

# Bay Lakes United Educators

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[www.WEAC.org/BLUE](http://www.WEAC.org/BLUE)

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## Election 2010: Public School Employees Enter the Age of Consequences

Scott Walker's victory in the race for Governor will bring consequences for all of us. Teachers and support staff across this state were aware of his promise to bring change "by requiring state employees to contribute toward their pensions" and how he vowed to take health care insurance "choice out of the collective bargaining process" and that "the Qualified Economic Offer (QEO), which helped hold down local school costs for more than 15 years, will be restored."

It is reasonable to expect that for these promises to be fulfilled, Walker will make public employees (particularly school employees) the villains in this economy. Our collective economic problems will not be blamed on greedy Wall Street titans, the Banks that improperly foreclose on homes or on the companies that leave the United States for cheap labor. Walker will make us and our union the enemy, the very organization that brought you stable wages, benefits and employment. We did not cause this economic crisis, but cutting our wages and benefits will be viewed as the solution. It was a major part of his platform. "It's time for Republicans to put up or shut up", Governor-elect Scott Walker told reporters. "For Republicans, we have to step up and do exactly what we told voters we'd do." (*Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, 11/4/10)

Here is what to watch for. Walker has said he would never raise state taxes, so he will have to find spending cuts to eliminate the 3 billion dollar deficit. He has also pledged to call a special legislative session, to cut taxes on small businesses that will require even deeper cuts. What is not talked about is the fact that school funding makes up the greatest portion of our state budget-meaning schools will certainly be the largest target as opposed to any other group. Who is going to stop him? Because Republicans captured the State

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Pictured above, UniServ Director Kathy Rohde, WEAC Secretary/Treasurer David Harswick, SDESP Secretary/Treasurer Suzie Weidner, and SDESP President Ted Chaudoir.

## Suzie Weidner Honored

After working thirty years at Southern Door High School, the last twenty-eight as a secretary in the main office, Suzie Weidner is planning to retire at the end of the 2010-11 school year. What's significant about Suzie's employment is that she was there when the Southern Door Education Support Personnel organized in 1981 and she was there for the first bargain between the SDESP and the District. Suzie has served on every bargaining team ever since, keeping all the bargaining notes for the Union. She has also served as "the one and only" Secretary/Treasurer of the SDESP, keeping all the SDESP membership records and handling all the dues collections and remittances during those twenty-eight years. Suzie stepped down from that elected office at the end of the 2009-10 school year in order to lend support to the newly elected Secretary/Treasurer, Kay Jeanquart.

On Friday, September 9, 2010, the SDESP hosted a membership meeting and potluck dinner in Suzie's honor. WEAC Secretary/Treasurer, David Harswick, was on hand to present a WEAC Proclamation to recognize her for her many years of service and said,

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# American Education Week November 14-20

The National Education Association's (NEA's) 89th annual American Education Week spotlights the importance of providing every child in America with a quality public education from kindergarten through college, and the need for everyone to do his or her part in making public schools great. Our tagline, *Great Public Schools: A Basic Right and Our Responsibility*, reflects the Association's calling upon America to provide students with quality public schools so that they can grow, prosper, and achieve in the 21st century. NEA is BLUE's affiliate at the national level. In 2010, each day during American Education Week will spotlight a different aspect of school life:

- **Monday, November 15: Kick-off Day.** From national commemorations to local community events, millions of Americans celebrate public education.
- **Tuesday, November 16: Parents Day.** Schools invite parents into the classroom for a hands-on experience of what the day is like for their child.
- **Wednesday, November 17: Education Support Professionals Day.** Individuals who provide invaluable services are recognized for their outstanding work.
- **Thursday, November 18: Educator for a Day.** Community leaders are invited to serve as educators to get a glimpse at a day in the life of a school employee.
- **Friday, November 19: Substitute Educators Day.** This day honors the educators who are called upon to replace regularly employed teachers.

American Education Week is always celebrated the week prior to the week of Thanksgiving. You can find out more about American Education Week and Education Support Professionals Day at NEA's website, <http://www.nea.org>.

**Education Support Professionals (ESP) Day** was first celebrated in 1987, after NEA's Representative Assembly called for the creation of a way to honor the contributions of school support staff. In 2003, Karen Mahurin, then president of NEA's National Council of Education Support Professional (NCESP) members, led a successful campaign at the NEA Representative Assembly to change the ESP formal name from "Education Support Personnel" to "Education Support Professionals." "The name change to 'professional' acknowledges the major contribution ESPs make to children and public education every day," said Mahurin, a secretary with 22 years of experience. Today's support professionals provide invaluable services that enable students to learn in positive, supportive environments. ESPs are equal and essential partners in the education process.

