



we2.0

Washington Education Association
Volume 61, Number 4 – Fall 2023

Teachers teaching teachers

WEA Teacher Residency program, the first union-led teacher preparation program in the nation, allows residents to learn and teach alongside veteran educators.

A map to the road ahead

We all know about the importance of planning. We also know that a solid plan does not guarantee success in the classroom or worksite, but without a plan, success is much more random and our ability to evaluate our work is much more challenging.



Larry Delaney
WEA President

WEA is no different than our workspace and classroom. Without a plan, we lack structure to prioritize how best to use our limited resources and we can find ourselves being pulled in a myriad of directions.

It has been many years since WEA has had what I would describe as a true strategic plan. In fact, our last effort at this nearly a decade ago was simply a description of all the work we were doing at the time.

We have historically been an initiative-driven organization: Think I-732, I-1351 and McCleary, just to name a few. And prior to COVID, these initiatives were our North Star: educator COLAs, smaller class sizes and fully funding public education. We went from McCleary into COVID, and now that we are in the post-pandemic world, WEA needs to better define its purpose. We need to have a simple and clearly articulated plan that will outline our work into the next decade and beyond.

One thing is clear: WEA cannot be the Washington *Everything* Association. We have limited resources, and we cannot do our best work when we are pulled in different directions. We do our best work when we have members, leaders and staff aligned with a shared vision grounded in equity and justice.

The creation of a strategic plan and vision for a statewide organization of our size will take about a year, and I am excited to be able to lead this work in 2024, with the goal of presenting the finished

product to our 2025 WEA Representative Assembly for approval.

I understand that the development of a strategic plan may cause concern among some of our members and staff, but it is through conversations with members and staff that it has become clear to me that this is something that we need.

It also needs to be noted that the plan and vision that will be developed will not be Larry's plan or Janie's plan, but a plan that belongs to all of us as one WEA community. Its creation will require input from all stakeholders in our union — active and retired members, state and local governance, management and staff. And a variety of focus groups will convene in the coming year to gather input and test assumptions.

So, if you are interested in being a part of one of our focus groups, please reach out to Janie or me. If you are interested in participating in this process through one of our official WEA member caucuses — Black Caucus, Latinx Caucus, LGBTQ+ Caucus, Asian/Pacific Islander/Middle Eastern (APIM) Caucus, Native American and Alaskan Native Caucus, Badass Teachers Caucus (BATS), also please reach out to me and I can connect you with the respective caucus leadership.

I have no doubt that this work will be difficult. The status quo will be challenged, and organizations historically protect established norms and traditions. But I also know that once this work is completed, WEA will be positioned to be an even stronger union for our members, students and communities.

I look forward to you all joining me in this work.

In solidarity,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Larry'.

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WEA is joining other education unions to call on legislators to increase pay for classified and adjunct faculty staff.

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When educators are respected and schools are funded, our students thrive. Members and staff tackled nearly 150 open contracts at bargaining tables this season.

6 Teachers teaching teachers

WEA leads a one-of-a-kind teacher preparation program in the nation — and helps the state build a diverse teacher workforce.



R • E • S • P • E • C • T

ESPs speak out for rESpect

From unlocking the school doors in the morning to supporting our most vulnerable students to making sure students get nutritious meals, our schools could not run without Education Support Professionals. But ESPs are severely underpaid, and even with full-time hours many are forced to hold second or third jobs. For Washington's Legislature to meet its obligation to provide high-quality public education to every child, it must act immediately to raise ESP wages.

"Our school can't function without ESPs," said Davina Diaz, a paraeducator and member of Seattle EA. "Our nutrition-services specialist, Ms. Latasha, consistently checks in with medically fragile room teachers and the nurses to make sure the food she provides is within the dietary restrictions and the sugar limits. And our bus monitors that bring the kids to school and make sure they're safe give me the heads up when a student has a really hard time and if it looks like Mom or Dad are out of town, they let teachers know if they're sad or mad. Our ESPs are the educators from behind the scenes."

Janice Kennish, president of the North Thurston Paraprofessionals, noted, "ESPs, in particular paraeducators, deserve to be paid a higher wage because we are required to have the highest education behind certificated staff but currently receive the lowest pay. We also work on a daily basis providing services certificated staff provide, just short of a few duties, for two-thirds to half the pay of certificated staff."

