

Welcome

**Lake Washington
Education Association**

August 2011

On behalf of the members of the Lake Washington Education Association, I would like to welcome you.

LWEA is an organization of education professionals in the Lake Washington School District. There are about 1,500 of us - classroom teachers, psychologists, resource teachers, counselors, occupational and physical therapists, librarians, specialists, and more.

We protect the rights of our members, advocate on their behalf, assist them in resolving conflicts, answer their questions, offer suggestions, and listen to their concerns. It is our responsibility to negotiate with the school district on behalf of our members over wages, hours, and working conditions.

As a democratic organization, we hold monthly meetings with our elected building representatives to conduct Association business and to ensure communication with our members. In addition, we publish a weekly newsletter, the Update, in which we share news of the Association, member benefits and discounts, professional information about upcoming classes and available educational resources, and articles on current educational issues.

I would like to extend to you an invitation to become a member of the Lake Washington Education Association. You will find a membership enrollment form in your packet. All you need to do is to complete the form and return it to our office (through district mail). It is not necessary to send any money with the form, as your dues will be automatically deducted from your monthly paycheck. I encourage you to fill out your membership form right away.

You will also have access to a variety of materials which will describe how your local association works and how you can become an active participant. In addition, it contains information from WEA and NEA which will give you a better understanding of your Association at the state and national levels - what its goals and purposes are and what benefits are derived from membership in these organizations as well.

Once again, welcome to our community of educators. We look forward to working with you to make our schools the best they can be and to make your teaching experience in the Lake Washington School District a successful and positive one. Please feel free to call on me, your Executive Committee members, and the staff of LWEA if you have any questions, suggestions, or concerns. We look forward to hearing from you. Have a great year!

Kevin Teeley
LWEA President

How is LWEA governed?

LWEA works when you and your colleagues get involved. Our democratic structure increases in effectiveness as members' ideas, direction, and involvement increase.

Representative Assembly is the monthly meeting where elected reps from each building discuss issues, make policy, and develop programs. Any LWEA member may attend these meetings.

The officers of the Association are the President and Vice-president and each serve a term of one year. These two officers and the seven elected representatives from different categories of membership comprise the Executive Committee.

The Executive Committee meets an average of two times per month and assists in the preparation of the budget, sets priorities and goals, develops programs and activities, and serves in an advisory capacity to the Association president. However, all LWEA policy is set by the Representative Assembly.

LWEA's president receives a paid leave of absence allowing him or her to direct the organization full time. The president works in the LWEA office along with a staff of three - one UniServ Rep, and two LWEA administrative assistants.

LWEA is affiliated with the Washington Education Association (WEA) and the National Education Association (NEA).

What is a contract?

Every three years, LWEA members sit down with representatives of the District to discuss salary, benefits, planning time, leave and vacation policies, classroom discipline, professional development opportunities, materials, and much more.

Agreements reached as part of these discussions become the official contract between LWSD and LWEA members. The contract governs the wages, benefits, and working conditions for all employees in the bargaining unit.

The language we are able to negotiate depends on a number of variables, including:

- State funding;
- Member support for the bargaining team and the negotiation process;
- The level of community support for teachers' proposals;
- Budget considerations;
- The political climate of the District and state.

District funding for contracts comes predominantly from the state with support from local levies.



Lake Washington Education Association

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How does LWEA help?

LWEA helps you resolve problems at work, enhance yourself professionally, and assists in making sure your ideas for improving education are heard where it counts.

The District and Association meet regularly to discuss labor management issues. Many times problems and concerns can be dealt with here before they become major issues. Decisions made at these meetings are often published in the Update (LWEA's weekly newsletter).

Building reps are trained to deal with building issues and concerns. Contact your rep for information and help in dealing with anything that might come up. If you are not certain whether something should be an issue or concern, ask your rep. He or she can assist you through building operating principles, district guidelines, and LWEA, WEA, NEA guidelines. We encourage you to ask questions.

Involved in politics?

