



Washoe Education Association Monthly Newsletter

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MARK YOUR CALENDAR

April 11<sup>th</sup> - 15<sup>th</sup>

Spring Break  
WEA Office Closed

April 11<sup>th</sup>

Rally in Carson City  
11:30am

April 29<sup>th</sup>

Last Day to Return Ski Tickets  
4:30pm in the WEA Office

May 3<sup>rd</sup>

National Teacher  
Appreciation Day

May 4<sup>th</sup>

Rep Council  
4:30pm in the WEA Office

# Crisis in Carson What Can We Do? Write Legislators and Rally!

*Dana Galvin / WEA President  
Phil Kaiser / Government Relations Chair*

Now is a critical time to influence state legislators. Here are some of the proposals floating around the halls of the legislature in Carson City

- Cut K-12 funding by 9%
- Cut pay for additional education, such as Masters Degrees
- End seniority consideration for Reductions in Force
- Change probationary/post-probationary guidelines
- Make 50% of teacher evaluations based on student test scores
- Permit vouchers to be used at private/religious schools
- Change NEW-HIRE retirement programs to make 401K type programs, thus reducing the number of active employees paying into the system.
- End collective bargaining.

### First, write your legislators.

Introduce yourself by sending them a photograph of you and your family. Remind them that Nevada is already at or near the bottom in per pupil spending, the number of children in pre-school, and residents with college degrees. Ask how Nevada can attract high-quality jobs without an educated workforce. Remind them we have already accepted furlough days and pay freezes. Ask them what sacrifice the gold companies have made.

### Second, rally in Carson on April 11th.

WEA will rally in front of the legislature Monday April 11th at 11:30. Bring your kids, friends, and family members. We need a good turnout, so please commit to come to Carson for a few hours. Our jobs and the quality of education for Nevada students depend on our action! Dr. Morrison has stated that the current proposals from the state, along with reduced property tax revenue could result in 300 to 500 positions being cut. Class sizes will go up, schools may be closed. Cuts have gone too far.

If you do not know who your legislator is, simply go to Google and search for Nevada Legislature. The first website should allow you to click on “Who’s my legislator?” and you can type in your address and zip code. You can find the legislator for your school on the WCSD website and click on Budget Update and Legislative Session, then scroll down to contact Your Legislator, List by School.

Teachers, parents, and students need to show our elected leaders that the proposed cuts go too far. Join us in Carson City Monday April 11. We will gather at the legislature at 401 South Carson Street (the main drag in Carson) at 11:30. See you there!



Go to  
[www.facebook.com/WashoeEducationAssociation](http://www.facebook.com/WashoeEducationAssociation)  
to “like” us!

# Nurse's Notes: The Choking Game

Sharon G. Freier / RN

Since 1995, at least 82 children and adolescents have died as a result of playing "the choking game," according to a new study by CDC's Injury Center. Researchers analyzed media reports of deaths of children and adolescents from the choking game. Highlights from their findings address some common questions about this public health threat.

## What is the choking game?

The choking game is a dangerous activity that older children and early adolescents sometimes play to get a brief high. They either choke each other or use a noose to choke themselves. After just a short time, children can pass out, which may lead to serious injury or even death from hanging or strangulation.

## Who is most at risk for death from playing the choking game?

- Boys were much more likely to die from the choking game than girls; 87% of victims were boys.

- Most of the children that died were 11-16 years old (89%).
- Nearly all of the children who died were playing the game alone when they died.
- Deaths have occurred all over the United States; the choking game isn't limited to one area of the country.

## What are the warning signs that a child is playing the choking game?

Parents, educators, health-care providers, or peers may observe any of the following signs that can indicate a child has been involved in the choking game:

- Discussion of the game or its aliases
- Bloodshot eyes
- Marks on the neck
- Wearing high-necked shirts, even in warm weather
- Frequent, severe headaches
- Disorientation after spending time alone
- Increased and uncharacteristic irritability or hostility
- Ropes, scarves, and belts tied to bedroom furniture or doorknobs or

found knotted on the floor

- The unexplained presence of dog leashes, choke collars, bungee cords, etc.
- Petechiae (pinpoint bleeding spots) under the skin of the face, especially the eyelids, or the conjunctiva (the lining of the eyelids and eyes)

## What are some of the other names used for the choking game?

- Pass-out game
- Space monkey
- Suffocation roulette
- Airplaning
- Blacking out/blackout
- Cloud nine
- Something dreaming game
- Scarf game
- Purple dragon
- Purple hazing
- The American dream
- Fainting game
- Space Cowboy
- Dream game
- Flat liner
- California choke

## How quickly can someone die after playing the choking game?

Someone can become unconscious in a matter of seconds. Within three minutes of continued strangulation (i.e., hanging), basic functions such as memory, balance, and the central nervous system start to fail. Death occurs shortly after.