Paraeducator and Puyallup ESP member Alisha Rasmussen's mother, Seattle EA member Martha Rasmussen, also works as a paraeducator. She saw the impact that low wages had on her as a child.

"It's always been this way, that paras have to have 2-3 jobs

on top of full-time para work in order to scrape by," Alisha Rasmussen shared. "Not even to thrive, just to keep a roof over your head and your kids' head. That's how I grew up: My mom had 2-3 jobs in order for us to try to make it and sometimes that wasn't even enough."



Additionally, cost-of-living increases aren't keeping pace for lower-wage educators: Applying a percentage COLA raise to a smaller salary means the increase adds up to less as well.

"I have colleagues who go from their para job at 7 a.m. to

their night job pretty much immediately after school, and maybe get one day off a week because they have to work weekends, too. Some work 7 days a week between their para job and their other job in order to avoid becoming unhoused," Rasmussen pointed out. "It makes it hard for us to be able to engage in other things, like school for ourselves or being there for our kids' appointments, conferences or sports. It can cause real trauma for children, both the instability and that we can't be there."

ESP union members from across the state are using our collective power to urge lawmakers to raise wages. WEA members are joining SEIU 925, PSE and AFT members to campaign for increased funding for ESP wages in the 2024 legislative session. Already the coalition is planning to share our stories and to take action in-person and online. The best way to ensure ESPs get the wages and respect we need and deserve is to increase the funding coming from the state.

"I do have privilege in my job because I love what I do," said Diaz. "I know that I am going to a job that I enjoy and that's a privilege for me in my work, but that privilege is slowly being overtaken by the reality of the cost of living and not being able to maintain my living if I stay in the job I love."

Join educators across the state in raising our voices for better ESP wages.
Share your story at <https://wea.mobi/ESPpay>.

Read more about WEA's 2024 legislative priorities, Page 9

Lessons in solidarity

Across the state, WEA members worked together to fight for our students and each other

With nearly 150 open contracts in the 2023 bargaining season, it isn't surprising that a few of them bubbled over to the level of strikes or near-strikes. What's unusual this year is that three clustered in southwest Washington, creating the impression in that part of the state that "everyone is on strike."

It could be something in the water. Or it could be because next-door neighbors Evergreen and Camas were negotiating with districts that chose to spend large amounts of money hiring the union-busting Stevens Clay law firm out of Spokane rather than investing in educators.

In addition to similar scare tactics from both districts, many of the issues our members in both districts were facing were similar as well. Both Camas and Evergreen educators were striking over support for students with special needs, more planning time and compensation packages that keep up with inflation. That was a familiar refrain in nearby Battle Ground and in bargains all across the state this year.

It's unconscionable that the district is stockpiling \$16 million and then claiming they can't afford to support students. It's mismanagement. It's running it like a for-profit venture.'

— Marci Zabel
Camas EA President

On Monday, Aug. 28, the 450 members of Camas Education Association were the first to hit the sidewalks on what would have been their first day of school.

That evening, at its regularly scheduled meeting, the Camas School Board approved a resolution to direct Stevens Clay, "to take any and all lawful steps necessary to terminate any strike or concerted refusal to perform services by the certificated staff and other employees of the district." The resolution would also have authorized attorneys to sue individual employees for monetary damages. Despite the threat, the district never pursued legal action and Camas EA members prevailed. Threatening to take educators to court is a losing strategy!

As with many districts, lack of money was not an issue in Camas. The district was sitting on millions in general fund reserves.

"It's unconscionable that the district is stockpiling \$16 million and then claiming they can't afford to support students," said Camas EA President Marci Zabel. "It's mismanagement. It's running it like a for-profit venture."



Meanwhile, talks remained stalled in Evergreen and Evergreen Education Association President Kristie Peak echoed Zabel's sentiments: "Time after time, district management refuses to invest in our schools even though they have the funding for it. No one wants to go on strike but we'll do what we have to do to protect our students."

On Tuesday, Aug. 29, members in Battle Ground met for a bargaining update and to decide on next steps. With the first day of school scheduled for the next morning, members chose not to strike as negotiations proceeded.

Wednesday, Aug. 30, was the first scheduled day of classes for Evergreen EA as well. With no deal on the table, Evergreen members' picket lines went up that morning.

