

UPDATE

Lake Washington Education Association

February 2, 2011

Legislation proposes to eliminate job security for teachers

Two bills recently introduced in Olympia---by both Democrats and Republicans---would significantly change the employment status of Washington teachers by eliminating job security provisions that are a part of most teachers' contracts. The bills, Senate Bill 5399 and House Bill 1609, would base teacher layoffs on principal evaluations, as well as institute a statewide policy for in-district transfers that would override local bargaining agreements.

Currently, teacher layoffs are implemented by seniority, which has been used historically as an objective way to navigate through a very difficult situation. Under the new bill, if a teacher is given an unsatisfactory evaluation, that teacher would be laid off before others. No appeal process exists for evaluations---evaluations are final unless the principal decides to change it him/herself. In other words, when a teacher receives an unsatisfactory evaluation from a principal, the teacher can't formally appeal the content of the evaluation to the principal's supervisor or to central administration to revise the evaluation---no matter how inaccurate or unfair the teacher believes the evaluation is. The only option available to the teacher is to write a rebuttal statement that is attached to the evaluation.

Further, if the teacher is laid off, the bill eliminates his/her recall rights. Under the existing system, teachers who are laid off are on a call-back list based on seniority. If a position opens up in the district, the teacher is automatically hired back. The new legislation would eliminate this call-back requirement, and only guarantee the teacher an interview.

If an individual school sees a decrease in enrollment, teachers right now are given a job in a different building within the same district if there is an opening.

The proposed legislation takes away this safety net for teachers by laying off the teachers whose school's enrollment went down, instead of moving them to other openings in the district.

The bill proposes that all teachers would be ranked according to their evaluations. If a layoff occurs, the lowest-ranked teachers would go first. If there was a tie, district seniority would be used as the tie breaker, regardless of how many years a teacher taught in the state. (Currently state seniority is used for layoffs so that experienced teachers who change districts are not risking a layoff by giving up their district seniority.)

All due process rights would be gone under this bill. Teachers would not be able to appeal their dismissal. The evaluation decision by the principal would be final. When teachers are dismissed now, they have the right to a hearing to appeal the decision. While no one wants bad teachers in our classrooms, employment decisions need to be based on more than a 30-minute observation by the principal.

Several Gates Foundation-funded organizations, "Stand for Children" and "The League of Education Voters" are lobbying heavily to get this bill passed.

It's important that you let your legislators know what your opinion is on this bill as well. Simply go to www.ourvoicewashingtonea.org from your home computer (**do not use district computers or resources to contact legislators**). We encourage you to do so today to ensure that legislators hear the point of view from teachers who are working in our classrooms.



Information & News for Members

Certificate expiring?

If you have a teaching certificate that requires you to complete 150 continuing education clock hours (15 credit hours) every 5 years, failure to do so could result in the loss of your certificate. SPI does **NOT** send reminders, and the District is not required to (but usually does) send letters of reminders to those with expiring certificates.

Check to see when your teaching certificate expires and be sure to keep current with your continuing education credit hour obligation. Do not wait until the last minute as you might not be able to complete the requirements prior to the expiration date. **YOU WILL BE REMOVED FROM THE CLASSROOM WITHOUT PAY IF YOUR CERTIFICATE EXPIRES.** In addition, once you obtain new certification regardless of the type of certification you held previously, you will now have to meet the newer professional certification requirements imposed on new teachers.

Remember that all certificates now expire on June 30. If your certificate contains a date other than June 30, then your certificate will actually expire on June 30 of the year following your expiration. (For example, certificates containing an August 31, 2011 expiration date will actually expire on June 30, 2012.

If you have a pre-August 1987 certificate, you do not need to renew.

Retirement in your future?

If you see retirement in your near future, there are a few things you might want to plan to do before you reach that last day. Here are a couple of resources that will make this change easier and less stressful:

- ✓ Make an appointment with the Department of Retirement Systems (DRS) to go over your service credit and years of experience. It is a good idea to check the accuracy of your records now rather than deal with problems later. You can make an appointment by calling the DRS at 800-547-6657 or by e-mail at recep@drs.wa.gov.
- ✓ Attend one of the District's informational meetings. Payroll staff will be going over topics such as sick leave cash out, VEBA, COBRA, medical and optional benefits, etc. Meetings are being held at the Resource Center on the following Wednesdays:

February 9 at 3:30 PM

March 15 at 3:30 PM or 4:30 PM

April 13 at 3:30 PM or 4:30 PM

May 11 at 3:30 PM or 4:30 PM

To register, e-mail [Carmen Simpson](mailto:Carmen.Simpson@lwsd.org) in Payroll.

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LWEA

Reclaim your health

It's easy to ignore your health when you are dealing with the demands that are placed on you at work and trying to cope with your everyday life. Here's a way to get back to reclaiming your health – take the WebMD^R HealthQuotientSM online health assessment.

The confidential assessment will give you personalized advice and support to help you on your way to improving your health. Your assessment may also qualify you for free coaching to receive the extra support you may need.

\$50 check for you? The first 10,000 Premera subscribers (and their dependents 18 years of age and older) who complete the assessment between February 1 and April 11 will receive a \$50 check. If you completed the assessment and received a check last year, you are still eligible to participate this year.

How do you access the online health assessment – simply follow these steps:

1. Go to www.premera.com/wea
2. Click on "Take the Health Quotient"
3. Complete the confidential assessment (takes about 20 minutes)

Can you use \$50? Take the "HealthQuotient" assessment!

