



Mortland's reply to 'Education 2.0'

By Ken Mortland

Ken Mortland is a member of the Mainstream Republicans of Washington Board, the WEA-Retired Board, the WEA Republican Educators Caucus, and the NEA Republican Leaders Conference. He retired with 37 years of classroom experience in the Northshore School District and 41 years experience in educational policy.

Freedom Foundation's assessment of government-run schools is absurd! The quotes you see below are taken from the Freedom Foundation's newly released *Education 2.0*.

"Today, almost everyone agrees that our government-run schools are not good enough."

Not everyone agrees! The George H.W. Bush administration commissioned a study by Sandia

Laboratories of Texas, which reported, "Much of the 'crisis' commentary today claims total system-wide failure in education. Our research shows that this is simply not true." The Bush administration tried first to "referee" the report, meaning modify its content, to reduce the impact. When that failed, because all the data Sandia used was government data, the Bush administration tried to bury the report. Fortunately, it was printed in educational journals before it could be buried.

I submit that the only place you will find consensus about the poor quality of America's schools is among people seeking to obtain taxpayer support for charter schools, for-profit private

schools, and voucher programs. They must first convince America that its schools are substandard before they can expect to separate public school funding from public schools and apply it to private, parochial, and for-profit schools. Then they expect to extend support for taxpayer funding of vouchers.

"Unfortunately, the most commonly heard answer is that they just need more tax dollars."

This claim is most egregious right now, as educational funding has been slashed to meet budget reduction requirements. The evidence that public education, particularly

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President's Message

As I write, the papers are full of Black Friday ads, the failure of the Congressional "Super Committee" and the upcoming Special Legislative Session. The theme for the week would be "revenue" ... In layperson terms, it's all about the money.

The topic of money is all around us. Movies have been



Kit Raney, WEA-Retired president

written from 1924 silent film *Greed* to this year's *Moneyball*. In between you'll find *Color of Money*, *Easy Money*, *The Money Pit*, and *Two for the Money*. Forbes Magazine actually rated the "Top Ten Films About Money" with *Wall Street* coming in at number 1 and *American Psycho* at number 10.

And then there is the music about money: Dire Straits' *Money For Nothing*, ABBA's *Money Money Money*, Steve Miller Band's *Take the Money and Run*, Pink Floyd's *Money* and that old country western classic, *If My Nose Was Running Money, Honey, I'd Blow It All On You*.

This money talk can be summed up by the Liza Minnelli/Joel Grey song from *Cabaret*, *Money Makes the World Go Round*. If I had any doubt, it was dispelled by Costco's ability to spend over \$22 million to "buy" via the Initiative process, the ability to sell hard liquor in their stores. To put that amount in perspective, \$22 million is more than the 2011-12 budget of the Granite Falls School District (approximately \$20 million).

Like it or not, money does make the world go round, particularly in the world of public opinion. Costco had \$22 million to spend on an initiative. Currently, Stand for Children WA PAC has raised over \$260,000 in 2011 and rumor has it that their goal is to raise at least a million for the 2012 election cycle. Stand is only one of many groups with political agendas which are definitely not aligned with ours.

If we were still working and shared a school site, now would be the time when I would be coming around with WEA-PAC forms in order to sign you up (only during our duty-free time, of course). And at least one of you would decline to join WEA-PAC because 1. You're not political; 2. You care about kids, not politics; or 3. It doesn't make any difference anyway.

My response? Almost every part of our jobs as educators is determined by elected officials – from curriculum to number of school days to healthcare to pensions. Legislative action and public votes decide what

materials can be provided for students. And low income students feel the impact outside of school, in their healthcare, counseling, and even food.

As for excuse number 3: if not us, who? WEA has over 80,000 members, in every community across the state. WE MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

Please join with the other members in WEA-PAC, our political action arm. I want WEA-Retired members to help us enter the 2012 election cycle with a strong retired presence. I want us to do our part to support the profession that we love. The first step is to have every WEA-Retired member also be a WEA-PAC member. Complete the membership form on the next page and mail it in, or go to <http://www.ourvoicewashingtonea.org/formconfirm.html> to download a copy of the membership form.

Retire from your position, not from your profession. And add your \$15 to WEA-PAC to make our world 'go round' in a direction that will benefit public education.

