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Washington Education Association
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WEA MEMBERS

HAVE THE

POWER TO

NEGOTIATE FAIR

PAY RAISES

FOR ALL!



Why I am Union

I'm writing this right after most schools have let out for the summer. Lockers are emptied, well, in theory. Furniture is moved aside for the big summer clean. Community and four-year colleges have a new group of students for the summer schedule. Educators briefly dream of taking a small breather before it all begins again.

But this summer is much different. Locals across this state will continue bargaining new money. A lot of new money. Some have already broken ceilings with their achievements.

And this summer we will face each other for the first time in many years to ask, are you a union member?

I am a union member. I know we succeed because of my being a union member. The state has provided \$2 billion for salaries for all educators to be available starting in the upcoming school year. That is a direct result of my being a union member. I have health care, because I am a union member. I have negotiated working conditions because I am a union member.

I also know that the money I pay in union dues helps all educators. It doesn't pay for just me. It is combined with everyone's dues to make sure our needs are addressed.

Looking into the faces of my colleagues, I am proud to pay union dues to help them achieve great things for their students and for themselves.

I have a choice. I've always had a choice. The difference this year is a financial decision. The decision this year is a professional decision. Will I decide to stop paying my union dues? **NO.**

What is at stake?

Will our union be as strong if I cancel being a member? **NO.**

Will my colleagues be able to achieve what they need if I cancel being a member? **NO.**

Will I lose my ability to have a voice about my profession? **YES.**

It may seem like I will give the "right" answer because I'm a union leader.

The answer I give is the only answer I would ever be able to give as a public school educator.

I will stay in my union, not only for my own personal needs, but because I care deeply about each and every educator. I will be a union member because I know my colleagues need my support, just as I need theirs.

Anyone who says you can still get everything you have now and not have to pay dues is wrong. You risk loss when you stand by yourself and not with the power of many.

If you are told that you run the risk of losing any gains for yourself, your current colleagues and those who have already retired, they are telling the truth.

I will look everyone in the eye and say, I am here for you because I know it takes all of us to make a great education for students. I pay my fair share. We may not always agree, but I will always stand up for our profession. **I am a union member.**

United and strong. Join me and help others to stay strong, too.

Kim Mead
WEA President



Kim Mead

*United
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WEA members are getting big wins at bargaining tables across the state this summer, thanks to billions of dollars in new state salary money. While legislators and the Supreme Court both said the additional funding was to increase educator pay, actual pay raises must be negotiated locally between the union and the school district.

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IMPOSSIBLE? LIFE-CHANGING PAY RAISES NOW REALITY

On its face, a 21.1 percent one-year raise for teachers seems worthy of enormous celebration.

But Ocean Beach's contract settlement was even more noteworthy: It helped explode myths that nearly \$2 billion in new state funding can't be spent on pay.

In big locals and small, one-year contract increases of 12, 15, 20, even *more than 40 percent* are a wake-up call. Educators have been underpaid for so long that double-digit raises in one year seem unimaginable. But WEA locals are now turning what many thought impossible into reality.

Bellevue's new contract brings an overall increase of 17.3 percent, but pay for some mid-career educators will jump up to 25 percent when school starts in September.

That's exactly what our state Constitution, our state Supreme Court, the Legislature, the governor and WEA's McCleary lawsuit demanded — and parents support. The Constitution requires ample funding, legislators determined these big budget increases should go to salaries, including support staff, and the court noted that nothing is more basic to basic education than educators' pay.

In November, the Supreme Court continued holding legislators in contempt following a proposal that money for *salaries* would not be available by Sept. 1. Once the additional salary money was approved, and the contempt citation lifted, districts responded.

"The district realized and followed through with the Legislature's recommendations: this is money for salaries," noted Ocean Beach President-elect Doug Pellerin.

"It's sort of astounding," Bellevue's Kelye Kneeland said, "This past year I made \$93,000. ... Next school year I'll be making \$111,000, which is an increase of about \$17,000, which will go a long, long way toward helping my family help our children with their own educational goals."

Lake Washington also helped pave the way, with an overall pay increase of 12.2 percent over last year. Bridgeport EA, along the Columbia in central Washington, secured a 21.1 percent pay increase. In Southwest Washington, Mossyrock EA members bargained a 25.9 percent overall increase. Cascade EA, in Leavenworth, won a 15.9 percent raise.

