



Update - stay connected

www.lakewashingtonea.org

January 3, 2024

Run-Off Election Results: LWEA Vice-President

Results of the LWEA Vice-President Run-Off Election have been verified.

Rojine Rudio will serve as the LWEA Vice-President for the 2024-2027 term. Congratulations Rojine!



We appreciate all of you!

A special **THANK YOU** to all members who have run for or served LWEA as an Officer, Delegate to RA, Executive Committee Rep, Building Representative, and all those who volunteer their time on various committees and teams. You are the BEST. The strength of LWEA would not be possible without your involvement and dedication on behalf of all members.

Legislative session begins Jan. 8

The 2024 legislative session will kick off in **Olympia on Jan. 8**. Each year, leaders in WEA's Legislative Strategy Committee come together to create a blueprint of the most pressing legislative issues. This year, our agenda is focused on the most urgent issues impacting educators and students across the state: staffing levels; special education; student behavioral needs. [Read more about our legislative agenda here.](#)

2024 Legislative Priorities

- providing professional, livable wages for classified education support professionals (or ESPs)
- fully funding special education
- supporting students struggling with behavioral challenges

**LWEA Officers and
Executive Committee**

President:

[Howard Mawhinney](#)

LWEA / 425-822-3388

Vice President:

[Katie Badger](#)

LWEA / 425-822-3388

Primary Rep:

[Patti Cook](#)

Rush / 425-936-2690

Intermediate Rep:

[Rojine Rudio](#)

Red EI / 425-936-2660

Middle School Rep:

[Martha Daman](#)

RSAR/ 425-936-1544

High School Rep:

[ShineMay Woodcock](#)

JHS / 425-936-1600

Specialists Rep:

[Nikole Lasas](#)

RHS / 425-936-1800

Special Services Rep:

[Karyn Taggart](#)

KaMS/ 425-936-2400

Ethnic Minority Rep:

[Michael Finley](#)

RHS/ 425-936-1800



HAVE YOU “LEVELED UP” YOUR WEA-PAC MEMBERSHIP YET?



Pro-Education. Pro-Labor.

A strong PAC is how we elect pro-education, pro-labor candidates to school boards and statewide office. Increasing your monthly contribution gives us a greater voice in policies that affect our profession. Most of us have been giving at the \$2.25 level for many years, and [we now have the option to “level up” to \\$5 or \\$10.50 per month.](#)

Increasing our monthly donation ensures WEA members continue to have a significant impact in elections across our state. Increasing our monthly donation ensures WEA members continue to have a significant impact in elections across our state. [Will you give a little more now?](#)

Stay up to date on WEA-PAC! Like and follow [WEA Advocacy on Facebook](#), [subscribe to the Advocacy blog](#), and text ADVOCACY to 833-258-6815 to get regular legislative and election updates by text message.

Friends In Need



Kathleen Rothbaum, Clara Barton Elem, is requesting shared leave for bonding time with her baby. Due to miscommunications, the leave plan that was created has left her with no paid days. She is in need of time to complete her leave. Any hours you can donate are greatly appreciated.

Please consider a [Shared Leave Donation](#) by filling out the donation form and sending it to leaves@lwsd.org Thank you.

MONEY MINUTE



What is Vesting?

Vesting is your right to the money contributed to your pension plan by your employer. Once you become vested, you're entitled to receive a pension benefit when you retire. You'll receive a monthly check for the rest of your life, even if you've left public employment. In Washington state this benefit is considered a contractual right.

In order to receive these funds, you must be fully vested. So how do you become vested? Vesting is earned after achieving the required number of service credit years for your plan. For Plan 1 and Plan 2 members, you become vested upon reaching 5 years of service credit. The vesting requirements for [other plans](#) are slightly different.

To find out more about vesting, leaving employment before vesting, withdrawing contributions, service credit years and pension: visit: <https://www.drs.wa.gov/what-is-vesting/>

Tax Free VEBA Account!

There are triple tax benefits to a VEBA account. You do not pay taxes on the money when you receive it, you do not pay taxes on the earnings of your VEBA investments, and you do not pay taxes on the money when you withdraw/use it for qualified medical expenses.

What is VEBA?

The Voluntary Employees' Beneficiary Association is a non-profit, multiple-employer organization with a Trust managed by a board of trustees that offers a funded health reimbursement arrangement (HRA). VEBA started just as a way for retirees to "cash out" their sick leave into a tax-free account for health care expenses. Still, any employee group can set up specific contribution rules before retirement. As an organization, we are required to re-authorize our plan annually and can make any changes at that time.

Contributing to VEBA is a great way to save money on taxes while saving money to use in retirement for medical expenses.

We want to invite you to speak to Brian Riehs, a HRA & VEBA Consulting representative about your VEBA questions later this month. He will be at the LWEA office on TBD. More info to follow. If you have questions, email [Terri Neely](#).



Pre-Retirement Seminar



LWEA will be offering a Pre-Retirement Seminar on Friday, February 23 and Saturday, February 24. Both sessions will be held at the LWEA Office. The sessions will go into depth on Social Security, Health plans and Retirement plans. Priority is given to those who will be retiring this year. For more information and to register, see:

[Pre-Retirement Seminar February 2024](#)

Marketplace

Ads are run in the Update on a first come, first served basis. All ads must include a home email and/or phone number.

Send directly to **Terri Neely** in the LWEA office.



JAN 9

Executive Committee

JAN 15

Martin Luther King Day
No School

JAN 16

Rep Assembly

Welcome
TO
2024

WEA Retired

Start 2024 out right and join WEA-Retired! You do not have to be retired to join WEA-Retired! Benefits include flowing seamlessly from pre-retired to retired when the time comes, continues NEA Member benefits such as credit card and insurance programs, attorney referral program offering two free 30-minute consultations, and \$1,000,000 liability insurance if you choose to work as a substitute! There are also travel benefits, opportunities to get involved as an advocate for retired and current educators and our public-school students!

WEA Retired also offers pre-retirement seminars and creates camaraderie! You can become a lifetime member with a one-time payment or break it down into smaller payments. It's never too early or too late to join WEA Retired! You can join at www.washingtonea.org/retired or email wearetired@washingtonea.org for more information. (Brigitte Tennis, WEA Retired member)



FREE: Tall metal filing cabinets. 4 cabinets lock, 2 no lock. For more information, contact [Diana Wagner](#) at LWEA.