

CONNECTIONS

W E A - S A M M A M I S H
UNISERV COUNCIL

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE: WASL...DID YOU KNOW

- According to the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction's (OSPI's) own projections, the costs of the WASL for next year will increase by an additional \$41.7 million *over current costs*. That same amount of money could have been used to restore almost 1% of the 1-732 COLA cut *or* would have been helpful in reducing class-size ratios in grades K-3.
- The WASL has decreased the amount of time spent teaching art, health and fitness, social studies, world languages, career, and vocational-technical classes in schools.
- The WASL and the accompanying regulatory implementation decisions under OSPI's authority have created an increasingly intolerable workload for teachers and other educators and taken critical time and resources away from our primary task--the classroom instruction of all our students to bring them up to state standards.
- The disproportionate impact of the WASL on the graduation of minority, special education, and low-income students has not been reported by OSPI since a report using 2004-05 data. In that report, scheduled to NOT graduate in 2008 were: 45% of American Indian students, 41% of Special Education students, 40% of Latino students, 39% of African American students, 36% of ELL students, 35% of low income students.
- Terry Bergeson, Superintendent of Public Instruction, promised the legislature and the public that the high stakes WASL would not increase student dropout rates, but has not published any data on state dropout rates since a 2006 report which used 2004-05 data. In that report, 15,921 students had dropped out of school in 2004-05.



ART GALLOWAY
COUNCIL PRESIDENT

2008 Legislative Session Review

A focused agenda and thousands of e-mails, phone calls and face-to-face meetings WEA members made with legislators this past legislative session had a huge impact.

This year's new state budget includes an additional .5 percent COLA restoration for WEA members covered by 1-732, plus a 3.9 percent COLA. In addition, many classified employees will receive an additional salary equity increase in the 2008-09 school year.

The budget plan also includes increased funding for librarians, support staff, and general school

district costs. It also funds a bill that counts National Board bonuses toward retirement.

The legislature passed a bill that will phase out the math section of the WASL by 2014. Instead, students will take two end-of-course exams, either at the end of Algebra I and Geometry I, or Integrated Math I and II. This bill was approved and signed by Governor Christine Gregoire.

Thanks to the many members who made phone calls, wrote e-mails and letters, and attended town hall meetings during this past session. You made the difference!

Take the lead Moves Forward with "Got Average?" and a Living Wage



Take the lead.

Restoring Washington's Commitment to Great Public Schools

- WEA-Sammamish *Take the lead* cadre members met in March with WEA staff to learn about the next phase of focusing on school funding. We've succeeded in raising awareness of the problems of Washington State being below the national average in funding, salaries and class sizes. Now we are connecting with community organizations and business leaders as we move toward fixing the school funding system. Visit the *Take the lead* website at <http://www.washingtonea.org/ttl> for ways you can connect.
- Look for "Got Average?" buttons arriving in April and talking points for these conversation starters.
- LWESP's Living Wage Committee met twice in March to map out the schedule for Listening Sessions around the district that will be taking place every week in May. Watch for a flyer to be delivered to all LWESP in April.

Final Round Up for New Educator Caucus

We're concluding the year's New Educator Caucus with a highly engaging topic and speaker: Jerry Painter, WEA General Counsel, will discuss "Safer Interactions with Students" and "Sexual Harassment."

If you are a new teacher, librarian, counselor, psychologist, or specialist in the first five years of your profession, this evening is designed for you. Please join us on Tuesday, April 22 from 5 to 7 pm for a fast-paced discussion, invaluable information, and a box dinner of your choice.



All of this is available at no cost, while allowing you to earn clock hours for a \$5 fee as long as you have attended at least 2 sessions. Please contact Charlotte Cole at ccole@washingtonea.org if you would like to register for this event.

Federal Loan Forgiveness

Certain teachers may be eligible to receive federal money for teacher loan forgiveness provisions. The amounts vary from \$5,000 to \$17,500 depending on subject area taught.

More details and information about eligibility are available at: www.ed.gov/policy/highered/guid/secletter/060301a.html.

Upcoming Events

Sammamish Unified Bargaining Meeting	4/14
Tahoma Pre-Retirement Seminar	4/18-4/19
New Educator Caucus	4/22
Earth Day	4/22
Administrative Professionals' Day	4/23

*Join us on April 22
New Educator Caucus
and
Jerry Painter
"Safer Interactions
with Students"*

*We will meet in the
cafeteria at Sammamish
High School in Bellevue.*

*E-mail
ccole@washingtonea.org
if you are interested in
attending.*

WEA-SAMMAMISH

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