On Friday, Sept. 1, Evergreen's third day on the line, Camas was not picketing because that day was not a scheduled school day in the district. Many Camas members used their "day off" to join Evergreen educators at their schools and in front of district offices for a Full Force Friday mass picketing event.

At the end of seven-day strikes in both Camas and Evergreen, members won what they sought, and classes started on Friday, Sept. 8, in Camas, and Monday, Sept. 11, in Evergreen. Evergreen's tentative agreement came over the weekend and members reported to Evergreen High School for an early morning meeting to vote on it before starting school on a two-hour delay that Monday.

As in any negotiations, these settlements didn't include everything members had hoped to win for their students — but that's why there's a next contract!

Battle Ground's road to settlement was longer, but members were ultimately able to ratify an agreement on Tuesday, Sept. 26.

Battle Ground EA President Kim Bettger said, "Although collaboration and innovation take time, this process allowed us to explore new ways to better support students and families."

Several other locals across the state including Shoreline ESPs and North Kitsap also faced difficult bargains. North Kitsap EA's negotiations were off to such a rocky start that its members voted to authorize a strike and issued a vote of no confidence in the school board and Superintendent Laurynn Evans at its general membership meeting in mid-June. While contract talks concluded without a strike, work continues to resolve problems identified by parents and educators.

Most of the open contracts were settled by the beginning of the school year and around 35 remained in negotiations a month into the school year.

Working together, WEA members across the state made significant gains this year for their students, each other and their communities. That included weighted average salary increases of 4.7% for certificated members and 5.1% for ESP/classified members.

While the wage increase percentage was higher in ESP units than in certificated, there is still much to do to improve the wages and working conditions of classified school employees, both at the bargaining table and in the upcoming legislative session.

In addition to these improvements to their collective bargaining agreements, members won strong community support, a sense of united purpose and the confidence to advocate for public education knowing that being united in our union makes a difference.

Although most of this year's settlements are in, work continues to improve our schools alongside both longtime and newfound allies. During campaigns throughout the state, educators, parents and community members organized around their shared goal of better, safer schools. Students are counting on the adults in their lives for the strategy and planning around school-board races, legislative action and future contract campaigns it will take to make that happen.





The WEA Teacher Residency Program serves 16 residents in Federal Way, Mukilteo and Walla Walla, with a focus on training aspiring special-education teachers. Residents spend nine weeks in various learning settings, and the rotations are book-ended by two seven-week institutes focused on theory. Residents pay \$2,000 in tuition, and their school district pays them a minimum salary of \$35,000, including benefits.

Teaching the teachers

WEA-led residency program aims to reduce barriers for aspiring teachers

The WEA Teacher Residency Program brings new perspective to the aspiring educator landscape. Through this program, WEA is at the forefront of meeting the needs of aspiring educators through a program that truly reflects best practices for teaching throughout residency coursework, and is context-embedded, with residents learning to be effective teachers as they gain teaching experience in classrooms in their own communities.

This exceptional teacher-preparation program reduces barriers for aspiring teachers by partnering with school districts to implement a yearlong residency. Residents work alongside mentors in multiple rotations, each rotation at a different grade level and program type. The program is affordable, and residents receive a living wage throughout their teaching rotations. Beyond affordability, residents have access to trainers and mentors who are current teachers.

“This is my dream program,” says Meenakshi Boma, who is a teacher resident at Mark Twain Elementary in Federal Way. She works alongside mentor Gerald Rhoden, who teaches second grade. “It’s everything I dreamed about and more and I love it.”

Boma, along with Joshua Wisnubroto and Lauren Lewis, are residents in the inaugural class of the WEA Teacher Residency. Wisnubroto is learning alongside his mentor, Aaron Yniguez, in the Mukilteo School District, and Lewis is learning from mentor Trevor Nix in Walla Walla.

An important goal of the program is to diversify the teaching force in Washington by reducing barriers for educators of color to enter the teaching profession.

“I am excited to see this program grow and recruit more teachers of color for not only special education but for general education, too, so that staff reflect the student diversity in our schools,” says Rhoden.

The WEA Teacher Residency Program launched in June. In its inaugural year, it serves 16 residents across three school districts — Federal Way, Mukilteo and Walla Walla — with a focus on training aspiring special-education teachers.

One commonality across residents is their aspiration to become special-education teachers, but they are facing insurmountable barriers in achieving that goal. That is, until they found the WEA Teacher Residency Program.



