



WEST CENTRAL ILLINOIS SPECIAL EDUCATION COOPERATIVE NEWSLETTER

March 2008

“EDUCATING EVERY CHILD”

Volume 4, Issue 4

“DISTRICTS MUST MAKE REASONABLE EFFORTS TO ENSURE CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE IN FIELD TRIPS.”

**“IF NOTHING EVER CHANGED THERE WOULD BE NO BUTTERFLIES.”
(ANONYMOUS)**

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View From The Corner Office By Bill Pumo



If nothing ever changed there would be no butterflies.
(Anonymous)

Next, I would like to discuss two articles from the April issue of “The 504 Compliance Advisor.” Both of these articles address field trips and students with disabilities. If you need further guidance in this area please contact us.

Students’ exclusion from trip requires district to train staff on inclusion

Case Name: Salida (CA) Union Sch. Dist., 49IDELR 166 (OCRIX, San Francisco (CA) 2007).

Ruling: Because a California district made no attempt to include four elementary school students from a special day class in a science field trip, OCR concluded that the district discriminated against the students on the basis of disability. OCR determined that the district could resolve the compliance concern by taking the steps set forth in a resolution agreement.

What it means: Unless a student’s IEP limits him from participating in activities such as field trips, a district must take steps to include the student in offsite activities with his classmates. The lack of specialized personnel such as a sign language interpreter or a one-to-one aide will not justify a district’s decision to exclude the student from a trip. Here, the district could have prevented a Section 504 and ADA violation by seeking additional information about a purported two-chaperone limit rather than opting to leave four students behind.

Summary: A California district might have believed that it could bring only two adults on a science class’s field trip to a local park, but that did not excuse its decision to exclude four students who

(Continued on page 2)

With spring around the corner we are now in the midst of an important time of planning and projecting for the next school year. Simultaneously we must juggle all of the daily responsibilities, issues, and challenges that continue throughout this school year. During this period of planning, it is exciting to begin discussing new ideas and formulating new goals and plans for the upcoming year based on what we have learned throughout this year.

Do we get so overwhelmed with budgetary pressures, competing initiatives and needs, and the sensitivities of special education costs that we start with these questions....

How much does it cost?
What can we afford to do?

instead of reviewing what current student data tells us about our programs, services, supports and professional development results?

We are painfully aware of the rising costs of special education and it’s imperative that we figure out how to plan for what students need in a fiscally responsible manner.

We all have to make difficult decisions this time of year. Why is one program or service more worthy than another? If we increase one service, what service do we diminish? We ask tough questions and make difficult decisions in light of our budgetary realities.

(Continued from page 1)

received the bulk of their instruction in a special day class. OCR concluded that the district's failure to invite four students to participate in the trip amounted to a Section 504 and ADA violation. According to the district, OCR observed, the science teacher informed the SDC teacher that park officials would only permit the elementary school to bring two adults on the science outing. Because the district's two fourth-grade teachers planned to accompany their students, the SDC teacher would need to remain behind. OCR noted that the district permitted only two of the six fourth-graders in the SDC to participate in the trip. Although the district claimed it based its decision on concerns about the remaining students' behavior, OCR pointed out that none of the students' IEPs contained restrictions regarding their participation in field trips. "OCR also found no evidence that IEP teams or any similar meetings took place prior to the field trip to discuss the participation or exclusion of the SDC students from the field trip," OCR wrote.

Consider students' unique needs when planning field trips

A student with diabetes requires periodic insulin injections throughout the day. A child with muscular dystrophy uses a wheelchair that cannot be accommodated on a regular school bus. A middle schooler with behavioral problems has emotional outbursts that make her difficult to control. Can these students participate in field trips with their nondisabled peers?

They can, provided the district is willing to undertake a little extra effort in the planning stages. OCR has addressed a number of discrimination complaints involving accommodations provided during field trips. Although the measures taken to accommodate the student differed in each case, the lesson was the same: *Districts must make reasonable efforts to ensure children with disabilities have an opportunity to participate in field trips.*

Efforts to include students in field trips will require some preparation by the district. Here are a few steps districts can take to ensure that students with disabilities have the opportunity to participate in field trips with their classmates:

- **Consider all aspects of the trip.** Encourage teachers to view potential field trips through the eyes of a child with a disability. Is the destination or activity accessible to students with mobility impairments? Does the trip involve a quiet activity, such as a visit to a museum, which would be difficult for a child with behavioral problems to endure?
- **Contact parents about any concerns.** Before making the final plans for a field trip, teachers may wish to contact the parents of children with disabilities and hear their feedback. Inviting parents to share their concerns in advance will foster a spirit of cooperation and reassure parents that the district is looking out for their children's needs.
- **Prepare for potential emergencies.** If a student requires a parent or a school nurse to administer medications or provide emergency health services, be prepared to reschedule the trip to accommodate the individual's schedule.

