

Unity

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Race to the Top

A note from Mary Lindquist, WEA President

It's not easy being the focus of national attention. President Obama has made improving our schools a top priority of his administration. And, that has trickled down to the local level where many of us are feeling the pressure to sign on to the Race to the Top (RTTT) proposal.

We've worked with the governor, the State Board of Education and OSPI to ensure that our state proposal does not include the most onerous parts of the RTTT. Our state is not proposing merit pay, tying student test scores to evaluation or creating charter schools in order to get this money.

WEA prepared a one-and-a-half page document outlining what the state's proposal requires of any district that signs on. It clarifies the key components and what pieces will be implemented even without the federal dollars. It can be found on the SEA website.

What does signing a memorandum of understanding mean for local leaders? Signing only commits you to bargain in good faith if the state receives the grant. If you cannot reach agreement next fall with your district, your district will be removed from the grant. That's it.

What does WEA advise? Questions to consider:

- Is your district eligible for an attractive amount of money?
- Could the federal money benefit your students and members?
- Would the federal money support activities your district is already undertaking, or going to take on soon?
- Are you able to be a working partner with your district on this project? Is your district trustworthy?
- How will your community react if the Association refuses to participate in this program? What might be the impact on future levy campaigns, or future bargaining?

Only you and your leadership team can answer these questions. Each local association faces a different set of circumstances, needs and players. Participating in this proposal will be appropriate for some districts and perhaps not for others. SEA Association Representatives will make their decision at their meeting on Monday, May 17, 2010.

Bargaining Visits to a Building Near You

Last fall, members of SEA leadership and staff tried to visit almost all of the schools in the district to talk about organizing for another bargaining year that proves to be just as interesting as last year. This spring we plan to visit buildings one more time. If you are an Association Representative, if you haven't been contacted by anyone at the SEA office to set up a visit, please feel free to call us at 206.283.8443.

The purpose of these visits will be to talk about SEA's bargaining goals, based upon previous visits, focus groups and survey results. We will also be listening to your thoughts on the district's priorities and how you believe the bargaining team should respond.

Most importantly, we hope to walk away from each building visit with at least one Bargaining Support Person who can be contacted throughout the summer; a complete email and/or phone tree; and commitments to attend the General Membership meeting in August.

Our ability to communicate to members via home email has increased dramatically over the last 18 months, but we all know that face to face conversations are the most productive when dealing with the difficult topics that will need to be addressed again this year in bargaining.



Lessons from School Improvement Grants

In many ways, the impact of the Education Reform Movement is more a looming possibility than a reality right now. Not so for our members who will be working under the federally funded, state implemented “School Improvement Grant” next year. This grant was awarded to the District for programs at Cleveland High School, Hawthorne Elementary and West Seattle Elementary.

SEA members and SEA staff negotiated the terms of the grant through many discussions. Although there is substantial worry about where the Reform movement is headed and if it really will result in better education, on April 19, Association Reps agreed to go forward with the [Memorandum of Understanding](#) that specified the terms of the grant on members in the 3 schools. There were several lessons learned in the negotiation process, here are a few:

The values members shared with us last spring and fall served as a guide as we negotiated the MOU: our members are focused on equity, collaboration and commitment to effective education. In this process, the same values were central to the staff members in the three schools.

We were able to make the case that “merit pay” was not going to help students. One of the grant requirements was that participants be rewarded for academic success of students. The members involved in helping with negotiations quickly made the point that educator collaboration is what works for students, not competition and that if the whole school did well, then the “reward money” should be available for the whole school’s use. In the end, there is no aspect of merit pay in the MOU, and the additional resources will be directed by the staff using the decision-making matrix.

How student growth is measured is difficult terrain. The feds and state mandated that under this grant,

teachers must be evaluated in part on their ability to get their students to achieve academically. When it came down to how this would be implemented – the proposed plan was that teachers who had students taking MAP tests and/or the MSP would be able to be judged by this criteria. Despite the media hype that teachers don’t want to be accountable – our members said, “What about me?” “I’m an ELL teacher, I’m a counselor, I’m a foreign language teacher, are you saying I don’t contribute to the academic growth of the students?” But then, of course, it became obvious that the contributions of everyone in the life of a student couldn’t easily be quantified and measured. In the end, the grant was approved with language that said a joint committee would figure out how this would be implemented by November 1.

