

FEAtures

Contract Review: Assessment Release Time

by: Chelsea Bell

"Each elementary school budget will be given funds, to be administered by the principal, to purchase substitute teacher or paraeducator time as needed to allow teachers to conduct district-required literacy assessments. Kindergarten teachers will be provided additional release time to conduct one-on-one assessments as necessary."

(page 10, FEA Collective Bargaining Agreement, 2009-2010)

This language allows flexibility for building principals to make decisions about how best to administer district required assessments, such as the DIBELS. Having worked in four different elementary schools in the last five years, I have seen this language interpreted in different ways. In some buildings teachers are released by a substitute and administer the assessment themselves one-on-one. In other buildings reading specialists take time from their regular teaching schedules to administer, while some principals hire a trained substitute (certified or classified) to come into the building and rotate among classrooms to complete the assessment school-wide.

This year, there has been a change in the language that provides additional time for kindergarten teachers to conduct assessments in a broader capacity. There is no amount of time indicated in the language, nor are there the same parameters surrounding the type of assessments that can be administered using this release. This time has been given in part because of the cut-back to half time kindergarten. These teachers now have either half the contracted time to fulfill a full workload or 1.0 FTE to do the workload of two classes. These teachers are provided additional report card prep and conference time for the same reasons.

If you have any questions about this language please contact your FEA leadership or your building administrator.

REASONS TO CALL AN FEA REP (There are no "dumb" questions.)

**FEA Reps are listed on the last page

1. You, or someone in your building, have a contract question.
2. You, or someone in your building, receive a poor evaluation from your principal.
3. You, or someone in your building, need information about benefits.
4. You, or someone in your building, have a problem with your paycheck.
5. You, or someone in your building, want to volunteer in the Association.
6. You, or someone in your building, are unsure about transcript/college credit/clock hours.
7. You, or someone in your building, are uncertain about supplemental days and/or professional stipends.
8. You, or someone in your building, have an uneasy situation in your school.
9. You, or someone in your building, want clarification about policy (school/district/FEA).
10. You, or someone in your building, would like information regarding leadership training and opportunities.

PRESIDENT'S PEN

BY TRACIE MORRIS



Since both of my parents were public school teachers, I have been involved with levy, bond and political action my entire life. I can say wholeheartedly that the manner in which this past levy campaign was organized, and the amount of community and staff involvement truly impressed me. Everyone was supportive, involved, and creative working together in hopes of encouraging our entire community to support our Ferndale Schools. The whole tone in the district was positive and supportive, partly because of our new superintendent and everyone's openness to change. Thank you for spreading the word and answering difficult questions. We are very pleased to announce the levy passed by almost 66%. Our community supports what we do!

The future of the Ferndale School District in terms of support, trust and transparency is encouraging. I look forward to meeting with the District to work on problem solving together. This is the first time I can say that after five years serving as your FEA President. I would like to also thank everyone that has volunteered to be on one of the many committee opportunities available with the FEA and the District. We are all in this together and have the power to guide the changes that are best for our members and students.

How do I contact them?

If you would like to leave a message for any of your legislators, make just one call to 1-800-562-6000. You may leave a message for a single legislator, or multiple calls to many legislators, however, the messages will only be taken for the legislators that represent the district where you live or work.

If you prefer to put your message in writing, you can use e-mail (**use your home computer, please**). Go to the WEA legislative/political website for an easy link to your legislator. Go to www.ourvoicewashingtonea.org, Click on the "Take Action Now" button. Select the issue that you want to write about from the action alert options, enter your zip code and press go. There are talking points available to help you with your message and a spell-check tool to make sure that your message is error-free.

Please remember that e-mail and phone calls to legislators must be done outside of work hours and from a location other than your work site. Do NOT use District equipment.

