

## Take time to celebrate our wins this season...

- A focus on the state's attention to properly fund education for students
- Long-awaited win for Yakima support professionals
- Election results that will help defend public education
- Continued leadership on common-sense education reform
- Collective strength of our 81,000 members

"My goal for the new year is to provide as many meaningful real world experiences as I possibly can for my students. Fourth grade is a great time to start exploring the world beyond the walls of our school. I'm planning to use every available resource to get my students thinking about the adventures, challenges and opportunities that await them."

— Kirby Green  
Seattle EA



WEA members share their wishes for public education and our Association in the coming year. Thank you for your commitment to your profession and your dedication to Washington's students. Happy New Year!

# The wonder years

As 2012 comes to a close, I look back at the year in wonder and with deep gratitude for your help. Together, we have accomplished much — starting with the McCleary education funding court case victory in January — which has re-focused the state's attention on properly funding education for our students. I don't think we could have predicted that this was the first of many victories we would celebrate this year.

We are building a stronger, more powerful union in the wake of attacks on associations in Wisconsin, Michigan, Ohio and Indiana. And, we elected a governor who has promised we won't become Wisconsin under his watch.

To elect Jay Inslee and key legislators, we ramped up significantly to support election activities, engaging thousands of you in our efforts. We had a particularly successful year — 93 percent of the candidates WEA-PAC endorsed were elected.

Though our candidates won, we are disappointed that corporate interests with their \$11 million were able to pass the charter school initiative. Looking forward, your board of directors has decided to fund a legal challenge against the new charters law and, as we did with McCleary, are seeking partners and developing an approach and timeline for this effort. More details about this will come.

Our victories and successes in the past year should make us optimistic and hopeful. Now is the time to offer a proactive legislative agenda.

Your board of directors set our priorities for the 2013 legislative session: advocating for "real and measured progress" on funding McCleary, starting with lowering class sizes; reclaiming the compensation we have lost; and supporting a "parents' right to know" bill about the classroom impacts, and costs of administering so many standardized tests. It is also time to extend collective bargaining to



Mary Lindquist  
WEA President

our two-year colleges and restore state funding of higher education. This work won't be easy, and will likely take time, maybe more than one session.

In closing, I want to thank each and every one of you for your commitment to your students. Your dedication and the work you do each day are fundamental and essential in building Washington's future. You are sharing knowledge, developing thinkers and serving as role models. It's hard to imagine a profession more challenging and satisfying than ours.

Enjoy the holidays, rest up and get ready for 2013. Your Association and your students will need you.

Mary

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Congratulations to Washington's newly minted National Board Certified teachers. The number of nationally certified teachers in our state now has grown to about 6,800, with the addition of 574 educators who recently received their certification.





# Contract battles in Yakima, Clarkston boost unity, power, pay

*After a 16-month struggle, Yakima paraeducators have a new contract with an 8 percent leap in base pay and a new sense of unity.*

While educators across Washington are feeling the economic pressure on school spending, some of the hardest hit are our school support staff: many are paid poverty wages, and struggle just to buy groceries and gas.

WEA has responded with additional support for local bargaining efforts, funding for Living Wage campaigns and training for local activists in relational organizing.

Efforts in two communities, Yakima and Clarkston, had run into particularly intense opposition from administrators who seemed more concerned with their own power and pay than with the welfare of their frontline staff and students.

In Yakima, support staff worked more than a year without a contract, and created a new, more powerful bargaining cluster that combined all six WEA local units. The results paid off last month with a new contract that will boost pay next year by 8 percent for beginning paraeducators, 4 percent for veteran paraeducators, and reduce the number of years it takes to reach the top pay level. And the work isn't done yet.

A joint district/association job study revealed a clear pattern of gender bias in pay for jobs traditionally held by men, such as custodians, versus traditionally female jobs, such as paraeducators. The united locals stood together to emphasize additional salary increases for paraeducators in the new contract.

In Clarkston, support employees have worked without a contract since Sept. 1, and are now in mediation with a district administration that has delayed, denied and resorted to bullying tactics to avoid a fair contract settlement.

Clarkston Superintendent Darcy Weisner first tried broad-based intimidation by claiming enrollment declines would require cuts in hours and jobs for Clarkston Classified Association members. But enrollment this year is actually higher than last year, and the tiny district is sitting on a \$3.5 million cash reserve. Weisner's latest strategy seems to be kill the messenger: The administration appears to have trumped up charges dealing with student record-keeping by CCA's

union spokeswoman in blatant retaliation for her union activism. Weisner suspended Angie Gustafson, a counselor at Grantham Elementary, for a week without pay and held out the threat that he would fire her.



