

**REA Members,**

**As we gear up to head back to work tomorrow, here are a few REA things to put on your radar:**



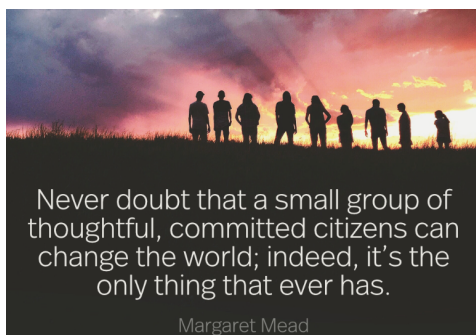
- 1. Preschool Program task force invitation**
- 2. Save the Date: March 16th Renton specific student behavior PD hosted by REA**
- 3. Raise the Wage Renton: REA Members leading community change!**
- 4. School based member organizing & empowerment: show up to get things done!**

## **Preschool Program Task Force Invitation**

### **From REA Member Leader Erin Rouso**

Meadow Crest's Preschool Program is struggling to get enough typically developing students in our program so that we can be inclusive. Therefore, I am putting together a Preschool Task Force to try to help our preschool programs grow despite Bezos' Academy next door, which is free and full day, and the full day free charter school that will be opening up in Renton next school year with 120 preschool spots. This is not going to be a gripe session. My vision is that over the next several years we can get our program to be full day. This would require an additional building and more certified early childhood teachers, which are hard to come by. To do that we/the district will need funding. How do we get funding? Legislative action. We need to talk to the city council, the legislators, etc. In the meantime we also need to think of creative ideas to get more people to join our program. That is my vision but it may be tweaked as we get going on this. **Our initial meeting will be Tuesday, the 28<sup>th</sup> at 4:15PM at Meadow Crest.** Please let me, Erin Rousu, know if you would like to be a part of this taskforce and I will send you a calendar update.

You can email me at my work email for this @ [erin.rouso@rentonschools.us](mailto:erin.rouso@rentonschools.us) Thank you!



***Save the Date!***  
***March 16th Student***  
***Behavior PD***

REA Member Leader Tana Peterson and WEA Staff Sally McNair are co-hosting the first of a NEW series of zoom events this spring! These are designed by and for Renton educators to develop skills, improve your access to resources to better meet our students' SEL and behavior needs, and to strengthen your school's discipline plan.

**We will review changes to state law, current RSD policies and your building's discipline support plans and generate options** for how YOU can become empowered to build a positive school culture of learning. We must build accountability mechanisms to ensure Tier 1 interventions are in place and Tier 2 follow through using MTSS (if you don't know what that is, PLEASE COME TO THIS PD!).

Mark your calendar, for **March 16, (4:00-6:00 on zoom)**. A formal invite will be coming soon with more details!

## Raise the Wage Renton: REA Members leading community change!



How does increasing the minimum wage in Renton affect learning and teaching conditions? Students' home lives dictate how ready they are to learn at school. Trauma from COVID, systemic forms of oppression and poverty are the underlying cause for many if not most of the struggles we face. Minimum wage increases won't fix skyrocketing housing costs but it WILL lift up the working poor families of our kids. [Click here to learn more!](#)

[Here are the slides \(also pasted below\)](#) diving into the ballot measure that your building reps received to share at your building meeting this month.

Please read through the slides and reach out to [julianna.dauble@washingtonea.org](mailto:julianna.dauble@washingtonea.org) with questions before [taking the survey!](#)

**Rep Council voted to endorse the ballot measure campaign and request MEMBER INPUT to determine what level of support REA will give!**

With REA's involvement, collecting 9,000 valid signatures of Renton voters by the end of June is possible! Once it is on the November ballot, activists and organizers will continue to build support.



The campaign needs more than volunteers: we need monetary donations to print the initiatives and signs and to support our data systems and field workers who are committed to knocking on as many doors as we can!.

On March 7th Rep Council will review the results of the member survey **(CLICK HERE TO SHARE YOUR LEVEL OF SUPPORT)** to help us set a financial contribution amount from REA's community outreach funds (which currently are going unspent). Building reps will also debate a strategy for REA members to engage in signature gathering, social media and other activities! If you'd like to attend this meeting as an active REA member, email [apnguyen@washingtonea.org](mailto:apnguyen@washingtonea.org) or Julianna.



Power

A bargaining relationship is based upon power...real and perceived...and if you do not have power when you go to the table, you won't find it when you get there.

## When the People Lead, the Leaders Follow

With so many struggles facing the work of educators, contract enforcement is a foundational aspect of unionism. So far this year FIVE

SCHOOLS have engaged in collective action to problem solve systemic issues in their buildings, many related to assuring building level administrators are not only following the contract but are authentically engaging MEMBERS to make decisions for how our schools function. As each school has different needs, REA Members identified priorities and took action by some or all of the following: co-writing a statement of concern, gathering signatures of support, presenting it to district leadership and responding to the options presented. The work doesn't stop there. Elevating awareness to issues that aren't being solved with what RSD has made available is the next step whether that is through school board communication, legislative advocacy, parent/family listening sessions, outside consulting/organizational collaboration, and more.

