

A portrait of Michelle Hayes, a woman with long blonde hair, smiling. She is wearing a blue and white patterned top and a gold necklace. The background is a solid dark red color.

Michelle Hayes

WEA 2019 ESP of the Year

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The next chapter ...

So, what's next?

A question I've been asked for some time. A question I've asked myself. The easy part of my answer is to take some time off. At least 6 months. To go from 100 to 0 in one day will be a bit of an adjustment. But after that ...

What do I want? My husband is retiring. It would be nice to have coffee with him every morning. Go old school and spread the paper out in front of me. Check the obits to make sure I'm not in them (that was my grandfather's saying), read what is happening across the country, do the mini crossword and the Sudoku puzzle. Travel and see new places where I don't wear a suit to visit. Learn how to play the cello that I just received as a gift ... maybe so I won't bug him while he's reading the paper. Read a book from beginning to end and be able to do a workout when the sun is up. Those are just my ramblings.

Will I want to start a new career? No, probably not. But I'll want to be involved with tackling the issues we face as a country so that I leave the space better than when I came into it.

I'll be the grandmother that asks for the phones and iPads to be left in the other room. I know there is a place and purpose for both, but not at the expense of human interaction. I'll still be the one you meet in the elevator that says "hello" when you enter and "have a nice day" when you get off. The crazy lady that believes each of us needs to be aware of those around us.

I'll be the mom that remembers how frightened I was when my son got lost in the clothing rounds at Nordstrom for less than 20 seconds and wonders how moms and dads are coping being separated from their children at the border.

I'll be the wife that says we need to recycle, use less water, drive electric, and walk whenever possible because I know that global warming is not a myth.

I will be the woman that reminds you that I have no limitations because of my gender ... and my age will just make me a bit slower at times.

In other words, what's next?

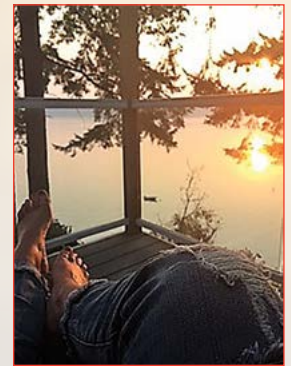
More of the same. Just in jeans.

Thank you for six great years, WEA.

I will miss you all.



Kim Mead
WEA President



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Delegates at the WEA Representative Assembly in April elected Larry Delaney and Janie White to be WEA's next president and vice president. They take office in July at the end of the NEA RA.

Washington Legislature continues historic investments in public schools

State funding for public schools will reach an all-time high under the budget Washington legislators approved in April.

The new two-year state budget increases state funding for K-12 public schools by \$4.5 billion over the previous two-year period, from about \$22.8 billion to \$27.3 billion.

“This is terrific news for Washington’s 1.1 million public school students and proof that WEA members’ hard work and commitment to our students is paying off — literally,” says former Washington Education Association President Kim Mead.

The new budget includes a nearly 20 percent increase in state funding for Washington’s K-12 public schools, mainly because of the continued implementation of court-ordered McCleary funding and new policies. K-12 funding is now more than half of the state’s general fund budget. Nearly every one of our 295 school districts has substantially more funding than last year — and they will next year as well.

The pro-student, pro-educator majorities in the House and the Senate addressed several of WEA’s top priorities this session. Here are some of our biggest wins from the 2019 Legislature:

- Increased higher education funding, including funding to improve some faculty salaries and to expand financial aid for college students. (HB 2158)
- Removed high-school tests as a barrier to graduation. (HB 1599)
- Funded the negotiated health care agreement for K-12 educators, which will expand access to quality, affordable health care for many lower-paid and part-time school employees, including ESP members. This means all K-12 employees will be moving to a new insurance system in January, 2020. (*Read more about School Employees Benefits Board, SEBB, on page 12.*)
- Increased funding for special education students by \$155 million.
- Invested \$500 million in cost-of-living adjustments for K-12 educators. COLAs are now built into the state budget on an ongoing basis as part of basic education.
- Increased local school levy flexibility, which could raise as much as \$645 million per year in additional school funding in coming years. This levy legislation will help school districts avoid the major budget cuts and layoffs threatened in some districts. (SB 5313)



WEA members played a lead role in funding increases for public schools and students this legislative session. Pictured: Highline College AHE’s Shana Friend, Diego Luna, Sue Frantz, Jennifer Jones, James Peyton and Robin Ennis-Cantwell in Olympia.