*Angie Gustafson*

The administration didn't even pretend to be impartial: It launched the so-called "investigation" shortly after Gustafson appeared in a community poster highlighting how her monthly pay as an elementary counselor with a master's degree is less than her son, who flips burgers and has only a high school diploma. The administration's alleged "investigation" of the communications rep for the CCA bargaining team was conducted by members of the administration bargaining team, and the suspension was announced for the week that the district was forced into mediation by the local.

The administrative tactics in Yakima and Clarkston, intended

to silence our members, are having the unintended consequence of making our locals stronger. In Clarkston, a new generation of activists is stepping forward to ensure their concerns are heard. In Yakima, the individual bargaining units for paraeducators, maintenance, building services, technical staff, secretaries and certificated staff recognize they have greater strength when they stand together as one. The legacy of Yakima's drawn-out negotiations is

a new coalition, Yakima Educators United.

"The classified group is definitely stronger now that we've unified," noted Yakima Maintenance Association President Bill Hegel. "And now we're on a similar contract schedule so we can stay more aligned. Hopefully the district will treat us with more respect, and we can work even more closely with our certified colleagues in the next bargain."



*Highland Elementary teachers Leanne Fuller and Valarie Hopkins join Clarkston ESP members recently for a candlelight vigil for the classified unit's missing contract.*

Learn more: See online video at [www.washingtonea.org/video](http://www.washingtonea.org/video)





Visitors observe and interview students in a classroom as part of Data In A Day. “We are the future and we want to help improve our learning environment,” says student Elizabeth Cachuela. “It’s depressing when good teachers leave. I want to make sure they want to stay at our school.”

## Relevant reflections improve teaching and learning

This is a story about a long-term relationship. It’s a story about intention, trust, hope and even intimacy. And, like any long-term relationship, there is deep value and much to learn.

The story begins some eight years ago when Margery Ginsberg, an associate professor at

University of Washington, first arrived in Seattle from Colorado. One of the graduate students at UW brought a motivational framework to her attention. Seattle’s Cleveland High School was labeled as a “low performing school.” Ginsberg decided to meet with the educators and administrators at Cleveland and explained she wanted to develop a reciprocal partnership which valued local knowledge.

“We began with Data-in-a-Day (DIAD), the motivational framework we used which has endured over time,” Ginsberg says. “It allowed us to start ‘deprivatizing’ our classroom teaching practice and work on the ‘whole system’ of the school.”

The goal of DIAD is, “to help educators understand how well they are teaching and how well students are learning while, at the same time, better understanding their instructional practice,” Ginsberg says, and Cleveland has been engaged in this process for five years. The event, which occurs at least once a year, sometimes twice, gives the school community the chance to observe

educational practice in the school and to collect information that helps educators improve teaching and learning.

There has always been a desire to include more students in the process, and this year, thanks to a small Parent Engagement Project Grant through the National Education Association, Cleveland was able to achieve this goal. In her role as Seattle Education Association UniServ Representative, Maggie Crain participated in the planning committee with the PTA president, teachers, community partners and students.

“Three of our planning meetings were conducted in an Introduction to Teaching class. The students were actively engaged in committees with a teacher or community partner to develop publicity, observer questions, and methods to display the results,” Crain says.

Students, educators, parents, community members and administrators came together for DIAD training the evening before the data was collected. Each team had a student, a parent, an educator and a community member, and each team member paid close attention to one of four “R’s” — Relevance, Relationships, Rigor and Results — as they “walked through” several classes. Teams visited classrooms for some 20 minutes and got a snapshot of what was occurring. The person specifically looking for “relevance” was focused on whether the learning experience for the students offers them



*Cleveland High School teacher Kelly McFadzean says she liked being part of the planning process. “There’s a lot to celebrate and, as a second year teacher, I feel like it is a non-threatening way to learn about our teaching practice.”*

meaning: Are the classes taught with students' experiences, concerns and interests in mind? Are students able to voice their opinions?

The person monitoring "relationships" was watching interactions between students and the teacher or paraeducator as well as interactions with one another. Are students' lives, languages and cultures represented in the room? Do students hold one another accountable for learning? Are students able to follow routines and rituals in the class easily?

Rigor was about challenge and engagement. Are the adults in the room building on what the students already know? Are students participating actively and do they feel academically challenged?

The fourth team member was looking at the authenticity and effectiveness in the classroom. Are students aware of clear criteria for success? Are the grading policies fair? Does the material or demonstrations allow students to make real world connections?

Each team visited four to six classes, so, that day, eight teams saw 48 classes in the earlier part of the morning. Team members did not write the teachers' names or the class subject down as they collected data. No one pretended that a few minutes in a classroom on a given day was some kind of "teacher evaluation." Instead, the process allowed teams to compile observations into data that was shared with the staff, by students, at the end of the day.

When teams returned from collecting data, they broke up and regrouped in one of the four "R's" to see if there are patterns everyone saw. Each person shared one "Wow," and one "I wonder," comment while others began compiling other information.

