

State lawmakers are reminded to make a significant investment toward keeping the McCleary promise to our students, including competitive, professional base pay for teachers and education support staff.



This is the song that never ends...



Kim Mead

I remember a song we used to sing on the band bus: “This is the song that never ends.” For those of you who may not have heard the song, it is entertaining for the students singing it and irritating for the adults listening to it. Sadly, I appear to be the adult that is irritated on the bus. I’ve been failing to find the humor in Olympia and the song we’ve had to create: “This is the fight that never ends.”

would receive a cut in pay, the response was, let’s pass it anyway. “This is the fight that never ends ...”

But wait! As of *We2.0* print time, we now have a new verse from the House. McCleary is almost funded with actual funding sources. Are we to the final verse? Not yet — the House budget is great, but it still requires a delay in funding class sizes and the total compensation isn’t amply funded.

## My Life in Olympia

McCleary. I bet the plaintiffs had no idea their name would be written in history books to describe an era when Washington state-elected officials were asked to be accountable to the Court and their constituents by upholding the state constitution. Fines have had little influence. Common sense appears to be lacking.

The first verse of our fight song this year was great. We stood next to the Governor when he released his budget which amply funded education along with a revenue source. “This is the fight that just might end ...”

And then we saw the second verse. The Senate Republican budget showing what appears to be funding, but on closer inspection, does not provide more but less. It would take funding from one pocket, put it into the other pocket and proclaim “DONE!” Even when all of the errors were pointed out, including the fact that certificated teachers no longer needed to be certificated, have a degree, or hold a high school diploma, and many educators

In my meetings in Olympia I often hear, “Now Kim, you are just never satisfied.” This is said by all sides and it is absolutely true. BECAUSE MCCLEARY HASN’T BEEN FUNDED.

“Don’t talk to me about revenue” is a statement coming out of all groups.

Okay. I won’t. I’ll talk about the children. They come first. They are the paramount duty. They need public assistance. They need the extras like food, shelter, medical care, safety and a world-class education. They aren’t the last in line. They are the first in line. Instead of having to hold out their hands, they already should be living an educational dream because of the amply funded education received.

I am singing that song that never ends — and you are all in the same choir with me. We are here. We aren’t going away. Fund McCleary.

So ... a one and a two ... “This is the FIGHT that WE will end.” I like these lyrics better.

*I am singing  
that song that  
never ends — and  
you are all in the  
same choir with  
me. We are here.  
We aren’t  
going away.  
Fund McCleary.*

## Contents



- 3 Note to lawmakers
- 4 Safe Havens
- 6 Read Across America 2017



## LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

# Protecting quality public education

Access to a quality public education is a fundamental civil right enshrined in our state's constitution. Achieving that civil right requires ample funding for all students, regardless of race, color, religion or gender.

It's been five years since the state Supreme Court ruled in the McCleary case, and this is the year that lawmakers are finally supposed to fully fund public education.

After all that time, the House budget proposal finally addresses the key investments that we've been fighting for:

- Competitive and professional pay for educators. There's a shortage of teachers and school staff out there. Our kids deserve to be taught by caring, committed and quality educators who don't have to worry about working two or three jobs to make ends meet. The House budget represents nearly a 30 percent increase in certificated base salaries over three years and roughly a 60 percent increase for ESP salary allocations. This will make a huge difference in our ability to attract and keep quality educators in school.
- Given the backgrounds of many of our students, we also need more counselors, nurses, and family coordinators and others to support students so they have what they need to learn. The House education funding plan dedicates funding over the next four years for support staff — including additional support for students who are gifted, English language learners, and students who struggle academically.
- Smaller class sizes for all grades, not just K-3, so every child has the opportunity for the individual attention they need to succeed in class. The House budget fulfills the initial promise of providing smaller class sizes for

grades K-3. While implementation is delayed, it maintains I-1351 staffing levels in the basic education funding law.

- Every district is different, just like our students. When it comes to education, there is no "one size fits all." Whatever plan comes out of Olympia must allow local districts the flexibility to fund programs that meet local needs. This is why the House budget recognized the need to continue to provide local levy authority and continued levy equalization to help property-poor school districts.

And, the House recognizes that we must retain our ability to negotiate with our employers, the school districts.

When compared to the House proposal, it's clear why we are standing firm against the Senate Republican's reckless and punitive approach which would:

- Increase class sizes by eliminating I-1351, the voter approved class size initiative.
- Reduce funding to help students in high-poverty schools.
- Cut funding for special education.
- Eliminate the voter-approved cost-of-living adjustments for educators like us.

We need to make sure that our lawmakers lift up every student and every district with funding levels that improve public education for all students, not just some. Tell your lawmakers to stand strong for our students, and stop the Senate's bad bill.

