

we2.0

Washington Education Association  
Volume 51, Number 1 – Winter 2013

## His education: Up to us.

Your voice and action are needed to persuade a reluctant Legislature to fund McCleary, reduce class sizes and restore the COLA.

# UP TO US

*Dear Members,*

The 2013 Representative Assembly will be held next month and our theme is Up to Us. It is so appropriate as we work to ensure our students have access to an amply funded, quality and well-rounded education. It's up to us to reclaim our power at the local level and in Olympia so that every student has the opportunity to thrive and grow into his or potential.

And if you've been watching events in Olympia, you know it's true. If we remain silent, the Senate, with its so-called majority coalition, will be more than happy to continue its attacks on us.

It's up to us to assert ourselves and make sure our collective voices are heard – both fending off the bad bills, but more importantly, standing up for the good ones. It is clear that no one in the Legislature is going to advocate for smaller class sizes or reinstate the COLA unless they hear from us and our allies.

We all need to help. Smaller class sizes and better compensation will not fund themselves. Join together with your fellow educators, family, friends and neighbors to send the message to Olympia: Fund public education and reduce class sizes now. Reinstate the COLA for educators who not only haven't had a raise, but actually have seen pay cuts over the past four years.



Mary Lindquist  
WEA President

Watch and listen. We are running radio ads and increasing our presence in the weeks ahead to light some fires back home and in Olympia. Here are a few things you can do in the meantime:

- **Sign a petition** telling Rodney Tom to fund education and reduce class sizes. See back page for a copy of the petition or visit [www.paramountduty.org](http://www.paramountduty.org).
- Visit [www.ourvoicewashingtonea.org](http://www.ourvoicewashingtonea.org) and **send an action alert** to your legislators.
- **Join the April 1 — No Foolin' Day:** We have the fourth-most-crowded class sizes in the country! Use your social media networks and join OurVoice activities to tell the world how many kids are in your classroom this year — and what you could do if you had fewer students.

As we have seen, if we want to improve our education system in Washington, it's up to us. Let's get to work.

Best, *Mary*

## 'It's up to us' to help set WEA's direction

About 1,000 WEA members selected by peers in their local associations will gather for the WEA Representative Assembly, or WEA RA, April 25-27, at the Meydenbauer Center in Bellevue.

The annual delegate assembly, which has a look and feel similar to a major political convention, provides a forum where WEA members can gather, discuss, debate and vote on policy decisions that set the state Association's goals, priorities and policies for the coming year.

Eight candidates have announced their intent to seek office on this year's ballot for the position of president, vice president and NEA state director. Candidates running for president: Kim Mead, Mike Ragan and Peter Szalai; vice president: Tim Brittell and Stephen Miller; and NEA State Director (terms vary): Shannon Ergun, Bill Lyne and Patrick Nicholson. Nominations remain open until the second business session of the RA.

For more details about RA and the candidates seeking office, visit [www.WashingtonEA.org/RA](http://www.WashingtonEA.org/RA).



### Purrr-fect!

Edmonds Education Association members teamed up with people throughout their community March 2 for a rip-roaring Read Across America celebration, held in honor of Dr. Seuss's birthday. Left: *Thing One and Thing Two*, aka Meadowdale Middle School students Emily Howard and Zoe Wisser, were seen playing and reading around town. As part of the annual event, WEA distributed 100 \$50 grants to members to use to support literacy in their classrooms.

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# Coming this fall ... a new teacher evaluation system

**B**ig changes are coming in the way classroom teachers are evaluated, and the changes are coming fast. Locals with certificated teachers are or will be negotiating new language in contracts before the fall school year.

At the root of the changes is that teachers will move from the satisfactory/unsatisfactory model now in place to a more nuanced four-tiered evaluation. Principals also will be evaluated. The system includes multiple criteria but it results in a single score: 1 (Unsatisfactory), 2 (Basic), 3 (Proficient) or 4 (Distinguished).

The four-tiered evaluation system is required only for classroom teachers, including specialists. Most educational staff associates, such as counselors, non-teaching librarians, and other certificated professionals, are not expected to be subject to the new evaluation criteria.

Like under the current system, two different evaluation formats will be used for educators depending on their years of experience teaching in Washington state, and their past evaluations: comprehensive or focused.

- Comprehensive evaluation — similar to current “long form”: All teachers must have a comprehensive evaluation at least once every four years. Provisional teachers, those on probation, or not receiving a 3 or 4 on a previous evaluation, will use the comprehensive evaluation. It includes eight criteria (See related story).
- Focused evaluation: This is for educators who

have received a 3 or 4 on a previous evaluation; it is based on one or two of the criteria.

