

PERSPECTIVE



Central Valley Education Association

November 2011

12202 E. Main, Spokane Valley, WA 99206 • 509 926-0201 • FAX 509 891-9183 • cvea@aol.com • www.centralvalleyea.org

The November 1st Executive Board meeting and General Membership Forum

The CVEA Building Representative Council, at its October meeting, asked for a chance for members to be briefed on the process and results of the survey that was approved by the Council at the September meeting. To that end, the Reps were requested to advise their members that the Executive Board meeting scheduled for Nov. 1 would include an open forum to do the briefing and listen to member input.

That meeting was held in the theater at Central Valley High School. It was promoted through the Building Reps, Executive Board members and through building visits by the president.

Thirty-nine people attended the meeting which began with an explanation of the timeline of events beginning in March leading up to that meeting. It was then opened up to questions, comments and general discussion. A variety of concerns were identified, and several different viewpoints expressed.

We then outlined decisions made by the Building Rep council around action that CVEA would pursue. The first primary activity is to send some representatives to the rally in Olympia on November 28th (the first day of the special session of the legislature, wherein two billion dollars in budget shortfall will be addressed.) We will also be preparing a media campaign that may include buttons, t-shirts, yard signs, billboards, newspaper ads or other means of making our concerns about further cuts to education known to our citizens. The Principals' Association, Public School Employees association (classified employees), and the district have all indicated a desire to work together with us to get the message out to our citizens concerning how further cuts will adversely affect our district and the students we serve.

CVEA Elections

December begins the election process for CVEA. Nomination forms will be available for anyone wishing to run for office. In January, candidates can submit biographies and statements for the February newsletter. The ballots will be provided to Building Representatives at the February 21st meeting with the deadline for returning those ballots being February 28th. The ballots will be counted and the election of officers announced by March 5th. Those elected will assume the duties of office on July 6th.

The positions open for election this year include:

- President
- Secretary
- High School Representative
- Middle School Representative
- Elementary School Representative
- Special Services Representative

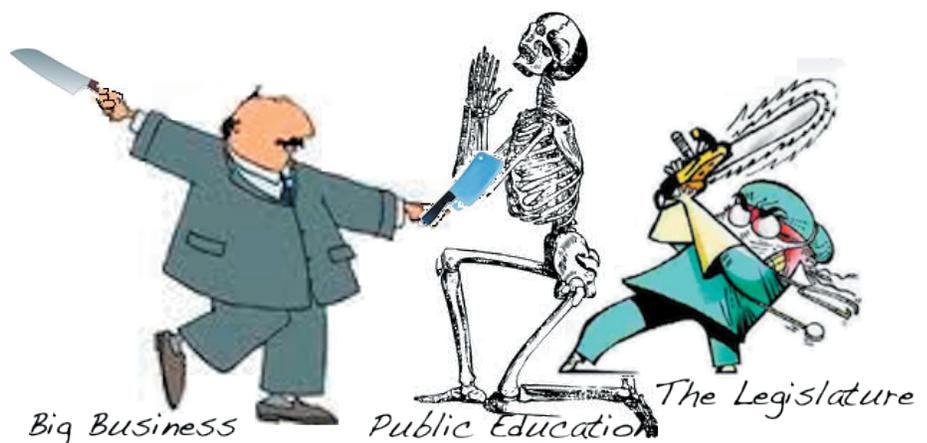
In addition to the officers, we will be electing Representatives to the WEA Rep Assembly and the NEA Rep Assembly. The WEA RA is May 17,18 and 19 in Spokane. The NEA RA is June 30 through July 5 in Washington D.C. We can send up to 13 members to WEA RA and 3 people to NEA RA.

If you have any questions about the process please contact the CVEA office at 926-0201.

Tips for teachers working with Special Education para-educators in the general education classroom:

- Ensure the para-educators know your classroom rules so they can comply with them and help the students follow the rules.
- Review the students' IEPs for information of student expectations. The Para-educator can assist you in providing modified curriculum and/or accommodations for the students in your classroom.
- The para-educator works under your direction while in your classroom.
- If you have questions or suggestions of ideas that may work well with the student (and the para-educator) collaborate with the student's case manager.
- The para-educator is in your classroom to support the students and to assist you in providing for the students' needs. They are not to be doing their own projects, reading, and texting, phone calling, or taking breaks while in your classroom.

