

FEAtures

A New Superintendent in



our Future

by Bud Larson

On November 25, 2008 the Ferndale School Board accepted the resignation of Dr. Lehnert effective June 30, 2009. The Board has moved ahead very quickly on the process of hiring a new superintendent. The Board hopes to announce the new superintendent by the end of April with the successful candidate starting on July 1, 2009.

The Board has been thorough and open so far in this process, including asking Tracie and I questions at both meetings we attended. On December 4 the Board discussed and approved the process and timeline for hiring the new superintendent. This included a national posting looking for consultants to help with the hiring process. On December 30 the Board interviewed four consulting firms and on January 5 hired Ray and Associates, Inc.

of Cedar Rapids, Iowa. They are a national firm with 100 associates covering all 50 states. The associates met with the Board on January 9 to set the process and timeline for hiring our next superintendent. This process will have many components, several which will include opportunities for community and staff to provide feedback and information. Finalists for the position will meet different groups and be interviewed by the Board. The Board will make the final decision and announce it to the public.

This is an ongoing process so look for announcements that will inform you of opportunities to be involved in hiring our next superintendent. It will be one of the most important decisions to affect our members for years to come.

Upcoming Meeting Dates

January 31, 2009 (Exec)
4:30-6:00

February 7, 2009 (Rep)
4:30-6:00

February 7, 2009 (Exec)
6:00-7:00

March 6, 2009 (Rep)
4:30-6:00

April 3, 2009 (Exec)
4:30-6:00

April 24, 2009 (Rep)
4:30-6:00

May 8, 2009 (Exec)
4:30-6:00

May 22, 2009 (Rep)
4:30-5:30 Dinner Grant
Recipients 5:30-7:00

June 5, 2009 (Exec) 1:00-4:00



Other Dates:

March 13-15 SPARKS

May 14-17 WEA Rep
Assembly

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

BY SUSAN GELHAR, FEA LEGISLATIVE COORDINATOR

Olympia is now in session. Day One: 191 bills! How can our elected lawmakers possibly keep track of all the complex issues they are expected to act upon? They need to hear from educators. Remember, almost everything we do here at school is affected by political decisions; it's important for more members to have an active voice in those decisions.

If you've wondered what a legislative rep does, please read this brief summary of recent activities; please contact me for more information or to provide input so that I may better represent you (gelhars@gmail.com).

Locally, the role of Legislative Coordinator was given a position on the FEA Executive Board and I report to the monthly Rep Councils as well. Regionally, I am a delegate to the Fourth Corner Uniserv council, so I have the chance to interact with other districts. Also, I am a member of the Legislative Action Team led by Lyn Sherry, responsible for planning activities to promote communication with state legislators.

At the state level, I am a member of WEA's Workload Task Force. This committee has been directed to focus on a specific task to fulfill a resolution passed at the Rep Assembly last year and to have recommendations prepared for the

May 2009 RA. And lastly, I accepted an appointment to the Congressional Contact Team. This has provided training opportunities to follow developments with NCLB and other federal programs. There were once rumors of possible trips to Washington DC, but so far my congressional contacts with Rick Larsen have taken place right here.

As the new administration takes office, NEA has proposed a plan to stimulate the economy and protect/create jobs by providing additional funding to states through existing education funding formulas. This is a way to allow funding to reach every community across the nation in order to prevent cuts to education, protect jobs, and stimulate economic growth.

"Tell your members of Congress to provide flexible funding for education through state funding formulas as part of any economic recovery plan."

I can't close without mentioning the 191 bills in Olympia. Maybe you expect more detail from me. Several of the bills are somewhat related to education, most are not; one requires that cigarette lighters are not to be made in interesting shapes. I encourage you to track all new bills yourself on the excellent website

www.washingtonvotes.org

MESSAGE FROM WEA

"When WEA President Mary Lindquist testifies about the state budget in Olympia this week, her message will be simple: A strong K-12 and higher education system is the solution to our state's economic woes."That's why finding new revenue is critical," Lindquist said.

