

Newsletter
Vol. 436 No.4
June 2002

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

David W. Peterson, IAASE President

I want to use this final message of the 2001-02 school year to recap IAASE's progress this year. IAASE's activities have been guided by six broad organizational priorities and I would like to share my perspective on some of the Association's accomplishments under each of these priorities.

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1. Create an Organizational Vision for the Future. In a short time, IAASE has created its own unique organizational culture. Under the Long Range Plan developed by our Planning and Evaluation Committee (Chair, Jim Surber), IAASE has fifteen committees, which are aligned to our six strategic goals. Moreover, the Executive Board attempts to measure its progress in relation to the six major goals on a regular basis. IAASE is now the largest CASE unit in the United States with a membership approaching 700 special education supervisors and administrators. Our organization will continue to grow in size and influence - membership of 1,000 is clearly within our reach.

2. Strengthen Networking and Collaboration. This priority speaks to the need to develop meaningful collaborations with other professional organizations with common interests. IAASE has created a variety of liaisons with other organizations and has initiated specific collaborations with the Illinois State Board of Education, the Illinois Principals Association, the Council of School Attorneys, and legislative consortia like Ed-Red and the Management Alliance. In particular, in times of dwindling resources, we have worked hard to collaborate with Illinois' Chief Education Officer, Chris Koch. We also look forward to our work with new State Director of Special Education, Anthony Sims. Our collaboration with the Council of School Attorneys has strengthened the input our Federal Committee provided on IDEA Reauthorization and our work with other legislative groups have strengthened our power within the Illinois State Legislature.

3. Improved Service Delivery. Promoting innovative service delivery models will continue to be a challenge that IAASE faces in the future. Under Elliott Lenoff's leadership, IAASE now provides three outstanding conferences that focus on effective, research-based service delivery models. Over 1,000 special education administrators and supervisors participated in these conferences this year. Additionally, the ad hoc Committee on Innovative Practices co-chaired by Diane Morrison and Joan Hartnett is working hard to develop a long range plan to promote effective practices throughout the state and support those practices through IAASE's professional development activities.

4. Support Professional Development. A related goal involves supporting the professional development of administrators and supervisors throughout Illinois. In addition to the outstanding conferences provided during the past year, IAASE has completely revised its web pages, has supported the ISBE Directors' Conference, and has collaborated with the Illinois Principals' Association and the Special Education Administrators Leadership Academy (SELA) to provide more and better professional development. Moreover, Newsletter Co-Chairs Sheri Piercy and Bill Thoman have been working hard to expand the scope and breadth of our newsletter to more fully support professional development activities.

5. Influence Funding, Legislation and Policies. A key priority of our organization has been to influence legislation and policies affecting the provision of services for students with special needs. We are pleased that International CASE recognized IAASE with an award for Outstanding Legislative Efforts. Gary Lieder, Senior Co-Chair, deserves a great deal of credit for IAASE's stature in the legislature. Co-Chair Tim Thomas is working actively with him to further expand our legislative influence. Just a few of the policy initiatives addressed this year include: Corey H./Teacher Certification, working with ISBE on revision of audit requirements and designing training to meet those requirements, participating in the

Governor's Summit on Teacher Quality and on the Governor's Commission on the School Code, drafting a comprehensive position on the Reauthorization of IDEA, influencing policy developments in both Washington and Illinois on Medicaid, participating in the ISBE/OSEP Steering Committee, testifying before the Education Funding Advisory Board, and preparing the Directors' Standards, among others. We continue to need your support to inform legislators and other policy makers of the need to attend to issues affecting students with special needs.

6. Develop Proactive Policy as a Unified Group. IAASE's reputation as an organization with proactive power will only come from expanding our membership and increasing our influence over Illinois educational policy. In order to make our organization more effective, we are pleased that we have now hired Ms. Nancy Newbold as our full-time Administrative Assistant. Under Nancy's leadership, we will consolidate administrative services into one office and provide more effective support to our members. We must also continue to make a significant effort to expand our membership and get more Illinois administrators and supervisors involved in the organization's work.

