

Dear OAPSA members,

Welcome back to the 2013 – 2014 school year! I hope you had some time for rest and renewal during the brief summer period and are ready to take on the inevitable challenges that will be coming our way.

Most of you are aware that I have been selected as the first OAPSA Executive Director since the organization was founded. Truly, this is both an honor and a privilege. OAPSA, as a small, state-wide organization, has been providing valuable services to its members for many years. However, with the ongoing and difficult challenges we face in the field of education, OAPSA needs to move forward so we can respond affirmatively and effectively to those changes at a higher level.

As you can imagine, there are many items on my new “To Do” list. In discussion with your Executive Board, we have identified a number of areas that will be considered for implementation during this next year. Below are descriptions of some of the items that will be our focus over the coming year:

As one area of focus, we are working on revising the way in which we communicate with members. Over a period of many years we have relied on a rather basic form of email communications to distribute information to you. This past year, several Executive Board members put a great deal of effort into the development of our new website hosted by ClubRunner. That site has already resulted in significant improvements and it continues to have tremendous potential for enhancing and expanding the ways in which we communicate with…and offer resources to…our members. As an OAPSA member you will now receive most OAPSA communications through our ClubRunner website so it is important that you are registered on the site. We are also considering using social media as another way to keep in touch.

A second area of focus is the expansion of our membership which has been in the 200 -250 range throughout much of OAPSA’s existence. When you consider that there are more than 600 public school districts, 55 ESCs, more than 40 developmental disabilities (DD) centers, and an ever-increasing number of community and private schools in Ohio, there is potential for significant membership growth for OAPSA. This growth would need to be managed in such a way to ensure that not only is the high quality of OAPSA’s resources and services maintained, but also added value is gained from the broader diversity and expanded base of support within our membership.

A third area of focus involves one of the consequences of this being such a high-stress and demanding profession: there is a relatively high rate of turnover among pupil services administrators and each year there seems to be a new cohort of administrators…some of whom have very little experience in the field. We are considering the development of a resource available through OAPSA that would provide support to new pupil services administrators during their first year in the position. This potential program is only in the early stages of consideration at this point.

A fourth area of focus will be on expanding and improving the impact that OAPSA has on the field of pupil services in Ohio. There have been major legislative and policy changes in Ohio over the past several years and OAPSA needs to have a stronger voice in those decisions that affect our profession. There are many professional organizations such as OSBA, BASA and even OSPA that have been much more involved in these issues mainly because they have dedicated staff that can focus upon them. It is my intent as your Executive Director to make OAPSA much more visible and impactful in the months and years to come.

Your input and involvement as an OAPSA member is very important to me. For us to have a greater impact on legislative and policy decisions that affect the wide range of pupil services in Ohio, we must have a substantial membership base that works together with coordination and focus. I look forward to serving as OAPSA’s Executive Director and to the opportunity to join together with you in addressing the many issues we are currently facing.

Sincerely,

Dr. John Opperman, Executive Director

Ohio Association of Pupil Services Administrators