

## Furlough Day Reflections

By Jonathan Knapp, SEA Vice President

SEA staff members at each of the sites reported back that 50-60 members showed up to demonstrate to the public what happens when the legislature does not fully fund public education: schools close, students go home, and educators aren't at work. Our high-visibility sites provided a maximum exposure to vehicular traffic and assured that a very large number of Seattleites saw and heard our message first hand. Additionally, media coverage was good, with TV cameras at four of the sites, radio coverage by KOMO and KUOW, as well as print coverage from the Seattle Times and neighborhood newspapers. The news reports all seemed to get it right that the reason Seattle schools were closed this half-day was because the state legislature had not allocated enough money to run schools the full 180 days.

Our effectiveness in getting legislators to do the right thing is, to a certain extent, a function of our ability to mobilize action on behalf of public education. It would have been even more powerful to have a hundred or more members on those street corners. What was it that kept some educators from seeing their participation in this action as necessary? Yes, the weather was not optimal for street action, but in your mind what can we do to get more members to see the urgency and necessity of political action for public education? Please write me with your thoughts and comments about how this event could have been made better: [jknapp@washingtonea.org](mailto:jknapp@washingtonea.org).

### **Vote now for Delegates to the NEA and WEA Representative Assemblies**

Electronic voting began Friday, February 3<sup>rd</sup>, for 70 Delegates to the Washington Education Association Representative Assembly and 25 Delegates to the National Education Association Representative Assembly. Members can vote until 11:59 p.m. on February 15th.

Vote online at <https://www.Bp4A.com/SeattleEA>. Vote by phone at 1-800-538-9774. **Initial Login** (Member ID) requires a member to enter their **SPS employee ID number**. DO NOT enter any leading zeros (0). *The initial PIN number is the member's zip code.* Any problems or questions can be directed to Tricia Nielsen, Elections Chair, at [seaelectionscommittee@gmail.com](mailto:seaelectionscommittee@gmail.com) or 206-283-8443 x119.

### **Local SEA Officers and Board of Directors nominations open February 13th**

Every two years, members elect SEA President, Vice President, and Treasurer, along with certificated representatives on the SEA Board and officers in the Paraprofessional, SAEOP and Substitutes Departments. Nominations for all positions open Monday, February 13, at the SEA Representative Assembly. Nomination forms will be available through Association Reps and at [www.Seattlewea.org](http://www.Seattlewea.org). Nominations close on Monday, March 12.

Any member can nominate themselves. This is a time of challenge and opportunity for public education. We need good listeners who can help analyze the range of opinion in our membership and help determine and implement an organizational action plan. Is this you? Nominate yourself for a position.

Voting for these local offices will begin Sunday, March 18, at 12:01 am and end on Wednesday, March 28, at 11:59 p.m. The current SEA Board will certify the election of new officers on April 2. The 2012- 2014 Officers and Board take office the day after the last teacher day of this school year.



# Educating and Caring for Kids in Public Schools is Political

SEA members believe that a free, quality public education is the right of every child and that public education upholds and empowers our democratic society. It is no surprise then, that SEA members must be politically engaged as Seattle's voice of public education in promoting that free, quality education for each and every child. The challenges coming at teachers and public education have never been greater. In this session, SEA members will again confront **Key education bills in Olympia:**

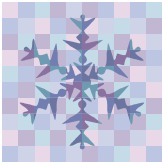
- House bill [2724](#), Senate Bill [6442](#): State takeover of all school employee health care plans.
- House Bill [2428](#), Senate Bill [6202](#): Charter schools.
- House Bill [2427](#), Senate Bill [6203](#): Basing layoffs on evaluations.
- House Bill [2165](#), HB [2334](#): Changing teacher evaluations.
- House Bill [2309](#), Senate Bill [6278](#): Changing provisional teachers' rights.
- Senate Bill [6020](#), SB: [6050](#): Waiving 180-day requirement.
- House Bill [2231](#): Reducing costs by reducing student assessments.
- Senate Bill [6314](#): Delink end-of-course science tests from graduation requirements.
- House Bill [2543](#), Senate Bill [6320](#): Repeal new State Board of Education graduation requirements that contain unfunded mandates.
- House Bill [2493](#), Senate Bill [6319](#): Add WEA-appointed practitioners to the State Board of Education.

SEA members also face significant threats in the 2012 governor and house races. Whatever SEA members person-

ally believe about each of these issues, all members need to stay informed about legislative efforts to change educators' working conditions. SEA members need to take action to promote their beliefs and values on how public education best serves children.

