



WEA Board of Directors Report

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WEA Fourth Corner
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Take the Lead...in many arenas

External Organizing-

WEA maintains partnerships with many community organizations. An "Awareness to Action" multicultural event took place in November. This **community leaders summit** involved groups who were working together for the first time. Students are now also part of this summit and eagerly joined in the conversation.

The topics covered included: graduation requirements, biology of culture, community leaders panel and a student panel. The participants' education priorities included: need for a stable and reliable funding source, higher teacher pay, lower class size and cultural competency for all staff.

A follow-up meeting took place on January 8th to work on an action plan. Some groups want to help WEA with lobbying at the State Capitol.

WEA is part of the **Education Coalition** which includes; superintendents, school board directors, administrators and PSE. Although there are some disagreements on some issues, there is a firm agreement to work on full funding and to focus on such common goals as smaller class sizes, full day kindergarten and higher teacher pay.

Community support is also critical for the **WEA Living Wage campaign**. Three ESP locals are involved in a pilot funded by WEA and NEA to achieve a living wage which is the minimum hourly wage and the resources necessary for a person to be a fully functioning member in the community without having to be dependent upon friends, family and the government for economic assistance. Although there are regional differences, the Washington state needed living wage is \$18.00 an hour. The new improved WEA website will help members with tools as "**every bargain is a living wage campaign.**"

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WEA Board Delays Decision Regarding Possible Funding Ballot Measure for 2008

The WEA Board discussed options for political action this year including a funding initiative, incumbent protection, and targeted races including the governor and OSPI. The Board heard a report on the political landscape and polling of our members and other voters.

How much does it cost to give the WASL?

Creating a WASL Cost Analysis Model

Last spring at the WEA Representative Assembly, members voted to approve a new business item to find the true cost of the WASL. This summer WEA contracted with a public policy consultant/researcher to undertake this task. The scope of this study is to determine, "How much did the WASL cost to administer in the 2006-07 school year?" A sub-question is, "What were the costs triggered by the WASL at the state, district and school building levels?"

The results of this study is needed for use during the 2008 legislative session. This is the first time that anyone has estimated the full costs of the WASL so there are not any tracking systems in place to collect the data. The researcher has created a model that may now be used yearly.

A representative sample of districts and schools including Eastern and Western Washington, urban and rural districts of large and small size, and high schools with

above and below the statewide drop-out rates. The WASL study includes 17 schools across 11 school districts. Schools/districts were asked to participate which meet the sample criteria. Workload issues and confidentiality of the districts influenced participation.

The final report will be completed soon by the independent researcher to determine the cost of the WASL in staff time by job class as well as the non-staffing costs. All three categories of the WASL are being included: standard initial WASL, remediation/retakes and alternative assessments. The cost of the WASL will be calculated by the number of WASL tests administered, as reported by OSPI.

Preliminary results include:

- 1.4 million WASL tests were administered during the 2006-07 school year.
- OSPI portion estimated at 21 million.

Briefs...

Class of 2008 students eligible for graduation numbers continue to be misleading....

- 12-17-07 OSPI Press Release (84.5%)
- 1-11-08 OSPI Website (75%)

*OSPI continues to reclassify students passing the WASL.

Political action is the key to long term resolution of school funding.

How can you help?

1. Join WEA-PAC
2. Use your home e-mail to contact your legislators or members of Congress. Use the WEA website for assistance.

Many WEA members were highly impacted by the December flooding. Kathie Axtell, WEA Chinook president, reported with gratitude, the over-whelming response of members statewide to give victims gift cards.

Gift cards may be sent to: Kathie Axtell, 5220 Capitol Blvd., Tumwater, WA 98532