



# EVERGREEN

Education Association

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## EEA Visits WE HEAR YOU!

EEA Executive Board members have been going out to campuses to meet one on one with members, as we have been doing for the previous five (5) years. In these non-bargaining years, it is always good to hear from members about what is working and what is not working in our District and in our state. Thus far this year, the EEA Executive Board has spoken one-on-one with over 300 members. Every campus has its own flavor, needs and culture. A few common themes are emerging across the District: The need for more resources/support in serving our special needs students, the cry for help with respect to discipline and restorative practices in our schools, and a need for time/support/resources to implement the curriculum/technology being implemented. Your EEA hears you and will continue to have conversations with management about what is needed to help mitigate these problems. The EEA and the District are in conversations around these issues (and more) and hopefully progress can be made in the short and long term. If not, we will come to you about what actions need to be taken to get solutions. Furthermore, solutions to these issues might need to be bargained when the Contract opens back up for negotiations in the Spring of 2020.

During the holiday season as we approach the end of the calendar year, many people are thinking about donations to charities. The EEA would like to ask you and your friends to consider donating to the WEA Children's Fund. This fund is a fund that our members can utilize to provide necessary materials to our students so they can succeed in school. Last year, the EEA was the second largest utilizer of the fund.

## WEA Children's Fund

**From the WEA:** Winter weather is upon us, and it's time to bundle up and stay warm. Unfortunately, there are some students who don't have the basics to keep themselves warm. Some are in need of clothing, school supplies, or other things we take for granted. If you are a WEA member and know of any child who is doing without, you can help by accessing up to \$75 from the WEA Children's Fund. All requests are confidential. No child should do without.

Prior approval is required for reimbursement. Approved requests will be reimbursed provided receipts are submitted within 30 days of your approval and adhere to the [guidelines](#).

*The goal of the WEA Children's Fund is to help meet the modest and immediate needs of students encountered by WEA members in their daily workplaces. The intent is to ensure that the physical, social and emotional needs of students do not stand in the way of success within the school setting.*

For general information about the fund as well as a link to donate, please visit <https://www.washingtonea.org/childrensfund/>.



# WEA RA & NEARA Nominations **CLOSED!**

At the December Representative Council meeting, nominations closed for election to both the WEA representative assembly and the NEA representative assembly. The purpose of the WEA and NEA representative assemblies is to give members the opportunity to direct the WEA and NEA leadership as to what is desired by the

members. These assemblies are not board meetings, meant only for leadership, but rather it is the annual opportunity for the "everyday member" to direct the organization. It is always a goal to get a diverse representation of our membership at these assemblies. As the 5<sup>th</sup> largest local in the state, the EEA is sending 19 delegates to the WEARA and 8 delegates to the NEARA. Those elected will have their lodging, travel, meals, and sub-release (for WEA-RA) covered. Expectations for those elected are not huge. Delegates would more than likely meet once before the assembly to caucus, attend the assembly, and caucus while at the assembly. Dates and locations for the assemblies are as follows:

**WEARA – Spokane, WA April 25-27<sup>th</sup>**

**NEARA – Houston, TX July 2<sup>nd</sup>-7<sup>th</sup>**

## "Choice for Teachers" AT IT AGAIN!

"Choice for Teachers" is at it again, contacting WEA members and encouraging them to drop

union membership. This is part of a larger campaign to weaken public-sector unions, including EEA and the WEA. It is funded by corporate interests, including an anti-union political group called the "Freedom Foundation." It's a direct attack on our ability to stand together to speak with one voice in our workplace and in the political arena to advocate on behalf of students and our profession. Here are some important points to keep in mind:

### **Who is Choice for Teachers?**

Choice for Teachers is an arm of the Freedom Foundation that is funded by wealthy corporate foundations including political groups affiliated with the billionaire Koch brothers. The foundation's agenda is clear: weaken the ability of educational professionals to stand together and swing the balance even more in favor of corporations and wealthy CEOs.

These groups have been leading the efforts to outlaw public sector unions both in the courts and through the legislatures in the U.S. They do not care about us, our students or public education. They only care about weakening our ability to join together to speak with one voice.

### **We need a strong union voice**

Without a strong union protecting our ability to have decent pay and benefits, things would be much worse for teachers, education support professionals and students in our public schools.

Together, our union bargains our contract. This includes salaries, benefits, working conditions and a fair evaluation process. We support educators in making sure school administrators follow all the provisions of our contract. With a strong membership, we have the power to protect our rights and economic security, and to fight for the best interests of students.

Non-members lose their voice in union issues. They cannot vote on the contract, or other important issues that affect us at work. As a large local who is now looked up to by many locals throughout the state, we need to work with the WEA to continue fighting these anti-education efforts.

## VOICE INFLUENCE POWER

A High School is certainly home to the largest gathering of our members. Being a trusted, respected leader on a campus of over 100 members can be very time-consuming, intense and complex. Our November VIP has always risen to the challenge and beyond, advocating for her members, being watchful of administration and communicating the EEA message in a way that will be listened to by all of her building's members. Also, seeking new leadership to help with this endeavor post-strike has given our association much better access to the needs of our members. For using her Voice, Influence, and Power to be the face of EEA at MVHS,

### **Katie Gammage**

was awarded EEA's V.I.P. award.



