

# we2.0

Washington Education Association  
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**It's time for a COLA**  
It's the fair thing.



# Time for a COLA, and a few other things.

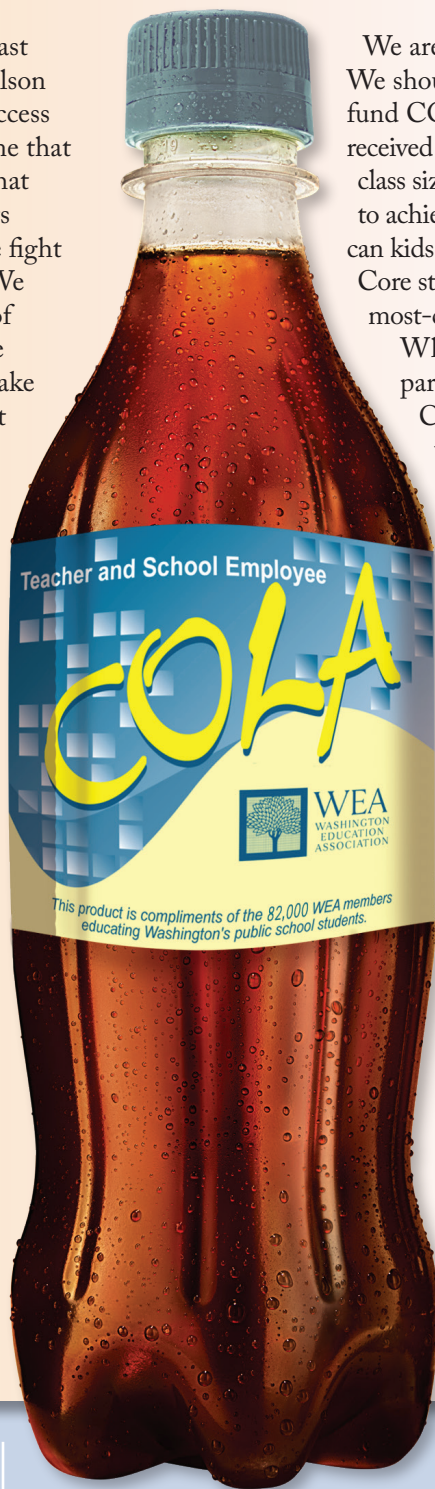
The world lost a great man last month with the passing of Nelson Mandela. His story — and success in changing the world — is one that reflects the absolute best of what

we try to do, as educators and union members. We fight for what we believe in. We hold high expectations of others and ourselves. We recognize that people make mistakes and we use that information to correct course. We hold our students and ourselves accountable for achieving our best, especially when the effort is hard.

Well folks, the effort is hard. We need each and every one of us to be successful in achieving both high aspirations and fundamental needs. Though it's been two years since the state Supreme Court directed the Legislature to meet their paramount duty and amply fund public education, lawmakers are still punting. Sen. Rodney Tom had the gall to say, "We should never be having a conversation about new funding for education."



Kim Mead  
WEA President



We are here to tell him he is flat out wrong. We should fund public education; we should fund COLAs for educators who have not received them in five years; and we should reduce class sizes to give our students a fighting chance to achieve all the demands we put on them. How can kids perform well with the new Common Core standards when they are sitting in the 47th most-crowded classrooms in the country?

When the great recession hit, we did our part. We accepted the suspension of the COLA. We knew people everywhere were suffering. Then one, two, three years passed. Prices went up. Our paychecks didn't. Four then five years, still no COLA. I hear from many of you every day, and I know you are mad. Restoring the legally-required, voter-approved COLA is the fair thing to do, and to achieve it, we have to stand up for ourselves, together, and tell the Legislature it is time. Time for a COLA. Time for smaller class sizes. And time for our elected representatives to step up to their obligations to the students and the future of our state.

We need every educator voice to join us this legislative session, to tell the Legislature that we are holding them accountable for achieving their best, even when it is hard. And we are willing to fight for it.

Visit [www.OurVoiceWashingtonEA.org](http://www.OurVoiceWashingtonEA.org) to find out how you can join in the fight.

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Bellingham EA's Brian Porteous says one way to help with Common Core is by providing genuine time for sharing new strategies, developing a common language and learning from one another.







