

FEAtures

Newsletter of the Ferndale Education Association • Vol. 10, No. 4

January 10, 2006

Tracie Morris *President - Skyline*
Candy Ford *Vice-President - Eagleridge*
Cathy Cook *Secretary - Mt. View*
Cheryl Frazier *Treasurer - Skyline*

David Fayram *Webmaster - F.H.S.*
Susan Browne *FEAtures Editor - F.H.S.*
Susan Gelhar *Legislative Rep - F.H.S.*

Bud Larson *Head Negotiator - N. Bell.*
Kris Skewis *Negotiator - Horizon*
Beth Andres *Negotiator - F.H.S.*
Rocky Diaz *Negotiator - Mt. View*

Building Reps

Judy Thomas *Head Rep - Beach*

Denise Smith *Head Rep - Central*
Jeremy Nolan *- Central*

Lynn Kelling *Head Rep - Custer*
Brandi Caffrey *- Custer*
Ryan Mitchell *- Custer*

Candy Ford *Head Rep - Eagleridge*
Jerry Finkbonner *- Eagleridge*
Vicki Salisbury *- Eagleridge*
Jamie O'Brien *- Eagleridge*
Tami O'Neill *- Eagleridge*

Eric Gorden-Mercer *Head Rep - Mt. View*

Lindsay Dorr *- Mt. View*

Jan Lindsay *- Mt. View*

April McIntyre *- Mt. View*

Thirza Zagelow *Head Rep - N. Bell.*
Christi Liese *- N. Bell*

Greg Hart *Head Rep - Skyline*

Jay Sozanski *Head Rep - Vista*

Gary Cocca *- Vista*

Mitch McCarrell *- Vista*

Jenny Kubic *Head Rep - F.H.S.*
Diane Cooper-Schieck *- F.H.S.*
AnnMarie DeCollibus *- F.H.S.*
Steve Menefee *- F.H.S.*

David Peters *- F.H.S.*

Marilyn Rockwell *- F.H.S.*

Drew Sampson *- F.H.S.*

Heidi Stahlberg *- F.H.S.*

Mike Smith *- F.H.S.*

Cherie Thomas *- F.H.S.*

Adam Goldstein *Head Rep - W.H.S.*

Negotiating team identifies issues Negotiations method outlined, member input crucial

by **Bud Larson**

FEA Head Negotiator

The bargaining season has begun. In December, the FEA Negotiating Team, Bud Larson, Kris Skewis, Beth Andres, Rocky Diaz, and Skip Williams, WEA Fourth Corner UniServ Rep, met with the district team for a day-long training session on interest-based bargaining.

Interest-based is a problem-solving method that FEA has used for many years. The goal is to problem-solve how member needs, or interests, can be met. For example, an interest may be to improve the financial security of members. This may be met in different ways. It may take the form of an increase to salary, additional fringe benefit dollars, more optional days, or other types

of compensation.

When bargaining begins, both teams discuss and agree on operating procedures, such as how meetings will be run, how meeting notes will be recorded and distributed, standards, and other housekeeping matters. At the first few sessions, both teams present interests and issues.

The FEA team is compiling our list from the input obtained at building meetings, at Representative Council and Executive Board meetings, from the member survey that will be distributed this month, and from listening to individual members. Usually, the team organizes interests and issues into categories. Those that are limited in scope and expected to be neutral issues to the district are

See **PROBLEM-SOLVING**, Page 3

FEA takes initiative on calendar

by **Susan Browne**

FEAtures Editor

The FEA Calendar Committee met Dec. 12 to begin the process of deciding next year's school calendar. At the urging of the FEA Negotiating Team, Committee members Jay Sozanski (Vista), Bob Kandiko (Horizon), Robin Peters (FHS), and Terry Nysten (Mt. View) developed eight possibilities for the 2006-2007 calendar. According to Jay Sozanski, the Committee looked at as many options as possible with the given variables

of start date, length of winter break, mid-winter break, and middle and high school sports

See **MORE OPTIONS**, Page 2

In this issue:

President's Pen	2
P.S.E. Negotiations	2
Paid Planning Time	3
Pre-retirement Workshop	3
FEA Website	3
State Legislature	4
TRS 3 Contribution	4
Rep Assembly ballot enclosed.	

President's Pen

From FEA President Tracie Morris

As most of you know, we'll be voting March 14, 2006, on our 5-year bond and 4-year levy. Starting in January we'll be campaigning to help gain support for the proposals presented by the Ferndale Citizen's Committee, parents, community members, and district employees, that helped identify district needs. Jeremy Nolan served on the Committee and represented FEA. Thank you, Jeremy, for your commitment and time.