"We have finally helped get teachers in our area what they deserve," said Mossyrock negotiator Heather Davis.

Eastern Washington's Othello EA negotiated a 17 percent overall pay raise. Bainbridge Island EA members bargained an

average overall 21.2 percent increase, but some individual cells on the salary grid increase by *39.1 percent!* And while the overall increase in Mossyrock is nearly 26 percent, some cells on the salary grid will jump 42.4 percent. That's no typo: *some educators will see a 42.4 percent pay raise in a single year.*

At Cascade EA, "Our members had high expectations going into our bargain this year, and they were behind the team," President Vicki Harrod noted. "The district saw that our members care and that we were united. That made a difference."

Highline College and Columbia Basin College faculty also negotiated large salary increases, thanks to a historic new bargaining law WEA members helped pass.

"All of the work that WEA put in last year is paying off for union members and for the students we serve!" said James Peyton, president of Highline College EA.

It's still early, but WEA ESP members have won, too. Classified Education Support Professionals earn only 60 cents for every \$1 of the average worker's salary in Washington. The need for higher classified salaries is clear.

Bridgeport Education Support Personnel Association members negotiated an 11 percent pay raise on average, with top pay reaching \$37.10 an hour.

Sadly, not all the news is good. Some superintendents and school boards insist on blocking the state-directed pay increases.

Their excuses include a salary-grid cap based on inflation (that's moot since the funding changes require salary grids to be completely redrawn). Or they foresee dismal enrollment declines (but not based on actual trends). Or they suggest levy losses will bankrupt districts (in reality, levy rollbacks are dwarfed by even larger state funding increases). Our favorite: blame the marbled murrelet. In that dire vision, environmental restrictions will halt logging, and school funding will plummet.

Perhaps fear-mongers could worry over invaders from outer space or attacks of killer zombies, too. But make those lame excuses quickly — then pass along the \$2 billion in pay increases intended by our Constitution, the Supreme Court, our Legislature, our governor, and WEA's McCleary lawsuit.

A note about our numbers: sometimes, the percentage gains listed by WEA are not the same as used by a local. Contracts vary, for example in areas such as stipends and reimbursements, so WEA tries to apply consistent definitions that offer apples-to-apples comparisons statewide of contract gains.

"I bring women of color, from all walks of life, mostly professional, so they can see what they can aspire to be in the future. ... I want them to know, 'Don't limit yourself. You, too, can aspire to work in Olympia, and make policy, and make changes affecting what's happening in your community.'"

— Vallerie Fisher
2018 WEA ESP
of the Year



Family support worker *nurtures, molds minds and unlocks opportunities* for girls in south Seattle

Seattle's Vallerie Fisher is the 2018 WEA Education Support Professional of the Year

For 18 years, Vallerie Fisher has been a bedrock of support for families most in need. Whether it is connecting struggling families to community resources, providing food or clothing to children, or a simple gesture of offering a hug or a little bit of extra attention to a student having a rough moment, it's all part of Fisher's day as a family support worker at Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary School in Seattle. But more than work duties, colleagues say her commitment and advocacy is the makeup of Vallerie Fisher the woman, the one who brings people together and challenges others to better serve students, families and community.

"When I think of Vallerie, I think of someone who is very passionate," kindergarten teacher DaZanne Davis Porter says. "Someone who is very caring, but also someone who is very honest and not afraid to speak her truth. She's going to do whatever needs to be done for our

scholars to make sure that they get whatever it is that they need."

"Her intervening can mean children eating or not eating," she says. "Her intervening can mean children going home to a home with lights on and running water, or not. Her intervening means children being able to come to school, even though they may be homeless or they are in a shelter somewhere."

Principal Chris Thomas says Fisher builds relationships.

"Vallerie really helps kind of build some of those bridges between families and teachers, and families and myself," Thomas says. "You don't necessarily have to trust

schools. We want that to be the case, but a lot of our families have had negative experiences in the past with schools. Vallerie's ability to reach out and connect in different ways with families provides an entryway for families to feel like there is someone there to support



Modeling that family matters, Vallerie Fisher often celebrates life's milestones with relatives, including mother Henrietta Price. Last year, the WEA Human & Civil Rights Committee honored Fisher for her student involvement, specifically the girls group she founded at Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary School.

them, someone who is their advocate, and isn't just for the school, but is really for them as well."

