both schools. The Olweus Bullying Questionnaire has been administered and we are now reviewing the data. On November 28<sup>th</sup> we will have the kick-off events for this program with a motivational speaker joining us. After that kick-off event this program will be well underway and we will start the classroom meetings to educate the children on the importance of this bullying prevention program.

Feel free to look at this program on line at <http://www.clemson.edu/olweus> or contact me with any questions you or your school may have on this program. I will be more than happy to send you information and/or meet with you to discuss your school starting this wonderful program.

Alyssa Cabrera, MSW  
[amcjd@yahoo.com](mailto:amcjd@yahoo.com)  
 309-837-3911

## "Beginning Boardmaker" Class Offered

Have you seen a difficult student that seems not to be listening or following directions turn around and become an attentive learner? Have you seen a class go from chaos to calm without teacher threats of fines and detentions? If you have witnessed these, or



similar scenarios, you are probably familiar with the use of 'visual strategies.' Visual strategies encompass a mind set that many students comprehend oral information better when 'visuals' are used. Students on the autism spectrum, in particular, benefit from visual strategies in the classroom. Teachers find that once they start using 'visual strategies' more, many of their other 'typical' students perform at higher levels and acquire improved listening skills and demonstrate better behavior, also.

If you would like to learn or become more proficient on your use of 'visual strategies,'

you are invited to attend a WCISEC class, Nov. 14, 1-3 p.m. on Beginning Boardmaker. Boardmaker is a computer program that is easy and fun to learn. With it, you will learn to produce whatever 'visual' you may need for your classroom or for a particular student.

Sign up on line now at the WCISEC website. If you don't see the benefit in your classroom by learning how to use visual strategies (with Boardmaker) within one week, your money will be fully refunded and doubled!!! Space is limited so sign up now. Fee: Free to WCISEC employees and member districts. See you there!!!

C. K. Best, Autism Consultant



## Project Insight Elections Held



Student Council elections were held at Project Insight Jr/Sr High School on Oct. 4th. The following students were chosen by their peers to represent them:

Co-Presidents:	Holly Parker Melody Winder
Vice-President:	Van Chaney
Secretary:	Bryan VanSlike
Treasurer:	Wes Jenkins
JH Representative:	Trenton Ford

## WCISEC Executive Committee Bulletin for October 19, 2007

### Review of Action Items from the October 19, 2007 Executive Committee Meeting:

**Approved Minutes:** from the September 21, 2007 meeting.

**Financial Reports:**

Approved the October 2007 Payables;  
Approved the FY07 Audit;  
Approved the 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Financial Report;

**Approved and Adopted Policies:**

#2:230 Public Participation at Governing Board Meetings and Petitions to the Board;  
#2:260 Uniform complaint Procedure;  
#3:50 Administrative Personnel Other than the Director;  
#4:160 Hazardous and Infectious Materials;  
#5:40 Communicable and Chronic Infectious Disease;  
#5:150 Personnel Records;  
#5:160 Release of Credit Information;  
#5:170 Copyright;  
#5:300 Schedules and Employment Year;  
#5:320 Evaluation;  
#6:150 Home and Hospital Instruction;  
#6:220 Instructional Materials Selection and Adoption;  
#7:90 Release During School Hours;  
#7:150 Agency and Police Interviews;  
#7:260 Exemption from Physical Activity;  
#8:100 Relations with Other Organizations and Agencies;  
#8:10 Connection with the Community;  
#8:110 Public Complaints;

**Personnel:**

**Resignations:** Approved the resignations of: Connie Carvalho as an Individual Assistant, effective September 14, 2007 and Mindy Miller as a program assistant, effective September 4, 2007.

**Employment:** Approved the employment of: Connie Carvalho as a program assistant in the WCISEC Canton SPARKS program, effective September 14, 2007.

**New Business:**

**Plans/Search for WCISEC Assistant Director:** The search will begin in October 2007 and close in January 2008.

**RTI Coordinator:** The Director continues to review data for this position to see if appropriate.

**Summary of Other Information Reviewed:** The Director reviewed the following:

Program Report(s);  
2nd<sup>d</sup> Quarter Administrative Claim Report;

**Director's Report:** The Director reviewed the following:

- Rockford Register Star Article
- Student Letter

### *How Are We Doing?*

We are interested in your newsletter ideas.  
Send any suggestions for future issues to Jim  
Armstrong at: [jarmstrong@wcisec.org](mailto:jarmstrong@wcisec.org)

We're On The Web!  
View our Newsletters at:  
[www.wcisec.org](http://www.wcisec.org)



WCISEC  
130 S. Lafayette, Suite 201  
Macomb, IL 61455  
Phone: (309) 837-3911  
Bill Pumo, Director  
[wpumo@wcisec.org](mailto:wpumo@wcisec.org)  
Lou Pruett, Asst. Director  
[lpruett@wcisec.org](mailto:lpruett@wcisec.org)