At the May Executive Board meeting in Collinsville, I "passed the gavel" to incoming President Elliott Lenoff. It has been my privilege to work with the IAASE Executive Board over the last two years and we hope that our membership feels that we have made a positive difference for them and the students they serve. Participation in a professional association like IAASE provides opportunities for professional growth, unique opportunities to get to know colleagues on a personal level and an endless source of information to support our work at the district and joint agreement level. I greatly appreciate all the support that I have been provided by the Executive Board and want to thank each of them for their hard work on your behalf.

Best wishes for a wonderful summer! May each of you get some much deserved rest and relaxation and energy to begin our work anew next fall.

Polly Baker CPS by Sheri Piercy

For the last five years, the IAASE (formerly IASE) newsletter was formatted and published by Polly Baker. On the surface, Polly formatted this publication, edited articles for submission, took the newsletter for printing, and mailed it. At a deeper level, she made suggestions, collaborated with different co-editors, and worked professionally at all times.

The IAASE board wishes to thank Polly for her service and dedication to our organization and to the field of special education. Because this is the last newsletter Polly will produce for our organization, it is important to acknowledge her many contributions.

Polly is the office manager for the Special Education Association of Peoria County, a position she held for the last three years. In that position, she serves as Treasurer, supervises support staff and assists with grants, child count responsibilities, and completion of tuition cost sheets. Polly also works part-time for other organizations. She teaches other districts about Medicaid claiming and is the bookkeeper for a private business. Prior to working at SEAPCO, Polly worked full-time in special education for Peoria District #150. It was in this position that she began traveling to special education administrators' meetings and providing support services to our organization.

Polly completed coursework and extensive examinations through the International Association of Administrative Professionals. As a result, she earned the designation of Certified Professional Secretary and became actively involved in that professional organization. Polly frequently travels and otherwise actively supports the work of her profession through this involvement. Closer to home, she provides leadership through her mentoring of other support personnel, her management, her teaching, and through her support of special education administrators. Listening to Polly talk about her career, leaves one thinking about her example of professionalism.

When asked what she would like for us to know about her personal life and interests, Polly volunteered "I'm happy." She is married to Michael and describes her family as close. She and her husband have one daughter and a five year old granddaughter.

The IAASE newsletter will be produced by Nancy Newbold, beginning with the new membership year when Nancy assumes the role of Administrative Assistant for this organization. However, Polly's service to our organization will not be forgotten. Thank you, Polly, for five years of producing the newsletter and for the many other services you've provided to our organization over the years.

Spring In Collinsville Was Colossal

By

Elliott Lenoff, President-Elect

Attendance at this years spring conference in Collinsville reached a new high of 230 members. The golf scramble managed to be played between rain showers and all golfers enjoyed the time with their colleagues, the new golf course, and the prizes. We even had forty-five members go to dinner in St. Louis at Duffy's. The food and socialization were outstanding. The social hour sponsored by Robbins, Schwartz, Nicholas, Lifton, Taylor, LTD. provided our IAASE members with hors d'oeuvres, drinks, and a chance to chat with the firm's attorneys.

We had many exciting keynote speakers beginning with Dr. Steve Van Bockern, Dean of Reclaiming Youth International, who spoke on the Circle of Courage, Reclaiming Kids On The Edge, and Courage For The Discouraged. His presentation utilized American Indian culture as a model for nourishing respectful and courageous children without employing punitive discipline. Dr. Van Bockern presented research on youth which revealed the essential elements in raising confident and caring children. His strategies included creating belonging, school climate, brain research, discipline for responsibility and a curriculum of caring. We all left the conference better prepared to redirect unmotivated and negative children into positive values and pro-social behavior.

