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October Issue 2007

Washoe Education Association Monthly Newsletter

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Mark Your Calendar

Retirement Seminars

October 4th

October 11th

October 18th

November 1st

WEA Office - 4:15 p.m.

October 21st

Membership Committee

WEA Office

4:30 p.m.

October 26th

Nevada Day - No School

November 7th

Rep Council Meeting



Fall Is Here and Voting Is Near

Ken Buhrmann / WEA President

It is a privilege and an honor to be involved in our democratic process. Nevada is poised to make history. Yes, involvement in our democratic process in selecting a candidate for the highest office in the land is now a reality for voting citizens of this state. We in Nevada are the second primary caucus in the country. The eyes of the nation will be on us January 19. Not only does that focus the national spotlight on Nevada, but also gives those of us in education an opportunity to get our issues out and into the party's platform. These issues range from Reauthorization of No Child Left Behind to the Social Security Off-Set (GPO/WEP), school funding and school safety, just a few of the concerns for educators. All are issues that can now be heard and presented by teachers on a national level.

We have numerous candidates asking for our time and for meetings with members and Washoe Education Association leadership. All these candidates say the right things and we as educators enjoy

hearing it said. Becoming involved, speaking out at the state caucus and making sure our voices are heard when it comes to education, are even more important. This month during our October Representative Council meeting, we will take part in a Mock Caucus also known as a Mock-us. This exercise in local politics will be an educational experience in the workings of the caucus process and Nevada's primary.

As educators, this is our chance to make our voices heard, loud and clear. Become involved, enjoy the process. It is our right as citizens and our duty as educators to listen, speak out, and participate. Educators at this time can change attitudes and the direction of a political agenda just by being there at caucus and speaking out for education and educators. Become more involved and you might be surprised at your influence to make changes and influence opinions. You might find that you truly do enjoy politics and discover a whole new hobby.

Announcing A New Program to Save Money For WEA Members

Own your home in 8 to 10 years without going into further debt and without altering your monthly budget. Learn how to cancel out tens of thousands of dollars in interest on your mortgage. Own your home free and clear in a third the time. Contact Jim or Derek Kroshus at Estate Planning Services, 775-359-7712

Contract Corner... *Evaluations*

Elaine Lancaster/UniServ Director

It's that time of year to begin the evaluation process. WCSD Regulation 4117 has the complete details of the process. By now you have hopefully had the initial meeting with your principal and have discussed the domains for the year. Probationary teachers work on all four domains with the first evaluation due by December 1st, the second one on February 1st and the final one on April 1st. If your contract is not going to be renewed, the district must inform you by March 1st. Post probationary teachers are on a three year cycle, two years on a minor (one domain) and one year on a major (two domains). Prior to each formal observation, the teacher and administrator should meet to decide the goals of the lesson. A post conference must be held with written feedback for the teacher. Your final

evaluation should be presented to you face to face by your administrator with the opportunity to discuss the items and recommendations presented.

New to the evaluation process this year.....The 2007 Legislature passed a new law that is now part of NRS. 391. (our Professional Practices Act). Its major components include the time administrators must spend observing in classrooms and a new teacher performance standards form that every teacher-probationary or post probationary-will have as part of the process. Administrators shall personally observe the performance of the probationary teacher in the classroom for not less than a cumulative total of 60 minutes during each evaluation period, with at least one observation consisting of 45 consecutive minutes. For a post

probationary teacher, the administrator shall observe the performance of the teacher in the classroom for not less than a cumulative total of 60 minutes during each evaluation period with at least one observation consisting of 30 consecutive minutes.

Per the 2007 legislature the following items will be used in a separate form and every teacher will be evaluated in the five areas. If any are marked unsatisfactory or target for growth, the teacher and administrator will jointly agree on a plan for desired outcomes.

The five standards are:

1. Classroom management skills including handling of materials, transitions with little loss of instructional time appropriate response to student behavior and established culture for learning.

2. Teacher maintains written lesson plans with clearly defined structures and times

3. Lessons are designed and taught coherently, connecting all curriculum to the standards using logical sequence, materials, and resources

4. Teacher maintains a grade system (work log or grade book)

5. The teacher appropriately addresses the needs of all the pupils in the classroom including Spec. Ed, cultural and ethnic diversity, limited English proficient

Please contact the office if you have specific questions or concerns about your evaluation.