Legal restrictions in place prevent the use of the Unity to influence specific political action. SEA members must go to other sources for information about specific bills and candidates as well as to discover what actions are being planned and carried out. Building ARs will have information about actions encouraged and supported by SEA RA actions and SEA leadership. SEA's website ([www.seattlewea.org](http://www.seattlewea.org)) keeps members posted on current political issues and actions. WEA's OurVoice website ([www.ourvoicewashingtonea.org](http://www.ourvoicewashingtonea.org)) offers specific information and talking points about current issues as well as tools for taking personal action like emailing legislators and executive officials or sending letters to local newspapers. Getting organized is a personal action as well as a collective action; take action now.

Teaching, training, and caring for children cannot be disconnected from politics. Washington's constitutional responsibility to educate the young is the paramount duty of the state. The resources, funding, and conditions of SEA members' workstations all depend on political decisions. The conditions under which SEA members work, conditions that impact our families and personal lives, depend on political decisions. There is no union value that says, "I did my part. It's another's turn." There is no union value that says, "I'm too busy today; maybe tomorrow . . ." There is no union value that says, "It's hopeless; we cannot make the change we want." If we have no hope for ourselves, what does that say about our work with the next generation? Take hope, take charge, and take action.



## What Happened to Our Snow Days?

SAEOP's and Paraprofessionals who worked year round used to have two snow days that they could use when the district was shut down due to inclement weather. Recently, many have asked, "What happened to our snow days? Non-represented employees still get them." Currently, 260-day employees must use personal leave, accumulated vacation leave, or work an agreement with their supervisor about how to make up the time for district-wide snow days. When the 2009-2010 collective bargaining agreement was negoti-

ated, the SEA bargained three additional vacation days in place of the two snow days. This is a definite advantage for our members. Snow days only happened when there was an inclement weather closure of the district and there were only two. Now there are three extra vacation days that every employee gets even when there are no district closures. Snow days went away each year if they were not used. The vacation time is accumulated and can be cashed out according to the collective bargaining agreement.

## Substitute Pay

There are some issues regarding paying substitutes for extra time due to 1.2 FTE contracts of certificated employees and due to subbing for employees who because of block schedules are not getting a prep period. We are in talks with the district regarding these issues and will inform you about what is resolved when we have a resolution.

The SEA believes there should be equity between certificated employees working for the district and our substitute members. We also believe that our members should be paid for loss of time. Hopefully this issue will be resolved this month.



## What's in Your File?

Seattle public educators should periodically review their personnel files at Human Resources and in their supervisor's office to see what documents are being kept. Most principals keep a working file of documents on a year by year basis. Unless those documents become part of discipline or evaluation actions, the contents of the working file are shredded each year. When those contents do become part of discipline or evaluation action, they may be moved to the HR file. Members have a right to attach their own statement to any document in either file. Members have the right to challenge documents through the grievance procedure (a successful challenge will be about process and not content). Members have the right to request removal of documents from their HR file after 4 years with exception for behavior that has been repeated and/or for behavior that was something like sexual or physical abuse where the law requires documentation be kept.

Make an appointment with HR to review your file and see what's in there. If you haven't attached your response to something you feel needs a response, do so. If it's outside the four-year window and you want it gone, make the request. If denied, talk with your UniServ Field Representative to see if there is more that can be done. It's your responsibility to know what's in the file.



## Long Term Leave Without Pay

Do you plan to take a long-term leave without pay next year? If you plan to take a year of non-paid leave for 2012-2013, notification in writing is due to Human Resources by March 1. The contract allows members to take a year of non-paid leave for professional growth, education, employment opportunities (except teaching in another school district, state, or foreign country), serve public office, travel, and any other reason that is not covered in the contract. This leave is applicable for only one year, unless there is a valid exception (i.e., Peace Corps).

To be eligible for leave, you must have worked in the district at least two full years immediately prior to the request for leave. The leave is also available for any FTE status. However, people on a plan of improvement, probation, or currently subject to discipline are ineligible for this type of leave. You must intend to return back to the district and will return to the same position held before the leave. After the leave is granted, the employee must contact the district in writing by March 1 of the year they are out on leave if the intent is to return back to work in the district. Failure to send notification will constitute resignation.

More information regarding long-term leave without pay is available in the contract under the Other Long-Term Leaves Without Pay section, which is located under the Leaves article in the contract.

### **ESP CORNER**

On January 31<sup>st</sup>, the SCOT Team held our second joint SAEOP/Paraprofessional general membership meeting at the John Stanford International School. We hope that everyone who attended had an opportunity to look at the bulletin board displays in the hallways and in the rooms where we met to learn more about the International School philosophy.