Moving the issues of “performance pay” to an issue of “are there additional career ladder opportunities here that would benefit staff and students?” was welcomed by all parties. Our members felt that there are teachers in schools who could offer more in the way of mentoring and professional development that is not currently offered. They also believed that people should be compensated for this with a stipend. The final MOU included language that affords these types of opportunities in the last two years of the grant.

The significance of summing up this experience is that the same kinds of proposals are coming to all of the members. We will see them in Race to the Top federal competitive grants, in the new state law, and in SEA/SPS contract proposals. We will need everyone engaged to have authentic education reform that we believe will help our students achieve. In the end, we need to be the drivers of what works as opposed to having those on the outside telling us what to do.

Colleagues Request for Sick Leave Donations

Naomi Mandojana, Orchestra and Choir teacher at Hamilton MS, is new to the District and does not have enough sick leave for childbearing disability nor does she qualify for FMLA. She is in need of sick leave donations.

Helen Read, Special Ed Assistant at Green Lake Elementary, fractured her wrist and is in need of sick leave donations.

Brenda Hughes, Admin Secretary at Interagency, injured her leg and is in need of sick leave donations.

Amanda Turner, teacher at Coe Elementary, delivered prematurely and is in need of sick leave donations while on maternity leave.

Delfino Munoz, an IA at Sealth High School, is in need of sick leave donations while recovering from a health related issue.

Mary Lou Webster, from Human Resources, is recovering from a serious illness and is in need of sick leave donations.

Grace Saturnino, Bilingual IA at Aki Kurose, is recovering from an emergency surgery and is in need of sick leave donations.

Monica Wood, teacher at John Hay Elementary, is in need of donated leave as she deals with the death of her son.

All donations are greatly appreciated. If you can help, see your school secretary for a Sick Leave Donation Form or call Roxana Melville, 206. 252.0293 or email remeville@seattleschools.org

Know What Affects Your Contract

Hiring/Staffing Timelines

Classified and Certificated Hiring/Staffing starts with **Phase I, May 10 -17**. Positions at the new schools and with new programs (McDonald, Queen Anne, Sand Point and Cleveland STEM) as well as the School Improvement Grant schools (Hawthorne and West Seattle Elementary) will be advertised.

Classified Phase I vacancies are open to all current district employees. Applicants may apply for positions within their current job titles, work year and FTE.

Certificated Phase I is open to regular employees currently staffed in positions, as well as displaced.

May 26 Classified and certificated job offers made for new schools and programs and SIG schools.

May 17 - 24, All open positions in the district are advertised for certificated and classified. There are a few exceptions.

SEA and SPS have agreed to exercise the Collective Bargaining Agreement language in Article VIII Staffing, section C. 5.b.:

“SPS and SEA can agree at any time to bypass the hiring process in exceptional cases.”

Positions created through RIF will not be advertised. RIF positions will be held until August 1 to allow for additional attrition. As additional positions become available, in the RIF areas, staff will be recalled and returned to their positions. The newly vacated positions will be available to the displaced.

Positions in specialized areas identified for displaced with limited categories will be advertised as available for

applicants currently occupying a position in the same category. SEA and SPS have reviewed the displacements, RIF list and vacancies to identify critical categories for this exception to the regular certificated staffing process. (I.e., PE is an area where positions are needed for displaced employees, so secondary PE positions would be available only to a teacher vacating a secondary PE position.)

Some classified positions will be direct placements because of the job category that is available.

June 10 Classified and certificated offers made on all positions.

June 14 - 18 Phase II All required 504 placements will be made. Certificated staff with super-seniority will be provided a list of the available positions and a Job Fair will be held to facilitate placement. Classified super-seniority and displaced employees will also attend the job fair. Classified displaced employees will then choose positions according to seniority. Assignments for super-seniority certificated staff will be made on June 18 according to seniority.

June 21 - 25 Remaining positions not filled at the Job Fair will be available and advertised for displaced certificated employees only.

July 14 Certificated offers made on all positions.

August 1 Remaining certificated staff will be placed by HR.

Staff at SEA will be able to assist with any questions someone may have.