The legislative process requires compromise, and all of these bills evolved throughout the 105-day legislative session that began in January. On issues such as testing, faculty salaries and special education, we have more work ahead of us. (The testing bill calls for a review of new pathways to graduation, college faculty salaries still aren’t competitive and special ed remains underfunded.)

Mead said there also is more work to do on funding smaller class sizes and hiring more school counselors, nurses, social workers and other support professionals who work with students.

Unfortunately for their students, there are a small number of school district superintendents who continue to push for unnecessary budget cuts and reductions in staff. Mead said WEA stands firmly opposed to reduction in teachers and other staff who directly support students. She said unnecessary cuts will hurt students, including overcrowded classrooms and fewer services.

However, many school boards and administrators who originally threatened layoffs and deep budget cuts have since backed off after pressure from local WEA members and parents. Union leaders and staff in districts experiencing layoffs are meeting with affected educators and providing personal support, including help updating resumes and other job-search needs. Job postings and information about unemployment benefits are on the WEA website at www.WashingtonEA.org.

While the Legislature’s historic investment in public education continues, it’s up to local union members to make sure district administrators make good budget decisions that benefit students. WEA members in at least 160 locals are in contract negotiations again this year. Competitive, professional compensation is needed to continue attracting and keeping qualified, caring educators for our students.

“We can’t go backwards,” Mead said. “Even when we face opposition, WEA members will continue to focus on what matters most: our students.”

Building relationships for union success

Lakewood EA's Larry Delaney takes helm as new WEA president

Colleagues say newly-elected WEA President Larry Delaney is approachable and compassionate. Delaney is a 27-year veteran math teacher at Lakewood High School in north Snohomish County. He gave up coaching baseball after he decided to focus more on his union. He has been a building rep, served on his local bargaining team and was president of Lakewood EA. Most recently, he served as the WEA Fourth Corner UniServ Council president and a WEA board director.



It was election day, last spring, at Arlington High School and Larry Delaney was waiting to hear from his daughter, Maggie. She was running for Associated Student Body (ASB) president and her father was anxious because the text to say she won the election never arrived.

Like most dads, Delaney was preparing comforting words and an ice cream date as he awaited the arrival of a tearful daughter. When she finally came home late that afternoon, she was smiling ear to ear and sharing news of her election success. Before her father could chide her for making her parents wait all day to hear the news, she said, "Pressure's on, Dad."

With his election at WEA RA last April, there are now two presidents living in the Delaney household.

"Educators are relationship people," Delaney says. "As cliché as this sounds, I want to meet and hear what's important to as many members as possible because we are a member-driven organization."

After the 2017 RA, the chatter began around who

might run for president. Delaney says he wondered about the possibility of a classroom teacher running for president.

"I found that I loved bargaining. I get giddy when we get to bargain. I love a table covered with contract numbers and Starbuck cups."

"I'm an idea guy but I don't always chart out an entire plan," Delaney says. "I was more like, 'I want to see where this goes,' so I told my wife, Julie, 'I think I'm going to run for WEA President. She said, 'That's nice. Did you clean the cat box?'"

One of Delaney's house chores is to make sure their big orange cat, Oliver's, box is in order. They also have a big Labrador, Toby, so both cat people and dog people can warm up to Delaney. While Julie Delaney took his idea with a grain of salt at the start of his campaign, she began to see that her husband had a knack for building relationships. Once she saw him begin traveling hundreds of miles to bargaining rallies around Washington, she realized his commitment to running was more than a fleeting idea.

