

FEAtures

The Newsletter of the Ferndale Education Association • November 9, 2006

Tracie Morris *President - Skyline*
Candy Ford *Vice - President - Eagleridge*
Lynn Kelling *Secretary - Custer*
Cheryl Frazier *Treasurer - Skyline*
Ryan Mitchell *Webmaster - Custer*
Dee Schulz *FEAures Editor - Eagleridge*
Susan Gelhar *Legislative Rep - F.H.S.*

Negotiating Team

Kris Skewis *Head Negotiator - Horizon*
Adam Goldstein *Negotiator - Windward*
Beth Andres *Negotiator - F.H.S.*
Rocky Diaz *Negotiator - Mt. View*

Building Reps

Judy Thomas *Head Rep - Beach*
Denise Smith *Head Rep - 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*

Dave Esser *Head Rep - Mt. View*
Lindsay Dorr *- Mt. View*
Jan Polen *- Mt. View*
April McIntyre *- Mt. View*
Cathy Cook *Minority Rep - 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*

Jenny Kubic *Head Rep - F.H.S.*
Diane Cooper-Schick *- 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.*
Susan Smith *- F.H.S.*
Cherie Thomas *- F.H.S.*

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



Life as a FSD Teacher : The Way It Used to Be.

Written by two veteran teachers - Cathy Cook and Candy Ford

When we started teaching, we had very little adopted curriculum. It was the teacher's job to invent what to do every day in the classroom. It was not unusual to have up to 32 students in a class; and as far as support services go, the only support was special education pull-out. Students did their work. It was rare to have someone who didn't keep up.

The Ferndale School District paid some of a teacher's tuition to go to summer school after their first year of teaching. Mountain View was grades K-3, Central was grades 4-5, Vista was grades 6-8, and Custer was grades K-8. Science books said, "Some day man will get to the moon." Wearing pants was frowned upon. Smoking was allowed in the staff lounge, even during staff meetings. A workday without students meant you got to work in your classroom, but you didn't always get paid for it.

We didn't have personal leave, class size mix committees, planning days, or computers. The workroom had a duplicating machine that gave off toxic fumes and purple fingers, and we ran off papers that you had to type using a conventional typewriter. Calculators were a new item in the elementary school, and their use was much debated. There were no electric pencil sharpeners, GLEs, EALRs, or WASL tests. VCRs and DVD players did not exist. Instead we used old reel-to-reel film projectors as well as filmstrips.

One teacher graduated with her master's degree and had to get special permission to take the Friday off to participate in the ceremonies. Plus she had to make up the day on Saturday. All schools had just a few keys that teachers could check out to enter their building on the weekend. Lunches were delivered to our wing on a cart. We accompanied our students out in the hallway to get their lunches, which they ate in our classroom. Leftovers were placed in a

"pig bucket" that was delivered to Hovander Farms for the pigs.

There was a special federally funded program called "Follow Through" that provided services to lower income students for early intervention, K-3. The Johnson O'Malley program was affiliated with schools that offered programs that assisted our Native American population.

Classroom teachers taught their own P.E. and covered all recess duties except students' lunch recess. The district had a lunch and dinner allowance when we had to attend meetings, and no curriculum pay was offered when we attended meetings after hours. There were no grade level meetings. Elementary students only had music once a week.

All FEA meetings were held at 6:00 a.m. at Johnson's Restaurant near the freeway. There were no PGOs- everyone had to have a formal observation. Certificated employees got only 10 sick days a year and signed a 180-day contract. Starting pay for teachers was between \$8000 - \$9000 per year. And last, but not least, remember when we had to fill out forms for our per diem days?

When one looks back at those "old days", you begin to realize that we have come a long way. Change happened because our spokesmen listened to us and worked hard to make positive changes. Take time to thank all those who have ever been on an FEA Negotiating team.

Editor's Note:

If you have any other memories of the "old days" you would like to share, please email them to me at dschulz@ferndale.wednet.edu and they will be included in future issues.

FEA Website Address: www.ferndaleea.org

President's Pen

by Tracie Morris - FEA President

One of the many things I have learned as your FEA President is that if something doesn't sound right, it probably isn't. If you want things to change, you have to question and be involved! Sitting around waiting for something to happen or waiting for someone else to fight for you usually doesn't work too well. Become involved and get informed! There are many opportunities to become involved in FEA. You could attend building meetings, Rep Council meetings, and/or negotiator update/building meetings. Check our awesome website for dates. The most important way to be involved is to share your opinion. If you are happy with your workload, class size, meeting commitments, don't do anything. If you would like to see something done, speak up! This is another bargaining year and a chance to strengthen the language.