Pre-Retirement Seminar presented by WEA Retired & WEA Fourth Corner **Get Ready to Plan to Save Money**

What will be covered:*Plan I, II, III*—
Financial Planning—*Social Security and
Medicare*—*Estate Planning*—*Health and
Medical Insurance*—*PERS/TRS*—*DCP
(Deferred Comp)

When: Friday, March 26, 6 PM– 9 PM
and continues Saturday, March 27, 8 AM– 4
PM

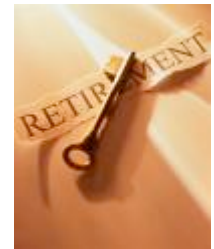
RSVP: No later than March 19, 2010

Where: WECU Education Center
(across from Main Branch)

511 E Holly Street
Bellingham, WA 98225

How: Download an application or contact Bob
Blum (360) 734-0701 for more information.

[http://www.weafourthcorner.org/images/
retirespring.pdf](http://www.weafourthcorner.org/images/retirespring.pdf)



VEBA – NOT JUST ANOTHER PRETTY ACRONYM

Heads up FEA members! VEBA (Voluntary Employee Beneficiary Association) is coming to town. FEA will be sponsoring opportunities for teachers to meet with a VEBA representative to ask questions prior to a membership vote to decide if we want to add this as a mandatory benefit. If elected by the membership, deductions would begin next year.

The VEBA Plan is an “account-based” health plan that reimburses qualified health care costs and insurance premiums for you and your family (similar to your section 125 health Flexible Spending Account). It is defined by the IRS as a health reimbursement arrangement (HRA). VEBA Plan participation is renewed annually by bargaining unit. Visit www.veba.org for more information.

Advantages

- You pay no tax on contributions, earnings, or withdrawals (claims)
- You can use your account anytime
- Your spouse and dependents are covered—even if you die (see NOTE below)
- Your unused account balance carries over from year to year; no annual “use-it-or-lose-it”
- You can invest your account among the available investment funds, including any one of four pre-mixed portfolios
- The district saves the FICA contribution

The growing cost of health care

Public employees everywhere are struggling to cope with the soaring cost of health care, particularly after retiring. Many who are eligible to retire keep working because their retirement pensions and other taxable retiree income sources aren't enough. The average 60-year-old school employee and spouse retiring today may spend **well over \$300,000 of their own money** on health care expenses and insurance premiums during retirement! Fortunately, the VEBA Plan can help.

Common funding sources for VEBA

- Mandatory employee contributions (flat dollar amount); no individual elections permitted
- Annual sick leave buy back
- Retirement/separation from service sick leave cash out
- Vacation and other leave cash out
- Excess monthly benefit dollars after pooling for basic benefits

Other participating education associations

- Stanwood
- Arlington
- Blaine
- Mount Baker
- Coupeville

NOTE: Per IRS Revenue Ruling 2006-36, the VEBA Plan will be required to discontinue providing reimbursements to non-dependent heirs for expenses incurred on or after July 1, 2009. This ruling only affects benefits paid to non-dependent heirs; benefits on behalf of a surviving spouse or dependent(s) will continue to be available.

Be Computer Savvy When Using District Equipment



Here are 10 things you should know when you use district technology:

1. Read the District's [technology use policy](#). Make sure you know and understand the policy. If you have questions about the policy, ask for clarification.
2. It's not a good idea to use District e-mail for online personal shopping or bill payment. Use your home e-mail address for these types of transactions.
3. Assume you have limited privacy regarding the e-mail you send and receive on your school computer system. Remember, anyone can forward anything.
4. A “deleted” computer file, including e-mail, can still be accessed by an experienced IT person.
5. There is a trail on computers that shows what Internet sites you've accessed. Be aware that these can be monitored.
6. Assume that what you see on your computer screen can also be seen by the District, including e-mail accounts that you view through equipment or network connections.
7. What you post on personal blogs, Facebook and other websites may be seen by more people than you realize - including students, parents, and the District. Check your privacy settings on Facebook, and remember, do not “friend” students on your personal Facebook page.
8. Many Fortune 500 businesses, small businesses, and even some school districts conduct web searches of potential employees as part of the application process.
9. Be aware that copyright law also applies to material on the Internet. Online information is available from the Library of Congress, U.S. Copyright Office: www.copyright.gov.
10. Guard your password - don't share it with others. Be sure to change your password often. Turn off or lock your computer when you leave your work area.

