

OEA Speaks

OLYMPIA EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

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PRESIDENT'S CORNER

OCTOBER 2017

I had the opportunity to attend the State Supreme Court McCleary hearing last week. OEA member (and Head Rep for LP Brown Elementary) Denise Morrison attended as well. The purpose of the hearing was for the justices to hear from the State's attorney why he feels the legislature should no longer be under a contempt order for its failure to comply with the McCleary decision. The hearing also gave the plaintiff's attorney an opportunity to weigh in on the "progress" the legislature has made. The McCleary lawsuit was filed on behalf of the McCleary family. The lawsuit eventually made it to the State Supreme Court which ultimately ruled that the legislature was not meeting its constitutional duty of amply funding public schools.

As you may be aware, the 2017 legislative session ended after several special sessions. An education funding bill was passed at the last minute with no public comment and little debate. And, surprise, it's a bit of a mess. Many of you have had students that turn in projects at the last minute. At times, the final product can be surprisingly good (and perhaps could have been even better with a little more time and planning involved). The final product the legislature produced and handed in should be considered "unsatisfactory". It does not meet a September 2018 deadline for full implementation, and it does not amply fund education in Washington State.

The hearing lasted a little over an hour. The Supreme Court Justices asked many questions of each attorney, and there did not seem to be a clear indication how they will eventually rule in the matter.



A decision is expected in the next eight weeks.

My takeaway from the hearing, and the takeaway from others I spoke with, is that a bit of McCleary fatigue has set in. It was apparent to me that the State's attorney, the plaintiff's attorney, and the Supreme Court Justices are tired of discussing this issue. At one point, a justice said to Tom Ahern, the McCleary family's attorney, "Just tell us what you would like us to do." When the same statement was made to the State's attorney, the response was "Remove the contempt order and end the case." This was after he had admitted that the State would not meet the deadline for full funding implementation mandated by the court. It remains to be seen what the Supreme Court will do.

In the meantime, we keep plugging along in an unconstitutionally funded education system. To be sure, more funding has come into the system and more money will be coming (the legislature promises!). But the job is not yet done, and the biggest issue, and the biggest cost item for the State, is competitive educator salaries.

The McCleary kids have now graduated from high school. They never did get to experience an amply funded K-12 education system. And you're not experiencing the benefits of a competitive salary that recruits and retains the best educators and pays you amply for the challenging work you do.

Adam Brickell, OEA President
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VEBA VOTE RESULTS

Thank you to all members who returned their VEBA vote ballots. Both motions

passed. Here are the count totals:

Question 1: Should the OSD offer VEBA to retirees, requiring that sick days be cashed out and placed in a VEBA account?

Yes: 96.9% No: 3.1%

Question 2: Should the OSD offer VEBA to pre-retirees, requiring that all sick days over 180 in number, as well as personal leave days over 6 in number (depending upon FTE), be cashed out and placed in a VEBA account?

Yes: 94.4% No: 5.6%

OEA DISTRICT CLIMATE SURVEY

Thanks to everyone who participated in the OEA District Climate Survey that was conducted last June. This was the fourth year that OEA has conducted the survey. The survey covers a range of topics that members rate on a scale of 1 to 4. Members have the opportunity to weigh in on building and district practices, the effectiveness of district leaders and the school board, and the

impact of various state and local initiatives such as the current evaluation system. The WEA Research department created the survey with input from OEA leadership. Once the results are submitted, WEA Research completes a statistical analysis and provides OEA with the results and talking points.

Building reps will have a copy of your specific building results. The full results of the survey will be available for review at the OEA office. Please contact Miranda at the OEA office if you would like to schedule a time to stop by and look over the results.

The survey helps inform OEA leadership about what is going well in the district and what can be improved. The OEA Exec Board spends time going over the results, and highlights from the survey are shared with the OEA Rep Council. A copy of the results is shared with the superintendent and two members of the school board. The survey helps inform our conversations with district leadership and, at times, also helps to determine areas of focus for bargaining.

The following schools had too few respondents to the survey and WEA Research was not able to perform a statistical analysis for the building: Centennial, Pioneer, Marshall, McKenny, LP Brown, Jefferson, McLane, Lincoln, and Avanti. OEA will run the survey again this spring. Encourage your colleagues to take the survey when it comes out!



SICK LEAVE TAKEN IN LESS THAN ONE-HALF DAY INCREMENTS

Your contract allows you the choice of taking sick leave, particularly for medical appointments, in full or half-day increments, or for the actual amount of time you are away from work.

Although substitutes must be contracted in half-day increments, the amount of time charged against your sick leave need only be the time you are gone. For example, if you leave for the den-

UNION SOCIAL!

It's time for Solidarity! Come join your colleagues from the Olympia, North Thurston, and Tumwater Education Associations for an afternoon of socializing, Thursday, November 2nd from 3-6 pm at the River's Edge Restaurant (4611 Tumwater Valley Dr., Tumwater, WA 98512). The first drink (beer, wine, soda) will be provided by OEA. Appetizers will be provided and door prizes awarded!

Bring a non-perishable food item for the local food bank! For a list of needed items, please see the OEA website (www.olyea.org).

tist at 10:30 and return at 12:00, your sick leave balance will only be charged for 1.5 hours. Your substitute, however, will be in your building for 3.5 hours, and may either assist you or be assigned other work by the principal.