Dr. Alan Coulter, Associate Professor, Louisiana State University, provided us with a true understanding of President Bush's Commission On Excellence In Special Education and the scope and process for developing the Commission's report by July 1, 2002. His candid and humorous comments, as well as his willingness to receive feedback in an interactive manner, gave us an opportunity to add an Illinois perspective to the reauthorization process.

The third keynote presentation by attorneys, Bennett Rodick and Heidi Katz, highlighted the legal responsibilities of school administrators and staff when dealing with bullying, sexual harassment and discrimination. Evaluating these situations in the school climate can be highly charged. The

attorneys assisted us in understanding the ramifications of both illegal and dangerous actions by students. Practical case application left us better prepared for decision making and legally appropriate solutions.

The Friday session was highlighted by our first opportunity to meet Dr. Anthony Sims, Manager Of The Specialized Support Division, ISBE. His introduction by Dr. Chris Koch, provided us with an insight to the qualifications of Dr. Sims. Dr. Sims proved in his first IAASE conference that he is knowledgeable, eager to assist the directors and coordinators while utilizing an excellent sense of humor. Dr. Chris Koch used this presentation as a forum for his final comments as he leaves his position to become Chief Education Officer, ISBE. We were honored to have both Anthony and Chris with us at the conference.

The remaining speakers and presenters were all excellent and provided timely information. Thanks to our other speakers who were: Jane Boyd, Dr. Christy Chambers, Linda Conover, Sherri Cook, Charlotte Denight, Dr. Sue Ireland, Elliott Lenoff, David Peterson, Dr. Susan Philhower, Dr. Bonnie Reinhart, Merry C. Rhodes, Judith Riffel, Dr. Tim Wahlberg.

The completion of this conference starts a new era as Dr. Sue Ireland assumes the reins as President-Elect and Program Chairperson. It has been a great honor to have prepared the past six conferences for our membership. I have enjoyed organizing meaningful presentations, fun events, and social activities. Of course, I want to thank all who have assisted me in bringing quality programs to our membership. A special thanks to Nancy Newbold for her support, organizational skills, communication and attention to detail. I look forward to working with Nancy in my capacity as President of IAASE and in her new full-time position as IAASE Administrative Assistant.

To each member, enjoy your summer!

COURT RULING IN *BETH B.* "CLARIFIES" LAW OF INCLUSION/TRIAL COURT FOLLOWS-UP ON NAVIN

By **Bennett Rodick**

Hodges, Loizzi, Eisenhammer, Rodick & Kohn

School districts and cooperatives have been closely watching the ongoing saga of the *Beth B. v. Van Clay* litigation. This was due to the significance of the issues raised by that litigation regarding "inclusion" or least restrictive environment ("LRE") and because of the hope that our federal appellate court would finally, after all these long years, let us know what the legal standard is governing least restrictive environment. The *Beth B.* litigation involved almost a classic case of "full inclusion." Beth's parents demanded that the Lake Bluff School District "fully include" their daughter in a regular education classroom despite the nature and extent of the disabilities caused by Beth's Rett Syndrome. When the school district recommended a self contained "ELS" classroom, the parents filed for a due process hearing.

After a nineteen day hearing (the longest on record in Illinois) the school district prevailed on all issues and the parents appealed the decision to the federal trial court in Chicago. In a major ruling, Judge Moran upheld the hearing officer's decision and, after an extensive discussion of the law governing LRE ruled that he would be guided by the legal standard first articulated in *Daniel R.R. v. State Board of Education* in which two questions need to be answered:

1. Can education in the regular classroom with the use of supportive aids and services be achieved satisfactorily?
2. If not, has the child been mainstreamed to the maximum extent appropriate?

The court rejected the standard more favorable to parents articulated in *Roncker v. Walter* which focused on the "feasibility" of the school district providing services in a non-segregated setting. On the Parents' appeal of Judge Moran's decision to the Seventh Circuit, the school community anxiously awaited a final ruling on what the relevant legal standard is so that school district IEP teams would have guidance on making LRE decisions.

