



Phew!

WEA's 2021 ESP of the Year Keri Roberts is a strong advocate for pausing to remember that students are individuals and, like all of us, are imperfect and evolving.



We did it, together



Larry Delaney
WEA President

This has been a helluva year! In a normal school year, June is a month where we are all struggling to just hang on until that last day of the school year. We all know, however, that this year has been anything but normal. It doesn't matter who you are or what your job is, we've all faced a whole new set of challenges. It's OK to be frustrated. It's OK to be tired. It's OK to hit the off switch and take some time to recharge. Not that you need it from me, but you have permission to just let go, live a little, or a lot, if that's what you want to do. And please, take some time to take care of yourself. You have all earned it.

I've been reflecting as we approach the end of the school year, and the end of my first term serving as your WEA president.

I've been a pandemic president longer than not, working from my home in Arlington more months than in the WEA headquarters building in Federal Way. When I started in this role, I knew I was in for new challenges, but I could never have predicted this.

I've learned that many things that were true in the classroom are also true in this role. Relationships matter. I'm so thankful for the partnership that your Vice President Janie White and I have forged over these two years. I truly believe that we have strengths that compliment one another and am

thankful to be able to call Janie not just a colleague or co-worker but a true friend.

I've re-learned that no matter our differences, there are more things that unite us as a union than not. Our dedication to our students, public education and each other. The knowledge that when we stand together for the things we believe in, we can achieve just about anything.

I've learned not to take WEA's strength in numbers for granted. That to maintain our standing as powerful advocates for students and educators often means slowing down, becoming a better listener, and creating more opportunities to listen to our members, leaders and staff.

When we take that time, to share our stories, listen and really hear what each of us has to say, we learn to understand and value each other as colleagues, fellow union members and, most importantly, as human beings. It is that connection, whether it is with students or each other, that forms the underlying strength of our union. Nothing is more valuable than that.

Thank you for all that you continue to do on behalf of our students, colleagues and communities. We have all made it through a school year that has been like no other. Rest, relax, and I'll see you in the fall.

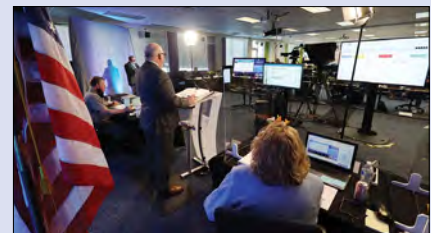
CONTENTS

3 Taking Action in Olympia Legislative session highlights

4 **WEA's 2021 ESP of the Year**
Keri Roberts, Central Kitsap ESP, is recognized for her dedication to creating space where students feel safe and supported as well as opportunities for fellow education support professionals to become leaders in their own right.

6 **2021 WEA Representative Assembly**
A pandemic didn't stop WEA's annual business meeting. Delegates used a virtual platform that allowed for debate, voting on business items, and all other RA business.

7 **Essential Work**
Recovering from a violent attack, a Northshore educator talks about learning, reflecting and taking action to integrate anti-racism into teaching.



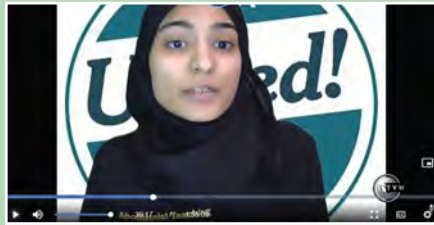
Lights, camera and the internet. This year's WEA Rep Assembly was held online live from the WEA headquarters in Federal Way.

Winning for equity in the legislative session

WEA members made our voices heard for what our students need and it made a huge difference in advancing our priorities in this year's legislative session. WEA members and staff worked with our legislators to advocate for fully funded, equitable, safe schools that have the resources they need to recover from the pandemic. Together we sent more than 7,000 emails to lawmakers and testified at dozens of hearings to make sure our students' needs were heard. For a full run-down of the legislative session, visit the OurVoice blog at www.washingtonea.org/ourvoice.