# College faculty strike highlights bargaining, politics

The faculty strike at Bellingham Technical College in late September highlighted the connection between local bargaining and politics — and how both affect the lives of educators in very big ways.

BTC instructors struck for six days over three main issues:

- five years without a pay raise or cost-of-living adjustment
- increased workloads
- employee surveillance by the administration

While a stubborn and disrespectful college administration refused to compromise at the bargaining table, legislative politics were at play as well. The Legislature's suspension of voter-approved COLAs for five years straight, along with legislative restrictions on faculty bargaining rights, meant increased pressure for a locally negotiated raise. Yet, thanks in part to WEA lobbying efforts, for the first time in several years the college had money available to raise salaries — something key legislators noted in a letter to the administration.

And when the administration dragged faculty

members to court in an unsuccessful attempt to stop them from striking, language in the state's collective bargaining laws came into play as well.



*Faculty at Bellingham Technical College went on strike six days this fall, primarily over pay and workload. Classified staffers at the college joined them on the picket lines.*

In the end, striking faculty members won pay increases, workload relief and a renewed sense of union solidarity and strength. The classified employees at BTC were negotiating at the same time, and with the same lack of progress. The support employees honored faculty picket lines and picketed side-by-side with their faculty colleagues throughout the strike. Once the strike ended and classes started, WEA locals generously donated to a special fund so support employees wouldn't lose money or personal leave for the lost days.

Union leaders from both units said their new contracts were a first step toward dramatically changing the relationship between college employees and the administration.

"We're serious about wanting to improve our college," said Don Anderson, who served on the faculty bargaining team.

It was the first local higher education faculty strike in Washington since 1988.

*Striking WEA members from Bellingham Technical College drew strong public support when they picketed in downtown Bellingham in September.*







# Common Core Collaboration

*In Bellingham, every public school teacher will receive 52 hours of professional development this school year and all of it will be during the school day. At Shuksan Middle School, math teachers recently met to plan and deliver lessons that teach content and language to ensure that all students acquire the academic language needed to succeed.*

While people around the country bicker about Common Core State Standards, educators are figuring out ways to implement changes and align curriculum. Walk into a small classroom at Shuksan Middle School in Bellingham on any given day and you will, likely, find two or three teachers discussing what they are doing with students and spending time collaborating with Washington 2014 Teacher of the Year Katie Brown who says one thing is certain: If we are going to be effective with implementing new plans like Common Core, teachers and other educators must have time to explore ideas, share strategies, talk with one another and receive meaningful professional development during the school day.

"These kinds of opportunities make it feel more do-able," Shuksan seventh-grade math teacher Peggy Stephens says. "We've really started thinking differently about how to teach students." Stephens is meeting with two other math teachers and

Brown as they slowly and methodically work their way through aligning what they are already doing in math with what is expected in the Common Core State Standards (CCSS).

"There has to be a learning curve just like when we teach our students something new," Brown says. "There has to be time for people to learn a whole new system and value it. We would never assess our students before they had an appropriate amount of time to master the material. Why would we do that to teachers?"

Brown, an English Language Learner (ELL) specialist, says one main focus of her job is to coach teachers in planning and delivering lessons that teach content and language to ensure that all students acquire the academic language needed to succeed.

"The Common Core happens to have the same objectives in mind, so

it aligns nicely," Brown says.

Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP), which is used at Shuksan and across Bellingham secondary schools, is a checklist for

***'There has to be time for people to learn a whole new system and value it. We would never assess our students before they had an appropriate amount of time to master the material. Why would we do that to teachers?'***

*— Katie Brown*



planning and developing lessons so all students — not just ELL — can acquire what they need. Every student in the class is learning a language. They're all learning the language of science; the language of math; the language of social studies.

"Even though we are ELL specialists," she says, "we see *all* of our students as language learners — they all have to use words like justify, identify, compare — all of those words we use in school to talk about content. Sheltered Instruction is teaching content with language concurrently so students are acquiring both. That's excellent for all students but essential for ELL students and part of my job is to provide all of the professional development around SIOP."

A couple of years ago, says Brown, SIOP was a new language to talk about teaching and learning. While there was initial three-day training for educators, the real support came with practice, continuous follow-up and professional development.

