



EVERGREEN

Education Association

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Each year I marvel at how short the time is for the “holiday season.” I’ve commented each time that we stop to celebrate Veteran’s Day and then *blink* we’re back from Winter Break. This year, especially, November escaped me. Between the WEA Board meeting, The School Board Election (and the way that it drew out for another week,) Association Rep Training, the preparations for the bargaining blitz, and then Thanksgiving, I never quite got caught up.

I imagine you are probably feeling the same, in some way. The nickname our elementary teachers have given it is: “No-Teach November”. Between the parent conferences, assemblies, holidays and general malaise, somehow teachers squeeze in a smidge of instruction and then it’s December.

It is also a wonderful time of year. Our focus will be shifting from the young people in front of us to the people we live with, love, are related to us, and any/all combinations of such. The time to catch our cold winter breath is here. Grades are done, topics are changing, books are finished, and we are ready to start anew with the calendar we buy on sale on boxing day.

The work will be there for you when you return.

Don’t take home things to read: You won’t. Leave the chart paper behind your desk. The curriculum will not change between now and January 6th. People will email/call you again if it was important. Dis-engage, re-energize, refill your cup/bucket.

We want the best you to task in January. If you continue to spend yourself into exhaustion over the break, there will be no chance that you will be your best when you return.

You do not care any less about your students because you care about yourself.

However, the EEA cares about you. We have a lot to get done to be ready for the bargain. I want you to be at your best when I ask you to show up.

As quickly as Fall has fallen, we will be in negotiations and looking at creative solutions for making your job better for kids and better for you: as we always do.

EEA VISITS YOUR VOICE MATTERS !

EEA Executive Board members have been going out to campuses to meet one on one with members, as we have been doing for several years now. Combined with the blitz on November 21st, the EEA Executive Board, with support from other WEA leaders, has spoken one-on-one with over 500 members this year. 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 better class sizes/caseloads. Your EEA hears you and we will bringing these (and other) items to the table this Spring. The EEA and the District are already in conversations around these issues and hopefully progress can be made in the short term (survival) and long term (contract language.) If not, we will come to you about what actions need to be taken to get solutions. We continue to show our strength in standing up for kids, for our professionalism, and our working conditions, as we all know these are the learning conditions of our students.



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. EEA has always been one of the state's largest utilizers of the fund. 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 & NEA RA NOMINATIONS ARE CLOSING SOON!

At the December Representative Council meeting on Monday, nominations will be closing 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 sanitized board meetings intended just for leadership, but instead it is the annual opportunity for our "everyday member" to direct the Association. It is always a goal to get as diverse a representation of our membership at these assemblies. As the 6th largest local in the state, the EEA last year sent 19 delegates to the WEA RA and 8 delegates to the NEA RA. The budget allows for us to send a few more this year. 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 the **100th WEA RA – Spokane, WA April 16-19** and **NEA RA – Atlanta, GA, July 2-7**.

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A Middle School is certainly home to a huge number of our members. Being a trusted, respected leader on a campus of over 60 members can be very time-consuming, intense and complex. Our November VIP has always risen to the challenge and beyond, advocating for his members, being watchful of administration and communicating the EEA message in a way that will be listened to by all of their 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. In addition to this responsibility, this member has been willing to volunteer for committees, to participate in the building blitzes and has been a vocal advocate for transparency in the middle-school schedule transition that has directly influenced how our admin communicate the decisions being considered. Our "Strike Band" is still the envy of the state, of which Chris was our EEA leader. For using his Voice, Influence, and Power to be the face of EEA at Pacific, **Chris Sigman** is awarded EEA's V.I.P. award.

From the CBA, it says:

In recognition of faculty meetings, committee meetings, and other work that staff perform outside of the work day, staff will be dismissed on the last work day of each school week after the safe departure of students. In a normal work week, meetings shall not be scheduled on the last day of the week at the end of the work day. In the rare exception an IEP or emergency student meeting must occur, the impacted employees may submit a Form A for the time, paid at per diem, or may make arrangements to leave early on another day in recognition of the additional work time.

While this comes nowhere near making up for all the extra time spent working outside the contract, it was something negotiated to give our members peace of mind that when you "sneak out" early on Friday afternoons you don't actually need to sneak out. As soon as students have safely departed the school, on the last day of the week (not on Early Release days,) you are free to go home. Also, there should not be any meetings, IEP or otherwise, scheduled on Fridays (or other last days of the week) after school gets out unless there is no way to avoid it. If this does happen, fill out your Form A paperwork and get paid for that meeting!



