

An educator for honest history

*WEA members are
committed to helping
students build a better
future for everyone.*



The power of our union



Larry Delaney
WEA President

Recently I pulled out a draft of a *We2.0* column that I started but scrapped one year ago in November of 2020. It began with “Did you ever think that you would experience a start to the school year like this one?” Well, we’re back one year later and that question seems even more appropriate today than it did in 2020.

One year ago, the COVID vaccine was not an option, and we were all faced with a dizzying array of in-person, hybrid and distance learning. We had all hoped that 2021 would bring a return to something that was more familiar, something that more closely resembled “normal.” What we now know is that the 2021-22 school year is anything but familiar and nowhere close to normal.

WEA members across the state are dealing with the impact of students who, through no fault of their own, are bringing the challenges of the pandemic into our classrooms and worksites. We are feeling the impact of staffing shortages – particularly among substitutes and ESPs. We are faced with unresolved issues of race, justice and inequity. And, on top of all of this, we are living and working in communities that have become increasingly polarized around what we teach, how we teach, and how we keep our students and communities safe.

The demands educators are facing across our state are very real and I don’t think that it’s a stretch to say that there has not been a time in our history where the job of an educator is both so challenging and so important.

Too often challenging times lead to feelings of loneliness and isolation; however, it is important to remember that it is in these trying times that we need the power of our union and our connection to one another most of all.

Throughout the pandemic, we have stood together and used our union strength to negotiate improvements to our workplace health and safety. Members have stepped up to run for school boards, bringing educator voices to decision-making bodies that can shape policies and priorities that better serve each of our students and our professions. Every day, our certificated and classified staff members strive to make sure students can experience the richness that our schools offer.

Meanwhile, WEA continues to build the capacity of our locals in ways that are relevant to our members. I cannot think of a time in my 30-year career in education when having strong local unions was more important than it is right now. Whether advocating for safe and healthy working conditions for our students and educators, protecting the right to teach the truth in our classrooms, or bargaining the impact of the countless changes that have been thrown at us over the past 18 months, WEA has been working together with local leaders and WEA staff to ensure that you have the protection that you need.

Our Association also has been working with members statewide to leverage the image of educators in our communities. I want to thank all of you who have written letters to the editor, appeared on local radio and television outlets, and have even starred in our own WEA produced online radio ads. Your ability to shine a light on the challenges that we face and raise the collective voices of all educators has been so important.

Though WEA’s Professional Development Network, we have made connections with more members than ever before. Prior to 2020, online professional development from WEA was not a thing; moving forward it will be the norm. During the pandemic, tens of thousands of WEA members have accessed our by members, for members professional development. We could not have accomplished this if we were offering only in-person classes.

With COVID’s disparate impact on communities of color and its exposure of the deep levels of inequity within our educational systems, our struggle for justice is especially crucial right now. As educators and union members, we are uniquely positioned to challenge and change systemic racism in our communities, and WEA continues to advocate for racial, social and economic justice throughout our educational universe.

Make no mistake, our adversaries are seeking to exploit the challenges of this pandemic to weaken our voice. Secure in the power of our union, we will not let them win. Instead, in this most challenging of school years, we know that the protection of our union and our connection to one another is exactly what we need.

Stay safe. Be well. And forward together.

I voted pro-public education and pro-labor. What's next?

We read our ballots, looked at our education voters' guide, and supported the candidates that will support our students. Thanks to the support of educators like us, many of our school boards and local governments across the state will now better represent our communities. Now it's time to work with our elected officials to move forward policies that benefit public schools.

"Our efforts don't end on Election Night," says Toby Doolittle, president of Mead Education Association. "We must continue our work to ensure every newly elected candidate hears our perspectives as educators and puts our students first when making decisions."

Keep up with what's happening



The more local the elected body, the less likely it is that people are really tracking what's going on, even though it can have a huge impact on our schools. Most elected officials have social media accounts that you can follow, and elected bodies usually have email lists or social media accounts that help keep the public up to date. Almost all elected bodies post their meeting agendas and minutes online which can give an important picture of what elected bodies are considering.

Get engaged in your local union



Our union is our strongest voice for our students and professions. Together in our union we set priorities for policy and take positions on issues that come before local elected bodies.

The Kent Association of Paraeducators (KAP) wanted change in their district and took action together to make a difference. "In our local a motion was brought forward by (member) Tomara Lucrisia about requiring our school district to be more transparent about the number of positive COVID cases in our schools," says Rochelle Greenwell, president of the Kent Association of Paraeducators. "We are moving forward with bringing this before our School Board."

"KAP is working on making sure paraeducators realize they have the voice to make *real* change," Greenwell says. "ESP Locals are *fiercest* when we speak as one unified voice."

Connect with your local union leader to find out the best way to plug into the work that's happening now.