Business Office Bits

... By Denise Ratermann



As you complete your taxes, you might consider changing the amount of money that is withheld from your paycheck for federal and state taxes. Your number of withholdings is listed on the pay stub in the first box on the far left corner. This number can be changed at any time upon your request. If you wish to make a change all that is necessary is to fill out a new W-4 form. As you probably know the higher the number of deductions the less tax that is taken out. Another quick reminder, you can have a single filing status even if you are married. This will cause more taxes to be withheld during the year. As always if you have any questions regarding this information or anything to do with your paycheck please feel free to give me a call.

WCISEC Calendar For April, 2008

Mar 28	BIC Meeting, 1:00 PM to 3:30 PM
Mar 31	Administrator Meeting, 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM
Apr 7	Administrator Meeting, 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM
Apr 10	OT/PT/APE Meeting, 8:30 AM to 3:30 PM
Apr 11	SLP/HI/VI/Audio Meeting, 8:30 AM to 12:00 PM
Apr 14	Administrator Meeting, 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM
Apr 17	BIC Meeting, 8:30 AM, 2nd floor
Apr 17	SSW Meeting, 9:00 AM, 2nd floor
Apr 17	Triannual Meeting, 1:00 PM to 3:30 PM
Apr 18	Executive Committee Meeting, 9:00 AM, 2nd floor
Apr 21	Administrator Meeting, 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM
Apr 23	Administrative Assistant Day
Apr 24	TPC Meeting, 1st floor, 12:00 PM to 1:30 PM
Apr 28	Administrator Meeting, 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM



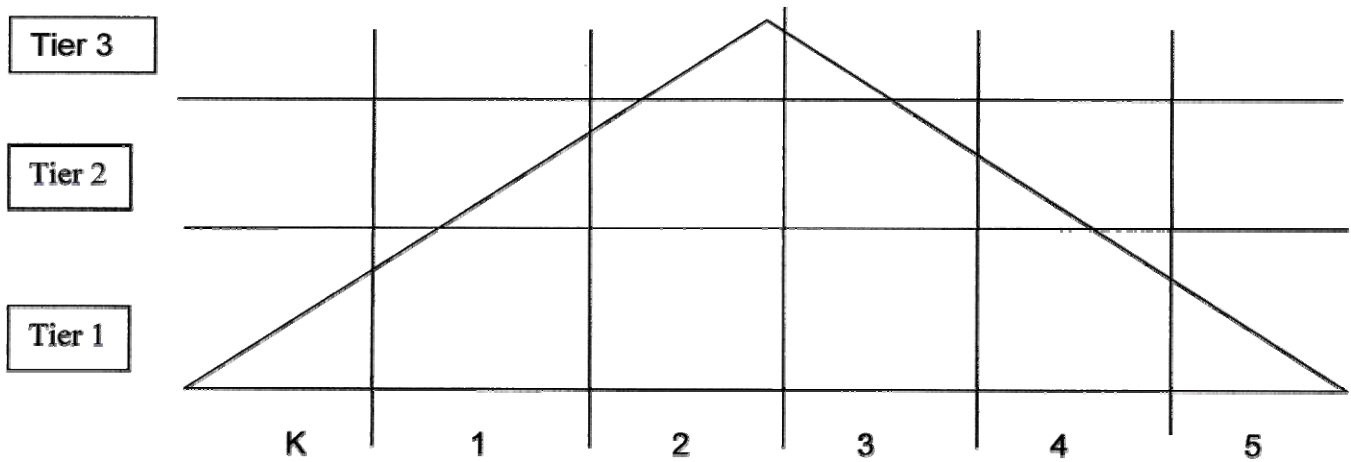
Southeastern High School Job Skills Class students are pictured with Pella Windows staff after their recent tour of the Macomb facility. The tour was organized by WCISEC STEP Job Developers Jackie Neill and Dana Ourth. Barb Kessler is the SHS teacher.

