



From Zillah to the White House ...
National teacher honor gives Jeff Charbonneau
a platform for excellence

Looking ahead ...

I am not one for looking back over my shoulder. By nature, I am an optimist, the kind who sees the opportunities ahead, so it is hard for me to think back over my last six years as WEA president, and even harder to reflect on the 42 years I have spent in public education. But big transition points — graduations, marriages, retirements — have a way of demanding a degree of reflection.

I leave WEA leadership at the conclusion of the NEA RA in early July, and I am getting accustomed to people asking me what I will do next and of what achievement I am most proud. As I think back, several milestones stand out:



Mary Lindquist
WEA President

- Passing the Simple Majority Referendum, which changed the state's constitution and allowed more financial security for our students and schools. Think where we would have been over the last five years and the economic downturn had we not been successful in 2007!
- Challenging the state for its failure to live up to the state constitution and amply fund our schools. We're not finished with that effort, but we have made amazing progress because our members were willing to take the first step. No one else could have done what we did.
- Increasing the number of National Board Certificated Teachers. About 13 percent of our teaching force now holds that honor. We have set a national standard with our Jump Start program for supporting and encouraging NBCT candidates.
- The amazing work our SIG schools have achieved. Our SIG schools have outperformed every other state's SIG schools and shown we are the ones who have the key to improving schools in our most challenging communities.

We have been buffeted by the worst recession in our lifetimes and we have managed — when others

couldn't — through our collective efforts to hold onto our core rights: collective bargaining, ability to join a union, political activism. We have made a difference in election after election, ensuring our state's government stayed in the hands of people who respected our rights, even if they couldn't or didn't always fund our schools appropriately.

I do remember my first year of teaching. It was simpler then. And, more difficult. No standards. No adequate yearly progress. Like many first-year teachers, I felt overwhelmed by the needs of my students and my barely emerging skills as a teacher. So I felt relieved when near the end of the year the vice principal, whose job it was to

evaluate me, stopped me in the hall and said, "Mary, you're doing a good job, I know. I don't need to come observe you, do I?" Only later did I realize he had violated the law and our contract. Only later did I realize how much I had been denied mentoring, support, and opportunities for professional growth.

Since 1971, we've come a long way in what we know about how students learn and in how professional development and support for teachers can make in terms of student success. We've learned it takes a team — teachers, education support professionals and parents — to prepare students for success. And we've confronted the reality that we need to be

better, particularly in our neediest communities, to support every child's success. It has become too clear that doors to a quality and affordable higher education are closing.

Clearly our struggles are not over. We must continue to advocate for our schools, our students and our colleagues. I have confidence the new WEA leadership team will bring fresh energy to this fight. With your continued support and hard work, the Washington Education Association will continue to lead the way. It has been an honor to serve as your president.

Mary

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contents

- 3 Representative Assembly
- 4 National Teacher of the Year
- 6 ESP of the Year
- 8 Message to Olympia





Class size, funding top issues at 2013 WEA Representative Assembly

The 2013 WEA Representative Assembly (RA) is a wrap. More than 1,200 members from across the state converged in Bellevue last month to identify key issues to tackle in the upcoming year. In addition to the business of the association (see *FOCUS*, page 7), highlights included an uplifting presentation from Tom Ahearne, the NEWS attorney representing the Association in the McCleary case. Ahearn showed how properly funding education for every child in our state is the civil rights issue of our day, akin to integration of public schools over 50 years ago. He made striking parallels between the quotes and comments of elected officials and news media for both issues, at once both frightening and unoriginal in their defense of the status quo. He made the case that it is up to us as educators to hold the Legislature accountable for funding our schools.

Along those lines, delegates traveled to Olympia to rally for class size and cost-of-living adjustments. The Capitol steps turned into a sea of red for a few hours on April 27. They passed a key business item directing WEA to consider possible ballot initiatives for funding COLAs and

smaller class sizes. Government relations staff is investigating the feasibility and possible timing for such action, given the resistance to fund these by our current Legislature. Expect to see more information in June.

The RA was the last for President Mary Lindquist and Vice President Mike Ragan, both of whom have fulfilled three terms in office, the most allowed under term limits. Meeghan Black, from KING 5 and a former student of Lindquist's, emceed a tribute to Lindquist that was fashioned after a baseball game. For those of you who don't know, Lindquist is a devoted Mariners fan. There were nine guests —

See RA, page 7



WEA's Representative Assembly offers elected delegates and their successors the chance to shape WEA policy for the upcoming year. Any WEA member can offer up an item for discussion. The annual meeting also gives members the chance to hear from colleagues including elected officers who represent WEA in Washington and in Washington D.C. at the National Education Association.