# Moving Wisconsin Forward Rally October 16

A bus filled with enthusiastic BLUE and GBEA members left the office parking lot early Saturday morning, headed to the Rally in Madison. The Rally was a huge success (and a lot of fun!) Photos by BLUE Board member, Dan Weidner.



A Capitol View



BLUE board members Amy Gee and Steve Thomson



UniServ Director Kathy Rohde



BLUE President Dean DeBroux



Clintonville EA member Lynne Kessler and BLUE Board member Peggy Johnson

(SUZIE WEIDNER Continued from page 1)

"Suzie faithfully demonstrates what an active Union member is; one who will support your issue or any Union issue even when there is nothing in it for herself."

Ted Chaudoir, current SDESP President and Chief Negotiator said, "I remember her replying, when asked why she continued to be involved in negotiations, "we've been through too many tough bargaining sessions for me not to be involved anymore because I don't want to see anything we've fought hard for bargained away." Ted further stated, "she is invaluable to have on our negotiations team because of our Union's history she brings to the table."

Thank you Suzie for your devoted service to your Union family!

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(ELECTION 2010 Continued from page 1)

Senate and the Assembly along with the governor's office, Walker will have a far easier time cutting spending and lowering taxes. But the fact is no one talks about how this will affect students, families and employees across the state. Do we want to end up with no infrastructure and fewer quality schools? And if this happens, will businesses even want to move here? How does Wisconsin get out of a "rust belt" economy if school quality declines?


Many have talked about retiring and leaving the profession altogether in the wake of this election. Before anyone gives up, especially through retirement, please consider what Congressman Ryan, the next budget chairman of the new GOP-controlled House noted recently. "We have over 60 people coming to Congress who just endured three months of Medicare and Social Security demagoguery of ads designed to scare seniors, and we won the senior vote handily. These things are no longer the third rail they once were," Ryan said. This is significant commentary as noted by the press, "Ryan's personal policy blueprint, known as the 'Roadmap,' calls for sweeping changes to Medicare and Social Security that most lawmakers in his own party have shied away from." (Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, 11/4/10) Simply put, there is no escaping these threats simply by retiring. We cannot walk away from these issues. We owe it to ourselves, our families and to the students to fight back. The profession and your Union need you more than ever and that means we must prepare now for the next election cycle in 2012.

## New Program Addresses Member-To-Member Conflicts

WEAC has launched "Roadmap to Resolution," a program designed to help our members deal with member-to-member conflict. **Stage One** presents self-help materials designed to help members identify their own conflict-management styles and to provide strategies for addressing the conflict on their own. **Stage Two** offers intervention in the form of mediation services to members. Before a UniServ Director recommends mediation here are some questions that will be asked:

- Was an effort made by the individuals to resolve the conflict on their own?
- Is the conflict one that will likely benefit from mediation and are the parties willing to try it?
- Is the conflict of such a nature that it could result in member discipline?
- Is the conflict of such a nature that it could have a negative impact on student learning or the employer's operation?
- Is the conflict of such a nature that it could disrupt union solidarity?
- Has the conflict been unresponsive to prior efforts at resolution?
- Is the employer requiring the individuals to resolve the conflict and is the employer amenable to using WEAC mediation as a resolution tool?

If the conflict is recommended for advancement to mediation, the WEAC Bargaining and Organizing Department will assign mediator(s) to the case. They will schedule a mediation session in a timely manner. Details about the program can be found at [www.weac.org/roadmaptoresolution](http://www.weac.org/roadmaptoresolution). Please contact your UniServ Director at 800-472-5582 if you would like more information.



**TAX  
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### Tax Tip for Educators

- **Income Tax Preparation**
- **Financial Planning**
- **Life & Health Insurance**
- **Small Business Accounting**

Save your receipts for any classroom expenses. They may qualify for the \$250 Educator's Expense Deduction, an "above-the-line" deduction.

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**Did you know?**

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## PDP CORNER

If you are an initial educator or a teacher who is obtaining a new license or renewing a license through the Professional Development Plan process (PI-34), you need to be aware of the workshops available to you at the BLUE UniServ Office. For minimal fees, our members can learn about the process, and obtain the necessary review and signatures needed in one easy stop. Mark your calendars!