On The Edge By Lou Pruett



By now, districts that are using AIMSWEB have completed their second benchmarking in reading. In order to make district level decisions, we should be seeing 80% of our students reaching benchmark (TIER 1), 15% or less of our students will fall in TIER 2, and 5% in TIER 3~ at each grade level.

As each district moves forward with RTI implementation, districts need to complete a self-study which should display a triangle of interventions based on the needs of the students in the district in addition to the core reading program. The district graph would indicate the assessment/ intervention/curriculum used at each tier. (Illinoisaspire.org)



This self study will assist districts in completing the ISBE District Self-Assessment template that is now online: http://www.isbe.net/RtI_plan/default.htm This Assessment needs to be completed by a collaborative district team and submitted to ISBE no later than May 23, 2008.



Marla Johnson (l) and Shelly Jennings are caught clowning around



Lou Pruett delivers information on RtI

ROE 27 held a teacher institute on Friday February 29th at United District Junior High School for teachers/staff in Henderson, Warren and Mercer counties. WCISEC was represented by Marla Johnson and Shelli Jennings presenting a hugely attended session on behavior and autism while Lou Pruett presented a session on RtI to a smaller, yet appreciative group.

Communication for Children in the Autism Spectrum

By: Marla Johnson

Communication is the number one focus with any student we come into contact with. Children in the Autism Spectrum have a most difficult time in this area. It sometimes makes for a tough day for all of those involved.

The following are some “words of wisdom from Linda Hodgson author of *Visual Strategies for Improving Communication* “Telling a student what TO DO may produce a very different result than telling the student what NOT to do.

So there are really two issues here. . .

1. ***Get the student’s attention before communicating***

A lot of communication to students occurs when they are doing something else. If they are paying attention to whatever they are doing, they may not shift their attention to the speaker.

2. ***Tell the student what TO do***

After getting the student’s attention, helping him understand what he is supposed TO do will generally yield a better response. When the message is communicated in a clear straight forward way, there is less thinking that needs to be done to figure out what action to take.

We can become so focused on trying to change our students that we don’t really think about our part in the interactions. Sometimes making small changes in what WE do can make huge changes in how our students respond. Little things can make a big difference.”

Para Pro Testing Dates:

The Hancock/McDonough Regional Office of Education has announced the following Para Pro Testing dates:
April 7; May 5; and June 2, 2008

The testing time is from 8:30 to Noon on the second floor of the ROE. To register, call Lynn or Penny at 309-837-4821. There will be a \$50.00 testing fee collected on the day of the test.

The Fulton/Schuyler ROE is offering the Para Pro Test through Spoon River College. To register for the test, call SRC at (309) 647-6260 or (309)833-6031. The testing site is the Spoon River College Technology Center at 45 E. Side Square, Suite 302, Canton. The cost of the test is \$50.00, payable in advance by check.

The testing time is from 1:00 to 3:30. The testing schedule is:
June 12, 2008

Test study materials for WCISEC employees are available at no cost. Call the Macomb office at (309) 837-3911 to obtain them.



OT/PT/APE staff (pictured above) listen to a presentation on Orthotics

“March Madness”

The Illini West gym was the scene of the 3rd annual Intermediate MD Gators vs. I.W. Slam Dunkers basketball game held Friday, March 14th. The crowd was bigger than ever with Carthage Primary students, Illini West students and parents cheering on the players. To start the event, Mrs. Boyer’s 3rd and 4th grade music classes sang the Star Spangled Banner. The game ended in a 24 all tie, but the “D-FENCE” and shooting was better than ever! Halftime entertainment was provided by the primary Bright Starts cheerleaders accompanied by Ms. Twaddle’s 2nd grade class; a dance routine by six 4th grade girls; and of course Big Dog Tyler portraying the legendary Elvis. Again, many thanks go to all the staff of our 3 classrooms and our Adapted PE teacher, Carie Johnson to plan, practice and carry-out this game.



New Horizons Improves Its Reading Program

By: Doug Dennis

This past summer, New Horizons Alternative School received the *Reading Intervention Technology Leadership Grant* from CSC Learning and UCP/Infinitec. The grant was used to issue licenses for the Lexia and Soliloquy reading programs which will supplement the already used Wilson Reading Program when working with struggling readers.

