

A close-up portrait of a woman with short, light brown hair, wearing black-rimmed glasses and a small stud earring. She is looking slightly upwards and to the right. The background is dark.

we2.0

Washington Education Association
Volume 55, Number 3 – Summer 2017

‘Be
fearless,
be kind,
get to
know
your
neighbors’

– Mandy Manning
Washington’s 2018
Teacher of the Year

Protecting the public education dream



Kim Mead

Bellevue, police presence, media crews, and a large group of protesters. Is it Groundhog Day? I felt like I was back to my first year as the President of the Washington Education Association.

In 2013, I was in downtown Bellevue with many moms, wives, and adult children of immigrants. At the end of the day, I was in handcuffs going to jail to help bring awareness around the need for bipartisan support for immigration rights. Our students and their families were living in fear of what could and had happened to them.

Fast forward. It's now 2017. This time, I'm in a red suit, standing with and surrounded by protesters from many organizations who came together to make sure their voices were heard by the Education Secretary Betsy DeVos. Public education is a right. It is the equalizer for our students of poverty, our students from the middle class, our students of color, our students with special needs and our Dreamers, the children brought here by undocumented immigrant parents. Education is the equalizer for all students and the chance at a future. It should be the basic right for every student across our nation.

The stakes are just as high at this gathering as they were then. Standing side by side with parents, the Washington Attorney General, community groups and WEA members from across the state. This time there would be no handcuffs or rides to a police station. But this time the crowd was larger and the awareness higher that if we don't stand up for and with our many and diverse communities, we all lose. We lose the talent of immigrant children. We lose the promise of our democracy, built upon a platform that welcomes people from all over the world. We lose our standing as a world leader with each child, each voice we exclude from opportunity.

Our students and education community need us. And we need them. Thank you, WEA members, for the work you do each day to support the future for all.

Kim Mead, WEA President

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Hundreds of protesters, including elected leaders, public school educators, parents and students, rallied against Education Secretary Betsy DeVos and her policies during her visit in Bellevue. DeVos, who has no experience with public education, champions vouchers and charter schools run by for-profit operators.



Striking Bellingham Technical College support employees picketed at a high-visibility intersection in downtown Bellingham.

WEA members in some locals bargain big pay raises

And two small local unions go on strike

WEA members in dozens of locals won significant pay raises this year — in some cases, the largest they've ever negotiated.

Nearly all WEA members got at least the 2.3 percent cost-of-living adjustment mandated by the voter-approved COLA law WEA helped pass more than a decade ago. Around 175 of WEA's 375 local unions had open contracts this year, and some were re-opened, which paved the way for hefty locally negotiated pay raises.

Many WEA locals exceeded the statewide goal of COLA plus at least 5 percent.

It wasn't necessarily easy — in many cases, administrators were reluctant to settle. Well-organized WEA members pushed back, often enlisting the support of parents and other community members. Mercer Island Education Association members organized hundreds of supporters at a school board meeting in August — and negotiated a tentative agreement within 24 hours. Mercer Island education support

professionals won an increase in base pay of more than 15 percent (including COLA), while their certificated colleagues received up to 12.6 percent more this year.

And it wasn't just Puget Sound-area educators who negotiated substantial pay raises. For example, Touchet ESP members won a pay raise of 10 percent plus the COLA.