The approximately \$37 million bond includes improvements to support health and safety, renovation of buildings and grounds, additional classrooms, property for another elementary school, an upgrade to the F.H.S. stadium, and the high school land lab that has been planned for several years. The levy will support the continuation of programs and staff positions, provide funding for unfunded mandates from state and

federal governments, pay for the opening of a new elementary school, cover fuel and electricity cost increases, support full-day kindergarten, and build cash reserves. If you would like more information about the bond and levy proposals, contact your FEA Head Rep or go to the district website.

Dr. Lehnert would like to thank the WEA for the Levy Bond Victory Training offered in November and attended by building administrators Wayne Massie (Horizon) and Aaron Kombol (FHS). WEA has offered to provide support and resources to help us have a successful levy and bond campaign.

Air quality

A big THANK YOU to a diligent FEA member at North Bellingham. Due to some health issues, she was determined to make her classroom a healthy environment. It required a lot of time, effort, letter-writing, research

and patience to pinpoint the problem and get suggestions for improvement. Thank you for stepping forward and making this an important issue.

We've discussed indoor air quality with the district, and the FEA and the district are in the process of finding out the cost of regular indoor air inspections for all buildings. Inspections can be made by the Northwest Clean Air Agency (www.nwclearnair.org). If you have an indoor air quality concern, your first step is to contact your building principal.

WEA PAC membership drive

The only WEA funds that can be used for political support of students and public education must be WEA Political Action Committee (WEA PAC) funds. FEA will provide a Krispie Kreme doughnut breakfast to the building with the highest percentage of WEA PAC members by Feb. 2. Head Reps have membership forms.

P.S.E. still negotiating

Negotiators for the Ferndale Public School Employees Union (P.S.E.) return to the table Jan. 23. Mediated negotiations with the district continue, as employees enter their 5th month without a contract. A membership meeting is scheduled for Jan. 17 to update members, further discuss issues, and plan strategy.

Informational picketing by union members and their supporters has taken place several times and at various Ferndale locations. Members believe its been effective in educating the community about Ferndale P.S.E. and how they compare with employees who work for other school districts.

More options, more votes provided

CALENDAR from Page 1

turnout regulations. The Committee plans to provide members the opportunity to vote on a range of calendar options and narrow the choices with successive votes, not a single vote on fewer options.

"It's important to offer more than one vote," Jay said. "We may be able to narrow options from eight to three with the first vote, but if there's not a strong majority, we may do three votes. We plan to vote until there's a clear majority."

Also different this time is the earlier start. In the past, the district called the committee meet-

ings, there was a later start, voting was rushed, and calendars were announced late. The last time calendars were decided, Robin Peters was not notified about the meetings and the high school was not represented.

In May, 2003, the calendar selection process was negotiated. Our current Collective Bargaining Agreement includes a Memorandum of Understanding that was negotiated following the district's refusal to recommend and the School Board's refusal to accept the results of the vote for the 2003-2004 calendar.

Problem-solving is goal

NEGOTIATING *from Page 1*

usually grouped together. Broader, more difficult issues that will likely require more time to problem-solve are in another group. Monetary issues, interests that are likely to require money to meet the need, are usually grouped together. The list is then finalized and, generally, new issues won't be added later.

After each team has presented their interests, each interest is discussed. All negotiators on both teams need to understand all the interests so they can effectively participate. Next, possible solutions, or ways to meet needs, are brainstormed by all negotiators. Then standards are applied to all suggested solutions. Some standards may be: is it legal? will it meet member needs? will members agree to it? can we afford it? Possible solutions that don't meet all the standards are eliminated. The remaining solutions are then thoroughly examined, implementation is discussed, possible related problems explored, and contract language is drafted. Sometimes it's relatively easy, but more often Negotiators work hard to find solutions that truly meet needs.

FEA Negotiators represent FEA members and, to do that well, they must thoroughly understand what members really want and need. Members must provide all the useful information they can to their Negotiators. Watch for the upcoming negotiations survey and take time to thoughtfully respond. Contact Negotiators, or speak to your Building Rep about issues and ask him/her to report to a Negotiator. Successful negotiations require good communication and members working together.

Pre-retirement workshop Feb. 1 at Horizon

Six pre-retirement workshop sessions will be held on successive Wednesdays 4:30-6:30 p.m. beginning Feb. 1, in the Horizon Middle School Library. Designed to assist in retirement planning, this workshop is recommended for educators who aren't planning to retire soon. Session topics include TRS Plans 1, 2 and 3, social security, and health care.

Registration is \$10.00 and, if you attend all six sessions, \$5.00 will be refunded to you. Send your check, payable to FEA, to your Head Rep or to Tracie Morris at Skyline, or register at the first session.