Get ready for 2022 legislative session



WEA member leaders are already preparing priorities for our 2022 Washington legislative session, which starts on Jan. 10, 2022. After the WEA Board votes to approve those priorities, we will begin mobilizing to educate lawmakers and support those issues. Sign up now so you don't miss an opportunity to make your voice heard! Follow WEA Advocacy on Twitter and Facebook and sign up to receive the weekly legislative session newsletter at www.washingtonea.org/advocacy/ourvoice. Text ADVOCACY to 81411 to get the latest legislative updates.

Join WEA-PAC



To win on the issues that are critical to educators from education funding to class size, we need to continue electing pro-labor, pro-education candidates. We do that through WEA-PAC. Make sure you are part of our political strength by joining fellow union members from across the state in WEA-PAC by giving as little as \$2.25 a month. And if you're already a member, consider increasing our strength by selecting one of the new membership levels of \$5 or \$10.50 per month. More information on how to join is at www.washingtonea.org/advocacy/wea-pac/.

"As part of WEA-PAC, I know I'm part of a statewide movement of educators who want to make sure our elected officials understand what our students, staff and our schools deserve," says Maria Lee, president of the Pasco Association of Educators. "Every WEA member should join us in advocating for our students! If you haven't joined, why not?"

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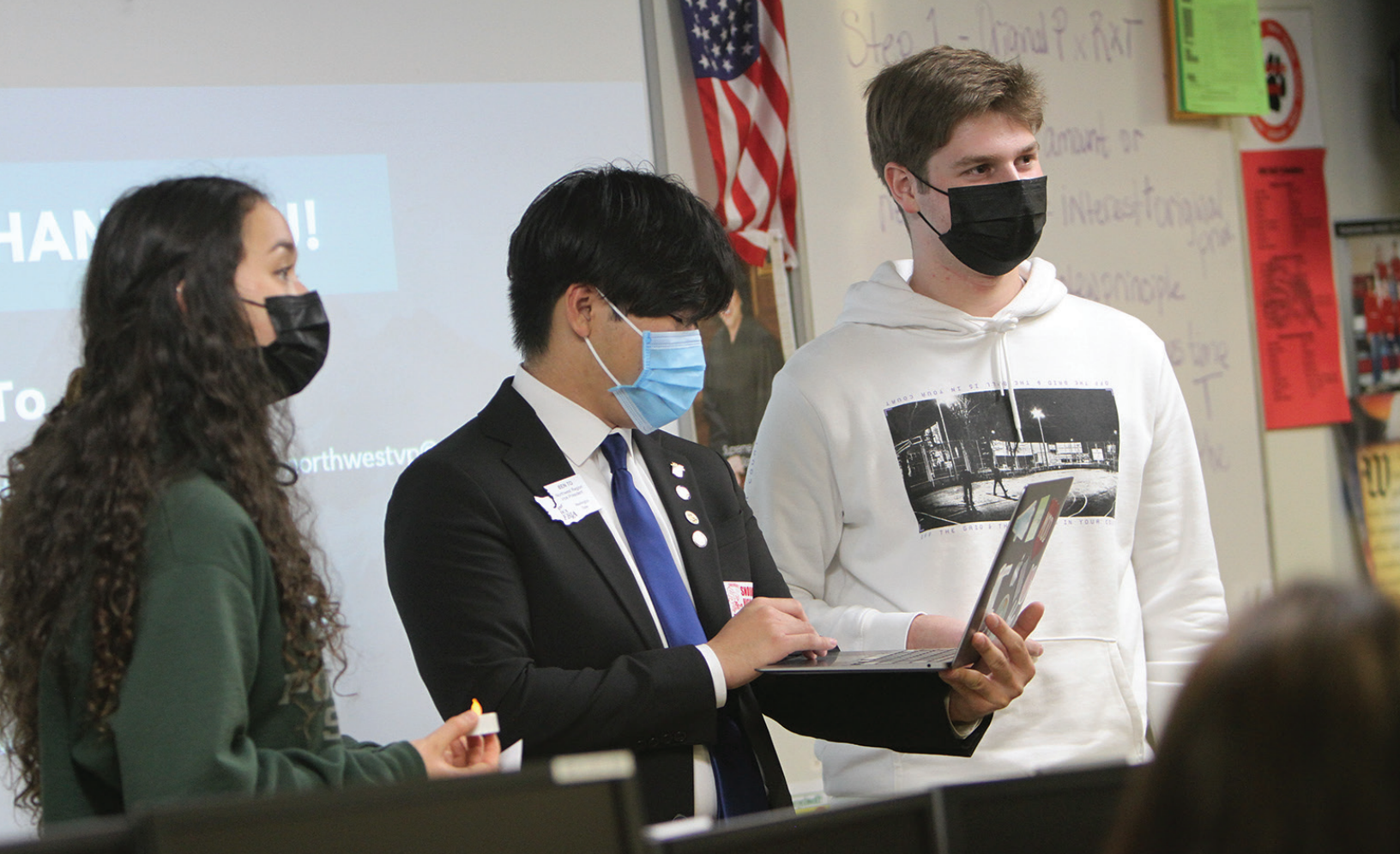
Kathy Purviance-Snow brings science, art and all heart every day to Snohomish High School. The social studies and career and technical education teacher works on opening doors of opportunities for students and diversifying the workforce. Her work has attracted national attention, landing her as one of five educators selected for the 2022 Horace Mann Award for Teaching Excellence, which carries a \$10,000 award. She'll be honored at the NEA Foundation gala in February.

