



## Facing the Flawed Assumptions of Educational Reform

*Thomas Hatch, Teachers College, Columbia University*

**T**he good news: Despite the economic downturn, the department of education is helping to stoke the development of a multitude of initiatives that might help to improve schools. The bad news: Many of those initiatives still focus on the same flawed assumptions that have undermined educational reform efforts for years. Those assumptions reflect a simplistic view of what it takes to improve schools and contribute to the repeated failure to address the basic conditions needed to sustain long-lasting improvements in schooling.

**Assumption #1:** We have the capacity to significantly improve the performance of all students; we just need to put in place the goals and incentives that will encourage teachers and schools to do it.

**The reality:** Schools do not have all the knowledge, expertise, and resources needed to address many of the basic challenges of teaching and learning across multiple subjects on a large scale. This flawed assumption was reflected in some of the initial efforts to implement systemic reform in the 1990's and in many current calls for "national standards" that imply that creating common goals and aligning policies, incentives, and supports can unleash some previously hidden capacity that will dramatically improve educational performance.

The same belief underlies many of the recent initiatives that suggest that producing smaller schools and smaller classes or establishing rewards and penalties based on student test scores will suddenly equip struggling teachers – in every subject and at all levels – with the knowledge and skills necessary to enable all their students to be successful in college and beyond.

The hope that a few successful "turnaround" efforts, model schools, or charter schools can quickly spawn a legion of more effective schools embrace this assumption as well when they fail to recognize that improving many schools at once takes a vastly different set of skills, structures, and resources than

transforming one school at a time. Ultimately, improving schools depends on working harder, increasing efficiency and building capacity for more powerful instruction.

**Assumption #2:** If a school makes some improvements and hits some performance targets at one time, the school has the capacity to continue to make meaningful improvements in instruction over time.

**The reality:** There are many different ways to reach short-term goals and outcomes, and some of them can actually undermine the ability of an organization to sustain performance and to reach long-term performance goals. Sports teams demonstrate the tensions between focusing on short- and long-term goals when they load up on established stars in order to win a championship, but then suffer in subsequent years because they failed to invest in a strong system for developing younger players. The simple fact that a team reached the championship in one year does not mean they have the capacity to sustain such a high level of performance consistently in the future. Similarly, even if schools do meet some performance targets – making "average yearly progress" in reading and math or even reducing the achievement gap a bit – those accomplishments do not necessarily mean that a school is on the way to meeting the needs of all learners or reaching "world-class" standards in any subject. High-stakes short-term pressures focused on narrow outcomes may make it particularly difficult for low-performing schools to make the investments in the basic organizational practices of managing staff, establishing a productive work environment, and developing common expectations that they need to meet meaningful goals and sustain high performance over time.

**Assumption #3:** Competition for students will lead to innovation and improved performance in many schools.

**The reality:** Regardless of whether or not students and parents have a choice of schools, limited resources, difficult external conditions, and public perceptions of what counts as "real"

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school constrain abilities to provide innovative classroom practices. The real competition is for scarce resources like effective teachers, strong leaders, high-quality professional development, capable external assistance, adequate facilities, political influence, and public support. Unfortunately, successful schools – regular public schools as well as charter schools and other alternative schools – often capture these scarce resources and gain a competitive advantage over others. That advantage reinforces a system in which a small number of schools can excel but does little to build the capacity for large scale improvements for all.

**Assumption #4:** The way to improve the system as a whole is to "scale up" the successes of individual programs and schools around the country.

**The reality:** The ability to "scale-up" a successful school or educational program depends more on finding the right conditions than it does on developing the right practices, curriculum model or other innovation. In the business world, start-ups need to find customers, suppliers, facilities, equipment, and employees in order to spread across the

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# Cultivate Community- Improve Outcome

by Carol L. Van Loon

*"We are each other's business; we are each other's harvest; we are each other's magnitude and bond." – Gwendolyn Brooks*

This past month, many answered the call to join our professional association as we began again to plant the seeds for the future. The process of developing our strategic plan was made rich by the ideas, vision, and creativity of those who entered the arena. While our ranks included many well known and quiet heroes, we were honored by the opportunity to join in professional partnership with many other leaders from around New Hampshire.

Our time together renewed my belief that we have the abilities and talents to push beyond previous limits. The stage has been set. To borrow an apt description "each of us has drunk from wells we did not dig and been warmed by fires we did not build – we owe those who came before us and those who will come after." Together, we will make an immense difference.

Focusing on the future, I'm excited by the possibilities but respectful of the challenges that lie ahead. You will once more be called upon to share your expertise, experience, and enthusiasm for realizing the goals central to our work with children, schools, and families. Please say yes when receiving the invitation to join colleagues and friends on March 20, 2010.

"If enough ordinary people back up desire for a better world with action, we can, in fact, accomplish extraordinary things." I came across this sentiment long ago, maybe it also speaks well for today. I hope to see you all as we take the next step together. ✕

## Save The Date!

NHASP Strategic  
Planning Retreat

March 20, 2010

*Alternate Date March 27, 2010*

9:00 to 1:00

Lunch will be provided.