For building principal, Melissa Robinson, and her staff, being awarded this grant was a very positive step in the pursuit of literacy. Some students enrolled at New Horizons do read at grade level. However, most have struggled with reading their whole lives and continue to struggle into junior high and high school. Most educators would agree that a strong correlation exists between low reading levels and problematic behavior.

The Lexia and Soliloquy reading programs are being used in tandem to help raise reading levels, and hopefully lower problem behaviors, at New Horizons School. Tim Clark and Miranda Vance, both teachers at New Horizons, have received formal training in facilitating the programs and have since implemented them with the junior high students as well as at-risk high school students.

Most students start by using the Lexia program, which is generally used to teach phonics and letter recognition, because their reading levels are not yet high enough to use Soliloquy. As they advance through the Lexia program, their confidence rises along with their reading ability, and they are then ready to use the Soliloquy program. The Soliloquy program focuses on fluency and comprehension, using complete stories that students can read aloud, record, and then play it back so that they can hear themselves. This benefits the child in the fact that they can tell on which words they need help with and which ones they have mastered.

Although the programs are still in their infancy at New Horizons, the feedback so far has been good from both teachers and students. Most of the students like it because it's a chance to be on the computer and they feel like they are in more control than when they "have to listen the teacher lecture all hour".

Teachers like it as well. "Anything that is able to hold the kids' interest and at the same time be able to improve their reading and track their progress is a tool that we have to give a serious shot," says program facilitator Tim Clark.

An Enlightening Workshop

By: Jan VanAcker


On Wednesday, February 13, 2008 WCISEC trained a hand-picked group of individuals including school social workers, behavior intervention consultants, teachers, support staff, and parents on the topic of Reactive Attachment Disorders (RAD.) The presenter, John Roope, from Chaddock Training Institute did an excellent job of reaching out to the participants and giving them an opportunity to feel how individuals identified with RAD face each day. . . Alone, with the world against them. The presentation led the group in a journey through their past-their multigenerational roots, the present-where do we belong? And into the future-for what outcomes are we striving? The theme of *wanting* and *needing to belong* surfaced as common ground throughout the day. The presentation also emphasized the saying: "It takes a village to raise a child." As educators, parents, and colleagues, Mr. Roope gave a simple act each of us can do to enhance in our students a sense of belonging and create a safer environment. The act is: At the onset of each day make sure the students in your building or classroom are greeted with a "Hello," a smile and a high-five or handshake. Let them know it's important they're present and that you're glad they are here! And when it is time to end the school day, touch base again with each student-close the day with a "See you tomorrow." "Hey, we made it through another day!" or "Have a great evening." Add to the greeting that big smile and a high-five, and take pride in the fact that you may just make a difference in a child's life and his success at school.

"Parent's Night" at Macomb HS



Pictured (l to r) Brian Davenport (DRS); Parent guest; Shirley Adams (Teacher); Ellie Zoerink (WCISEC); and Mary Jane Friedrich (WISC)

An evening of information sharing was provided to special education students and parents at Macomb HS on February 20, 2008. Resource agencies were on hand that night to help students learn the procedures necessary to receive services after graduation. The evening was sponsored by the Western Regional Transition Planning Committee and the special education teaching staff of Macomb HS.

<p>We're On The Web! View our Newsletters at: www.wcisec.org</p>		<p>WCISEC 130 S. Lafayette, Suite 201 Macomb, IL 61455 Phone: (309) 837-3911 Bill Pumo, Director wpumo@wcisec.org Lou Pruett, Asst. Director lpruett@wcisec.org</p>
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Teaching Social Interaction Skills to Students on the Autism Spectrum: Based upon the Indiana Resource Center for Autism “Building Social Relationship Model” by: Nancy Romine

Social Skills (Gresham & Elliot, 1995) are acceptable learned behaviors that enable a person to interact with others in ways that elicit positive responses and assist in avoiding negative responses. Teaching social skills is based upon these 5 basic tenets:

- students with ASD want to establish meaningful social relationships;
- we have to teach them these skills to be successful;
- social behaviors are not always “appropriate” social behavior
- social success is dependent upon the ability to adapt to our environment
- social interaction skills are not the equivalent of academic skills

Social skills training is difficult, you must start by identifying what it is you are going to teach and being flexible. You must use a model to guide you through programming and you must have a large cadre of interventions. One model to consider is a five stage approach to instruction developed by Scott Bellini, Ph.D., assistant Director for the Indiana Resource Center for Autism. In step one, you identify and assess areas of need; step two is discerning between skill acquisition deficits and performance deficits. Step three is to select appropriate intervention strategies and in step four, you implement these intervention strategies. In the last step you evaluate the program and modify as needed.