Eliminating the edTPA

Our students need teachers representative of all their communities, yet so many barriers stand in the way of building a diverse, inclusive teacher workforce. WEA members have worked together for years, first with the Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB) and then with the Legislature, to eliminate the edTPA requirement for certification. The edTPA is an expensive, time-consuming exam that creates an unnecessary hurdle for student teachers seeking certification, particularly for student teachers of color and low-income student teachers.



"The time I spent on completing the edTPA would have been better spent learning how to better educate my students," testified Sobia Sheikh, a national board certified teacher, NEA board director and a mathematics teacher at Mariner High School in Mukilteo. "And research shows that because of the bias of the test, educators of color score lower than white educators."

Legislators passed HB 1028 to eliminate

the edTPA requirement, effective immediately. This is one needed and long-fought step toward a more inclusive teaching workforce. Student teachers should consult with their programs to determine next steps in applying for a Residency Certificate.

"I am glad that the fight to end the edTPA is finally done," said Daniel Harada, a WEA board member and fifth-grade teacher in Federal Way. "Because of the hard work that went into making this a reality, more amazing people will be able to become amazing educators. I am thrilled that this unnecessary barrier will no longer be an issue for folks."



In March, WEA hosted its first Caucus-to-Caucus Lobby Day to connect WEA caucus members with members of our counterpart caucuses in the Legislature to discuss specific issues facing students, educators and families in our communities.

Creating anti-racism training

Every student needs an education that respects their culture and meets their needs. That's why WEA members united to pass legislation creating anti-racism training both for K-12 and for higher education teachers, faculty and staff.

"We can no longer afford to disseminate one-sided information in our classroom that continues to fuel the transfer of racism and further disenfranchises the cultural wealth that our BIPOC students bring with them every day," testified Glenn Jenkins, a fifth-grade teacher and member of Auburn EA.

The Legislature passed and funded SB 5044, for K-12 educators, and SB 5227, for community and technical colleges and four-year higher education institutions, which create cultural competency, diversity, equity, inclusion and anti-racism professional development. The bill for elementary and secondary schools starts in the 2021-22 school year and includes school board members and administrators in the PD requirement. The higher education bill, which starts in the 2022-23 school year, establishes a committee that includes educators to develop the training plus it requires anti-racism training be provided to students starting in the 2024-25 school year.

Join WEA-PAC to be part of the victory

These victories are only possible because we worked together to elect pro-labor, pro-education candidates last fall. Coming up, we will focus on electing school board candidates who support us and bargaining locally to ensure the influx of federal funds makes a difference for our students and our classrooms.



Pro-Education. Pro-Labor.

We continue to support candidates from local school boards to our state legislature through WEA-PAC. Be part of our strength — join WEA-PAC today!

Visit www.washingtonea.org/ourvoice/wea-pac/



Central Kitsap High's in-school suspension monitor decodes hidden messages students communicate with their behaviors; demands better and advocates for students — and colleagues

Congratulations to Keri Roberts, 2021 WEA Education Support Professional of the Year

"It is not enough to stand," says Keri Roberts, the 2021 WEA ESP of the Year. "I have learned that I must speak up and speak out when my students or colleagues are faced with injustice in my community or in our school."

Keri Roberts can't help but notice that when she is having a bad day and making mistakes, other adults stop to ask if she's OK, or what's going on, or if they can offer any help. But too often when students make mistakes, the default for school systems is to react with reprimands, punishment, suspension.

"When a student makes a mistake, often times it looks like they know they're intentionally doing it. But they're still kids. They're still trying to put it all together. Maybe they don't have the words to describe the frustration they're having," Roberts says. "We just expect them to live in these boxes, but haven't given them the skills, the words, the tools that they need to exist."