6 When school gets real

A Lake Washington high school history teacher is known for connecting classroom lessons to current events with an anti-racist and abolitionist lens. She challenges students to lean into uncomfortable conversations in a safe and brave space so they feel more engaged in the classroom and part of a larger story. Now, her work is being undermined and she fears for her safety, well being and career. Also, what do you do when you get recorded without permission.

11 Insurance

Do you know the difference between long-term care insurance and long-term disability insurance?



Future Business Leaders of America (FLBA) Regional Vice President Ben To (in middle) helps install Lily Ching and Connor Bryant as FBLA officers at Snohomish High School. Kathy Purviance-Snow is the club adviser.

Snohomish educator opens doors of opportunities for students and diversifying workforce

Kathy Purviance-Snow receives NEA Educator of Excellence award, Horace Mann Award finalist

“March 2020 made us totally rethink how we were doing schools,” says Kathy Purviance-Snow, social studies and career and technical education educator at Snohomish High School. To ensure students could experience some normalcy in their new virtual environment, Purviance-Snow took their yearly breakfast and student interviews with local candidates and made it accessible online. (Check out the website at <http://shsgov2020.weebly.com/>) It was this project and her leadership in helping her team get up and running with technology to best serve students that led to her selection as the 2022 Washington state recipient of the California Casualty Award for Teaching Excellence. Now, she is a top five finalist for the Horace Mann Award.

Purviance-Snow, a member of the Snohomish Education Association, says that teaching is “part science, part art, and all heart.” She entered the education profession as a second career. She credits her success as an educator to her peers in her building who have nurtured her over the years, and her mom and aunt, who she describes as “brilliant

teachers.” In her teacher preparation program, her class had a discussion on whether teaching is a mission or a profession. She has ultimately decided it’s a little bit of both. “You’re helping kids see their potential and nurturing them to be the people and citizens you hope they will be, but at the same time it’s a job with expectations.” She believes in the mission more than the profession, which is why, like so many educators, she stays late and comes in early.

The pandemic has been a challenge for her as a teacher and for her students. Her goal throughout has been to continue opening doors of opportunities for students. She recalls one young man she taught as a freshman. “He was someone who made some unfortunate choices and he didn’t have the best reputation,” she says. “But he saw me as someone who valued him anyway and when he had a choice during COVID to drop out of school or to continue on, he said ‘I decided to come back because of you, Ms. P. I didn’t want to disappoint you. I knew that you believed in me, and you knew that I could graduate and so, I came back.’”



"I am proud to call myself a teacher," says Snohomish EA's Kathy Purviance-Snow, Washington's recipient of the California Casualty Award for Teaching Excellence. She is one of five finalists for the Horace Mann Award, which will be announced in February.

Part of the process of being nominated for this award is getting letters of recommendation. Purviance-Snow talks about that humbling experience. "There's just no way of knowing how you're impacting students until they speak those words out loud and you see them in black and white," she says. "To talk about some of the things I said or I did that caused them to rethink how they could imagine themselves or believe in themselves and move forward in that. Even if I hadn't won, just going through the process was so impactful to know that people thought so highly of me."

Award-winning educators are offered a platform from which they uplift their students and colleagues. Purviance-Snow says she will use hers to work to increase the diversity of the teaching staff in our state and throughout the nation. She is already working with her local UniServ on a grow your own program to develop students of color in becoming teachers. With the teacher shortage and so many upcoming retirements, Purviance-Snow points out that "our classrooms are filled with students of color and they're not seeing people that represent them."

"It is important," she says, "that we let students of color know that they are not only capable of becoming teachers and educators, but they are needed in this profession to add their voice." She has also been accepted into this year's WEA NAKIA Academy cohort. NAKIA is a mentoring and leadership academy by BIPOC members and open to BIPOC members.