More than a teacher-preparation program

Boma began her career in education as a one-to-one paraeducator 5 years ago, then transitioned to substitute teaching in 2019. Wisnubroto began his career as an inclusion paraeducator in a general-education classroom, eventually transitioning to substitute teaching as well. Lewis, after completing Teach for America, similarly started her education career as a paraeducator. While each of these aspiring educators had a foothold in education, becoming a certified classroom teacher proved difficult, as the traditional route did not meet their financial needs or honor the experience they already brought with them. The WEA Teacher Residency Program was the solution they needed.

The level of support and the opportunity to experience teaching at different grade levels are two elements that set the WEA Teacher Residency Program apart for these residents.

“It is incredible to have this huge support system. It is all-encompassing,” says Lewis of her experience in the residency program thus far. “I have been slowly taking over responsibility. This gradual release of responsibility style is really what I needed. I’m not thrown in there, but get to gradually take on more responsibility, so when I recently got to sub for my mentor, Trevor, it was crazy, but I felt ready.”

Wisnubroto who is serving his first rotation at ACES High School, an alternative high school in his community in south Everett, was attracted to the Teacher Residency Program partially because of the financial aspect, but mainly because of the mentor-teacher role. “I get to see an example of what to do and how to do it.”

While traditional programs provide only a single 10-to-12-week student teaching experience, Wisnubroto explains that the WEA program “is more hands on, with the opportunity to work with a wide demographic of students.” He points out the importance of learning about classroom management and dealing with



Lauren Lewis shares a lighter moment with mentor Trevor Nix. The teacher residency program, she says, offers a support system like no other.

student behaviors in real-time, which is not something he would get in a more traditional program.

Federal Way resident Boma agrees. “I have learned more in this first rotation than I have in my last five years working in this school district as a sub.” Boma also highlights the benefits of learning to address student behaviors in the moment.

“I am learning so much about classroom management,” she explains. “I’m having restorative conversations with students who are misbehaving, and I learned how from my mentor.”

Of the coursework, Boma points out the focus on diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) in all aspects of special education. “In our coursework we are learning about DEI and about IEPs (Individual Education Plans), and about having those difficult

conversations about race and ethnicity and responding to students and families in the ways they need.”

The program mentors echo the sentiments of the residents.

Yniguez in Mukilteo says of the program, “This program is an amazing opportunity for residents and mentors, but also for our state to try out a new approach to training new teachers and preparing them for the challenges they will face in the classroom.”

Yniguez also highlights the residents’ access to teachers in the field and access to knowledge at the ground level, while

See TEACHING, Page 8

Joshua Wisnubroto, second from left, and his mentor Aaron Yniguez, lower right, with some of their students at ACES High School, where they create a community that allows students to learn the necessary skills for college and career success.





Gerald Rhoden shares teaching strategies with Meenakshi Boma in Federal Way. The hope is that residents emerge “classroom ready,” who can prepare and deliver effective, inclusionary education for all students, and be less likely to experience burnout.

punctuating the value for mentors, as well. “Being a mentor in the program has reinvigorated me and reminded me why I love doing what I do. Watching a new teacher grow and learn is wonderful. It brings that passion back into my classroom practice.”

Rhoden, in Federal Way, comes to the Teacher Residency Program as a new mentor.

“Mentors and mentees get to work hand-in-hand. I’ve been learning as much as the residents,” he says. “I also have the opportunity to reflect on my own practice and see what I can improve.”

Nix, in Walla Walla, reiterates how being a mentor in the program has reignited him as a teacher. Being a mentor “has been good for my classroom and for me. It’s made me feel more involved after 14 years in the classroom.”

As a mentor, Nix wants to help his mentees be the best teachers they can be by modeling and teaching

them skills and strategies as they are happening in the classroom. He discusses Lauren Lewis’ experiences thus far. “Lauren has had to deal with a lot: home visits, parent meetings and IEP meetings. She’s getting experience in the real world.”

Lewis agrees that she has learned a lot in her first rotation. “The kids have taught me so much. I think I’ve learned more from them than I have taught them.” Just as she has felt safe to learn and grow as a teacher resident, she wants to create an environment for her students to feel the same. Lewis calls this “unconditional support. No matter what you do, I will always support you and figure out a plan that works for you.”

