

Looking Ahead

By SEA Vice President, Jonathan Knapp

Last month I looked back on my 17 months since I came on board as SEA VP. This month I will look ahead to what is coming at us from over the horizon.

January 24th half-day furlough actions: State budget cutting is taking a heavy toll on public education. With the 1.9% cuts to educators' salaries mandated by legislators last session there is not enough money to run the whole school year. The last half of the day on Tuesday the 24th is a furlough. Kids go home early; the buildings are closed. You will be able to highlight the impacts of those cuts by being out on the streets with your peers that afternoon. A planning group has identified 6 regional meeting sites at major crossroads in the city. Educators will congregate there from neighborhood schools so that the public will see you in the afternoon out on the street instead of in schools. We are asking everyone to have a sign that says something like, "I should be in school teaching your child!" We want everyone to take pictures on your cell phones of your event, and then at 2 o'clock, email those pictures to legislators. We have to make visible to the public the results of continued budget cutting in Olympia. We need everyone to participate in this event!

Legislative lobbying: It is not yet clear that legislators understand that their major task this session is building new revenue streams. It appears that much of the focus of the neo-ed reformers in Olympia will be around charter schools. We are hearing that it will be a Seattle Democrat who sponsors a bill to establish charter schools. We must meet any such proposal with a huge email response. There will probably be another attempt at legislation on reduction in force being based on your evaluation or loss of seniority rights as well. The grand bargain, which the neo-ed reformers are preparing for, could well be support for revenues in return for support for their "reform" bill. We need to be ready for that. Governor Gregoire seems to be trying to shape the debate about teacher evaluation. Her initiatives around teacher evaluation look to be based on Seattle's contract. So our new evaluation system is proving helpful in fending off the worst ideas out there about evaluation. We will have to equal or better last year's 11 trips to Olympia in order to be successful this year in having legislation that our members want.

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January 24th Half-Day of Action

The half-day furlough on Tuesday Jan. 24th is a (half) day of action to call attention to the insufficiency of state funding for public education. We need EVERYONE to participate, to help create a big event that refocuses legislators' attention on the need for revenue. Here is what is going to happen:

Staff should wear "**red for ed**" that day.

School will let out and students will go home after half a day. Staff starting times that day will be adjusted slightly later so that there will be coverage for getting students out of the building and on buses to home.

After students are gone, staff should pose in front of their building all together wearing red and with signs (I should be teaching now!). People take pictures on their cell phones.

From the schools, staffs either walk or drive (depending on distance) to pre-selected, strategic intersections in the city to picket with signs.

Starting at 1 p.m., picketing at these intersections. This raises the profile of the event. Local media will be informed about the locations. If interviewed your message should be: "Why am I here? I need to be in the classroom with your children!"

At 2 p.m. everyone sends pictures and messages to legislators asking them why they are not funding education enough for them to be working.

At 3 p.m. we pack up and go home.

Logistical updates for this will happen by email through the ARs over the next few weeks. Here are the things that will be detailed:

Sign making party at SEA (although you are also strongly encouraged to make your own personalized sign).

The locations of the strategic intersections near your school where people will gather.

Addresses of schools closest to the strategic intersections (for parking for those who drive from more distant schools).

The email addresses of legislators.

Lists from ARs of people in their worksite committed to participating.

We need to make a big splash with this event. The conversation needs to shift away from cuts and toward revenue. Please be sure to schedule this into your calendar and work with the ARs in your worksite to make it a success. Special thanks for planning help go to Janet Woodward, Ted Virdone, and Phyllis Campano.

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Budgets in buildings: It is even possible that the legislature will make cuts that will have to be implemented this year. The district is very uneasy about this possibility. If that happens, it is not clear how the district can respond. There isn't much left it can cut without cutting whole programs (e.g. transportation, athletics) or shortening the school year and challenging the state on the 180-day or 1000-hour requirement. The same is true about cuts that would apply to next year.

State take-over of health care benefits: The state legislature last session commissioned a group to study the possibility of taking over the collectively bargained health care benefits of school employees. The claim is that pooling of the many districts will produce "efficiencies" that will reduce costs. Pooling at this level will have a marginal effect on costs, at best. WEA predicts that the conversion to a state system will end up costing the state tens of millions of dollars. The real way for the state to save money on employees' health benefits is to take over the administration of the system and then reduce benefits. This is a very carefully hidden attack on public sector employees and our collective bargaining rights. To read more about WEA's position, [click here](#).

Gubernatorial election: Washington elects a new governor in the fall of 2012. WEA has already endorsed Jay Inslee. If the state house flips to a conservative majority as the senate has already done, a progressive governor could be the only thing standing in the way of the anti-public sector initiatives that swept through Wisconsin, Ohio, and other states.

New school board: With two new members who were supported by SEA, the new school board will be working out a new dynamic in the coming months. I am hopeful that the new members will bring some fresh thinking to the group and that will give birth to new priorities and approaches. Some of the incumbents also seem to be signaling that board perspectives could shift. There is an opportunity here for SEA to build new relationships and strengthen existing ones. Communication with the school board has been difficult in the past. I am reaching out to board members to open up new and regular lines of communication.