The new system will place greater emphasis upon student growth. Information about student learning is embedded in several criteria, and is required as part of our ESEA waiver. It is largely used to trigger additional professional growth and would affect the outcome of the final score only in rare cases. In the event that a teacher receives a low student growth score, he or she must engage in one or more of the following activities:

- Consider other evidence based on classroom, school, district and state-based tools;
- Examine extenuating circumstances possibly including: goal setting, student attendance, and the alignment of curriculum with the assessment;
- Attend monthly conferences with the principal about goals, progress and best practices; or
- Create and implement a professional development plan to address student growth areas.

Measures that will be used to assess student growth are subject to collaborative and local conversations among educators, and they must be bargained. Check in with your local bargaining team to find out how they are pursuing this and other aspects of the new system.

WEA is committed to improving our state’s educator evaluation process so that it serves as a means of professional growth, regardless of where we work, where we are in our careers or what our students need to learn and grow.

## Eight criteria form the basis of the new teacher evaluation system

1. Center instruction on high expectations for student achievement.
2. Demonstrate effective teaching practices.
3. Recognize individual student learning needs and developing strategies to address those needs.
4. Provide clear and intentional focus on subject matter content and curriculum.
5. Foster and manage a safe, positive learning environment.
6. Use multiple student data elements to modify instruction and improve student learning.
7. Communicate and collaborate with parents and school community.
8. Exhibit collaborative and collegial practices focused on improving instructional practice and student learning.



## Moving forward to improve your healthcare benefits

WEA, in partnership with Aon Hewitt, has launched an interactive, easy to use online tool — Your Benefits Resources (YBR) — to help WEA Select plan-eligible members make enrollment decisions in medical, dental and vision plans. No

more paper forms will be accepted; all activity for the plans will be done online 24/7. For those who need translation services, or those who simply prefer to use the telephone, a dedicated customer service center will answer questions and help with enrollment during business hours.

Plan members do not need to do anything now except create their user ID and password. Participants also can explore the site to view their current coverage and plan details. The site also contains a provider list so you can search for specialists near you. For new hires and those with qualified status changes, however, the YBR portal will be your tool to enroll, add or remove dependents, or process other changes. Later in the year, WEA will provide more information to WEA Select plan members to get people thinking about annual enrollment. During annual enrollment, plan eligible participants will be able to use cost comparison and cost estimator tools personalized to reflect their plans.

Your Benefits Resources is available anywhere you have an Internet connection. Access Your Benefits Resources at <http://resources.hewitt.com/wea>. You also can set up your account and ask questions by calling the customer service center at 855-668-5039, 9 a.m.-noon and 1-6 p.m. weekdays.

A quick information guide is available at [www.washingtonea.org/content/docs/comm/guide.pdf](http://www.washingtonea.org/content/docs/comm/guide.pdf).



Kris McBride, Garfield High's academic dean and test coordinator, tells the crowd gathered at a Jan. 23 Scrap the MAP rally in Seattle that educators are taking a stand on "an unnecessary expense and drain on our very few and precious resources." Students, she says, are not benefitting from the test. The rally, followed by several other gatherings, raised the serious concern about the ineffective, irrelevant test.



# The fuss about MAP

In December 2012, the faculty at Garfield High School voted unanimously to refuse to administer a standardized test given to students in Seattle and in several other school districts in the Northwest and across the country. It's not the first time an educator has stood up because he or she thought they were being asked to do something detrimental to students. This decision did not come quickly or without discussion.

"Those of us who give this test have talked about it for several years," explains Mallory Clarke, Garfield's reading specialist. "When we heard that district representatives themselves reported that the margin of error for this test is greater than an individual student's expected score increase, we were appalled!"

The decision made national news, however, for two reasons: it is the first time an entire faculty refused to give a district-mandated test and it happened at Garfield High School, a well-known and top-ranked high school in the state and nation.

Education historian and author Diane Ravitch says she considers the Garfield faculty champions of education for "their courage, their integrity and their intelligence." Other schools in Seattle joined the boycott — educators at Ballard and Sealth high

schools, Salmon Bay and Orca K-8 to name a few.