Boma says she loves the honesty of her students and wants to be the type of teacher she needed in school. “I have grown as a person and learned so much from the kids. People underestimate these students. I want to be their advocate. It’s so exciting to watch them grow.”

Wisnubroto points to his own experiences as an English learner in elementary school. “My teacher was helpful and advocated for me to be full time in my general-education classroom and not pulled out all of the time.” He explains that everyone learns differently. “I want to give kids an opportunity to work from their strengths. It’s not about lowering expectations,” he says. “It’s about helping students exceed the expectations people have of them.”

Empowering special-education students and helping them to grow is not the only passion these residents share. They also believe in the WEA program.

Boma encompasses the thoughts of her fellow residents, “I love this program. I’m grateful to be part of it,” she says, specifically calling out Annie

Lamberto, the WEA staff member who is the program supervisor, and her amazing and super-supportive mentors and teachers. “I feel like I’m learning so much and am so supported. I hope more people apply.”

*‘Mentors and mentees
work hand-in-hand.
I’ve been learning as
much as the residents.
I also have the
opportunity to reflect
on my own practice
and see what I can
improve.’*

— Gerald Rhoden

On the web

For more information about the WEA Teacher Residency, visit washingtonea.org/events-training/residency/

Gearing up for 2024 legislative session

Educators have a powerful voice in the state Legislature for what our schools need, what our students need and what we as educators need. Earlier this year, WEA members shared our priorities for the upcoming legislative session in a survey and now we're putting those priorities into action. Washington's 2024 legislative session is just months away and WEA leaders across the state are already talking with our lawmakers about critical issues.

Making sure that everyone who does the critical work of educating and supporting our students gets paid respectful, livable wages leads our agenda this year. Paraeducators, nutrition, custodial, office and transportation staff as well as adjunct faculty are too often forced to work second or third jobs or live hours away from where they work to make ends meet. Collaborating with partner education unions, we're launching a campaign to call on legislators to increase funding for classified and adjunct faculty pay.

"We can't teach without our support staff and without our ESPs, our buildings would suffer," said Jenn Black, president of Sumner-Bonney Lake EA and co-chair of WEA's Legislative Strategy Committee. "Students recognize the important work our ESPs do; it is time legislators show



Making sure that everyone who does the critical work of educating and supporting our students gets paid respectful, livable wages leads our agenda this year.

their support by providing a professional wage."

Members also highlighted the urgent need to address student behavioral health, a complicated issue that demands multiple solutions. Leaders are having creative conversations with lawmakers about approaches to supporting our students, from increasing behavioral health interventionist staffing to reinforcing multi-tiered systems of support in schools and the community.

And while we're working on these priority issues, we're continuing to advocate for funding and policies that support high-quality, equitable public education from Pre-K through our Community and Technical Colleges. After WEA members won \$371 million in additional special education funding in the 2023 session, we're continuing to advocate for the Legislature to *fully* fund special education. Additionally, we'll be advocating for fully funded, inclusive and well-

staffed schools and colleges that ensure every student feels welcome and safe and has the freedom to learn.

"Together in WEA we have incredible power to advocate for ourselves and our students," noted WEA President Larry Delaney. "We're mobilizing to keep up our track record of winning."

Stay up to date during the legislative session!

Follow the Advocacy Blog and WEA Advocacy Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Visit <https://wea.mobi/Advocacy> for more or point your mobile device to the QR code.



OFFICIAL NOTICE

This is official notice that Washington Education Association will run nominations and elections for the following positions. More detailed information on each of these positions can be found at <http://www.WashingtonEA.org/elections>.

***NEA State Director** (*one position available*)
WEA UniServ Council Director to the Board
NEA State Delegate

NEA State Delegates At-Large (*reserved for the WEA President, WEA Vice President, NEA Resolutions Committee members and current NEA State Directors only*)

NOMINATIONS

Nominations will be open from **Jan. 15 – Jan. 31, 2024, at 4 p.m.**
Nominations will be submitted online only (no paper documents will be accepted).

Beginning on Jan. 15, 2024, you can submit your nomination at <http://www.WashingtonEA.org/elections>.

All nominations must be made by a member of the Washington Education Association in good standing.

To be eligible for any position the nominee must be an active member in good standing.

Please note: Student WEA (SWEA) members and WEA-Retired members hold their own separate elections for representation on the WEA Board of Directors and NEA Delegates.