Executive board meeting will follow  
- all members  
welcomed to attend

*"Where there is an  
open mind, there  
will always be a  
frontier."*

Charles Kettering, American inventor of  
the first electrical ignition system

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# Equal Educational Opportunity

by Adrienne Spector, NCSP

I am not going to mention the weather until the end of this column. Instead, I will start out with wonderful news from past Protocol Editor, Betty Lenehan. Her first grandchild, Sam Gelman, was born on December 20, 2009. Sam was born in Manila, Philippines, to Rosie and Andrew Gelman, who are finishing their last year of teaching there before returning to their home in Portland, Maine. Betty and her husband Mike never dreamed they would visit the Philippines twice in one year, but judging by the adorable pictures taken during their January visit, Sam is certainly a compelling reason for a trip of any length!

Professional development is a big and expensive concern for most of us. Information relevant to our school psychology practice grows exponentially. We can't be away from our schools more than a few days in a school year, yet our school teams and families depend on us to be credible and accurate resources for information. More students than ever before are referred to their school teams because of learning, social and behavior differences that beg the question of whether or not the student is "on the spectrum." Dr. Claudia Gibson, pediatric neurologist with Deer Creek Associates, recently sent me [The Vermont Best Practices Guide to Assessment of Pervasive Developmental Disorders](#). The Guide emphasizes the importance of informed, differential diagnosis. As stated in the handbook, the purposes for developing these best practice guidelines include:

- Increasing the consistency of the diagnostic process to allow for equitable access to appropriate services
- Increasing accuracy of diagnosis which will lead to referral to appropriate treatment and services, thus improving outcomes and maximizing the use of limited resources
- Providing a foundation for training additional evaluators and for offering professional development for existing evaluators
- Increasing the quality and consistency of evaluations to assist various state provider agencies and schools in determining eligibility and planning for services

I'm sure you will be as impressed (and grateful) as I was when you read the names and

credentials of the persons who contributed to this guide. Copies of this document may be found at <http://www.ddas.vermont.gov/ddas>

I'm not alone in feeling sad and frustrated by budget cuts to agencies and institutions that help our children. *Growing numbers of children are suffering needlessly because their emotional, behavioral and developmental needs are not being met by the very institutions and systems that were created to take care of them.* Department of Health and Human Services (2001) Current, longitudinal research reveals that the percentage of children who suffer one or more adverse childhood events (ACE) is 50%. It is clear to those of us on the front lines of public education that there are more students who need help than there are ways and means to give them that help. When the "help" comes from a pot that is hard won and scrutinized, a school team has to be quite nimble when deciding who gets what. We sometimes have to divide the "whole" of the child's needs into parts that may or may not be special education, regular education, the parent's responsibility, the social or medical agency's tasks, etc. It can make a kind of intellectual sense sitting around a table, but we are playing a 'zero sum game.'

A zero sum game is a situation or interaction in which one participant's gains result only from another's equivalent losses. In trying to make the world a better place for children and adolescents, many advocates feel they must focus strategically and laser like on one concern because resources are sparse and distributed politically. (*Addressing Barriers to Learning, Volume 15, #1, UCLA Center for Mental Health in Schools*). The students who lose become marginalized, that is, relegated to the bottom or the edges of groups because their problems are too "low-grade" to grab the resources available, or perhaps so pervasive that no one specific disability or disorder stands out enough to "qualify" the student for help.

If given the time and the imperative, the boards of various agencies and institutions can identify what the needs are among the groups they serve. It is not always a matter

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of money. It is a matter of taking the time to build an agency infrastructure that shares the vision with all that entails: identifying issues, making plans and following through, monitoring, making changes where necessary and staying committed. My own town's school board has completed an excellent study of the factors related to student achievement. The report outlines specific ways to reach all students. Now comes the really hard part, and that is to give our leaders and school board time and support to follow through.

Finally, the emergence of tulips and daffodils is only eight weeks away. During the long winter, I sometimes think about the complex process going on beneath the ground. Driving to school on frozen mornings, the quiet and whiteness occasionally make me feel like I'm crazy to live here. Then I enter the school building. Inside it is warm, bright and charged with purpose. It's a new day for the children and anything can happen. I hang up my coat and smile, glad to see them all. ✕

# Educational Reform

*Continued from page 1*

country. Put the “right” business in the wrong place and it will founder regardless of how good the basic idea might be. In education, even the most successful school networks and model programs only work in some places, under some circumstances. Any attempt to scale up successful schools and programs has to be accompanied by a concerted effort to create more favorable economic, organizational, social, and political conditions that will give all schools a better chance to make significant improvements.

What can be done? First, instead of infusing the system with funds when times are good and demanding cuts when times are bad, put in place stable funding streams. Second, make sure those funds address basic needs that have direct benefits for students and parents – renovating inadequate facilities, building new schools where necessary, putting in place effective child day care and afterschool programs where they are needed, and strengthening the day-to-day support for more powerful learning.

