

we2.0

Washington Education Association
Volume 54, Number 2 – Spring 2016

WE Are WEA:
MEMBERSHIP
MATTERS



WE Are WEA MEMBERSHIP MATTERS



Union united

I love the WEA Representative Assembly. The elected delegates have different levels of experience, come from all areas of education, and provide a wide perspective of views. Once a year, they set the direction of our union. The issues cover a wide range of topics and will impact the lives of our students.



Since 1889, WEA has been the voice of the education profession. Today, that collective voice is 90,000 members strong.

Looking out at our assembly in action I witness great hope, passion, respect and genuine caring. Not all that surprising considering the delegates are representing 90,000 individuals. They understand their work sets the stage for members and students statewide.

This year's emphasis on membership helps anchor our work as we set the direction of our union. We know that the issues we face will not only have a



Highlights of 2016 WEA RA business, 3

direct impact on our students but future educators coming into public education.

One of the areas we will begin to work on is addressing institutional racism. This was a new business item originally from the NEA Representative Assembly. Our state union has taken on the issue as well when we passed a similar new business item. Understanding and addressing institutional racism will not be something with an instant fix but a conscious, intentional, ongoing process.

I was very proud of the work accomplished to amend our continuing resolutions to include more inclusive language around gender identity. It will help us to better meet the needs of all of our members and students within the education setting as well as provide the opportunity to encourage all organizations to do the same.

Everyone needs to feel safe, welcome and empowered in the public education setting. Members, students, parents and community members will know we stand with them and for them.

Our union's culture is making the adjustment to better meet the current needs of members. As we come together to advocate and bargain, we also know that we need to support each other in a much broader sense. This RA was a reflection of working to meet those needs.

Membership matters and I'm so proud to be a union member.

Kim Mead, WEA President

3 WEA Are WEA: Membership Matters

Nearly 1,000 delegates at this year's Rep Assembly in Spokane voted to commit to a renewed vision for WEA: Union representation is a fundamental principle and value. We commit to protecting and strengthening this right.

4 Bargaining Matters

Strength, resolve and determination — whether you are a bargainer or not — are ingredients in tough negotiations for fair pay and other school-quality issues. Member unity, not just vocal bargaining teams, is what pushes contracts forward.

8 Outstanding Support

Seattle's Gwendolyn Jimerson is WEA's Education Support Professional of the Year.



WEA Representative Assembly delegates commit to a vision to move the Association forward by protecting and strengthening the right to union representation, continuing to be the state's most powerful advocate for quality public education, and being the voice of the education profession.

ANNUAL REP ASSEMBLY *reaffirms Association's efforts to engage members and build a stronger union*

Nearly 1,000 WEA Representative Assembly delegates, alternate delegates and staff met April 7-9 to reaffirm union representation rights as a fundamental principle, deliberate the best ways to advocate for quality public education and shape WEA policy for the upcoming year.

Spring break and perfect spring weather were no deterrent at Spokane's Convention Center where elected delegates heard from National Education Association Governmental Relations Director Mary Kusler both praising WEA members' work in influencing the new Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) through Sen. Patty Murray and for standing strong to resist tying student test scores to teacher evaluations.

Delegates also heard from Kevin Gilbert, an NEA Executive Committee member from Mississippi, who stressed the importance of union rights and shared a poignant story about trying to shift deeply imbedded cultural bias based on an experience with his own son.

Particularly satisfying for delegates, this year, was that both the Washington State 2016 Teacher of the Year and WEA's Education Support Professional of the Year were RA delegates. Tacoma EA's Nathan Gibbs-Bowling talked about the importance of knowing the union assures academic freedom in his work as an AP teacher at Lincoln High School. He also spoke about socio-economic disparity and how good teaching is key in combatting what sometimes seems like insurmountable circumstances. Gwendolyn Jimerson, a family support provider in Seattle, talked about a colleague who asked her repeatedly to become more involved in union work and gave him credit for not giving up until she became more engaged.

