



Washoe Education Association Monthly Newsletter

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MARK YOUR CALENDAR

November 2nd

Furlough Day
WEA Office Closed

November 4th

Retirement Seminar:
PERS
4:15pm in the WEA Office

November 11th

Veterans Day
WEA Office Closed

November 14th -

November 19th

American Education Week

November 25th

Thanksgiving Day
WEA Office Closed

November 26th

Family Holiday
WEA Office Closed

December 1st

Rep Council
4:30pm at the WEA Office

Courageous Conversations

Dana Galvin / WEA President

On Monday, Oct. 18th and Tuesday, Oct. 19th, the WEA took part in the WCSD's diversity conference. Both Elaine Lancaster and I were thrilled to have been included in the conversation as were all of the other association presidents. The conference was led by author Glenn Singleton, who co-wrote *Courageous Conversations About Race: A Field Guide for Achieving Equity in Schools*, with Curtis Linton. Not only was the conference attended by central office employees and the four zone superintendents, but every building site administrator attended as well.

Some of the topics we discussed were: "Do we have the 'will' to educate all children?", "Beliefs about student achievement," "Talking about race," "Why talk about race?," "Racial consciousness" and "Bridging cultures." All in all there were thirty topics of discussion during the fifteen hours of training. This most important discussion will serve as the framework to begin to engage in conversations about race. Dr. Morrison ended the conference saying the work we have begun and the conversations we are committed to will distinguish the Washoe County School District. We need a way to have this conversation for the 64,000 students we serve everyday. He went on to thank us for embracing Glenn Singleton's work.

This important work will be spearheaded by the Coordinator of the Diversity and Equity office, David Gamble, and the Equity Team. Members of the Equity Team are: Andy Kelly, Wanda Shakeenab, Andrew Yoxsimer,

Amanda McWilliams, Stacey Ting, Jeny Ricci, Mary Ann Robinson, Lynn Manning, Jane Woodburn, Pedro Martinez, Doug Parry, Sheila Meibergen, Fatima Rivas, D'Lisa Crain, and Sue Denning.

The purpose of the WCSD Equity Team is stated as follows: "Key District administrators and school level leaders have been selected to participate on the District's 'Equity Team.' The purpose of the Equity Team is to map out action planning steps in support of the District's 'Beyond Diversity' professional development training efforts in increasing the cultural competency of District's Staff. The Equity Team, moreover, will also serve as a committee to work on the District's Strategic Plan goal to 'Foster a Diverse and Inclusive Culture.'"

The Equity Team additionally will collaborate with the Equity Alliance at Arizona State University (EA), which is a federal Equity Assistance Center for research, technical assistance in professional learning. The EA's will help to provide support to WCSD as it works on developing, adapting and implementing reform efforts aimed at insuring equity in opportunity and outcome for all students.

The Equity Alliance and the Equity Team will work together to facilitate the District's development of a systemic approach in engaging stakeholders in conversations about educational equity, and experiences that build awareness and capacities in key strategies that will assure students' success.

Contract Corner: ESIP and Sick Leave at Separation

Chuck Fletcher / UniServ Director

Separation, you ask? In the case of your accumulated sick leave, if you have 10 years of service and are retiring or resigning, you are entitled to payment for your unused sick leave days. In the case of the Early Separation Incentive Plan (ESIP), if you plan to retire or separate early, the district will pay you up to 30% of your final year's salary.

Early Separation Incentive Plan (ESIP)

Do you have at least 20 years of continuous service with the District? Are you 50 years old? Were you hired prior to July 1, 1985 and have up to 36 years of service? Were you hired on or after the above date, and have up to 30 years of service? You are eligible for ESIP!

Don't take retirement lightly in these economic times, but if you have planned

and are ready, then ESIP could well be for you. You must submit an ESIP application (available from HR now and tentatively due by December 10) and a Letter of Resignation (effective before September 1, 2011) to Human Resources. The maximum incentive is 30% of your final year's salary (not to exceed 30% of column TG Step 20), and there is a district-wide cap which is set at \$1,038,000. If the number of employees and their calculated payment exceeds the cap, the benefit will be distributed to those employees with the greatest number of years of continuous service to the District.

The benefit is taxable by the IRS. You can use the money to buy years of service in PERS (up to 5), or it will be paid to you in a lump sum at the end of your contract year.

Should you die before the ESIP mon-

ey is paid out, the balance will go to your estate.