The Measure of Academic Progress (MAP) of reading and mathematics is a computerized assessment that Seattle students are given two to three times a year. The test starts at what is considered "grade-level" content. According to the Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA), the test responds to the students, adjusting up or down in

difficulty depending on previous answers. While the test is intended to be formative (or diagnostic), many teachers say the information is nearly impossible to use since it does not ever include what questions the student answered.

Seattle students currently begin taking the MAP in kindergarten. If the test is administered the way NWEA suggests, a student will have taken the test 27 times by the end of his or her freshman year in



Seattle's Garfield teachers, including Stephanie Taylor, thanked supporters at the Feb. 6 National Day of Action. Taylor read a letter of support to Garfield colleagues from actor Matt Damon and his mother, early childhood educator Nancy Carlsson-Paige.

high school. The test can take up to two hours so six hours a year for 10 years — or 60 hours of lost instructional time for each student — while they take the test. Additionally, as Clarke says, the test yields sporadic results and closes down libraries where schools have their computer labs limiting access to students who need to use computers for school projects.

### Outcry for a better test

Garfield teachers voted to boycott the MAP because they felt it was a waste of time and money. Students interviewed in both elementary and secondary schools say they and many of their peers don't take the test seriously. Many students simply "click through" so they can finish quickly. There is talk about evaluating teachers based on MAP results even though NWEA has said in their materials that the MAP ought not to be used for teacher evaluation.

Once the boycott began and other schools joined in, Seattle Public Schools Superintendent Jose Banda sent out an edict telling teachers they would lose two weeks of pay if they did not administer the tests. He also gave a deadline for when tests had to be administered at Garfield.

Garfield's Academic Dean and Testing Coordinator Kris McBride speaks highly of Garfield administrators because they worked with Seattle Education Association members to make sure they met deadlines without requiring the teachers to administer the test. She says the unity between teachers, other faculty, administrators, parents and students is what revitalized her during stressful times.

### Test boycott, frustration draws growing support

Within 24 hours of hearing that Garfield students would be given the MAP, more than 300 parents opted their freshmen (the only grade required to take the test) out, and many more

students opted themselves out by refusing to take the test or by clicking through so quickly that the tests were disqualified.

Other administrators in other schools followed suit so SEA members did not have to deal with sanctions.

More than 500 students opted out of spring tests last year in Snohomish. A parent group called We Support Schools Snohomish researched the wide array of tests their children were being asked

to take and, basically, came to the same conclusion as Garfield — while in-class testing and reasonable valid tests are a useful tool for teachers, layer upon layer of standardized tests are a waste of time, money and valuable instructional time. The group is growing and is organizing to opt their students out of tests again this spring.

In January the group also introduced a bill on testing transparency in Olympia. They asked that parents across the state be told how many standardized tests each student is given as well as the cost of the tests and whether they can opt out the student without individual consequences. The legislation appears to have stalled, but the concept could resurface as part of another bill.

Garfield staff continue to receive notes, photos, cards and emails in support from educators, parents and students around the country. Actor Matt Damon sent a letter of support. Ravitch offered to raise money to help if any educator lost a penny of pay.

This story is not over. Seattle students in kindergarten through ninth grade are "required" to take the MAP once more this spring. Garfield teachers will not back down.

"We believe the negative aspects of the MAP test so outweigh the positive ones that we are willing to take this step," SEA member and language arts teacher Adam Gish says. Stay tuned.



*Garfield High School Student Body President Obadiah Terry says students at the Seattle school share overwhelming support for their teachers taking a stand against the test.*

*Below, left to right: Shedrick Johnson, a freshman at Garfield, says he can't afford to waste his time taking a test that doesn't have any bearing on his high school career. Community members, parents, students and others displayed posters and signs encouraging the district to get rid of the MAP. The attention attracted national media attention. Garfield High PTSA President Phil Sherburne encouraged other parents to opt their students out of taking the test, calling the MAP a "distraction."*



# Don't let the Legislature ignore its PARAMOUNT DUTY

In Olympia, there's a battle brewing between two competing visions for Washington's K-12 public schools ...  
*Educators and parents who believe all children everywhere deserve a quality education and that we should keep the promises we've already made to our kids — like reducing overcrowded class sizes.*

vs.

*Non-educators in the state Senate promoting a corporate "reform" agenda that lowballs school funding, blames teachers and ignores both the state Constitution and the Supreme Court's McCleary decision.*

**M**aria Ocampo stood in downtown Bellevue on a recent Saturday morning, waving a sign with a message directed at state Sen. Rodney Tom.