This article is one of a series of articles called for as part of a Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU) to dispense information around special education issues as part of our last contract negotiations. It will appear in District newsletters as well as in the Perspective.



"There's got to be more fat in here someplace."

Education Fellowships

The Earthwatch Institute offers educators fully funded fellowships for hands-on learning with leading scientists doing field research and conservation on one of 130 projects. Earthwatch's Education Fellowships are national in scope, and supported by a wide range of businesses, foundations, and individuals.

To be eligible, applicants must be K-12 classroom educators on any subject from public or private schools within the US. The maximum award would be full cost of expedition, including all research costs, meals, housing, and on-site travel, and more. Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis. More information may be found at <http://www.Earthwatch.org/about-us/education/edopp/>

Thanks to Gayle Northcutt, Wenatchee EA for permission to use this article.

\$\$\$ for your classroom

DonorsChoose.org is a nonprofit organization that connects public school educators in need of classroom materials and experiences with individual donors who want to help.

Educators submit project requests for specific materials their students need to learn, and donors from across the country browse the website and fund the projects they find most compelling.

Full-time teachers, librarians, counselors, and school nurses who spend at least 75% of their time working with students are eligible to request materials.

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WANT REIMBURSEMENT?

If you want reimbursement for supplies and tuition in your January check the deadline is December 1. Forms were placed in your boxes some time ago. If you have questions, contact Martha Poffenroth @ 228-5465 or Birgit Hodgson @ 228-5464.

WEA Eastern Washington and Spokane Education Association are sponsoring the bus!

Olympia or Bust! Enough is Enough!

Departure time: 5:00 AM Monday, Nov. 28 – Sharp!

Place: WEA Eastern Building, 230 E Montgomery Ave.

Travel to Olympia for the opening day of the Special Session, Nov. 28!

We will meet in the parking lot of the WEA Eastern Building, 230 E. Montgomery Avenue, and travel to Olympia for the day's events.

Attend the rally, meet with legislators, and advocate for your students. **The time is now!**

We will serve box lunches before we arrive in Olympia. Bring snacks along if you choose. We will leave from Olympia immediately after the rally, and have a quick dinner stop on the way back to Spokane.

If you are interested – please RSVP to Shannon Hughes by Nov. 15th at shughes@washingtonea.org. You will need to include your **name, school, and local affiliation** in the RSVP. If we have more passengers than seats – we will hold a drawing. Thanks!

Don't miss the boat – be on the bus!



We keep hearing the reminder that WEA is it's members, not some entity that exists in Federal Way. The same is true of locals; like CVEA. In an effort to give our members voice, we will try to accommodate those members who wish to submit articles and guest editorials.

The hope is that this will allow us to find common ground in an effort to establish unity. That process necessitates sharing various points of view.

The disclaimer is that these editorials may not reflect an official position of the association, but rather an avenue that will facilitate open dialogue among our members.

What Is Is

By Larry Bernbaum, CVHS

I had a dream last night, that last spring, as the Washington legislature was cutting the budget to conform to the state's financial straits, they hunched together in a darkened chamber, and with nefarious glints in their eyes, asked of each other, "Now, we've cut pay and work time all over the state, but before we finish, what is one group we can pick in the state where we cut their pay, but work them just as hard?"

One among them grinned hideously, rubbed his hands together greedily, and said, "I know! The teachers – they're a perfect blend of guilt-ridden, complacent martyr types. Let's cut 2.5 billion dollars from education, including teacher pay, but keep their number of work days the same! They'll take this and feel holier for their sacrifice!"

"You're right!" another crowed. "This is the same group of people that let us take a Learning Improvement Day back in 2005, let us cancel their COLA's in 2006 and 7, let us take another Learning Improvement Day in 2008, and let us take away their COLA's again in 2009 and 2010! You couldn't ask for easier fools than them – and best of all, they'll keep voting for us!" His cronies filled the hall

with a chorus of ghoulish laughter.