Outside of school, Purviance-Snow finds inspiration in her faith. It is her faith that inspires her to be the person she is and makes her a better teacher. As she discusses this, she talks about the rally held May 30, 2020, in Snohomish for George Floyd, who was murdered by a police officer in Minnesota. The very next day on May 31, Snohomish was overrun with white supremacists holding their own rally. Students of color made a documentary about those two days. (See *Honoring student voices story on page 10.*)

Fall 2021

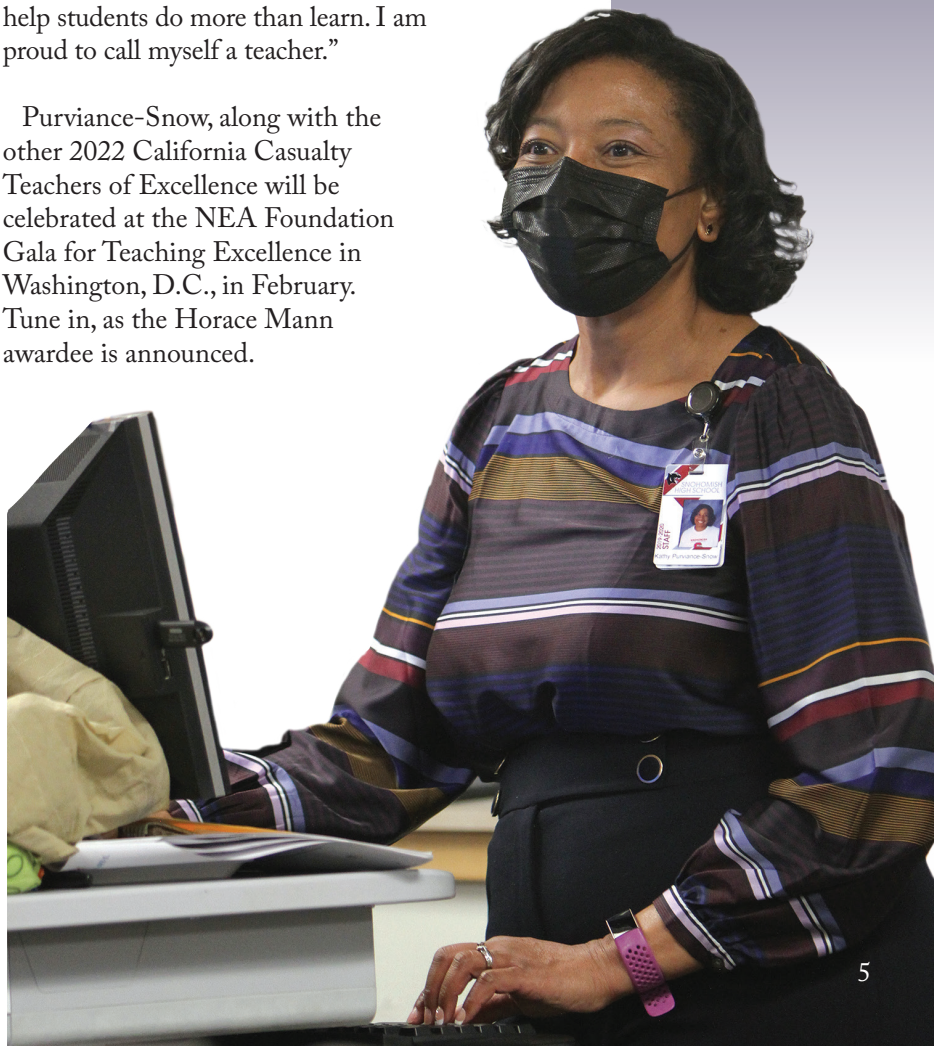
Purviance-Snow makes an appearance in the film, which debuted on Oct. 16, 2021. She wants to see every human being be able to walk in their potential and be who they can be without facing discrimination. "Without my faith, I wouldn't be able to believe that day is coming. I probably couldn't walk through this planet loving humans," she says.


As a 2022 California Casualty Educator of Excellence and Horace Mann Award finalist, Purviance-Snow has several messages she would like to share. To students, she says, "Find that thing that you really love doing and do that. You will find success." To leaders, she says, "Stop changing things. We have research-based systems in place that we know works for kids. We don't need the bright new shiny thing. We need time. Let teachers do their jobs. We are the ones who are in the trenches working hard for our students and we have their best interests at heart. We know our students and we know how to get the best from them. Get out of the way and allow teachers to do their jobs. Finally, before proposing or implementing any policy, spend time in K-12 classrooms. You cannot make good policy without first understanding the constituency who elected you." And, to her fellow educators, she says, "I see you. I see how hard you're working, and I appreciate you. Especially during the pandemic. You are amazing. You are rockstars. Students look to you and see more than just a teacher. We help students do more than learn. I am proud to call myself a teacher."

Purviance-Snow, along with the other 2022 California Casualty Teachers of Excellence will be celebrated at the NEA Foundation Gala for Teaching Excellence in Washington, D.C., in February. Tune in, as the Horace Mann awardee is announced.

"It is important that we let students of color know that they are not only capable of becoming teachers and educators, but they are needed in this profession to add their voice."

– Kathy Purviance-Snow





Defender of Truth

'Anti-racist teaching starts with being honest and transparent'

Crystal Visperas has three things she wants students to know when they are in her classroom and when they leave her class: Students are loved, especially by her, but also by their fellow classmates. Students feel empowered and know the world can be better and that they can be a part of making that change. And, most of all, students can “feel very comfortable about feeling very uncomfortable.”