"I worked with students who were clearly leaders," Crain says. "They were very insightful about revising the questions for the observations and thinking about how a parent or community member might get the most out of their classroom visit. During the day of the event, students helped organize the feedback and then presented some of it to the staff during their feedback session."

Cleveland's academic dean, Catherine Brown, has been involved in the process since 2007.

"The really special moments," she says, "are when the teachers assemble and the students tell them what they saw and what they've learned. You can hear a pin drop. It's very powerful."

Everyone is learning throughout DIAD. Group leader and senior Daniel Conde spoke with many

students to find out more about the rigor in the various classrooms he visited. "I observed how the majority of the upperclassmen really understand the concepts in the classes and just get to the work while the younger students need a lot more individual contact. The teachers need to be more intentional with the younger students who require more attention," he says.

Kristene Naoe, a sophomore, says she enjoyed visiting classes with her team and felt confident in the way she was asked to collect data. "I think I'd say what I saw most is that students have to have more time to complete a task they are given because they lose interest and become less engaged as they fall behind in class."

DIAD has another very practical result for some of the team members. "I am a second-year teacher here," Kelly McFadzean says. "It's hard to get into other people's classrooms and this was a great way to see what's going on in other classes and to see what I can incorporate into my own teaching."

After school staff reviewed the data, Brown asked everyone regardless of whether someone visited their class or not to think about what they heard and to think about their own teaching practice. The reflections for the day's data provided staff with information to validate things they were already doing and giving them new ideas about things that they might do differently.

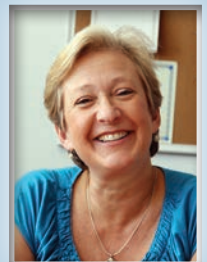
All of the observers were asked to provide suggestions about what might be next for Cleveland High School. There were multiple variations of "Celebrate and publicize what's going on here!"

"I gave up my hiking today to come. I have four grandchildren in this school and I had never been inside before today," Betsy Bell, a DIAD participant says. "I was so impressed with what I saw in the classrooms. My grandchildren here are getting a better education than in any private school plus they are preparing for life."

"My wish for students in 2013 is that they will know the academic success that comes from appropriately sized classes and that the tests they take will be used to drive more effective instruction, not used as a measuring stick to see if they measure up.

My wish for our members is that they would feel the support of our Association and know that as we work together we strengthen our profession and the future of public education."

— Angel Morton  
Tacoma EA



*"My grandchildren are getting a better education here than they would in any private school," says Betsy Bell, a participant in DIAD. Bell, shown with granddaughter Hanna Rossen, has four grandchildren at Cleveland.*







"A hope for my Association is that as we bargain this year, we work hard to protect the limited time we have. We have so many responsibilities and somehow the people at the top seem to feel that they can just keep adding more and more to our plates without ever taking anything away. Meetings that could have been handled by an email are a waste of my time and don't help me become a better teacher. I need time — time to meet with students and parents, to grade, to plan lessons, to prepare materials, work with my colleagues, and last, but not least, time to reflect on my teaching practice."

— Robin Zucker  
Bellevue EA



# ELECTION WRAP

**Y**ou gave your time, resources and energy to elect education champions in our state. Your effort made a difference for the more than 1 million students in Washington.

In an election where the stakes were high and the partisan rhetoric was flying, you kept your eye on what is most important — our students. Thank you for supporting students with your votes and your work.

As of *We 2.0* press time, 70 of our 89 endorsed legislative candidates have won and we are watching the returns in a few close races. We are thrilled with the decisive House victories by Dawn Morrell in Puyallup, and Hans Dunshee in Everett, as well as Sen. Rosemary McAuliffe in a strong Senate finish in the 1st Legislative District. And we are excited one of our own, Evergreen EA building rep, is now state Rep. Monica Stonier. She will be joined in the House by WEA member Steve Bergquist from Renton.

We were deliberate. We worked hard and we were determined to preserve public education for Washington's students. Our collective successes this past election was due to you and your union's collective work, making phone calls, knocking on doors and talking to friends and neighbors.

We elected Jay Inslee, a governor who will be a continued voice for educators and middle class workers by preserving contract rights and collective bargaining. Overall, we had a 93 percent success rate for WEA-PAC endorsed candidates.



## Ring, ring!

184,345 calls were made in 2012 on behalf of gubernatorial and legislative candidates.



## Support for legislative candidates

At least 9,073 members talked about the election at building meetings this fall, with participation in all 22 of our councils.

More than half of the work sites in WEA-Cascade hosted meetings for member engagement. Northshore EA began organizing and educating members long before the primary election about what public education would look like if cuts and the wrong legislators were elected. Momentum in the North King/South Snohomish county district continued to build after longtime incumbent Sen. Rosemary McAuliffe was targeted by challengers funded by millionaire education reform groups. McAuliffe, who was re-elected by a large margin, is one of the strongest supporters of public education and authentic education reform in Olympia.



