

WEA PRIDE

Wauwatosa Professionals
Making a Difference

Wauwatosa Education Association

13835 W. Burleigh Rd. Brookfield, WI 53005

Fall 2008

Vol. 6 No. 1

from 1 president debbie brent
welcome



Debbie Brent

Welcome to the 2008-2009 School Year!
I am honored to be serving in the capacity of your WEA president and together I am confident we will make great strides in the issues before us. I had the opportunity to hit the ground running after the election in March and have worked with many dedicated and enthusiastic members. I look forward to many more productive outcomes!

The mission of the WEA Long Range Planning Committee is to inform, educate and motivate. The latest effort in distributing the Dear Family and Friends letter has paid off with three positive, supportive, editorials in the Wauwatosa News Times, several letters/correspondence sent to the school board on which we were copied, and several positive phone calls of support,

For a report from the Long Range Planning Committee, go to page 4.

with promises of future actions. If you were unable to help in the distribution of the letter stay tuned for part two which your building representatives will be telling you about soon!

In addition to the mission of inform, educate, and motivate, we need to begin to re-connect with administration in a way that allows for a respectful relationship in which all will benefit, and to build partnerships with groups such as the PTA, local businesses, parents and the like.

WE have A LOT to do and need each and every one of you to be successful! There is a way for you to be part of that success...you just ask!

~Debbie Brent, WEA President
Whitman Middle School, 414-773-2687

Other Elected Board Members



Mary Butkus
Vice-President
Washington



Jeanine Brennan
Secretary
Longfellow



Michael Vann
Treasurer
West High

Inside the Pride



2 Negotiations Update

Job action possibilities are varied. Check out what other schools are doing and how you can make a difference.

3 Your Viewpoint Matters

Read what teachers have to say about job actions being considered at the high schools.

4 Long Range Planning

The Crisis Committee has a new name and a new mission. Here's their report, including survey results from last semester.

5 Moving on..

We take a look at four Tosa teachers who took jobs in other districts this fall.

6 New, student teachers

New teachers can get rebates on their NEA dues if they were members of Student WEA.

NEGOTIATIONS MIRED BY QEO

by • debbie brent

There has been some conversation on both sides to return to the table, but no dates have been set.

The Negotiations Team is looking at re-structuring their members and strategies. They will be sending an invitation to the District to come to the table to see if there is any way creative thinking can re-

solve the 07-09 contract issues, the largest being the salary schedule.

In addition, through the Collective Bargaining Council, the team will be participating in six training workshops about the issues that face negotiations teams at the table. You will be kept posted on the next steps and the results of those efforts.

over the summer

- July 10** District refused WEA's proposal to accept the District's 4.25% package, keeping our insurance plan
- Aug. 15** District implemented QEO

WHAT'S HAPPENING NOW

One thing was clear at Tuesday night's WEA Executive Board meeting: People are ready to take action.

Just what that action would be has been left up to schools and individuals, but President Debbie Brent and West Suburban Council Executive Director Sandy Nass were clear about parameters.

"Don't refuse to do something you're directed to do [by an administrator]," Nass said. "Act now and grieve later, if necessary."

Although more than a dozen teachers had resigned their extra pay positions at the high schools earlier this week, Brent said that Dr. Ertl told her he would not accept letters from those who had signed contracts for those positions. Brent advised resuming extra pay responsibilities.

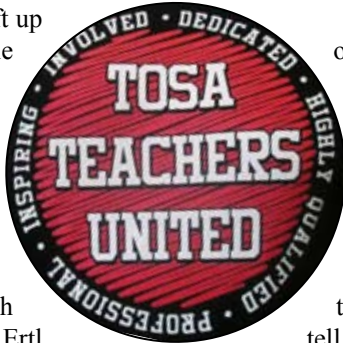
A number of teachers also planned not to write letters of recommendation to colleges. Again, Brent said that Ertl planned

to tell teachers that writing letters of recommendation is part of teachers' "professional responsibility."

Nass pointed out that Article 19 of the contract spells out those responsibilities in a lot of detail. According to contract, teachers can be directed to write such a letter during the school day, but not outside of the contracted hours of the school day.

If you are directed by your principal to write a letter of recommendation and don't have time to do it during the school day, ask that administrator which professional responsibility you should do, and then list the things you need to get done. Let the administrator tell you what other responsibility can be postponed while you write the letter.