Special Education Corner

Ask the special education teacher

“What is Response to Intervention (RTI)”? RTI is a multi-step approach to providing services to struggling students. Teachers provide instruction and interventions to them at increasing levels of intensity. They also monitor the progress students make at each intervention level and use the assessment results to decide whether the students need additional instruction or intervention in general education or referral to special education.

RTI models have several components in common: RTI uses tiers of intervention for struggling students, relies on research based instruction and interventions, uses problem-solving to determine interventions for students, and monitors students regularly to determine if they are progressing as they should academically and/or behaviorally.

Many models are based on three or four tiers. Generally, in Tiers 1 and 2 general education teachers provide instruction and interventions. Special education teachers may help develop interventions and/or plan assessments for students receiving instruction and interventions in Tiers 1 and 2. They

may not provide instruction to students until Tier 3 or 4, when the student could be referred for special education. Some students may continue receiving a tier 3 or 4 support.

To determine a learning disability, educators use the information gathered through RTI about the student's performance. They likely also conduct a file review, examining the student's attendance, attention control, and other factors; observe the child in class; and interview the parents. They may also administer assessments that determine skill levels.

Implementing RTI is a substantial undertaking. Staff may need professional development in the RTI process as well as in research-based instruction and progress monitoring. To assist teachers, some schools provide training and manuals on acceptable interventions. In addition, schools may bring in outside support to help teachers learn and teach curriculum.

Teaming is another integral part of RTI implementation. Teams, which have different configurations and schedules, assess how students are doing and devise interventions.

Team members represent a range of expertise and may include the principal, counselor, special education teacher, general education grade level teacher(s), reading specialist, Title I specialist, psychologist, speech-language therapist, and others. The teams' meet regularly to share their concerns about students and problem solve.

From the Council for Exceptional Children. For more information on RTI visit www.cec.sped.org

Most Frequently Asked Questions On Retiree Insurance

Virginia Doran / Executive Director

Is there a possibility that all employees in Washoe County will be going to the state health insurance plan (PEBP)?

We met with representatives of all bargaining units and WCSD. The way in which the legislature reimburses the districts for the health insurance subsidy has now obligated the District to be responsible for the GASB (Governmental Accounting Standards Board) accounting for retirees. This would cost the District an additional \$25-27 Million. Since this is not feasible, there will be no movement to the state plan for all employees.

When did employees become eligible to join PEBP when they retired? And why is there a date for which future retirees cannot be eligible for the retirees' subsidy?

In 2003 the legislature passed a bill that allowed for any retiree from a governmental agency to join PEBP (Public Employee Benefit Program)

with a subsidy being provided. The governmental agency would then reimburse the state for the subsidy being provided. School districts were the only entities reimbursed through a different piece of legislation.

This past session the legislature placed an ending date in 11/08. Anyone retiring after that date would not be eligible for PEBP.

If an employee retires after 11/08, would he/she be able to continue with the WCSD Insurance?

Yes, the legislation did not change the fact that people could retire in Washoe and continue their insurance.

If an employee decides to retire now (before the 11/08 deadline) is the subsidy a guarantee for the remainder of the retiree's life?

There is no guarantee that this subsidy will continue at the current level. With the continued increase of insurance premiums nationally and the cost of the subsidy program, we believe that the legislature will

reduce this amount (maybe as soon as the 2009 legislative session).

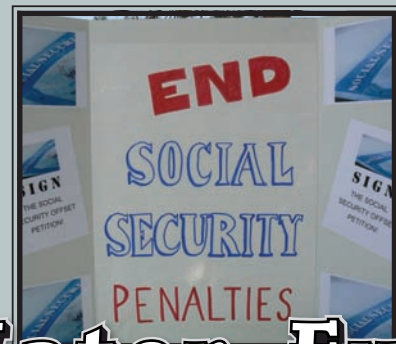
If a retiree becomes part of PEBP and wants to return to the WCSD's plan in the future, may they?

Yes, retirees may always come back to WCSD's insurance coverage.

Are there plans that may be bargained that will provide some savings mechanism for employees to pay for future insurance premiums?