Delaney's current office as Fourth Corner UniServ president is a half-time release. That allowed him to continue teaching math to students who appreciate his relaxed style and easy laugh.

“He likes engaging in real conversation. He really cares about students – even outside of the classroom,” says Joaquin Anaya, a graduating senior heading off to the U.S. Marines.

“I’ve never seen him get angry,” graduating senior Cayden Brost says. “He had my dad when he was in high school.”

Indeed, Delaney has been at Lakewood for 27 years. But he arrived in north Snohomish County accidentally. Spouse Julie, a kindergarten teacher, was hired in the Highline School District where she grew up, right after she and Larry graduated from Central Washington University. After substitute teaching for a year, he applied to schools in the area where they thought he could easily commute from their apartment in Seattle’s Fremont neighborhood. When he was granted an interview at Lakewood HS, he was surprised to find it was north rather than in the Tacoma area. He got the job and vowed to stay, “two years tops.” The couple moved to a townhouse in Mukilteo, gave birth to first daughter, Erin, then ended up moving further north when deciding they needed a home to make room for their second daughter, Maggie. Arlington has been a great place to raise kids, Delaney says.

Delaney grew up, mostly, in Seattle with a short jaunt of his childhood in New Jersey. He is the youngest of eight kids and grew up in a blended family where he was lucky enough to have two sisters named Debbie although one spells her name Debbi. He was good in math and physics and figured he would become an engineer until one day, a teacher told him he really had the personality of a teacher.

“She told me that roads and bridges are good,” Delaney says, “but there are lots of other ways to serve. I’ve tried to have that same talk with a few kids I think have what it takes to teach.”

Delaney says he filled out membership and WEA-PAC forms because that’s what the building rep said to do. He didn’t come from a union family, he says, but one of his building representatives was a math teacher who told Delaney to join the bargaining team.

“He said it was a great way to learn the contract and that everyone should serve on a bargaining team at least once,” so I signed up. “I found that I loved bargaining. I get giddy when we get to bargain. I love a table covered with contract numbers and Starbucks cups.”

Bargaining led to becoming a building rep which led to deciding to give up coaching baseball, which

he really loved. My heart was being pulled more and more by the union and I decided to turn a page and run for Lakewood EA President in 2010, he says.

Delaney says he is excited, if a little bit nervous, about the upcoming challenges as president to more than 98,000 members. With more than two-thirds



Team Lakewood EA at the 2019 WEA RA (left to right): Delaney, Katrina Dusevoir and Risa Livingston.

of our locals considered small and rural, like his, he wants to change the perception that their voices don’t matter. At the same time, he looks forward to learning ways to manage all the different interests including social, cultural and geographic. “I know there are a lot of landmines out there, he says, and I’m not always going to be sure where they are.”

On one of the last days of school, Delaney is working diligently with students to make sure every senior can walk at graduation.

“What kind of grade do you want?” he calmly asks one of his students. The student responds and Delaney sets out to show the student how to solve math problems so he can reach his goal. Should you meet Delaney over the next several months, don’t be surprised should he ask you what kind of union you want.

Delaney spends the last few days of school, helping students get through remaining assignments so they can walk at graduation.



Renton ESP's Janie White wants to lead with an equity lens

As the first ESP vice president and first person of color elected since 1968, Janie White says she will emphasize the voice of those who feel their voices are sometimes lost.



Anyone who has spent time on bedrest understands all those hours on one's own leads to deep thinking. For WEA's new Vice President Janie White, two separate times on bedrest saved a life and dramatically changed a life.

"The last time I was on bed rest, I donated a kidney," White says. She was down for several months when younger daughter, Mykala, tried to enter the world a little too early. An aunt who helped raise her desperately needed a kidney. White had herself tested and was a perfect match so three months after the baby was born, one of her kidneys went to her aunt. The aunt had another good 15 years until she passed, but the doctor told White the kidney was still going strong.

Last year, White found herself on bedrest once more. "I broke my leg when I fell down two stairs. In that process, I wondered if there has ever been a person of color or an ESP in WEA governance. I didn't see anyone represented and I decided to run for VP and make history."

