

FROM THE EDITOR

The return of 'Children at Risk'



More than a year ago, *ASBJ* began work on a series of stories we called “Children at Risk,” spotlighting programs and problems that put students at risk of failure in academics and in life.

Over five stories that spanned 10 months, Senior Editor Lawrence Hardy focused on juvenile justice, the neighborhood, poverty, parent involvement, and a program that worked to help low-income students graduate from high school. At the end of the series last September, we promised to revisit the topic periodically.

This month, “Children at Risk” returns with a story on students’ mental health and how schools can provide the care they need. If you don’t think this is something that affects you, consider this: Three-quarters of the children and youth who need mental health services in the United States do not receive them or get inadequate treatment.

As Mark D. Weist, director of the University of Maryland’s Center for School Mental Health, says in the story, mental health problems are some of “the most neglected needs in the

nation. It’s a very troubling scenario that a majority of youth with mental health needs do not receive services.”

Troubling, indeed.

Also troubling, especially for schools, is the tremendous rise in the number of autism diagnoses among children. The number has soared 900 percent over the past decade, as Associate Editor Joetta Sack-Min notes in her story on Page 19, and shows no signs of slowing.

Sack-Min visited three districts in New Jersey, the state with the highest percentage of school-age children with autism, to see how they are meeting the challenges. She also has sidebars that look at the disorder and Sensory Integration Dysfunction (SID), a neurological condition that causes problems processing with the five senses.

We hope you benefit from reading these stories, and that you enjoy the rest of our March issue. Next month, we will focus on unions and merit pay, and present the winners of our 14th annual Magna Awards.

Thanks again for reading. Until next month...

Glenn Cook, Editor-in-Chief