

PERSPECTIVE



Central Valley Education Association

April 2011

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WEA Representative Assembly 2011 - Tacoma

The WEA Representative Assembly (WEA RA) is the governing body of the WEA. It's annual meeting sets policy, makes resolutions and directs action items to be facilitated by the WEA Board of Directors and staff during the year.

This year the WEA RA is being held in Tacoma on May 12, 13, 14. For the last several years it has been held in Spokane, and will be again next year.

Your CVEA representatives to the WEA RA for this year are:

Vicki Arnold - North Pines
Dale Bouge - University High
DM Freed - Liberty Lake
Scott Knowles - Opportunity
Jim Osmuss - Adams
Martha Reese - South Pines
Cheryl Sampson - Nurse
Wally Watson - University High
Mary Jo Gilbert - Sunrise
Steve Lalonde - CVEA

With the political events across the nation resulting in clear attacks on public sector unions, this is likely to be a lively Rep Assembly. Add the challenges of this struggling economy and emotions and rhetoric will likely be very raw.

Your team of Delegates to the Representative Assembly is a rich continuum ranging from those brand new to this process through seasoned veterans. Since the delegates will be representing you, don't hesitate to make any concerns or positions on education issues known to them. You can communicate with them directly or send email to the CVEA office to be shared with them. They will be among over 1,000 other Washington Education Association Representatives involved in the Assembly who will be bringing their Association member's concerns and positions to the debate.



Contract Reopeners Start April 15

The District and CVEA negotiations teams are scheduled to meet on April 15 to address concerns that are mutually agreed upon, a process referred to as reopeners for mid-contract modification. We will be addressing the progress on MOUs (Memorandum of Understanding) that resulted from last year's bargaining. We should also be addressing additional issues that continue to be concerns from past contract efforts as well as new issues resulting from the massive budget cuts made to education funding.

Members of the Team of Twelve (the bargaining committee comprised of the CVEA Executive Board and six members) met on March 16 to determine the issues and process to move forward in reopeners.

There will be more information available as we move through the process, and when we reach a tentative agreement on language, it will come to our membership for a ratification vote.

Team of Twelve

- Vicki Arnold
- Shirley Brick
- June Cunningham
- Keith Hoekema
- Vicky Jensen
- Denise Kennedy
- Scott Knowles
- Steve Lalonde
- Monica Larson
- Martha Reese
- Cheryl Sampson
- Mary Sullivan

TPEP Mini-Pilot Progresses

The Teacher and Principal Evaluation Pilot is moving rapidly forward in Central Valley School District as the mini-pilot moves toward completion. This mini-pilot is designed to test the evaluation instruments designed by the TPEP committee. The data gathered will allow the committee to determine if any modifications need to be made before the full implementation of the year-long pilot next school year.

McRel will be doing the number crunching and assessment of the mini-pilot as well as the full pilot. They will help us to facilitate the implementation of these instruments as we move to satisfy the requirements of Senate Bill 6696.

State Budget Woes Come to Central Valley

The legislature moved from a scalpel, to an axe, and now to chainsaws and bulldozers in the area of finance. No agency or program has been spared the devastation of the all-cuts budgeting, but education, which the courts have ruled are underfunded, has little ability to accommodate more cuts.

Washington has fallen to 49th place in terms of class-size. In an article to run in the May PERSPECTIVE, Bill Gates is shown to oppose the concept that smaller class size is a factor in improving learning. As education professionals, we know otherwise.

The district has done a remarkable job of being proactive in dealing with the impact of this economy. We have not had the RIF's that so many districts across the state have had. Some of that can be attributed to our size as we absorb staffing cuts through attrition. But the next round of cuts will most assuredly force our district, too, to make more devastating adjustments to operations that will adversely affect our core function - educating students.

From the March 31 Inside Story:

"Anticipating further budget cuts for the 2011/12 school year, the School Board on Wednesday night adopted a resolution directing Superintendent Small "to develop and recommend a modified education program to resolve an approximate \$3.5 million budget-based net loss for the 2011-12 educational program year through reduction of expenses, **including but not limited to reduction in the workforce** and reduction of non-employee costs." Small advised Board members that the dollar amount included in the resolution is a realistic, high-end estimate that can be adjusted by the Board after the release of the Legislative budgets."