White is WEA's second person of color and first ESP to hold one of two WEA-elected positions. It's a distinction she holds close to heart.

"I tell people the only way you can make a difference is you," she says. "I have spent my whole time in the union telling people to get involved, so shame on me without doing it myself."

She says she loves people and getting to know strangers. She loves to hug and exudes a warmth and comfort for one and all when she enters a room.

Several years earlier, White was asked to attend a WEA Representative Assembly at the last minute. She was an office manager at Black River Alternative High School when a colleague asked her what she was doing for the weekend. When she said she didn't have big plans, her friend asked her to attend RA "where they would house and feed me – all I had to do was pack my bags." White was slightly hesitant, knowing she had been asked to attend because she was a person of color. That RA turned out to be "amazing," she recalls.

"It was filled with energy and power in a room full of passionate union members, networking with strangers and realizing we are the union and we can make a difference," she says. "One of the topics was LGBTQ."

From that RA experience, "I went all in with the union as a person and member."

"I turned tokenism into empowerment," she says, "and this has always driven me to do more."

White became a building rep, began asking co-workers and friends to get more involved, and was elected vice president of Renton Educational Support Professionals (RESP). She worked hard to change the one-year contract which used to treat all ESPs as temporary workers so if they were laid off, they had to start over. Now, every ESP member has a regular contract after working in the district for two years.

When her youngest daughter graduated, White ran for RESP president. She brought her inclusive style to the position, one she held for six years.

"I gave everyone a piece of the pie," she says. "I didn't believe that the president should do all the meetings because, then, how can others learn about all that is going on?"

She joined WEA's ESP Action Coordinating Team (ACT), a statewide group that advocates for and advises local ESP units and coordinates conferences geared specifically for ESP members, and Organizing for Power. She became the first person of color to lead ACT. She is a graduate of the NEA ESP Leaders for Tomorrow and is active with Rainier Educators of Color.

White entered the field the way so many ESP members come to the work – she was a PTA president and constant volunteer until people at her daughters' school asked her to apply to be a substitute in the office. She credits many who have helped her on her union journey, including WEA staff members, Naché Duncan and the late Rosemary Wolf, for showing her the power and voice she has as an ESP and for empowering and encouraging her leadership qualities.



White will continue her involvement with ACT and put ESP issues at the forefront, but she also says she is really looking forward to gaining a fuller and stronger understanding about issues impacting certificated members.

She says she loves people and getting to know strangers. She loves to hug and exudes a warmth and comfort for one and all when she enters a room. She will miss her students whom she calls her "babies" as well as her colleagues at Nelsen Middle School where she has worked for the last nine years. As proud mom to Mykala and older daughter Myriah, White is happy to share photos of 4-year-old grandson, Noah, and Myriah's husband Semel.

Last spring, White's daughter was the victim of gun violence. Between dealing with the horror of that tragic incident (her daughter has recovered from her injuries) and nursing her broken leg, White had to step back from her union work. Then WEA President Kim Mead called to see how she was doing and, White recalls Mead saying, "I need to make sure you don't disappear."

White has no intention of disappearing. She says she believes that the bedrest was God's plan so He could help with her planning her next move. She wants members to own that "We are the *we* in WEA. You are the union. We are the union." And as far as her new role as WEA VP, she says, "It's going to be real."

Every member has a voice, but no one will know what you have to say if you don't speak up, says White as she shares her own story of how she found her power and voice as an ESP member at the 2018 ESP Conference held in Federal Way.

As a former office manager, White has experience in supporting healthy morale. She allows people to make mistakes and gives them many opportunities to feel empowered.

WEA's 2019 ESP of the Year Michelle Hayes

Michelle Hayes is the first to say she hates speaking in front of a crowd, but colleagues say her quiet determination and intelligence make her a fierce advocate and leader.