For more information, see article 24.14 the negotiated agreement, or ask us!

Payment for Accumulated Sick Leave

Assuming you have 10 years of continuous service at separation, you can be paid for 25% of accumulated sick leave (to a maximum of 190 days) at your daily rate of pay. There is a cap on the total amount paid out district-wide per year as a percentage of the general fund.

One small caveat: if you separate from Washoe County to take a job at another school district in Nevada, you are entitled to take your accumulated sick leave with you – but you can't "have your sick leave and get paid for it, too!"

Nurse's Notes: US Has Highest Obesity Rates Among Rich Countries

Sharon G. Freier / RN

The United States is the fattest nation among 33 countries with advanced economies, according to a report out from an international think tank. Two-thirds of people in this country are overweight or obese ... which is roughly 30 pounds over a healthy weight.

Obesity rates have skyrocketed since the 1980s in almost all the countries where long-term data is available, says the report from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), which works on policies to promote better economies and quality of life. Countries with the fastest obesity growth rates: the United States, Australia and England.

"Obesity is a growing threat to public health in all the advanced countries throughout the world," OECD spokesman Matthias Rumpf says. Obesity

causes illnesses, reduces life expectancy and increases health care costs, he says. Obesity cost the U.S. an estimated \$147 billion in weight-related medical bills in 2008, according to a study by government scientists.

"We have to find the most effective and cost-efficient way to deal with the problem," Rumpf says. Among OECD's recommendations:

- Individual lifestyle counseling by family doctors and dietitians to increase the life expectancy and quality of life for people who are obese or at risk of becoming so. "It costs a lot of money," Rumpf says, "but you get a lot for this money."

- Health-promotion campaigns, compulsory food labeling and a serious commitment from the food industry to stop advertising unhealthy foods to kids.

"There are a lot of these things going on in the U.S. already, but the question is

whether you can adjust and redirect the policies to make them more effective," he says. "No one can fix the problem, but we can reduce it." Neville Rigby, director of the European Obesity Forum, says the OECD report "is important because it provides clear evidence that the way most countries have been approaching obesity has been doomed to failure."

"Obesity must be tackled by a multi-pronged approach that involves a combination of strong policy measures at the same time as individual management issues are addressed by physicians and their teams," he says.

The report "makes the case for a much more robust set of government and societal actions," Rigby says. If society waits for business and individuals to do what is really needed, "the obesity epidemic will simply get much, much worse."

Are AB521 and Positive Behavior Supports Compatible?

Frank Selvaggio/ Student Support Services

In 2010 WCSD adopted Positive Behavior Supports (PBS) as a key strategy to deal with problem behaviors in a school and classroom. PBS is a nationally recognized system that research has shown will increase academic performance and decrease problem behaviors. Currently, 47 schools in WCSD are implementing PBS.

The goals of PBS are to develop a safe, consistent, and positive culture for all students and staff. Similar to Response-To-Intervention (RTI), PBS is a three-tiered problem solving process that provides increasing levels of sup-

ports and interventions for students not able to meet school-wide expectations for behavior. A critical component of PBS is the belief that students do not come into schools with the necessary requisite behavior skills and need for them to be taught like one would teach math, language arts, or science in all aspects of the building, including the classroom.

A question that has recently come up is if Assembly Bill 521, which specifically calls for a child to be removed from a classroom if disruptive and/or interference of instruction occurs, and PBS are compatible. The answer to this question is an emphatic “yes.” When a student’s behavior gets to the level where he/she is disrupting a classroom environment at such a level that instruction is no longer feasible then the philosophy of PBS would be to re-

move the student after the handful of interventions outlined in AB521 have failed to solve the problem.

Where PBS may differ from previous approaches, is that the goal of PBS is not punitive but intervention focused. Practically, this means when a student is removed, the goal would be to identify the motivation behind the behavior (peer/adult attention, etc.) and then design a strategic intervention to solve the problem behavior. This is a much different approach than simply suspending or placing a student in detention, which research has shown actually increases school violence and problem behaviors unless there are proactive interventions included.

If you would like more information about PBS please contact Frank Selvaggio at fselvaggio@washoe.k12.nv.us or visit www.PBIS.org.



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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.

BUILDING REPS ARE YOUR LINK TO THE WEA BUT THEY CAN'T DO EVERYTHING!