“I want my class to be a space where the can come to breathe,” says Visperas, a fierce advocate of students, educators and communities of color and a self-described co-conspirator in the fight for social justice and equity. “I want students to know they are imperfect, and they can be unapologetically themselves. They are malleable and they can change their minds as they learn more.”

It's her philosophy and style the 15-year educator brings to her 11th grade AP Language Arts/American History class at Eastlake High School in Sammamish, a suburb east of Seattle, where she has taught for the last three years. Visperas teaches with an anti-racist and abolitionist lens and her lessons reflect an honest history of the country's founding and development — including the contributions of and the discrimination against marginalized people — which has traditionally been glossed over in textbooks and curriculums.

“My class is not about the College Board, it's not bout the test only,” she says. “It's literally about you, who you are outside of grades, outside of Sammamish, and if you don't know what you value or believe in or who you are yet to become, then you're in the right class.”

Born and raised in Houston, Texas, she says Eastlake is the first school where she has taught majority white students. On the first day of school this year, students learned about the racial demographics of Eastlake and the Lake Washington School District and Visperas told students about her identity and what it feels like to be a BIPOC teacher in a white space. She and her students examined the Constitution as a flawed document built on enslavement

and genocide of Indigenous peoples and she challenged students to write a class social contract that would reflect their highest ideals for each other in the learning community and for themselves as imperfect humans.

A safe and brave space for uncomfortable conversations

Last year, amid a deadly pandemic and social justice protests, students had questions about the police shootings of Black and brown civilians and why the coronavirus was disproportionately impacting Black and brown communities. What was happening couldn't be ignored.

"My students are absorbing these conversations and want to know more, so I created a space beyond the set curriculum to have these difficult conversations founded on facts, history and lived experiences of marginalized people," says Visperas. "Students have told me time and time again that this is the first class they talk about transgender people, white supremacy beyond the KKK, impact of capitalism, and the untold values of Dr. King."

As such, Visperas offers a course syllabus that's reflective of what is happening in the world. She says that has helped students feel more engaged in the classroom and part of a larger story.

"From what students have told me about their experience in school, students tell me they rarely have discussions about institutionalized or systemic racism. They talk about siloed history instead of continuous patterns in history. That is our failing as teachers," she reflects. "Our students need to be able to weave and connect history and I think curriculum should be based on what students' needs are, what they are curious about, instead of nostalgia from our own teaching or what we think school should look like."

It's what her students refer to as a "healthy sweat" they experience when they are in her class where Visperas presses and challenges their thinking, asking them to lean into uncomfortable conversations — and can do so in a safe and brave space where everyone feels heard, makes mistakes, repairs harm, and feels valued. One of the most important duties as educators, says Visperas, is to develop students' critical thinking skills so that they can recognize fact from falsehood. No one should be afraid of an honest accounting of our nation's history. And those who feel threatened by mere discussion of race, racism, and the lives of Black and brown students and humans should ask themselves why.

"Equity and justice are not negotiable," she says. "It's not an add-on in our classroom. Equity is not an extra. Justice is not an extra. It's just what you do as a teacher: struggle with students in the long fight for educational freedom and collective liberation."

Yet, as the only teacher of color in the school's Humanities program, Visperas is acutely aware that the spotlight is on her all

the time. The color of her skin does not give her space to address important aspects of history without it being seen as largely a personal interest.

"I didn't wake up one day and said, 'I'm a woke person.' I'm still a brown Asian who can still benefit so much," she says. "I could easily shrink but I'm choosing to rise and unapologetically be my brown self because I have no other choice. White educators can choose who they show up to be in the classroom, but I can't. I will never have that choice."

'The liberal and radical teacher'

She says she has been called "the liberal and radical teacher" and has been criticized for being "too aggressive," "too emotional" and "too political" — even when her white colleagues follow the same lesson plans. In her first year at Eastlake, she was threatened to be sued for her beliefs after a discussion on the First Amendment. Last year students dropped her class because of her values of justice. Parents had complained about her before meeting her. And in October, she learned from her school administrators that a recording of an online discussion about the impact of the Jan. 6

Capitol riots on Black and brown people with a few students after class had been taken nine months ago without her consent. That video, along with comments about her classroom environment, her comments to the School Board about the dangers of neutrality and her advocacy of Black Lives Matter, had been sent to a conservative radio host. (The same host covered a story about Eastlake a few weeks ago before and resulted in threats of physical violence and harm against school staff.)

Recording educators without permission isn't necessarily a new phenomenon. In the past, however, "teacher-baiting" was the biggest culprit. In those scenarios, students deliberately misbehaved until their teacher lost their temper, and then a student recorded the aftermath. Recently, however, right-wing media have intensified attacks on individual members using video recordings of teaching on topics that fuel their campaigns against honest, truthful curricula.

Visperas says she knows it's only a small group of students who want to cause her harm. Even so, because of the previous incident that happened at Eastlake, Visperas fears her own safety, well-being and career and has taken leave.