What resulted was a classic "good news/bad news" scenario. The Appellate Court upheld the school district's placement decision but refused to articulate what legal standard is applicable to least restrictive environment cases.

The Appellate Court noted the severity of Beth's disabilities including cognitive, motor and

communication impairments. The court further noted that her curriculum was geared at a pre-school level. While Beth's curriculum paralleled the regular classes curriculum in which she attended, Beth's curriculum was fundamentally different.

The Seventh Circuit found that FAPE and LRE are "two sides of the same IEP coin." FAPE is absolute and governed by the legal standards of *Rowley*. LRE, by contrast, is "relative" and is not governed by *Rowley*. The Court refused, however, to articulate a legal standard to govern this "relativity" stating that: "Each student's educational situation is unique. We find it unnecessary at this point in time to adopt a formal test for district courts uniformly to apply when deciding LRE cases. The Act itself provides enough of a framework for our discussion. If Beth's education at Lake Bluff Middle School was satisfactory, the school district would be in violation of the Act by removing her. If not, its recommended placement will mainstream her to the maximum appropriate extent, no violation occurs."

So, there you have it. It is twenty-seven years after the passage of the IDEA and Illinois school districts still have no guidance as to what legal standard is applicable to LRE cases, leaving the statute itself as our only guide. As always school district IEP teams facing contentious LRE cases should seek out guidance from legal counsel.

On a somewhat brighter note, a federal trial court has issued a follow-up ruling to the appellate court's ruling in *Navin v. Park Ridge School District No. 64* which we discussed in the March issue of the IAASE Newsletter. *Navin* held that a non-custodial parent could maintain a due process hearing subject to the hearing officer's determination that the exercise of these rights was consistent with the rights reserved to the custodial parent.

On remand to the trial court, Judge Conlon upheld her prior dismissal of a portion of the non-custodial parent's hearing request relating to the substance of the student's IEP. The Judge found that Illinois law grants custodial parents control over the student's education and that the custodial parent was satisfied with the IEP's substance thus negating any claims of the non-custodial parent. On a series of procedural issues however, related to notice and other issues, the Judge declined to dismiss the hearing request. Rather, she ordered that the matter proceed to a due process hearing on those issues alone.

The appellate court ruling in *Navin* opened a door to litigation. The trial court's ruling on remand partially closed that door by stating that, as regards the substance of a child's IEP, the school district may rely on the decision of the custodial parent in the face of challenge by a non-custodial parent.

Where did another school year go? We will look forward to seeing you all at the ISBE Director's Conference in August to kick-off the 2002-2003 school year.

Dr. David Peterson is our 2002 Dave Berto Award Winner

Nominations were recently received from the IAASE Regions for the 22nd annual Dave Berto award. The IAASE Executive Board selects the winner by secret ballot based upon outstanding ability/achievement in special education and a commitment to the highest standards of our profession.

At the May IAASE Conference in Collinsville, Northern Suburban Special Education District Superintendent, Dave Peterson accepted a plaque commemorating this year's Berto Award. Dave has been the IAASE President for the last two years, and has accomplished much during his term. Dave Peterson exemplifies the outstanding achievement and the skilled leadership that was characteristic of Dave Berto.

Dave Peterson has been extremely active in numerous professional organizations, often serving as an officer. Indeed he has been the chief executive officer of many. He has been published in over 15 books or journals and remains consistently in demand as a presenter at state and national conferences and workshops.

The Dave Berto Award is only one of several awards that Dave has accumulated over his respected career. Some of these awards include the 1985, 1991 and 1992 "President's Award" presented by the National Association of School Psychologists. Dave was also presented the "Special Award for Advocacy, Children and Leadership" by the LaGrange Area Department of Special Education. All of this recognition shows the positive impact that Dave has had on the lives of innumerable students with disabilities as well as the dedication and tireless service that he has provided in special education throughout his outstanding career. Besides all of this, Dave is a great person to work with, and garners the respect and admiration of his peers.

