

MEA Frontline

Marysville Education Association
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A NEW YEAR BEGINS

By Arden Watson, MEA President

Welcome back to a new school year! As you may have noticed, our class sizes have risen, as anticipated, due to the continued budget cuts by the Legislature. “Doing more with less” is an understatement these days. We must continue to engage parents, community members, and legislators about the impact of cuts on our students in order to turn this trend around. It takes all of us – speaking to individuals, sending emails, and making phone calls to change the current trends in public education. With a special session looming, it is clear that we have our work cut out for us. Never before has it been more important to stay informed and involved. In this issue of the *Frontline* you will find information about activities to participate in to do just that (Ravitch event, Fish & Chips & Politics, New Educators).

Tacoma Education Association

MEA Executive Board approved a \$3,000 donation to the Tacoma EA crisis fund. TEA President, **Andy Coons**, announced our donation at their membership meeting at the Tacoma Dome. Our donation paid for their use of the Tacoma Dome on that day.

I had an opportunity to visit strike lines in Tacoma and share with TEA members our support of their efforts to get a fair contract. I even met MEA member **Theresa Engstrom's** sister on a picket line! TEA ratified a new agreement on September 23, and returned to work the following day. Way to stand strong, TEA!

2011-12 ASSOCIATION DUES

(Based on 12 months at 1.0 FTE)

NEA	\$178.00
WEA	\$410.00
Community Outreach	\$12.00
UniServ	\$181.00
MEA	\$352.00
NEA FCPE (Optional)	\$12.00
WEA-PAC (Optional)	\$27.00
Total	\$1,172.00
Dues deducted/month	\$97.66

HEADLINE ONLY NEWS

- ❖ MEA will be interviewing school board candidates from District 3 - **Darci Becker (incumbent), and Pete Lundberg**, for a possible WEA-PAC recommendation on September 27. Please check MEA's webpage for all candidate recommendations after September 27.
- ❖ The **2011-12 Collective Bargaining Agreement** is almost ready to be sent out to all members electronically. Due to the one-year duration of this agreement, hard copies will not be printed. The CBA will also be posted to the MEA webpage.
- ❖ **HB 2070** which passed during the 2011 legislative session requires the Department of Retirement Services (DRS) to calculate members' retirement benefit.
- ❖ Check out **NEA Member Benefits** (www.neamb.com) for a variety of discounts including savings on appliances, cars, travel, restaurants, magazines, and more.



KEEP YOUR INTERACTIONS SAFE WITH STUDENTS

Every year the Association represents colleagues of yours who have been accused by students or parents of inappropriate behavior. Most of the time these accusations are unfounded – usually they are the result of actions being misinterpreted by the student and unintended by the teacher.

While it's never possible to completely eliminate the chance of being falsely accused of wrongdoing, here are some things you can do to minimize the risk:

Facebook, Twitter, email, etc.

Social networks are used by millions of people including teachers and school age students. When using electronic communication, please use the guideline that everything you are sending or posting could become public knowledge.

Never "friend" students on your social networking site

- If you choose to "friend" former students, they should be over 18 and graduated out of the school system.
- Think about what you post on your site – would you want your students to have this information?
- The same thing goes for posting a photo – would you want it circulating around your classroom?
- Avoid giving your personal email address out to your students. Use your district email.
- Keep email communications brief and related only to school issues. Print out copies and save for your records.
- Communicate with the idea that whatever you write should be able to be read by your students' parents and your administrator.
- If you give out your home or cell phone number for parents to reach you, make it very clear that students are not allowed to call you.
- Do not text individual students. If texting a group of students, make sure that parents are aware and have given consent.
- If a student sends you an inappropriate text or email, notify your administrator right away.

Interacting with students

- Touch only “safe” areas, such as shoulders, arms, and upper back.
- **NEVER** touch a student while disciplining or redirecting him/her.
- Touch all students, male and female, in the same manner.
- Keep touching very brief, such as a pat on the back.
- Avoid initiating hugs with students.
- Keep hugs quick, and if possible, make them a side hug.
- Be sensitive to students who react negatively to being touched.

Verbal communications

- Be sure to talk to all students in the same manner.
- Avoid comments that might be interpreted by others as being sexist or sexual in nature.
- Avoid using sarcasm. It can be easily misinterpreted.
- Avoid “good-natured” joking that could be taken the wrong way.
- Compliment students on school-related performance rather than on physical characteristics (such as outfits or hairstyles).

In your classroom

- Try not to be alone with a student.
- If this is unavoidable, make sure your door is open and you are visible to others walking by.
- If you are in a portable and have to be alone with a student, tell another staff member and ask them to drop by unannounced.
- Keep windows, especially in your door, free from obstructions so other staff members have a clear view of your classroom from outside in the hallway.
- Be aware of spending unequal amounts of time with individual students.

Outside of School

- Never invite students to non-school sponsored events.
- If a student invites you to an event, make sure their parents will be there before you accept.
- If you run into a student outside of school, keep any conversation brief.
- Avoid having students babysit for you.
- If you do private tutoring, make sure a parent or other adult is around. Do not tutor your own students.
- Never transport a student alone in your vehicle unless it’s an absolute emergency.
- Always make sure you have other adults with you when you are with students outside of school.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

**** Pilchuck UniServ Council’s New Educator Evenings**

All new educators in their first six years in the profession are invited to discuss relevant topics, eat good food, have some fun, meet other new educators, and earn clock hours! The first New Educators evening is October 4 from 5-7 PM at Pilchuck UniServ Council (2500 Hewitt Avenue, Everett). RSVP by September 29 to Diane Flynn at DFlynn@washingtonea.org.

**** Learn the truth about Social Security**

Nancy Altman (Co-director of Social Security Works), Jeff Johnson (President of WA State Labor Council) and Representative Mike Sells (38th) are hosting this forum on October 18 from 6:30-8:00 at the Jackson Conference Center at EvCC.

**** WEA-Retired Pre-retirement Seminars: Taking charge of your future**

Full seminar covers: PERS and TRS plans I, II, III, social security, estate planning, health/medical insurance, and transition to retirement. Class is limited to 25 people. First seminar is Oct 28 (5:00-8:30) and Oct 29 (8:30-4:00). Details and registration information were emailed directly to MEA members.

Mini-seminar covers: When do I do what? What do I need to know to complete paperwork? Important information about insurance choices and timelines. Mini-seminars are designed specifically for members who are planning on retiring at the end of this school year. Dates are November 2 and February 1. Please contact Jan Curtis at jc_curtis@comcast.net.

**** Pilchuck's "Fish 'n Chips 'n Politics"**

Interested in talking about education and politics, while socializing with other Pilchuck (and Marysville EA) members? Come out to the Fish Tale Ale (formerly Turners, on the corner of Broadway and Hewitt) on October 11 at 5:30 and join the conversation. This is the group that planned the forum in Everett that drew 1200 members last spring.

**** Diane Ravitch: Getting Our Schools Back on Track!**

Diane Ravitch, author of The Death and Life of the Great American School System, is coming to Seattle Thursday, November 17, 7:30 p.m. at Town Hall Seattle. Tickets are \$5 and available through <http://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/190956>

2011-12 MEA EXECUTIVE BOARD

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