

DIRECTOR'S REPORT February 2010

Legislative Update

WEA has a handful of priority bills in Olympia. WEA members have been testifying in support of [SB 6518](#)/HB 2893, which increases the levy lid AND increases state-funded levy equalization. Key elements of these bills are as follows:

- Increase levy lid for all districts 4% (includes all 24% districts as well as grandfathered districts).
- Increase the levy equalization percentage from 12% to 14%.
- Make both of the above provisions temporary for the period of calendar year 2011 through calendar year 2017.
- Adjust language on the levy base to include the amounts the districts should have received from state funding for Student Achievement Funds (I-728) and educator cost-of-living increases (I-732), including the current 2009-11 suspension of these payments.
- Allow districts in the midst of their levy collection period to return to their voters to increase their local levy collection amounts consistent with the above provisions.

Other Priority bills include:

[HB 3059](#) – Expanding options for educator preparation

[HB 3035](#) – Regarding educator performance and innovation

[HB 3038](#) – Regarding standards and accountability in education

State Budget Update

The biggest issue in Olympia this year is the state budget shortfall and the need for more revenue. WEA is part of the Rebuilding Our Economic Future Coalition, which is urging lawmakers to find revenue solutions instead of relying solely on cuts, as they deal with the budget crisis. (On Tuesday, Oregon voters protected their public schools and services by overwhelmingly passing tax increases on corporations and wealthy individuals.)

The coalition is organizing a February 15 Presidents' Day revenue rally in Olympia, and all WEA members are invited. [Register on WEA's OurVoice site](#) or [print a really colorful rally poster here](#).

Governor's Education Bill

WEA President Mary Lindquist testified on [Senate Bill 6696](#). She testified before the Senate Early Learning and K-12 Education Committee last week.

What does WEA view as strengths about this bill?

- 1) Bringing parents, teachers and administrators – those people who know their community and their students best – to the table together to develop a plan they can support, that they will have to implement, and that strongly enhances the chance for success in turning these schools around.
- 2) Evaluation: including criteria that reflects the breadth of the skills and knowledge all educators – teachers, principals, support professionals – must have to meet the needs of all students, while still allowing communities to tailor the specifics of implementation to their own needs.

- 3) Alternative routes to certification that maintain rigor and our current high standards
- 4) Common core standards as long as they are focused, clear and maintain an appropriately high bar for our students
- 5) Avoids the false promise of charter schools that have been rejected multiple times by voters and whose success is questionable and whose costs can't be born in this economic climate.
- 6) Parental engagement offers an important tool to reinforce the vital link between parents and our schools. WEA's polling shows us that the public wants teachers and the parents in our communities to make decisions about their schools. This bill takes us in that direction.

Senate Bill 6696 may help Washington state be competitive in the Race to the Top. However, more importantly, it builds on the strong foundation we have of dedicated professionals working in our schools with fewer resources but still helping students to reach further and higher every day. I look forward to working with you in the coming weeks in the best interests of those students.

Educator Night Forum

The forum was held January 28th. There are two more forums scheduled for this school year. The details will be coming in the weeks ahead. The two remaining topics will be: "Understanding the Generation Differences" and "ELL."

PoliSparks

HEA will be sending 6 members to this great training. Thanks for your recruiting efforts.

Seniority

Seniority lists will be posted March 1st in all buildings. It is critical that you inform your members of the need to verify their seniority date. Members have 14 calendar days to challenge/correct inaccurate seniority dates.

Special Education Task Force

The Special Ed Task Force finished story telling during the two January dates. The February meetings will begin the process of developing options to make contract language changes for the issues that surfaced during the story telling process.