Roberts is a strong advocate for grace, for pausing to remember that students are more than their latest behavior, to remember that students are individuals and, like all of us, are imperfect and evolving.

The compassion that Roberts brings to her job as

In-School Suspension Monitor at Central Kitsap High School in Silverdale, plus her dedication as a culturally responsive trainer and her work as a union activist, have made her WEA's 2021 Education Support Professional of the Year.

"The best part of my job is getting to work with students who feel like the world has given up on them, or that made a mistake and are beating themselves over the head because they did something stupid," Roberts says. "And it's like, 'Dude, you made a mistake. Alright? We're going to move forward through this. It doesn't make you a bad person.' How can I give them that grace to be more than that moment?"

Compassion doesn't mean she ignores the need for accountability or corrective action. But as a trainer of Culturally Responsive Classroom Management (CRCM), she understands that effective discipline is far different than old-school "punishment."

“Discipline is teaching through a behavior, teaching a student or an individual a skill so that they can next time navigate those waters differently, with a more successful outcome for themselves and for those around them,” she says. And a behavior is not isolated: it almost always involves factors beyond the particular eruption that sparks the discipline.

“As educators, we need to reflect on the situation, and see what part our roles played in the discipline. So students don’t like pop quizzes, right? So did we forget to give that warning? Maybe that’s what set the student off. It’s not like we’re taking blame and putting it on the educator, that’s not it at all. What we’re saying is it’s not just simply a student misbehaving. That behavior is communicating some type of message, and as the educator in the room, it’s my job to figure out what that message is — and to help that student find a more effective way to get that message across.”

Roberts was nominated for ESP of the Year by Shawna Moore, a middle school teacher in Highline and fellow CRCM trainer.

“Everything she does and everything she touches is over and beyond,” Moore notes in Roberts’ nomination letter. “You ask her to create a curriculum, she creates two. You ask her to present at a state conference, she modifies for national as well. You ask her to present for Western Washington, she creates and modifies for Eastern as well, just in case.”

Roberts’ hard work, open heart and sweet demeanor means she has become “the go-to for ESPs across the state,” Moore says. “She is committed to empowering all ESPs and supporting them in their journey.”

“Her values of equity, tolerance and kindness bring people to her,” agrees Cristi McCorkle, WEA’s ESP Coordinator and a former UniServ Director at Roberts’ WEA Olympic Council. There are countless examples, “from students that will say that she has literally kept them from dropping out of school, to stating that she is the mom they never had. ... She is equally understanding, welcoming, and loving to all.”

WEA Olympic Council President Eric Pickens has seen Roberts’ consistent dedication for students and colleagues in marginalized groups.

“Keri is a tremendous leader and advocate within our council,” he says. “She consistently analyzes decisions that we are contemplating through an equity lens, and she is especially mindful of the impact our decisions have to our colleagues and students of color.”

Roberts says a concern for social justice has always been part of her fiber, perhaps from the years she

lived in the South as a young teenager and the “rules” she witnessed on whom you could and couldn’t associate with.

“It just didn’t make sense to me because I’m like, ‘Well if we like each other, why can’t we hang out? Why can’t we be friends?’” she recalls.

She also found herself to be passionate about the environment before it became mainstream, and that led to her degree in Environmental Science from Western. Likewise, she traces her passion for union activism to her formative years, growing up with family who were active Teamsters, fire fighters and shipyard workers, all union.

“Unions are still very relevant,” she says. “We still need them. Corporate America would love to just reduce us to a dollar bill. If we don’t stand and fight for something more, we’re going to be back to the pre-labor movement. It’s important to have that voice. If you want better, you have to fight for it.”

Roberts is a building rep, a CKESP Executive Board member, WEA Olympic Council Rep., facilitator of WEA Olympic’s Equity Team, and a cadre leader for the equity strand of paraeducators certification. She currently is working on her master’s to become an adjunct college instructor to help guide the next generation of teachers. But she is quick to note she doesn’t do it alone.