So clearly the budget woes of the State are going to be felt more sharply in Central Valley next year and beyond, than they have been. We will all need to do the best we can to adjust and continue to deliver quality education while trying to deal with our own increasing economic challenges.

Testing...

Testing...

1...2...3...

A...B...C...

One, two, three.

Test...Test...

Great for microphones but not so great for kids, *as the essence of their education.*

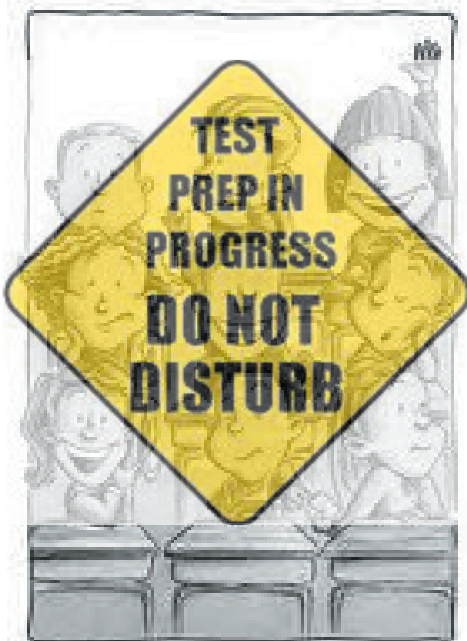
Check this out.

It is a little ditty about testing.

Click the link below or go to the url listed below the link;

Tom Chapin, Not on the Test

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bXwvmQcTmSQ&NR=1>



From: **The Children Must Play**

The New Republic online magazine has an article called “The Children Must Play” by Samuel E. Abrams, which suggests that we can learn some things from the Finns when it comes to education. In comparing the current U.S. approach to education, the article says that the Finnish educational system is based on a “balanced curriculum and professionalization” as opposed to testing for validation.

The article goes on to say that in the 2009 Program for international Student Assessment (PISA), the Finns scores were very high for the fourth consecutive time while the U.S. posted in the middle of the pack. The test is given every three years to 5,000 15-year-olds in nations around the globe, and covers reading, math, and science.

Abrams continues with the observation that while nations worldwide moved to standardized testing practices in the 1990’s, “the Finnish National Board of Education concluded that such tests would consume too much instructional time, cost too much to construct, proctor, and grade and generate undue stress.” Instead the Finns give exams to a statistically significant sampling of students to check on systemic progress and facilitate appropriate modifications. This trust in teachers and the curriculum they create has been so successful that in 1991 they closed the “inspectorate “ office of the National Board of Education. The article goes on to state;

“Teachers in Finland design their own courses, using a national curriculum as a guide, not a blueprint, and spend about 80 percent as much time leading classes as their U.S. counterparts do, so that they have sufficient opportunity to plan lessons and collaborate with colleagues.”

Finnish students do take standardized exams as high school seniors if they wish to go on university studies. The article says much more about the differences between the Finnish and U.S. educational systems.

This article is based on an article found on a website called “the New Republic.” To read that complete article, click the link or go to the url listed below the link;

The Children Must Play

<http://www.tnr.com/article/politics/82329/education-reform-Finland-US?id=sW4VSeW5JvwdjUmCzG2xjLsxMVeKtkhGpr3IHtSfzLCRyAT7vmhJf8sQiB4RfzG>

“If we have to test their butts off, There’ll be No Childs Behind Left”

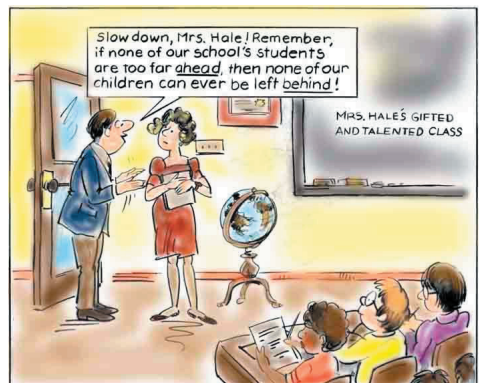
These are lyrics from a song written and performed by recording artist Lily Eskelson, who also happens to be the NEA Vice President. The Associationn at the State and National levels have long objected to high-stakes testing as costly and inappropriate to assess a comprehensive education.