In addition to being presented a personal plaque, Dave's name will also be added to the past Berto Award winners listed on another plaque that is prominently displayed in the late Dave Berto's employing District, Peoria Public School District #150.

Fortunately for the IAASE, Dave Peterson will be continuing to serve our organization as the Immediate Past President for the next two years. We congratulate Dave and wish him continuing success!

IAASE NEWSLETTER

Published by the Illinois Alliance of Administrators of Special Education

ARTICLE SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

IAASE members are welcome to submit articles describing service delivery or program evaluation methods used within their schools for publication in this newsletter. Articles submitted by members should be faxed, emailed, or mailed to either Bill Thoman or Sheri Piercy.

NEWSLETTER CHAIRS

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WILLIAM H. OTT MEMORIAL
SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

PURPOSE

The purpose of the William H. Ott Memorial Scholarship (hereinafter referred to as "scholarship") is to provide scholarship grants to assist individuals in the pursuit of graduate study leading to improved competency in the administration of special education programs.

APPLICANT QUALIFICATIONS

Individuals who are eligible for this scholarship shall:

- ? be a current member of IAASE;
- ? have demonstrated leadership in the organization and to the field of education;
- ? be a student enrolled in an education administration program;
- ? interested in pursuing initial certification, further certification or an advanced degree in special education administration;
- ? not have previously received the William H. Ott Memorial Scholarship

APPLICATION PROCESS

Applications must be completed on the forms provided for by the IAASE Executive Board and be submitted to the Chairperson of the Awards Committee by October 30, of each year. Completed applications must include:

- ? name and address of applicant;
- ? three letters of reference, specific to the subject of the scholarship and its judging criteria;
- ? a statement by the applicant indicating a commitment to special education;
- ? verification by the college or university of the applicant's official status as a degree candidate;
- ? response to practicum question; and
- ? written documentation identifying the applicant's employment as a practicing administrator in Illinois.

SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS WILL BE MADE ON THE BASIS OF:

1. good scholarship;
2. evidence of strong communication skills;
3. abilities and strengths of the applicant as indicated in the letters of support; and
4. potential for contributing to quality special education in Illinois

The Awards Committee will review the applications and present the recipient to the Executive Board for approval at the January Board Meeting. The public announcement will be made at the IAASE Winter Conference. The scholarship award will be in the amount of \$500.

APPLICATION

Application for the William H. Ott Memorial Scholarship is due
October 30, of each year.

Name: _____

County of Residence: _____

School District: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: (Work) (Home) _____

E-Mail: _____

Applicant should also submit the following with this form:

1. Three letters of reference, specific to the matter of the scholarship.
2. A statement by the applicant indicating a commitment to special education.
3. Verification by the college or university of the applicant's official status as a degree candidate.
4. Response to scholarship question (see reverse).
5. Proof of employment as a practicing administrator in Illinois.

The complete application package should be postmarked no later than midnight October 30. Submit to:

The Chairman of the Awards Committee.
William H. Ott Memorial Scholarship
c/o Illinois Association of Administrators of Special Education
Attn: Nancy Newbold
PO Box 357 – Vandalia, IL 62471

ILLINOIS ADMINISTRATORS OF SPECIAL EDUCATION AWARDS

Introduction

The structure for the IAASE Awards beginning in the FY 03 school year is as follows. The premises behind this awards revisions are based on the following:

- ? There is a desire to standardize the awards process so that it is not confusing *to the awards committee or to the general membership.*
- ? There is a desire to increase recognition of members from *various* sectors of the organization.
- ? There is an interest in supporting those who are seeking careers in administration of special education.
- ? There is an interest in *promoting the organization* through *the* awards and scholarships of *our* unified organization.
- ? There is a desire to reinforce *our* alliance *and affiliation* with the *international* CASE *organization* through *presenting* nominees for *CASE* awards from Illinois.