A call to action: protect and empower educators

"I feel heartbroken that I can't be back in school doing what I love doing and being my authentic self," she says. "I'm devastated that I cannot talk with my students or be there to share in our community. It makes me feel so lonely and censored. But I hope my students know that I love them so much and am proud of them for standing

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I want my class to be a space where they can come to breathe. I want students to know they are imperfect, and they can be unapologetically themselves. They are malleable and they can change their minds as they learn more.'

— Crystal Visperas

up for me and their values of liberation for all people.”

Last month, more than three dozen Eastlake colleagues signed a letter to Lake Washington School District administrators and the School Board calling on district officials to protect employees, specifically Visperas’ immediate physical and emotional safety concerns, and to uphold the district’s language on equity.

“What Crystal Visperas teaches in her classroom is what any of us would teach, or should teach, if we are to follow the goals set forth for us by the district’s language on equity.”

“Any of us who teaches these topics deserves to know that the district will support us publicly and clearly as we do so. It is not lost on us that our one BIPOC Humanities teacher is the one being filmed and reported for teaching something many of us have taught in our own rooms,” the letter continues. “As district officials, you have the power to be the loudest voices in the room when it comes to defending and protecting Crystal and all of us.”

An online petition directs state Schools Superintendent Chris Reykdal, Gov. Jay Inslee and other elected leaders to ensure a safe workplace for educators and a truthful education for students. The petition has garnered nearly 500 signatures.

Visperas believes the lack of district and school support and protection and proper enforcement of employee safety led to her having no choice but to resign from the position and the students she loves so much.

“The district and school need to stand up for teachers, especially BIPOC teachers, who are asking students and fellow colleagues to fight for justice and human rights and not the easy gaslighting route of kindness, diversity and building bridges,” she challenges.

“There must be a community of comrades with shared values of equity and justice for all. School and district trainings and new equity policies and positions mean nothing if they are not at the root of every decision, educator and learning space,” she says. “And my students know better. They know that without action, nothing will change. They can see right through complicity and fake allyship ... and so they demand better from me and the people around them.”

“Students are brave and bold when you push them to dig into history and facts and ask questions about what they believe in and about the systems around them. Why can’t adults do the same?”

Districts and schools need to protect and empower teachers who are asking students and colleagues to examine our values and morals to be on the right side of history. If we do not do this, we are complicit in this system. Our students deserve better. We all deserve better.’

– Crystal Visperas

Can my students film me at school?

More and more — students are using cell phones to record educators when they talk about mask mandates, racism or any of the various subjects that have become controversial in our politically charged environment. What can we as educators do about it?

Know your district policy

Many local union contracts and district policies address phone use in the classroom. For example, Moses Lake School District policy 3245 says, “Telecommunication devices will be turned on and operated only before and after the regular school day and during the student’s lunch break ...” Spokane Public Schools bans student phone use except during lunch breaks. Most districts have a similar policy or allow individual schools or teachers to enact cell phone restrictions.

Prevention is the best solution

It is best to stop a recording before it happens. The most effective way to do this is to enforce the cell phone policy consistently and equally in your classroom. Educators have found success using pocket charts, old cassette holders, vinyl envelopes, etc.

If you see a student take out their phone, stop instruction and address the infraction. Use equitable and fair discipline when necessary and seek administrator support for consistent offenders.

Administration should have your back

If a video circulates of you in your work environment, whomever recorded it should face discipline for the policy violation. Furthermore, if the video content is consistent with district curriculum and instruction, refer questions about the content to administration rather than addressing them yourself. It’s the district’s content!

Get support

Our colleagues, together in our union, are here to support each other. If you are the target of video harassment, talk to your building rep about available union support.

Providing the tools for educators to create safe, welcoming, affirming learning environments

When Highline EA member Joe Bourgeois finishes facilitating one of his WEA-sponsored classes, he says he wants participants to leave feeling their heart pumping full of wonder. He takes notes on them as they introduce themselves then goes back to those notes during the training to help him engage with individuals in a meaningful way.

As part of teaching classes on restorative justice, white privilege, institutional racism or implicit bias, facilitator/trainer Bourgeois shares painful experiences he had as a third grader and a sixth grader while growing up in New Orleans. He says he wants to touch his participants' hearts first because he believes if he can do that, it can create real change.

Seventh-grade English teacher Clarice Swanson, who started teaching in the 1990s (but took a huge break to raise her family) says that when she returned to the classroom, she noticed a wide swath of culture and education theories evolving. She took several courses to learn more from her younger colleagues.

"It's interesting to hear from my colleagues who have a wide spread of backgrounds. I can hear the tone of voice from some who have great ease with which they talk about sensitivity and implicit bias and others who find it awkward, nerve-racking and a bit intimidating," she says.

For Bethel EA member Sandi Rothman, taking these courses was a fortunate accident.