Diane Ravitch who was one of the architects of the No Child Left Behind program of the Bush administration has done a complete reversal and now agrees that high-stakes testing is not doing what NCLB intended. In her book The Death and Life of the Great American School System, stated:

“Where once I had been hopeful, even enthusiastic, about the potential benefits of testing, accountability, choice, and markets, I now found myself experiencing profound skepticism about these same ideas. I was trying to sort through the evidence about what was working and what was not. I was trying to understand why I was increasingly skeptical about these reforms, reforms that I had supported enthusiastically. I was trying to see my way through the blinding assumptions of ideology and politics, including my own. I kept asking myself why I was losing confidence in these reforms. My answer: I have a right to change my mind. Fair enough. But why, I kept wondering, why had I changed my mind? What was the compelling evidence that prompted me to reevaluate the policies I had endorsed many times over the previous decade? Why did I now doubt ideas I once had advocated?”

The short answer is that my views changed as I saw how these ideas were working out in reality. ”

Somehow we have to hang on until the public comes to the same realization, or the whole movement collapses under the weight of it’s false assumptions.



When Did I Become the Enemy?

One day when I was in kindergarten, I brought my mother a letter from my teacher summoning her to school for a conference. None of my elder siblings had ever brought home such a document, so my mortified mother spent the entire week leading up to the conference interrogating me to learn what I had done to drive my teacher to the desperate length of resorting to such an extreme measure. I was incredulous, but I wracked my brain and confessed to every transgression I could possibly recall that would merit such a grave step on my teacher's part. That was almost fifty years ago, but clearly, I have not been paying enough attention again, because the other day I rolled out of bed to learn that I had become a major public enemy, and I am prepared to confess to you my actions that have led to my near-treasonous behavior and my well-deserved public scorn.

Let's see. Because teachers had greatly impacted my life, and because I felt I had a talent for it, I invested thousands of my hard-earned dollars to study education in college. In 1979 I was hired as a high school English teacher for a salary of about \$7900 a year. Those were lean times for districts, and I had to



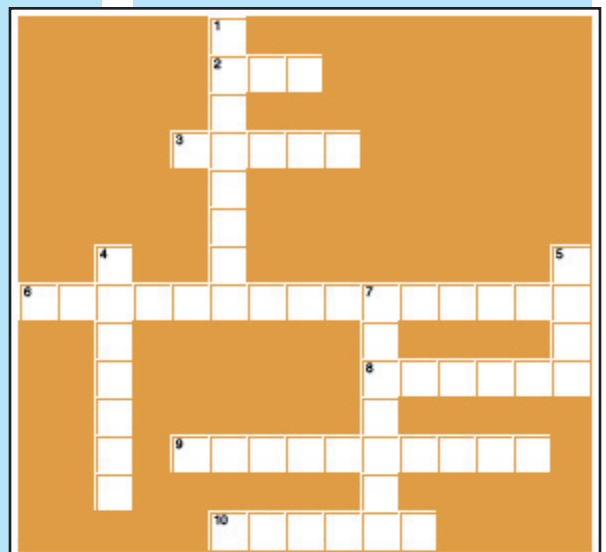
move to new districts three times before I was able to land a stable contract. During those early years of my career, I endeavored to teach my students to be better readers, writers, and thinkers. My students ranged from those bound for the very finest of universities to those with one foot in jail. I spent many hours most nights grading papers and planning lessons. I also spent thousands of dollars more studying for my master's degree at night and in summers. About 1987, I got my school counselor's degree, and first part-time and eventually full-time, I became a counselor. As a counselor, I have intervened with more suicidal kids than I can count any more. I have helped students with academic and career planning and have helped them solve problems with others on numerous levels. I have worked closely with hundreds of parents. In short, I am no different from most of my colleagues.

You're seeing right through this, aren't you? I have been holding back some essential information: facts that will damn me for the scoundrel that I am. Ok, there is nothing to do but square my shoulders and say it: my name is Larry, and I am a member of a . . . of a . . . UNION.

I may as well spill my guts. Every school I have worked at, I have joined the local, state, and national education association. I am ashamed to say it, but I carry a union card. I even have (God forgive me!) an NEA T-shirt.

