

CONNECTIONS

WEA-Sammamish UniServ Council

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE: *Make Your Voice Heard*

It was nearly unanimous.

With only one dissenting vote, the 2007 Washington Education Association 1100-member assembly voted to support an "open letter" to Superintendent of Public Instruction Terry Bergeson, criticizing her lack of leadership.

The letter, which will be available to all members through your local leaders between now and the first of May, cites two specific areas where the Superintendent has not provided appropriate leadership and failed to:

1. reject the current testing practices which are too high-stakes, do not provide appropriate diagnostic information, do not include workable alternatives for all students, and threaten to bar our students from graduating from high school.
2. advocate for improved education funding and fulfill the state's paramount duty.

In making the motion to send the letter with all of our signatures, I cited a *USA Today* article from March 29, 2007, which criticized teachers

for spending too much time on basic reading and math skills and not enough on problem solving, reasoning, science and social studies. "And whose fault is that?" I asked the delegates. We are all too well aware of the pressure on our schools, particularly at the elementary level, to focus primarily on those tested subjects --- often to the exclusion of everything else.

The letter you will be able to sign goes on to explain how the "professional opinions of educators have been devalued and ignored." The letter calls upon the Superintendent to take corrective action and says we look forward to hearing how she intends to address these concerns.

It is our hope she will listen to us. And if not, we will have to take corrective action of our own. I urge you to sign this letter and get your family, friends and neighbors to join you.



Mary Lindquist
Council President

UPCOMING EVENTS

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|----------------|-----------------------------|------------|--------------------------------|
| • April 23 | Take the lead Cadre Meeting | • May 2 | Financial Planning Workshop |
| • April 24 | New Educator Caucus | • May 4, 5 | Pre-Retirement Seminar |
| • April 27, 28 | Pre-Retirement Seminar | • May 7 | Presidents and Council Meeting |

FINAL ROUND UP FOR NEW EDUCATOR CAUCUS

We're concluding this year's New Educator Caucus series with a panel of veteran educators who are prepared to field any and all questions from new educators.

Certificated educators in the first five years of the profession are invited to "Ask the Education Experts" on Tuesday, April 24, from 5 to 7 p.m.

at Sammamish High School in Bellevue. Join us for dinner, and an opportunity to meet other new educators and hear the advice and insights of veteran staff on a variety of professional issues.

To RSVP, please contact Charlotte Cole at ccole@washingtonea.org. ~ Kathleen Heiman

MARY LINDQUIST ELECTED WEA PRESIDENT

Delegates at the WEA’s annual Representative Assembly elected Mary Lindquist to a two-year term as WEA president. Mary is currently president of the Mercer Island Education Association and our own WEA-Sammamish UniServ Council. She will take office in early July.

Our 86 delegates, along with delegates from across the state, approved motions in support of

modifying the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act and making substantial improvements in educators’ pensions.

A *Take the lead* rally was held at a nearby plaza urging the state Legislature to increase funding for public schools, including smaller class sizes and educator salaries, health benefits, and pensions. ~ *Clarence Gunn*

A big part of the WEA Representative Assembly was the discussion and recommitment to the *Take the lead* (TTL) campaign. Members made phone calls, wrote letters and e-mails to legislators, and sent postcards to friends and family to illustrate the need for an ample, stable funding source for public education.

By the end of the month WEA-Sammamish anticipates surveying our members about the TTL campaign. Are you ready for a pop quiz? Do you know Washington’s ranking on class size? How does our state rate compared to others on education funding? Where do we fall in compensation compared to the other Pacific Region states?

The Sammamish Council TTL Cadre is beginning its next planning efforts for beginning external outreach to build allies in the greater community. Your stories have power, and it’s time that you have the chance to tell them to others who will learn why it is critical to address Washington’s public education funding crisis. ~ *Jim Fotter*



Take the lead.
Restoring Washington’s Commitment to Great Public Schools

Are you interested in the Minority Training Program “Reaching Out to Diverse Communities: *Take the lead*” spring workshop on May 19? Visit our website www.weasam.org for more information.

ESP LIVING WAGE CAMPAIGN

A Living Wage campaign to support ESP locals in negotiating a living wage for members received overwhelming approval at the WEA Representative Assembly. The WEA Action Coordinating Team (ACT), which includes LWESP President and WEA Board member Sheila Nokes, will determine criteria at its April 20 meeting. Three councils will be chosen to receive monetary support for locals engaged in bargaining this year. More councils will be added in coming years.

Two WEA-Sammamish Council locals, SVASA and MIEA, are negotiating this year. LWESP concluded a three-year contract negotiation at the outset of the school year that made progress towards achieving a living wage for its members. The council is looking for members who are interested in a campaign to build support among teaching staff, parents and communities. Please contact the WEA Sammamish office for more information. ~ *Lora Hein*

WEA-SAMMAMISH

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Executive Board

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