When news of this decision reached the Central Valley Education Association, those negotiating the re-opened portion of our contract asked the district for seven half days off, to compensate for our lost pay and to help the public see what was lost. The district said, "No – but here's an extra personal day – for this year only."

The negotiators reserved one of the two biggest rooms in the district, the Central Valley High School theatre, with a seating capacity of more than 500, to break the sad news to the membership and to ask if they wanted to ratify the first contract with a pay cut and no work reduction. Twenty people attended. A few days later, the CVEA, with about 760 members, voted to ratify the contract with a 94% majority.

At the next Representative Council meeting, the reps voted to survey the membership to see if they wanted to do anything about the way they were being treated. The survey asked if they wanted to take seven half-days off, take a personal day all on the same day, conduct a media campaign, or do nothing. Of course, all that was required of people at that point was to write four numbers on a piece of paper. Five buildings never returned the surveys, but among those that did, the responses reflected a rangy diversity of responses. One thing was clear though, the last thing a strong majority of members wanted was to do nothing.

So the council reserved that same theatre again, and invited everyone to come at four o' clock on Tuesday, November 1st and share their ideas about what the association should do in general, and particularly on November 28, when the legislature, fat with a Thanksgiving feast, would convene again to orchestrate two billion dollars in further cuts. This time, 39 association members attended. None said, "I have colleagues who desperately wanted to be here, but could not be. They asked me to share their views or give their support." They discussed ideas for T-shirts, signs, buttons, a demonstration, press conference and bus to Olympia on November 28, and more, but let's be real: 39 people out of an association as big as ours will simply look ludicrous doing anything.

As thunder and lightning crackle around the governor's mansion, she has released her preliminary budget-cutting proposal:

increase class sizes everywhere by two students, cut 2,250 teaching positions statewide, reduce our health care allotment by \$23 per month, cut the national board bonus to \$4000 per year, stop funding districts for any student with five consecutive unexcused absences, cut higher education funding by 15%, and cut levy equalization funds, including over 4.3 million dollars to our district, which means almost 23 teaching positions.

While it is true that unemployment is at about 9%, that means that 91% of the people in this state are employed. They can be educated on the issues, they can pressure their leaders to raise revenue through taxes, they can vote for ballot measures and people that will help the cause of education before people start moving to Mississippi to get into better schools.

But that is for someone else to do. It's probably best at a time like this to lay low until things get really bad. Sure we stand to lose pay, colleagues, jobs and more, but if we speak up someone may not like it. Someone may even call someone else and complain about us. That would be unbearable.

It appears that the legislature, at least in the case of the CVEA, calculated quite correctly. I know not what other districts in the state have planned for November 28, but the CVEA seems fully prepared to curl up in the legislature's lap and purr contentedly.

Have I got it wrong? If I have, e-mail Steve Lalonde at cvea@aol.com and tell him what you are really willing to do on November 28.

An update on education lawsuits still in play

By: Kevin Teeley, Lake Washington Education Association

State Funding for K-12 Education

The Network for Excellence in Washington Schools (NEWS), to which LWEA [and CVSD] belongs, sued the State of Washington for failure to meet its constitutional mandate to fully fund basic education. The seven-week trial, heard by Judge John Erlick in King County Superior Court, ended in October 2009.

In February 2010, Judge Erlick ruled that the State of Washington was in violation of its constitutionally-mandated "paramount duty" to amply provide for the education of its children. The court ordered the state to determine the actual costs of educating students and to fully fund that cost with stable and dependable state resources.

The State of Washington appealed Judge Erlick's decision to the Washington State Supreme Court. Documents were filed and the Supreme Court heard the appeal on June 28, 2011. Right now, we're waiting for a decision from the State Supreme Court, which could be at any time.

If the State Supreme Court upholds our victory from King County Superior Court, it's uncertain when funding would be restored to K-12 education. We are hopeful the court will establish timelines.

