



ANYA EVMENOVA, EDITOR

FEBRUARY 2014

President's Message

Margaret Bausch, Ed.D., President TAM



Happy New Year to all TAM members! This is the time of the year when we typically look forward to exciting events and resolutions in the upcoming months.

However, I would be remiss not to reflect on the past for a moment and thank the TAM executive board members who worked tirelessly last year to maintain TAM as a viable organization. I would especially like to thank Joel Mittler, last year's TAM president and CAN coordinator, who kept the membership informed of the latest technologies and abreast of the activities in Washington. (See more about Joel in this issue of the Connector.) Many thanks also go to TAM board members Brenda Heiman, Marci Kinas Jerome, Joy Zabala, Cheryl Temple, Cynthia Okolo, Cynthia Warger, John Castellani, Melinda Jones Ault, Anya

Evmenova, Lynne Mainzer, Sue Stein, and Jim Gardner. As you can see, it takes a team of folks to run this organization, and I am grateful for the knowledge and dedication this team brought to TAM last year and will continue to bring in 2014.

As we look forward to the future of TAM, those of you who have been a TAM member for a few years probably recognize some familiar names on the TAM board. Although it is important to have some continuity, it is also imperative to have fresh ideas and new leaders. In an effort to keep TAM on the forefront of special education technology, I invite you to become a part of the TAM leadership team of the future. TAM has many opportunities to involve

the membership, and we encourage you to reach out to a TAM board member to find out how you can become a TAM leader. The TAM board also invites you to the TAM Business meeting at the CEC meeting in Philadelphia. We will inform you as soon as the date and time of the meeting have been confirmed with CEC.

So, while it is important to reflect on the past, please take advantage of the opportunity to have an impact on the future of TAM. Volunteer to become involved in one or more of the many TAM committees where you can see old friends, make new acquaintances, and have an impact on the lives of individuals with disabilities. I hope to see you in Philadelphia!

Thanks to Our Past President

The TAM Board would like to thank our past president, Joel Mittler, Ed.D for his years of service to TAM and especially for the past two years as TAM president. Joel attended the very first CEC sponsored conference on assistive technology (AT), held in Hartford, CT in 1983. Within a few years, he joined efforts with other present TAM members to form a new division of CEC, the Technology and Media Division (TAM). A founder of TAM, he has remained active on the Executive Board, serving in various capacities including three terms as president of TAM. His passion for special education and in particular technology for students with disabilities has not waned over the years having served as president of the New York

State Council for Exceptional Children (NYSCEC), CEC board of directors, the Children's Action Network (CAN) Coordinator for TAM and NYSCEC, a JSET reviewer, and numerous other committees in both TAM and CEC.

Primarily interested in public policy and special education, he continues to serve as the CAN Coordinator for TAM and regularly writes and presents on legislation and policy emanating from Washington DC. His focus is on legislation that impacts our work as special educators, especially in areas that involve AT. Those who have worked with Dr. Mittler over the years have commented on his hard work, dedication, and vision for TAM. Dr. Ted

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Leadership Update

Meet TAM's Newly Elected Board Members

President-Elect



Dr. Cheryl Temple is the Assistive Technology Services (ATS) Program Manager at Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS). In this role, she plans, manages, and co-

ordinates programs and personnel who are responsible for providing assistive technology support to students and staff in FCPS. "As I write this, it is zero degrees outside and most of the local school systems are closed. It's a good time for sitting by a nice warm fire with a cup of hot chocolate and reflecting. Among the many things I am thinking about, one of them is the unique opportunity to work with the President, the rest of the TAM board, and all of the TAM members in the capacity of President-Elect. Our President, Margaret Bausch, and I have already had several conversations and have been discussing ways to continue to lead the organization forward.

"As President-Elect, I hope to continue to collaborate with other members to develop innovative ways to further the uses of technology and media for all individuals with diverse learning needs. I would like to find a way for more professionals to take advantage of the valuable resources and products that TAM has available. As a practitioner in the field of AT, supporting the diverse learning needs of individuals with disabilities through the use of technology is my passion. I am excited to continue

my involvement with the TAM division of CEC, which is a dynamic group of people who also value technology as a tool to help individuals with diverse learning needs reach and maintain their full potential. I am looking forward to the opportunity to work with the President, the TAM board, and all of you, and hope for the best year ever!"