Among the many great things negotiated in our CBA is a small benefit that may go unnoticed and/or be underutilized by many.

Freedom Foundation is at it AGAIN!

Sometimes called: "Choice for Teachers" the Freedom Foundation is at it again.

The following excerpt was sent from WEA:

The Freedom Foundation has filed a public records request with the Department of Retirement Systems for all employers that participate in the state's retirement program. As part of the request, they are asking for each employee's full name, birthdate, work email, employer, current salary and duty station address. We know the Freedom Foundation will use this information to attempt to contact our members to drop union membership.

We can't stop the information release, but we can fight back. Here's something you can do:

- *Remind other members that the Freedom Foundation is an anti-union organization that only cares about reducing our power to achieve great things for our students, public education and ourselves. You can find [more information here](#).*

They are trying to "trick" the District into giving out your private information as well as using public records requests. They use that information to contact WEA members, 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, and is a direct attack on our ability to stand together to speak with one voice in our workplace. In the political arena, their goal is to weaken our ability to advocate on behalf of students and our profession.

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 and our students.

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, leadership, 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.

SCHOOL BOARD elections



EEA is proud to announce that now TWO of our members are serving on their local school board to best serve the needs of the students in SW Washington. Tracie Barrows was sworn in on Tuesday to the Vancouver Public Schools School Board to join their new President, Wendy Smith. Putting a school psychologist on this board was certainly a message sent by the public about our current issues and shows the priorities of the community. With a majority of educators on the board, it will be amazing to see the work they do to benefit the students and families of their neighborhoods. We could not be prouder! Way to go, Tracie.



VEBA INFORMATION

If you have a VEBA account, you do not need to fill out another VEBA application form. If you have never contributed to VEBA before, you will 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 (1440 hours) of sick leave banked up.

Any employee that wishes to apply to see if they are eligible for sick leave cash out (must have enough hours banked AND have hours left over from the 2019 **calendar year**) will need to fill out an additional form for cashing out at 4:1. Additionally, we are in current negotiations with the District on a new form this year. Additional information to follow.

One of the benefits of being part of the EEA is the great staff support we receive from the WEA. Our Level V, Lisa Raine, was ready before we even started talking about the premium holiday money resulting from the change of our locally negotiated insurance providers to the SEBB. Way back in September, we began to discuss all of the implications of this transition.

SEBB PREMIUM INFORMATION

To the District's credit, their representatives (including Mike Merlino,) understood the need for some sort of way this premium could be put into salary. At no point did the EEA or District indicate that they could "keep" this money. (Note: many of our surrounding Districts are in negotiations, still trying to keep the money, with no intention of compensating the members.)

After many back and forth offers, we settled on the solution that will have the most lasting impact for our members: Putting the money into our salary schedule.

From the MOU:

The District will compress the salary schedule by removing the zero years' experience lane on the salary schedule and revise the newly compressed schedule as steps 1-15, effective September 1, 2020 by redistributing unspent premium, pool and previous health care authority monthly payment dollars.

Any relevant and/or remaining language in the collective bargaining agreement related to health insurance will be reviewed in housekeeping in the 2019 full reopener.

This makes our schedule, with *only* 15 years to the top, the most compressed schedule in the region. This was one of the bargaining objectives in the summer of 2018.

Additionally, any "extra" premium (spouse/family coverages, etc.) would also not be withheld in the December paycheck. Members who were paying big out-of-pocket will benefit, and of course this is fair.

We presented this idea to your Executive Board at the October 10th retreat and it was moved, seconded and approved that the president sign this MOU. The MOU was signed on October 17th. (see the complete signed MOU at https://www.eeaoffice.com/file_viewer.php?id=25866)

Many members are concerned that Districts around us may have taken another approach. Most are offering "nothing." Some are getting "pay-outs" or ONE-TIME payments of this money. It is difficult to compare one association's solution to another. Many other locals had negotiated for deeper "pooling," extra premiums, or other options in lieu of compensation in past bargains. EEA has had a good relationship negotiating good rates with our providers and have not invested in the "pooling" as have many of the surrounding Districts.

The schedule that we will negotiate BEGINS the 2020 bargain as a 15-step schedule. We are free to negotiate fairly for compensation using this schedule, including possibly a cost of living update. I am confident in our ability to bargain a great schedule as well as take care of each of our member's health benefits under the new Health Care Authority.

Just like with the SEBB, the decisions made have different effects on different members. The overall result is a better standard of living for all our members, and reflects our desire to always be advancing the cause of professional wages, benefits and working conditions for our members.