The union goons may break my thumbs for this, but I'll tell you some of the

things my union does. It negotiates contracts with my school district (not politicians) that guarantee I won't be fired by a principal just because he is having a bad day. It guarantees me legal defense against false accusations from misguided students or parents. I have never needed these protections, but I am glad they are there. I wish that was the end of my confession, but it doesn't stop there. My union supports legislation and local initiatives that try to reduce class sizes, get better and more modern supplies and materials in the schools, and, yes, even to build new schools when old ones need to be replaced. Now that I shine a harsh and unyielding light upon my shameful actions, it is becoming clear why my fellow citizens are so disgusted with me.



Across

- CVEA office phone number (missing number spelled out): 926-020_
- Office manager for CVEA.
- url for CVEA's website: _____ .org
- Middle School Executive Board member.
- Elementary School Executive Board member.
- High School Executive Board member.

Down

- Current Secretary of CVEA.
- Current Vice President of CVEA.
- CVEA office address: 12202 E. _____
- Current President of CVEA.

C
V
E
A

Try as I might, I can't stop before I tell you the darkest, most disgusting truth of all about my union: when it negotiates on my behalf with my school district, it tries to get me more benefits and . . . money. It's true. Every teacher I know wants to be paid for their work, and wants insurance, and . . . likes the idea of a retirement pension. We like the pension idea so much that we pay hundreds of dollars a month into the system set up by our state's leaders in order to have a more comfortable retirement when we reach age 65 (Very few of us still in the profession are on the old 30-years-and-retire system). You know what? My union has never gone into negotiations and said, "You're paying us too much. Here, take some back." Nothing you can say will shame me more than my own words already have. The closest we have come to that is our paltry acceptance of not being paid the cost of living allowance afforded us by the voters of this state, receiving fewer paid days and netting less insurance money for three years running now because we know times are hard.

As you can see, my hands and those of my union brothers and sisters are filthy, and we've clearly used our muscle to strong-arm everything we have from the hard-working folk of this state and their elected leaders, never mind the fact that we are paid, on average, significantly less than other professionals with similar training.

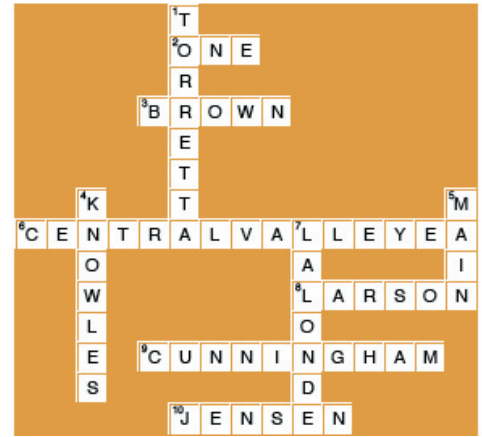
I admit to all of this, but there are some things I have never done: I've never made home loans to people I knew couldn't possibly repay them. I've never bundled those loans together and sold them as junk bonds to unwitting investors. I've never created and supported an unregulated international structure of stocks

and other investments that would eventually crash and throw millions of people out of work and shatter state and municipal budgets everywhere, because if I did, you and I both know what would happen: I'd be paid an enormous bonus on top of my already six or seven figure salary, and my employers would justify it by saying, "We can't afford to lose our best and brightest."

--Larry Bernbaum
Central Valley High

“In actions more fitting for comic book arch-villains, a new crop of state leaders have launched blistering attacks on working families disguised as budget and education reforms, and many have sought to strip workers' rights to have a voice through their union. Instead of dealing with the real problems at hand, such as looming deficits and high unemployment, these politicians are choosing to use public sector workers as scape-goats.”

-Dennis Van Roekel
NEA President



CALENDAR

- April 27, WEA-EW Mock RA, 5:30
- May 3, CVEA Exec. Bd. meeting, 4:00, CVEA office
- May 4, WEA-EW Rep Council meeting, 5:30
- May 10, SEAT, 3:45, LTC
- May 12, 13, 14, WEA Rep Assembly, Tacoma
- May 17, CVEA Bldg. Rep. meeting, 4:00, Cuppa Joe's



CVEA Executive Board

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228-4780

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