Elaine Lancaster / Executive Director

Building reps are the hard working folks in your buildings that attend meetings, pass out information, hold ten minute meetings, gather input and answer questions. They attend Rep Council once a month to gather vital information for their members. They forward e-mails from the WEA office to keep everyone in the information loop. They listen to concerns and try and get folks headed in the right direction - which most often means contacting the WEA office.

With that said, there are things that reps are *not expected* to do, nor should they do, at their sites. Reps do not at-

tend meetings with their peers and administration. Reps are not expected to do any kind of peer evaluation. Reps are not expected to represent members when the school police are involved. Members at all of these types of meetings are to be represented by the WEA staff, either Elaine Lancaster or Chuck Fletcher. It is the reps’ responsibility when members come to them with these types of problems, to direct folks to the WEA office. If for some reason the member does not wish to have representation, that is their choice, not the responsibility of the WEA Rep.

WEA Reps are volunteers that do much of the work of the WEA - be sure and say thanks!

Improving Students' SAT/ACT Performance

Kelly Jesch / Counseling Services

Our goal in Washoe County School District is to support students toward graduation and in their post-secondary planning. Taking college entrance exams and scoring well provides students the best opportunities for entrance to the college or university of their choice.

Teachers and parents can assist students getting ready for the test with some of the following tips:

- Students should print and take practice tests beginning several months before their test date.

- Learning how each test is scored helps students understand good test-taking strategies.

- Students should take a full length test as practice so they get used to the amount of time it takes for each test and how to pace themselves.

- Students benefit from learning where their deficits are by taking a practice test. Teachers and parents can help students find materials or tutoring to eliminate those deficits before the test.

- Students need to be sure they know which tests are required by their college or university of choice. The University of Nevada, Reno requires the ACT but many other schools require the SAT.

- School counselors encourage all students to practice and take the SAT or ACT no matter what their post-secondary plans are. Taking the test and having scores available keeps all options open in the future for students.

- All sophomore students in Washoe County School District take the PSAT and receive their scores. These scores can be useful to help students, parents, and teachers identify student strengths and need for improvement areas well before taking the SAT. If students are interested in pursuing becoming a National Merit Scholar, they take the PSAT again as a junior.

- Practice, Practice, Practice. The night before won't cut it.

Washoe County School District is partnering with Triumph College Admissions to provide students with step-by-step test prep materials on-line for free. The student portal is on the Washoe County School District website under the Student tab. The user name and the password is the student's ID number. Students can get their ID numbers from their counselors. Students can access test-taking strategies, practice tests, specific diagnostic information about their own skills to help them target their studies, and monitoring to help show their areas of improvement.

When your students are feeling overwhelmed or discouraged, remind them that there are many tools available from Triumph College Admissions, ACT, or College Board to assist them in improving their scores to give them the best opportunities in their post-secondary plans.

Welcome, New Members!

- **Pilar Biller** at Vaughn
- **Christina Breitmeyer** at Desert Heights
- **Douglas Brubaker** at Sparks Middle
- **Lisa Chavez** at Depoali
- **Nancy Colby** at Washoe High
- **Stacey Conner** at Van Gorder
- **Mary Culpepper** at Silver Lake
- **Elisia Drake** at Cold Springs
- **Logan Hamilton** at Spanish Springs High
- **Freeman Holbrook** at Cold Springs
- **Jennifer Kittrell** at Brown
- **Erin Laster** at Allen
- **Jessica McKinley** at Risley
- **Sarah Peterson** at Hug
- **Stacey Phillips** at Maxwell
- **Susan Punchard** at Sparks High
- **Marchelle Reviglio** at Diedrichsen
- **Amy Stimac** at Sparks High
- **Amy Thrower** at Melton
- **Tracie Van Spronsen** at Risley

Master's Equivalency Meetings for 2010-2011

Here is the schedule for the Master's Equivalency Meetings for the rest of the 2010-2011 school year.

ELEMENTARY

November 30th (Application deadline: November 23rd)

February 1st (Application deadline: January 25th)

May 10th (Application deadline: May 3rd)

SECONDARY

December 6th (Application deadline: November 29th)

February 3rd (Application deadline: January 27th)

May 9th (Application deadline: May 2nd)



Ski Tickets

The ski resorts haven't announced their discount ticket prices yet but the WEA will again be offering you lift tickets this winter! We'll publish the prices in the December *WEA Today*, but in the meantime, check www.weatoday.org - we'll post the prices there as soon as we know them.