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THE NEXT PAGE

## A voice in political arena

By coming together we have a voice in the political process where many decisions are made that affect our pay, working conditions and profession. Many politicians in the state legislature want to freeze our pay, cut our retirement and health plans and allow even larger class sizes.

Unlike many states this past election, voters in Washington re-elected a pro-public education state supreme court, and elected pro-public education and pro-labor candidates across the state, including re-electing EEA's own Monica Stonier unopposed! We are proud of our work to support these candidates and believe they will serve us and our students in their decision-making.

## School Board Elections Recruitment

After last year's school board races, we met as a team to debrief what we could improve on in the next election. Universally, not looking sooner for all those interested and getting them the information early about running for the school board were noted. Since there will be three positions open next year, we really want all the possible pro-education candidates to be informed.

Any employee that wishes to apply to see if they are eligible for sick leave cash out (have enough hours banked AND have hours left over from the 2018 **calendar year**) would need to fill out an Application for Excess Sick Leave Cashout. The form is located here:

<https://www.eeaoffice.com/eea-documents/> and is due in the payroll office before the close of day on Thursday, January 31st @ 4:30pm, and forms will be stamped received as they come in. **Any that are not in the District payroll office – (dark green building) by the deadline will not be paid. IE: If someone waits until the last minute, don't put it in the pony mail - best to drop it off in person.**

## VEBA Information

If you have a VEBA account, you do not need to fill out a VEBA application form. If you have never contributed to a VEBA before, you would need to fill out an application. (Please note that cash outs to VEBA only apply to those eligible employees that have more than 180 days of sick leave banked up.)

From the CBA:

Each employee's personnel file shall contain the following minimum items of information: all evaluation reports, copies of annual contracts, teaching certificate, a transcript of academic records, and correspondence between the employee and the District.

The Association and the District agree that any piece of information over three (3) years old shall be removed from that employee's file **at the request of said employee**, provided material older than three (3) years which shall remain shall be the **items listed in the second paragraph of this Agreement provision.**

## YOUR Personnel FILE

Everyone should know EVERYTHING in their District personnel file. It is typical to have your evaluations, your certificate and credentials, and your contracts in this file. If you've had disciplinary letters in your file, it is up to YOU to ask for their removal after the appropriate amount of time (usually 3 years.)

This is different than the file your principal may have saved for you at your building. Those files should be purged at the end of each academic year. This should happen automatically each year, but you may need to remind your admin. of this fact. Next time you have to go down to the District Office, ask for an appointment to see your personnel file and make sure it is clear of anything that shouldn't be there.

# WHAT'S UP WITH ALL THESE SICK LEAVE INTERROGATIONS?

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Questions come into the EEA office pretty regularly about Human Resources and their questioning of members who want to use their sick leave. Here are a few of the Frequently Asked Questions:

Q. *Do I have to answer the email?*

A. Yes. One of the provisions from the state is that the District maintains “oversight” into the use of sick leave. They can ask the question.

Q. *Do we have to give them specific information about our illness?*

A. It depends. For up to five days: **No**. We have good contract language that allows you to preserve your privacy and requires no documentation for up to five days. If it is longer than five days, the District does need you to prove you saw a “physician.”

Q. *Why do they ask, then?*

A. If you notice, the CBA has many reasons you could use sick leave:

**Sick leave may be used for illness, injury, emergency, doctor, dental, and vision appointments. Physician verification is required for absences of more than five consecutive school days.**

**The employer shall allow an employee to use any or all of the employee’s choice of sick leave or other paid time off to care for: a) a child of the employee with a health condition that requires treatment or supervision; or b) a spouse, parent, parent-in-law, domestic partner, grandparent of the employee, or anyone who is living with or considered part of the family who has a serious health condition or an emergency condition**

The District is entitled to know WHICH reason you are out sick, but for the first five days, you can maintain your privacy about your illness, other than to say, “I had to stay home with a sick child,” “I was sick,” or “I felt too ill to come to work.”

Q. *But why me? No one else gets asked.*

A. Much like an IRS audit, some things “look” more suspicious than others. For instance:

- Sick days entered way in advance (Appointments can be entered separately, now)
- Sick days next to personal leave
- Sick days when everyone knows you’re traveling out of town
- Sick days that make up the difference in a 5 day week with a holiday
- If you’re sick every Friday and/or Monday

Q. *Can’t I just take a day without pay?*

A. This is **not** a right and must be pre-approved in advance by the District. Be very careful here: It can be viewed as “abandoning” your position to not have leave and take it anyway.

Q. *If it is less than five days, why don’t I just use my sick leave instead of a personal day?*

A. The past president warned me that one of the worst parts of this job is helping out members who are very sick and out of leave. When you are young, or just consider yourself very healthy, those large numbers of sick days seem like they will always be available. The fact is: No one chooses WHEN to be so sick they have to be out on leave. Those days are there for you when you need them. Please don’t squander them. Also, there can be significant discipline for mis-use of leave, and the District may choose to make an example of you for not being honest.

**Bottom Line:** If you’re sick, stay home. If your kid is sick, stay home with them. EEA will back you up on your legitimate use of sick leave and fight any intimidation used to prevent you from using this benefit. However, there is very little we can do for members caught using their leave for purposes other than it was intended.