“Across the country we are focusing so much on what we’re doing ‘wrong’ that we’re forgetting to lift each other up on what we are doing right. That’s my platform for education: Let’s start talking about what’s going on that’s right in education.”

— Jeff Charbonneau,
Zillah High science teacher

A national treasure

Zillah’s Jeff Charbonneau, 2013 National Teacher of the Year, embodies teaching’s passion and innovative spirit

The new National Teacher of the Year says he often gets asked who he is, where he’s from and what he teaches.

His name is Jeff Charbonneau. And he’s from Zillah, just east of Yakima.

“The harder question is, ‘What do I teach?’” Charbonneau says. “If it’s just somebody on the plane and I feel like sleeping, then I say, ‘Chemistry, physics and engineering. ... But that’s not what I teach:

“I teach students. ... I teach young ladies to have confidence in science and career fields. I teach young men to have the same thing. ... It’s not about a classroom. It’s about confidence. It’s about showing students that they can, and do, have the abilities to succeed in life.”

Charbonneau says he teaches courage. And

self-sufficiency. And citizenship. And overcoming obstacles large and small.



Zillah High School science teacher Jeff Charbonneau was named 2013 National Teacher of the Year and recognized by President Barack Obama at the White House in April. Charbonneau is the fourth Washington teacher to earn the honor since the Council of Chief State School Officers’ contest began in 1952.

“I do not teach chemistry, physics and engineering. I teach something far greater than that. I teach in public schools, to students of all backgrounds, of all abilities, to be successful, absolutely no matter the circumstance. And you do it, too,” he tells more than 1,200 WEA members last month in Bellevue.

Charbonneau is Washington’s 2013 Teacher of the Year, and was announced as the national recipient on April 22.

“I do take great pride in winning the National Teacher of the Year award — but it is pride in knowing that I am just a representative sample of the quality of educators in our state and nation,” Charbonneau notes. “There are so many

outstanding educators in my school, district, region and state. With each of us fulfilling our roles to the best of our abilities, we have created a positive learning environment that helps students succeed."

Charbonneau was recognized for his honor by President Barack Obama in a private meeting in the Oval Office and in a Rose Garden ceremony.

"Meeting the President was very surreal!" Charbonneau says. "President Obama was extremely welcoming and did his best to make myself and my family feel very comfortable. I know it is odd to say about the President of the United States, but he really gave the impression of being a 'regular guy.' I say that with great respect. It was so humbling to be treated so kindly by someone in his position."

In his remarks, Obama praised Charbonneau for helping students realize their unlimited potential, helping spark interest in a vigorous Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics program at the rural 400-student high school, and his dedication to providing opportunities for students such as robotics, yearbook, drama and an outdoors club.

"What's true for Jeff is true for every educator standing behind me," Obama tells the audience. "They understand that their job is more than teaching subjects like reading or chemistry. They're not just filling blackboards with numbers and diagrams. In classrooms across America, they're teaching things like character and compassion and resilience and imagination. They're filling young minds with virtues and values, and teaching our kids how to cooperate and overcome obstacles."

Relationships are key

Charbonneau emphasizes the key to helping students learn is to see them as individuals, to recognize their hopes, dreams, ambitions and challenges.

"Content is secondary," he says. "Connect with your students — learn about them as individuals who should be celebrated for their

similarities and their differences. Be genuine in your interest in their backgrounds and utilize the information you learn about them in your lessons, as appropriate, to increase the relevance and impact of those lessons.

"Do more, expect more. Have high expectations for what your students can do — in fact set the bar higher than even you expect them to reach. Then watch them reach the bar anyway," he says. "The surprising thing about making content secondary, and relationships first, is that you will be able to teach to a much greater depth, with more rigor than you ever expected. So challenge your students and challenge yourself to continue to improve every single day."

Charbonneau notes he is not alone, that there are millions of dedicated, hard-working educators in the U.S. So many in fact, he likens public education to Mount Rainier.

"How many don't even see it anymore? It blends into the background," he says. "Public education is an amazing, beautiful entity that has been so beautiful for so long that we forget just how beautiful it is. We are doing so much right, and so much right, together."

Be inspired: Listen to Jeff Charbonneau's uplifting and entertaining address to WEA Rep Assembly members, at YouTube.com/WashingtonEA, or hear more in a video from his classroom, at WashingtonEA.org/Charbonneau

"I teach quantum mechanics (and) universal gravitational acceleration," Charbonneau says. "You can't say 'Nerd' much better than that!" Charbonneau rounds out his school life as assistant drama director, yearbook advisor, and Zillah Education Association co-president.



Above: "In order to have a great teaching environment, you have to be an advocate," Charbonneau says. "You have to advocate for the proper funding, for the proper prep times, for the proper extended learning days. You have to be an advocate for those things."