"My message is smaller class sizes for quality education," said Ocampo, who teaches social studies in Spanish. "I have a class of 35 students — sixth graders! I just can't be with all my students the way I need to. I don't have the time to get to all of them."

Next to Ocampo, visual arts teacher Candice Rutherford waved her own sign and said, "I can do more and students can experience more with smaller class sizes. The largest class I have had this year is 36. When that happens, they don't get as much from me."

Ocampo and Rutherford, both Bellevue teachers, were joined by another 170 WEA members and supporters March 9. Most of them went door to door and talked with Tom's constituents about his failure to increase school funding or reduce class sizes — despite his previous promises to do both.

As state Senate majority caucus leader, Tom controls the Senate. He and a cadre of other senators have been promoting a slate of bad education bills that do nothing to increase K-12 funding as the Supreme Court ordered in its 2012 McCleary decision.

Simply put: Tom and his political cronies are failing to fulfill their constitutional paramount duty to our children.

Tom and senators such as Senate education committee Chairman Steve Litzow, Senate budget committee Chairman Andy Hill and Sen. Steve

Hobbs all sponsored a bill that attacks due process, collective bargaining rights and job security. The bill, SB 5242, has passed the Senate and is in the House.

It essentially allows school districts to fire teachers for almost any reason -- regardless of a teacher's job performance.

Tom and others deceptively label the bill "mutual consent," when it's anything but. In reality, it tramples local collective bargaining and eliminates any guarantee of fairness and objectivity around staffing decisions.

SB 5242 is just one of several misguided Senate bills that blame and attack teachers instead of increasing K-12 school funding. Other proposals include eliminating defined benefit pensions for public employees, linking 50 percent of a teacher's evaluation to student achievement and cutting locally negotiated teacher pay.

The regular legislative session ends April 28, and a special session is possible. It's also likely that, like last year, Tom and other senators

will refuse to pass a budget unless the Legislature passes one of their priority bills — such as SB 5242.

Whether they succeed depends largely on whether WEA members get involved in the legislative process in the next few weeks. There's a lot at stake: Will the Legislature fund smaller class sizes? Or will we lose due process and the right to negotiate fair staffing procedures?

As Franklin Pierce teacher Julie Bourke puts it: "When the time comes, what are *you* willing to do?"

For the latest information about what's happening in Olympia, visit [www.OurVoiceWashingtonEA.org](http://www.OurVoiceWashingtonEA.org).



*Bellevue educators Debby Nissen and Jayesh Rao went door to door in Sen. Rodney Tom's legislative district to talk with pro-education voters about Tom's refusal to increase school funding and his failure to reduce overcrowded class sizes.*

## House passes bargaining bill

The state House has passed one of WEA's priority bills. House Bill 1348 gives community and technical college faculty members the right to negotiate locally funded salary step increases. Now the bill is in the Senate.



Educators from Bellingham to Tacoma stood on all four corners of the busiest intersection in downtown Bellevue, holding signs that read, "Tell Rodney Tom: Every child deserves a quality education!" The WEA Labor Chorus performed outside Tom's favorite coffee shop and later at a prominent Bellevue shopping mall.

## Legislators must raise educator salaries

It's time for lawmakers to increase educator salaries.

In recent years, the Legislature has cut 1.9 percent in salary funding, eliminated three learning improvement days for teachers and suspended voter-approved cost-of-living adjustments. Add in higher out-of-pocket insurance premium costs, and many educators are earning and taking home less money.

The Legislature's own recommendations call for dramatically increasing educator salaries. Yet most legislators haven't even seen the Compensation Technical Work Group's report.

Legislators need to hear from educators about the need to increase compensation. If educator salaries fall further behind as the economy improves, it will be more difficult to attract and keep the best school employees for our students. Read the salary recommendations at [www.OurVoiceWashingtonEA.org](http://www.OurVoiceWashingtonEA.org).

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# Reducing class sizes — it's up to us!

"The fight isn't over until you win." So says author Robin Hobb.

WEA members thought we won big last year when the Supreme Court so stridently ruled that the state has failed in its paramount duty to amply fund public education. And we did. Having the hearts and minds of the court, not to mention the state's constitution, behind us is powerful.

Though, evidently, not powerful enough to move the Legislature. The very same lawmakers who for years have avoided funding schools continue to create distractions in hopes of looking like they are doing something even when they are not. Just look at the so-called education reforms passed out of the Senate in early March.

Lawmakers continually lowball the amount of money needed to meet the standards defined in the McCleary case. It is up to us to carry the message — not just to Olympia, but to our family, friends and neighbors — to increase everyone's interest in funding education and reducing class sizes.