### Register NOW for December 4 Workshops and Sessions!

#### **PDP Writing Workshop for Initial Educators** Saturday December 4, 2010 and Saturday, May 7, 2011

This workshop offers hands-on, step by step guidance for writing a Professional Development Plan (PDP). Participants will learn how to register with the QEI website in order to use the online template for recording their work. The presenters are Kay Johnson and Diane Slivka who are trained reviewers ready to help you develop a quality PDP. We offer two FREE sessions at the BLUE office: AM: 8:30 a.m. registration; workshop 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon, and PM: 12:30 p.m. registration; workshop 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. (PM workshop will only be offered if needed.)

#### **PDP Goal Approval Session**

Saturday, December 4, 2010 and Saturday, May 7, 2011

If you need your PDP Goals approved, reviewers will be available at the BLUE office to review and approve your goals for a flat fee of \$25.00. You will meet with a team of three reviewers. When you leave, you will have your goals approved and will have the signatures of all three reviewers to send to the DPI. Goal approval will start at 8 a.m.

#### **PDP Verification Session**

Saturday, December 4, 2010 and Saturday, May 7, 2011

If you are moving from Initial Educator to Professional Educator status and need to have your PDP plan verified, a team of three reviewers will be available at the BLUE office to verify that the necessary components of your plan have been met. Time slots are available from 8 a.m. for a flat fee of \$50.00. When you leave, you will have your plan verified and will have the signatures of all three reviewers to send to the DPI.

To register, please contact the office at 496-2440 or 1-800-472-5582, or email at [Blue@weac.org](mailto:Blue@weac.org) (Deadline for registration is two weeks prior to the event.)

## ESP Members—Be Sure WRS Changes Are Enacted

A bill passed by the Wisconsin Legislature and signed by Governor Doyle two summers ago provides equal treatment of ESP under the Wisconsin Retirement System (WRS). The new law defines full-time employment based on a school year (1,320 hours). The old law defined full-time employment for teachers as 1,320 hours, but defined full-time employment for non-teachers as 1,904 hours when determining eligibility for retirement calculations. Any non-teacher working less than 1,904 hours was given credit for a partial year for each year worked.

To qualify for benefits under the WRS, a participant must work or be expected to work one-third of full-time. Thus, prior to passage of this bill, this was defined as 440 hours per year for teachers and 600 hours per year for all non-teachers. Now, non-teachers will qualify for WRS benefits if they work 440 hours per year.

Be sure to check your incoming paperwork, such as trust fund reports, pay stubs, and other annual reports, to be sure you are receiving a WRS contribution from your employer **if you are working at least 440 hours per year**. Some employers have been slow to catch members who would now qualify under this change. If you need assistance in securing WRS status, be sure to call the BLUE office at 1-800-472-5582.

Borrowed from NUE Newsletter, 9/10

## Visit Us on the Web

[www.weac.org/blue](http://www.weac.org/blue)

- [Calendar](#) (get all the latest updates!)
- [Facebook](#) (be our friend!)
- [Local Associations in the BLUE UniServ](#) (includes contact information for local leaders)
- [Members Only](#) (find local contracts and member benefits)

Look for valuable information about:

- Health Care Reform
- School Funding Reform

# How to Avoid a Hangover

By Corey Otis, WEAC-Fox Valley President  
[edited for length]

As we drove home after seeing *The Hangover*, way back in 2009, my then-fiancée asked what my “wolf pack” had planned for me in Las Vegas. I assured my wonderfully understanding and trusting partner that there would be no tigers, former heavyweight champion boxers, or gunplay at my bachelor party in Sin City.

Months later when I triumphantly returned from my bachelor party (i.e. I still had money in my checking account), I broke the cardinal rule of Vegas visitors: what happened in Vegas did not stay in Vegas. Thanks to *The Hangover*, visions of my friends and me acting immorally, indecently, and irresponsibly danced in her head, so constructing the reality of my trip for her was a struggle. The story of my real bachelor party didn’t jibe with *The Hangover*’s unreal bash. After all, who would believe my Vegas bachelor party centered on long conversations about Chuck Klosterman?

Klosterman is the foremost pop culture essayist of our time. He may also be the only one. His ability to analyze mindless media is unmatched, mostly due to his brilliant mind and partially because no one else writes this kind of stuff. His most recent book, last year’s *Eating the Dinosaur*, dissects reality. Through his essays, the author argues our media perception has constructed a “fake reality,” which may carry greater weight than actual reality. What we think is “real” isn’t real, but because we want it to be, “real” is really more important than what really happens.