One dominant theme this year was reiteration of the

right to union representation as unions around the country are under attack by wealthy corporate interests that simply want to eliminate members' ability to advocate for what students must have to be successful. RA opened with Lake Washington EA member Peter Cheng, a high school math teacher, who said he became involved in the union after hearing stories from his father about what working conditions were like in the 1970s.

"Back then, powerful individuals and organizations took advantage of not just educators, but every working individual in the name of profits. ... Today, we still have many rich and powerful individuals and corporations using their wealth

to undermine working people Strong, committed membership matters to me because it is what allows us to effectively defend against these attacks," Cheng said.

Delegates heard that the WEA Board voted to join a lawsuit challenging the constitutionality of Washington's new charter school law. And while members were debating new business items, wild applause broke out as they got word that Wisconsin's so-called "Right to Work" law was declared unconstitutional.

The WEA Political Action Committee (WEA-PAC) members voted, Saturday morning, on a resolution to ask all candidates seeking endorsement questions about supporting the fundamental rights of union representation, opposing legislation limiting existing and collective bargaining rights and supporting public sector employees the right to fully engage in the political process.

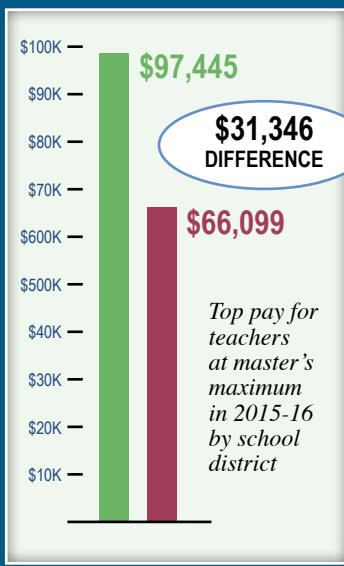
State Rep. Chris Reykdal and Sen. Cyrus Habib, two candidates who were endorsed last month at the WEA-PAC Endorsement Convention, shared stories about why they chose to seek office this fall. Reykdal is WEA-PAC's recommended candidate for state schools superintendent and Habib is the choice for lieutenant governor.

See RA, page 7

**The Washington
Education Association
believes the right to
union representation is a
fundamental principle of
American democracy.**



We are union: Delegates shared words of wisdom and welcome to new members.



WEA members have two choices: Either accept what comes out of Olympia, or negotiate better pay and benefits through the collective bargaining process to address better compensation, working conditions, terms of employment and school accountability issues.

Ferndale EA 2010

Bargaining Matters

Pushing hard in negotiations can mean thousands more in take-home pay

One of the greatest places where WEA members can exercise power is in local bargaining. That's true in good financial times, not-so-good years, and even in years where all seems dark and desperate.

Just ask educators in the Pilchuck UniServ Council in Everett. Top pay for veteran teachers will reach \$103,000 at the end of their current contract, in 2017-18.

"We always push to make financial gains to assure our members earn a professional wage," says Everett Education Association President Jared Kink who works in tandem with Pilchuck UniServ Director Diane Flynn on every step of the bargaining process.

Washington teachers are feeling the economic squeeze. Consumer prices, housing, professional expectations from local administrators and work hours are all increasing. After six years of losses to inflation without a statewide salary boost, WEA continues its statewide goal of negotiating 5 percent increases per contract year in local salary, also known as Time Responsibility Incentive (TRI) pay, in addition to any statewide increases WEA wins from the Legislature.

With WEA's McCleary court decision, billions of additional dollars are now being driven to local schools, and that trend should escalate when the Legislature creates a new plan to begin fully funding schools in two years. Widespread teaching shortages have driven home to community members that education salaries no longer are competitive with other professions. And administrators realize one of the best ways to compete for the few teaching applicants available is to be able to offer a solid contract.

This spring, approximately 140 locals will return to the bargaining table with fully open contracts, and additional locals may have contract language that allows them to reopen negotiations on limited topics such as salary. A common thread in the success of those bargains is if local bargaining teams go to the table with high expectations and ambitious proposals, and then don't waver because they know they have the power of a united membership behind their bargaining proposals.