Call your legislators at 800-562-6000 and tell them to fully fund our public schools.



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# We **all** belong here

*In the wake of the new administration, Washington educators look*

When Mexican-heritage students say they fear they will be separated from their parents, educators at a South Everett school say it is a major distraction from focusing on academics. When elementary-school-aged children say annual trips to see relatives south of the border are being cancelled and they are afraid they'll never see their grandparents again, teachers try to be reassuring. When a child simply says she believes the United States President hates her because of her heritage, reassuring her that she is safe can be both heart wrenching and complicated.

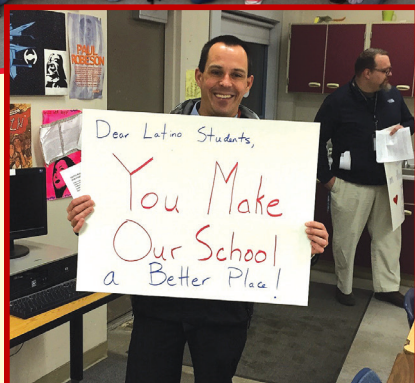
These are not isolated situations. Walk into nearly any school office where there are immigrant families and you'll see signs, letters, cards and other ways school staff members are reaffirming that students are welcome and safe at school.

Distress and trauma levels continue to rise as families in communities across Washington are trying to understand and cope with harsh immigration enforcement and forever-changing executive orders. The National Education Association is offering numerous resources to help members in supporting students and their families.

One way to alleviate stress is to know your rights and your students' rights. NEA suggests establishing procedures that refers Immigrations and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officers to the superintendent's office for any kind of clearance. Providing the public information about students' and parents' legal rights in several languages is easily accessible through WEA's and NEA's websites.



*Madrona Elementary School staff proudly show their colors as they greeted students coming to school on Jan. 19. Highline High counselor Owen Sallee reminds all students they are welcomed at Highline.*







Highline Education Association held "Walk-Ins" at more than half of its school sites on Jan. 19 to make public and visual statements in support of the district's students and families. Many students and families joined staff members in the Day of Solidarity. Cedarhurst Elementary was one of the participating schools.

## to keep all students safe and sound

There are sample resolutions, pledges, posters and other resources available through NEA to make your school a Safe Zone.

"It's been really hard to focus on academic growth when a kid is afraid their parents are going to be taken away," Pilchuck UniServ Rep. Diane Flynn says a teacher told her. "Teachers fiercely love their students. They are struggling and sometimes doubting their own ability as this spiral of hopelessness creeps into their classrooms each day."

But members around the state are working to build resilience and combat hopelessness.

Highline Education Association members held a student/family support day in January. Like their colleagues in Seattle, HEA members lined the sidewalks and main foyers in their schools holding signs to help create a sense of safety and welcome.

Several schools still have signs from that day plastered on walls in hallways through their schools. Parents joined members during that walk-in day sponsored by HEA, and students made their own signs and hung them on school walls.

Juan Cordova teaches sixth grade at Cedarhurst Elementary School in Burien. He says that he talked with his students even before the election then they held a classroom meeting the day after the election where they agreed that, "Now, it's real."

Cordova says there was a lot of fear and anxiety but they decided, as a class, that they were all in the same place and that they would stand up for one another. "It didn't matter if

you were an immigrant or not. The class really came together. There was a lot of solidarity."

Cordova says he goes out of his way to show immigrants in a positive light to combat so much of the negative exposure they receive. But, he says, "I tell my students the best thing you can do is to keep working on your education." He says his work with his students is ongoing. He also says that it's even more important than ever to make parents feel welcome. "If you said 'hi' to parents before, now you have to say, 'Hi and we're so glad you are here.'" He encourages colleagues to do everything they can to value other cultures and to do whatever possible to uplift students in these difficult times.

First-grade teacher Jennifer Flores says she and her colleagues are strong believers in community teaching to build relationship and trust among students and their families. They have a family engagement event called Popsicles in the Park each year before school begins so families can meet their students' teachers in a relaxed setting away from school. Additionally, teachers set individual meetings with families at the beginning of the school year in public libraries, a park, a coffee shop or a home visit. Teachers make sure to call family members throughout the year to celebrate or share positive moments and invite family members to celebrate academic achievements by students.

"We also run community circles to have classroom meetings to talk about feelings, common issues and share compliments. A combination of all of these things builds trust between student and teacher and creates a strong classroom community to support all aspects of our students' needs," Flores says.





More than 600 students and their families from 15 public schools in Seattle and Highline were treated to a March 1 gala featuring performers and readers who shared their love of reading in honor of Read Across America.