We were strongly encouraged at the President's Meeting on September 26, to have our members speak up about issues that concern them in the classroom. You have an opportunity to voice your concerns by filling out a **Take The Lead: What's Your Number** card (enclosed in this FEAtures issue). I'm sure you have heard that we are 46th in the nation for class size, 42nd in the nation for student

spending, and last for compensation for educators. Is this okay? Please return your card to your building head representative by November 17th and I will send them on to the WEA.

FYI: WEA-PAC Drive November:

Pre-Retirement Seminar

Friday, November 17, 6-9:00 PM &
Saturday, November 18, 8-4:00 PM

Where: WEA Fourth Corner
1800 James Street #201
Bellingham, WA 98225

Call Edna at 733-3344 ext 229 to register now. Space is limited to 25 members.

WEA Mission: The mission of the WEA is to make public education the best it can be for students, staff, and communities. Our goal is to build confidence in public education and increase support for Washington's public school system.

FEA 2006-2007 Meeting Calendar

Location: Babe's Restaurant

Scheduled at 4:30 P.M. unless specified otherwise

Nov. 9, 2006	Executive Board
Dec. 7, 2006	Representative Council 6:15 A.M.
Jan. 4, 2007	Executive Board
Jan. 18, 2007	Representative Council
Feb. 1, 2007	Executive Board
Feb. 15, 2007	Representative Council
March 1, 2007	Executive Board
March 22, 2007	Representative Council 6:15 A.M.
April 6, 2007	Executive Board
April 19, 2007	Representative Council
May 3, 2007	Executive Board
May 17, 2007	Representative Council
FEA Scholarship Awards June 7, 2007	Executive Board
Planning Session	TBA

All members are invited and encouraged to attend. This is the chance to meet with other FEA members, to let your voice be heard, and as an added bonus, you get a delicious meal at Babe's Restaurant absolutely free! Please come join us at any of the scheduled meetings. We'd love to have you with us!

FEAtures is published throughout the 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.

Submittal Instructions: Send items to Dee Schulz, FEAtures Editor, Eagleridge Elementary, x9725, dschulz@ferndale.wednet.edu

Articles will be included based on space available.

New Members We Want to Welcome!

We have many new members on our Ferndale School District team. We will introduce a few each issue. If you have any other new employees to your building or celebrations to share, please send a note to FEAtures so we can share the news with the rest of our schools. Stay tuned for more introductions!

Eagleridge Elementary would like to introduce and welcome **Nicole Ross** as the newest addition to its staff. After visiting Egypt this summer, Nicole became the newest member of the kindergarten team at Eagleridge.

Ann Fulton joined our reading team at Central. She's excited to be working directly with kids again. Before coming to Central, she was a classroom teacher at Mt. View, then a TOSA in the Curriculum Office.

Wendy Rice is a new 9th grade WASL English and sophomore English teacher at F.H.S. Wendy comes to FHS with a variety of experiences. Having grown up in Kirkland, and a WWU grad, Wendy is now working on her Master's degree. She took her first teaching job at BEST Alternative School in LWSD. After two years, Wendy went to State Street High School in Sedro. She taught there for five years. Wendy loves the fall in Whatcom County- the trees, the farms, and the mountains. When asked about what she likes about FHS so far, Wendy responded, "First, the staff is incredibly friendly and gracious. People have really stepped forward to answer all my questions and helped me find resources. Second, is the poetry I have gotten from my sophomore students. I think the students in this community are thoughtful and expressive. I can really appreciate that as an English teacher."

Joanne VanErt is Central's new part-time Special Education teacher. Before coming to Central, she lived in Spokane. She enjoys working with children with special needs.

Mrs. Kacie Bundy has moved from teaching fifth grade to second grade at Central Elementary. She is enjoying the change. Mrs. Bundy, her husband, and son Tipton are expecting a new addition to their family in May.

Miss Cara LeCroy has also made a change this year. She had been teaching Special Education for several years and is now teaching 5th grade at Central.

Natalie Friesen is a new 6th grade teacher at Central School. She grew up in Ferndale and graduated from Western Washington University. Before coming to Central School, Natalie taught for five years at a middle school in Seattle.

Important Changes Are Here!

by Kris Skewis

The 2006-2007 FEA contract has a few important changes. We heard loud and clear that members wanted to get rid of all the per diem paperwork! So the Professional Responsibility Stipend will replace the teacher and principal directed optional days. The stipend, which is the equivalent of 12 per diem days, shall be paid in twelve equal monthly installments. You will sign one form in the spring stating that you fulfilled the requirements of the stipend.