Balancing the budget entirely by cutting education and other crucial services is the wrong response, and it will leave Washington economically weaker. Lindquist reminds legislators that good schools are the key to our state's economic strength and

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recovery. High-wage jobs in the future rely on our ability to fund and deliver a world-class education for all students.

The 2009 legislative session started January 12th, and it's sure to be the most challenging in years. The state is facing a \$5.7 billion budget shortfall. The governor's budget proposal calls for suspending I-732 COLAs, reducing I-728 funding for smaller class sizes and other cuts. The COLA cuts alone total an estimated \$359 million in potential lost pay for school employees.

WEA members have three main goals this session:

- Funding and compensation
- WASL reform
- Equal collective bargaining rights for community and technical college faculty

Please contact your state legislators; urge them to fix the funding problems and remind them that education must remain our highest priority.

PRESIDENT'S PEN

BY TRACIE MORRIS



Staff Safety and Emergency Procedure:

According to Board Policy 3410- Emergency School Evacuation-"When an emergency within a school or its surrounding area necessitates evacuation and/or total or partial closure of the schools within the district, staff shall be responsible for aiding in the safe evacuation of the students within the endangered school or its surrounding area."

In the past, when the school was closed due to emergency and students were safely evacuated, the building administrator would allow staff to leave and take care of their own personal safety. On December 17th, as a result of the mid-day blizzard, our superintendent made the decision to send students home early. Unfortunately, the communication was disjointed and the staff was treated differently in different buildings. To make matters worse, staff safety did not appear to be a priority.

Staff was not encouraged to leave as soon as students were safely out of the building. In fact, many staff had to make a difficult choice. We were told that if we needed to leave, we could use emergency leave. The rationale provided was that to allow staff to simply go home with no leave deduction would be a "gift of public funds".

This is simply untrue. Certificated staff members are salaried employees. It is not a "gift of public funds" to send salaried staff home early. (In fact, flex time can even be arranged with hourly employees – they could "make up" the time!) School Districts have different lengths of day depending on what is negotiated, i.e., some of our colleagues statewide work 7.5 hour days, some work 8 hour days, some even work 7 hour days! Even with different lengths of day, most are on the same salary schedule.

Staff safety should be paramount, and it didn't seem that way on December 17th. Using myself as an example of someone who had emergency leave to draw upon, I had to abandon my car on the freeway and walk home in the snow. Fortunately, I made it home before it was too dark to see. I don't know what would have happened if I didn't have any leave!

For myriad reasons, FEA negotiators are concerned. It doesn't appear the District communicated accurately about the concept of a "gift of public funds". Some staff members were required to work their contracted hours or use emergency leave, while others were respected and trusted to work the remainder of the day safely at home. In addition, through their actions, the District is unilaterally imposing a leave deduction in the face of bargaining notes that show we discussed the matter and assured it would not be an issue.

What next?? We are currently in discussion with WEA Legal to help clarify our

rights. Some FEA members contacted other state employees to see what their practice is for emergency situations. One member contacted Cal Brodie, the Director of Finance for OSPI. According to OSPI it's "up to each district to decide how they handle these circumstances". He stated we should have language in our contract or written policy. I checked with the district to see if we had any written policy concerning staff safety. We do not.

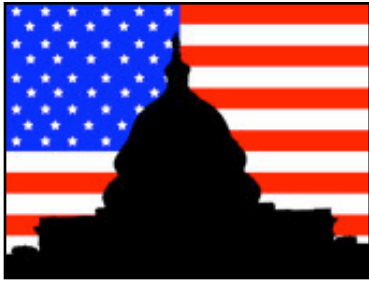
Please continue to discuss this issue with your building reps, community, and school board members. Also share how you would voluntarily supervise students indoors due to the cold, giving up contracted planning time and lunch breaks. The community needs to know we place the utmost priority on the safety of our students, and it's not too much to ask that the same priority be placed on our safety.