Step One: Identifying and Assessing Skill Difficulties:

Children with ASD have difficulties with reciprocity and terminating interactions as well as non-verbal communication. They commonly have social anxiety and social withdrawal in addition to challenges with social cognition. To determine interventions at this step, interviews with parents and the child if possible are necessary. Teachers and parents can complete any variety of rating forms; an observation in structured and non structured settings must occur and a team meeting is held to identify/analyze problems and develop treatment goals and objectives.

Step Two: Discerning between a Skill Acquisition and a Performance Deficit:

Skill acquisition deficits are the absence of particular skills or behaviors and performance deficits are skills or behaviors that are present but not performed or demonstrated. How do you know the difference between a skill or performance deficit? Consider these, does the child perform the skill across multiple settings and when reinforcement is provided or does the child perform the skill without support? Does the child perform the skill effortlessly or does he need

environmental modifications? The goal of step two is to enhance the performance of existing skills. There are many ways to promote skill acquisition such as role playing, social stories, scripting, prompting and social rules to name a few. To enhance social performance add reinforcement or contingency strategies, game playing; environmental modifications; peer sensitivity training or live social practices situations. Additional factors to consider are sensory sensitivities, anxiety, impulsivity, motivation and movement differences.

Step Three: Selecting Appropriate Intervention Strategies:

In selecting these strategies, you need to target specific social skills and its components. In doing so, you have to assure that the strategy you select matches the type of skill deficit and the developmental level of the child. With the emphasis today on scientific based research interventions, you must consider your rationale for using strategies *not* supported by research.

Step Four: Implementing Intervention:

In implementing interventions for children with ASD first determine what children will benefit from the program and then what format the program will be. It could be class-wide, group or individual instruction using peer models. A team should be assembled and trained with materials and resources available to them as well as a specific location for sessions. Lastly, a schedule for each child is developed to determine length and success of interventions.

Step Five: Evaluation and Monitoring:

The last step in this process is an ongoing process of integrating social goals and objectives developed in step one with data collection and modification. Does the strategy proceed from skill acquisition to mastery of performance? Does the intervention connect with the social profile? Social Skills training will fail if:

- the interventions are not frequent enough or fail to match the skill deficit
- the intervention goals are too ambiguous or poorly implemented
- there is a lack of systematic programming and
- there was a lack of social skill assessment prior to intervention

For more information on this 5 step social interaction model and other articles, go to:

www.iidc.indiana.edu/irca/

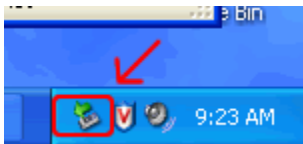
Tech Tips by: Gregg Randall

Flash drives are meant as a way to move files to and from multiple computers. They are not intended to be used as backups for long-term permanent storage. Valued information should be backed up to File Server drives or burned to CD-R or CD-RW disks.

Please note that some flash drives may require drivers to be installed, usually on older computers. Most will work straight away with most computers running Windows XP or above. The computer must have an available USB port. Flash drives go by many names including: thumb drives, jump drives, USB drives. They come in varying amounts of memory. Today, most range from 1-32 GB in capacity. Some of the more popular brand name drives would include: Sandisk, Kingston, Lexar, Transcend, Corsair, and PNY.