Educator Appreciation Night with the Seattle Storm

Join colleagues for a fun and free night of basketball entertainment. For the first time, the Seattle Storm is offering all educators and support professionals a free ticket for the May 25 game versus the Washington Mystics. Extra tickets for family and friends can be purchased for \$12. More information can be found online at <http://www.wnba.com/storm/educators.html>. The promotional code is teacher.

Seattle Special Ed PTSA Outstanding Educator Awards for 2009-2010

The Seattle Special Ed PTSA honors teachers each year for their exemplary work with children who have disabilities. The SEA would like to congratulate our members, Tom Baisden, a special education teacher from Adams Elementary, and Shelley Baker, a first grade teacher from McGilvra Elementary, for being this year's award winners. Congrats Tom and Shelley!

Interested in National Board Certification?

The OSPI Conditional Loan program has announced an extended deadline of May 21 to submit applications. Here is a link:

<http://www.k12.wa.us/certification/nbpts/default.aspx>. Further information may be found on the National Board website: www.nbpts.org; or the district National Board website: <http://inside.seattleschools.org/area/nbc/index.dxml>.

RIF – Reduction in Force Resource Meeting

SEA and SPS will have a RIF Resource program for SEA-represented RIF'd staff, classified and certificated, on **May 19th at Wilson Pacific from 12:45 – 4:00.**

The program will provide a variety of resources including the opportunity to work with Employment Analysts to review your seniority and categories, and to add categories/job titles for recall. The email communication system that will be available to rified staff to track recall will also be explained.

There will be information sessions on Recall and Seniority, Payroll and Benefits, and Retirement. Workshops on Job Search, Resiliency, Unemployment, and Managing Finances will also be available.

Calendar



Upcoming Association Meetings:

SEA Board meeting: Mon., June 14th, 4:30 p.m. at SEA.

To address the body in the Speak Out section, email: redmond@washingtonea.org.

Rep Assembly: Mon., May 17th, 4:30 pm., at Washington.

Substitute Meeting: Weds., May 26th, 4:15 pm., at SEA

Parapro Dinner: There will be an end of the year dinner for Para's in June. Stay tuned for more info!

Upcoming Interview Training:

Thurs., June 17th, 4-5pm, JSCEE, Rm. 2700.

Register by contacting Richard at 206.283.8443, or rfisher@washingtonea.org.

SEA Board of Directors 2008/2010

Officers:

SEA President : Olga Addae
(206) 283,8443 ext 107
omaddae@washingtonea.org
SEA VP: Brian Lindquist
(206) 283,8443 ext 115
blindquist@washingtonea.org
SEA Treasurer: Verleeta Wooten
Garfield H.S. (206) 252,2416
vmwooten@seattleschools.org

High School Cert Reps:

Mark Epstein, Rainier Beach
mdepstein@seattleschools.org
Noam Gundle, Ballard
njgundle@seattleschools.org
Michael Lawson, Franklin
milawson@seattleschools.org
Middle School Cert Reps:
Kathy Saxon, Denny
kmsaxon@seattleschools.org
Debra Tarpley, Washington
datarpley@seattleschools.org

Elementary Cert Reps:

Marianne Bratsanos, B. Hill
mabratsanos@seattleschools.org
Kent Daniels, Orca
tkdaniels@seattleschools.org
Dazanne Davis-Porter, Brighton
ddavis@seattleschools.org
Joyce McDonald, Lowell
jomcdonald@seattleschools.org
Donna Shy, Bryant
dshy@seattleschools.org
Centrally dispatched Cert Rep:
David Abrams, Franklin
ddabrams@seattleschools.org
Grace Beeler, Van Asselt
glbeeler@seattleschools.org

SAEOP Reps:

President: Debbie Passi, N. Beach
dpassi@seattleschools.org
VP: Vivian Belcher, Blaine
vlbelcher@seattleschools.org
Parapro Reps:
President: Marguerite Jones, WSH
mbjones@seattleschools.org
VP: Grace Saturnino, Aki Kurose
mjsaturnino@seattleschools.org
Substitute Reps:
President: John Dunn
SEA: jdunn@washingtonea.org
Home: dunn570@aol.com
VP: Patricia Robertson
wstout@gmail.com

WEA Board:

Brian Lindquist, SEA
blindquist@washingtonea.org
Verleeta Wooten, Garfield
vmwooten@seattleschools.org
ESP At, Large & NEA Board:
Marguerite Jones, West Seattle
mbjones@seattleschools.org