Because teachers are public employees, much of what we negotiate at the bargaining table is impacted by decisions made in the state legislature.

If we want higher salaries, better working conditions, and improved schools, education employees have to be willing to invest their time and money in political action. If we want a state government that adequately funds public education, we have to be involved.

LWEA's political activities are organized through the WEA and NEA. You will receive more information on candidates, issues, and legislative action throughout the year.

Whether you decide to get involved is up to you. Your participation in no way affects your membership or status in the association.

What dues will I pay?

Association Dues for 2011-12



	<u>NEA</u>	<u>WEA</u>	<u>Comm Out</u>	<u>LWEA</u>	<u>Council</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Monthly</u>
Full time	\$178	\$410	\$12	\$288	\$119	\$1007	\$83.92
Half time	\$89	\$205	\$12	\$144	\$59.50	\$509.50	\$43.29

Dues are deducted in 12 monthly installments from September through August. In addition to the regular dues, members may choose to participate in the state political action fund, WEA-PAC, which will increase your dues by \$27 per year and the national political action fund, NEAFCPE, which will increase your dues amount by \$12 per year.

Non-member dues

All non-member, certificated employees will pay a representation fee equivalent to 96% of the regular dues of the Association, including the local, state, and national dues.

If you have an objection to paying dues based on a bona fide religious tenet or teaching of a church or religious body, you must notify the Association and District in writing. If it is determined that you have a bona fide religious objection, you will pay (an amount equal to non-member dues) to a charitable organization agreed to by the Association and you.

Your evaluation

As a LWSD teacher, you will have access to a copy of the LWSD/LWEA Negotiated Agreement through the LWEA website (www.lakewashingtonea.org) or the LWSD Portal (portal.lwsd.org). In the contract, you will find the section titled Evaluation and Probation which deals with the whole evaluation process. If the information is not clear, talk with your building rep or the senior teachers in your building.

In addition to understanding the process, LWEA members want you to know - you will get more out of an evaluation if you see yourself as a partner in the process. Share your perceptions, ideas and problems with evaluators in addition to hearing theirs. Then work to reach conclusions and recommendations that are mutually agreeable.

During the first two weeks of each school year, a group meeting will be held between each school principal and new school staff. The purpose of the meeting will be to review and discuss the evaluation process including evaluation criteria, the process used in the collection of data and the purpose of evaluation. Employees will not be observed for the purpose of evaluation until they have attended such a meeting or had the same material explained.

At every step of the evaluation process, you have certain rights and protections. If appropriate procedures are not followed, it may be grounds for contesting a negative evaluation. You have the right to:

- **Be informed if you are being observed as part of the evaluation process.** As a new teacher, you must be observed at least once within the first 90 calendar days. The first observation will be at least 30 minutes long. You must have a total of 60 minutes of observation for the entire year.
- **Have a pre-observation conference with your evaluator** so that you can receive the specific criteria that will be evaluated at this observation. (See the LWSD/LWEA Contract)
- **Request a clarification conference with your evaluator** for the purpose of clarifying any part of the observation. Your evaluator may also request a clarification conference. This conference should be scheduled within 3 working days following the observation. Neither you nor your evaluator is required to request such a conference.

- **Receive a copy of the written evaluation report.** Within 3 working days of the observation (or 2 working days following a clarification conference) your evaluator will provide you with a written copy of the evaluation report.
- **Have a post-observation conference with each observer.** Within 5 working days of the receipt of the evaluation report, your evaluator will hold a post-observation conference with you to discuss the evaluation findings. This is your opportunity to point out strengths or skills you believe were overlooked in the observation and to make sure you receive specific, feasible recommendations for improvement.
- **Sign the evaluation form and any additional comment sheets even if you do not agree with what is written.** Signing does not imply agreement, it only means that you have seen the written evaluation. You may attach a written response to any evaluation or comment sheet which will be permanently attached to your evaluation. This must be done within 5 working days of receipt of the evaluation report.
- **If you receive a “Unsatisfactory” on any evaluation, please get in touch with us right away.** We are here to support you.