Tax deductions for educators

If you were an eligible educator in 2010, you can deduct up to \$250 of your qualified expenses (this is in addition to your association dues). If you and your spouse are filing jointly and both of you are eligible educators, the maximum deduction is \$500. This deduction is recorded on line 23 of the 1040 form.

An eligible educator is a K-12 teacher, instructor, counselor, principal, or aide who worked in a school for at least 900 hours during a school year.

For more information about the educator's deduction, go to page 27 of the 1040 Instructions – look for Line 23 Educator Expenses.

Time to do your taxes

Planning to work on your taxes soon? Don't forget that you can deduct most of your association dues from your income tax. The dues deduction for teachers is as follows:

.7 - 1.0 FTE	\$982.72
.51 - .75 FTE	\$848.08
.26 - .5 FTE	\$502.40
.1 - .25 FTE	\$334.64

Please remember that your 2010 dues for income tax purposes includes 8 months at the 2009-10 dues rate and 4 months at the 2010-11 rate. If you've changed FTE from last year, or are new this school year, your dues will be different - you will need assistance in determining the correct dues amount. If you have any questions, please contact [Sheila Hagerman](#) at the LWEA office.

Planning to leave?

Do you plan to retire this year? Will your spouse or partner be transferred out of the area? If you can answer "Yes" to either of these questions, the District would like to hear from you now.

With the upcoming potential for budget cuts, the District needs to be able to make staffing decisions based on accurate data.

We encourage you to let HR know about your plans as soon as possible so that next year's staffing can be determined.

Calendar

Feb 7	School Board Meeting
Feb 8	Election Day – Ballots due by 8 PM
Feb 14	Remember that special someone!

Next Rep Assembly – Feb 15

Marketplace

WANTED

New fabric (flannel, cotton, fleece, etc) to make quilts for babies, teens, & adults. I'll deliver to special group of ladies that make them. Lorrie Thomas (BEST) 425-374-3684.

Job share partner: Looking for an elementary job share partner for 2011-12? Deadline to apply is 2/15. Julie Sparks-Stuht (Keller) 206-719-8769.

SERVICES

Income Tax Preparation: Over 30 yrs experience, high client satisfaction. Specializing in individual returns & small business. Reasonable w/ discounts to educators. References available. (LWEA member & building rep for many years.) Sandy Hargraves (RHS) 425-868-8898 or sandyhargraves@hotmail.com.

Estate planning & elder law: wills, probate, guardianship. Personal & compassionate service. Contact Kristin Reeder, PLLC, in Bellevue at 425-861-1109. (Lon Turner, Thoreau).

Auto repair & maintenance – excellent customer satisfaction. Call Totem Lake Auto Care at 425-827-6411. (Colleen Bollinger, Einstein).

Links that can help!

[H&R Tax Assistance](#)

[5-Minute Retirement Checkup](#)

[Walk your way to better health](#)

[Discounts at 1-800-Flowers](#)

[Jenny Craig discounts](#)

[Whirlpool VIP/LINK Program](#)



FOR SALE

2007 **Jetta**, dark blue, 4-wheel drive, leather interior, all electric, heated seats, 30K miles. \$14,000 – will consider offer. Margaret Velte (Redmond Elem) 425-820-8458.

Ludwig drums, 5-piece, 1970s issue, includes 5-1/2"x14 Sensitive snare. \$675. Jim DeJoy (RHS) 425-483-3703.

Yamaha U1 **upright piano** w/ ebony finish, 48". Well cared for, in excellent shape w. a full, rich tone. Includes black padded bench w/ lift top for storing music. Pictures available. \$3,600. Nancy Kuta (JHS) 425-486-1026.

Dining room chairs: 2 arm chairs, 4 w/o arms. Fine oak furniture, w/ fabric seat & back, springs in seat. 1 chair needs to be reupholstered. Dimensions – seat height 21", seat depth 19", seat width 22", height of chair back 35". Sell as set only, \$300. Alex McShane (Rose Hill Jr) mcshane@hotmial.com.

Small **safe**, lockable & fireproof. Perfect for important paperwork or jewelry. \$20. Luke Johnson (Lakeview) 425-827-4910.

1993 **Ford Explorer Sport**, 194K miles, runs great, ready to drive. \$1,800 OBO. Call Michael O'Connell at 425-890-9887. (Beth Weaver, McAuliffe).

PC computer – component built system: AMD Athlon 64 processor, 200gb hard drive, ATI Radeon platinum videocard, DVD, CD-R/W, HDTV tuner & remote, wireless, Windows XP, multi-media keyboard, Intellimouse, manuals, discs, extra cables. \$125. Caroline McDowell (LWEA Office) cmcdowell@washingtonea.org.

Vintage wood **sideboard**, 26"Hx18"Dx45"W, 12" drop-leaf on each side, 3 drawers, 2-doors; marked Heritage (pre-1963 – prior to becoming Drexel-Heritage); \$75. Vintage **office chairs** (2), metal & leather, small, armless, fully adjustable, solid wheel base; 1 is brown, other orange. Perfect for computer chair, craft projects, musician's seat, \$20 each. Caroline McDowell (LWEA Office) cmcdowell@washingtonea.org.

**Pending available space, ads are run in the Update on a first come, first served basis.
Ads are accepted only in written form – send directly to Sheila Hagerman – shhagerman@lwsd.org.
Ads are subject to approval by the Executive Committee and may be edited for length.**