"When she started," science teacher Nathanael Kepler says, "if she implemented it as 'here's SIOP — go do it,' I think a lot of us would have crashed and burned. She was able to take all of the components that were overwhelming and give them to us in a way that was very non-threatening and provide the information to us in a very hands-on approach."

Typically, the only time teachers may have to talk about their lessons is when they pass each other in the hallway or see one another for a very few minutes while trying to eat lunch. They may find reflection time as they are driving to or from work (if they are not shuttling their own children) or maybe in the shower. "Teaching is too complex for this. We have to fit collaboration time into our school day," Brown says.

"Having others' ideas — that's what we want our students to do so it's been a really great shift in the way we work together," CJ Fisher, a seventh-grade core teacher, says. "There's not a sense of shame admitting I need help; I don't know how to do this because we're all helping to solve the problem."

"Working with Katie forces me to see what I teach differently and not be so rigid. Because of her, I try new stuff with my students," seventh-grade math teacher Brian Porteous says.

At Shuksan, every teacher will receive 52 hours of professional development this school year and all of it will be during the school day. The first half hour of every staff meeting is focused on SIOP and instructional strategies.

"A lot of the things she's been able to teach us — teachers go back and use in their classes that day," Kepler says.

Early release days are collaborative time for

teachers to work together on implementing SIOP into their lessons. Additionally, they put together a creative professional development plan to support a lot more time together while students are in school. The collaborative structure is effective and sustainable, Brown says, and that structure helps teachers tackle any new initiative that comes their way, including CCSS.

"Currently we are filtering T-PEP through our work with Sheltered Instruction and seamlessly integrating it," Brown says of the new state evaluations. "The teachers at Shuksan are focusing on delivering lessons that teach the Common Core, but really, it's just about integrating reading, writing, speaking and listening with critical thinking."

"It's not that I'm not worried about Common Core and all of the other things we are juggling," sixth-grade math teacher John Finnley says. "But we're not doing it in isolation and having time to work together makes a huge difference."

"We don't approach teaching as 'this is what the Common Core says ...' We approach teaching as what we know is best for kids," Brown says. "We have not started to explicitly focus on the CCSS yet as a whole staff, but by working on SIOP we are also working on the CCSS as they are so similar. The work will begin and we are ready because of the commitment we have made in collaborating to improve instruction. While I plan on orchestrating when we bring the CCSS into focus in our learning around SIOP, most teachers are already doing this on their own and during our SIOP collaboration time."

Brown says she is confident the transition will continue to go smoothly because, "when you have the systems in place for teachers to be learners, new learning can be invigorating, not overwhelming. If teachers are given time to work together, new initiatives can push us to be better."



*When educators are given time to collaborate during the school day, it's easier to try and test ideas and share strategies, Shuksan's Katie Brown says.*

# Time for a COLA for Educators

State-funded cost of living adjustment (COLA)

## Income Adjustment

from state-funded COLAs

2008

**COLA suspended**

Legislature suspends voter-approved COLA for educators

2009

**\$0**

2010

**\$0**

2011

**\$0**

2012

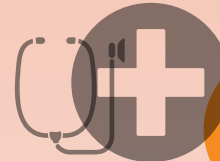
**\$0**

2013

**\$0**

## Cost of Living Increase

2009-2013



Healthcare

**\$2,000**



Milk, 1 gallon

**57¢**



Gas, 1 gallon

**96¢**



Meat, 1 pound

**\$1.05**

\*Health care costs – Average out-of-pocket increase for plan 2 member with children  
\*Milk, gas, beef – U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

Teachers haven't  
received a cost  
of living adjustment  
in 5 years

*Tell your*  
**REPRESENTATIVES  
TO GIVE  
EDUCATORS A COLA**

Each year  
the price for  
basic essentials  
increases

visit [www.OurVoiceWashingtonEA.org](http://www.OurVoiceWashingtonEA.org) to learn how



# It's time to restore the lost COLA

The COLA numbers are compelling.

**000000:** K-12 and community/technical college employees may go six consecutive years without a state-funded cost-of-living adjustment (COLA).