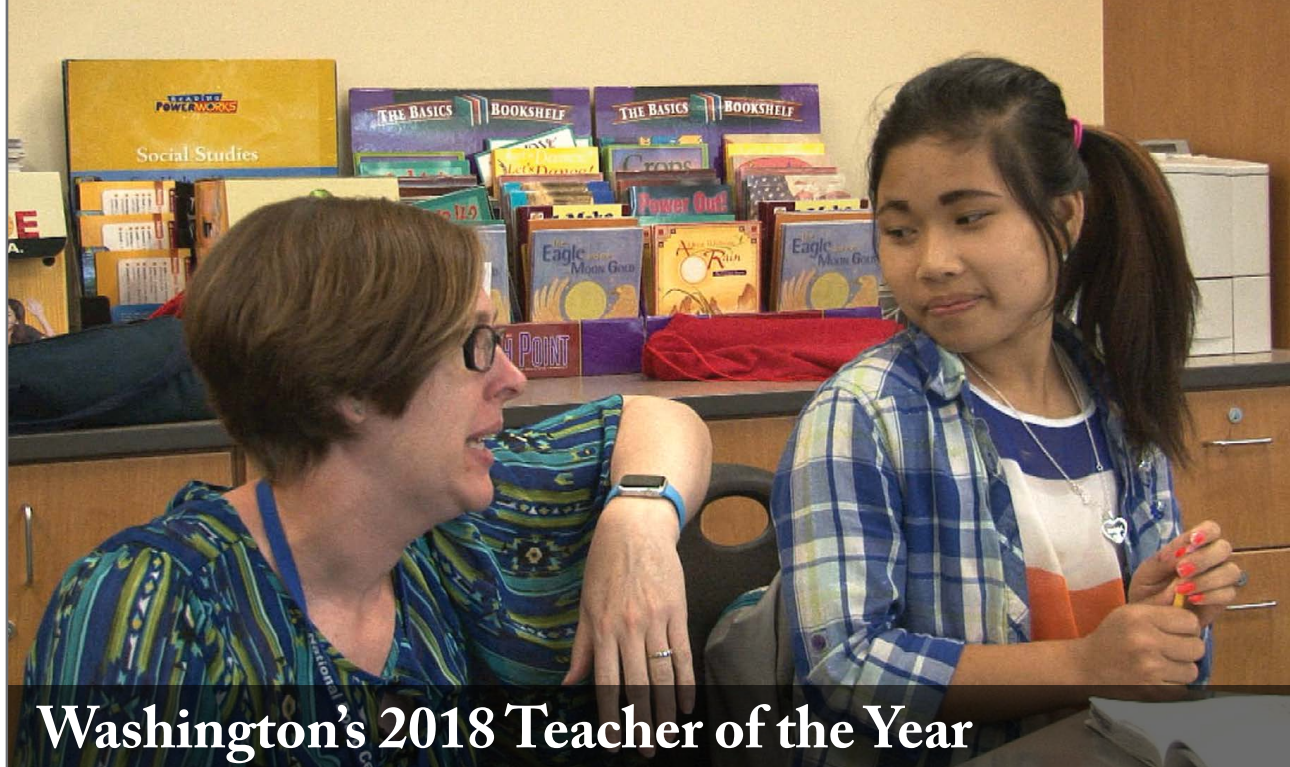
Although state funding for educator salaries is rising, under new state law, pay raises will be temporarily capped next year. That made this year's pay increases even more important. (After next year, changes in state law and school funding are expected to give locals more latitude to meet local needs through collective bargaining.)

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The annual **WEA Bargaining Conference** is Dec. 1 and 2 in SeaTac. Sessions will cover bargaining, organizing, grievances and writing good contract language. For information, contact Stacy Noah at 253-765-7070.

“Mandy has routinely shown herself to be a leader, an excellent teacher and a thoughtful woman of character with a huge heart.”

John O'Dell
Ferris High
School Assistant
Principal



Washington's 2018 Teacher of the Year

'Let's teach fearlessness'

Spokane's Mandy Manning advocates lessons of kindness, compassion and understanding

"Let's teach fearlessness." 2018 Washington State Teacher of the Year Mandy Manning says that is her message. Because she teaches students ages 14 to 21 in Spokane's Newcomer Center at Ferris High School, one might be concerned that her students may interpret fearlessness for recklessness, but, that is not the case.

Instead, her students embody the definition of fearlessness we must teach.

"They've faced war, extreme poverty, religious and political persecution," Manning says. "One of my students had a brother die in his arms. Another came home from school to find her mother killed — they've experienced more than any young person ever should."

Manning's students come to the Newcomer Center from around the world. They are immigrants and/or refugees. Some arrive having had a strong education background and need help learning English to pick up

where they left off. Others have never held a pencil. They have only known life in a refugee camp and need so much more. All of them, she says, have been uprooted from their homes; some moved from country to country until they arrived in Spokane.



Mandy Manning, Washington's 2017 NEA Foundation Award in Teaching Excellence recipient, was introduced by her former students and honored at last year's WEA Representative Assembly.