In bargaining, it might seem as if it's less important if you're currently at the bottom or already at the top, but it's the understanding that these negotiations build on those that have come before, and you're now building a stronger foundation for the years to come for your locals and for those around you.

The additional money available this year comes directly from WEA members' tireless and unending support to force legislators to meet their paramount duty and improve school funding. It's up to all of us — whether we are bargaining team members or supporting bargaining team members — to ensure we do not leave that money on the negotiating table.

"Engaging members in the bargaining process shifts the power equation and causes school districts to prioritize budgets to meet the needs of its employees," Kink says. "This includes not only compensation but what our members say is needed to do the best job they can for students."

Often, many of the high TRI locals are involved in coordinated bargaining, using comparative information from similar and/or neighboring locals to develop proposals, support their positions, and motivate members.

Many of the high-paying districts have invested resources in attracting and retaining staff. Now with a statewide teacher shortage, that investment becomes even more important for lower-paying districts to increase compensation so they can compete to retain or recruit educators.

Both Kink and Flynn believe *all* teachers should be earning what Everett teachers earn.



Top: Pasco Association of Educators pack a school board meeting where the board agreed to seek a court injunction to end the strike last summer. *Bottom:* Pasco students rally in support of their teachers.

\$70,000 - \$79,999

Franklin Pierce \$79,902
 South Whidbey \$79,513
 Conway \$79,385
 Steilacoom \$79,319
 University Place \$79,226
 Spokane \$79,125
 Blaine \$79,021
 Mount Baker \$78,858
 Sumner \$78,832
 Darrington \$78,658
 Coupeville \$78,511
 San Juan Island \$78,364
 Meridian \$78,327
 Vashon \$78,129
 Camas \$77,754
 Bainbridge Island \$77,726
 Evergreen (Clark) \$77,679
 Dieringer \$77,408
 Lynden \$77,190
 Bremerton \$77,184
 Pasco \$77,091
 Central Kitsap \$77,019
 Moses Lake \$76,945
 Enumclaw \$76,877
 Peninsula \$76,697
 Richland \$76,516
 Orcas Island \$76,344
 Nooksack Valley \$76,171
 White River \$76,135
 Orting \$76,062
 Sedro Woolley \$75,930
 Oak Harbor \$75,767
 Olympia \$75,647
 West Valley (S) \$75,583
 La Conner \$75,375
 Hockinson \$75,371
 East Valley (Y) \$75,279
 Kennewick \$75,096
 Central Valley \$75,089
 Vancouver \$74,798
 North Franklin \$74,728
 Concrete \$74,361
 North Kitsap \$74,361
 South Kitsap \$74,178
 Wapato \$74,068
 Longview \$74,041
 Port Angeles \$74,031
 East Valley (S) \$73,907
 Washougal \$73,858
 Wenatchee \$73,811
 West Valley (Y) \$73,502
 Kelso \$73,443
 Ridgefield \$73,409
 Yakima \$73,392
 Eastmont \$73,174
 Clarkston \$73,109
 Mary M. Knight \$72,807
 Ephrata \$72,709
 Yelm \$72,709
 Cheney \$72,598
 Deer Park \$72,427

Selah \$72,342
 Wahluke (Mattawa) \$72,342
 Mount Adams \$72,341
 Shelton \$72,288
 Medical Lake \$72,132
 North Mason \$72,123
 Walla Walla Valley \$72,106
 Quincy \$72,011
 Centralia \$71,974
 Southside \$71,864
 Sunnyside \$71,864
 Sequim \$71,851
 Chehalis \$71,655
 Finley \$71,607
 Skykomish \$71,607
 Stevenson-Carson \$71,607
 Woodland \$71,606
 Kiona-Benton \$71,540
 Grandview \$71,534
 Battle Ground \$71,446
 Cape Flattery \$71,442
 Riverside \$71,439
 Naches Valley \$71,242
 Chimacum \$71,240
 Mabton \$71,240
 Quillayute Vly (Forks)
 \$71,240
 Prosser \$71,239
 Lake Chelan \$71,170
 Nine Mile Falls \$71,056
 Aberdeen \$70,873
 Hood Canal \$70,873
 Port Townsend \$70,873
 Union Gap \$70,873
 Othello \$70,872
 Royal \$70,872
 Eatonville \$70,788
 Columbia (W) \$70,775
 Highland \$70,611
 La Center \$70,506
 Toppenish \$70,506
 Lopez \$70,228
 Oakville \$70,138
 Rainier \$70,138
 Rochester \$70,138
 Chewelah \$70,004
 Elma \$70,000