The evening program was an exercise in looking up answers to questions about income and other financial provisions; career advancement; and hours/days/work year, holidays, and leaves in the SAEOP and Paraprofessional Contracts. Glenn Bafia gave answers to the questions on the sheets and responded to general questions from the membership.

Your SCOT Team has been encouraged by the response to these meetings so we will host a third one on February 29<sup>th</sup> at Blaine. Please mark your calendar and plan to attend. The program is being developed now and will center around contract language on hiring, displacing, and RIF as it pertains to the budget and student weighted formula processes so we encourage you to contact your friends and join us. We will serve a light dinner courtesy of our Living Wage Grant from WEA.

Later this spring, the SCOT Team will be holding regional meetings to have one-on-one conversations with our members to begin to prepare for upcoming contract talks. Please watch this corner for upcoming communications as plans are finalized.

Remember, too, that we are gearing up for elections for new leadership. Please consider running for an office, or if you do not feel you can commit that much time, contact leadership to serve on a committee or to do some one-time tasks that help the SAEOP and Paraprofessional Departments better serve our members. We are only as strong as the number of hands willing to share in the work. When the upcoming elections are held for WEA/NEA representatives or SEA/Department leadership, please vote. Our ESP membership's voice can only be stronger if we all encourage each other to cast our ballots and be heard.



# Mandatory Reporting, SPS Policies, and You

A student reveals to you that she has been a victim of physical or sexual abuse. What do you do? Whatever the student has revealed to you, whether it is abuse at home, assault by another student or an adult, thoughts of suicide, or similar concerns, you are a mandatory reporter under state law and have certain obligations.

SPS district policies give guidance and direction as to what you must do to meet your contractual obligations and to fulfill the law and the professional code. You want to serve the student but you must protect your position and certificate as well.

Available in your building should be a flip chart booklet with the key procedures and policies outlined and explained. If you can't find one, ask your principal to make these available. Limited quantities were printed, but the document was also made available online at [InsideSeattle](#).

The policy states who you have to notify. You get no consideration for protecting a child's confidence in mandatory reporting situations. You must tell and you must follow the procedures. There are reasons for involving authorities early in the process. Consider:

- You will be impacted by this revelation yourself and it will affect your relationships with both students involved as well as others.
- You may well need counseling or support services to deal with your feelings.
- Both students need protections and services that are outside your ability and responsibility to provide.
- SPS has responsibilities to the students and to you that cannot be met if administrators don't know what is going on.
- Your duty is to report and not to investigate. You may be asked to assist in the investigation, but it is not your role to carry out that investigation.
- SPS, CPS and the police have the responsibility and authority to deal with the situation.

Spend some time looking over the policies in the flip-chart so that you know what is there and how to find it again. It's worth the effort. If the situation arises where you need to know, you will at least know where to look.

## Colleagues Request for Sick Leave Donations



Maria Perez, Elem. Office Assistant at John Stanford Int'l. School, is requesting sick leave donations as she is needing medical procedures.

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 [remelville@seattleschools.org](mailto:remelville@seattleschools.org).

## SEA Calendar of Events



### Upcoming Association Meetings:

**SEA Board Meeting:** March 5th, 4:30 pm  
SEA Office.

**SEA Rep. Assembly:** February 13th, 5:00pm  
Washington MS.

**SAEOP General Meeting:** February 29th, 5:15-7:15 pm  
Catherine Blaine.

### Upcoming Interview Training:

Feb. 9th, 4-5pm- JSCEE Auditorium

Mar. 13th, 4:30-5:30 pm- JSCEE Auditorium

Register by contacting Regina Redmond at 206.283.8443, or email: [redmond@washingtonea.org](mailto:redmond@washingtonea.org).

## 2012 Special Education Conference

The annual **Special Education Conference** will be held at the **Shoreline Conference Center (greater Seattle area)** on **March 7-9, 2012**. They have "gone green" and will not be sending out conference programs to every school. You may download a brochure at the conference website at <http://www.rehabseminars.org>. The conference offers twelve full day courses to choose from, on a wide variety of topics. Course faculty includes Dr. Nancy Mathers, Dr. Martha Burns, Linda Burkhart, Kimberly Wiggins and Bek Wiltbank. See the conference program for the full list of courses, faculty biographies, accreditations, and course summaries and outlines. **Western Washington University** is offering 2 quarter college credits (course #597) for the full conference. The conference is also offered for 18 OSPI Clock Hours (staff cannot sign up for both college credit and OSPI Clock Hours).