More discussion centered around a request for a General Meeting where all teachers could ask questions and share ideas for job actions. Brent said that she is planning a meeting for later this month, but is still finalizing details for the location.



on the lookout

school email accounts:

Use your school account for informational purposes only and if then, only outside the contract day or during lunch

WEA communication:

Any WEA messages, oral or written, may be transmitted personally outside the contracted hours of work, or during lunchtime.

home email accounts:

Give your personal email address to your building rep so that we can create a list to get you information electronically (& quickly)

home email at school:

DO NOT open web-based home email accounts on your school computer

for you: usefull

Licensure assistance for new teachers working on the PDP process

Workshops begin at 5 p.m at the UEP building in Brookfield with a light meal at 4:30 p.m.

- Oct. 1:** Overview of the PDP process
- Oct. 7:** Preparing your PDP for verification
- Nov. 5:** Goal writing and approval workshop
- Nov. 6:** PDP Goal approval
- Jan. 7:** PDP verification
- Feb. 5:** Privacy in the workplace
- April 23:** Overview of the PDP process

LRP* events

- letter to parents at Open Houses
- black T-shirts on Tuesdays
- lit drops
 - (Sept. 27 on the west side Bowlero headquarters 10-noon)
 - Oct. 11 on the east side Hoyt Park headquarters, 10-noon)
- teach to the contract time
- optional: standing outside school in the morning
- resign from committees

IN THE FUTURE

- attendance at School Board meetings
- picketing at large events

*Long Range Planning Committee (see full report on p. 4.)

Opinions about the proposed job actions in the high schools: interviews on Sept. 15, 2008



Barb Murray
East

WE'RE HERE FOR KIDS

I think it's time that our district gets pressured and realizes really what we do for these kids. I don't want to hurt them. As teachers, we're here for kids. My fear is that what we do may negatively affect students.



Carol
Chmielewski
East

I feel sad that we have to get to this point. I wish the School Board would see the need to work with our bargaining committee to make a plan to get the Tosa salary schedule more competitive. We need a plan, for the future of this school district!



Tom Woodworth
West

TAKE SOME KIND OF A STAND

In my 41 years in the district I have no recollection that this has ever happened. But if you don't make some kind of stand, nothing's going to happen. I don't think my efforts are being appreciated, so I've stopped doing Academic Decathlon. I've done this for 24 years, and it is an activity that I greatly believe in.



Mary Johnston
West

COST OF LIVING INCREASES

I feel like for 18 years I've been nice and never done anything that was confrontational. I just got my WE Energy bill increase of \$480 for this year. It's so insulting not to be paid enough to keep up with the cost of living. I'm beyond ready to do something. I'm actively upset.



Cathy Razner
West

OUTSIDE THE SCHOOL DAY

We do a lot of extra work outside of the school day. We want to do all that stuff for kids like we've done in the past, but I haven't gotten a decent raise in 10 years. We have to take a stand to let them know they're not paying us adequately for the job.



Mary Pat Foley
East

NEED FOR COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Doing this job action is important because it will let our community, who is totally unaware, know that we are working without a contract and what that means, and what they take for granted. Let's give them the opportunity to speak up and support their faculty and staff.



Rob Hamill
East

GET PEOPLE'S ATTENTION

In other places where the QEO has been imposed, what people did afterward made all the difference, so you have to do something to get people's attention. And that's what we're trying to do. In the other places if people just accepted the QEO, they ended up in the same boat next time. Something's got to change and this will make it happen.



Vicky Thomas
East

INSULT TO OUR INTEGRITY

After 16 years in this school district, I think that it's a shame that we have to resort to this. It's insulting to the integrity of everybody in this school district that the district is not willing to bargain honorably.



Linda Vitrano
East

LACK OF PROGRESS

If I didn't have scorers, ticket takers, line judges for our sporting events, we'd be in a mess, no doubt about it. The vast majority of people who work our events are teachers. And our coaching positions are based on the 200-2001 base salary. It's been years since this last improved.



Tom Norstrom
West

PEOPLE ARE PRETTY FED UP

People at West wanted to know what we could do in face of the QEO's imposition. I said, "Whatever we do, we have to do together." We were very supportive of taking job actions. We will wait for newsletters to go out at open houses, but people are pretty fed up.

Long Range Planning Committee sets job actions



Patty Chapman
Longfellow

Even though we may still be in CRISIS, it was decided to change the committee name from the Crisis/Action Team to the Long Range Planning Committee.