“I work with some amazing people. Honestly there is no way I could do half of what I do if I didn’t have amazing people around me,” she says. “They inspire me to keep doing more, and being better.”

Roberts is a strong advocate for grace, for pausing to remember that students are more than their latest behavior, to remember that students are individuals and, like all of us, are imperfect and evolving.



WEA ESP ACT Chair Rochelle Greenwell (left) surprised Roberts at her home on March 31 to inform her of her selection as this year’s ESP of the Year. Greenwell shared the event live on a Zoom call from her phone with other WEA leaders.

A WEA Representative Assembly

like no other

Just like most things this year, the WEA Representative Assembly took on a different look and feel. Instead of joining together in a large hall of delegates, our annual meeting was virtual, and felt more like a cross between C-Span and Zoom. WEA's board room in Federal Way was transformed into a TV studio, with lights, cameras and lots of action behind the scenes.

About 800 delegates logged in from living rooms, kitchen tables, and back patios from across the state to help set the course of our union's work for the next year. Delegates migrated from the virtual meeting hall to digital "microphone rooms" where they could introduce or speak to a resolution or business item.

To accommodate the virtual format, all business had to be submitted ahead of time. Delegates were presented with two constitution and bylaws amendments, 11 new resolutions, four amendments to resolutions and 42 New Business Items (NBIs).

WEA members who have experienced the virtual versions of their jobs can likely relate to the idea that things simply take more time than they do in person. As a result, there was not enough time to debate each NBI. Near the end of the third day, delegates voted to move all unaddressed business items to committees to be addressed over the course of the next year.

Delegates approved a constitutional amendment to change the term limits of WEA President and Vice President from three two-year terms to two three-year terms. They voted to form a committee to study the WEA dues formulas, and amended several resolutions, or belief statements, on topics including equity, assessments and organizing. Of the 42 NBIs introduced, delegates took action on 14, four were withdrawn by the maker, and the remainder will be considered by committee.

Common themes for NBIs included advancing equity and anti-racism for students and within our union, expanding professional development opportunities for members, and strengthening support for higher education members.

WEA President Larry Delaney and Vice President Janie White were re-elected, and Washougal EA member Charlotte Lartey was elected as a State NEA Board Director.

Special guest speakers included NEA Vice President Princess Moss, and education and race scholar Dr. Bettina Love. There was a virtual awards ceremony (*See pg. 7*) on Thursday night, and even a dance party to keep delegates moving.

Top to bottom: WEA President Larry Delaney and WEA Executive Director Aimee Iverson confer on a business item; the conference room at WEA Headquarters in Federal Way aka virtual WEA Rep Assembly Central April 1, 15-17; WEA Communications staffer and DJ diva Eddie Westerman queues the music throughout the RA, and assistant rules chair Kelly Snow, from Lake Stevens EA, answers delegate questions and keeps the speaking order in the microphone room.



Virtual awards night celebrates what members are accomplishing through the most difficult year

WEA members around the state have been particularly innovative and flexible during the pandemic. During our virtual RA this year, some time was set aside to recognize and honor award recipients whose work represents all our members. WEA Vice President Janie White says the stories she hears about the ways members connect with students energize her. WEA recognized four Human and Civil Rights (HCR) awardees, the WEA ESP of the Year, WEA's ESA of the Year, Washington's Teacher of the Year and NEA's Washington state nominee for California Casualty's Award for Teaching Excellence.



Charlotte Lartey

Charlotte Lartey, WEA's HCR Cultural Awareness recipient, has shown a lion's share of courage in difficult situations in Washougal. Lartey helps students empower themselves, but she is also pushing her colleagues and the whole district forward in interrupting racism.

Spokane EA member April Eberhardt is this year's HCR Community Partner recipient. She has been instrumental in making space for student voices at Shadle High School and throughout the district.