Know the rights guaranteed to you by your contract

- You will not be discriminated against and the provisions of the contract will be applied without regard to your domicile, race, creed, religion, color, national origin, age, sex, marital status, sexual orientation, or the presence of any sensory, mental or physical disabilities.
- Complaints shall be called to your attention as soon as possible. Anonymous complaints or complaints that have not been called to your attention may not be used for any disciplinary action against you.
- In an attempt to resolve problems at the lowest level, principals shall encourage anyone making a complaint to discuss the issue with the person(s) involved.
- You have the right to have a representative of the Association present when being formally reprimanded or disciplined. It will be your responsibility to contact the Association to arrange for representation.
- If you are threatened with injury or need to come to the aid of another person about to be injured, teachers are authorized to use reasonable force toward a student or other person.
- You have the right to exclude disruptive students from your classroom for up to 2 days for **EACH** disruptive event. The student **CANNOT** be returned to the classroom before the designated time is up without the teacher's permission, or until the teacher and administrator meet and decide otherwise.
- You have the right to appeal to the Director of Special Services regarding the resources, assignment, and/or program for continuously disruptive students whose behavior disrupts the educational process.
- You are guaranteed 3 days of annual leave per year with the ability to accumulate up to 5 days. Check your contract for specifics.
- You are entitled to 5 days of bereavement leave with pay in the event of a death in the immediate family or your household.
- On the first day of each school year, each teacher is credited with 12 days of Illness/Injury Leave to be used for the illness and injury of the employee, the employee's spouse or domestic partner/significant other, parent, parent-in-law, grandparents, and the employee's children.
- Each full time teacher is entitled to \$2,000 per year for the following purposes:
 - 1) Compensation for working up to 4 additional days paid at the rate of \$500 per day (\$250 per 1/2 day);
 - 2) Reimbursement for tuition or for workshop/ conference fees; or
 - 3) Instructional materials or other professional expenditures.

If you have a problem, concern, or question, be sure to get advice early. Don't wait to "see what happens."

Contact your building rep, Executive Committee Rep, President, or UniServ Rep right away and ask questions.



Benefits of Membership

Voice and Vote: Your membership entitles you to a voice and vote in all Association activities and business, which also includes contract negotiations and ratification.

Liability Insurance: The Association policy provides the best employment protection in the world for teachers. Up to \$1 million in liability insurance is available for NEA members only.

Legislature: Full-time lobbyists help ensure your views are heard at the state and national level and that you are informed about what is taking place during the legislative session.

Professional Publications: Publications keep you informed and alert as to what is happening in education and the state.

Professional Development: The Association works to enhance your skills through caucus meetings, workshops, conferences, and forums on important topics.

Legal Assistance: You are entitled to two free 30-minute sessions each school year and a 30% discount on attorney fees with network attorneys for personal matters which include: real estate, wills and estate, domestic relations, consumer protection, and traffic violations.

Credit Card Program, Line of Credit, and Credit Plan: These programs can only be accessed by NEA members and are aimed at meeting the needs of educational employees.

Home Financing Programs: NEA members can access this program when they are ready to purchase a home or when refinancing the home they currently own. Home equity loans are also available. The program offers competitive rates, substantial savings, and free mortgage counseling services.

Investment Services: NEA offers Money Market Accounts, Gold Certificate CD Programs, and tax deferred annuities.

Retirement Solutions: You can choose from a variety of diversified investments that can help you build a more substantial retirement nest egg faster than with taxable, short-term investments. These programs have been created for NEA members only.

Insurance Programs: You have access to a variety of insurance for your personal life such as homeowners, auto, travel and accident, life, and mortgage protection.

Discounts: Your membership will entitle you to discounts for major entertainment centers, travel, car rentals, dining out, Costco wholesale membership, magazine service, cellular phone service, and airport parking.

Position Listing Service: Members have access to a listing of current job postings in Washington schools and colleges.

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Washington Education Association / National Education Association