



ANYA EVMENOVA, EDITOR

FEBRUARY 2013

President's Message

TAM, The Fiscal Cliff, Sequestration, and the Debt Ceiling

Joel Mittler, Ed.D.

What does TAM have in common with all the unexpected political events in Washington, DC the past few months?

Well, if you can't figure it out, just think about unusual events concerning governing requiring uncommon solutions. While the Fiscal Cliff, Sequestration, Debt Ceiling all were about budget, in TAM's case, it was about the search for a President. While TAM has surely had interest in the Washington budget issues, the question of the TAM Presidential Search was our most recent "policy" concern.

As you might recall, the TAM Board serves from January to December. With that year in place, TAM usually issues the first call for nominations, including President-elect, at our TAM Business Meeting at the CEC Conference in April. We continue the call for nominations via our Newsletter until the summer and hold our election in October, with the new term beginning in January.

And that is exactly how things were moving along until about two years ago. In October 2010, you, the members, elected me as your President-elect and my term started in January 2011. In April 2011, we began to solicit nominees for President-elect to take office in January 2012. Unfortunately, there were none. Thus, when I took office as President in January, 2011, we had no one to succeed me. The TAM Board voted, in October 2012 to ask me to stay on one more year, beginning in January, 2013, rather than place someone with little experience in the office. I agreed (as long as Brenda stayed on as Past President) and urged them to find someone to succeed me. Thus, I now begin my second term as TAM President. Fortunately, the TAM Board did identify candidates to run for all the open seats in the election held last fall. We now have a full slate of Board members, including a President-elect!

What I am pleased to report, however, is that I am looking forward to working with our TAM Board. Our new President-elect, Margaret Bausch, has been a wonderful asset to our field and to TAM for many years, having served in many critical positions with the organization, including a previous term as TAM President. Margaret brings her spirit and commitment to everything that she does. She will provide energy, creativity, and leadership to TAM in the years ahead.


I am also thrilled that Joy Zabala has been reelected as TAM Secretary.

Not only does she do a wonderful job in maintaining the records of our meetings, but also her experience and knowledge of what is happening throughout the country in the world of Assistive Technology is invaluable.

I'd like to welcome back Cindy Okolo, our new Member at Large. Cindy is a long time leader in our field and served on the Board many years ago. In fact, Cindy was a President of TAM and I had the privilege of working with her during that period. I am thrilled to have her join us again, sharing her hard work, her skills, her knowledge, and more.

I want to publically thank our Past President, Brenda Heiman, for her invaluable help and guidance the past year and tell you all just how important she is to TAM and to the children and youth we care about. Thank you, Brenda!

As new Board members are announced, other terms end. I want to thank Emily Bouck who has completed her term as Member at Large for TAM. She has helped TAM in several critical ways, particularly getting us more involved in social media. Thank you, Emily!

So, I look forward to continuing to lead TAM and working with these "new" Board members, our returning Board members, and our other volunteers. We will do our best to represent you, the members and to enhance the field. I know that our entire Board wishes you a happy and healthy New Year. 

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Leadership Update

Meet TAM's Newly Elected Board Members

President-Elect



Dr. Margaret Bausch is an associate professor in the University of Kentucky's (UK) Assistive Technology (AT) Program, Director of the AT Certificate at UK and a

long time member of TAM. "I am very excited to have the opportunity to serve TAM in the upcoming years. I have worked with many of the TAM Board members in the past and know how dedicated they are to the organization. I hope to be able to continue their fantastic work and look forward to working with and learning from the current TAM president, Joel Mittler. I am eager to support the development and dissemination of new TAM products for our membership. I hope that you will consider attending the TAM business meeting at CEC and becoming involved in your organization. Please let me know how TAM can serve you."

Member-at-Large



Dr. Cynthia Okolo is the professor in the special education area at Michigan State University. "I am so pleased to be serving as a Member-At-Large of TAM.

I teach courses in assistive technology, UDL, and instructional methods. My research focuses on improving instruction in the content areas for students with mild disabilities. Technology has been a major component of my research program, and my colleagues and I have developed and investigated several online learning tools. I want to support members by networking, creating and disseminating relevant and timely information, virtual and face-to-face meetings and conference presentations, and innovative products that can help you better integrate technology into your educational or clinical work. I hope to have the opportunity to hear from you."

Secretary



Dr. Joy Smiley Zabala is a past president and the newly re-elected secretary of TAM. She has over 25 years of leadership in assistive technology (AT), Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and Accessible Instructional Materials (AIM). Dr. Zabala is the Director of Technical Assistance for CAST and the National Center on Accessible Instructional Materials (<http://aim.cast.org>). She is the developer of the SETT Framework and a founding member of the QIAT Community. "I am a strong supporter of UDL as the foundational support for the educational participation and achievement of all students and of AT and AIM as complementary supports for those students who require them for active participation and achievement in UDL environments. I look forward to continuing to serve on the TAM Board."