\$60,000 - \$69,999

College Place \$69,971
 Zillah \$69,955
 Hoquiam \$69,950
 Montesano \$69,802
 Crescent \$69,771
 Napavine \$69,771
 Warden \$69,771
 Freeman \$69,661
 Orondo \$69,621
 Naselle-Grays River \$69,588
 Ocean Beach \$69,588
 Kittitas \$69,514
 Castle Rock \$69,404

\$60,000 - \$69,999

Don't want to be low on the list? The key is how hard members push for bargaining gains. Member unity, not just vocal bargaining teams, is what pushes contracts forward.

Ellensburg \$69,404	Newport \$67,935
Kalama \$69,404	Ritzville \$67,935
Taholah \$69,404	Tonasket \$67,935
Pullman \$69,257	Winlock \$67,935
Mount Pleasant \$69,037	Wahkiakum County \$67,751
Tenino \$69,037	Cosmopolis \$67,716
Wilbur \$69,037	Grand Coulee Dam \$67,568
Soap Lake \$69,036	Northport \$67,568
Trout Lake \$68,824	Okanogan \$67,568
Cashmere \$68,774	Quinault \$67,568
Adna \$68,670	Raymond \$67,568
Asotin \$68,670	Rosalia \$67,568
Cle Elum-Roslyn \$68,670	Wishkah Valley \$67,568
Liberty \$68,670	Lind \$67,560
McCleary \$68,670	Selkirk \$67,500
Onalaska \$68,670	Wellpinit \$67,384
Pe Ell \$68,670	Shaw* \$67,360
Pioneer \$68,670	Creston \$67,201
Prescott \$68,670	Centerville \$67,200
Reardan \$68,670	Curlew \$67,200
Odessa \$68,617	Pomeroy (Garfield Cty) \$67,200
Brinnon \$68,449	Wilson Creek \$67,035
Brewster \$68,302	Garfield \$67,017
Easton \$68,302	Palouse \$67,017
Entiat \$68,302	Touchet \$67,017
Morton \$68,302	Willapa Valley \$66,985
Wishram \$68,302	Almira \$66,833
Oroville \$68,247	Coulee-Hartline \$66,833
Colfax \$68,238	Omak \$66,833
Goldendale \$68,077	Tekoa \$66,833
Davenport \$68,068	Toutle Lake \$66,813
Colville \$67,968	Glenwood \$66,699
Cascade \$67,935	Endicott \$66,466
Kettle Falls \$67,935	Pateros \$66,466
Methow Valley \$67,935	Washtucna \$66,466
Mossyrock \$67,935	Lyle \$66,199

Bridgeport \$66,099	Onion Creek* \$66,099
Columbia (S) \$66,099	Orchard Prairie* \$66,099
Mansfield \$66,099	Orient* \$66,099
Manson \$66,099	Palisades* \$66,099
Benge* \$66,099	Paterson* \$66,099
Bickleton* \$66,099	Queets Clearwater* \$66,099
Boistfort* \$66,099	Quilcene* \$66,099
Carbonado* \$66,099	Republic* \$66,099
Colton* \$66,099	Roosevelt* \$66,099
Cusick* \$66,099	Saint John* \$66,099
Damman* \$66,099	Satsop* \$66,099
Dayton* \$66,099	Skamania* \$66,099
Dixie* \$66,099	South Bend* \$66,099
Evaline* \$66,099	Sprague* \$66,099
Evergreen (Stevens)* \$66,099	Star* \$66,099
Granger* \$66,099	Starbuck* \$66,099
Grapeview* \$66,099	Stehkin* \$66,099
Great Northern* \$66,099	Steptoe* \$66,099
Green Mountain* \$66,099	Summit Valley* \$66,099
Griffin* \$66,099	Thorp* \$66,099
Harrington* \$66,099	Toledo* \$66,099
Inchelium* \$66,099	Tumwater* \$66,099
Index* \$66,099	Valley* \$66,099
Kahlotus* \$66,099	Waitsburg* \$66,099
Keller* \$66,099	Waterville* \$66,099
Klickitat* \$66,099	White Pass* \$66,099
Lacrosse* \$66,099	White Salmon* \$66,099
Lamont* \$66,099	
Loon Lake* \$66,099	
Mary Walker* \$66,099	
Mill A* \$66,099	
Nespelem* \$66,099	
North Beach* \$66,099	
North River* \$66,099	
Oakesdale* \$66,099	
Ocosta* \$66,099	