## Are there non-fatal, long-term consequences of the choking game?

- Loss of consciousness and death of brain cells due to oxygen deprivation in the brain; coma and seizures may occur in severe cases
- Concussions or broken bones (including jaws) from falls associated with the choking game
- Hemorrhages of the eye

## How can the choking game be prevented?

Research is not available on the best strategies to prevent the choking game. However, parents, educators, and health-care providers should be made aware of this public health threat and the warning signs that adolescents may be playing the game.

## Make a Difference in Carson City: Join Parent Leaders for Education

Caryn Swobe /  
Parent Leaders For Education

What difference can \$75 million make? It can mean adding several more students to each class. It can mean losing teachers, staff and programs. It can mean losing the momentum Washoe County has been gaining in its goals of increasing the graduation rates and fostering excellence in education.

Nevada's economic crisis has presented the legislature with difficult choices as the state's budget must be balanced by the end of the legislative session this June. Education represents approximately one third of the budget, so it has become a target for significant cuts.

Many of us feel helpless to change the fate of education on a statewide level, but there is something we can do.

To advocate for education funding, Parent Leaders for Education formed in Washoe County. The group is a non-partisan; all-volunteer organization comprised of parents, concerned citizens, educators, community leaders and business owners who advocate for public education and who vote. Parent Leaders is advocating for education funding and reforms that support the Washoe County School District's strategic plan.

Nevada Assemblywoman Debbie Smith (Sparks) said recently at a Parent Leaders for Education event that for several years there have been no parent advocates for education pressuring lawmakers in Carson City. She attributes the decline of educational funding in Nevada to the loss of the parent voice.

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# Contract Corner: Potpourri

Chuck Fletcher / UniServ Director

## Evaluations

If you haven't received your evaluation by the time you read this, contact Chuck Fletcher at WEA (828-3022).

You may have your evaluation and your evaluator may have proposed that you be on a Track III or start your '11-'12 evaluation now, rather than next year. This is at their discretion. It is especially employed where they feel there are immediate concerns, and of course, the last two months are as important as the first two months. And let's not forget that "being more proactive" may have come up on his/her evaluation.

## Your Signature...

...means that you have **received** the document, not that you agree with it. If you don't agree, a meeting with the principal focused on the rubrics as descriptors serves as a productive discussion. If you still don't agree, then you are entitled to "respond" (see below), but you must sign the evaluation.

## Track III Reminder

If a Track III is a possibility or reality, you are entitled to representation at the goal setting meeting as well as the monthly summaries. It is better for us to be involved sooner rather than later. We will check to make sure the notifications are proper, the goals are achievable, the time line is clear, and the support is available – all requirements of the Track III.

The monthly summary is also a part of the process, and this summary should report on the evidence collected in the monthly observations, which will be frequent, and state progress made or not observed.

Again, the Track III can start as soon as April 2.

## Right to "Respond"

You have the right to "respond" to any disciplinary or evaluative document that goes in your file. It is recommended the "response" letter be labeled as such, and given to the principal/evaluator, and sent to your HR Tech with a note requesting it be attached to a spe-

cific document, e.g. "Please attach to my March 29, 2011 evaluation."

There is **NO TIME LIMIT**. You may respond at any time. Having said that, if you respond too soon, it may become an emotional purge, which is not good. Usually if you wait one to two weeks, you can be less emotional. In order not to forget or procrastinate, circle a date on your calendar as a reminder to begin writing.

The response should be reasoned and logical: take quotes from the document with which you disagree and say why you don't think the statements are correct. If WEA has helped you with the problem, we will also proof read the document if you wish.

Around "evaluation time" we often hear that the principal "told me I only had 5 days to respond" to my evaluation. The principal must send all evaluations by a certain date, and what he is saying is that *to be included when he sends them to HR*, your response should be in by then. You can, however, send it in yourself.

## Evaluations, Negotiations and Ongoing Calendar Work

Elaine Lancaster / Executive Director

### Evaluations

The WEA and WCSD are working together to create the new evaluation instrument that will be used in the 9 TIF/SIG schools and 9-12 selected schools that are willing to be part of the pilot for the 2011-12 school year. Only those schools will be involved in the new evaluation. The plan is to have it ready for all schools by 2012-13. The evaluation committee consists of the principals from the schools, a teacher of their choosing and a teacher from WEA. There will be central office folks, community leaders business folks and your WEA staff and president also. The Danielson Consulting group will be leading the discussions. Our current evaluation is based on the Charlotte Danielson model, so we believed that it best to start from that basis, to create the new instrument. The commit-

tee will be meeting 4 days in April, two days in one week, two days the next. We will have a finished product by May 1. The TIF grant is paying for the cost of the consulting firm.

