

# Multiple choice for top administrator in Sea Isle begs question: Who's in charge?

By MARY RUDLOFF  
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SEA ISLE CITY – Who is in charge in the Sea Isle City School District?

Some inquiring school board members want to know.

The answer they received at the Tuesday night board meeting resembled the Abbott and Costello "Who's on First?" routine and left a few school board members unsure.

Board member Ellen Ramsey raised the question after trying unsuccessfully to get the same question answered at the meeting a week before.

She said there appears to be no identifiable person taking responsibility for the operation of the tiny school district. As has happened in several recent meetings, the chair of the chief school administrator (CSA) sat empty.

When Ramsey got an answer, it raised more questions.

According to Dr. Charles Ivory, executive director of the Educational Information Resource Center (EIRC) which runs the district, Tim Wade is superintendent of record.

Wade was Sea Isle's CSA until Aug. 31. He is currently employed as the superintendent of schools in Jenkintown, Pa.

Ramsey and board member Tom Szczurek said they do not understand how Wade can be their head administrator while employed full-time in another school district, in another state.

When Wade left the district, the school board approved EIRC's recommendations for dual administrators, Anne Borger and Stephen Derkoski. Borger is working in the

*Please see Rotating, page A9*

## Rotating school administrators causes confusion in Sea Isle City

*Continued from page A1*

school and Derkoski is slated to start in Sea Isle either Dec. 1 or Jan. 1, 2008. He is currently employed in Monroe Township. Derkoski and Borger are the sixth and seventh administrators placed by EIRC to run the school district since July 2006.

In August, Ivory described Derkoski's duties as being along the lines of a superintendent while Borger's will center more around curriculum and oversight of the Child Study Team.

This week, Ivory said Wade has worked in the district one day per week over the past few weeks. Ivory added Derkoski would be working in the same capacity during the

current week and next week.

"Superintendent duties are being handled through Dr. Wade, who has been available on call. He has been here working since taking the other position (Jenkintown, Pa.)," Ivory said. "If he is unavailable, then EIRC would provide another chief administrator to handle whatever comes up."

Ivory said he, Derkoski or Borger would handle administrative needs that might occur.

All three were at Tuesday night's meeting, but none were seated at the table as chief school administrator.

Ivory noted school Business Administrator Earl Vasallo has an administrator's certificate and could fill that role as

needed. Vasallo, also an EIRC hire, said earlier this month he didn't want to be put in that position.

Ivory said he is in contact with all of the parties at various points each week. Borger is working in the school every day, but does not have chief school administrator certification.

Ramsey said the constant rotation of administrators is shortchanging the board and students. She believes it gives the district no single person has ultimate responsibility.

"I am uncomfortable without a real person sitting here. Tim Wade is working in Pennsylvania, not Sea Isle," Ramsey said. "I am very uncomfortable with us operating and making decisions as

a school board without a superintendent sitting here to answer questions."

"Tim Wade's last day here was Aug. 31. He sat here and said that," Szczurek added. "So last month, this month, and evidently for months to come, there is no one sitting there to answer our questions."

Ivory said it he wished Wade did leave EIRC and the state and also wished Derkoski was available prior to Dec. 1.

"But that's not the way it is," Ivory said. "We're not having any problem with the operation of your school from our end."

"As long as things are running smoothly I don't care," board member Terrence

Libro said. "It doesn't matter there's no CSA at the meetings."

Ivory would not commit to having anyone assuming the responsibilities of the chief school administrator at board meetings. At the past several meetings, board members have raised a variety of questions and Vasallo could not provide answers.

Asked by Szczurek who would be responsible to answer board questions, Ivory reiterated that Wade is the chief school administrator of record.

"But he has a full-time job in another state," Ivory said. "You will have a schedule of who is here and what days someone is here, so you know who to call. There will always

be some days when there might be no one here."

Ivory said if one of the designated chief school administrators is unavailable, the board should direct their questions to Borger, who would seek out the answer.

"It's not our fault there is no one sitting in that (CSA) seat. That responsibility falls on EIRC," Ramsey said. "Without a consistent superintendent, without a consistent board attorney, it is not fair to the students or the taxpayers. There has been absolutely no consistency in this district for more than a year."