WEA's 2019 ESP of the Year Michelle Hayes says being an office manager is truly like running a business. The work she does keeps everyone safe, allows everyone to stay in class and keeps everything related to what happens at Federal Way's Kilo Middle School running.

Federal Way Education Association Vice President Jeremy Bort, a teacher at Kilo, says, "She is the hub around which the school smoothly turns." Bort, who has served on the FWEA Executive Board with Hayes for the last three years, says she has empowered education support professionals to participate in FWEA, a merged local of certificated and classified members, like never before.

"Michelle spearheaded the changing of an impression among ESPs that their membership and voice were valued less than that of certificated members," Bort says. "She has inspired and coached

ESPs across the district to grow in their own leadership. Thanks to her, our ESPs are, in greater numbers, seeking leadership roles and making their voices heard."

FWEA President Shannon McCann says that when

she met Hayes, she wouldn't get up in front of a room. But Hayes has an uncommon grace and tenacity to ensure that everyone, whether ESP or certificated, is given the dignity and respect they deserve. Somewhere in all of Hayes' work to ensure her colleagues would not be left behind, she picked up microphones and megaphones to speak

to hundreds, "and we are all better for it," McCann says.

Her ESP advocacy journey began, according to Hayes, when she first started working at Kilo as a part-time health room assistant.

"I remember realizing I had a contract and I tend to be, I guess, for lack of a better term, kind of nosey.



Cheryl Williams (left) and Michelle Hayes, both from Kilo Middle School, participate in a table discussion at a Federal Way EA forum in 2018. School employees, administrators, parents and students joined in a discussion around school safety, gun violence, and solutions.

I like to know things and understand things, so I thought, I'm going to peruse my contract."

Kilo Attendance Secretary Cheryl Williams, who has worked with Hayes for the last eight years, says she has watched her grow.

"There was an incident where our health room was not covered. Michelle encountered a student who had an allergic reaction to a bee sting; she had to 'stab' the student in the leg. She saved his life. He cried and so did she," Williams says. "She was instrumental (after that) in writing contract language to have all health rooms covered by a nurse or health room assistant in our schools."

Hayes' titles went from health room assistant to data secretary to office manager in less than three years and, along the way, her "nosiness" and curiosity about her contract grew exponentially.

"I signed up for WEA-PAC. My activism and awareness were piqued by Jeremy (Bort). I knew that a lot of our ESPs didn't, I don't think, realized that they were a union or a part of the union and I just wanted to start sharing that message," Hayes says.

"Michelle is a fierce advocate for racial justice for our members, students and families," McCann says. "She was instrumental in fighting for new equity language to be added to both certificated and ESP collective bargaining agreements which says, 'We value the unique and diverse perspectives, experiences, and cultural identities of our staff, students, and community . . . We must dismantle institutional racism in a collaborative and intentional manner, and commit to address intentional and unintentional bias.'" Hayes, McCann says, continually strives to develop her knowledge and be an authentic voice for equity in her work.

Bort says Hayes is an amazing leader on both the FWEA bargaining team and at Kilo because she put in countless hours to learn district and state finances; she volunteers for after-school equity trainings to help her be the best community contact she can be; and she brings ESPs across the district together for meet-ups where she facilitates conversations and instills a spirit of validity and professionalism for all things ESP.

Thomas Jefferson High School Secretary Graciela Basilio says, "(Michelle) understands that ESPs are a very important part in a school."

"Within the district, she has raised the level of seriousness with which our ESPs are taken and has raised the level of voice with a capital V," Kilo Principal Margaret Peterson says.

"She is a leader, but not a leader that we're intimidated by," Federal Way Public Academy Office Manager Valerie Bradshaw says. "She leads us by understanding us."

Hayes says that she is proud of many things that ESPs and certificated members have achieved together in bargaining including the raises they have negotiated over the last couple of years.

"Another thing she brought to us was Professional Learning Communities for ESPs which we've never had before," Bradshaw says. "This is the first time in the 14 years I have worked here where I feel we are appreciated. We were just forgotten and we're important and Michelle made us feel important."