Third, give parents and the wider public opportunities to see what goes on in classrooms and to develop their understanding of what “good” student work – in the US and around the world – looks like. Fourth, provide useful feedback on how schools, districts, and states are doing in providing equal opportunities for all students and for meeting meaningful learning goals; but reward schools for making improvements over the long-haul without imposing short-term penalties on particular individuals. These efforts have to go far beyond the usual initiatives to publicize data on school performance, sway public opinion on education or put in place another set of standards.

Especially in this age of accountability, policymakers, funders and education leaders need the vision and the courage to make the basic investments that will improve the conditions for all schools even though the real results may be hard to see for some time.

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# NHASP Spring Conference- Bring a Member of Your School Team!

There are at least two words in this next sentence that should bring a smile to your face: *Spring* and *April*. Our NHASP Spring conference on April 1, 2010 comes at a perfect time! Teams all over the state are in different stages of following the RtI model. Administrative support for the RtI process runs the gamut from enthusiastic to nonexistent. As is often the case, our New Hampshire school psychologist association is leading the way to provide professional development on this critically important example of bringing sound, longitudinal educational research into consistent and informed educational practice. *Editors Note: I am bringing a dedicated and talented second grade teacher who also happens to be on her district's math committee!*

Our day long conference will be held in the beautiful SERESC building in Bedford, NH. Most of us have received the conference brochure, but in case you have not, registration information is available at [NHASPweb.org](http://NHASPweb.org). I am bringing along a dedicated and talented second grade teacher in my elementary school that also happens to be on the district's math committee!

**Amanda M. VanDerHeyden, Ph.D.** is a private consultant and researcher who has worked as a researcher, has authored over 50 related articles and book chapters and has worked as a national trainer and consultant to assist districts to implement RTI models. Dr. VanDerHeyden received the 2006 Lightner Witmer Early Career Contributions Award from the APA for her scholarship on early intervention, RTI, and models of data-based decision making. That year she was named to the National Center for Learning Disabilities

advisory panel to provide guidance related to RTI and the diagnosis of specific learning disability.

Dr. VanDerHeyden is associate editor of *Assessment for Effective Intervention*, serves on the editorial boards of several journals including *School Psychology Quarterly* and *Journal of Early Intervention*, and has recently co-authored *Essentials of Response to Intervention* (with Dr. Matthew Burns). She serves as research advisor to iSTEER, has published measures of early numeracy for preschool and kindergarten children, and currently directs research projects in early numeracy with children in preschool and kindergarten.

Dr. VanDerHeyden's presentation will focus on how to evaluate and ensure the technical adequacy of RtI implementation for mathematics. This presentation will provide “how-to” details needed to evaluate tier one instruction, successfully plan and implement classwide interventions for mathematics, and plan and implement tier three intervention. Special attention will be paid to the findings of the National Math Advisory Panel (2008) as a context for implementation of multi-tiered interventions. Participants will learn to select measures, to use data for intervention planning, and to plan and implement interventions for maximal effect.

Useful background for this presentation can be obtained from a paper authored by Dr. VanDerHeyden. It is available online at:

[www.tqsource.org/publications/RTI%20EvidencedBased%20Math%20Interventions%205-14-2009.pdf](http://www.tqsource.org/publications/RTI%20EvidencedBased%20Math%20Interventions%205-14-2009.pdf). ✕

# No Shortage of Well-Prepared School Psychology Interns in New Hampshire

by Jonas Taub

Nearly ten years ago, Plymouth State University established a graduate program to train school psychologists at the Specialist's level. The school psychology program is modeled on NASP training standards. Students must complete 60 credit hours of graduate study, including 100 field hours of Practicum and a 1200 hour Internship. Internship and Practicum students attend a seminar to review and critique experiences in the field and other topics related to school psychology practice and skills.

The practicum is completed in two terms (winter and spring).during the year prior to the internship. These students have completed coursework in Assessment of Intellectual Functioning, Assessment of Social Emotional Functioning, and Behavior Assessment, Analysis and Intervention. The practicum is an opportunity for students to apply knowledge and skills in a school setting, with supervision, and to begin to experience the role of school psychologist.

The internship is 1200 hours of field based experience under the supervision of the school psychologist in the district. The internship is typically completed in one year of full time work, but can be extended to two years part time. Interns have completed all of their coursework in school psychology, and are expected to take on the full role of the school psychologist, with increasing responsibility and independence through the course of the year, including psycho-educational assessment, behavioral assessment and intervention planning, counseling, and more.

There is a current need to expand the number of internship and practicum field sites to accommodate the growing number

of students in the school psychology program at PSU. Hosting a practicum or internship student is generally a win-win-win for the student, the supervisor and the district. It is a terrific professional growth experience for all involved and also provides an additional level of service for the district.

Interns make a significant contribution to the districts in which they work. Many also face the financial burden of lost income during the internship year. It is very helpful to the student if the district is able to offer a stipend for the internship. Currently there are a very few paid internships available in NH schools. The program would like to encourage school districts to consider offering a stipend to support an intern in their district.

Students have had outstanding experiences in school districts around the state and beyond, thanks to the support and supervision of our colleagues. If you are interested in offering a practicum or internship, would like more information about how to develop one, or would like more information on offering a paid internship, please let me know. I would be happy to speak with you or come to your district to meet with you and others as would be helpful.