One project close to Fisher's heart is a girls group she created at the school where fifth-grade girls of color meet with her regularly during the day. It's a time when girls learn about topics such as hygiene, etiquette and various academic fields in a safe space. It's a time where relationships are formed, and self-esteem boosted as girls navigate into their teenage years and beyond. It's also a place where girls can see adult women of color in leadership roles. Fisher takes girls on field trips to places they normally might not have an opportunity to visit. (She currently is trying to coordinate a visit to the governor's mansion). Before the end of the school year, she took the group to see "Black Panther" to let girls see how science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) is applied and that they can be successful with STEM-related careers.

"When I go to Olympia or another state, I don't see very many women of color," Fisher says of the genesis of the girls group. "I want them to know, 'Don't limit yourself. You, too, can aspire to work in Olympia, and make policy, and make changes affecting what's happening in your community."

"I don't know which girl in this group is going to wind up in politics. I'm hoping some of them do. So, I feel like I should expose them to that."

Fisher, who comes from a strong union family, is a mother and grandmother of 12. Her work, she says, is important, because it impacts her own grandchildren and other children in the community — and one never knows when one might need a helping hand.

"Those girls love her," says colleague Gwendolyn Jimerson, a family service provider for Head Start Services. "Vallerie goes out of her way to make sure those girls have a positive experience, and that they experience things in the community. She is actually allowing them to be their authentic selves, and identify what that is."

Outside of school, Fisher approaches life with the same fervor, passion and determination. She plays an active role in strengthening African-American communities, particularly Seattle's Rainier Beach neighborhood where she is a leader at Goodwill Missionary Baptist Church, a precinct committee officer in the 37th District Democratic Party, and serves on the Rainier Beach Action

Coalition. She advocates on behalf of the state's ESPs, serves as Seattle Education Association treasurer and a NEA ESP At-Large Board Director on the WEA Board. She has been part of the Association's Human and Civil Rights Committee and now serves as the chairperson of the NEA/WEA Educators' Black Caucus.

"What I would like to see is for young people and older people to know that your voice matters," Fisher says. "But if you never open up your mouth, if you never show up at a community meeting to give your input, then who else knows that beside you? Individually it's great to do something but it's better when you do it with others. It has a greater impact and that's why I call myself a community activist ... that's all the way to the church house."

"Every day that I wake up that God gives me another opportunity to leave my home, to do something *amazing* for somebody else that cost me nothing but time and effort, I think is a blessing," Fisher says. "It doesn't have to cost a lot of money but if you have time you can make a difference in somebody else's life. Hopefully what you did for them, one day they'll see that they can do it for somebody else, too. And that's what it's really all about."



Fisher considers every day an opportunity to make a difference in somebody else's life. Surrounded by her mother, colleagues and student speakers, Fisher received the 2018 ESP of the Year award earlier this spring.



Put on your 'kicks' for the Super Six and protect public education

And return your ballot by Aug. 7

WEA-PAC recommends and elects education friendly candidates — regardless of party affiliation. This fall, WEA members are encouraged to “Put on your kicks for the Super Six!” to help elect six candidates for the state House of Representatives in three districts to maintain our ability to advocate for students and our freedom to negotiate a fair contract.

Last fall, hundreds of WEA members doorbelled for Manka Dhingra, helping elect her to the Washington Senate and winning a pro-public education, pro-union majority.

WEA volunteers stood out — they wore red T-shirts that read “Ring the Bell for Manka/Educators for Manka Dhingra.”

At her election night party, Dhingra recounted the vital role educators played in building support in her district. Educators, she said, have credibility with voters.

With Dhingra and a new majority in the Senate this year, the Legislature approved an additional \$1 billion for K-12 salaries and passed a long-stalled bill that granted collective bargaining rights for community and technical college faculty. Neither would have happened if Dhingra hadn't been elected.

The stakes are equally high in this year's legislative elections. If anti-union candidates win control of the state House, we will face a rash of bad bills to limit our freedom to negotiate a fair contract and to weaken our ability to advocate for students.

That is why WEA members are encouraged to “Put on your kicks for the Super Six!” this fall. The Super Six are six candidates for the state House of Representatives in three districts (“kicks” is slang for shoes):

- **Mari Leavitt** and **Rep. Christine Kilduff** in the 28th Legislative District (Lakewood and University Place)

- **Rep. Kristine Reeves** and **Rep. Mike Pellicciotti** in the 30th Legislative District (Federal Way)
- **Bill Ramos** and **Lisa Callan** in the 5th Legislative District (Issaquah)

Kilduff, Reeves and Pellicciotti are incumbents. Leavitt and Callan are challenging incumbents, and Ramos is running for an open seat against a former legislator. All of them are in tough races.