Superintendent search: One of the first tasks for the new school board will be to conduct a search for and hire a new superintendent. SEA will use the new lines of communication it is developing with the school board to tell it what qualities you think are paramount for a new superintendent. I hope the board has learned its lesson about the superintendent candidates out there who align with "ed reform" agendas and who seem to have more interest in implementing pre-conceived agenda items instead of doing what works.

Families and Education Levy: The recently passed new levy offers many more opportunities for schools to take advantage of community partnership for wrap-around services for students and families. Forward-thinking staffs should be discussing the kinds of support that would be useful in their buildings and making contacts with community-based organizations, the city, and the district to make them happen in their schools. This money will be much more effective if educators get involved in determining how it is spent. A Seattle

version of community schools is within our grasp. This will also help us build stronger ties with parents.

Site-based hiring: The understanding of our members across the district about the site-based hiring process is very uneven. It has fallen into serious disrepair in some buildings. We need to help those buildings shore up their practice. I will be working with district HR to develop and distribute information to all buildings about best practices for site-based hiring under our CBA.

Site visits: Last year I visited 50 schools; this spring I will visit the other 40. Most of the schools that I have not visited are schools that, for whatever reason, did not sign up for a meeting with me last year. For some of them we could not find a day that worked for both of our schedules. Others were new schools or schools without any SEA reps. For those schools I am using a different approach. I will be contacting the school secretaries to look at the school's schedule in order to choose a date when there are no conflicts for a lunchtime visit. I am still available for scheduled after-school visits as well. Listening is what builds members' trust in the association. Contact me if you would like to set up an after-school meeting.

CTE skills center: The district is poised to move ahead with a skills center for Career and Technical Education programs. For quite some time there has been significant support for this idea from parents, the business community, and from legislators. Seattle schools will roll out four advanced level CTE programs in the fall of 2012. The programs will not all be located in one building but will take advantage of excess capacity in several locations across the city. It is my hope that this signals a move by the district away from the simplistic notion that all high school graduates will go on to seek a 4-year college degree.

Union elections: March 18th to the 28th is the voting period for SEA elections. You will elect a new president, vice-president, treasurer, and board of directors. Separate elections will be held this spring for WEA board directors and delegates to the WEA and NEA Representative Assemblies.

Evaluative Correction

There was a statement in the December Unity about classified members creating a portfolio and collecting documentation for purposes of goal setting and discussion when meeting with supervisors. This is for those classified members who want to do professional goal setting. It is not required and is optional.

Evaluative Reminder

SEA represents only non-supervisory personnel. It would put a member in a supervisory role if they were to give teacher-specific performance information to an administrator. Unsolicited classroom feedback is a supervisory act and committing a supervisory act that impacts another member's evaluation may put both members in legal harm's way. This includes both certificated and classified staff. SEA reminds you that all members, including academic coaches, are non-supervisory colleagues and thus should not perform, nor be asked to perform any supervisory acts.

ESP CORNER



Happy New Year ESP's! We hope that all of you had a chance to spend time with family and friends, reflect on blessings from the past year, and have wonderful opportunities to look forward to in 2012.

Since our last UNITY article, principals and supervisors have been trained in the new classified evaluation system. If your administrator has not met with you about the process yet, you should make an appointment to do so. The rubric and form are significantly different than years past, and you also have a chance to share evidence on why you feel you should be evaluated at a certain level. Goal setting is also a new but optional feature you may wish to participate in. We are fielding questions from members as it is implemented so if there are things you don't understand or disagree with, please let us know.

Budget time for the school district is just around the corner and it is important for all ESPs to know, understand, and participate in your decision-making process in your buildings. There is contract language on Building Leadership Teams and decision-making matrixes, as well as building BLT bylaws to be familiar with. As budgets become tighter and tighter, your voice in your building's deliberations is vital to ensure continuity in workload distribution and assisting students.

Your classified departments are also looking for those of you who wish to run for office, chair or be a member of a committee, or do small tasks. SEA will be running elections this spring and new leaders are being sought. If this is something that might be of interest to you, be sure to contact Vivian Belcher or Marguerite Jones, your SAEOP and Parapro Presidents, to get additional information.

SCOT, in cooperation with the SAEOP and Paraprofessional Departments, is planning another joint membership meeting January 31st. Please watch for flyers announcing the time and location. Please continue to watch this corner for updates on our living wage grant as well.