We did this because of the need to not only discuss job actions, but to put in place activities that will help us gain parent and community support. We hope to build positive community awareness, so we have more support each time our contract is up.

Over the summer several of our members met to discuss job action as well as long range planning ideas to keep us moving forward. These are some of the job actions we put in place this fall:

- working to the contact as best we can
- wearing our TOSA black shirts on Tuesdays
- resigning from committees
- not participating in the district first day activities
- wearing our black shirts on first day.

In order to build community and parent support we felt the need to build a communication link and inform the public. At several Open Houses, volunteers handed out flyers informing parents that we still do not have a contract, and suggesting ways they could help support teachers.



Beth Storey
Longfellow

Also, we are looking for volunteers to help walk through the neighborhoods of TOSA on Sept. 27 and Oct. 11 to hand out a new brochure informing the community about the education in TOSA.

The flyer will explain that we are working without a contract and will highlight all the extra activities teachers participate in to help our students be more successful.

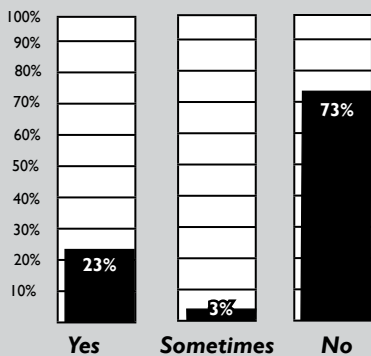
The flyer shows the positive aspects of education in TOSA. Your building rep will be handing out a flyer with more information.

Our next meeting will be Sept. 29 at 4 p.m. at the Uniserv Office on Burleigh Street. We will be discussing our presence at future school board meetings, picketing large events and forming committees to achieve goals established by the committee.

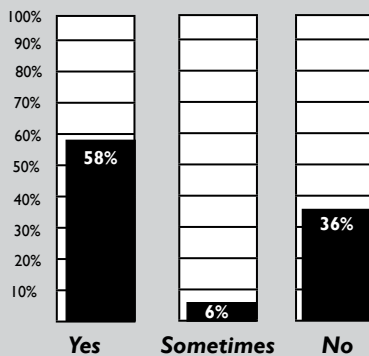
We would like to have a representative from every school take part in the Long Range Planning Committee. Feel free to attend the meetings or contact us to answer and questions or concerns you may have. **There is strength in numbers and we need to be united to make a difference.**

Contact Beth Storey at 773-2459 or Patty Chapman at 773-2457. We look forward to hearing from you.

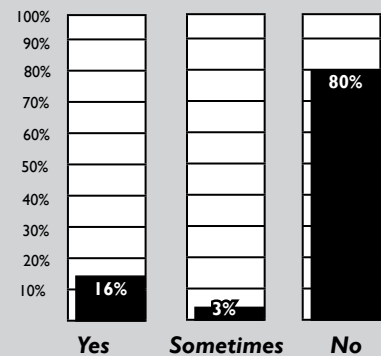
WEA Survey results indicate dissatisfaction with District support



1. I am generally made to feel valued and respected by my employer, the Wauwatosa School District.



2. I have confidence that my building administration creates a supportive and professional climate in which I may more easily foster student learning.



3. I have confidence that the district administration of Tosa School District creates an environment of support and professionalism for its employees that allows for effective education of its students.

This survey was taken in early 2008 in each building. Well over 90 percent of the 500-some teaching staff responded to this survey.

moving on to new districts: a comparison

Teacher A**Wauwatosa**

Position: Library Media Specialist

Years invested: 12

Tosa Salary Schedule: Step 8, MA+15

Tosa Salary: \$47,000

New School District

Position: Library Media Specialist

New Salary Schedule: Step 13, MA+15

New Salary: \$67,000

Health Insurance: Teachers pay 3% of premium with \$200 family deductible and no co-pays; \$8-\$20 drug payment

Benefits: I have a para-professional aide seven hours a day.

Reaction: In Tosa I was in the “black hole” of the salary schedule. I felt like I’d never get to the far end of the schedule. Now I’m almost there.

Unanticipated benefits:

Everyone I’ve dealt with greeted me warmly. They treated me as though they were lucky to have me. I felt valued. When people are treated well, they’re happy and productive.

Observation: This district has a rigorous hiring system. I feel I was lucky to get this position.