# A rockin' literacy party

WEA's 2017 Read Across America Literacy Concert celebrates reading for the senses

The mission is clear. Produce an event that is entertaining to students in kindergarten through third grade; make sure their parents can also enjoy it; encourage the kids and their parents to read together at home; and figure out a way to get everyone to the event and home by bedtime on a school night. Also, send the message that taking time to read every single day is a treat, not a chore.

The Washington Education Association's Read Across

America celebration, this year, was specifically focused on Title I schools. As WEA members know, oftentimes, students who receive free and reduced breakfast and lunch at school do not necessarily have a house full of books. Some are in families that are newly arrived from other countries; some simply do not have family incomes which account for extras like books simply for the fun of reading.

The first step is to secure funds to get some books into those students' hands. The National Education Association gave us a generous grant. The next step is to convince teachers that all they have to do is get invitations to parents and to show up at the school's doorstep and that everything else will fall into place. Step three includes securing a venue that will make the students and their families feel valued and special. Town Hall Seattle fit the bill. All the rest is detail work. Securing buses from Highline School District that would agree to transport students from both Highline and Seattle. As it turns out, teachers from both districts couldn't stop talking about the kindness which the bus drivers showed to the families when the March 1 event, the Read Across America Literacy Concert, occurred.

Once the skeletal bones are in place, it is easy to entice people to help create a little reading magic. First, invite the Seattle Mariner Moose and some Lucha Libres to greet students when they arrive. Book-It Theatre is already in the business of taking children's books and turning the written word into plays. They agreed to do a version of Matt de la Pena's *Last Stop on Market Street*. Seattle's Bushwick Book Club, already known for

writing songs inspired by book, offered to sing *When I'm With the Monsters*, inspired by Maurice Sendak's *Where the Wild Things Are*, so why not ask Amazon.com to donate 650 copies of that book to add to the Dr. Seuss books that were already donated as part of NEA's grant? Amazon agreed and sent six volunteers dressed in t-shirts which honored the book. Invite local author Jeffrey Cheatham II to read his book, *Why is Jane so Mad*, and he brings his family along so they can celebrate along with the students.

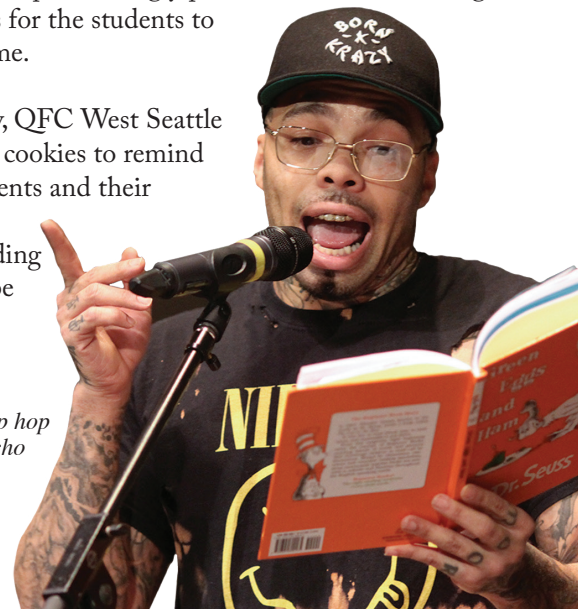
Nevertheless, we all know that even the most enticed 5- to 9-year-olds can only sit still for so long so see if five-time world jump roping champion Rene Bibaud is willing to tie jump roping to reading (yes, of course) and watch everyone's mouths fall open as she does a seven-minute routine on stage including getting several volunteers from the audience to jump rope with her.

Finally ask Seattle hip hop artist Nacho Picasso to take time to stop by before his spring tour begins to rap a freestyle version of *Green Eggs and Ham*, and watch the small mosh pit gathered around the stage start bouncing in time with the beat.

But two books is hardly enough to get that at-home library going. Every student or sibling who attended received between 5-10 books donated by Book Haven or purchased with NEA's grant money. Each teacher was asked to share a wish list of books for her students. Teachers were not left out. They also received goody bags of books for their classrooms. And who packed all those tote bags (donated by Image Source) so they were ready to be carried home (in bins donated by Frogbox Vancouver)? A chapter from the Boeing Bluebills, a great group of retired volunteers, painstakingly packed more than 650 bags of books for the students to take home.

Finally, QFC West Seattle donated cookies to remind the students and their families that reading should be sweet.

Seattle hip hop artist Nacho Picasso





# 'Choice for Teachers' is no choice

**Education  
Secretary  
Betsy  
DeVos  
financially  
supports  
network  
behind false  
union group**

Since the smackdown 2016 presidential election, fake news and facts have been a hot topic. As misinformation spreads, the Freedom Foundation-backed group Choice for Teachers continues to send email and direct mailers to WEA members throughout Washington asking them to resign from the union.

