

OEA Speaks

OLYMPIA EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

1619 STATE AVENUE NE, OLYMPIA, WA 98506

PHONE: 360-352-5255 ~ FAX: 360-352-7361 ~ WEBSITE: WWW.OLYEA.ORG

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

MAY 2018

I recently attended a training with other OEA members at our regional WEA affiliate, WEA-Chinook, in Tumwater. The training focused on union values, the importance of membership, and the strength of our collective association when we work together for common purposes.

One of the trainers is a recent transplant from the Right-to-Work (for less and be fired at will) state of Colorado. She had some stories to tell, and hearing those stories makes me very happy to live and work in a state where collective bargaining and unions are supported and appreciated. In her previous district, the salary schedule did not stop at Step 16. It went all the way to 30. Thirty years to reach your maximum earnings! The salary on her Step 30 is equivalent to our salary at Step 16, but it takes an educator in Colorado an additional 14 years to get there. That creates a significant reduction in total lifetime earnings for an educator in Colorado compared to an educator in Washington.

Equally crazy is their evaluation scheme. Fifty percent of an educator's evaluation is based on standardized test scores. If you don't teach in a tested

not ever teach.

When the trainer realized there were greener pastures further west, as well as an evaluation system that excluded standardized test scores, she decided to move. How she decided what school district to move into is interesting. She didn't look at OSPI data, or school websites, or make school visits, or interview principals or teachers. She simply started to review the Collective Bargaining Agreements for the districts in the area she wanted to live. She knew that the district with the best contract would also have the best educators and programs for her kids.

When a contract has specific language about staff and student safety, that's good for kids. When a contract has salary provisions that competitively compensates educators, that's good for kids. When a contract has language about paid staff development, that's good for kids. Other areas? Planning time, mandatory participation on curriculum committees, leadership teams, reporting periods, conference schedules, generous health care and other benefits, and access to a mandatory conversation when you believe your workload is too high. All of those are good for kids.

I'd like to say the district she landed in was Olympia, and the contract she thought was the best was our contract. But that's not the case. We're getting there though. Good contracts are good for educators and good for kids. Our bargaining team knows this, and we will keep working toward that end.

Adam Brickell, OEA President
abrickelloea@comcast.net



BARGAINING UPDATE

The Olympia Education Association bargaining team is in the process of negotiating a new Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) with the district. Our current CBA expires August 31, 2018. Normally the bargaining team maintains a goal of completing negotiations prior to the end of the school year. However, given the radically different parameters under which we are bargaining, especially designing a new, local salary schedule, it is becoming increasingly apparent that our negotiations may continue into the summer. This would necessitate a contract ratification meeting in August, or after the beginning of the school year. The bargaining team and building reps will keep you apprised of the timeline for negotiations as bargaining progresses.

In order for you to be informed about what is taking place, you should:



1. Attend your building OEA meetings.
2. Read email and hard copy communications sent out by OEA.
3. Check the OEA website regularly (www.olyea.org).
4. Read your school email regularly over the summer.

ICE CREAM SOCIAL



All of you are strongly encouraged to make some time to honor your colleagues who are retiring at this year's Ice Cream Social. Each year education employees are honored for their service upon their retirement. We also honor the Advocates of the Year and the Teacher of the Year. Come join us to celebrate and eat some ice cream on Thursday, May 24th from 4:00-5:30 PM at the Olympia High School Commons.



This is not just a challenging year for contract negotiations; this is a completely different year from any contract negotiation we have ever conducted. Why?

- The state funding formula for education has dramatically changed.
- State education funding allocations to individual districts vary widely.
- No state salary schedule is in place; we must create it.
- The parameters for what we can bargain, and when we can bargain for it, are confusing and contradictory.
- There is a vast difference in the interpretation of what and how much can be bargained for compensation between the Washington Education Association's legal staff and the district's legal counsel.



What guides the OEA bargaining team? Values. The values the bargaining team uses to guide our work (and that we have always held) include equity, unity, fairness, and professionalism.

The bargaining team understands that educators have been waiting a long time for significant salary increases from the state. Over one billion additional dollars in state education funding was added in the recent legislative session. We understand that this money is for compensation. If a shared goal of both the OEA and the district is to have qualified, quality educators in front of students, then a competitive salary must be offered to attract and retain those educators. As always, the OEA bargaining team will work with WEA staff to have a full understanding of the district's resources.