Jonas Taub, MA, NCSP, is Adjunct Instructor in School Psychology at Plymouth State University. He teaches Practicum I and II and Internship seminars and assists students in coordinating their field placements. Contact [jonasjt@comcast.net](mailto:jonasjt@comcast.net) or at (603) 588-6208.

*Editor's note: The old saw, "It's hard to find school psychologists in New Hampshire," no longer fits. School districts should step up and be part of the solution. During my own internship 35 years ago, the school district provided a stipend equal to half the beginning salary of the school psychologists at that time.* X

Baxter Worthing, age 14  
Brunswick, Maine

## Theme for English II

I wish I had been born  
in the heartlands  
Where only views  
outnumber cornstalks  
Where beliefs stand, are  
cut down and re-grow  
I wish I could worry about feeding  
My country's mouths  
Rather than her turmoil

Instead I came forth  
on the rocky coast  
Where minds open like  
white garden gates  
Where boys too long contemplate  
What it is to be a young boy  
That too soon they are men

Like the boy I used to be  
I love too greatly the  
school of thought  
And not too fondly where  
school is taught  
Ideas have pirated my mind  
and locked the door  
I am useless now but only to think

I have a collection of values,  
opinions and thoughts  
I would so gladly share my  
mind in class  
If it were not for fear of correction  
If my ideas are destroyed  
then my mind is empty  
And for a boy born only to think  
Such a mind is accomplished suicide

But in this new class I may  
Through cracked books and  
matched wits  
Closed meditating eyes  
Learn the ideas of those who are,  
and are not me  
In due time I will like to share my  
ideas with you

That's my theme for English II

*Baxter Worthing is a young poet  
currently living in Illinois.*

# Going to Chicago? Have Some Fun!

by *Fredye Sherr*

Plans are in the works for those of us travelling to the NASP Convention in Chicago to take in a performance at Second City. What is Second City? Why, it's where comedians such as Alan Arkin, Bonnie Hunt, Bill Murray, Joan Rivers, and countless others got their start.

Beginning with the first Second City revue show in 1959, the style of comedy has changed over time, but the format has remained constant. Second City revues feature a mix of semi-improvised and scripted scenes, as well as unscripted improv sessions based on audience suggestions. A recent Second City innovation is the inclusion of live, improvised music during some performances.

We are inviting NHASP-ers and their friends and colleagues to join us for some chuckles and belly laughs at a Second City performance. At the time that the Protocol goes to press we are looking at an 8:30 PM show on either Tuesday, March 2<sup>nd</sup> (first choice) or Wednesday, March 3<sup>rd</sup> (second choice). Performances on tap for those nights are "Rush Limbaugh, The Musical" and "Taming of the Flu." Ticket prices will be between \$22 and \$25, and may be limited to a first come basis.

For more information and to secure a ticket, please contact Fredye Sherr, NHASP Membership Chair at 603.635.7822 or [f\\_sherr@yahoo.com](mailto:f_sherr@yahoo.com) by February 22<sup>nd</sup>. It's always a treat to share some "down time" with colleagues, so come and join us for an evening of laughs and levity. ✕

# School Psychologists Pay Attention

by *Nate Jones, NASP Delegate*

Happy winter everyone, can you see the light of spring yet? Some important news from NASP this month, the American Psychological Association (APA) is finally moving forward on the Model Licensure Act (MLA) and we all need to be paying close attention.

I hope you had an opportunity to read the recent message from Patti Harrison, NASP President, on the status of the APA's proposed revisions to its Model Licensure Act (MLA). The proposed MLA being considered for adoption by APA significantly restricts the exemption for school psychologists. I encourage you to keep up-to-date on this issue, which is so important to our professional futures, by visiting [www.nasponline.org/standards/apamla.aspx](http://www.nasponline.org/standards/apamla.aspx).

NASP leadership, members, and staff have been actively engaged in a 3-year effort to preserve the right of school psychologists to use their title and engage in the practice for which they are trained and credentialed. NASP will continue to communicate our position to APA until the vote in February. Right now it appears that there is no formal opportunity for individuals to send comments to APA. Mass communications to the APA Council will NOT be helpful and are likely to be harmful. You can be confident that if the proposed MLA becomes APA policy, NASP is prepared to assist you and our state association in protecting school psychologists' title at the state level. NASP is currently updating key messages, coordinating with state leaders, and preparing for strong state-level advocacy.

NHASP has been closely following the MLA at both here in NH and at a federal level. While we wait to hear more from NASP and to see what action the APA Council takes, we are determining to how best respond within NH. If you are interested in participating in this effort, please contact me or our NHASP president, Carol Van Loon at any time.

In addition to serving as our profession's advocate, NASP continues to develop resources to support members in their day-to-day practice. You can download informative podcasts at [www.nasponline.org/resources/podcasts/index.aspx](http://www.nasponline.org/resources/podcasts/index.aspx).