"I joined the WEA class I saw on the website when I was looking for clock hours. I had a goal of reaching the next pay scale so why not? The class was way beyond what I thought. The trainers made it an extremely safe environment to ask any questions. The next day was a 7 a.m. training and I was excited to log on and get started," says Rothman, who teaches fifth grade.

"We don't get the opportunity to take classes that help us build relationships with students," Kent EA inclusion teacher Katrina Ohlemiller says. The 25-year veteran teacher says that even as she heads into the last part of her career, there is always new information to learn. She estimates she has taken about a dozen of these kinds of courses over the last year.

Our member participants are not the only ones who are energized by repeat trainings.

"It has been a phenomenal experience for me just in the interactions," says Bourgeois. He says he calls himself "Captain Vulnerable" because, "sharing your heart allows people to share their own heart or to reflect deeply."

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– Joe Bourgeois

Bourgeois says he recalls staying on Zoom with some of the participants for an extra hour after one of his three-hour courses. "I apply my own truths and I share my vulnerability which empowers participants to speak their own hurts and truths."

"What I liked most," Rothman says, "is that, as a white woman, I felt I had a safe space to ask the questions I wanted to ask. I loved how the trainings truly allowed us to look at ourselves first and get the feeling of how this learning affects us as humans before I share my new knowledge with my students starting day one of this new school year."

Swanson says that the courses have raised her awareness on implicit bias, race and LGBTQ issues.

"I consider myself to be a compassionate, caring teacher but one who can always learn more and recognizes that trends in culture and sensitivity are aspects that always evolve over time," Swanson says. "It's not good to fall behind. If we want to be relevant (to our students) we must be informed. I want the awareness I have of my students' backgrounds and social emotional levels to be a guide as I present opportunities for learning."

Bourgeois says he doesn't approach what he does as if he knows everything, but from a space of openness. "All I have to gain is a meaningful relationship," he says. "I have no judgments. I just want to help break down those barriers that exist."



Clarice Swanson



Sandi Rothman



Joe Bourgeois



Katrina Ohlemiller

Each of our students have a unique perspective on what happens in our campuses and communities. For students of color in particular, their experiences may not match what administrators think. When 2020 racial justice protests in Snohomish surfaced stories of racial harm in their town, students of color picked up video cameras to share their experiences and perspectives. The resulting

Honoring student voices for racial justice



Snohomish residents were interviewed about their experiences leading up to and following the May 2020 protests in their community for "What Happened on First Street," a documentary produced by two Snohomish graduates.

film, "What Happened on First Street," surfaces stories of racism and discrimination that amplifies a call to action to address racism in Snohomish.

"I knew me and both of my sisters had experienced racism, along with other community members of color," says film co-creator Drake Wilson. "I made this film wanting to make Snohomish a better place, knowing my sister would continue living and learning in the community for the next coming years."

Wilson and co-creator Carolyn Yip, both graduates of Snohomish Public Schools, recorded the stories of students, community members, educators and other leaders and chronicled the racial justice protests of 2020 with an eye to the changes still needed. The hurt they surfaced reveals the need to take action in the schools and town to address ongoing racism.

"Watching this film is uncomfortable for some — they're in the process of learning and reflecting," Yip notes. "We have to realize that some people live in ignorance and just don't know what's happening. In the movie we come from a place of caring and not attacking, spreading empathy and caring for each other to help things move forward."

Snohomish Education Association (SEA), working with the Snohomish for Equity coalition, supported the film project and saw it as an important tool to help white neighbors understand the work needed to address ongoing racism.

"Every person of color has lived experiences that are very real that I just don't have access to," reflects Justin Fox-Bailey, president of Snohomish Education Association. "There's a well of experiences that are racist, traumatizing, and painful that keep coming up."

"There's a part in the film where one of the students who had no intention of speaking at the Juneteenth rally felt like if she didn't say something she'd regret it. She spoke and it was this amazing outpouring, and she shared incident after incident beginning with, 'When I was in third grade it was the first time someone called me the n- word.' We need to move beyond the trauma to create change, but we have to respect that is the lived experience of the colleagues, students, and communities which we all serve."

The 2020 protests resulted in students developing a list of demands for the school system which SEA adopted and bargained with the district. Now Snohomish Public Schools is moving forward to create more inclusive and welcoming schools, but there's more work to be done.

"Educators need to listen to the students and young people, and then take responsibility," Yip says. "We as young people do what we can to share our voices and perspectives. Educators can listen to what students are saying and then take action to work on changing things."

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At a glance

Do you know the difference between long-term care and long-term disability insurance? Take a look because both have enrollment deadlines.