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Assistive Technology Funding News

Stepping-Up Technology Implementation (327S) Federal Funding Awards

Anya Evmenova, Ph.D.

The Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) at the U.S. Department of Education has recently awarded 7 projects across the country with the purpose to support the development of resources essential for successful implementation of evidence-based technology tools as well as to expand the high-quality, rigorous research on

the effectiveness of these technology tools. The awardees are:

- University of Oregon, Center for Advanced Technology in Education in partnership with EdNW (Northwest) - "Stepping up to SOAR (S-SOAR): Strategies for Online Academic Reading."
- California State University Auxiliary Los Angeles in partnership with Braille Institute of America - "Improving Literacy and Technology Skills Using Braille Challenge Mobile App."
- George Mason University, College of Education and Human Development - "Project WeGotIt! Writing Efficiently with Graphic Organizers."

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CAN Report

Fiscal Cliff Avoided, but More Problems Loom

Joel Mittler, Ed.D., TAM CAN Coordinator

Even as the Congress avoided the fall over the Fiscal Cliff by coming to some agreement on taxes at the very last minute, the issue of Sequestration was only postponed for two months until the beginning of March 2013. As you may recall, Sequestration was used in the Budget Control Act of 2011 to encourage Congress to reduce the annual deficit by \$1.2 billion by the end of 2012. If lawmakers failed to do so, the law would have triggered automatic budget cuts to the 2013 national budget beginning January 2, 2013.

The Budget Control Act of 2011 (BCA) established a 12 member Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction (or “super committee”) charged with reducing the deficit by an additional \$1.2 - \$1.5 trillion over ten years. The BCA also included a sequestration hammer should the super committee fail; a provision intended to “force” the super committee to act.

Despite the threat of sequestration, the super committee failed. So, as established in the BCA, sequestration was triggered when the super committee failed to reach an agreement. Sequestration generates automatic cuts for each of nine years, FY 13-21, totaling \$1.2 trillion. Without Congressional action to prevent sequestration, the first round of cuts was scheduled to take place Jan. 2, 2013.

The 2013 cuts apply to “discretionary” spending and are divided between reductions to defense (\$500 billion) and non-defense (\$700 billion). Under sequestration, education funding will be subject to cuts ranging from 9.1% (in 2013) to 5.5% (in 2021) according to the Center on Budget & Policy Priorities. The reduction in FY 2013

would be \$4.1 billion. These cuts would be distributed across the various education programs based on current funding levels.

Under sequestration, federal funding for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act will be reduced by **\$1,053,600,000** in 2013, or 28 percent of the total reduction to education programs. A \$1.1 billion reduction in IDEA federal funds in 2013 will put the federal contribution toward the cost of special education back to its 2005 level. Equally important, federal funds for IDEA have never come close to the amount authorized by IDEA, often referred to as “Full Funding.”

The Fiscal cliff deal essentially sets up yet another major fiscal fight later on this year. Congress will need to come up with new legislation to cope with sequestration by March. That could involve a fresh round of domestic-spending cuts, which, in turn, could put education programs on the chopping block.

Plus, the federal government is operating on a temporary budget, called a continuing resolution, which expires at the end of March. Lawmakers will have to figure out a final budget for fiscal year 2013, which began back on Oct. 1, or face the prospect of a government shutdown.

There were however, some small victories for education in the Fiscal Cliff legislation. The Act extends a deduction that elementary and secondary school teachers and other school professionals can take for up to \$250.00 related to materials they purchase and use in classrooms. Likewise, it extends the Qualified Zone Academic Bond (QZAB) program, which provides needed

funding for rebuilding and modernizing qualified schools and colleges throughout the nation.

In addition to all of this, the new Congress that began on January 3, 2013 are likely to have some new members of the House and Senate education committees and possibly new Chairs of those committees. With the reauthorization of ESEA overdue and possible work on a reauthorization of IDEA in this Congress, we will have to monitor the committee membership and their positions.

If you wish to receive a weekly update from CEC or have questions for me, feel free to contact me at jmittler@liu.edu. 📧

AT Funding News

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- University Of Kansas, Center for Research on Learning in partnership with Don Johnston Inc. - “Sustainable Implementation of Innovations for Student Achievement.”
- Institute for Community Inclusions, University of Massachusetts-Boston - “Think College Island: Promoting College and Career Readiness for Students with Disabilities in Middle School.”
- Ohio State University, Nisonger Center - “Scaling-Up EnvisionIT: A Model for Teaching 21st Century Skills to Students with Disabilities.”
- Southern Methodist University, Institute for Evidence-Based Education - “An Experimental Examination of e-nimble for Providing Technology Based Student Focused Coaching in Special Education Resource Rooms.”

TAM Board Membership 2013

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TAM CONNECTOR

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