Member-at-Large



Dr. Anya Evmenova is the assistant professor in special education at George Mason University. She teaches master and doctoral level classes in research methods, assistive technology, and special education. Her research interests focus on the use of instructional and assistive technology to support cognitive development and academic instruction for students with various abilities and needs across content areas.

"I look forward to this opportunity to serve as a member-at-large on the TAM board. It is very important to introduce more people to all exciting activities and products available through TAM. When I first learned about assistive technology in 2001, I was a special education teacher in North Carolina. At that time there were only a few tools available, so choosing a technology support was a much easier process. Nowadays, the AT market is growing by the minute. There are a myriad of software programs,

hardware tools, and mobile applications that can help students with disabilities reach their full potential. So I believe that we should focus the education and professional development opportunities for teachers on how to make data-driven decisions about which AT to use and how to effectively and seamlessly integrate technology into the instruction. I hope such opportunities will be valuable for the existing members and attract many new members to TAM." ❶

Thank You Joel!

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Hasselbring, a long-time friend and co-founder of TAM said, "Joel has provided a tremendous service to TAM for almost 30 years by keeping the membership informed about legislation related to special education."

Joel's inspiring leadership, unfailing sense of humor, and successful efforts to attract new members have been greatly appreciated by the TAM board members. Under his leadership, important work of marketing TAM products and developing activities has been initiated, aiming to attract more attention to TAM and CEC. Joel Mittler deserves an enormous thank you from all of us for his dedication to the division and for being an incredible role model for new and upcoming leaders in the area of AT. Thank you, Joel, for all you have done for TAM. We are hoping you will stay around for another 30 years! ❶

CAN Report

A Bit of Relief in the Budget Battle in Washington

Joel Mittler, Ed.D., TAM CAN Coordinator

Over the last year, sequestration (the 5% across-the-board cut to federal programs) resulted in over \$600 million cut from federal special education programs. While little could be done about the money lost in the last fiscal year (Oct. 1, 2012 – Sept. 30, 2013), the House and the Senate finally agreed to a budget deal that provides some relief for the current fiscal year that began October 1, 2013 and for the next year. Recall that sequestration built in significant budget cuts over a ten-year period.


While the budget deal is far from perfect, it does provide a way to move the budget discussions forward during a time when Washington has been hamstrung by a deep partisan divide that resulted in a 16-day government shutdown last year. However, these discussions are not likely to take us back to the days that some of you may recall when we saw increased spending on special education each year.

The current deal prevents \$63 billion in additional sequestration budget cuts from taking effect for the next two years, which is “paid for” by savings elsewhere in the budget. It also sets a budget for

overall discretionary spending at \$1.012 trillion, which is halfway between the Senate’s budget level of \$1.058 trillion and the House budget level of \$967 billion. While this agreement sets overall spending amounts, the actual dollars that each program will get will be up to the Appropriations Committees which will determine funding allocations for specific federal programs, such as special education. That work is due to be completed by January 15th, when the current continuing resolution—the mechanism that is keeping the government operating—expires.

In other news, the ESEA reauthorization is still awaiting Congressional action. The Senate has introduced a bill and the House has passed or introduced several smaller bills relating to parts of ESEA, but there is little indication that the Congress will complete work on ESEA this session. Recall that this 113th Congress is in session for two years that will end in December 2014. Unless there is a sudden demonstration of bipartisan thinking and compromise, it does not appear that ESEA, or IDEA, will be reauthorized.

One area that is attracting some attention in various states that impacts the children that we care about is the intersection of data collection and privacy. In one example, some states have agreed to store data about children and their families, including disability label, within a nationally run, cloud-based system. Such storage, it is argued, will permit a better analysis of the needs of these children so that services can be best tailored. Some parents, mistrustful of the security of any large-scale data system, are objecting. In another emerging area, some new teacher certification systems will require the videotaping of teacher candidates working with children. Again, there is a growing concern about the storage and privacy protections being afforded to the children that are part of that taping. Watch these issues as they develop over the next few months.

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

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TAM CONNECTOR

TAM Connector is published 4 times a year by the Technology & Media Division of the Council for Exceptional Children. Email all news items to Anya Evmenova (aevmenov@gmu.edu). Change of address should be sent to CEC Membership at the Council for Exceptional Children, 2900 Crystal Drive, Suite 1000, Arlington, VA 22202-3557.

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