### Negotiations

The WEA and WCSD negotiations teams will be meeting on March 29th to agree on the ground rules for our negotiations and to set future dates. Hopefully, there will be preliminary discussions on issues to be negotiated. Remember, we cannot do anything with salaries and benefits until the legislature ends. We will keep you informed as we go.

### Calendar

The Calendar Committee, which has many WEA members on it, is now considering two calendars for the 2012-2013 school year. We had been concentrating on a calendar that would have an August 6th common start date for all schools (except multi-track) and

a 5 week (three weeks for intercession) winter break to allow students to attend intercession to do credit recovery from the first semester that would end at winter break. There have been concerns raised about the length of the break, and the cost of the intercession. The second option would have a common start date of August 1st, and instead of one large 5-week break there will be breaks spread over the course of the year. This will shorten the break during the summer in hopes of better retention by students. The weeks of breaks could possibly be used for credit recovery and remediation. There is still the issue of pay for the first year when everyone goes to a different pay cycle. WEA is closely involved with the pay discussions. You will be getting a survey to ask your opinion-it will be very important that you respond to the survey.

## Parent Leaders for Education

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She encourages all of us to get involved and actively work together for the common goal of reforming and funding education.

With that advice in mind, Parent Leaders for Education is creating forums and dialogues between the Washoe County School District, elected officials and the citizens of Washoe County. It arranged for the proclamation of "Public Schools Week" in January in the cities of Reno and Sparks which included visits by nine of the ten area legislators to elementary schools in their political district. It is hosting town-hall style meetings at schools around the community to have Washoe County School District officials inform citizens of the impact of the proposed cuts and encourage grassroots support for education funding. Parent Leaders for Education hand delivers postcards from attendees of the events every week to the legislators and the governor. They also make public comment at legislative hearings and committee meetings on K-12 education.

The future of our schools is literally at stake this legislative session. We need to step forward and help shape decisions and resulting impacts. No longer can we afford to be bystanders. Help spread the word that cuts to education of this magnitude are not an option. Lawmakers need to hear from parents and teachers. Our children's success, as well as Nevada's economic stability depends on everyone making education the #1 priority in Nevada!

Join Parent Leaders for Education to increase its influence in Carson City. Visit our Web site at [www.educationpriority1.com](http://www.educationpriority1.com) to fill out a simple membership form. By joining Parent Leaders for Education, you help demonstrate widespread support for education. You will also receive updates of events we will be hosting and activities for which we may need either help, attendance or communication with elected officials so that our collective voice can be heard.

If you have questions, please call Caryn Swobe 771-1612 or email [cswobe@yahoo.com](mailto:cswobe@yahoo.com).

## Congratulations, 2010 National Board Certified Educators and Counselors!



**Back Row:** Mariluz Garcia, David Erickson, Stephanie Reddig, Theresa Jempsa, Kelli Moore, Cheryl Best, Denise Bryant, Sandy Dunn, Heather Bowman and Sean Whisler.

**Front Row:** Linda Drake, Carol Wilkins, Debby Shaw, Julie McGrath, Natalia Cui-Callahan, Gillian Bartlett, Christine Harris

## Welcome, New Members!

- Megan Lapidus at Winnemucca
- William Marchuk at Sparks M.S.
- Lisa Mortara at Wooster
- Amanda Ryan at Winnemucca
- Larry Zunino at North Valleys

## Member Benefits

### ATTENTION MEMBERS: ANOTHER MEMBER BENEFIT!

Be sure to check with your cell phone providers. Many cell phone companies offer a discount for WEA/NSEA/NEA members.

**Tax Deductible  
Dues  
\$662.41**

**Last Day to  
Return Ski Tickets  
for a Refund  
April 29th**



WASHOE EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

**1890 Donald Street, Suite A  
Reno, Nevada 89502  
828-9282 Fax: 828-6748**

Dana Galvin	President
Jane Bantz	Vice-President
Elaine Lancaster	Executive Director
Chuck Fletcher	UniServ Director
Chelsea Canon	Office Manager



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WEA Today is published nine times per year to inform, educate and entertain the members of Washoe Education Association. We urge readers to write letters to the editor on matters of concern. Letters should be mailed to WEA Today Editor at 1890 Donald Street, Reno, NV, 89502. All letters must be signed and include phone number; however, anonymity will be granted if deemed necessary. We reserve the right to edit for length or libelous comments. It would be appreciated if letters were typed, but neatly handwritten copies are accepted.