For more information, check out these joint NEA and Sprint websites for educators, parents, and students:

www.4Netsafety.com
www.Bnetsavvy.org

Your 2009-2010 Representative

Officers:

President: Tracie Morris

Vice President: Dave Esser

Secretary: Thirza Zagelow

Treasurer: Cheryl Frazier

FEAtures: Dee Schulz

Legislative Rep: Susan Gelhar

WebMaster: Ryan Mitchel

Head Negotiator: Adam Goldstein

Minority Rep:

WEA/Uniserv: Lyn Sherry

Ferndale High School:

Head Rep: Heidi Stahlberg

Reps: Drew Sampson, Nate Button, Beth Andres, Holly Wibbens, Jeff Demorest, Wendy Rice, Susan Smith, Julie Vandoren, Steve Meneffee

Clearview high School:

Head Rep: Boo Kaufman

Windward:

Head Rep: Chuck Schelle

Vista Middle School

Head Rep: Jay Sozanski

Rep: Amy Nylen

Horizon Middle School

Head Rep: Nancy Hudson

Rep: Melanie Helt, Donna Ritter

Beach:

Head Rep: Judy Trauth-Thomas

Central:

Head Rep: Michelle Taylor

Reps: Denise Smith, Joelle Schneider

Custer:

Head Rep: Lynn Kelling

Rep: Brandi Caffrey, Kerri Mensing

Eagleridge:

Head Rep: Jerry Finkbonner

Reps: Leah Rochon, Patty Cornelsen, Jeremy Nolan, Jamie O'Brien

Mt. View:

Head Rep: Jan Polen
Reps: Lindsay Stamm

Cascadia:

Head Rep: Christi Liese

Reps: Diane Monson, Marcy McIvor, Cynthia Pottle, Bud Larson, alt: Pat Scheling

Skyline:

Head Rep: Kathy Galbraith

Rep: Kathy Miller

The Voice



BAYPORT FINANCIAL ADVISORS LLC

DOES YOUR MONEY HAVE A MISSION?

As an educator, I know first-hand the financial challenges that teachers face. Bayport Financial specializes in assisting educators in achieving their financial goals, including planning for:

- *Retirement Funding
- *Life Insurance
- *Education Funding
- *Long Term Care Insurance

Contact **Jed Decker** for a free initial consultation
(360) 527-2937 or jdecker@bayportfinancial.us

Financial Planning offered through Bayport Financial Advisors
Securities and Asset Management Services offered through: Sunset Financial Services, INC.
3520 Broadway, Kansas City, MO 64111, 816.753.7000 (Home Office) Member FINRA/SIPC
Bayport Financial Advisors is not affiliated with Sunset Financial Services, INC

Upcoming FEA Meetings:

Thursday, March 4, 2010
Exec Board, 4:30-6:00 WECU
Wed., March 10, 2010
Rep Council, 4:30-6:00 WECU

Thursday, April 22, 2010
Exec Board, 4:30-6:00 WECU
Nominations Open for Officers

Thursday, April 29, 2010
Rep Council, 4:30-6:00 WECU
Nominations Due

Thursday, May 6, 2010
Exec Board, 4:30-6:00 WECU
Ballots Distributed
Thursday, May 27, 2010
Rep Council, 4:30-5:30 WECU
End of Year Dinner Grant Recipients
5:30-7:00
Ballots for Officers Due

Wednesday, June 9, 2010
Exec Board Planning 1:00-4:00 WECU