Contact Information: WEA-Retired

E-mail:
WEARetired@washingtonea.org
or raneyk@aol.com

Website:
www.washingtonea.org/retired

Mailing address:
P.O. Box 9100
Federal Way, WA 98063-9100

WEA PAC

Your Voice – Your Vote
Membership Form

Washington Education Association Political Action Committee

Membership Information (required)

Name _____ Home E-mail Address or Phone Number _____
 Home Address _____ School District/Employer _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Local Association _____
 Job Title _____

Contribution Options—There are two ways to become a member:

Option 1: Easy Pay – A monthly WEA-PAC contribution from your checking account

VOIDED CHECK REQUIRED IF CHOOSING OPTION 1

Make the minimum contribution by choosing your employee category.

- ☐ K-12 certificated staff, full-time higher education staff, WEA staff, UniServ or affiliated staff: **\$1.67 per month.**
☐ ESP staff, part-time higher education staff, WEA-Retired or WEA Student: **\$1.25 per month.**

OR help us speak louder and choose a higher monthly contribution.

- ☐ \$4 ☐ \$6 ☐ \$10 (silver) ☐ \$20 (gold)

AND support national efforts by adding a monthly contribution to your federal PAC, The NEA Fund for Children and Public Education.

- ☐ \$1 ☐ \$2 ☐ \$5 ☐ \$10

VOIDED CHECK REQUIRED IF CHOOSING OPTION 1

I hereby authorize the WASHINGTON EDUCATION ASSOCIATION (WEA) to initiate debit entries to my checking account indicated below and the credit union/bank named below, hereinafter called BANK, to debit the same to such account. I will not hold BANK liable for any erroneous debits made by the WEA.

Conditions: This authorization is to remain in full force and effect until BANK has received written notification from me of its termination in such time and in such manner as to afford BANK a reasonable opportunity to act on it. A customer has the right to stop payment of a debit entry by notification to BANK prior to charging account. After account has been charged, a customer has the right to have the amount of the erroneous debit immediately credited to his/her account by BANK up to fifteen (15) days following issuance of statement or forty-five (45) days after the charge, whichever occurs first. Deductions will be made on the 10th day of the month, except when the 10th falls on a weekend or holiday, in which case the deduction will occur on the next business day.

Signature _____ Date _____

Thank you for joining WEA-PAC. Your contribution works to support children and public education.

Signature (required)

Option 2: Annual Contribution

The WEA-PAC membership year is September through August.

If using Option 2, choose your method of payment:

- ☐ Cash ☐ Check ☐ VISA ☐ MasterCard

If you prefer to make your contribution as a lump sum, choose your employee category.

- ☐ K-12 certificated staff, full-time higher education staff, WEA staff, UniServ or affiliated staff: **\$20 annual.**
☐ ESP staff, part-time higher education staff, WEA-Retired or WEA Student: **\$15 annual.**

OR help us speak louder and choose a higher contribution.

- ☐ \$48 ☐ \$72 ☐ \$120 (silver) ☐ \$240 (gold) ☐ Other \$ _____
 (Make **separate** check payable to WEA-PAC.)

AND support national efforts by adding a contribution to your federal PAC, The NEA Fund for Children and Public Education.

- ☐ \$12 ☐ \$24 ☐ \$60 ☐ \$120 ☐ Other \$ _____
 (Make **separate** check payable to NEA-FCPE.)

If using a credit card, fill in the following:

Account number _____

Expiration date ____ / ____

Exact name on card _____

Signature of cardholder _____



Automatic Credit Card Renewal Option

- ☐ I hereby authorize WEA-PAC to deduct the amount indicated above annually in the month of September from the credit card listed above. Such deductions will cease upon written notification no less than 30 days prior to the scheduled deduction date.

Note: Credit card information obtained from WEA members is used only to charge credit card accounts for authorized contributions to WEA-PAC and/or The NEA Fund for Children and Public Education. This information is held in strict confidentiality and will under no circumstances be transferred to third parties.