Recent additions address topics including cultural and linguistic diversity, homelessness, and home-school collaboration. In addition, be sure to download 'In the Know With NASP,' a monthly podcast focused on what's new and noteworthy at NASP.

NASP members can access several sessions from last year's NASP Annual Convention at no cost at [www.nasponline.org/profdevel/cpdmodules/nasp2009sessions.aspx](http://www.nasponline.org/profdevel/cpdmodules/nasp2009sessions.aspx). The sessions are video synced to PowerPoint presentations and handouts, and are ideal for self-study CPD. The topics offered include Conducting RTI Tier Three Case Studies, Combining Academic and Behavioral Supports for a Universal System, Things That Make You Go HLM: Getting Comfortable With Hierarchical Linear Modeling, Consuming Research: There Is Significantly More to Research Than Significance, and Grant Writing: Getting Funds for Your Education Research Project.

Now is your final chance to take advantage of the special rate of \$44 for a full year of member-only access to the NASP EBSCO Online Library. Save 10% off the regular annual rate by signing up before the end of the month at [www.nasponline.org/ebsco/ebscoaccess.aspx](http://www.nasponline.org/ebsco/ebscoaccess.aspx). The Library consists of thousands of peer-reviewed journals and more than one million full-text articles from six comprehensive databases. A new mobile application puts the most important features of the Library right in the palm of your hand!

I look forward to writing to you next month with more news from NASP and I hope to see you at the NASP 2010 Annual Convention in Chicago next month. ✕

**NHASP Spring  
Conference**  
**RTI-Mathematics**  
**April 1, 2010**  
**SERESC, Bedford, NH**

*The Student Lounge*

# Well Qualified Interns Looking for Work

by Yesenia Schuler

As I approach the end of my program, I'm faced with the decision of having to leave a salaried teaching position for either a part-time or full-time internship. While this is truly a huge step forward, the possibility of not making any money almost feels like a step backward. Now that I've begun my search, I'm finding that there aren't many paid internships available in New Hampshire. Could it be the economic climate? I'm not sure. What I am sure about is that the idea of having to complete an internship with no means of supporting myself is beyond unsettling. I have found several internship opportunities but unfortunately without pay. I am curious to know how many districts in New Hampshire may have offered a stipend at one time and how that compares to other programs across the country (stay tuned for the next column).

While I choose to remain positive in my pursuit, it seems the likelihood of securing a paid internship is almost zilch. My concerns are also shared by others who have families and other responsibilities. They, too, don't know how best to move forward. It's definitely not an easy choice to make. How is one to support oneself in the process of growing as a professional? At what point do we assign greater value to interns?

Those of us graduating from the school psychology program are equipped with a well-rounded understanding of learning, psychology, and community and are more than eager to make a difference. We have a lot to offer! What's that saying? "You get what you pay for?"

One solution I've come up with is to work part-time while fulfilling my internship requirements on a part-time basis. In order for the next two years to work for me, that has to be the plan. The biggest challenge will be fulfilling both in the same district. Stay tuned for the next column. Hopefully, I'll have positive news in that department.

# How to Choose a School Board Candidate: What Every Voter Should Know

## What is a board of education?

School board members make up the largest body of elected officials in the United States. We entrust them to set the policies of our most treasured institutions: our public elementary, middle and high schools. School districts are complex corporations; they're often the largest employers in a community and the decisions they make reach far, affecting jobs, resources and most importantly, the education of all children.

## What do they do?

Somewhere in between the agendas, public comment sessions and resolutions, school boards make a number of important decisions. School boards establish a vision for the community's schools. They have to set up and maintain an effective, efficient organizational structure for the district that lets the superintendent and administrators manage the schools, teachers teach and students learn. They are responsible for hiring and evaluating a superintendent, evaluating and adopting policies that affect all schools in the district, serving as a judicial and appeals body when conflicts go unresolved, monitoring and adjusting district finances, and managing the collective bargaining process in the district.

## How can I tell if my school board is doing a good job?

How does the school board make decisions? Do the members function as predictable, single-issue advocates, or do they approach each decision with an open mind? Do they seem to make strategic choices for the well-being of the district? Strong decision-making requires analysis, the balancing of needs and concerns, and the ability to see the long-term implications of an action.

How's the team spirit? Does the board exhibit a healthy group dynamic, or is it a parade of egos marching single-file? Do members show respect and trust for each other, and for the operating

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**Don't forget to**  
check out our website at  
**www.nhaspweb.org**  
for the most up to date information  
on upcoming meetings, conferences  
and more!

# California There She Went

*and lived to tell the tale...*

by Anne Bunce

After winning a Silver medal at the 2007 Senior Games in Kentucky, I vowed to return to the Games in the summer of 2009 at Stanford University in Palo Alto, California. I would compete in both the swimming and sprint triathlon events. My husband John passed on this trip but lucky for me, my daughter's best friend, Heather lived in Oakland. Tip #1 Do not drink coconut milk before long flights. Trust me – not a good idea.