The HCR Student Involvement award was given to Marc Mason, a Central Valley EA member near Spokane. Mason, who is a physical education teacher and soccer coach, is someone who listens carefully and responds to his students with kindness.

Mount Vernon EA member Ramón Rivera nominated Tim Hornbacher for the HCR International Peace and Understanding award because Hornbacher has spent hours upon hours of time editing videos that feature community members and students from every culture which raises both awareness and appreciation.

WEA's ESP of the Year Keri Bjornemo Roberts told members she was humbled to be recognized by her union family. Roberts, the in-school suspension monitor at Central Kitsap High School in Silverdale, says she has learned that it is not enough to stand with her students and with her union brothers and sisters, but that, "I

must speak up and speak out when my students or my colleagues are faced with injustice in my community or in our school."



Kanoe Vierra

Our WEA NEA Foundation 2021 California Casualty Excellence in Education nominee, Kanoe Vierra, Edmonds EA, told us that personal connections are the very core of his teaching. Vierra, a mentor to students, talked about one of his own mentors who taught him that gentleness goes a long way in any conversation or relationship with students, parents, school or other district staff.

WEA's Educational Staff Associate (ESA) of the Year and Franklin Pierce EA member Carrie Suchy talked about her passion for advocating for her students. Suchy said that becoming a WEA leader has taught her that being part of a union strengthens her profession as a school psychologist.

Washington State Teacher of the Year Brooke Brown, also from Franklin Pierce, shared how she has stayed centered through these tumultuous times. She shared words from author Sonya Renee Taylor: "We will not go back to normal. Normal never was. Our pre-corona existence was not normal other than we normalized greed, inequity, exhaustion, depletion, extraction, disconnection, confusion, rage, hoarding, hate and lack. We should not return, my friends. We are being given the opportunity to stitch a new garment. One that fits all of humanity and nature." Brown says she reads those words regularly to keep her rooted in her journey to help make positive change occur.

"As an educator of color, I strive to become the teacher to be who I needed when I was growing up. I needed an advocate who could push me to see my potential even when I couldn't see it for myself," Brown said. She ended the awards evening by telling members that she had faith that all educators would continue to show up for students.

In addition to the awards night, the WEA Black Caucus announced two awards. WEA Vice President Janie White received the caucus' 2021 Inspiring Educator State Award for "paving the way, lighting the torch, and holding the door open for all Black educators' to follow." The caucus also honored Student WEA President Price Jimerson with the Janie White Inspiring Student Educator Award. Jimerson is the caucus' first student member and "she is setting the foundation for future aspiring Black educators to build upon."

we2.0

Washington
Education
Association



Scan with your
smartphone to stay
connected to WEA.

Governance and Administration

Larry Delaney, *WEA President*
Janie White, *WEA Vice President*
Aimee Iverson, *WEA Executive Director*

WEA Communications Staff

Dale Folkerts, Adam Isaguirre, Mandy Manning, Brooke Mattox-Ball, Linda Mullen, Julie Popper, Eddie Westerman and Linda Woo

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

We 2.0 (ISSN 1544-5283) is published quarterly by the Washington Education Association, 32032 Weyerhaeuser Way S., Federal Way, WA 98001-9687. Subscription cost of \$1.38 is included in annual membership dues. Separate subscription price: \$15.50 annually.

Copyright 2021 by the Washington Education Association.

Periodical nonprofit postage paid at Auburn, WA, and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *We 2.0*, P.O. Box 9100, Federal Way, WA 98063-9100.

Northshore teacher, recovering from violent attack, speaks out against anti-Asian hate crimes



Noriko Nasu

Noriko Nasu doesn't fully recognize herself in pictures when she smiles. With three months of dental work, a broken nose that is still not all the way fixed, and scars on her face, she is surprised when a stranger says she is a beautiful young woman.

