

CONNECTIONS

WEA-Sammamish UniServ Council

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE: *A Silver Lining*

There has been a silver lining in the recent cold and flu season.

Recently members have told me stories of how much more effective their classrooms have been with five or children absent each day. In the words of one teacher: "I got around to every student individually during the math lesson; no meltdowns or tears. And the lesson went smoothly, without being rushed. By the end of the day, instead of feeling drained, I felt energized by a day of positive interactions with a reasonable number of students." Of course, this was before she had to deal with helping those students who had been absent catch up!

But her one-day experience reminds me of what a colleague once said to me, "Give me a manageable task and I'll give you excellence."

For too long, educators in this state have not been given a manageable task.

The Washington Adequacy Funding Study, released February 22, 2007, highlights just how underfunded our schools really are. Authored by David Conley, the report creates a model for quality education – a financial model that can be used by policy makers in their deliberations. Sponsored by WEA, the report has the support

of the Urban League of Metropolitan Seattle, as well as other community groups and leaders.

Bottom line? We need to increase funding for education by 45%, or an eye-popping \$3.45 billion to provide adequate funding for our schools. Conley recommends K-3 class sizes of no more than 17 and 25 students for grades 4 – 12; full day kindergarten; student-to-counselor ratios of 250 to one and funding of extra-curricular activities as a drop-out prevention measure. Conley also has research-based recommendations for professional development, mentoring of new teachers and much more.

Clearly the state is not in a position to meet this goal in this session. And probably not in the next session either. Conley recommends a five-to-six-year plan to gradually increase funding.

This study gives us a very tangible goal for our **Take the lead** campaign. Now we know what it will take to adequately fund our schools.

I hope you will join in our efforts to Take the Lead and to create the political will to accept the Conley report's recommendations.



Mary Lindquist
Council President

MARCH EVENTS

- March 5—Presidents & Bargaining Committee Meeting
- March 5—Mock Rep Assembly
- March 12—Financial Planning Workshop
- March 13—ESP Planning Dinner
- March 16—SPARKS Alumni Get Together
- March 20—New Educator Caucus
- March 23, 24—Pre-Retirement Seminar
- March 29, 30, 31—WEA Rep Assembly

WEA-SAMMAMISH READIES FOR WEA REP ASSEMBLY

The Council held a Mock Rep Assembly (RA) at Kirkland Junior High on Monday, March 5. Delegates from locals throughout the Council were given an overview of the issues and business items that will be discussed at the WEA Rep

Assembly in Tacoma's Convention Center at the end of the month.

Over 80 delegates attended, participated in lively discussions and debate, reviewed the various changes, and in some cases took positions.

COUNCIL CONTINUES TO PUSH COMPENSATION AND FUNDING

The Council has continued its goal of being politically active. On March 1 nine members from across the Council participated in a Lobby Day activity in Olympia. We continued to push for Legislation that is a down payment for the improvement needed for public education. The down payment would be applied to the following areas:

1. Reductions in class size to ensure a more personalized education for each child.
2. Increases in educator pay aimed at attracting and retaining the best teachers and support professionals for all students.
3. Funding of full-day kindergarten to prepare all children for success in the primary grades.

4. Improvements in educators’ pension plans that further ensure we attract and retain the best educators for our students.

For more information on the WEA Legislative program, visit the [WEA](http://www.washingtonea.org) website at www.washingtonea.org and click on the Issues, Advocacy, and Politics button, scroll down to the Political Issues, and click on Legislative Goals.

Thanks to Council members who participated in the Lobby Day: **BEA**—Casey Appel, Stephen Miller; **IEA**—Barbara Galler, Chelsea Dzedzic; **LWEA**—Andi Cox, Jane Wartenbe; **MIEA**—Ann Passer; **SEA**—Christine Kjenner; **WEA-Retired**—Eleanor Gilmore.
~Clarence Gunn

WEA ESP LIVING WAGE BARGAINING CONFERENCE



Take the lead.

Restoring Washington's Commitment to Great Public Schools

The WEA Action Coordinating Team held a *Living Wage* Conference on February 12 designed specifically to address Educational Support Professionals (classified staff) compensation and benefits. The conference focused on strategies to help ESP locals look at a broader *Living Wage* campaign as a way to increase their compensation and benefits.

Sheila Nokes, Lake Washington ESP president, said: “This was an enlightening workshop. We were given information to take back to our bargaining units. We will have a better idea of what is happening in other locals and take the steps necessary to get a living wage for all our members. While this won’t happen immediately, we will make progress in each bargain.”

NEW EDUCATOR CAUCUS

Over 45 new educators attended the February caucus and came away with valuable information regarding organization of their workloads and setting priorities. The next session is scheduled for March 20, with presenters from the Dispute Resolution Center of Snohomish and Island Counties discussing “conflict resolution and mediation.”

New Educator Caucus seminars are open to new 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.

For more information contact Charlotte Cole at ccole@washingtonea.org.

WEA-SAMMAMISH

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