The problems within Renton are not unique to our district. What IS UNIQUE IS YOU, your ideas and YOUR POWER AS UNION MEMBERS.

If you have building-based or work group issues that you think need to be addressed beyond labor management, **join our next Sunday Zoom Drop in on March 12th from 1:00-2:30 pm.** Reach out to your colleagues and get them to come to this union only space to identify shared concerns and to plan for changes that can be made to improve your working conditions and student learning outcomes! **REGISTER HERE** AND SHARE THAT LINK WITH YOUR COLLEAGUES WHO NEED TO BE ASKED DIRECTLY BY YOU TO SHOW UP!

# WHAT IS



# ?

- ❑ Citizen-led coalition to raise the wage from \$15.74 to ~ \$19 in 2024 for large business, medium businesses in 2025. Small businesses exempted.
- ❑ 3-year phase-in period to support transition
- ❑ 9,000 signatures by Renton residents are needed by June 2023 in order to appear on November 2023 ballot

## Facts Driving This Community Campaign (led by Renton Residents)



- ❑ Currently a worker making \$15 minimum wage must work a 72 hour week to afford a one bedroom apartment in Renton at Fair Market Rent
- ❑ An average worker in Renton spends 60% of their income on rent
- ❑ 35% of Renton residents are living paycheck-to-paycheck.
- ❑ Rent control isn't allowed in Washington-without slowing the out of control housing costs, raising the bottom income has an immediate effect on working families

# How does this impact our schools?



The single biggest concern amongst educators is unmet student Needs: behavior challenges, mental health concerns and lack of parent/home support for kids struggling the most. Here are two Renton High School students speaking to this issue:

[Bailey's Video Link](#)

[Xandra's Video Link](#)

- ❑ Parents living in poverty working 2-3 jobs to survive don't have time to support their child's schooling
- ❑ More teens than ever are forced to work in order to support their family. Juggling school and a job is reality for many high schoolers
- ❑ Students see widening wealth inequality, violence and increasing global instability; democracy of this kind models how change can occur to directly improve the lives of their neighbors

# Reasoning for this initiative



- ❑ Housing costs are skyrocketing, making it harder than ever for families to support their child's schooling (rent control isn't allowed currently in WA)
- ❑ Seattle, SeaTac, Tukwila have all raised their wages much higher than the state minimum; Renton must be next to stay competitive, attract workers and stabilize our local economy
- ❑ Corporate profits do not translate to benefiting the working class but higher wages DIRECTLY improve lives
- ❑ Families of Renton students deserve to have educators actively working towards justice at the most local and impactful level possible

# Questions We Must Ask



## Does raising the minimum wage increase inflation?\*

- ❑ Rising inflation rates are due partly to supply 'bottlenecks'. IMF says close to half of inflation came from supply shocks, estimated at about 45–50% in the US.
- ❑ Inflation is also due to increased profits from US corporations, comprising as much as 44% of the inflationary increase in costs, contributing to a 3% inflation rate on all goods and services.
- ❑ US inflation is much higher than wages, which are only growing at between 3-4%, which means real wages are going *down* for most Americans.

\*See slide notes below for citations

# Questions We Must Ask



## How many families in RSD will benefit from this?

Two indicators:

- ❑ 8.25k people out of 101k, or 8.14% of the population in Renton, WA live below the poverty line. The largest demographic living in poverty are Females 25 - 34.
- ❑ Out of 14,750 pupils enrolled in the RSD, 7,455, or 50.5% are income eligible for free/reduced lunches.
- ❑ Small business owners, many of whom have kids in our schools, are exempted from the higher wage



## Questions We Must Ask

- Does raising the wage impact our own Renton School District workers?

Yes, as ESPs bargain contracts, the higher wage can be leveraged to increase the wage of RSD employees.

- What are the impacts on small/medium businesses?

The smallest of the businesses (<15 workers) will be exempt and medium size (16-499 workers) will be given an extra year to transition.

Large businesses (over 500 employees) will offer higher wages initially but smaller businesses can improve working conditions more easily with secure scheduling and sick leave to attract workers



## Endorsements (since Jan. 18th launch)

Elected leaders, including King County Council members support this and are working on supporting legislation.  
Other early elected endorsers are:



Renton City Councilmember  
Carmen Rivera



11th LD WA State Senator  
Bob Hasegawa



Highline Education  
Association



Rainier UniServ Council



Seattle DSA



Labor for Black Lives  
Collective



Transit Riders Union



Professional & Technical  
Employees Local 17  
(PROTEC17)

## REA's Next Steps to Win this Campaign



REA's Rep council adopted the proposal from our Organizing Committee (ROC) and Political Action Committee (PAC) to ENDORSE the campaign.

To decide how REA will support this campaign, monetarily and in mobilizing members to gather signatures and share support on social media, a member survey has been sent to all members to determine-YOUR VOICE IS NEEDED to guide your building reps!

Survey to [members HERE](#)

All REA members are welcome and encouraged to attend and participate in debate on this at the March 7th rep council meeting; however only elected building reps may vote.

Email [apnguyen@washingtonea.org](mailto:apnguyen@washingtonea.org) or Julianna for the details to attend Rep Council!