

NORTHSHORE NEWS

January, 2006

NORTHSHORE EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

Issue 5



NSEA Calendar

February 2006

- ◆ February 6th: Exec Board Meeting, 4:00-6:00 pm NSEA Office
- ◆ February 13th: Rep Council Meeting, 4:00-5:30 pm BHS Library
- ◆ February 20th: President's Day
- ◆ February 21st-February 24th: Mid-Winter Break NSEA Office Closed

March 2006

- ◆ March 6th: Exec Board Meeting, 4:00-6:00 pm NSEA Office
- ◆ March 13th: Rep Council Meeting, 4:00-5:30 pm BHS Library
- ◆ March 23rd-March 25th: WEA Rep Assembly Tacoma



Read Across America

Does your school have plans to celebrate Read Across America? Dr. Seuss's 102nd birthday is Thursday, March 2 and WEA and NEA are once again encouraging schools to come up with creative ideas and innovative activities to celebrate. Last year, Washington state had the second largest number of "pledges" of planned activities. So, what's on your mind for this year?

If you need some ideas, visit the NEA web site (www.nea.org/readacross) for ideas on how to plan an event, publicity resources, bookmarks, posters, and ideas to involve parents.

President's Message

Happy New Year! I hope this finds all you well rested after the Holiday Break! My break was spent with my family including my ninety year old mother from Portland. As 2006 begins things are really moving here in the NSEA office. Several major initiatives are fully underway and progressing well.

First up in the new year is passage of the Bond and Levy. Thank you to all who have volunteered to phone voters in either January or February. We have over 200 callers for each weekend. If you have not yet volunteered we need more callers for our February round of calling. It would be best if we have 200-300+ volunteers. The January calling was conducted by NSEA members who made approximately 8,000 calls. For February there are approximately 18,000 calls to be made. The groups making calls in February include building administrators, central office administrators, NSEA, NEOPA, NESPA, citizens, and some students. The more people we have to call, the fewer calls each individual has to make. If you would like to still volunteer, or if you found calling in January to be painless and easy, please contact the NSEA office to add your name to the volunteer list. The levy represents 20% of the district operating funds each year. If the levy were to fail the results for the district would be devastating.

Bargaining preparation work is well underway! The Department Head/Activity Stipend Schedule meetings were held during December and we will be presenting our full findings to the district in February. Again, thank you to all the members who participated in the fact finding hearings. The input and suggestions received through those meetings have proven to be extremely valuable. It is amazing the hours and variety of work being done by our members to help students and expand their opportunities. Our bargaining committee has met twice already and will be meeting again in February. If you would like to become involved in this group please contact the NSEA office.

I will be lobbying the legislative representatives and senators representing Northshore, Shoreline, Edmonds, Mukilteo, Everett, and Snohomish on February 9th in Olympia. Superintendent Forsys and I were selected to do the presentation at this legislative breakfast meeting representing the Common Ground group described above. The primary focus of the presentation is the need for the state to change the funding source and funding formula for public schools in Washington state. Our presentation was previewed by the Rep Council at our January 23rd meeting.

Finally in January the Elementary Design Team Survey was conducted. This survey is the result of our last bargain with the district. Elementary teachers were sent a hard copy of the survey first with which to collect data and formulate thoughts. The on-line survey was conducted from January 20-27. The information gathered will be used in our upcoming bargain.

On a personal note I had to be out of the office from January 10-13 due to my mother's failing health. The Executive Board and Lydia, my Administrative Assistant, did a wonderful job covering association business in my absence. I will probably need to be gone a few more days as my mother's illness progresses. I will let members know of future absences on my part. Thank you for your understanding!

Are You Reading *Crucial Conversations*?

Talking seems like such a natural process, especially for educators who communicate for a living. The reality is that when it comes to those "heavy" conversations, most of us wish we could handle them better...or not at all. This year, NSEA Building Representatives are reading the book *Crucial Conversations: Tools for Talking When the Stakes Are High* by Patterson, Grenny, et. Al. to gain skills for handling tricky verbal situations. This month, Building Reps will focus on making the environment safe to talk and mastering your stories in order to stay in dialogue. Here are some strategies:

- Focus on your mutual purpose: don't get sidetracked by your individual issues.
- Step out of the situation: Make it safe before you get back to your conversation.
- Master your stories: Separate the facts from opinion.
- Beware of "clever" stories where you depict yourself as a victim, a villain, or helpless.

