

# Council #10



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## MAKE CONNECTIONS

WEAC Convention –  
 October 26 and 27

Great  
 Schools

weac.org

## Resources Available to Help School Communities Deal with Crisis

The tragic death of Weston High School Principal John Klang, the school shooting deaths of students in Colorado and Pennsylvania, the intercepted plot in Green Bay, and the number of bomb threats in southeastern Wisconsin schools in recent weeks have all focused attention on the risks that school employees face on the job.

The NEA, WEAC, the WEA Trust, and other organizations have resources available to help both with the prevention of school violence and with the emotional difficulties related to highly traumatic events affecting school communities. Often overlooked in the immediacy of the situation itself and in counseling the children are the needs, especially the emotional needs, of the staff. More resources are being developed all the time as more is understood about care for the caretakers themselves.

For crises prevention, the National Crime Prevention Council offers the following advice to school employees:

- Request free school safety assessments for your school to identify potential problems and upgrades needed to your safety measures.
- Establish "zero tolerance" policies for weapons and violence. Spell out penalties in advance.
- Encourage reporting of threats of violence or weapons at school as a way to prevent situations. (The student in Green Bay who reported what he knew is a hero.)
- Have periodic training of school staff on safety measures and protocols, and ensure compliance with those measures.
- Communicate and involve interested parents in school safety plans and ask for input to consistently improve potential problem areas.
- Control access to the school by visitors. Have a central check-in and identification system for all visitors.

Finally, although many schools now have written school safety plans in compliance with requirements of the Homeland Security Act, plans are no good if the only place they're executed is on paper. Practice them! If you do not believe that you and your colleagues are prepared as well as you can be for a crisis in your building, ask your local association to actively get involved on members' behalf.

Other frequently identified critical areas to ask for association help with include: administration's failure to notify staff regarding problem students; failure to enforce school-wide discipline policies; lack of responsiveness to safety concerns; failure to address school climate issues; inadequate on-campus communication systems; and lack of working partnership with local law enforcement.

Future issues of this newsletter will print additional advice. For more on what is available now, contact Val Gabriel at the Council #10 office.

### **Green's Education Plan Merits a Failing Grade**

Just as kids were heading back to school, Mark Green offered an education plan that leaves our children behind. Borrowing extensively from conservative think tanks, Green proposed eroding local control and bargaining rights while investing in unproven experiments such as independent charter schools.

The centerpiece of Green's plan is the so-called "70% solution," which would require 70 cents of every education tax dollar to be spent in the classroom. More appropriately named the "70% delusion," this proposal does not infuse one single dollar of new money into our schools. It merely reshuffles the money deck and erodes local control by forcing budget decisions disconnected from the educational needs of our students. As a result, school districts would find it more difficult to fund heating the classroom, food service, bus drivers, counselors and school nurses.

Failing to recognize that great schools depend on the ability to attract and retain great staff, Green attacks collective bargaining rights and advances performance-based merit pay. Instead of offering meaningful solutions to reducing the rising cost of health care, Green targets workers and their ability to bargain health coverage. He also puts his stamp of approval on "pay for performance," a system that ignores the many facets of educational success while providing no additional compensation for acquisition of skills and knowledge by educators.

Contrast Green's plan with Governor Doyle's record on education. Governor Doyle has shielded Wisconsin's schools from \$400 million in cuts, restored the state's commitment to two-thirds funding of education costs, and made significant investments in pupil transportation, special education, four-year-old kindergarten and the Student Achievement Guarantee in Education (SAGE) class-size reduction program. Using his veto authority, he has also deflected attacks on collective bargaining rights.

Mark Green and Governor Doyle couldn't offer two more different visions for education. Mark Green seeks to invest in unproven strategies for boosting student achievement. Meanwhile, Governor Doyle has made education his top priority and his record reflects his commitment to ensuring every kid in Wisconsin attends a great school.

This is an 11.29 communication with WEAC members.

### **Council #10 PAC Dues Rebate**

Any Council #10 member who wishes to have his/her Council #10 PAC contribution (\$2 full-time teacher, \$1 full-time support staff) refunded must send a signed written request to the Council #10 Office, 13805 W. Burleigh Rd., Brookfield, WI 53005, no later than November 15, 2006. Only requests postmarked on or before November 15 will be honored and any which are postmarked after that date will be disregarded.

### **Member Ad**

Door County A-frame for rent: With 2 housekeeping units. Each sleeps up to 6. Upgraded kitchens and bathrooms. Deck, gas grill, fireplace, satellite TV. Available year round.  
Call (414) 427-8420.