Here is some information we hope you will find useful.

- Washington remains at the back of the pack, with the fourth-worst class sizes in the country.
- Our public schools have lost more than 3,500 public school employees since 2008-09 due to state budget cuts. At the same time enrollment has increased by almost 13,000 students.
- Washington ranks 43rd in the nation on per-student spending.
- Smaller class sizes lead to lifelong benefits. Students are more likely to graduate from high school, attend college, own homes, have retirement savings, etc. (*STAR study analysis by Chetty, et al, 2011*)
- Student and teacher interaction improves, which supports learning and classroom engagement for all kids, and even more so for disadvantaged students. (*Blatchford, Basset and Brown, 2008*)
- Reducing K-2 class sizes consistently increases academic test scores. (*Washington State Institute for Public Policy 2007*)
- For every dollar you spend on reducing class sizes in lower grades, you get at least a \$1.40 back in benefits. (*Washington State Institute for Public Policy 2007*)

If class sizes don't matter, why do some of Washington's most elite private schools boast teacher-student ratios as low as 6:1? Senate Majority Caucus Leader Rodney Tom sends his kid to a private school with class size ratios about 8:1. If it's good enough for his kid, why not yours?

We can't sit idly by or the Supreme Court's validation of education as the state's paramount duty will be a hollow victory. We haven't won yet, but we can.

## More reform?

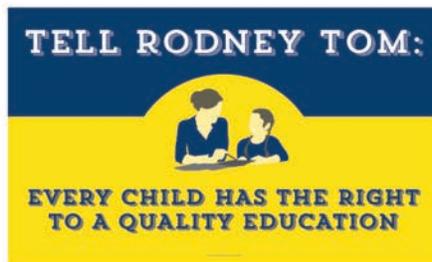
Since 2008, the Legislature has passed 49 different bills on education reform, including at least:

- 8** on testing and assessment
- 3** regarding technology or online learning
- 4** about special education
- 3** about the achievement gap
- 3** about evaluation (*TPEP implementation remains unfunded*)

And two comprehensive reform bills — House Bills 2262 and 2776 — which formed the basis of the state's case opposing McCleary.

**Enough is enough! Fund public education and smaller class sizes now.**





## Petition to Sen. Rodney Tom Fund our kids' education and reduce class sizes

*Our kids have a constitutional right to a good education. Yet Washington has the fourth-most-overcrowded classrooms in the country, which makes it much harder for teachers to teach and for students to learn. To give our kids the quality education they deserve, we must invest in smaller class sizes.*

State Senate Majority Caucus Leader Rodney Tom has ignored his constitutional paramount duty to fully fund our K-12 public schools – and Washington's students are paying the price.

Sen. Tom's leadership role means he should be leading efforts to invest in smaller class sizes – which we know will make a difference for our kids. Instead, Sen. Tom is promoting misguided education bills that do nothing to reduce overcrowded class sizes.

Sen. Tom and the Legislature have been ordered by the Washington Supreme Court to dramatically increase funding for public education by 2018. The Legislature adjourns in April, and now is the time to fully fund our public schools as the Court has ordered.

We, the undersigned parents, educators, voters and students, demand Senate Majority Caucus Leader Sen. Tom and other members of the Washington state Senate do the right thing for kids across Washington – increase funding for our public schools so our children receive the education and small class sizes they deserve.

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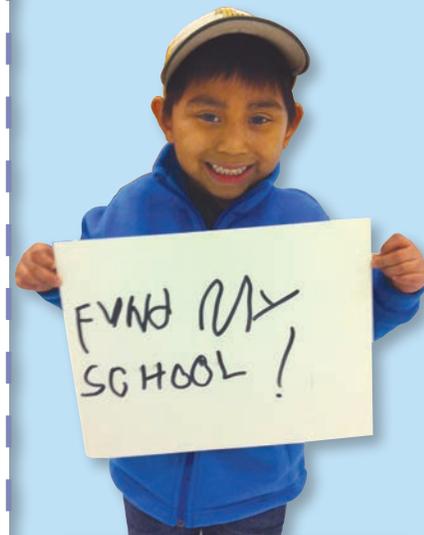
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Please clip  
this petition,  
collect signatures,  
and **mail** to the  
WEA Governmental  
Relations Office,  
724 Columbia St. NW, Suite  
220, Olympia, WA 98501,  
**by April 3.**