Want to know more? Check out the website: www.crucialconversations.com



Happy 2006!

Probation Deadline Nears

February 15 is the deadline for certificated employees to be placed on probation or on a plan of improvement. Often, members who find themselves in this situation are too embarrassed to talk to anyone about it. We urge you to contact NSEA immediately. We can help you with mentoring assistance, representation in meeting with administrators, and in making sure your rights are protected throughout the process. Don't wait until it's too late for your union to help.

WEA's 2006 Legislative Priorities

WEA recently announced their 2006 legislative priorities. These include:

Professional Compensation for Education Employees

Professional compensation, including salary, benefits and retirement pensions, is needed to attract and keep quality educators for our students. WEA's compensation priorities include:

- Full funding for the 2006-07 cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs).
- Making up the 3.6 percent in salary lost during the two-year suspension of voter-approved COLAs.
- Full funding of salary increments and part-time equity for community and technical college faculty members.
- Increasing higher education faculty salaries to levels comparable to peer state averages.
- House Bill 1484, authorizing countywide school levies to provide housing allowances for educators in high-cost areas.
- Guaranteed annual stipends for teachers and educational staff associates who earn National Board certification.
- Pension improvements, including the Rule of 90 for educators in retirement Plans 2 and 3, which would let some of them retire earlier than currently allowed. WEA opposes any changes in gain sharing without commensurate pension improvements.

Student Achievement

WEA members believe in high academic standards for all students. We support using multiple measures of student achievement instead of relying on a single test to make high-stakes decisions about students, including graduation.

- Lessening the WASL's use as a high-stakes graduation requirement and implementing a weighted multiple measures requirement for graduation. Under such a system, student achievement would be measured by a combination of grades, culminating projects, education plans and tests, including the WASL.



Adequate Funding

Adequate school funding is needed so every child has an opportunity to succeed, regardless of school location or population.

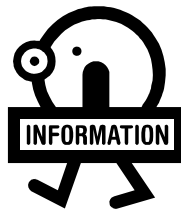
- Increased revenue stream and resources for public education to meet the state's paramount duty and state learning goals.

More information about WEA's legislative goals are on the web at www.washingtonea.org.

Stay in Touch

Let your voice be heard. You can call your legislators any time at the **Legislative Hotline:**

1-800-562-6000



One Fifty Two and Counting...

NSEA's WEA-PAC membership keeps growing thanks to you. WEA's Political Action Committee is committed to furthering the cause of public education. Our goal this year is to sign up 200 NSEA members and so far, we're up to 152. Need some convincing to join? In November, the following races will be decided, along with the future of public education in Washington state...

- 1) Several "targeted" Senate seats where pro-education candidates will need our support
- 2) Two crucial seats on the state Supreme Court as they decide on education funding issues
- 3) The ENTIRE House of Representatives

You can help us reach 200 by joining WEA-PAC today. If you need a membership form, contact your Building Representative or call NSEA.

We're online! Visit us at www.northshoreea.org.

Thanks NSEA!

Dear NSEA Members,

Thank you for your support and concern for the students of Anniston. We lost our science center and materials. Thanks to you, we now can conduct science investigations. It was very exciting to open all those boxes of materials.

Iris Collins, Librarian, and the students of Anniston Ave. Elementary in Gulfport, MS

Anniston Ave. Elem was hit hard by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. NSEA members sent six boxes of materials to help rebuild their science center.



Northshore News is a publication of the Northshore Education Association. NSEA is the bargaining agent of the certificated staff of the Northshore School District.

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Special Ed Training Opportunity

It's not too late to register for WEA's Special Ed training. This session will be held on Monday, February 27th from 5:30 to 8:30 pm at the Shoreline Room in the Shoreline Center. Dinner will be provided at 5:00 pm. Three clock hours are available for \$5. If you are interested, please contact Sara James at sjames@washingtonea.org as soon as possible. Space is limited!