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Nespelem* \$66,099	
North Beach* \$66,099	
North River* \$66,099	
Oakesdale* \$66,099	
Ocosta* \$66,099	

* Indicates that a local didn't report TRI data to WEA Research.

Source: Data reported for the local to WEA Research as of April 14, 2016. Amount represents highest certificated total pay (base pay plus TRI at master's plus 90 credits) available for 2015-16 for each school district.

Winning big without strikes

Planning, organizing, compelling stories and firm resolve are key ingredients for success

Consider it a tale of two cities: Teachers struck 14 days in Pasco before district leaders acknowledged the need for significantly higher wages, new curriculum and less testing. But across the bridge in Richland, teachers won similar gains without a noisy strike. And for ESP members statewide, strikes are prohibited by law.

Although strikes sometimes are necessary, most locals win solid contracts for members without striking. While the bargaining goal adopted by WEA's Board (a 5 percent salary increase *plus* any raises from the state) at first seemed impossible, locals found that with solid organizing, clear goals, regular communications and firm resolve, they not only could meet that goal, but exceed it.

Being prepared with research and organizing is crucial, Richland EA President Ken Hays believes: Initially, his district argued all its money had been budgeted.

"When the association pointed out that even after all of their alleged allocations were taken into consideration there were still several million dollars up for grabs, the district dropped all pretense," Hays recalls. "District administrators were also shaken by how quickly we organized members for the May 21 (legislative) walkout. The walkout helped show a unified front."

The Coupeville Educational Support Association was also a trendsetter, winning salary gains of 8 percent and 6.8 percent over two years. WEA Fourth Corner UniServ Director Nick Lawrie says the bargaining team's strongest arguments came from the stories of their own members. CESA's Tammy Glover recounted the years of minuscule wage growth, which meant losing ground to inflation and forcing even veteran school employees into poverty if they faced mortgage or car payments.

"The administration could see our determination for a

UNION PROUD

WEA RA delegates took time to show their union pride at this year's meeting. They wrote post cards welcoming new members; asked colleagues to sign "Proud to Be Union" affirmations, posted comments on social media, created posters, listened to colleagues share their own union story, and took a Membership Matters Quiz. Take the quiz yourself to find out how membership savvy you are.



RA delegates played the Wheel of Union Representation to learn more about the union rights we enjoy in Washington compared to other states where workers have fewer rights and freedoms. The wheel was one of many activities offered at the Membership Matters booth.

From RA, page 3

RA delegates also discussed and debated matters of membership. More than 30 new business items were passed. The official summary of all actions taken during RA is posted online at www.washingtonnea.org/ra/.

collaborative process," recounts Coupeville bargaining team member Steve Ellis. "It left them very little room to maneuver."

Adds Co-President Deanna Schulz, "We spoke from our hearts and shared with the district the financial challenges we had been facing. We felt heard."

Because of wide-ranging job duties, ESP settlements can be tricky to compare. But here's a look at some milestones this past year. Additional locals achieved similar gains:

To ensure professional-technical staff make at least \$15 an hour, minimum pay increased as much as 24.8 percent at Bates Technical College in Tacoma. Most Bellingham ASE staff won a 6 percent pay hike, but staff with 10-plus years will see an 11.2 to 11.4 percent gain. Clarkston Classified's lowest paid employees saw a 27 percent gain. Spokane Nutritional Services won a 9.5 percent increase; Spokane Secretarial/Clerical staff won an 8.5 percent increase. Eastmont Paraeducators won increases of 9 percent this year and 3.5 percent next year.