ELECTION

This election for WEA UniServ Council Director to the Board, NEA State Delegate and NEA Delegate At-Large shall be by secret ballot vote via an online election website.

Elections will be held only for those positions for which the number of nominated candidates exceeds the number of seats to be filled. The election for these contested positions will be held:

8 a.m. Feb. 5, 2024, through midnight March 4, 2024

Candidates for uncontested positions will be deemed elected by acclamation.

WEA UniServ Council Directors to the Board will be elected by a 50 percent +1 majority of votes cast. A majority of the votes cast is not required for the seating of delegates to the WEA and NEA Representative Assemblies. These elections will be held in accordance with the WEA and NEA Constitutions and Bylaws.

The election will be held by an online ballot. All eligible members will receive an email from BallotPoint containing their election credentials prior to the beginning of the election.

The WEA Nominations and Elections Chair will receive the online election results on March 5, 2024, and will report these results to the WEA President.

RUN-OFF ELECTION (if necessary)

In the event no candidate in a contested election receives a majority of the votes cast, a run-off election will be held between the candidates receiving the most votes.

If necessary, run-off elections will be held online:

8 a.m. March 11, 2024, through midnight March 25, 2024

The WEA Nominations and Elections Chair will receive the online run-off election results on March 26, 2024, and will report these results to the WEA President.

*The election of the NEA State Director will occur during the 2024 WEA Representative Assembly in April 2024 via an online election.

No child should go without the basics

Every day, we help our students learn to read, write and think. We nourish minds and feed souls in class and on the playground. Yet, we also see students who need basic necessities that we can't provide — at least not for every student. Luckily, our WEA family tries to help in the form of the WEA Children's Fund. It's a charitable fund where

members can request assistance in providing basic items such as gloves, jackets or new boots for students in need.

The fund reimburses WEA members who purchase basic supplies for Washington public school students in need. Members are allowed to

purchase up to \$100 for a student who is in need of clothing, school supplies, or other things we often take for granted. (Prior approval is required for reimbursement.)

Miriam Corkins, a teacher at Deer Park Middle School, has requested help from the fund for her students.



Miriam Corkins

"When I heard that one of my students didn't have any winter clothes, I asked for his sizes, submitted a request online, and went shopping! He fought back tears when I gave him everything, and honestly, so did I."

Thanks to the incredible generosity of our WEA community, we've been able to sustain our program and meet the modest requests for this fall. However, chilly temperatures will continue for the next several months and we anticipate the need will continue during the winter months. In order to meet the increasing demand, it is more important than ever that we have enough monetary contributions to keep the fund available throughout this school year.

It's not too late to make a year-end tax-deductible donation so that we can keep meeting your requests and the needs you see to help students thrive in school, regardless of their family income. Any amount will help. All monetary gifts are tax-deductible — and 100% of the proceeds benefit the fund.

Read more about the WEA Children's Fund, guidelines on how to access the fund and how to help at washingtonnea.org/membership/childrensfund/



PS Form 3526

United States Postal Service
Statement of Ownership, Management and Circulation

1. Publication: We 2.0
2. Publication No. 10-837
3. Filing Date: 9-29-23
4. Issue Frequency: Quarterly
5. No. of issues published annually: 4
6. Annual subscription price: \$1.99 (members)
7. Mailing address: PO Box 9100, Federal Way, WA 98063-9100
8. Headquarters: Same as above
9. Name and address of publisher: Washington Education Association, PO Box 9100, Federal Way, WA 98063-9100 Editor/Managing Editor: Linda Woo, PO Box 9100, Federal Way, WA 98063-9100
10. Owner: Washington Education Association, PO Box 9100, Federal Way, WA 98063-9100
11. Known Bondholders, Mortgagees and Other Security Holders Owning or Holding 1 Percent or More of Total Amount of Bonds, Mortgages, or Other Securities: None
12. The purpose, function and nonprofit status of this organization and the exempt status for federal income tax purposes has not changed during the preceding 12 months.
13. Publication name: We 2.0
14. Issue Date for Circulation Data Below: Summer 2023, 6/6/23
15. Extent and Nature