General procedures

- ? A letter of recommendation indicating how the nominee meets the requirements of the award must accompany each nomination.
- ? Nominees should be considered on their personal merits and not *the* location in the state.
- ? Nominations will be submitted to the chairperson of the Nomination and Awards Committee.
- ? The Nomination and Awards Committee will select one person to be the recipient of the award.
- ? Nominations can be made with or without the person's knowledge.
- ? A person may be nominated more than one year.
- ? For the Berto Award, the Peoria Public Schools will maintain a plaque that displays the name of each year's recipient.

Timelines

- ? The *criteria, nomination and selection* process for each award will be announced and a call for nominations will be made at the conference prior to the *one where the award is presented and a call for nominations will be made.* (i.e. *the process for award presentation at the winter conference will be explained and nominations will be taken at the fall conference, spring for winter, etc.* The newsletter *prior to the explanation and nomination* conference will include a call for nominees in writing.
- ? Deadline for the nominations will be 6 weeks prior to the conference at which *the award* will be *presented.*

- ? Presentation of the awards/ scholarship will be done at the luncheon of *each of the conferences held on the first full day of the conference.*

LD Vuillemot Leadership Award Criteria:

- ? Member in good standing for at least 5 years;*(including IASE and or ICASE)*
- ? Active or honorary member who has held an elected office of the IAASE Executive Board;*(including a officer of IASE or ICASE)*
- ? Demonstrates strong loyalty to colleagues and to *the organization*
- ? Demonstrates concern for the development of *special education* leadership talent;
- ? Exhibits outstanding leadership, commitment and high standards;

Dave Berto Distinguished Service Award

- ? Member of IAASE for at least 5 years ;*(including IASE and or ICASE)*
- ? *A career-long leader in the administration of special education programs; Has made a significant contribution to the field over an extended professional career;*

Innovative Practices Award

- ? *Must be a member in good standing;*
- ? *Significant contributor to the organization;*
- ? *Increased emphasis on honoring asst directors, supervisors, coordinators and other administrators of special education;*
- ? *Noted for exemplary services to teachers and students and to the administrative team of their organization;*
- ? *To honor innovative practices and approaches including in-service training, curriculum, service delivery models, evaluation of programs, methodology, strategies, technology, etc.*

Bill Ott Memorial Scholarship

- ? *Must be a member of and be a student enrolled in an education administration program*
- ? *Has demonstrated leadership in the organization and to the field of special education;*
- ? *Interested in pursuing initial certification, further certification or an advanced degree in the field of special education administration.*

A PRIMER ON UNIVERSAL DESIGN FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION ADMINISTRATORS

Dave L. Edyburn, Ph.D.

Reality check: How many of the following statements do you agree with?

- The range of academic diversity in the classroom has increased in recent years.
- Teachers working with students in inclusion settings face a relentless demand to modify curricular, instructional, and assessment materials.
- Students who cannot read at grade level struggle throughout the school day.
- Instructional modifications made for students with disabilities often can help many other children in a classroom.
- The current emphasis on helping all children achieve high academic standards means much more effort must be devoted to helping struggling students.

Teachers and administrators across the country are facing enormous pressure to improve student learning. However, the conditions under which we work make this expectation exceedingly challenging.

While not a panacea, "universal design"(UD) offers a potential solution through the design of instruction that anticipates the full range of diversity found in American classrooms and providing supports before they are needed. The purpose of this article is to provide a very brief introduction to UD, its implications for special education administrators, and resources for additional information.

Historical Context of Universal Design

The principles of universal design have emerged from our understanding of the design of physical environments for individuals with disabilities. Perhaps the best example of the success of universal design principles are curb cuts. Originally designed to improve mobility for people with disabilities within our communities, curb cuts not only accomplished that, but also improved access for people with baby strollers, roller blades, bikes, etc. Readers interested in additional information about the origins of universal design are encouraged to visit the Center for Universal Design at North Carolina State University (<http://www.design.ncsu.edu/cud/>).