From the airport, Heather took me to the bike shop where I'd shipped my bike (triathletes like to use their own bikes), then to the car rental place. I followed her to Palo Alto. Like New Hampshire, California has a Route 101, but driving this 101 was beyond tough. I registered, received my "goody bag" and Heather left, saying that it would be simple to find my way back to Oakland. "Just hop on the 101," she said.

On the day of the swimming event, I waited a long time in the sun in my full body fast suit. The sunlight and the long wait (during which time I needed breaks which required zipping and unzipping) caused my suit to split open up the back just before I swam the race. One of the male volunteers zipped it for me and it never split again. I swam better than my qualifying time. I was amazed watching a 93 year old woman continue swimming after she had completed the required number of laps because she couldn't keep track of the number and she could not hear everyone telling her to stop. Hey, this was the Senior Games!

Now to find the site for the triathlon course in Redwood City. I overheard two volunteers arguing as to how best to get there, but finally decided to go for it on my own and headed to my rental car. There were hundreds of parked cars, half of them two door, silver KIA's. Tip #2 Always memorize your rental car plate. Think of

a special way to recall it. My plate was 6CUP914. I just remembered 6 cups and never failed to find it. Tip #3 Rental cars do not have manuals so ask questions. The car would not start unless you were stepping on the brake as you turned the key. The key would not unlock the trunk – I didn't find out until I returned it and was told it needed to be clicked twice. Asking for help is the best and fastest way to go – forget the male mentality!

I found the triathlon course and then headed back to the motel, looking forward to loading up on steak and pasta that night, as is my custom before a triathlon. In the motel parking lot, I met a woman named Suzanne, from Washington. She was trying to remove a four foot by six foot box from her van. I watched her for a while before asking if I could help (She looked so determined). "Oh, no I want to do this myself." Her bike was in the box. She was going to return the rental van and ride only her bike for the next ten days. She joined me for dinner that night, but try as we might, we could not find my desired steak and pasta combination, so we settled for steak.

The next day – the Triathlon! For those of you who do not know – triathlons are made up of three different sports: Swim, Bike and Run. Transition times are crucial. I introduced myself to a man wearing a New Hampshire Senior Games shirt. He and I were the only NH competitors doing the Triathlon. One woman from the swim meet was very nervous about swimming in the ocean. I wasn't worried about the ocean but mentioned the very muddy dock we would be departing from. I was quickly informed the mud was duck poop. Hmmmm. At least the water, which we had been told the day before would be 65 degrees or less, turned out to be 70 degrees.

After the swim, the bike was a three times around course, and the run a four times around.

I crossed the finish line and was told I came in 4<sup>th</sup> out of 10. Honorable Mention. But when the race results were announced, I had placed third because someone ahead of me had only gone around the bike course twice. We had been told to keep track of ourselves— must have been that senior game thing again. So I left with a Bronze and a huge smile on my face. That night, I enjoyed a wonder post competition cold glass of Chardonnay. I finally got some pasta at an expensive Italian restaurant, but not until I sent back the roasted potatoes.

Back in Oakland Heather waited to help me pack up. UPS was going to charge me \$500 to send my bike back but Heather went to the internet and found another UPS station (not a local business), which would ship it for 46 dollars. (It really wasn't that easy.) The night before I was to fly out, Heather called a taxi service to pick me up at 12 noon the next day. The driver misunderstood the instructions and arrived at midnight. The next morning, if Heather had not been in her apartment to answer the phone, I would still be waiting outside.. Tip #5 Putting your room card anywhere near your cell phone will cancel it.

At the airport I saw two guys playing cribbage. The man who was winning continually had twinkling blue eyes and a great grin. His opponent was heavy set with a dour look. I stopped and told him that attitude was a part of winning. If you wanna win you need to act like a winner.

Editor's note: Ann Bunce is a semi-retired school psychologist who lives in Nelson, NH. Readers may recall the last article from Ann about the Utah Bike Trip she took with her husband, John. ✕

# How to Choose a School Board Candidate

*Continued from page 7*

rules of the board?

One of the most difficult parts of school governance is creating a strong relationship with the public. An effective board knows and respects its community, and encourages the community's trust in its school system.

## What should I look for in a school board candidate?

The ability to work well with a team and support group decisions, along with an understanding that the board sets a climate for the entire district. A desire to work toward a stronger relationship between the district and the public it serves. A keen eye toward serving the needs of all students, regardless of their abilities and backgrounds. A professional, poised demeanor and respectful, respectable behavior. Commitment to the time and energy required each week for meetings, phone calls, conversations, visits to schools, and professional development seminars and workshops.

They must be dedicated to serving and teaching all children. They must believe in the democratic process and understand that their role is to act strategically, in line with the interests of the entire school community.

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**Logan Brennan-Sawyer teaching English to young students in South Africa. Logan is a graduate student at the School for International Training in Brattleboro; his parents are Susan and Marty Brennan-Sawyer of Putney, Vermont.**

# What Do I Teach You?

*Susan Brennan-Sawyer*

What do I teach you? To take deep breaths to manage the pain  
I give you an eye pillow filled with sweet smelling lavender  
For a moment in your day  
That is otherwise filled with cat pee and stale cigarette smoke  
Am I trying to teach you not to be angry  
At lives that have caused you a lifetime of hurt in your six or seven years?  
I teach you to say "Please" and "Thank You" in a world  
Where you need to grab to have anything  
Tell me your issue, I say. We can all help you.  
We can say that we are sorry.  
But does this help?