We are currently working with the WCSD and all other bargaining units to investigate the best possible plan to provide employees with a mechanism to save for future medical costs once they retire by sheltering donations both from the WCSD and the employee. We are also looking at a process whereby an employee may be able to divert some of their sick leave to this account to be able to used in the future for medical premiums after retirement. We are still discussing this and will have more information in the future.

Over 3,600 Association members and their families enjoyed a day at Wild Waters on September 8th. This was the largest turnout we have experienced. Everyone is looking forward to next year.



... Wild Water Fun

Counselor's Connection

Helping Children Cope with Loss

Mary Hausauer/School Counselor

"When my mother died two years ago, it was so sudden. She was perfectly fine one day, and the next day she was being rushed to the hospital in an ambulance. She died of a heart attack that same afternoon. She was only 34," said "Sandy"- a senior and member of a local high school grief group. "What has helped me the most to heal is this group at my school and the fact that teachers have given me extra time on my homework when I am having a bad day. This makes a huge difference when I hit those milestones like her birthday or the anniversary of her death..."

Father Karry Crites, Saint Mary's chaplain and Bereavement Coordinator, has spent many hours helping school counselors in the district set up their own bereavement groups; he also has facilitated a high school grief group in Reno for the past ten years.

"Students who have experienced the death of a family member are very

fragile emotionally. In my experience, what works best is what I call 'gentle accountability.' We don't want to give them a blanket pass to not turn in homework or complete their school assignments. But at the same time, flexibility and extra time can really help those struggling students," said Crites.

"I want people to know that losing my father is something that hurts every day. I get a good grade on a test and I can't wait to show it to my dad. Then I remember," added "Tony," another student in the high school group. "Sometimes, I think teachers feel I should be over it by now, but I just have to heal at my own pace."

Crites is available to consult with area school personnel about the grief process or starting a group. "Groups provide a safe place away from all the turmoil where students can meet with others who share similar emotions," Crites stated. His e-mail address is frkarryelm@aol.com.

Another local resource is the Solace

Tree, a non-profit organization which provides support to children and teenagers coping with the loss of a loved one. (www.solacetreec.org)

The following are some suggestions foreducatorsfrom TheCompassionate Friends of Northern Nevada, another grief support organization, to help a student deal with his or her loss:

- Encourage students to express their grief in all its forms. Acknowledge the reality that grief hurts, but be careful not to try to rescue the child.

- Help students to realize that grief is a natural and normal reaction to loss.

- Help the student find a quiet place to go to whenever he or she needs to be alone. Almost anything can trigger tears.

- Try not to single out the grieving child for special privileges or compensations. He still needs to feel like he is a part of his peer group and should be expected to function accordingly.

- Understand there are no right or wrong ways to grieve. This process is influenced by the relationship with the deceased, the social support group of the student, the nature of the death, the status of "unfinished business" between the student and the person who died, and the emotional and developmental age of the student.

THE CHIHUAHUA FACTOR

By Bobee-Kay Clark

He was training for another marathon. Every day his sneakered feet padded rhythmically with calypsoed breath while golden haired dawn spilled through his hilled neighborhood. Running was life; each blister or callous a reminder he was alive and so he automatically arose each morning to be what he was made to be, a runner. Yesterday, and the yesterday before, he stopped at his door step and frowned at his watch. Same time, same pace. He had done everything he knew to do, yet improvement on his time eluded him.

Today dawn encouraged him back and the familiar beat of feet on pavement echoed its song through the corridors of his mind. Caught in his thoughts, he did not notice Her. The two pound teacup Chihuahua shook her Mardi Gras jingle-belled clown collar indignantly. Her barks bounced

up the sidewalk and pierced his reverie. He smirked and sidestepped. Her yaps morphed to snorting growls. Her eyes bulged. He blinked a surprise and returned to his slightly more sprightly pace. Challenged, the Chihuahua gave chase. He sprinted. She surpassed him. He leaped over the dog only to find She-Who-Must-Not-Be-Ignored attached to his left sock cuff.

He wriggled and ran so desperate to shake her, erstwhile south cuff-snarls threatened disaster. Over the top of a trash can, over the top of a wall, he dashed away, dashed away, dashed away all. With a grimace of pain he stretched lively and quick and he new any moment he'd throw out his hip. Fickle dawn silhouetted this guy and his two pound tormentor against hilltop sky. With the homestretch in sight, he reached deep inside and surprised found new strength-his

victory sunrise! Her grip released; he dashed past Her.

