

CONNECTIONS

WEA-Sammamish UniServ Council

PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE: 548

That’s the number of dollars more per student that each of our districts would have if education funding had just kept pace with inflation—\$548 more per student in our district budgets for just this year.

For Bellevue, that’s a total of well over \$8 million. With that money Bellevue could potentially hire 117 more teachers and lower class sizes. For Issaquah, that’s nearly the same amount of money. And every member in Issaquah could get an \$8500 bonus.

What could Lake Washington do with \$12.5 million? Perhaps help struggling students get to standard? With \$3.5 million more, would Tahoma choose to offer more competitive salaries to attract and retain quality educators? Mercer Island, Riverview and Snoqualmie could build the classrooms needed to offer full-day kindergarten to every child who wanted it with the \$2.5 million more they each should be getting from the state.

It’s enough money to make a real difference in each of our districts and to each of our members – teachers, counselors, paraprofessionals, and school secretaries.

Over the last decade, educators around the state have simply tightened their budgetary belts every year, spending a little less for essential services and dipping more and more into limited local levy dollars to make ends meet. It’s time for this to stop.

The students and educators of this state need to see a real commitment from the legislature this session. We need a substantial down payment on restoring education funding to where it should be as the state’s “paramount duty.”



Mary Lindquist
Council President

Take the lead. Write or e-mail your legislator today and share your number.

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|----------------------|------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|------------|------------|--|------------|
| February 2007 | Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
| | | | | | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| | 4 | 5 Presidents & Council Mtg. | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 WEA ESP Conference— <i>Take the Lead for a Living Wage</i> | |
| | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 NEA Pacific Region Leadership Conference—Anaheim, CA | |
| | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | |
| | 25 | 26 | 27 <i>New Educator Caucus</i> | 28 | | | |

BARGAINING TO BEGIN!

How do we make a difference in your working conditions, supplemental pay, and benefits? Through bargaining with your school district! Local associations in our Council have done a variety of prep work such as conducting building meetings, focus groups, one-on-one meetings, and bargaining surveys, as well as training at the state and local level. The goal: to be sure they have heard from *you*. Their hard work will prepare them to advocate for you on your issues of concern. Look for updates from your local president or bargaining team! ~ *Clarence Gunn*

COUNCIL LOBBIES IN OLYMPIA

WEA-Sammamish UniServ Council sent a team of local educators who joined over 200 educators statewide to lobby legislators on WEA’s priority legislative issues. The Sammamish lobby team discussed issues ranging from funding all-day kindergarten to class-size reduction and the need for significant compensation improvement. A dedicated effort was also made to ask legislators to thwart any attempts to remove gain sharing

from the state retirement plan. Members also spoke to the need for creating a “Rule of 85” to allow members to retire earlier without the penalties imposed on the current system. You can expect that we will communicate ways that you can add your voice to your lobby team efforts over the next several months. Together, we make a difference! ~ *Jim Fotter*



Take the Lead Cadre members

WEA-Sammamish Council Builds Local *Take the Lead* Cadres

Over 30 WEA-Sammamish local members gathered on Jan. 29 for a full-day workshop designed to broaden the *Take the Lead* campaign effort back at home. One of the major benchmark goals of the campaign is to ensure that 85% of members are able to articulate the goal of WEA’s *Take the Lead* effort: **to ensure an adequate and stable funding source for public schools in Washington.**



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

Washington’s failure to keep its commitment, as outlined in the State Constitution to make ample funding for public education “**the paramount duty**,” has created a funding crisis that threatens to erode the quality of our public schools. Cadre members will be working to support their local efforts for members to generate their stories and identify strategies to broaden public support for the *Take the Lead* goal. Members are already planning outreach efforts to local PTSA groups as the first step of an external campaign effort. ~ *Jim Fotter*

NEW EDUCATOR CAUCUS

Our first snowstorm this year cancelled schools and our Council’s professional development seminar in November for new educators. “*Organizing Your Workload & Setting Priorities*” has been rescheduled for Tuesday, Feb. 27. All of our New Educator Caucus seminars are open to educators in the first five years of the profession. Sessions are held in the Sammamish High School cafeteria in Bellevue from 5 to 7 p.m.

Come with a friend and join us for an informative topic, dinner, and the opportunity to meet other new members of the profession—all at no charge! Clock hours are available for attending two or more sessions at a cost of \$5. For questions, contact Charlotte Cole or Kathleen Heiman at 425-822-9898, or at ccole@washingtonea.org or kheiman@washingtonea.org. ~ *Kathleen Heiman*

WEA-SAMMAMISH

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