**\$10,000:** How much a veteran teacher will lose next school year because of the COLA suspension.

**16 percent:** The buying power teachers have lost over the last six years

**89 percent:** WEA members who believe restoring the COLA should be a WEA priority.

Numbers aside, going six years without a state COLA isn't fair for educators or their students.

"Restoring the state-funded COLA for educators is the issue legislators must deal with in the upcoming legislative session," said Jenny Rose, president of the Spokane Education Association.

Voters overwhelmingly approved the COLA initiative, yet legislators have suspended it multiple times. Instead of funding the COLA for educators, lawmakers have diverted the money to other programs – even though K-12 public education is the state's paramount duty under the constitution.

COLA restoration, along with funding for smaller class sizes and caseloads, is at the top of WEA's legislative agenda for the 2014 legislative session, which begins Jan. 13. That's also the day teams of WEA members from across the state will be in Olympia lobbying legislators to sponsor COLA restoration legislation. The COLA Kick Off goal is to get 51 legislators to sign the bill as sponsors — enough to pass it in the House of Representatives.

Some legislators already have committed

to sponsoring the bill, which would increase educators' paychecks by \$85 million next year alone. Visit [www.OurVoiceWashingtonEA.org](http://www.OurVoiceWashingtonEA.org) to learn more about the fight to restore the COLA and ask your own legislators if they support COLA restoration.

## Class Size Counts update

October was Class Size Counts month, and more than 5,000 parents, teachers and support professionals posted their class size numbers and stories. Thank you!

Here's what one teacher wrote:

"31 students in a classroom makes it challenging to meet the individual needs of each of my students and hardly allows me to give them the one-on-one attention they need and deserve."

Class Size Counts is a statewide community organization working to reduce class sizes in the upcoming legislative session — and beyond, if necessary.

"Our class sizes are 47th in the nation," WEA President Kim Mead said. "And when we talk about class size, we also mean caseloads for education staff associates and the important work education support professionals do with students."

CLASS  
SIZE  
COUNTS

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### Governance and Administration

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## Washington's National Board Certified Teachers *by the numbers*

- **516** new NBCTs
- **7,333** total NBCTs in Washington state now
- **31.6%** of all NBCTs teach in a challenging school
- Washington certified **the most** NBCTs in the nation this year
- Seattle certified **the most** NBCTs in the state this year with 54

National Board Certified Teacher Tony Donato offers advice to a member on her portfolio at a WEA Home Stretch seminar. WEA offers support for National Board candidates with two professional development classes every year: Jump Start and Home Stretch.

# In Washington, our NBCTs are No. 1

Apparently breaking records is fashionable in Washington this year. While our professional football players are breaking all kinds of records, the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) certifications for our educators this year are, like the Seahawks, No. 1 in the nation.

Washington state has 516 brand new NBCTs this year — more than any other state — bringing our total number of certified educators to 7,333. Taking into account that there are some 106,000 teachers in 50 states who have achieved National Board certification up until now, it is easy to see why our state is consistently in the top five states nationally and No. 1 in the nation this year.

Becoming an NBCT recognizes accomplished work through a rigorous, robust and time-consuming process. Certification takes one to three years and is not guaranteed. The national rate of certification is around 40 percent of those who go through the voluntary assessment program designed to recognize accomplished and effective teachers. NBCTs put together detailed portfolios of their work and participate in a six-question testing assessment.

“Even with class size counts that are larger than 47 other states, our teachers prove once again that they are excellent educators, achieving the best for the students they serve. We are proud of our members who have achieved National Board certification,” WEA President Kim Mead says. “Congratulations to all who participated in this very difficult process.”

More than 10 percent of our Washington NBCTs this year are Seattle Education Association members. Many of the 54 SEA members who achieved certification had the opportunity to participate in an intensive association-sponsored candidate support program, which featured interaction with NBCTs trained by the state Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), small cohorts of 7-9 people who met monthly, WEA's Jump Start seminar and other benefits. To apply for participation in this voluntary certification system, a candidate must hold a bachelor's degree and have completed three full years of K-12 teaching/counseling experience. Certification is valid for 10 years.

And like so many of our Seahawks players who humbly say they are showing up to get the job done, those who received NBCTC may be humble about their achievement but don't let them fool you — it's a big deal.