'A calming force' for students and education support members

Spokane's Debby Chandler is the 2013 WEA Education Support Professional of the Year



Debby Chandler, WEA's 2013 Education Support Professional of the Year, is all business when it comes to her work, whether it's at Rogers High School where she is the attendance secretary and parent community specialist, or when she's leading the charge for respect and equitable wages for her ESP colleagues.

She heads the statewide team for education support professionals, she's vice president of the Spokane EA, and now she is WEA's 2013 ESP of the Year.

It's hard not to know or know of Debby Chandler.

She has greeted generations of students in her 20 years at Rogers High School in Spokane; taken hundreds of thousands of calls; administered first aid; and offered up smiles to more than a few students — and colleagues — who've just needed someone to listen. Last year, she added another hat to her school attendance secretary job as the school's parent community specialist. Rogers is one of 27 schools in Washington to receive the federal School Improvement Grant to turn the school around academically. One of the strategies Rogers is using to boost student achievement and raise student aspirations and success levels is to engage students with people hired to work one-on-one with students. In her additional role, Chandler works on outreach and checks in with school parents.

"She has a heart bigger than the state of Texas," Rogers High School Principal Lori Wyborney says. "She cares about everybody, from the staff to the students, to the parents, to the community. "The biggest thing is the students can totally trust her, and in communities where you have a lot of trauma, a lot of poverty, trust is a big deal."

Assistant principal Ivan Corley calls Chandler "a calming force."

"It doesn't matter who you are, what gender, what ethnicity you are, what grade level you are at, what your need is, Debby is going to work just as hard for any of those types of kids," says Corley, "which is quadruple as important as all the other things we do in this building. When we say we are here to educate the kids, we also have to provide the social and emotional support and she's huge for us in that area."

Chandler takes her jobs seriously. She takes her role as an education support professional even more so.

She serves on numerous leadership committees and leads WEA's ESP Action Coordinating Team (ACT), which is the steering committee comprised of ESP leaders elected from all councils. Every year ACT sponsors two regional conferences geared for support professionals' needs and interests. ESP members tutor students, deliver them safely to school and return them home again, feed them and offer support and reassurance when things go wrong. And yet they hold jobs that, even when working full time, barely pay the bills.

"Debby is a fighter. She has passion. She has love. And she builds relationships," says Jenny Rose, president of Spokane Education Association. "Any type of organizing, Debby is always right there."

"She encourages others to sign up for leadership teams and the values ingrained is that everyone should be treated equally, whether you're ESP or certificated, that you should be working toward a living wage, that you shouldn't be holding down two jobs if you have a job with the school district."

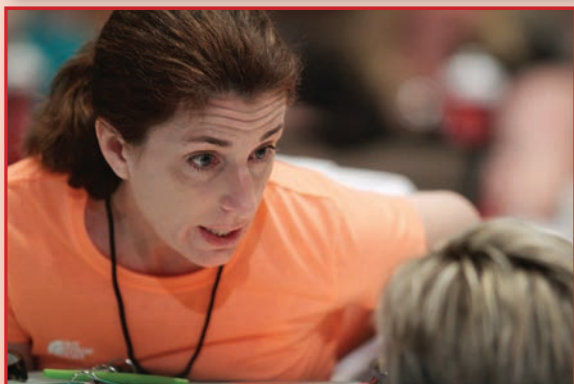
Like many of her ESP colleagues, Chandler holds a second job to help make ends meet. She credits the ESP Living Wage campaign and the Organizing for Power trainings as the momentum behind bringing the Association's ESPs together. She points often to a lesson learned about respecting self-worth for ESPs.

"You're not just a secretary. You're not just a paraeducator. You're not just a custodian," she recalls. "You *are* ESP and you have every right to stand up and demand the respect that you deserve for what you do for schools and for kids every day, so don't ever, *ever* let anybody tell you you're 'just a' anything. ... It's about time you stand up and demand the respect that you deserve."

Rose says Chandler is why Spokane's local is strong and its support professionals active.

"If you want to meet and see someone with a true passion for our union values, then you need to get to know Debby," she says, "and she's very easy to get to know."

Learn more about Debby Chandler in a video at www.WashingtonEA.org/ESPoY



More than 1,000 delegates from across the state debate and discuss new business items at the 2013 WEA RA in Bellevue. From top to bottom: Neva Luke, WEA-Retired; Jesse Hagopian, Seattle EA; and Kathy Sadler, Wenatchee EA

RA, continued from page 3

one speaker from each inning of Lindquist's life and professional career. Students, colleagues and elected officials including former Gov. Gregoire toasted and roasted Lindquist's achievements. Yet perhaps the most touching came from her 12-year-old niece, Harriet Siquiland, who, fighting back tears of admiration for her aunt, promised to follow in her footsteps to become a teacher and union leader when she grows up.