Williams sums up the feelings of so many FWEA members. "We love Michelle Hayes. We couldn't have a better person recognized with this award."

Hayes has an uncommon grace and tenacity to ensure that everyone, whether ESP or certificated, is given the dignity and respect they deserve.



Kilo Middle School staff gather to celebrate and honor Hayes on the day she was notified that she is the WEA ESP of the Year.

In addition to President and Vice President, delegates also elected three NEA Board Directors.



WEA President
Larry Delaney
(Lakewood EA)



WEA Vice President
Janie White
(Renton ESP)



NEA Board Director
Jeb Binns
(Highline EA)



NEA Board Director
Estefa Gallardo
(Tukwila EA)



NEA Board Director
Shannon McCann
(Federal Way EA)

From WEA RA ...

Every WEA member should feel welcomed, included and respected. That was the tone set for the 99th Annual WEA Representative Assembly held in Spokane at the end of April. The RA is where the business of the union gets done, and goals, objectives and work for the next year are defined. More than 1,100 delegates participated this year.

As WEA Executive Director Armand Tiberio noted in his speech, “Being strong and united means that every single member – and potential member – feels welcomed and respected within our union. Everyone — without regard to job type, race, ethnicity, geography, gender, religion, LGBTQ+, or socio-economic status — *everyone* — has something to offer and needs to see themselves, their values and their concerns reflected in our union. After all, this is the very essence of a union.”

After six years at the podium, this was WEA President Kim Mead’s last RA. She shared some personal stories about how she has been shaped by both opportunities and obstacles she has faced as a woman in life and in the education arena. (Car salesmen — it’ll cost you, literally, if you try to sell to her husband and not to Kim!) She recognizes the implicit bias that we all have and encouraged delegates to fight bias in the same way we approach our work — by constant reflection, sharing and willingness to learn and do better.

“I am challenging each of you — regardless of your skin color, your pronoun, your sexual orientation — to look inside your own history and learned biases. Examine what you can do to change your reactions to become positive actions in the future. Be committed to making our schools accessible to all, achievable for all and the place where dreams come true.”

Other highlights include 88 New Business Items (NBI), covering a range of topics that affect Education Support Associates, paraeducators and early career educators. There were NBIs to support and improve safety for students and staff, to support higher education bargaining, and to seek health care for all school employees. Several NBIs addressed improving equity and inclusion for all students and union members.

Another key action was re-setting the dues formula for certificated members. Because of last year’s historic salary increases at the bargaining table, WEA dues for certificated members would have increased significantly if no action was taken. Based on the



Sights and snaps from this year’s WEA Rep Assembly in Spokane. Top to bottom: Seeing doubles? Delegates salute President Kim Mead for her years of service with a “hair raising” tribute; Federal Way educators and RA delegates Daniel Harada and his mom, Gina; Travis Marsh, Marysville EA; and Pamella Johnson, first-time delegate from Rochester ESP.

new formula, certificated dues will increase \$8 a month, or about \$80 for the year. If no action had been taken, dues for certificated members would have gone up \$135 per year. Paraeducator dues and higher education dues amounts are determined by the WEA Board of Directors every spring.



A cultural shift for a sustainable future

WEA members are taking steps toward establishing Equity Teams. The purpose is to increase cultural competency of union membership and staff; to improve the way decisions are made; to better allocate resources; and to engage and support members and staff from traditionally marginalized groups.

“As a woman of color who never saw a teacher who looked like me, I know it’s important that our students have educators who work with them and who look like them,” says Spokane Education Association President Katy Henry.

As SEA’s new president, Henry asked SEA members to begin work on a Diversity Team. After receiving support from NEA, they shifted their focus from race and ethnicity to include issues LGBTQ+ and those with disabilities face.

“Our goals are to support recruiting and retaining educators of color, supporting all our colleagues in best supporting our students of color and other marginalized groups, providing professional development, providing safe/brave spaces and rising up leaders,” says WEA’s Human and Civil Rights Committee Co-Chair Pamela Wilson.