Northshore EA member Nasu, a Japanese language teacher at Inglemoor and (this year) Woodinville High Schools, was brutally attacked in Seattle's Chinatown International District Feb. 25, in what she is sure was a hate crime against Asians.

From March 19, 2020 to Feb. 28 of this year, the Stop AAPI Hate reporting center received reports of 3,795 hate incidents aimed at Asian American and Pacific Islander communities. The man who attacked Nasu was seen on a security camera following the couple then walking past her white boyfriend before knocking Nasu unconscious with a heavy object wrapped in a sock. Her boyfriend was also injured, but only after he tried to follow the man who attacked Nasu. The hit was so hard that she suffered broken teeth, two black eyes, other facial fractures and a concussion. Nasu says that while she is growing a little more accustomed to her different external physical features, the much more difficult part is that her brain injury causes nausea due to light sensitivity, dizziness and memory loss. She also is not able to do what she loves, running on trails, and backpacking through the Pacific Northwest.

At the beginning of this COVID school year, Nasu was teaching AP Japanese, IB Japanese and UW in the High School Japanese (a program that allows students to take University of Washington courses and earn college credit without leaving the high school campus) at two Northshore high schools.

"Working remotely and teaching six preps (since I also teach two other Japanese classes), I thought I had already hit the bottom," she says.

But then Nasu was the victim of an unprovoked and violent attack at 9:30 p.m. on a Thursday night.

Once she told students she was attacked, she immediately began to receive emails, letters, flowers and cards. She says she didn't realize how deep a connection she had made with one student, whom she has taught for four years, until he told her that he had to take a walk to calm himself down after he heard of the attack because he said he was so angry that he couldn't focus. Other messages from students shared their anger, sadness and fear for themselves and their families.

Most of her students didn't need to ask Nasu about details of the attack because they got enough information through the news. Instead, they shared their own worries. Nasu said she was particularly touched by how

many students told her to take whatever time she needed to recover.

"You don't always know what kids think because they can be shy," Nasu says. "Especially during this crazy pandemic. I have never met some of my students or even seen them. With cameras and microphones off, it's hard to know them. But when they sent cards, it touched me."

Nasu has been studying for a master's degree in English Language Learning and thinking about how public schools in the U.S. present a monolingual and monocultural perspective.

"In teaching Japanese," Nasu says, "I could only teach Japanese culture from a Japanese perspective or I could present Japanese culture in a more multi-cultural perspective."

She began working on focusing her classes on comparing Japanese culture to different cultures and building on the idea of teaching not just on a unit about Japanese internment but focusing on history by bringing in current social justice issues.

One thing she says she has learned in her studies is that a truly culturally responsive teacher must be an activist.

"When we witness something wrong, it is so easy to ignore it and let it go. When someone says or does something that is inappropriate, we can't let it pass. It's so important to speak up," Nasu says.

She says she believes that educating students to be engaged and activists is one way to fight hate crimes.

"If you see something and you remain silent, you're taking the side of the perpetrator," Nasu says. One thing that helped her recovery, she says, is that people from the restaurant near where the attack occurred came out to help. Without their kindness, she says, she would have been in a dark place.

Many people contacted her after the attack to share their stories. She is speaking up because she is angry that so many hate crime stories go unshared. Nasu worked with others to expand the definition of hate crimes during this year's legislative session, but the bill did not pass. Northshore EA members are writing letters of support and as her external injuries continue to heal, she says she will continue working to strengthen the laws. She is partnering with the Latino Civic Alliance, a non-profit group that works to strengthen communities of color through education, civic engagement and social empowerment, and will be appearing in an education documentary they are making. Through TV and newspapers, she is also speaking out in support of social justice in Japan.

Before the attack, Nasu's goal was to summit Mt. Rainier and circumnavigating the 93-mile Wonderland trail around the mountain. For now, she has had to set smaller goals like walking four to five miles a day. As she begins to be more comfortable and the brain damage begins to fade, she hopes to reclaim the goals she set before.