None of her students chose to live in Spokane. It was forced upon them, yet, she says, they are excited and hopeful. They are eager to communicate and learn from one another. And, mostly, Manning says, her students do not allow fear to limit them.

How does a teacher who takes in new students every week and prepares them for their next steps and beyond build a community that is safe and nurturing? Manning believes 90 percent of teaching is relational. She visits students' homes to learn more about their families and supports students from the day she meets them well into their lives after graduation whether it means college, technical school, work, or wherever they land.

Eastern Washington University sophomore Safa Mohammed arrived in Spokane five years ago. She credits Manning with changing and saving her life, standing by her every step along the way.

“Ms. Manning cares about her students’ lives and futures and how they will live happily,” Mohammed says. “I remember when I got carbon monoxide poisoning and spent 14 days in the hospital, Ms. Manning cried with her tears for me ... She stood with me and visited me at the hospital, until I got back to my normal life. I went to death and came back again with the help of Ms. Manning.”

“Mandy has routinely shown herself to be a leader, an excellent teacher and a thoughtful woman of character with a huge heart,” Ferris High School Assistant Principal John O’Dell says. “Mandy is able to unashamedly advocate for the concerns of staff and students while keeping things positive and focused on helping students.”

Manning is a powerful union member, a National Board Certified teacher, a fast pitch softball and basketball coach, an adviser for the writing club and the Gay-Straight Alliance.

“Students are drawn to her,” says colleague Amanda Mills, “because of her unconditional love and acceptance of them. She makes them feel comfortable and confident just the way they are.”

Mills says that of all the people who have impacted her life and her teaching practice, “Mandy’s name is at the top of the list. Her unwavering commitment to education, to her students, and her colleagues is nothing short of inspiring.”

Manning says fearlessness forces us to move outside of our comfort zones. Through meeting new people, listening to others’ thoughts and opinions and sharing our own, we become compassionate and open to that which we don’t understand.

Manning understands something about fearlessness herself having attended six schools in 12 moves with her family when she was growing up.

She was a Peace Corps volunteer in Armenia, a teacher in Japan and has witnessed fearlessness in other students in her career including two gay students in rural Texas; a homeless child in New York; and in students from very stable homes who volunteer in her classroom because they want to know students who are so unlike themselves.

“The constant movement and discomfort of adapting to new environments and people, regardless of the reason, helped me learn to accept change, to accept people are different and that we don’t have to think or be the same,” Manning says. “I’m not suggesting we should all move a dozen times or advocating instability. I’m advocating that we as educators, parents, citizens, challenge young people to learn about other places ... we must overcome our fears to lead to acceptance, compassion, empathy and optimism.”

Manning’s class community is constantly changing. It’s normal for her to add a couple of new students each week. At the same time, she is moving some of her students to other English Language Learner classes, preparing them to blend in with the rest of the Ferris student population when they are more proficient in the language and more comfortable in their new setting.



Above: Manning takes her students out into the community to help them learn about their surroundings and feel at home traveling about the Spokane area. Each newcomer receives her individual attention.



One key Senate race

could end **Olympia gridlock**



Redmond Elementary teachers Maren Talcott, Morgan Seymour, Libby Bruner and Amy Tolbert divvy up voter lists to contact on a recent Saturday to get out the vote for WEA-PAC recommended candidate Manka Dhingra in the 45th Legislative District.

It took six months for the Legislature to pass a state budget — one that we believe ultimately failed to fulfill the state's paramount duty to our students.

The main reason? Throughout the regular session and three special sessions, Senate Republicans blocked legislation to increase revenue and make the tax system more fair for working people and families. They also packed their initial education funding plan with harmful policies that had nothing to do with school funding.

Fortunately, the final education plan does not include the most onerous proposals from Republicans in the state Senate, such as eliminating teacher certification requirements, expanding charter schools, mandating merit pay, banning strikes or cutting special education funding.

The obstructionist Senate majority highlights the importance of a single special legislative election. It's a race that could restore a pro-public education majority in the state Senate, where Republicans have a one-seat majority.