“Electing these Super Six candidates will protect and strengthen the pro-public education, pro-union majority in the Washington House of Representatives,” said Kim Mead, WEA president and WEA-PAC chair.

WEA members will be doorbelling for the Super Six on Oct. 6 and Oct. 27.

The primary election is Aug. 7 — don't forget to mail or return your ballot! For a complete list of WEA-PAC-recommended candidates, visit washingtonea.org/OurVoice/2018-election-recommendations/#.



Sen. Patty Kuderer co-taught a math lesson at Stella Schola Middle School in Redmond last fall. Kuderer, who was invited to visit Lake Washington EA member Brigitte Tennis' class, has been a strong advocate for public education.

Another WEA-PAC priority is re-electing Sen. Patty Kuderer, a strong advocate for public schools and educators, including protecting our unions rights. Ex-legislator Rodney Tom is challenging Kuderer. When he last served in the Legislature, Tom led the Senate majority caucus that promoted anti-educator policies and fell far short on fully funding public education. *The Seattle Weekly* says Tom's current platform includes “removing tenure for teachers, allowing principals to hire and fire teachers at their schools, and installing merit-based raises.”

Sen. Kuderer represents a Bellevue-area district, and keeping her in office will maintain a pro-education, pro-union Senate majority.





WHAT TO DO if the Freedom Foundation contacts you ...

Nationally, and here in Washington, extremist groups are using the U.S. Supreme Court's Janus ruling to attack union membership. Many people have received emails from the Mackinac Center in Michigan, funded literally by Betsy DeVos' family foundation and other billionaires, who want to eliminate public sector unions.

In our state, these anti-union efforts are spearheaded by the Freedom Foundation, which sometimes uses front groups ("Opt-out Today," for example) as a cover for their anti-union activities. Regardless of the name, all of these groups may say they stand for freedom or your interests, but they actually oppose most of the things we champion. They oppose better funding for public education, smaller class sizes, and they attack our collective bargaining rights — our freedom to negotiate fair pay with our school districts.

The Freedom Foundation is sending paid canvassers to harass union members at their homes this summer. In the past, these paid canvassers have been known to lie by claiming they are from the union. In reality, they are attempting to coerce union members into signing paperwork under false pretenses. If you are contacted by someone you suspect is from the Freedom Foundation, here's how you can protect yourself:

You have the right to request the ID of the Freedom Foundation staff member.

Any time a solicitor comes to your door, you can ask to see their identification. In the past, Freedom Foundation canvassers have led people to believe they are from the union. Union reps will always carry ID, so it is easy to verify who they are. If you are concerned about who you are talking to, just ask. Then share that information with your local association and, if necessary, we can alert other members to be on the lookout.

You are not required to sign anything provided to you by the Freedom Foundation.

If you are approached and feel uncomfortable, you should ask that the Freedom Foundation staffer leave your property or your workplace and ask to be removed from their contact list.

You have a right to be removed from the Freedom Foundation's contact list.

If you are contacted after requesting removal, you should contact your union/building representative and report the activity. The Freedom Foundation does not have the right to harass you.

You have the right to take a picture or record video of your conversation with the Freedom Foundation staffer.

Politely tell them that you are recording the conversation for your protection. Capturing this information with your smartphone will help authorities identify the Freedom Foundation staffer if you experience harassment — and it will help other union members protect themselves.

At any time, if you feel scared or intimidated, ask the Freedom Foundation representative to leave the premises immediately and call 9-1-1.

If you'd like more information about the Freedom Foundation and other anti-union groups, visit the WEA website at www.WashingtonEA.org.



It's been about a month since the U.S. Supreme Court's Janus decision against

public sector unions' ability to collect fair share representation fees. What does this mean for WEA members accessing WEA program and services? Below is a list of some of the programs and services available exclusively for members. Contact your WEA UniServ staff if you have more questions.