	Average No. Copies During Preceding 12 Months	No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date
a. Total No. Copies (Net press run)	83,707	84,131
b.1. Mailed Outside-County Paid Subscriptions on Form 3541	83,073	83,992
b.2. Mailed In-County Paid Subscriptions	---	---
b.3. Sales Through Dealers (not mailed)	---	---
b.4. Other classes of USPS mail	---	---
c. Total Paid Distribution	83,073	83,992
d.1. Free or Nominal Rate Outside-County on Form 3541	---	---
d.2. Free or Nominal Rate In-County	---	---
d.3. Free or N.R. Other Classes of USPS mail	---	---
d.4. Free or N.R. Outside the Mail	---	---
e. Total Free or Nominal Rate Distribution	---	---
f. Total Distribution	83,073	83,885
g. Copies Not Distributed	634	139
h. Total (sum of 15f and 15g)	83,707	85,210
i. Percent Paid	100%	100%
16. Publication Required — This Statement of Ownership will be printed in the Fall 2023 (approx. 11/1/23) issue of this publication.
17. Signed: Linda Woo, Editor, 9-29-23

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We are interested in your feedback and ideas. Reach Editor Linda Woo at lwoo@washingtonnea.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 \$1.99 is included in annual membership dues.

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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.

Talking to students about the dangers and consequences of hazing

As high school seniors finalize college applications and post high-school plans, Bellevue speech language pathologist Michelle Mordaunt believes colleagues can impart one final lesson to students that can be lifesaving.



Sam Martinez

Sam Martinez was just weeks into his freshman year at Washington State University when he died of alcohol poisoning during a fraternity-sponsored hazing ritual pledge event in 2019. He had just turned 19.

Mordaunt didn't know Martinez well, but her son and Sam went to the same school, starting in kindergarten, and she knew him from soccer games and trick-

or-treating. Sam's death, however, deeply impacted her family as it did the entire Bellevue school community.

"Education regarding the dangers of hazing could be included in high school events and classroom discussions already happening to address bullying," Bellevue EA member Mordaunt told delegates at this year's WEA Representative Assembly in Spokane. "Providing Washington high school students this information would be a powerful way to protect incoming college and university students."

In May, Washington became the 15th state to make hazing a felony under law, as Gov. Jay Inslee signed legislation that strengthens anti-hazing laws named in honor of Martinez.

The new law makes hazing a gross misdemeanor, rather than a simple misdemeanor, and makes hazing a felony if it results in substantial bodily harm. It increases penalties for hazing from a maximum of 90 days to up to a year and up to five years for the felony version. The bill, known as the Sam Martinez Stop Hazing Law, passed both the House and Senate unanimously.

The law, said Inslee, "reflects the inherent danger of hazing rituals that can pressure college students to consume large amounts of alcohol."

Martinez died from alcohol poisoning while pledging the Alpha Tau Omega fraternity. Fifteen fraternity members were charged with misdemeanors for supplying alcohol to a minor. The statute of limitations on the state's hazing law had expired by the time a prosecutor was ready to charge those involved.

The new law extends the statute of limitations from one year to two years.

Since their son's death, Jolyane Houtz and Hector Martinez have advocated and urged lawmakers to strengthen hazing laws, garnering national attention on hazing education and legislation requiring universities to publicly report hazing violations. Next year, they will launch HazingInfo.org a new website to provide timely information about hazing incidents at colleges and universities nationwide.

The new legislation follows the passage of "Sam's Law" in 2021, which updated the definition of hazing and required universities and colleges, as well as fraternity and sorority chapters, to make hazing investigation records public.

Mordaunt says, "Sam's Law" is designed to help protect students from hazing on our college and university campuses, and help students make informed decisions about the organizations, teams and clubs they want to join," but awareness needs to begin sooner.

"While Sam's Law is crucial and much needed on higher education campuses, I believe education about hazing is too important to begin when students are already attending college or university," she said. "Education regarding hazing prevention and intervention should occur before high school students make the decision to attend a college or university."

Since the passing of Sam's Law, WSU has required all first-year students and staff to complete anti-hazing training. Some colleges have created or strengthened anti-hazing or hazing monitoring programs to address the issue.

Hazing is any activity expected of someone joining or participating in a group that humiliates, degrades, abuses, or endangers them, regardless of a person's willingness to participate.

There are three components that define hazing:

- It occurs in a group context
- Humiliating, degrading or endangering behavior
- Happens regardless of an individual's willingness to participate

* StopHazing Research Lab, December 2020

Resources online

StopHazing.org
HazingPreventionNetwork.org
HazingInfo.org