Confused? Try this. Close your eyes and imagine a basketball game. What did you see? When I tried this, I saw Michael Jordan hitting a jumper at the buzzer – in slow motion – even though I’ve watched countless Appleton East basketball games. Unless you’re a coach or former player, you probably drew upon a borrowed image from a televised game instead of a real, personal memory.

In his essay “FAIL,” Klosterman asserts many of our internal images originate from media sources. Klosterman theorizes that while we are able to describe the difference between real and unreal images, our brains can’t quite manage it. I can describe the difference between games I’ve seen on TV and games I’ve witnessed in person, but subconsciously, media memories trump my eyewitness accounts.

Now try this: imagine a classroom. What do you see? If you’re like me, you see your classroom. You see your desk, your students, your books, your chair, etc. I envision the stack of papers to be graded. Educators spend so much time in schools these personal images and experiences dominate their brains. We construct our own perception without help from media.

One more thought experiment: consider someone who doesn’t work in public education trying to imagine a classroom. It’s easy if you try. Remember, most people outside our profession haven’t been in classrooms full of

kids for a long, long time. Their memory banks probably lack real images, or at least fairly current ones, so they draw upon memories constructed by media – unreal images. Maybe they see Mr. Kotter. Maybe they see Rydell High School. Or maybe they see *Superman*.

*Waiting for Superman*, tagged as education’s equal to *An Inconvenient Truth*, paints a bleak picture of failure and disaster in our nation’s public schools. Most major media outlets present the film as a beacon for reformers. Oprah heaped her highly lucrative acclaim upon the film. She and other media magnets perceive the film as an accurate portrait of public schools in crisis. In the film, cameras follow five different students struggling in different schools for different reasons. The future of their education depends upon a single solution: a lottery in which the winners attend charter schools while the rest are doomed to “dropout factories.” As the children await their fate, the filmmaker interviews experts about problems and solutions in public education. He presents “heroes” – including Michelle Rhee, who recently resigned her post as Washington, D.C. Superintendent – fighting to change the system against “super-villains” of the establishment, like American Federation of Teachers President Randi Weingarten and her kryptonite equivalent – teacher tenure!

I would tell you more about *Waiting for Superman*, but I haven’t seen the film. In fact, most people have not; the movie has grossed just \$1.5 million so far. Still, the film’s promotional campaign has saturated our society with images of failing schools. These “unreal” or highly selective scenes negatively impact the public’s perception of our schools and our work. Oprah railing on unions, TIME Magazine sensationalizing ineffective teaching, rightwing blogs perpetuating myths, all create “fake realities” of public education. You don’t need x-ray vision to see that, but your perception of education is based on a foundation of real experience, not media constructs.

*Superman* and its fans create the perception that teachers block our students’ ability “to leap tall buildings in a single bound.” Anyone with experience in education can shoot that theory down faster than a speeding bullet. No one would argue we don’t have problems in public education, but the causes are more complex than the corporate media and opportunist politicians would care to admit. To point the finger at one group is immoral, indecent, and irresponsible. The problems are widespread and societal: student poverty, school funding, educational values, teacher respect, etc.

We live in the reality. We have the experience, the knowledge, the passion. Counter the media construct. Explain the challenges you face in the classroom. Explain how funding shortfalls limit our students’ education and opportunity. Paint a picture for your friends outside our profession. Eventually, perception becomes reality. Should we lose control over our reality, there will be a Hangover after *Superman*.

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## UniServ Activity Calendar

Wed. Nov. 10	5:00 & 5:30 pm	Various committee meetings	BLUE office
Wed. Nov. 10	6:30 pm	BLUE Board Mtg.	BLUE office
Thurs. & Fri. Nov. 11 & 12	—	WEAC Prof. Staff Meeting	Madison
Wed. Nov. 17	5:30 pm	M & O EA CBC	Kelly Lake
Thurs. Nov. 25	—	Holiday	BLUE office closed
Friday Nov. 26	—	Holiday	BLUE office closed
Tues. Nov. 30	5:30 pm	Bay Negotiators CBC	BLUE office
Thurs. Dec. 2	5:30 pm	ESP CBC	BLUE office
Saturday Dec. 4	9:00 am	PDP Workshops	BLUE office
Wed. Dec. 8	5:00 pm	Various com- mittee meetings and BLUE Board meeting	BLUE office