"We had each others back," says Coupeville's Renee Kisch. "We took a team approach and feel we had a winning season."



MEMBERSHIP MATTERS QUIZ

1. What was the first WEA local to go on strike?
A. Aberdeen B. Seattle C. Evergreen
2. In what year did the Washington Legislature pass the current collective bargaining law for K-12 certificated staff?
A. 1967 B. 1972 C. 1975
3. What is the country's largest union?
A. Teamsters B. NEA C. SEIU
4. When did WEA form?
A. 1778 B. 1889 C. 1927
5. Approximately how many local unions are affiliated with WEA?
6. Approximately, how many locals have open contracts this year?
7. How many members are in WEA?
8. Who is WEA-PAC endorsing for Superintendent of Public Instruction?
A. Randy Dorn B. Jay Inslee C. Chris Reykdal
9. Why do you believe membership matters?

Answers: 1) a 2) c 3) b 4) b 5) 375 6) 130
7) 90,000 8) c 9) Up to you ...

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Washington
Education
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WEA Communications Staff: Dale Folkerts, Adam Isaguirre, Brooke Mattox-Ball, Linda Mullen, Eddie Westerman, Linda Woo and Rich Wood

We are interested in your feedback and ideas. Reach Editor Linda Woo at lwoo@washingtonnea.org; by mail at P.O. Box 9100, Federal Way, WA 98063-9100, or 253-765-7027.

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Family service provider brings introspection and unrelenting activism to work, life

Seattle's Gwendolyn Jimerson is the 2016 WEA Education Support Professional of the Year

Gwendolyn Jimerson likes to take things into her own hands rather than complain. Seattle EA Paraprofessional President Marla Rasmussen says Jimerson's outlook is, "unerringly fair minded."

"She listens more than she speaks; she cares deeply for others; and her warmth draws people in and makes everyone feel welcome," Rasmussen says about Jimerson, a family service provider for Head Start Services at Martin Luther King Elementary School.

Jimerson says she spends a lot of time watching, listening and learning. She says it helps her figure out how she fits in. "My mother used to tell me, 'Before you put your mind on display, make sure you know what you're going to say.'"

As the third of four daughters in her family, she says she blended in at home but took a different path at school. She ran for student council at Asa Mercer Jr. High finding she enjoyed being "in the know." As junior *and* senior class president at Franklin High School, Jimerson says, "I asked my classmates what they wanted done then, also, asked them what they would do to help make it happen."

Jimerson advocates and assists families in accessing educational services for their 3- and 4-year-old children who are just beginning their schooling. She connects with someone in each of the 40 families she serves at least once a month.

"Gwendolyn consistently goes over and above for her students and families by taking the time to get to know who they are as

parents and community members. She has an incredible ability to empower families to advocate for themselves but is always there for them when they need guidance and support to succeed," says Seattle Education Association Vice President Phyllis Campano.

Jimerson is direct.

"I always tell people I will say what I think. I don't intend to hurt you with my words, but I am not changing my words. I speak my truth," she says. Those qualities served her well as a member of the SEA bargaining team last fall.

"Just as I encourage the parents who move here from all over the world that it's appropriate to ask what and why questions when it's all about your children, I encourage WEA members to ask what and why questions when it's about anything that can benefit our students or our working conditions," Jimerson says. "We must flex our own voices, sometime, even if it takes us out of our comfort zone."

Jimerson spent years being deeply involved in activities supporting her daughter, Price, at school and in the community.

As Price heads off to college this fall, Jimerson says she intends to become even more involved in SEA and WEA activities.

"It is my passion to advocate for others. I always try to be respectful of others, slow to take offense, and always willing to work through any concern to a positive end."

— Gwendolyn Jimerson, 2016 WEA ESP of the Year

