

Council #10



CUDAHY • FRANKLIN • GREENDALE • GREENFIELD • OAK CREEK • ST. FRANCIS • SOUTH MILWAUKEE

The Budget Crisis!

Those who care about funding for schools and other public services are watching with bated breath as elected officials decide how to address our state's astronomical \$5.4 billion budget deficit. Despite a much improved political environment, funding for the services we provide is truly in jeopardy.

The ultimate outcome of the upcoming State budget process will largely be determined by how much assistance the Federal government provides through a proposed "stimulus package." Fortunately, we have champions for protecting public services in the new President-Elect, **Barack Obama**, and House Appropriations Chair, **David Obey**. They understand that the draconian cuts necessary for states like Wisconsin to balance their budgets alone in the current environment would be ruinous for essential public services like education, and would also badly damage the economy by generating substantially higher unemployment.

However, Wisconsin's current budget mess is the product of a much longer term dynamic. Our system of generating revenue for necessary public services like education is increasingly outmoded and unfair, and relies far too heavily on the property tax. At this point our state does not tax fairly and does not generate the revenue necessary to fund services that we depend on. The system is characterized by countless exemptions and loopholes that are ruthlessly exploited by special interests, resulting in the long term "structural deficit" that underlies our current crisis.

The **Institute for Wisconsin's Future (IWF)**, in partnership with a coalition of organizations including WEAC, is now providing grassroots organizing support to address both the current budget crisis and the longer term structural deficit. In our area they have helped organize a local coalition called the **South Shore Citizens for a Prosperous Future**. Members should look for notice of a community wide forum sponsored by the group at a date to be determined in February. In the mean time, for more information on Wisconsin's revenue problems and realistic long term solutions to address them, visit the IWF website at www.wisconsinsfuture.org.

Meet Beth Waschow our New WEAC Board Rep

Beth Waschow, a 35 year teacher of English, French, and Spanish for the South Milwaukee School District, joins Council #10 President, **Nancy Koeckenberg**, as one of our UniServ's two Representatives to the WEAC Board of Directors.

Beth has a long history of union activism, having served as Building Representative, Secretary, Vice President, and President of the South Milwaukee Education Association (SMEA).

As a Local leader, she helped secure a WEAC grant to develop one of the best organized local mentoring programs in the state. She also helped lead efforts to protest budget cuts and revenue caps in Madison that earned the local a WEAC Outreach Award.

Most recently, Beth was a key leader in the signature gathering campaign that placed Healthcare Referendums on the ballot in South Milwaukee and Oak Creek.



13805 West Burleigh Road
Brookfield, Wisconsin
53005-3058
phone: (262) 789-6000
fax: (262) 789-6010

OFFICERS

Nancy Koeckenberg
Chairperson/WEAC Board
Representative
Beth Waschow
WEAC Board Representative

STAFF

Val Gabriel
Executive Director
Ted Kraig
Executive Director
Sharleen "Shorty" Ott
Staff Assistant

Council #10 Website
www.weac.org/council10

MAKE CONNECTIONS

Spring Primary Election for
Superintendent of DPI,
Tuesday, February 17

SE Regional Bargaining
Seminar, Bowlero in Brookfield,
Tuesday, Feb 17, 5:00pm

WEAC Winter Conference
February 27 – March 1, 2009
Wyndham Milwaukee Airport

Great
Schools



weac.org

Department of Public Instruction (DPI) Election

With five declared candidates, Wisconsin will be holding a primary election for choosing a new Superintendent of the Department of Public Instruction (DPI). Who wins this position can make a big difference on issues like school funding and teacher licensing. The spring primary election will take place on **Tuesday, February 17** followed by the general election on Tuesday, April 7. As voter turnout tends to be very low in spring primaries, we can make a huge difference if we encourage all our members to vote. Our WEAC Board of Directors has made a candidate recommendation that only becomes official after members who contribute to the WEAC PAC have voted to concur with the recommendation. Please look for a ballot in the mail in the very near future and be sure to vote on the recommendation before the January 29 deadline.

Training: Classroom Discipline and Non-Violent Intervention

Learn what your legal rights and responsibilities are when a special education student becomes defiant or aggressive toward you or another person in your classroom. Learn how collective action can play a role in helping to keep everyone safe from injury by an aggressive or out-of-control student. Join United Southeast Educators for Understanding Licensure and Learning (USEFULL) at the Brookfield office (13805 W. Burleigh Road), on January 28, 2009, for this useful training. Light supper will be provided at 4:30pm and the program will begin at 5:00pm. Contact Linda Weaver at weaverl@wi.rr.com to register.

Time to Register for the 2009 NEA ESP Conference

It's now time to register for the 2009 NEA Education Support Professionals (ESP) Conference, which will be held from March 13-15, 2009 in Orlando, Florida. This national conference is a great opportunity for ESP members to learn about important issues, and gain skills they can use to build stronger locals. The conference is designed to help members gain professional development opportunities, to build stronger internal and external relationships, to organize members, and to enhance NEA ESP members' ability to positively influence student achievement. For more information on the conference visit the NEA's website at www.nea.org. To apply for funding to attend from Council #10 and WEAC, contact Shorty in the union office at otts@weac.org or (262) 789-6000. Applications are due by January 31, 2009.

Check Your ESP Contract

If your contract expires in 2009, now is the time to start thinking about the role you will play in determining the successor agreement. The most public role, of course, is to volunteer to serve on the union negotiations team. Especially if you belong to a job classification, or work in a building, or fall into a benefit category that doesn't have other volunteers stepping up to the task, your participation is highly valued. Don't think that you can't be on the team simply because you lack the experience for the work. Everybody learns on the job the first time through, but in addition to that, there are upcoming training opportunities to build your skills and confidence. One of these is WEAC's Winter Conference, February 27 – March 1, right in Council #10's backyard.

You do not, however, have to actually be on the team in order to fill key needs in the negotiations process. If team participation does not fit your circumstances this year, you can encourage others, both those with experience and those without. You can be sure to respond to any bargaining survey or, better yet, volunteer to help design and tabulate the survey. Attend meetings scheduled to develop and/or approve initial proposals. Be ready in case your team sends out word that further visible union support of their efforts is needed. If your elections are held this spring, help recruit a full slate of representatives and officers. The more active you are in the process, the more likely the next contract will truly feel that it belongs to you.