You still have the option of taking the time off in entire half-day increments and having your sick leave charged for that time.

Also, you might not be aware that you can request half-day substitutes for midday, rather than just AM or PM. For example, you can get a sub for time slots such as 10:00 - 1:30 if that works out better for your medical appointment.

BUILDING REPRESENTATIVES -- YOUR CONDUIT TO OEA

Each building should have a Head Building Representative who agrees to make sure someone from your building attends each OEA Representative Council Meeting. We are making important decisions that impact all certificated staff and we need you to be informed and to be part of the discussion and the decision. If your building doesn't have a Building Rep, nothing should stop you from volunteering. This year we are asking each building to have someone in attendance at each Rep Council meeting and to have a short subsequent building meeting to go over the hot topics discussed at Rep Council. If your building already has a Building Rep, contact him/her and see how you can help. At the very least be sure to go to your building OEA meetings. It's how you stay informed and how you participate.

Elementary Schools

Boston Harbor	Matt Hazel & Elizabeth Wilson
Centennial	Cami Anderson
Garfield	Jason Finney
Hansen	Kathy Gillespie & Molly Minder
Lincoln	Maribeth Wheeler
LP Brown	Denise Morrison
Madison	Jill Terry
McKenny	Nancy Hooper
McLane	Joan Moore



Pioneer	Jeff Snyder & Laura Barber
Roosevelt	Deb Haddon & Spencer Olmsted

Middle Schools

Jefferson	Eli Normoyle
Marshall	Carla Miller
Reeves	Katie Quimby
Washington	Jodi Boe, Katie Savinski, John Baranski & Rick St. Louis

High Schools

Avanti	John Hanby
Capital	Jenny Morgan, Carrie Street & Caitlin Donnelly
Olympia	Chris Sonnenstuhl, Paul Rae, Kathryn Dorgan, Brent Kabat, Kelly Boyer, Steve Roth, Dawn Williams & Natasha Landram
ORLA	Karina Champion

REVIEWS OF THE NEA REPRESENTATIVE ASSEMBLY

Karina Champion

Thank you to all of you who voted to send me the the NEA rep assembly in Boston this summer! It was amazing to be a part of 8,000 debating voting representatives and see a democracy function right before my eyes. I am still overwhelmed by the support for all students and families from educators all over our country. I really got to see the potential of our union to keep our students safe and learning, both by protecting high standards for the education profession and through the inclusive and celebratory protections for the diversity of all students.

I participated in three different caucus groups that were focused on equality in education and professionalism in the education field. These groups of educators are working nationally throughout the year on protections for our students and public education.

Over a hundred new business items were passed such as creating legislative language for states, research for effective practices, protective policies for students and educators,

and more.

Please contact me if you would like to see my notes or meet up to hear more about the work we accomplished at NEA-RA 2017.

Caitlin Donnelly

NEA-RA was intense this year. Many conversations centered around the current federal administration's practices and their impact on students' lives, particularly around immigration and Secretary of Education DeVos's privatization/voucher agenda. While there was a general consensus on most of these issues, debate was healthy and multi-faceted.

One of the most important items of business was the approval of a new policy statement on charter schools. The policy statement laid out several stringent criteria that charter schools must meet for NEA to consider them legitimate. These criteria included things like transparent financial operations and openness to all students. Evidently only a tiny fraction of charter schools meet the criteria in practice; almost all existing charter schools do not. I would encourage members to read the policy statement, or a summary of it.

Many delegates, myself included, worried that our communities, media, and legislators would think on a surface level that this means NEA now approves of charter schools. However, the day after the policy statement was passed, numerous news articles dubbed it a "hard line" against charters.

My favorite non-business moment was a slam poetry performance from a couple students articulating their perspectives on public education. They had mixed feelings, as I'm sure many of us do--I certainly do. For me these students' words brought into focus both why I chose this profession in the first place, and the immense work ahead of us. Thank you for sending me to represent you.

WELCOME NEW TEACHERS!

Amanda Adrian - Marshall Middle School

Thomas Fountain - Capital High School

Dorothy Freeman - L.P. Brown Elementary School

SAY HELLO TO OUR **NEW HIRES**

Sue Garrington - Madison Elementary School
 Jennifer Gilgan - McKenny/Lincoln Elementary Schools
 Betty Kinerk - L.P. Brown Elementary School
 Rebekah McFann - Capital High School
 Peggy Olsen - District Office
 Teresa Samuelson - Madison Elementary School
 Jennifer Todd - Garfield Elementary School
 Chantale Woronka - Reeves Middle School

WEA CHILDREN'S FUND

Do you know a child whose family can't afford to buy a warm coat, a new pair of boots, or basic school supplies? The WEA Children's Fund can help. The goal of the WEA Children's Fund is to help meet the modest and immediate needs of students encountered by WEA members in their daily workplaces. Physical, social and emotional needs of students should not stand in the way of success within the school setting. Access the Children's Fund online for pre-approval of a purchase of up to \$75. OEA members have taken advantage of this important membership benefit to help a child in need. Please contact the OEA office if you know of a child in need. Accessing funds is an easy process, and as winter approaches, we all know at least one child who could benefit from this wonderful program.

**REMEMBER
 TO VOTE
 NOVEMBER
 7TH**