Long-Term DISABILITY Insurance	Long-Term CARE Insurance
Pays for wage replacement when you are disabled	Pays for services and supports when you need help with daily living activities
Part of SEBB benefits	WA Cares for every worker in WA after meeting vesting requirement
Supplemental coverage available through employee-paid premium. Rate will depend on age and coverage level. Visit FAQ for SEBB-eligible employees at https://www.hca.wa.gov/assets/pebb/sebb-ltd-faqs-2021.pdf	Funded through a 0.58% payroll deduction
Fall 2021 – All SEBB employees will be automatically enrolled in supplemental coverage for 60% wage replacement; can take action to reduce to 50% wage replacement or opt for only employer-paid coverage of \$400 per month	Automatically enrolled unless you permanently opt-out.
Opt-out or reduced supplemental coverage can be selected during open enrollment .	Opt-out window through WA Cares site 10/1/21-12/31/22; must prove you have LTC coverage
Myaccount.hca.wa.gov/auth	wacaresfund.wa.gov

TOOLS from Page 9

Ohlemiller says she leaves these classes with a feeling of camaraderie, and with more tools in her toolbox to give students the resources they need to reach their fullest potential.

Swanson says that while it may not always feel 100 percent comfortable to go with the flow, she appreciates the way the facilitators help walk participants through and allow for discussion along the way.

Rothman says she is planning her desk arrangements around how Restorative Justice circles can happen in a small portable with 26 students already on her class list.

Ohlemiller says she absolutely uses what she has learned in these classes. She mentions giving students a lot of choices in how they complete their work; providing many opportunities for them to share culture, using preferred pronouns, and making sure her students' names are pronounced correctly.

For those who are “on the fence” about dipping a toe in by taking one of these courses, Bourgeois says he would ask people not to limit themselves by saying there isn't enough time but instead to reflect upon the fear of what one might discover about oneself.

“We have to take a lot of PD (professional development) about testing and other requirements,” says Ohlemiller, who took every class that she could. “I'm doing it because students don't remember what you taught them, but how you treated them.”

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A safe space at school

When Miguel A. Saldaña was a student at Washington State University, his daily routine was to attend class then drop in at the Chicano-Latino Center. If he didn't have class that day, he still would go to the center. "It was a home away from home," he recalls.

The center was a positive, safe place where he could adjust to life in his new school community and explore new experiences with compassion with others who were just finding their way on campus, too. Now, as dean of students at Pasco High School, he wants to replicate and build a dream center of sorts, similar to what he had, for high schoolers. It's an idea he's had percolating for several years and one he raised at the 2020 WEA Representative Assembly after attending a presentation on how to create a Dream Center at the National Council of Urban Education Association (NCUEA).

He points to the Alhambra High School and the Lincoln High School Dream Centers as examples of what could be replicated in Washington. Both centers, housed in high schools in Alhambra and Los Angeles, Calif., respectively, offer safe spaces for immigrant students to share their experiences, develop their interpersonal skills, and advocate for social justice. Staff at the centers support students and families with referrals to free or low-cost legal, academic and health services, organize college and university field trips, and offer internships to help students develop leadership skills in public speaking, event organizing and recruitment among other services. Both centers are sponsored by a partnership between multiple organizations including Asian Americans Advancing Justice, NEA, United Teachers, California Teachers Association, and the California Faculty Association.

For starters, Saldaña envisions a place where students can drop in just to take a breather.

"Often times, students just need an academic and emotional break," he says. "The majority of the students get referred to us because they leave the classroom without permission."

"There's no place for them to just chill out," he says. "They're

simply emotionally charged. If they have a space to go for 15 minutes to calm down and self-regulate emotionally, that's fine, there's the space for them. In the real world, we can practice and create that atmosphere if we need it. We can modify the atmosphere but here, now, students can't."



'When we look at the students who are involved in extracurricular activities, they already have that connector. This is for those who don't have the connectors and feel they do not belong.'

— Miguel A. Saldaña

A dream center, he says, would allow students to interact and develop social-emotional skills. It would complement, even enhance, existing school services offered. Additional options, such as tutoring, writing resumes, applying to college, as well as a place for family meetings and more could be added. Center hours would be limited to lunch and after school.

"It would be a complement to the services we have and wouldn't replace," notes Saldaña, adding that he plans to visit the dream centers in California and learn to build the center's offerings incrementally. In his vision, a dream center would be a place for all students to use, in particular historically marginalized and traditionally underrepresented groups, and every high school would have such a space.

"When we look at the students who are involved in extracurricular activities, they already have that connector," he says. "This is for those who don't have the connectors and feel they do not belong."

For now, the Pasco educator says he's waiting on room and additional buy-in at his school to create the first Dream Center in the Tri-Cities and in Washington. The pandemic put a stop to initial plans and he's hoping to restart plans soon. He still has a \$13,000 CAPE grant from NEA to start creating the space. He's met with his building principal, but his administration wants to make the center focus on academics while Saldaña wants it to be about relationships.

"For me there's a lot of academic arrays," he says. "I want to make it more about serving social emotional needs that I have identified over the last 14 years. It's about when students come back or see me at the store and express, 'When I came to the office and you gave me candy or you gave me water, or you let me stay for 15 minutes that I really needed.' I say this with certainty, they won't remember me for teaching them about solving quadratic equations or defining geometric figures. It's about social and human capital."