This bargain is critically important. The bargaining team will need your support as negotiations continue. We have seen the impact of union solidarity across the country over the past several months. Together we are stronger. Now is the time to work together, support each other, and stay united.

Wearing Red for Ed Supporting fellow educators



OEA IN THE CAPITAL CITY PRIDE PARADE

At the April OEA Rep. Council meeting, the council voted unanimously to have OEA participate in the Capital City Pride Parade. This is the second year that OEA will be in the parade in support of our LGBTQ colleagues, students, families, and community members. The parade will be held on Sunday, June 10th. Line-up will begin at 11:00 at the Capitol building. Look for the red and white OEA banner. The parade will begin at noon and conclude at Heritage Park. Family and friends of OEA members are welcome to walk with us. If you would like a red OEA shirt to wear in the parade, contact Miranda at the OEA office at 360-352-5255.



REFLECTIONS ON WEA-RA

Jason Finney, Garfield:

It was an honor to represent you as one of 11 delegates at the 2018 WEA-RA. It was inspiring being part of the energy of over 1000 delegates from across our state. My favorite moment in business session was listening to the powerful words of Mary Yu, a Washington State Supreme Court Justice. I will never forget that.

Every business item that was brought forward has children and communities at its center. Making sure every child has a voice and is empowered to be all they can be is at the heart of every local and the WEA.

The WEA-RA is about the continuing journey of advocating like mad on behalf of children we are lucky to serve.

Thank you, Adam, Dan, Denise, Deb, Caitlin, Karina, Spencer, Maribeth, Jenny, Rick, and Katie for being as passionate as you are on behalf of children, their families, and every OEA member!

Spencer Olmsted, Roosevelt:

This was my first time attending the WEA-RA, and I was blown away by the sheer quantity of teachers that were able to participate in the process. Any member who wanted to make a motion, modify a motion, or debate an idea was able to speak. It took a great deal of stamina to participate in the marathon three-day session!

There were a number of themes that aroused passions among our fellow educators around the state. I was struck by the number of educators who spoke about personal injury at the hands of students. When I returned to my building I heard similar stories from colleagues here in Olympia. There are some very difficult situations that need to be grappled with; when we share our stories we amplify our voices. Teachers of color and advocates of teachers of color made their voices heard on a number of issues from retention and support, to more general issues of equity. Also of note were conversations and debate around gun laws, school safety, and taxes.

The WEA is a diverse body of individuals with a wide array of concerns. We all care deeply about the quality of education in our communities, but each of us sees the world through a different lens. In the end it is our engagement in the process, and our ability to engage others, that matters. Our ideas, your ideas, set the course



of the WEA. Through our organization we truly do have the power to shape education policy in the State of Washington.

Adam Brickell, Olympia Education Assn:

WEA-RA was, once again, a great opportunity to see democracy in action as over 1,000 delegates from across the state gathered in Spokane to set the direction of the WEA for next year. I always leave the RA feeling tired but also inspired at how a group of 1,000 people can come together, debate issues, and make decisions. Several times my initial thought on how I would vote on an issue was changed by a compelling argument from another delegate.

One highlight for me at this RA was the opportunity to hear a speech by Mandy Manning, a Spokane teacher and the national Teacher of the Year. It was inspiring hearing about her work with students who are newcomers to our

country. She mentioned several districts she has visited so far, including Olympia. I wish her all the best as she travels throughout the country, meets with educators and state and federal elected officials, and shares her perspective on public education. She's a strong union advocate, as well!

Another highlight, as always, is the time spent with colleagues away from work. Although we put in long hours at the RA, there is time built in for breaks and socializing. That down-time is so important to getting a deeper understanding of a fellow union member's life experiences and why he or she seeks out and chooses to be an active participant in the local association. I was impressed by the focus and thoughtfulness that OEA delegates brought to the floor of RA. If you get a chance, please thank these individuals for their work on your behalf: Karina Champion, Jason Finney, Denise Morrison, Rick St. Louis, Katie Savinski, Spencer Olmsted, Dan McCartan, Deb Haddon, Jenny Morgan, Caitlin Donnelly, and Maribeth Wheeler.

Look for more reflections in the June newsletter.

CALENDAR

May 16 - Rep Council, OEA Office

May 24 - Ice Cream Social, OHS

May 28 - No School

June 6 - Exec Board

June 10 - Pride Parade

June 20 - Last Day of School