In the 1990s, universal design concepts were applied to computers. Gregg Vanderheiden at the TRACE Center at the University of Wisconsin, Madison spearheaded conversations among the disability community and technology developers concerning initiatives that include disability accessibility software as part of the operating system. This means that access would be provided as the computer came out of the box (rather than require a consumer to track down an assistive technology specialist to make specialized modifications). Today, accessibility control panels are available on every computer. To learn more about the design initiatives that make products more useful for everyone, read the following document produced by staff at TRACE: (<http://www.trace.wisc.edu/world/>).

Universal Design for Learning

Today, researchers and educational leaders are making a concerted effort to apply universal design principles to learning. A leader in the area of universal design for learning has been the Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST). In 1999, CAST received a five-year grant from the Office of Special Education Programs to establish the Center for Accessing the General Education Curriculum (<http://www.cast.org/naec/>). In their view, universal design is a critical issue if students with disabilities are going to be able to access the general education curriculum. CAST now sponsors the National Consortium

on Universal Design for Learning. Readers interested in becoming an Affiliate Partner may do so by visiting: (<http://www.cast.org/udl/>).

The Promise of UD

Without seeing a class list, in a class of 30 middle school students, one can anticipate that 5-7 students have below grade level reading skills, 3-5 students will have learning disabilities, 1-2 may have vision or hearing difficulties, and 1-2 students may have a primary language other than English. The current model of curriculum accommodations requires that these students first be identified and then special support services provided. The promise of UD suggests that instructional materials can be designed which provide adjustable instructional design controls (think of these as a volume control slider that is adjustable to be off or some level between low and high).

UD control panels could be included in all instructional software and be accessed by students and teachers when an adjustment is needed. Just think of it: do you need reading materials at a lower readability? Just go into the control panel and reset the slider and the same materials will be presented. Want a glimpse of the future? Visit: Windows on the Universe (<http://www.windows.ucar.edu>) and explore how rich instructional content can be presented at three reading levels so that students can decide which level is most appropriate for them.

Some students may need support in the form of text-to-speech so that they can hear and understand information they couldn't read independently. A tool like the CAST eReader (<http://www.cast.org/udl/index.cfm?i=211>) is an example of a web browser that is built with reading and note taking supports. In the past this type of tool was considered to be assistive technology, given only to those who needed it. However, research is suggesting that most students in a classroom could benefit from well-designed instructional supports.

Implications of UD for Administrators

The potential impact of UD has important implications for special education administrators. Consider the following ideas for making an action plan:

1. Make a personal commitment to learn more about UD. Download and read the following article: A curriculum every student can use: Design principles for student access. OSEP Topical Brief (1998) by Ray Orkwis and Kathleen McLane. Available online at: <http://www.cec.sped.org/osep/udesign.html>
2. Enhance your organizational capacity to respond to UD developments. Encourage a staff member to become an Affiliate Partner of National Consortium on Universal Design for Learning (<http://www.cast.org/udl/>), free, to keep your school/district/organization up-to-date about UD developments.
3. Facilitate staff development about UD. Contact training resource agencies in the state of Illinois (i.e., Infinitec Assistive Technology Coalition, <http://www.coalitionconnection.org/>; Special Education Assistive Technology Center, <http://www.coe.ilstu.edu/seddept/pages/seat/>) to arrange for a workshop for your staff on UD strategies.

Concluding Thoughts

Presently, the marketplace has only a handful of products with UD features. Nonetheless, this development is an important trend for teachers, therapists, administrators, and technology specialists interested in technology-enhanced student learning. I encourage you to learn more about UD and become involved in the emerging conversations among developers, researchers, and practitioners.

About the Author: Dave Edyburn is an Associate Professor, Dept. of Exceptional Education, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. He is a past president of the Technology and Media (TAM) Division of CEC and past editor of Teaching Exceptional Children.