His legs decrescendoed to an easy stop. Hands on knees, breath huffing, slowing, then chuckling. A glance at his watch revealed a new record, a new day had dawned on this marathon tracker.

From the top of the hill the small dog watched and knew:

Those who can,

Do.

Those who can do more,

Teach.

The Chihuahua factor is the source of our greatest power and our worst press. Never apologize for being the being you were created to Be.

Nurse's Notes -

Tips to Ensure Youth Athletes are Prepared for Play

Sharon G. Freier/RN

Information from National School Nurses Association

Tips to Ensure Youth Athletes are Prepared for Play

With the start of fall sports now in full swing and children returning to school, the National Athletic Trainers' Association (NATA) has issued timely guidelines to ensure sports safety.

NATA recommends the following tips for parents, coaches, medical professionals and athletes:

1. Pre-participation Exam
2. Emergency Plan
3. Appropriate Safety Gear
4. Preconditioning and Training
5. Facility Safety Inspections
6. First Aid
7. Adult Supervision/Trained Sports Staff
8. Proper Hydration
9. Beat the Heat
10. Eat to Win
11. Proper Warm Up, Flexibility and Cool Down.

"Our primary goal is to prevent injury, and these recommendations will not only help to reduce onset, but ensure that proper plans are in place if medical care is needed," states Brian Robinson, MS, ATC, chair of NATA's Secondary School Athletic Trainers' Committee. For more information on these guidelines, please visit <http://www.nata.org/newsrelease/archives/000592.htm>.

Childhood Immunization Rates Remain At or Above Record Levels,

However, Adolescent Rates Fall Below Nation's Goals

The nation's childhood

immunization rates remain at or near record levels for routinely recommended vaccines, according to 2006 estimates released by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). This continues the trend of more children being protected against vaccine-preventable diseases each year.

According to the CDC's annual National Immunization Survey (NIS), the percentage of U.S. children 19 to 35 months of age who have received the recommended series of childhood vaccines was 77 percent in 2006, statistically similar to the 76.1 percent in 2005.

This year, for the first time, the National Immunization Survey included estimates of the percentage of 13 to 17 year-old children who had received recommended immunizations. The percentage of adolescents who had received recommended vaccines varied widely by both vaccine and age, with the nation's Healthy People 2010 goals for adolescents ages 13 to 15 years not being met for any of the vaccines. The Healthy People 2010 goals are for 90 percent coverage for adolescents 13 to 15 years of age. For more information, visit <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/default.htm>.

Time To Talk Campaign JOIN THE TALK – SIGN UP TODAY!

The Partnership for Drug Free America's Time To Talk campaign encourages parents to have regular conversations with kids about the risks of drugs and alcohol. By having regular conversations with children, they are up to 50% less likely to use. Visit TimeToTalk.org and get free, easy-to-use, research-based tools to help encourage parents to have

ongoing conversations with kids to keep them healthy and drug-free.

Please help the Partnership meet their goal of reaching 500,000 parents and concerned adults. Sign up today at <http://www.timetotalk.org/JoinTheTalk>. NASN and other organizations such as the Boys and Girls of America and the National PTA have joined as strategic partners.

Employees with WCSD Quilting for a Cause

Employees from a variety of departments have recently decided to come together to make quilts for our community and Quilt for a Cause!

There is a need for quilts both locally as well as nationally for servicemen and women, children living with cancer, teens in foster homes, homeless families and animal shelters to name a few...the list is LONG!

If you would be interested in supporting this new group we could use your help. Please consider donating fabric or quilting supplies that you may be retiring from your own closet. If you know of any WCSD employee with family member's currently serving our county overseas in the military, please let us know as well. Our ultimate goal is to assist and support our WCSD "family" members and students.

Please contact us with any ideas or thoughts about how we can help to support our community of WCSD educators.

We would appreciate your support. For more information please contact: Heather Banks at hbanks@washoe.k12.nv.us. Thank you for your help!