Conditions: I understand that contributions to WEA-PAC and to The NEA Fund for Children and Public Education ("NEA Fund") are voluntary; making a contribution is neither a condition of membership in the Association nor of employment; and that members have a right to refuse to contribute without suffering any reprisal. WEA-PAC and NEA Fund use the contributions which they collect for political purposes, including, but not limited to, in the case of WEA-PAC supporting friends of public education who are candidates for state and local office, and in the case of NEA Fund making contributions to and expenditures on behalf of candidates for federal office. Although NEA Fund suggests an annual contribution of \$12.00, this is only a suggestion; a member may contribute more or less than the suggested amount or not at all without affecting his or her membership status, rights, or benefits in NEA or WEA.

Federal law requires The NEA Fund to use its best efforts to collect and report the name, mailing address, occupation, and name of employer for each individual whose contributions aggregate in excess of \$200 in a calendar year.

Contributions or gifts to the WEA-PAC and NEA Fund for Children and Public Education are not deductible as charitable contributions for federal income tax purposes.

Signature _____ Date _____

Complete the form, sign and date it, and mail it to: WEA-PAC, PO Box 9100, Federal Way, WA 98063-9100.

Member Activities

One-to-One conversations

By Kit Raney, WEA-Retired president

The Fall 2011 issue of *WE 2.0* featured several articles about relational organizing. WEA members everywhere are engaging in meaningful conversations with one another to build stronger unions. WEA-Retired leadership recognized the importance of this organizing effort and also recognized the importance of having retired educators be a part of the conversations.

A training attended by about 30 WEA-Retired members was held at WEA on November 15 to learn how to do 1-to-1 conversations, and to make plans on how to complete them.

The training was led by Diane Flynn, a UniServ Director from Pilchuck UniServ Council; and Lisa Lewison, a UniServ Director from WEA-Riverside. Jim Fotter, Director of Advocacy and Organizing at WEA, talked to the group about the how these conversations fit into the bigger organizing picture, lessons learned from Wisconsin and how important and appreciated is our continued passion and commitment to public education and WEA.

After watching Marj Njaa, a WEA-Retired member from Marysville and WEA-Retired President Kit Raney model a 1-to-1 conversation, the participants got a chance to practice and get and give feedback. At the end of the day, they left ready and willing to have these conversations with other WEA-Retired members, knowing that WEA-Retired will be a stronger organization for their efforts.



Mary Lindsey and Johnnie Tucker share in One-to-One training at WEA headquarters.

Occupy Leavenworth



*By Nancy M. Miller
WEA-Retired editor, WE ... Too*

On November 15, more than a dozen Leavenworth residents, active teachers and members of WEA-Retired joined the nationwide demonstrations against social injustice and in favor of wiser policies to protect our national future.



PEBB: To leave or not to leave

"Hello?"

"Hello, is this Sandy?"

"Yes. What can I do for you?"

"I just talked to someone at WEA and they said you might be able to help me. I think....."

by Sandy Kokko

WEA-Retired Board Director

As soon as I hear "WEA" and "help me", my heart sinks. Most of these calls do not end well. And the number of calls like this are increasing.

The usual story is that the person calling is a retiree who made the decision to seek health care coverage outside the Washington State Health Care Authority (HCA) and left a Public Employees Benefit Board (PEBB) program. The reasons for leaving at the time vary and are really not important. **What is important is that they did not call to see what other options were available and, more importantly, what the consequences of leaving PEBB would be.**

They are now calling WEA in the hope that WEA can plead their case with the HCA so they can return to a PEBB program. People often joke about the IRS not having a sense of humor. Well, you can add HCA/PEBB right up there with them. We often make decisions we regret later, especially when the decisions are made under times of stress. If you or someone you know is considering leaving PEBB for other health coverage, think **thrice** about it. **Talk to someone before making the final decision.** **It is better to ask the questions two or three times beforehand than to deal with the consequences after the fact.**

Olympia Rally — Day of Action

Below, WEA-Retired Board Director Michael Comstock, NEA Board Director Kim Mead and WEA President Mary Lindquist at the Olympia Rally.



Above, Pat Roberts-Dempsey, WEA-Retired Board Director, and Herb Dempsey at the Olympia Rally.

WEA-Retired members joined with WEA members from across the state for a rally in Olympia against any more cuts to public education. This was part of the November 28 Day of Action.

Defending pensions: New studies on retirement plan choices

By N. McKenzie
NEA (NMckenzie@nea.org)

New Resources for Defending Pensions: Recent Studies on Retirement Plan Choices and Cost

The National Institute on Retirement Security (NIRS) has published two new reports that may be helpful to you. The reports show that defined benefit (DB) plans are both highly attractive to employees AND also are more cost effective for employers and taxpayers over other retirement plan designs. They add to the body of evidence that DB plans provide a “win-win” approach to retirement security.