When a Choice for Teachers email written by "James" landed in Mukilteo EA member Jeff Ferderer's inbox his truth detector went off.

The Choice for Teachers mailers use so-called "union facts," compare union dues to a bad financial investment, and claim that as a WEA member you have less freedom as an educator.

Ferderer wrote back to Choice for Teachers, explaining why he is a strong union supporter and will be keeping his WEA membership. "It would be easy for me to place labels on you," he wrote. "I will use the label that is most obvious. You are misinformed. I would add that your email is harmful to teachers and to their students and only serves your selfish idea of an investment."

The Membership Matters campaign over the past year has highlighted that Choice for Teachers was just a front group for the Freedom Foundation. A Washington state-based think tank funded by billionaires pushing Right to Work laws in the U.S.

Ferderer continued, "the union and its services have been advocating for teachers and promoting best teaching practices to ensure that our students get the best education in the world for decades. My dues help contribute in only a small way to what our union does."

But Choice for Teachers and the advancing Right to Work movement is no accident. The Koch Brothers, Education Secretary Betsy DeVos and

her family, along with hundreds of other wealthy conservatives, have invested billions of dollars over decades supporting and creating organizations like the Freedom Foundation that in turn spend it on front groups like Choice for Teachers.

In Jane Mayer's "Dark Money, the Hidden History of the Billionaires Behind the Rise of the Radical Right," Mayer says the DeVos family since the 1970s has given "at least \$200 million into virtually every branch of the New Right's Infrastructure, from think tanks like the Heritage Foundation to academic organizations such as the Intercollegiate Studies Institute ..."

Politico reported that the DeVos Family Foundation has given more than \$800,000 to former CNN anchor Campbell Brown's efforts to undermine public education by promoting her school choice advocacy group.

The goal is to cripple unions, privatize public education and roll back government regulations that wealthy donors consider harmful to their business interests' bottom lines. In 2017, Kentucky became the latest state to pass "Right to Work" and in Iowa when the legislature passed its labor reform bill that Labor Notes calls "worse than Wisconsin's," only four people testified in favor. Likely all organized by the Iowa chapter of Americans for Prosperity, the nonprofit political advocacy group funded by the Koch brothers, according to news accounts by NPR.

Beating the "Right to Work" and school choice movement in Washington will take organizing, talking to our members one-on-one and speaking with one voice. Something Ferderer understands as a 32-year veteran teacher and building representative, "... the strength and good comes from all the members who realize the value of a team contribution."

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**we2.0**

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*We 2.0* (ISSN 1544-5283) is published quarterly by the Washington Education Association, 32032 Weyerhaeuser Way S., Federal Way, WA 98001-9687. Subscription cost of \$0.80 is included in annual membership dues. Separate subscription price: \$15.50 annually.

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Periodical nonprofit postage paid at Auburn, WA, and additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to

*We 2.0*, P.O. Box 9100, Federal Way, WA 98063-9100.



UNION BUG FPO



Thousands of educators, parents and students gather every summer at the grassroots Save Our Schools march on Washington, D.C. The core issues: equitable funding for all public schools, an end to high-stakes testing, professional, diverse educators, child-centered, culturally appropriate curriculum.

The Save Our Schools People's March in Washington, D.C. happened the day after five Dallas police officers were killed at the end of a peaceful protest march, protesting the killing of two black men. The previous day, Philando Castile, a support staff member in a school lunchroom was killed during a traffic stop in Minnesota. And the day before that, Alton Sterling was killed by police in Baton Rouge. In the hours before news from Dallas hit, Jonathan Kozol turned to me and said, "I think I should say something in my speech tomorrow." Nearly everyone did. The SOS rally and march felt heavy with the injustice of all the violence. Yet it focused our message and energized us to continue the fight.

Diane Ravitch celebrated accomplishments, ticking off reformers who stood in the way of equity, seemingly gone. Seattle EA member Jesse Hagopian gave us a history lesson, comparing the number of deaths at the hands of police in 2015 (256) to killings during the height of lynchings

in 1892 (136). Rev. William Barber connected the violence in our nation with Coretta Scott King's words, that poverty is violence. Neglecting our school children is violence. Little did we know that just six months later, Arne Duncan's policies would be reimagined by a billionaire who calls public schools a dead end. As we marched to the White House, the words of Rev. Barber echoed in our minds, "Even if we can't fix it, our children should see us trying. Backwards is a place we cannot go. We are determined forward together, and not one step back."

*The Save Our Schools March is a grassroots movement dedicated to restoring educator, parent, student and community influence over education policy and practice. Washington EA members have participated in this ongoing national call to action for several summers. Photos can be viewed at WEA's website at [www.washingtonea.org/sos-march/](http://www.washingtonea.org/sos-march/)*



Tracey Drum  
Highline EA