Welcome New Members



Kimberly Martinelli-Moss
 Donna Shultz-Winnemucca
 Leah Smeltzer-Risley
 Robert Stuart-North Valleys
 Allison Pistone-Reed
 Ann Clark-Incline HS
 Laura Hill-Donner Springs
 Kueihua Hayth-Donner Springs
 Timothy Taylor-Donner Springs
 Luis Hatfield-TMCC HS
 James Coleman-Clayton
 Vickie Peterson-Health Services
 Donna Chaney-Palmer
 Cindy Griffin-Silver Lake
 Kathleen Baucom-Wooster
 Sandra Jacobs-Dodson
 Michael Jennings-Incline HS
 Heidi Gabelman-Smithridge
 Andrea Johnston-Smithridge
 Elizabeth Parsons-Gomm
 Betsy Long-Spanish Springs ES
 Jacqueline Durham-Maxwell
 Morgan Barr-Mt. Rose
 Marcia Martinez Bateman-Damonte Ranch
 Heather Wagner-Spanish Springs ES
 Jeanette Dwyer-Melton
 Julie Bingham-Traner
 Kristie Parker-Sparks MS
 Diana Cox-Sparks MS
 Kathleen McDonald-Sun Valley
 Rachel Ellis-Desert Heights
 Kathy O'Sullivan-Brown
 Lucy Land-Brown
 Janet Sawyer-Reed
 Cindy Barnard-Reed
 Steven Lambert-Traner
 Joe Lamy-Hug
 Amber Martinez-Loder
 Nancy Gittelman-Loder
 Maureen Cotner-Dilworth
 Megan Valtierra-McQueen

Anna Lesselles-Risley
 Mei Hyett-Juniper
 Erin Vaughn-Sierra Vista
 Amber Mort-Whitehead
 Arika Marquez-Clayton
 Peter Suneson-Allen
 Flor Gutierrez-Spanish Springs HS
 Karin Hensel-Visually Impaired
 Heidi Frost-Desert Heights
 Carla Gonzales-O'Brien
 Mari Riggs-Donner Springs
 Miriam Korros-Silver Lake
 Laura West-Drake
 Catha LaGere-Natchez
 Linda Gonzales-Beck
 Renee Telling-Whitehead
 Amanda Cox-Hunsberger
 Yvette DePaepe-North Valleys
 Sara May-Donner Springs
 Christina Rhodes-North Valleys
 Teri Thomen-Greenbrae
 Deborah Torvinen-Duncan
 Kirsten Jeske-Juniper
 Alice Foster-Bennett
 Mary Hampton-Donner Springs
 Paul Girard-Lincoln Park
 Mathew Herald-Spanish Springs HS
 Lori Criss-Diedrichsen
 Gary Coyan-Reed
 Tamara McCollum-Stead
 Olivia Ulmer-Billinghurst
 Amanda Marsh-Boles-North Valleys
 Richard Flora-North Valleys
 Matthew Guthrie-Cold Springs
 Andrew Patrick-Sparks HS
 Christy Minkema-Lincoln Park
 Meggan Cranmer-Lemmon Valley
 Richard Carr-Sparks HS
 Katherine Champagne-Greenbrae
 Monica Roth-Traner
 Wendy Wolcott-Spanish Springs HS

Cynthia Camp-RTI
 Johnica Nunez-Maxwell
 Kimberly Wycoff-McQueen
 Elizabeth Delage-Hall
 Kara Lee-Hall
 Amie Newberry-Reed
 Leah Thompson-Palmer
 Melissa Roberts-Greenbrae/Whitehead
 Adrienne Tamori-Cold Springs
 Richard Mares-Corbett
 Lori Baumgartner-Mendive
 Tamar Cano-Cold Springs
 Larry Allison-O'Brien
 Amanda Todd-Smithridge



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WEA Today is published nine times per year to inform, educate and entertain the members of Washoe Education Association. We urge readers to write letters to the editor on matters of concern. Letters should be mailed to WEA Today Editor at 1890 Donald Street, Reno, NV, 89502. All letters must be signed and include phone number; however, anonymity will be granted if deemed necessary. We reserve the right to edit for length or libelous comments. It would be appreciated if letters were typed, but neatly handwritten copies are accepted.

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NEA MEMBER BENEFITS WEB SITE: neamb.com

Consumer resources, just a click away at neamb.com

Everything members need to know about NEA Member Benefits programs and services. The site includes consumer resources such as financial articles and educational videos, and a tools & tips section featuring useful financial calculators and tips on saving money. Members can also register to win Free monthly giveaways.

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