Another change is Planning Days. Now all or some planning half-days may be taken during the contracted work day and a substitute will be provided, or employees may choose to be compensated at the curriculum rate for planning half days conducted outside the workday. If you would like to work these planning days off-campus, then you need to clear it with your principal ahead of time. Speaking of curriculum rate, the curriculum rate was increased from \$23.52 to \$25.00 per hour.

We have seen changes to our Personal Leave as well. Now each certificated employee shall be entitled three Personal Leave days. The employee needs to write "as per contract" on the request. These days are still taken out of your sick leave.

While the Set Aside Benefit Account won't affect FEA members, it has the potential to help all of us. This account was established to meet unforeseen health insurance needs of employees who experience a qualifying event as defined by our insurance providers, and need to modify their insurance coverage after the benefit pooling has occurred.

As you already know the calendar has changed. No more late arrival days! Instead the State approved two waiver days for our district thus reducing the student calendar to 178 days. These two days will be regular contracted workdays for staff. Another minor change to the calendar is that elementary school students will be released at 1:00 PM for Fall and Spring conferences.

Remember we still have one Professional Development Day (7.5 hours) that the district will use to pay certified staff to work outside of the contracted day on District/Building goals.

One final note, the contract is one year long and we will be negotiating another agreement in the spring. The negotiators will be visiting buildings for feedback on these changes before beginning negotiations with the district.

If you have any questions about these changes, please don't hesitate to contact your FEA Negotiators:

Bud Larson, North Bellingham, blarson@ferndale.wednet.edu;

Beth Andres, Ferndale High School, bandres@ferndale.wednet.edu;

Rocky Diaz, Mt. View, rdiaz@ferndale.wednet.edu.;

Kris Skewis, Horizon, kskewis@ferndale.wednet.edu.

FEA Lunches at FHS

by Jenny Kubic

We're trying something new at the high school. To help improve communication at the building level, the FEA is scheduling informal meetings during lunches one day every other week. The purpose is to give members the opportunity to get current information about what the FEA is working on and for them to let their representatives know about any issues or concerns that members have.

The lunch meetings are scheduled for every other week, on the weeks between the Executive Board and Representative Council meetings (see schedule on page 2). The meetings are held both 1st and 2nd lunches in room 415, and will have at least one building representative at each meeting.

We are trying this out to see if it will be a good way to increase communication and involvement in the FEA. It has been challenging to find times that work for people to meet, and as we are asked to do more and more, people have less time to fit in another meeting. After a couple of months, we will decide if this is something that we should keep doing.



Important Information From Our Negotiators!

by Bud Larson

Congratulations! It is important that members realize that they were a big part of the successful negotiation of this contract. Your support by using your optional days completely sent a strong message to the District that teachers were willing to be active and support their negotiators. Thank you for this support and know that similar involvement will be needed this year as we prepare for the next round of negotiations.

Negotiators are visiting each building to discuss our new contract and answer questions. We hope you will attend these meetings so that we can get feedback from our members. We want this contract to work for you.

We all put in more time than the 12 days we are paid for so it is important that you focus your time on activities that are part of your building plan, planning for instruction, and assessing student work. This provision was meant to help teachers to be more efficient and focus time on work that best improves student learning, instead of taking time to document work you are completing. It is meant to enhance the cooperation and planning between staff and administration. Most importantly, it acknowledges the important role our professional judgment plays in the education of our students. Because this is a one year contract, it is critical that negotiators are given feedback on how this is working for individuals and staff so that we can improve this provision during the next round of negotiations. If there is confusion or a disagreement on what is part of your professional responsibility:

- Discuss it with your administrator.
- Seek help from your building representative.
- Contact one of the negotiators or FEA officers.

This contract provides five days to work when students are not at school. They are two LID days, *two waiver days, and one Professional Development day. Control of these days are prioritized starting with the District, then buildings, and finally staff members. During negotiations, we were assured that all three levels would be provided part of the five days. We will be monitoring how this time was used at each of these three levels and how decisions were made regarding this time. Actively work with your administrator to make sure this time is well spent. The Professional Development Day is a day of extra pay on top of your basic contract and the Professional Responsibility stipend.

* Students will attend school for 178 days instead of the normal 180 days. Two days have been "waived" by the state. The District had to apply to the state for these days and they had to be part of an overall District plan for improving student learning.