

MEA Frontline

Marysville Education Association
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January 6, 2012

It's a New Year... or is it?

By Arden Watson, MEA President

As I sit here, just back from a relaxing winter break, I am struck by how January 2012 doesn't feel like a new year. Perhaps as educators we are more closely aligned with the school calendar, making September our new year. That may be true, but it feels more pronounced as 2012 looks a lot like 2011... and even 2010. The Legislature is poised to begin their work on January 9 and once again, budget cuts are facing public education.

In December of 2010 school districts across Washington faced unprecedented mid-year budget cuts. In December 2011, after several weeks in special session, educators waited for the next axe to fall. It never came. The special session, called to deal with an anticipated \$2 billion shortfall, resulted in budgetary slight-of-hand that moved money around into the next biennium to create "savings." That leaves the potential for real cuts during the upcoming session. The big education items being considered for reductions include levy equalization (\$4.3 million for Marysville), school days (could be a loss of 3, 4, or 5 days), and class size (raise the number of students per FTE in the state funding formula). None of these options are good for students or educators. Enough is enough – no more cuts!

On November 28th many MEA members wore "RED for Public Ed" and sent pictures and messages to their legislators. Our work is not done. We need to continue to communicate with our elected officials. They need to know what impact the cuts that have already been made are having on students. Some members asked me what difference it would make if we wore red in Marysville. WEA lobbyists report that our efforts were noticed and did have an impact on Olympia. They know that we are engaged and we are watching. However, as I said previously, our work is not done.

JANUARY 18TH DAY OF ACTION

January 18th was selected as one of our furlough days, as it is early in the legislative session. MEA and MSD agreed to make this a joint day of action. MEA members, who will be joined by some administrators and other school employees, are asked to gather at designated spots along State Avenue from 11:45 a.m. to 12:45 p.m. with signs drawing attention to the Legislature's lack of education funding. Details will be shared via your building rep. **Please participate, and stand up for our students, schools and profession!**

*November 28th – members sent
messages with pictures to legislators.*



Totem



MPHS



Bio-Med



10th Street



Sunnyside



Kellogg Marsh



Marshall



Shoultes



Cascade

HEADLINE ONLY NEWS



- **MEA Executive Board and WEA RA Delegate election** process has begun. Open positions include: President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, Elementary position #1, and Secondary position #1. **Cathy Elkington** (Elementary position #2) and **John Hodgins** (Secondary position #2) are in the middle of their two-year terms. You can view the complete election timeline at www.marysvilleteachers.net.
- Taking charge of your Future," a **retirement seminar** presented by WEA-Retired, is being held on January 20-21 at Pilchuck UniServ Council. The cost is \$30. Registration forms (due January 13) and additional details are available on the MEA webpage.
- **"Improving special education and related services to students of all ages"**: A professional development conference for Special Education professionals is being held at the Shoreline Center March 7-9. The conference offers 12 full-day courses to choose from, on a wide variety of topics. Details can be found at www.rehabseminars.org



Historic victory for Washington students!

The Washington State Supreme Court this week ruled unanimously that the State of Washington is violating its constitutional paramount duty to amply fund the education of all K-12 students.

NEWS, together with the McCleary and Venema families on whose behalf the lawsuit was filed, declared the ruling an historic and monumental victory for public school students and citizens of Washington.

As NEWS lead attorney Tom Ahearne summarized: "The highest Court in our State has clearly told our Legislature, once and for all, that the State is violating its Constitutional duty to the people of Washington - and has declared that the Court will retain jurisdiction to enforce its ruling rather than sit on the sidelines and 'hope' that the Legislature someday complies."

The Supreme Court upheld a 2010 decision by King County Superior Court Judge John Erlick, declaring that the State must amply fund education first before any other State programs or operations. In addition, the Supreme Court prohibited the Legislature from eliminating or cutting funding for reasons of unrelated to educational policy - in other words, financial expediency cannot be used as an excuse to further cut education. The ruling also rejected the State's contention that federal funds and local levies should be counted toward meeting the State's constitutional mandate.

"The Supreme Court has unequivocally told the Legislature that our State Constitution leaves it no choice but to fully and amply fund public education," Ahearne said. "The only question now is whether our legislators will voluntarily obey the oath they took to our Constitution now, or be forced to do so by the courts later."

SCHOLARSHIPS VIA WEA-RETIRED

Can you use financial help with your courses that are leading to a teaching certificate, or with classes focusing on skills in a specific educational area? Well, **WEA-Retired** is offering five \$1,000 scholarships to assist WEA-Active members in reaching their educational goals.

If a \$1,000 scholarship can help you with your current academic endeavors, check out **WEA-Retired** "Dollars for Scholars" scholarship opportunity. Go online to www.washingtonea.org. Look under the Our Members section on the left side of the home page. Click onto Retirement Issues, which will bring up the WEA Retired page. Scroll down to the Dollars for Scholars description and click on the highlighted text. Scholarship directions and application forms are available at this online location. Applicants may also request directions and application forms from the address listed below.

The completed application, cover letter, and letter of recommendation are due at the address listed below by April 16, 2012. The Scholarship Committee chairperson will notify the scholarship recipients by May 14, 2012.

WEA-Retired Dollars for Scholars Scholarship Committee
51 SE Bayview Lane
Shelton WA 98584

TAX TIME

Most of your Association dues can be deducted from your income tax. Keep in mind that your dues for 2011 tax purposes include eight months at the 2010-11 rate and four months at the 2011-12 rate. Also, if you have changed your FTE from last year, your dues may be different. Your exact dues amount is listed each month on your pay stub, and your December paystub shows your entire dues amount for 2011.

2010-2011 Dues/Month		2011-2012 Dues/Month	
FTE - .76 - 1.0	\$93.74	FTE - .76 - 1.0	\$94.41
FTE - .51 - .75	\$81.43	FTE - .51 - .75	\$82.10
FTE - .26 - .50	\$47.79	FTE - .26 - .50	\$48.54
FTE - .25 or less	\$32.24	FTE - .25 or less	\$32.96

Amounts shown do not include WEA-PAC and NEA-FCPE contributions.

2011-12 MEA EXECUTIVE BOARD

President – Arden Watson	Elementary (2) – Cathy Elkington
Vice President – Randy Davis	Secondary (1) – Becky Roberts
Secretary – Corina Hansen	Secondary (2) – John Hodgins
Treasurer – Craig Iversen	Special Ed Chair – Tom Freeburg
Elementary (1) – Cathy Davis	Specialist Chair – Jill Garcia

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