Speaking of new leaders, Jeff Charbonneau, just off the plane from Washington D.C. where he was named the national Teacher of the Year, gave a rousing speech, invoking joy, courage, inspiration and a love of learning and leading that left delegates awed and inspired.

(Read about Jeff Charbonneau on page 4)

Video highlights from the 2013 WEA RA are available online at www.washingtonea.org and on WEA's YouTube channel at www.YouTube.com/WashingtonEA.

New WEA officers

Delegates at the 2013 WEA Representative Assembly elected a new president, vice president and two NEA state directors.

Everett teacher Kim Mead was elected president, and Bellevue teacher Stephen Miller was elected vice president. Mead and Miller will take office in July and will serve two-year terms. Current WEA President Mary Lindquist and Vice President Mike Ragan are wrapping up their third two-year terms, the most allowed under WEA rules.

Bill Lyne, an English professor at Western Washington University and president of the United Faculty of Washington State, will serve a three-year term as NEA State Director. Patrick Nicholson, head custodian at Brownsville Elementary in Silverdale, chairman of the WEA Indoor Environmental Quality Work Team, and former state and national Education Support Professional of the Year, will serve for one year.

WEA's focus in 2013-14

Delegates considered, debated and voted on 34 New Business Items last month. Of those, 17 passed, 2 were referred to committee, 10 failed and 5 were withdrawn. Here are a few of the key items:

- Shaping Strong, Student-Centered Public Education**
WEA provides leadership, strategic thinking and focus regarding high-quality public education. This includes providing opportunities to educate and organize leaders, member and staff around accountability, evaluation, Common Core standards and assessments, and other education issues; collecting and critically examining education research; working with external partners; and promoting our profession by advocating for strong, inclusive, student-centered practices that draw from the expertise of WEA members.
- Initiative to Voters**
WEA explores pursuing an initiative to the voters to lower class size and/or enhances educator compensation, with a preliminary report to the WEA Board of Directors in June.
- Eastern Washington Mini-Summer University**
WEA provides up to \$10,000 in a grant to help plan and host a Mini-Summer University in the greater Spokane area. The first year would be 2014.
- Support the MAP Test Boycott**
WEA RA supports the boycott of the Measure of Academic Progress (MAP) test.

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Message to Olympia: Fund COLAs and smaller class sizes

WEA members believe all children deserve a quality public education, no matter where they live and regardless of their background — which is why we're calling on the Legislature to fund smaller class sizes and educator COLAs.

Legislators have until June 30 to write and pass a state operating budget, since that's when the state fiscal year ends. The Senate and the House have competing budget plans that are far apart on many issues, including revenue and school funding.

Overall, the House has proposed spending substantially more on K-12 education, but it's still less than what is needed to comply with the state Supreme Court's McCleary decision.

No one knows what will be in the final budget or when it will pass.

WEA members continue to advocate for smaller class sizes and educator cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs), both of which are required under current law. Washington's students are packed into the fourth-most-overcrowded classrooms in the country, and educators will go six years without a state-funded COLA unless lawmakers restore it in this budget.

Instead of focusing on reducing class sizes, some state senators continue to demand the

passage of Senate Bill 5242, which attacks due process, collective bargaining and basic fairness. The bill would essentially allow principals or school administrators to transfer and then fire teachers for any reason, regardless of their job performance or qualifications. Instead of an objective, fair process determined locally, SB 5242 would force all districts in the state to follow the same staffing rules. Besides WEA, the professional organizations for principals, school boards and superintendents all oppose SB 5242. Yet big business, *The Seattle Times* and other non-educators continue to push for it.

SB 5242 isn't the only bad Senate bill. SB 5905 could eliminate employer-provided health care for educators who work between 20 and 30 hours a week and force them into a state-run system. SB 5901 would freeze locally bargained TRI pay, establish yet another compensation study (without education professionals represented), set up an A-F grading system for schools and link pay to school grades. WEA members continue to fight these bad policy bills and are urging the Legislature to focus on what really matters to students.

For example, WEA members Michael Ruiz and Pam Kruse recently joined Gov. Jay Inslee at a news conference focused on raising revenue and complying with the McCleary decision.

"While the Legislature debates the budget, our state's students are packed into the fourth-most-overcrowded classrooms in the entire country," Kruse told the media. "As a teacher, I can provide my students more personal attention when I have a smaller class size."

Visit www.OurVoiceWashingtonEA.org to learn more about the issues and to take action.



Eric Emans, Central Kitsap EA, Amy Hepburn, Highline EA, and other members of the WEA Chorus lead WEA members in song and solidarity on the Capitol steps in Olympia. Last month WEA RA delegates urged legislators to reduce class size and provide cost-of-living adjustments for school employees.