Gainsharing for TRS Plans 1 and 3

Several years ago, the Legislature repealed a benefit that was included in Teachers Retirement System (TRS) Plans 1 and 3. The provision, called "gainsharing," allowed plan members to share gains from investment earnings that exceeded a certain amount over a period of time. The legislation also lowered the retirement age for Plans 2 and 3 to age 62 without penalty, and reduced the penalties for retiring after age 55 with at least 30 years of experience. The Legislature, however, attached a "poison pill" to the bill, which stated that if they lost a lawsuit challenging the gainsharing repeal, the early retirement provisions would immediately be revoked.

The lawsuit was filed and was heard by Judge Richard Eadie in King County Superior Court. Judge Eadie ruled that the Legislature's repeal of the gainsharing benefit was unlawful. The lawsuit was split into two phases -- one dealing with the gainsharing repeal, and the other dealing with the Legislature's "poison pill." Judge Eadie ruled that the second phase (poison pill) must first be litigated before the entire case could be moved forward. There is a summary judgment motion on Phase 2 scheduled for December 16. Once Judge Eadie rules on Phase 2, it's anticipated the entire case will be appealed. As a result, we're at least another year away from a final decision.

Plan 1 COLA Repeal

During the last legislative session, the Legislature repealed the COLA provision in Retirement Plan 1. The COLA had been added to Plan 1 a number of years ago to address the significant loss in buying power Plan 1 retirees experienced during their retirement years. An automatic COLA kicked in after a retiree reached 66 years of age. The removal of the COLA means that current retirees in Plan 1 had their benefits permanently frozen at last year's level. Future retirees will have their benefits permanently frozen at the amount they receive during their first year of retirement. This means if someone retires at age 55 and lives for 30 more years, that person will receive the same dollar amount in retirement income at age 85 as he/she received at age 55.

WEA, along with the Washington Federation of State Employees, filed a lawsuit challenging the repeal in Thurston County Superior Court. Since the lawsuit is still in the preliminary stages, a hearing has not yet been set.

I-1053

Initiative 1053 -- sponsored by Tim Eyman -- was approved by voters in November 2010. The initiative requires a 2/3 majority vote of the Legislature in order to pass any revenue increases. WEA, the League of Education Voters, several Democrats in the State House of Representatives, several teachers, school board members and parents, filed a lawsuit in King County Superior Court this past summer challenging the constitutionality of I-1053. The case is currently in the discovery phase and the hope is that it will be heard in time to have a court decision prior to the 2012 legislative session.

BARGAINING TEAM OF 12

Our current contract expires at the end of August 2012. We need to assemble a Team of Twelve now for bargaining a new contract. The Team of Twelve will be in place through the life of that contract (traditionally two years.) If you are willing to serve on the Team of Twelve please send an email stating such to: cvea@aol.com

From the CVEA Bylaws:

ARTICLE IX - STANDING COMMITTEES
SECTION I - STRUCTURE

Paragraph 3 – Bargaining Committee:

1. Composition: The CVEA Executive Board and six (6) members selected by the Representative Council will make up the Bargaining Team of Twelve (12).
2. The Team of Twelve (12) will choose a team of Five (5) to do the actual bargaining with the District.
3. Term of Service: Terms of service for the Team of Five (5) will be for a minimum of the term of the contract.
4. Vacancies for the Team of Five (5) will be filled from the remaining members of the Team of Twelve (12).
5. The Representative Council will fill any Team of Twelve (12) vacancy that occurs during bargaining years.

CVEA Executive Board

President -

Steve Lalonde

Office - 926-0201

Cell - 842-6768

email - cvea@aol.com

fax - 891-9183

Vice President -

Scott Knowles

Opportunity Elementary
228-4550

Secretary/Treas -

Mariann Torretta

Substitute Teacher

Elementary Rep -

Keith Hoekema

Broadway Elementary
228-4100

Middle School Rep -

Monica Larson

Evergreen

228-4780

High School Rep -

Vicky Jensen

University High School
228-5240

Special Services Rep -

Heather Graham

Greenacres/Liberty Lake
228-4200 / 228-4300