I have you close your eyes to imagine that we are One  
That there is a diamond with light beaming down on you,  
Giving you warmth.

I offer you this momentary hope of love and kindness  
In a world that sadly offers you little  
And has no guarantees.

I give you each a flower from my garden  
"We are a bouquet," I say, "Prettier together, each unique."

I try to convince you that  
You are not a weed. You matter and contribute  
No more, no less than the rose.  
Do you believe me? Even I wonder  
As I try to convince myself that it can all be true.

I say, "We are like M&M's, different colors but  
Chocolate just the same. I give you these to remind you that  
You are luscious, mouthwateringly sweet. Your lips  
Barely open as I drop the candy into your mouth.

Even your body is cautiously vigilant.  
Who said that childhood was innocent?  
Yours is not.

I want you to feel the safety here in this M&M moment  
with me but  
Sadly, the world has already  
Clenched your jaw

*Susan Brennan-Sawyer has been a school psychologist for 30 years, 23 of those in Keene, NH. She provides direct services to children with severe emotional and behavioral needs. Susan also serves as the school psychologist for the SAU 29 preschool program.*

# ISPA Conference 2010: Fáilte to Dublin for the 32<sup>nd</sup> Annual Conference

The Irish Local Organising Committee (LOC) is delighted to invite you to attend the next ISPA conference in Dublin from 20-24 July 2010. The conference is being organised collaboratively by educational psychologists on the island of Ireland and co-hosted by the two professional bodies representing psychology, the Psychological Society of Ireland (PSI) and the Northern Ireland Branch of the British Psychological Society (NIBPS)

As a small island nation, Ireland has always looked outwards to the wider world. Strong links are forged around the globe, due to the extensive Irish Diaspora in USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and other countries. We will be delighted to provide an opportunity for some of this Diaspora to renew acquaintance with their ancestral roots during our conference! Looking across the Atlantic Ocean, as we say, to the “the next parish in New York” we are particularly conscious of the strong links we have forged with the USA, and judging from the response in Malta we will be welcoming many American delegates to the conference in Dublin. A special welcome will be extended to our near neighbours in the UK with whom we have close links and who have been supportive and influential in the development of our Educational Psychology Service model. We also look forward to fostering our relationships with school psychologists from Continental Europe.

There are approximately 400 psychologists working in education on the island of Ireland, both in the Republic and in Northern Ireland. One of the aims of the conference is to further promote the practice of educational psychology on the island and we are confident that the conference will provide a forum for this. We are pleased to be generously sponsored by the Department of Education and

Science in the Republic of Ireland.

The conference city is Dublin, which is one of the oldest in Europe, and has much to offer all tastes, whether cultural, literary or artistic. It is steeped in history and buzzing with diverse activities which are sure to meet all expectations. The conference site is the famous Trinity College Dublin, and we have reserved accommodation on the campus. We strongly encourage you to avail of this. Trinity College is centrally situated with easy access to public buildings, centres of entertainment and the main shopping areas.

The opening ceremony will be hosted by the Irish Minister for Education and Science in the historic State Apartments in Dublin Castle. Following the opening you will walk across the Castle Yard to be greeted by a harpist on the Battleaxe Landing. A wine reception will take place in St. Patrick's Hall, where Irish Presidents are inaugurated and you will be able to wander around the Picture Gallery and Throne Room of the Castle.

The conference theme is School Psychology: Making life better for all children. An impressive list of keynote speakers including Beth Doll (USA), David Farrington (UK), Sheila Greene (Ireland) and Ingrid Lunt (UK) have agreed to address this theme from varied perspectives. The main sub-themes under which the conference will be organized are academic achievement, diversity and inclusion, working together, biopsychological health, pro-social behaviour and professional issues.

The Social Committee is planning an exciting and memorable series of social events including a reception hosted by the Northern Ireland Minister for Education in Stormont Parliament Buildings (Belfast). We hope to have a designated bar in Trinity where people

can meet up. We will call it the ‘Fáilte’ bar – ‘fáilte’ meaning ‘welcome’. We may organize some Irish dancing classes in the Fáilte Bar one evening and there's sure to be music and ‘craic’ (the Irish for ‘fun’) to be found there late into the night!

On Thursday afternoon, we have organized tours to:

- The Boyne Valle and Newgrange, a megalithic site dating from 3200 BC
- Powerscourt House and Gardens and Glendalough, a monastic site in a beautiful setting
- Causey Farm where you will be able to enjoy making bread, playing the bodhrán and a sheep dog demonstration followed by a visit to Trim Castle, where BraveHeart was filmed
- Walking tours of Dublin, one including a visit to the Guinness Hop Store
- A trip to Belfast, with a reception at Parliament Buildings, the seat of government in Northern Ireland
- Golf on the Ryder Cup course at the K Club is another option

The last night party will be an Irish night with dinner followed by a show with dancers, musicians and singers – a great night, and we will have a DJ lined up for the party animals.... This is a great show and we think you'll love it.