- Access to WEA-sponsored professional development and clock hour trainings on topics including special education, employment law, common core, evaluation, etc. Most of WEA's trainings are developed by and for educators. Visit <https://www.washingtonea.org/pd/> for more information. Non-members are not eligible to take WEA trainings.
- Ability to attend local association meetings and social functions.
- Eligibility to attend meetings or participate in bargaining-related functions including interest surveys, input into bargaining issues, and contract ratification.
- Eligibility to vote and run for union offices at local, state and national levels.
- Access to state and national meetings including the annual representative assemblies.
- Ability to participate in association-sponsored retirement seminars.
- Access to certain legal services, such as wage and hour complaints, certification hearings, or discounts to participating attorneys. Some restrictions may apply.
- Access to NEA Member Benefits including but not limited to the "Click and Save" discount program; term life insurance; home mortgage program; auto purchase, and insurance.

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Governance and Administration

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McCleary ends with a victory, but WEA's fight for school funding isn't finished

The long-running and historic McCleary school funding court case is officially over — but the fight to fully fund Washington's public schools is far from done.

The end of McCleary is major progress for students and public schools across the state. Our schools will receive billions of dollars in new state funding, and education now accounts for more than half the state budget.

WEA members and dozens of local unions funded and supported the McCleary court case, which originated at a WEA Representative Assembly.

"We are proud that Washington Education Association members have been at the forefront of the fight for better school funding for decades, including the McCleary court case, which WEA supported from the start," said WEA President Kim Mead. "Our years of hard work and advocacy are paying off for the students of Washington."

In June, the Washington Supreme Court ruled the state was finally in compliance with the court's 2012 McCleary decision, which ordered legislators to amply fund basic education as required by the constitution.

The court's decision to end McCleary came after legislators voted in March to increase funding for educator salaries by another \$1 billion for the 2018-19 school year, on top of \$1 billion already earmarked for pay raises this fall. The salary money is for both certificated staff and classified education support professionals.

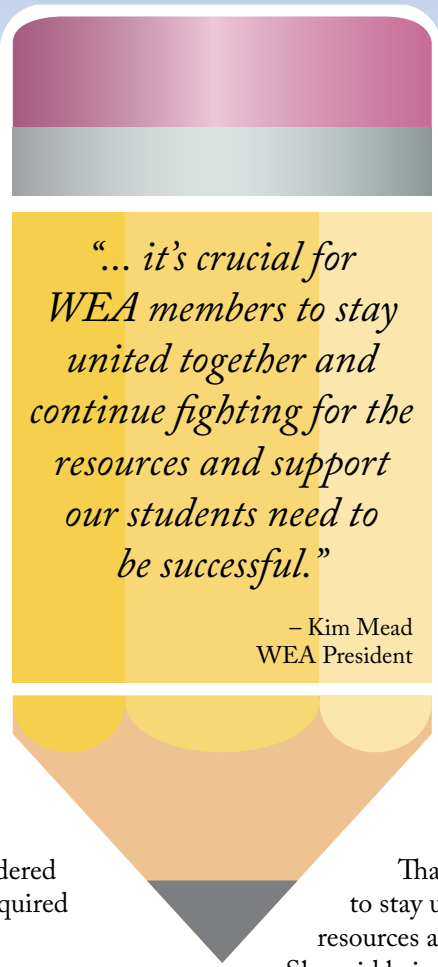
With \$2 billion in additional state funding for educator salaries, WEA members in locals across the state are negotiating big pay raises this summer. While legislators and the Supreme Court both said the funding was to increase educator pay, actual pay raises must be negotiated locally between the union and the school district — they aren't automatic. Negotiating pay is one of the core functions of a local union, and several WEA locals already have won double-digit pay raises (see story on page 3).

The McCleary court case was filed in 2007, and school funding needs have changed in the years since. In 2014, voters approved WEA-led Initiative 1351, which calls for dramatic class-size reductions in every grade level, plus additional support staff and extra help for low-income students. The Legislature, however, has delayed full funding for the initiative, and our students are still packed into some of the most overcrowded classrooms in the country.

The state also is failing short on funding for special education students, school safety and in other areas.

That's why Mead said it's crucial for WEA members to stay united together and continue fighting for the resources and support our students need to be successful. She said being a WEA member gives us the strength in numbers to do things we could not do separately — like winning a major school funding court case against the state.

"WEA members will continue to be Washington's most powerful advocate for public schools, educators and our students," Mead vowed.



*"... it's crucial for
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— Kim Mead
WEA President