1. Retirement Plan Choices: DB or DC?

Some of those opposed to defined benefit (DB) plans argue that traditional pensions are unfair to younger employees/teachers. They argue that younger employees would prefer to participate in defined contribution (DC) plans because they offer greater flexibility and portability. There is solid evidence, however, that public employees have not flocked to DC plans when offered a choice.

Certain states offer public employees a choice between a defined benefit (DB) pension plan and a 401(k)-type defined contribution (DC) plan. A new study finds that when given a choice, employees strongly prefer DB pensions over DC plans. The study, “Decisions, Decisions: Retirement Plan Choices for Public Employees and Employers,” was conducted by the National Institute on Retirement Security (NIRS) and Milliman, Inc. It examines seven state retirement systems that offer a choice between DB and DC plans. It finds that the percentage of new employees who select a DB plan over a DC option ranges from 98% to 75%. The seven plans

that were analyzed for the study include the Colorado Public Employees’ Retirement Association, Florida Retirement System, Montana Public Employee Retirement Administration, North Dakota Public Employees Retirement System, Ohio Public Employees Retirement System, State Teachers Retirement System of Ohio, and South Carolina Retirement Systems. The study is available at www.milliman.com and www.nirsonline.org.

2. Retirement Plan Cost: DB versus DC

In today’s challenging economic conditions, some policymakers and employers aim to save money by replacing DB retirement plans with DC plans for public employees. However, a new study clearly demonstrates that DB plans are far more cost-effective than DC plans and concludes that New York City’s DB pension plans can deliver the same retirement income as a DC plan at almost 40% less costs.

The report, “A Better Bang for New York City’s Buck,” found that DB savings come from three main sources: superior investment returns, better management of longevity risk, and portfolio diversification. The study was carried out by the National Institute on Retirement Security (NIRS) and Pension Trustee Advisors (PTA) on behalf of the New York City Comptroller John Liu using data from the five New York City retirement systems. This analysis provides important insight for policymakers, employers, and employees who want to ensure adequate retirement income at the lowest cost. The study is available at www.nirsonline.org and [Office of the New York City Comptroller John C. Liu](#).

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in Washington state, is underfunded is enormous. Only someone who opposes free universal public education would ignore that information and make such a biased comment. Several decades ago, Washington's courts agreed with school districts and private citizens that the state had failed to fund education adequately and meet the state's "paramount duty." Once again, citizens are in court. We await the court's decision.

"And the cry for increased funding is most often accompanied by an implicit — or even explicit — refusal to consider any fundamental change or innovation."

This is by far the most stunningly biased comment of all. The record is replete with huge undertakings by public schools and teachers' unions to improve the quality of education.

- Two decades ago, a new and better teacher certification program was begun in Washington. Teachers in these

"internship" programs spent a year in classroom training and collegiate work, not just the one quarter that had been standard. The parallel is the internship process doctors go through. Teachers certified under these programs are far more likely to succeed and stay in the profession.

- Graduation rates, though lower than we would like, are at or near all-time highs.

- EAs have been working with their district counterparts since 2000 to improve the teacher evaluation protocols. Several association/district efforts were done before the 2010 law that mandated such an effort. Seventeen associations and school districts across the state are working together on evaluation pilots right now. Their efforts will be the basis for new evaluation protocols in 2013.

There is no institution that couldn't improve itself. Educational institutions have improved significantly and must continue to do so. But little is served by denying the improvements that have

been made and instead boldly proclaiming system-wide failure.

Plan 1 COLA challenge

From Kit Raney

WEA filed a challenge to the legislative appeal of the Plan 1 COLA Oct. 12, 2011 in Thurston County Superior Court. WEA filed as an "association" claim, not as class actions, however Stacia Bilsland was named as an affected member. Yay Stacia!!

WFSE filed their challenge in Thurston Superior Court on Oct. 11.

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**Answering Education
2.0**

**Examining Pension
Choices**

The only retired organization affiliated with WEA and NEA



Statewide, retired and active leadership and members unite to fight further cuts to the educational system, and in favor of more prudent policies.