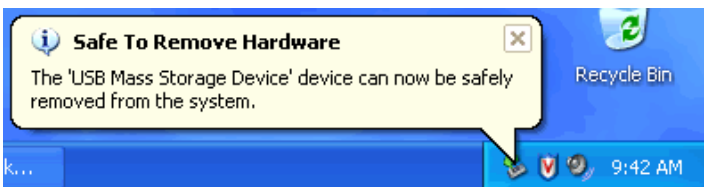
Copying files to a flash drive on a PC:

1. Open "My Computer" and see which drives are shown. Most computers, for example, have a hard disk such as a C: drive and a few removable storage devices such as a floppy drive, a CD-ROM drive, and perhaps a zip drive.
2. Insert the flash drive into the USB port and watch to see where the USB flash drive appears. Most will appear as removable storage, but some will instead appear as hard drives. Note the name Windows is using to refer to the flash drive ("Removable Disk (G:)," for example).
3. Open "My Documents" or the location from which you want to transfer files to the flash drive. Select the *files *or "folders" you want to save to the flash drive by left-clicking on them. To select more than one, hold down the CTRL key while you click and select all of the files you wish to save.
4. "Right-click" on the file(s) or folder(s) you selected, then select "Send to", then select the name you saw appearing in My Computer for the flash drive ("Removable Disk (G:)," for example).
5. When the copying is finished, **do not immediately remove the flash drive from the USB port**. Instead, left-click on the "Remove Hardware" icon located in the System Tray. A window containing a



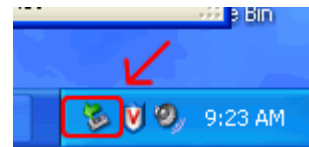
list of the USB devices will appear. Left-click on the "Safely Remove Mass Storage Device" line that matches your flash drive (for example, "Safely Remove Mass Storage Device - Drive(G:)").

6. When you see the following message appear in the bottom left toolbar, it is, as it says, safe to remove the flash drive from the USB port; you may close the message or ignore it, as it will close itself automatically:



Copying files from a flash drive on a PC:

1. Open "My Computer" and see which drives are shown. Most computers, for example, have a hard disk such as a C: drive and a few removable storage devices such as a floppy drive, a CD-ROM drive, and perhaps a zip drive.
2. Insert the flash drive into the USB port and watch to see where the USB flash drive appears. Most will appear as removable storage, but some will instead appear as hard drives. Note the name Windows is using to refer to the flash drive ("Removable Disk (G:)," for example).
3. "Double-click" on the flash drive to locate the file(s) or folder(s) you want to copy to this computer. Select the "files" or "folders" you want to copy by left-clicking on them. To select more than one, hold down the CTRL key while you click and select all of the files or folders you wish to copy.
4. "Right-click" on the files or folders you have selected and choose "Copy".
5. Open "My Documents" or the location to which you want to transfer files from the flash drive.
6. Click on the "Edit" menu, then select "Paste".
7. When the copying is finished, **do not immediately remove the flash drive from the USB port**.



Instead, left-click on the "Remove Hardware" icon located in the System Tray. A window containing a list of the USB devices will appear. Left-click on the "Safely Remove Mass Storage Device" line that matches your flash drive (for example, "Safely Remove Mass Storage Device - Drive(G:)").

8. When you see the following message appear in the bottom left toolbar, it is, as it says, safe to remove the flash drive from the USB port; you may close the message or ignore it, as it will close itself automatically:



Flash drives come in various shapes and sizes

West Central Illinois Special Education Cooperative
Executive Committee Bulletin
March 13, 2008

Review of Action Items from the March 13, 2008 Executive Committee Meeting:

Approved Minutes: from the February 15, 2008 meeting.

Financial Reports:

Approved the March 2008 Payables;

Personnel:

Employment: Approved the employment of Leyona Wiley as Assistant Director , effective July 1, 2008.

Reduction in Force: Approved a Reduction in Force for the following:

Jackie Neill, STEP Job Developer;
Dana Ourth, STEP Job Developer;
Barbara Finch, Individual Student Assistant;
Brandi Johnson, Individual Student Assistant;
Anna Rodeffer, Individual Student Assistant;
David Dieckow, Individual Student Assistant;
Amy Chandler, Individual Student Assistant;

New Business:

Approved the summer OT/PT program;
Approved the new Sub Pay rate;
Approved the 2008-2009 Retirement Incentives;

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

Program Report(s);
Correspondence from Dr. Jonathan Heerboth;

Director's Report: The Director reviewed the following:

- Putting Proven Interventions into RTI Tier 1 and 2 Reading Interventions;
- Annual WCISEC Basketball game for WCISEC classes at Illini West High School;
- March Madness and WCISEC students;
- Courageous Smiles Track Meet;



More action from Illini West as the "Gators" take on the "Slam Dunkers"