We look forward to extending a C  ad M  ile F  ilte (Hundred Thousand Welcomes) to you in Dublin! You will find information about the conference on the ISPA website [www.ispaweb.org](http://www.ispaweb.org) Sl  n go f  ill! (Good-bye until we meet!)

Michael Sheehan, Chair, on behalf of the Irish Local Organising Committee

Thanks to NHASP and ISPA member Peter Whelley for getting this information for us. X

# Talking to the Janitor

by Audrey Myerson O'Neill

Back when Education courses were taught by post-graduate school principals instead of research scholars, they offered homely practical advice like, "It's very important to talk to the janitor."

I used to stay at school till 4:30 to get reports done, but sometimes wound up talking to the janitor instead. Working out of the local mental health center where we had to log our time by the quarter hour, I logged, "4 to 4:30, talk to the janitor." The supervisor said, "Don't write that! You'll get me in trouble." I said, "But everyone knows you're supposed to talk to the janitor."

The janitor's importance was first brought home to me in the Minneapolis exurbs. Our old Chevy was not up to the 30-below winters, and one day I took the city bus to the end of the line--a sanatorium 5 miles from school, called the school secretary, and asked if she could send someone to get me. She said, "I was thinking of sending George, but then there wouldn't be a janitor in the building, and we can't have that. So I'll send the principal."

In kindergarten my daughter put the two jobs on equal footing. "We have two principals, Mr. Bownes and Mr. Wiggett." I told her I knew Mr. Bownes, but I didn't know Mr. Wiggett. "He sweeps up the broken glass."  
(The names above are real, the ones below pseudonyms.)

The janitor is a more approachable role-model for non-academically inclined kids than us teacher-types. At one school, helping the janitor was a reward given for good behavior. This sounds like Tom Sawyer whitewashing the fence, but custodial tasks are a relief for kids to whom school does not come easily. I used to wonder whether the janitor was

compensated for his contribution to the IEPs.

Mr. Avery was a model janitor--a perfect gentleman, and his school sparkled. It turned out that he did not read very well, and the principal had to help him fill out his supplies orders. The bumper sticker on his classic black pickup read NH SCHOOLS FOR A BETTER FUTURE. This appreciation of education was widespread. Clyde's remarks at his whole-school retirement party ended, "Listen to your teachers. They're your best friends." I read that school janitors have the most upward mobile children of any occupational group. They have experienced first-hand the difference education makes in a hierarchy. A friend of mine, a professor of education at a big name university, from a minority background, told me her father had been a school janitor.

On my husband's sabbatical I worked in an adolescent psychiatry ward instead of a school. No one else at the hospital talked to the janitor. I found ours, Filomina, a very helpful person. I had to share an office with three teachers who objected to my working with the kids during their coffee breaks, which made it hard to get the work done. Filomina knew all about the hospital space, and suggested that I use the little room with the phone. After going through channels, which involved mainly reassuring the staff that the phone would still be available to them, I had my own office with small table, teapot, file cabinet, and of course, telephone. I explained Filomina's work motivation to the psychiatrist, who had thought janitor was a default job, not a choice. Filomina said some of the others wouldn't work on our floor, but she liked it because "you don't catch no diseases." Cleaning was the way to health. Of course I didn't tell her the sexually transmitted diseases some of

our kids had.

Conversation with the janitor is a two-way street. Stan asked me to lend him a thousand dollars to start his own painting business, "I know you got it around somewhere." I said, "Stan, I'm caught in the middle class squeeze." He said, "Oh, yeah? Well, I'm caught in the workingman's squeeze." Touché, Stan.

I asked Mr. Bean if he knew where I could get some string like the kind Mrs. ----'s class used in their project. He said her class was through with that and there was lots of string left, and brought me three spools. Then he insisted on personally going and bringing me my school lunch. I finally figured out what was going on. This was some years back, and I was wearing a body suit. But one's audience is more than the kids. I never wore it to work again.

One of my favorites was Remi the Weatherman. He used to bring the school secretary beautiful roses that he grew well into October. Her desk was in the middle of the entrance hall so his roses decorated a large area and greeted everyone who entered. I am a chicken winter driver and hooked on weather forecasts. Remi's predictions were at least as accurate as the Weather Channel, and by late afternoon more up-to-the-minute. He would ham it up--close his eyes, put his fingers to his temples, and go into a mock-trance. (Long pause.) "It's coming in clearer. I can see it's starting to snow in Plymouth. If you leave right now, you can get there before it sticks."

Upon leaving a school building, I always left word where I was going next. Late one afternoon the building was empty except for Remi and me. I told him I was going to the Downtown Office. He said, "That's a good place to stay away from." He knew which way the wind blew. ✕

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#### **Deadlines for Submission**

Upcoming issues of Protocol will have the following deadlines for submission of articles, news and announcements:

<u>Deadline</u>	<u>Issue</u>
April 15	Spring
July 15	Summer
October 15	Fall