## You've got mail!

- 21 statewide email messages were sent to WEA members during the general election (not all members received all mailings).
- 24 blog posts were made on the OurVoice election website, which had more than 21,000 visits in the month of October.



## Knock, knock!

580 WEA members and staff knocked on tens of thousands of doors for six legislative candidates.



WEA members and public education supporters marched together in historic numbers on Jan. 14, 2003, in Olympia, Kennewick and Spokane, to send a message to lawmakers to keep the commitment to Washington's students today and tomorrow. Our commitment isn't over.

## School funding is *the* issue of the 2013 legislative session

The 2013 legislative session starts Jan. 14 — exactly 10 years to the day after WEA's huge school funding rallies in Olympia and Eastern Washington, which drew 30,000 school supporters.

A decade later, adequate school funding remains the big issue.

In 2013, however, the Legislature must begin complying with the state Supreme Court's recent McCleary decision, which ordered the state to amply fund public schools as required by the state Constitution.

Headed into the new session, we have a new governor-elect, Jay Inslee, a state House with a Democratic majority and a divided state Senate. The Legislature is facing another \$1.5 billion shortfall (not counting McCleary), and there's no agreement on new revenue.

We also have two new House members who are teachers — and WEA members. Evergreen Education Association member Monica Stonier won a House seat in the 17th Legislative District, and Renton EA member Steve Bergquist won his House race in the 11th LD.

At its most recent meeting, the WEA Board of Directors voted unanimously to support a 2013 legislative agenda that focuses on full funding for education, specifically: smaller class sizes, workload reduction and all-day kindergarten. After several years

of salary funding cuts and the suspension of voter-approved cost-of-living adjustments, salary increases for all WEA members are a priority as well.

The WEA legislative agenda also includes a 'Parent Right to Know' bill, a transparency and accountability bill that would require school districts to publicize the number of days and the



Barb Hankins

amount of money spent on testing. The Board also voted to oppose any additional changes to the new teacher evaluation laws. Full bargaining rights for community and technical college faculty and full funding for higher education are WEA priorities as well.

Evergreen teacher Barb Hankins, who has worked with Stonier and doorbelled for her election, said it's crucial for educators to connect with their legislators on issues such as funding, compensation and teacher evaluations. Last year, Hankins traveled to Olympia and lobbied her senator on health care.

"Do you trust legislators to make decisions about public education without your input?" Hankins asked. "Legislators need to hear from us. I shouldn't be making less money now than I did five years ago."



"If I had a magic wand I would give anything for poverty to go away for both the students we educate and our ESPs who work so hard every day to make the lives of their students the best they possibly can be. Our members reach in their pockets and give to students even when they can't afford to feed themselves."

— Debby Chandler  
Spokane EA



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## A new definition for education

There are no mandated standardized tests in Finland except for the one exam given to students finishing their senior year in school. There are no rankings, comparisons or competition between students, schools or regions. Educators — not business people, military leaders or politicians — run the schools. There are strong unions within the school system and the unions often include principals and superintendents. If you want to be a teacher, you have to have a master's degree and go to college for five or six years. Teachers are well compensated.

Though every school has the same national goals in educating the students, the system is highly decentralized — the decisions about how students will learn are left to those who are working with them in the schools. When the Finns decided to transform their education system about 40 years ago, they didn't set out to be the best in the world. In fact, Pasi Sahlberg, a director with Finland's Ministry of Education and Culture, half-jokingly says they just wanted their schools to be better than their neighbors in Sweden. He spoke to educators, legislators and other education stakeholders at a conference last month at the University of Washington.

The bottom line, says Sahlberg, is that market-place competition in public schools is not the answer to building a school system which allows every child a great chance at getting a high quality education — no matter his or her socio-economic background, or where he or she lives. The Finns, Sahlberg says, are in the business of teaching children how to learn — not how to take tests.

Students in Finland spend fewer hours in school each day; they have little or no homework; they are not allowed to be graded for the first four years of their schooling. While the entire population attends preschool, they do not begin formal elementary school until age 7.

Creating public policy around education is complicated. Finland is not as homogeneous as some believe. There are immigrants entering from around the world. Like Washington state, the country has a population of about 5.5 million people. Imagine what it might be like if our new governor, our legislators and our communities took lessons that the Finns have already learned. Imagine what might be if we dropped out — or opted out — of the Race to the Top, and gave the love and joy of learning back to our state's children and the ones who teach them.

For more information, visit [www.pasisahlberg.com/blog/](http://www.pasisahlberg.com/blog/)



*Pasi Sahlberg  
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