WEA-PAC has endorsed Democrat Manka Dhingra for the open Senate seat in the 45th Legislative District, which includes Lake Washington public schools. She won the WEA-PAC endorsement based on an interview with local educators and her written responses to a WEA-PAC questionnaire.

Dhingra is a pro-worker leader we can trust to help end gridlock in Olympia, invest in our public schools and create an economy that works for everyone.

"Public education is the foundation of democracy and the greatest equalizer. My family moved to this country for the benefits of its education system and the opportunity that this provides," said Dhingra, a deputy prosecutor who has two children in public schools. "Children in every corner of the state deserve equal access to a high-quality, state-funded education that meets their unique needs."

Hundreds of WEA members are doorbelling for Dhingra this month.

"She understands the needs of our students, and that's so important to me," said Morgan Seymour, a teacher at Redmond Elementary School.

For complete WEA-PAC candidate recommendations, visit www.WashingtonEA.org/OurVoice.



Manka Dhingra

WEA members in two small locals went on strike. In both cases, the strikes were about standing up to disrespectful and abusive administrations that refused to offer fair settlements. The 55 teachers in the San Juan Island School District went on strike the Friday before Labor Day weekend and reached a settlement on Labor Day.

A similar number of classified support staff at Bellingham Technical College struck in late September after starting school with an expired contract. Faculty, also WEA members, honored the picket lines and classes were canceled during the four-day strike. Immediately after ratifying a new contract, Bellingham Educational Support Team (BEST) members voted no confidence in the college president and two top administrators.

"The toxic campus environment is detrimental to the mission of our college and harmful to our students. It is untenable to continue on this path. The current BTC leadership must either dramatically reform or, if unwilling to do so, top BTC administrators must be replaced by more progressive and forward-thinking leaders," the motion read.

BEST members lost four days' pay, and it appears the college administration will try to punish faculty as well. To help them weather the financial hardship, WEA locals and members are



Sequit educators pack a school board meeting to talk about being treated equitably. They brought attention to issues including class size, fair pay and more representation on instructional committees.

contributing to the BEST strike fund. WEA is pursuing potential legal action against the college administration. Online donations can be made at www.washingtonea.org/best.

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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 \$0.80 is
included in annual membership dues. Separate subscription
price: \$15.50 annually.

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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.

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: 10-1-17
4. Issue Frequency: Quarterly
5. No. of issues published annually: 4
6. Annual subscription price: \$0.80 (members); \$15.50 (non-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: Spring 2017, 7/24/17
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)	84,385	83,900
b.1. Mailed Outside-County Paid Subscriptions on Form 3541	82,860	83,550
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	82,860	83,550
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	82,860	83,550
g. Copies Not Distributed	1,525	350
h. Total (sum of 15f and 15g)	84,385	83,900
i. Percent Paid	100%	100%
16. Publication Required — This Statement of Ownership will be
printed in the Summer 2017 (approx. 10/31/17) issue of this
publication.
17. Signed: Linda Woo, Editor, 10-1-17

UNION BUG FPO

Thousands rally to protest the Trump-DeVos agenda

Nearly 2,000 public school supporters, including hundreds of WEA members, turned out earlier this month to protest Education Secretary Betsy DeVos and her reckless and wrong policies.

DeVos is widely considered the most unqualified secretary of education ever. A billionaire, DeVos has spent hundreds of millions of dollars promoting the privatization of public schools and an anti-worker agenda.

Dozens of groups sponsored the anti-DeVos protest, including WEA, several locals and Washington BATs. WEA Board members Shannon McCann from Federal Way and Justin Fox-Bailey from Snohomish were rally speakers.

“They want to divert public funding away from our public schools and our local communities and send it off to unaccountable charter and voucher schools ...”

— Justin Fox-Bailey
Snohomish EA president

“They want to divert public funding away from our public schools and our local communities and send it off to unaccountable charter and voucher schools that are run by private organizations, with no transparency and no elected oversight, where educators and students and learning are just another set of fungible commodities in the machines of commerce,” Fox-Bailey told the crowd.

DeVos was in Bellevue to raise \$1 million for the Washington Policy Center, a right-wing political group that promotes anti-worker, anti-public education policies. WPC

and the anti-union Freedom Foundation belong to a national network of groups pushing the same agenda.