Integrated Comprehensive Services (ICS) Taskforce Update

By SEA President, Olga Addae

As many of you are aware the 2009-2010 contract established the ICS taskforce which is "comprised of special education teachers, general education teachers, building leaders, family representatives, and leaders from the Special Education Department." The taskforce work is continuing through the current contract and since early spring of 2011 was reorganized with new SEA members and parent members. The charge of the ICS taskforce is to "review data, share insights and observations, problem solve and make recommendations for adjustments to the ICS model." The taskforce is also charged with "reviewing and making recommendations for the staffing ratios for special education services." (Article IX Section H12)

While the charge may appear simple, the task is not. Over the course of the last ten months, the taskforce has focused on what special education services should be at every site and what services should be at some sites. Sound familiar? It should, as this mirrors what currently happens across the district, except there is a major difference. That difference being the ICS taskforce is working to build a sys-

tem that is "known"; not only to staff, but to families, and that all services are provided equitably in each region of the district.

Therefore the charge is not merely naming staffing ratios; it is looking deeply into the issues that face special education services for families, students and staff. It is looking into the demographic data of where students currently live and where the services are provided. It is determining what the "threshold" is. And by threshold we mean what factors should be included to determine if the service is provided only at certain sites. Our charge is not insurmountable; the taskforce is diligent and has learned to work across difference and perspective. It is strong and knowledgeable.

I would like to take a moment to thank the SEA members on the ICS taskforce who have dove into maps and spreadsheets, grappled with issues and law, and continue to represent SEA as the distinguished leaders they are. My personal thanks to: Deb Ahlers, Ann Berberian, Christine Billroth, Patrick Delaney, Yvonne Miller, Kathleen Newell, Karen Rugen, Alisha Winger and Deb Slager.

How does the half-day furlough work on January 24?

There are many questions about how the half-day furlough works on January 24 for SEA represented employees. Employees are required not to be at work during the furlough. Here are some explanations about time:

For those employees who are 1.0 FTE, you will work half of your day on the morning of Tuesday, January 24. Schools may adjust starting time to make sure that students are safe when leaving the building mid-day. This is for both certificated staff and classified staff regardless of the number of contractual hours you work. (Cut them in half.)

If you are less than 1.0 FTE, then you divide your work week hours by 10 and cut 1/10 of the time off of your Tuesday schedule.

For those employees with less than 1.0 FTE who do not work on Tuesday's, you will still lose 1/10 of your salary for the week. You should schedule 1/10 of your time off with an administrator for another day.

If you only work in the afternoon, you will need to make up the time for half of your afternoon work schedule. You should schedule this with your administrator.

If you only work in the morning, you will still have your pay docked and are required to take furlough time. You should only work half of your morning hours. You should schedule which hours to work on that day and which to take off with your administrator.

SEA Calendar of Events



Upcoming Association Meetings:

SEA Board Meeting: January 9th, 4:30pm
SEA Office.

SEA Rep. Assembly: January 23rd, 5:00pm
Washington MS.

Upcoming Interview Training:

Jan. 17th, 4-5pm– JSCEE Room 2700

Feb. 9th, 4-5pm– JSCEE Auditorium

Register by contacting Regina Redmond at 206.283.8443, or email: rredmond@washingtonea.org.

What's This We Hear About Charter Schools?

Washington State PTA endorsed a support for Charter School Legislation this session and the rumors are flying... is Representative Eric Pettigrew of the 37th district writing such legislation now?

In response to this hot topic, the WA State PTA has decided to hold a forum on Charter Schools. Ramona Hattendorf, who is the Government Relations Coordinator of the WA State PTA, will explain the state PTA process. The PTA has invited two guests in support of Charter Schools and two guests against Charter Schools to speak on their respective positions. President Olga Addae has accepted the PTA request to speak on our (SEA) position against Charter Schools: Please invite colleagues and friends to attend:

WA State PTSA Charter School Forum
Tuesday Jan. 17, 2012, 6:30pm—8:30pm
Washington Middle School

Creative Approach Schools Memorandum Of Understanding

In September, 2010, the SEA membership voted overwhelmingly in support of the 2010-2013 Collective Bargaining Agreement, which included an Innovation Schools provision. It states in Article II, Section B, 9, "SEA and SPS will develop and negotiate a process, approved by both parties, that will allow agreed upon schools to be able to apply for broad exceptions from SPS policies and collective bargaining agreements in return for enhanced autonomy and accountability. The process designed will include how schools qualify and from which SPS policies and collective bargaining agreement sections schools may be exempted."

SEA leadership has been negotiating with the district and the result is an MOU that will be voted upon by Association Representatives at this month's SEA Representative Assembly on January 23. **Click here** to read the **frequently asked questions**.

An updated MOU will be sent out as soon as we get it.

In Memory Of...

Karen Helweil, a long time teacher at Blaine Elementary, passed away December 18th from a bacterial infection. You can send cards and condolences to Karen's partner, Jack Brautigam, 3043 NW 62nd Seattle WA 98107.

Marcelyn Shadow, a long time teacher in Seattle Public Schools, passed away December 27th from cancer. She taught for more than 30 years in our district. A memorial service will be held Thursday, Jan. 5th at 3:30 p.m. at Peace Lutheran Church in West Seattle, 8316 39th Ave. S.W. Seattle, WA 98126.