Class Size Mix

Thank you to everyone that participated in the one-to-one interviews. We hope you found them as valuable as we did. One of our top concerns is our large class size and the fear that they will continue to increase. The school board has been hearing from the community concerns about our large class sizes. Elvis shared with the Board that the District/FEA collective bargaining agreement (contract) has Class Size/Mix language to address the problem.

The down side is the language also includes the line "the class size/mix section is not subject to the grievance process". This limits the power we have to enforce our language. This leaves

PRESIDENT'S PEN, (CONT.)



no recourse if the District says there is no money. That means the support sought for the kindergarten class of 28, or the 6th grade class of 32 is not provided. For the past two years, there has been no district-wide meeting to address concerns, get clarification, or provide suggestions.

Superintendents are already saying class sizes will be going up more next year. This is difficult to understand. How can any District justify kindergarten classes with 28 students, like Ferndale has?

It is time we gather and organize more information about the issue. We are interested in what has been requested, what has been provided, and your overall sense of the Class Size/Mix process. Please share your concerns with your Class Size/Mix Chairperson. Your negotiations team wants to support you by improving this language.

Political Action

Building Reps will be coming to you within the next month to have a conversation about political action and WEA-PAC. Everything we do in education is now controlled by the political process – from funding to program. We all understand the current financial crisis is likely to negatively impact school budgets, which ultimately impacts the program that can be delivered to students. However, the level of that impact is still undetermined. Our collective involvement is KEY to influencing what the final impact will be. Please join together to fight for schools!

Bargaining Update

by Adam Goldstein

I would like to extend a HUGE THANK YOU to all of the building reps and other association members who have helped conduct the one on one interviews this past month. They have been a huge success!! We are still making sure everyone's voice is heard and has a chance for their 'interview.' Please do let me know if you were not there the day they were conducted in your building.

We have been meeting as a team and are now combing through the interview responses. Your ideas are thoughtful and very forward thinking. They are great help as we create our issues lists and other bargaining priorities.

We still need more feedback however. Please look for a survey in later in February or possibly March. This will include specific questions that will also help guide us as to what our priorities are as an association.

We will also be holding Bargaining Forums this year at Horizon Middle School. They are February 9th and 18th from 4 until 6pm. Please send me an email if you would like to sign up your group. Please try to have as many members from your group attend as possible. This is a great forum to discuss issues that are specific to a group of members (Librarians, Counselors, 2nd Grade Teachers, etc).

Your first FEA BarGAINing newsletter will arrive soon. It will contain a rough timeline and other information about our upcoming bargain.

As always, if you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact one of your bargaining team members.

FEA Representatives

President:: Tracie Morris
 Vice President: Dave Esser
 Secretary: Thirza Zagelow
 Treasurer: Cheryl Frazier
 FEAtures: Dee Schulz
 Legislative Rep: Susan Gelhar
 WebMaster: Ryan Mitchel

Ferndale High School:

Head Rep: Heidi Stahlberg
 Reps: Jeff Demorest, Nate Button, Beth Andres, Jed Decker, Susan Smith, Holly Wibbens, Drew Sampson, Steve Menefee, Wendy Rice

Clearview high School:

Head Rep: Boo Kaufman

Windward:

Head Rep: Chuck Schelle

Vista Middle School

Head Rep: Jay Sozanski
 Rep: Amy Nylan

Horizon Middle School

Head Rep: Nancy Hudson
 Rep: Melanie Helt

Beach:

Head Rep:

Central:

Head Rep: Lisa Lockwood
 Reps: Michelle Taylor, Joelle Schneider, Denise Smith

Custer:

Head Rep: Lynn Kelling
 Rep: Brandi Caffrey

Eagleridge:

Head Rep: Jerry Finkbonner
 Reps: Leah Rochon, Patty Cornelsen,

Mt. View:

Head Rep: Cathy Cook
 Reps: Jan Polen Angela George, Teresa Parke

Cascadia:

Head Rep: Christi Liese
 Reps: Marcy McIvor, Cynthia Pottle, Diane Monsen, Pat Schelling

Skyline:

Head Rep: Kathy Galbraith
 Rep: Kathy Miller