

President's Letter: February 2007

Karen J. Rooney, Ph.D.
President, Division for Learning Disabilities



Dear DLD members:

As you know, DLD established several initiatives for the 2006-2007 year. To update you on our progress, I'll summarize the activities for each separate initiative to tell you where we are, and where we hope to go!

Increasing Communication with Members

You have already received your first of three newsletters. In response to feedback from you, we brought back *DLD Times*—rechristened as *New Times for DLD*—and look forward to continuing to use the newsletter to keep you aware of the activities of the Board as well as provide you with articles on topics that are important to you.

We also are in the process of trying to set up an e-mail system that will let us communicate with you on a more frequent basis, which I thought was going to be quite easy until my first attempt to e-mail DLD's members ended up shutting down my e-mail privileges because of the volume of mailing. I am in the process of trying to get a system in place that does not require us to break the thousands of e-mail addresses into groups of 15! We are looking at our options and hope to have a system in place because e-mailing can be so inexpensive and fast.

Our first West Coast conference in San Francisco was a huge success! The hotel was wonderful, all the speakers received ratings of 4 or 5 out of 5 and attendance was high. We were thrilled to meet and get to know the members who came, and we hope we have gained some new members

Our website continues to be an excellent communication tool. I have been contacted by several members who wanted to sign up for certain committees and we encourage you all to contact any officer or Committee chair through the website if you want to become more involved or be on a committee.

Providing Support for Teachers of Students with Learning Disabilities

The DLD Board has been doing a great deal of advocacy on your behalf and will increase our efforts as we approach the reauthorization of No Child Left Behind (NCLB). DLD has been to approximately 29 meetings related to NCLB, IDEA 2004 or Response-to-Intervention (RTI) to make sure your interests are represented and protected. This initiative will become more and more important as IDEA 2004 is implemented in our schools.

At both the Charleston and San Francisco conferences, we held focus groups to get your thoughts about a CD project that would provide CDs on timely topics to save you time and energy. Our pilot CD was on curriculum-based measurement and it contained two articles as well as a tutorial so you would have the information at your fingertips. We are in the process of trying to find some funding that will enable us to proceed so there will be no cost to the membership.

In San Francisco, we formed a Writing Committee to produce a booklet that will be a user-friendly guide to RTI that will address the process as well as the roles of parents and

professionals in the RTI process. We are excited about the project and have the booklet on the fast track to assist you as RTI is implemented.

Protecting the Construct of Learning Disabilities

DLD has defended the construct of Learning Disabilities at every opportunity and even held a special session to discuss the construct at the San Francisco conference. Dr. Ed Kame'enui joined a panel of Board members to respond to questions about the concept of Learning Disabilities and the RTI process. The session provided an opportunity for DLD members to make their concerns known to Dr. Kame'enui as well as the Board.

We are also beginning to develop a document that not only recognizes the validity of the concept of Learning Disabilities but also documents the enormous contribution special education research has made to the field of education. Instructional approaches, techniques and strategies that are outcomes of research conducted to improve the instruction for students with Learning Disabilities have been so successful that many are implemented in both general and special education on a daily basis in our schools.

DLD has also contacted all the previous Presidents of DLD to serve as a Review Panel to provide history and continued guidance to the Board and was pleased that we can rely on so much additional expertise as we move forward.

Forming Partnerships with Other Organizations

DLD has worked to develop common principles that will guide on-going projects with the Learning Disabilities Association of America (LDA). The DLD Board has approved the principles and is waiting for the LDA Board to review the latest version that was submitted to them. We have also worked with the International Reading Association's initiative to gather organizations to find common ground that could be helpful in the implementation of RTI and were invited to attend the National Alliance for Adolescent Literacy's meeting to address literacy issues affecting older students. We continue to be active members of the National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities and its newest member organization, Recording for the Blind and Dyslexic, provided materials for distribution at our San Francisco conference. In addition, DLD has a representative on the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities' Education Task Force and has started to participate in the Forum on Educational Accountability. DLD has also begun to partner with Division of International Special Education and Services to promote international memberships from developing countries.

The Board is very excited about the progress we have made and look forward to an even more productive 2007. Please let us know your opinions, tell us what you need and work with us to support research-to-practice. We are on the Board to serve, represent and advocate and we would appreciate any help you can give us to reach our common goals.

Thanks for all you do every single day!

Karen Rooney
President,
Division for Learning Disabilities
Council for Exceptional Children

The Division for Learning Disabilities (DLD) of the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) works to secure access to appropriate education for students with Learning Disabilities and to promote evidence-based practice by professionals serving those students. Learn more about DLD by visiting the organization's Web site at <http://TeachingLD.org>.

About the author

Karen J. Rooney, Ph.D. serves as President of DLD. Previously, she served as DLD's representative to CEC's Children's Action Network. In addition to teaching at the elementary, secondary, and community college levels, she established The Learning Resource Center and the Attention Disorders Clinic in Richmond, Virginia.