**Workday Issues and
Grievance Process
will be discussed at the
January 19
FEA Rep Council meeting
4:30 p.m.
Babe's Restaurant**

Paid planning time worked at home

by **Susan Browne**
FEAtures Editor

Some planning time worked away from school and outside the regular work day can be claimed for pay at curriculum rate. Planning time was originally negotiated to provide paid time for teachers to meet together during the school day for teacher-directed activities. With the difficulty of preparing for and obtaining subs, and the impracticality of working with files and computer in a classroom occupied by students with a sub, language was added to our contract to provide more flexibility in how teachers can use

WEA Rep Assembly ballot enclosed

Your ballot for voting on FEA delegates to the 2006 WEA Representative Assembly is enclosed with this *FEAtures*. FEA can send six delegates, so you may vote six times. **Ballots are due to FEA Reps no later than Jan. 18.**

Member benefits online

Medical, dental, and vision plan details are available online at instantbenefits.net. The password is **WEIC**. Provider lists are updated regularly.

Visit FEA website

For quick access to timely information, visit the FEA website at www.ferndaleea.org. FEA Webmaster David Fayram (FHS) tracks Association news and updates the site regularly. Useful links connect to NEA, WEA, WEA 4th Corner UniServ, OSPI, and the WA State Retirement System sites.

planning time. Up to one-half of your total planning time can be worked when and where you decide, and compensated at curriculum rate.

Each full-time elementary teacher has 5 half-days planning time per year provided by a substitute, and 3 of those half-days can be outside the workday, away from school if you choose, with no sub and paid at curriculum rate. Full-time middle school teachers have 3 half-days, 2 of which can be worked outside the workday, and high school teachers have 2 half-days, one of which can be worked outside the workday and compensated at curriculum rate.

State legislature in session

Supplemental budget top goal, Rule of 90 proposed

The Washington State Legislature convened a planned 60-day session Jan. 9. Key legislative tasks are passing a supplemental budget and deciding what to do with an estimated \$1.45 billion in unexpected revenue.

Gov. Chris Gregoire's supplemental budget proposal includes about \$40 million in new funding to help students struggling with the WASL. Washington's per-pupil spending is 42nd in the nation when adjusted for regional cost differences.

The Governor has also proposed slightly higher cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs) and health benefits for school employees. WEA's legislative priorities include full funding for 2006-2007 COLA adjustments and making up the 3.6% in salary lost to educators during the 2-year suspension of voter-approved COLAs.

TRS 3 contribution rate changes during Jan.

Teachers Retirement System (TRS) Plan 3 members have an opportunity to change their contribution rate during January 2006. If you want to change the amount you contribute to your TRS 3 account, you must submit a Contribution Rate Change form to the district before Jan. 31. If you don't submit a change form, your rate will remain the same. This option is offered according to provisions granted to TRS Plan 3 by the Internal Revenue Service. Forms are available online at the Washington State Retirement System website or use the link at www.ferndaleea.org.

The Legislature is considering important legislation that would eliminate the age 65 penalty for most teachers in Teachers Retirement System (TRS) Plans 2 and 3. This proposal often is referred to as the "Rule of 90," meaning that a member could retire, without penalty, when his/her age plus years of service equal 90. Currently, Plan 2 and Plan 3 members must work until age 65 to receive their full defined pension benefits.

WEA strongly supports the passage of the Rule of 90 and is working with key legislators to assure its passage. WEA is encouraging members to call the Legislative Hotline at **800-562-6000** to express their individual support for the Rule of 90.

If you live in the 42nd legislative district, you may also want to contact your legislators:

- Sen. Dale Brandland
brandland_da@leg.wa.gov
- Rep. Kelli Linville
linville_ke@leg.wa.gov
- Rep. Doug Ericksen
ericksen_do@leg.wa.gov

If you live in the 40th legislative district, contact your legislators:

- Sen. Harriet Spanel
spanel_ha@leg.wa.gov
- Rep. Jeff Morris
morris_je@leg.wa.gov
- Rep. Dave Quall
quall_da@leg.wa.gov

Use Optional Days

Are you using your Optional Days and turning in Optional Day Checklist Forms? Remember, full-time elementary teachers have 11 1/2 optional days, and middle and high school teachers have 11 days.

Using optional days earlier in the year allows you to be paid for time you're working anyway and demonstrates to the district that optional days are necessary and valued. As we begin negotiations, it strengthens our position that our jobs require more time than regular workdays provide.

FEA Rep Council Meeting Calendar 2005-06

January 19	4:30 p.m.
February 16	4:30 p.m.
March 23	6:15 a.m.
April 20	4:30 p.m.
May 18	4:30 p.m.

All meetings will be held at Babe's Restaurant in Ferndale.

Question? Concern? Here's who to contact

WEA Fourth Corner UniServ
Council Rep Skip Williams
Phone: 360-733-3344

FEA President Tracie Morris
email: traciemorris@comcast.net or
tmorris@ferndale.wednet.edu

FEAtures is published 11 times a year, August through June, to inform Association members of FEA activities, negotiated policies and district-wide points of interest. Letters, guest columns, announcements, and story ideas are welcome.

Send items to Susan Browne, *FEAtures* editor, Ferndale High School, x9282, suebrowne@ferndale.wednet.edu

Please submit copy electronically using MS WORD.