Teacher B**Wauwatosa**

Position: Science teacher

Years invested: 2

Tosa Salary Schedule: Step 2, MA

Tosa Salary: \$37,000

New School District

Position: Science Teacher

New Salary Schedule: Step 2 MA

New Salary: \$37,000

Health Insurance: I take the “in lieu of” option, which is \$6,000 a year.

Benefits: We get tuition assistance.

Reaction: Within 10 years I’ll be making \$6,000 more than I would if I had stayed in Tosa.

Unanticipated benefits: Every classroom in the school has a Smart Board and video projector. Every teacher gets his own laptop to use. When teachers have orientation or software training, they are

paid for it.

Observation: Working conditions are much better than in Tosa. The superintendent works well with the teachers. Teachers are given professional working hours; that is, they only have to be in school during actual class time, not during planning periods.

Teacher C**Wauwatosa**

Position: Library Media Specialist

Years invested: 18

Tosa Salary Schedule: Step 17, MA+30

Tosa Salary: \$60,000

New School District

Position: Library Media Specialist

New Salary: \$72,000

Health Insurance: Teachers pay 3% of premium with \$200 family deductible and no co-pays; \$8-\$20 drug payment

Benefits: I have a para-professional aide seven hours a day.

Reaction: Everyone in my

new district has been so friendly and welcoming. I felt wanted and valued immediately. It was such a pleasure to deal with the Human Resource Department. They didn’t exhibit an us versus-them attitude there

Unanticipated benefits: New teachers in the district are provided with two mentors. We must attend a series of classes with our mentors

to help us become better teachers and to familiarize ourselves with the district. We receive curriculum pay to attend these classes. They really invest in their people.

Observation: In Tosa so much energy goes into the constant fight to gain respect. It’s so mentally and physically draining, and I believe it does have an adverse effect on one’s ability to teach.

Teacher D**Wauwatosa**

Position: Social Studies Teacher

Years invested: 12

Tosa Salary Schedule: Step 8, MA+30

Tosa Salary: \$48,900

New School District

Position: Social Studies Teacher

New Salary: \$78,500

Health Insurance: I take the “in lieu of” option, which is \$5,000 a year.

Benefits: There’s lots of room for professional de-

velopment here in this new district.

Reaction: With two kids in day care, financial considerations motivated me to look in other districts. I wasn’t so much drawn to this new district as I was driven out of Tosa financially.

Unanticipated benefits: Students are great wherever you go.

Observation: I miss being in Tosa for many reasons, particularly the faculty. But I wasn’t being adequately compensated for the education I had. I see this as the start of a major bleed-out for Tosa.



Angie Miletich from Alverno Colleges works with Mary Davidson in her English classes at East High School. Miletich is a member of Student WEA.

Cooperating teachers urged to encourage their student teachers to join Student WEA

Help your practicum student or student teacher take his/her first step into his or her professional career...

Share with your future colleague the benefits of joining Student WEA for \$26 (state and national dues).

And encourage them to join!

Online membership sign-up at www.weac.org/Student-WEA.

Join online and get a free subscription to "Instructor" Magazine as a first time member.

Any student teacher can become a Student WEA member regardless of whether he or she has an organized Student WEA chapter at his or her college or university.

The student teacher with membership in Student WEA receives the benefits for the entire 08-09 school year, even though student teaching may take place during only a portion of the year.

For further information, contact Nancy Clark, WEAC Organizer/Consultant, at 1-800-362-8034 x 274.

Benefits

- Personal Liability Insurance (\$1,000,000) while student teaching in your classroom (the same that all WEA members have!)
- Online 'Mini-Resume' Service for finding a job
- Rebate off NEA dues as a first year teacher
- Access to Student WEA and WEAC Conferences, including WEAC Winter Academy
- NEA Teacher Toolkit Access (Free!)
- OnWEAC Savers Club Card for discounts nationwide
- Membership in your State-wide Professional Association

Did you join Student WEA last year?

If you joined Student WEA last year and are now a new hire here in Wauwatosa, you are entitled to a rebate on your NEA dues. Look for the rebate form in your new member handbook and follow the directions about sending it in.

If you have questions about how to find this form if you didn't get one, it will be posted soon on the WEA link of the West Suburban Council website.

It will also be on a CD that will be distributed soon to new teachers.

We're proud of...YOU!

We want to honor you and/or your colleagues. If you know of anyone's accomplishments, awards, etc., including your own, that we should know about, e-mail Linda Barrington at lbarring@wi.rr.com. The PRIDE would like to honor people in each issue.

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