Members from every local in Wilson’s Pilchuck UniServ Council began meeting to address race and ethnicity issues. Like Spokane, the Pilchuck Diversity Network, which began a few years ago, developed a subgroup to work on LGBTQ+ issues. The network offers events for educators of color and dinner-and-movie discussion nights for all members. They create professional development and have a Teaching Equity Conference with support from Pilchuck leaders and staff.

WEA Equity and Diversity Coordinator Randy Paddock says his work includes working on consistent definitions of equity, diversity, and cultural competence.

We’re in the business of teaching students, not just curriculum, Paddock says. Cultural competence equals professional competence, especially with students who don’t share our background or level of privilege.

With public schools facing a surge of students from low-income and homeless families and nearly every rural, urban and suburban community in the U.S. steadily becoming more racially and ethnically diverse, all educators — whether brand new or veteran — are more successful when they know how to navigate institutional racism, social justice and other cultural issues. Without proper training and support, educators may find themselves floundering and flee the profession.

WEA’s Board approved a plan in 2018 calling for establishing Equity Teams across the state. Paddock says some teams are up and running, others are taking first steps while some have not yet moved.

Last May, members in Pierce County met to discuss creating a Summit Equity team.

“There’s been this lack of awareness,” says Franklin Pierce EA’s Monica Shoopman. “We had equity training at my school, but we had (some) staff hanging out in the hallway instead. Do I think anyone in our school is blatantly racist? No. But there is a lot of complacency.”

Complacency and lack of awareness — that’s why it’s critical to engage our members in Equity Teams, Paddock says. This work takes courage, patience and persistence. But creating space for educators to discuss, struggle with and gain awareness allows them to become more confident and competent in supporting every student in our schools.

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Legislature approves changes to health plans

As the 2019 legislative session came to a close, the Legislature gave final approval to a plan for the state to operate school employee health plans. That means, effective Jan. 1, 2020, the new School Employees Benefits Board (SEBB) program will replace the existing health insurance negotiated locally in each school district and all K-12 public school employees will have a new insurance plan beginning next year.

As we have reported before, this change was part of the McCleary funding act. Though WEA long opposed a state takeover of health insurance, we endorsed the switch after a team of union representatives negotiated a robust collective bargaining agreement with the state last summer.

Below are some frequently asked questions and answers. More details about providers and specific costs will be finalized this summer. You can get updates at <https://www.washingtonea.org/ourvoice/health-benefits/> and through your school district and the state Health Care Authority.

Questions & Answers ...

What benefits are included in the SEBB?

- Medical, Vision, Dental, Basic Life and AD&D, and Basic Long-Term Disability
- Additional employee paid options
- Additional Life or Long-Term Disability, Medical Flexible Spending Arrangements (FSAs) and Dependent Care Assistance Program (DCAP)

Is my family covered?

- Eligible dependents covered by the SEBB include your legal spouse or state registered domestic partner, and children up to age 26.

If individuals do not meet the eligibility standards above, they are not eligible as dependents for employer paid coverage. But, in an effort to address transition issues, the Board has approved a policy that will allow school employees to continue coverage for these ineligible dependents at the employee's expense (if those dependents are covered on Dec. 31, 2019) for up to 36 months. A similar option would be available for any employee who has coverage in December, but does not meet the SEBB eligibility requirements.

Are chiropractic, massage and acupuncture included?

- Yes, though the specific number of visits varies by provider.

When do I have to choose plans?

- Open enrollment will be held Oct. 1 through Nov. 15 for plans that go into effect Jan. 1, 2020. The SEBB will have an online tool to help you pick the best plan for your needs.

What plan choices will I have and is my doctor part of those plans?

- Plan details will be finalized this summer. An enrollment booklet will be mailed to employees in mid-September, summarizing the plan choices.

What can I do to prepare for the transition?

- Find the documents you will need to verify dependents (marriage certificate, birth certificate, adoption papers, or other). Spend down your current flexible spending account and dependent care account this fall to ensure that you do not leave any of those funds unused.