



May 18, 2020

Dear IEA Members,

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1. Educator of the Year: Donna Burns is our forty-second IEA Educator of the Year! In addition to being a full-time Occupational Therapist in ISD since 1995, Donna has served as IEA Vice President and Treasurer for the past two years and has been on the IEA Executive Board since 2009. Donna has also been an important member of our past four bargaining teams. Her attention to detail, her calm and sensible speaking style, and her unparalleled work ethic make Donna a tremendous asset to our District and Association. Her quiet, assertive, and respectful demeanor have earned her the respect of colleagues and administrators. She loves animals, especially cats, and has a terrific sense of humor. Please congratulate and thank Donna for her service to IEA and the students of the Issaquah School District.

2. Financial Planning Resources: Your association membership gives you access to certified financial planners who specialize in helping educators. You can arrange no-cost appointments to ask questions about investing in your retirement, educator discounts, and more. Three of the planners who work with many IEA members are listed here.

AXA Justin Cykler: Justin.Cykler@axa-advisors.com (206) 956-6285

OPAL Chris Wheeler chris@opalws.com (425) 505-0400

VALIC (the NEA-endorsed retirement company): Rena Nofsinger Rena.Nofsinger@aig.com (206) 254-1000

In light of school closures, and the cancellation of the 2020 WEA Retired Seminars, Larry Steele and Rena Nofsinger will be hosting 1.5 hour webex workshops covering topics that are germane to retirement preparedness on Wednesday, May 20th from 4:00-5:30 PM and on Saturday, May 30th from 10:00-11:30 AM. The seminar will help you understand your Washington State pension plan, identify your retirement goals, take advantage of your funding sources and account



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for the effects of taxes and inflation in retirement. If you would like to know how all the parts and pieces of successful retirement planning fit together, including understanding your DRS pension plan, Social Security, and health care options, sign up for this free member benefit workshop designed to address these and other important questions wherever you are in your career. Click [HERE to register](#). Key topics include: TRS and SERS Plan 2 and Plan 3; 403(b) and 457(b); Social Security; Retirement Health Care Options (Medicare, COBRA, PEBB, VEBA); Resources such as retirement income strategies, planning checklists, and contact numbers. If you have questions contact Rena Nofsinger at 206-430-2714 or Rena.nofisinger@aig.com

3. Bargaining Update We are working with the district on the following issues and will continue to update you as we make progress:

- **Closing out the school year, including arranging for students and staff to pick up materials and belongings.** Initial plans in some buildings have been placed on hold because central admin and IEA will work to be sure this is done in a way that is **safe** and **consistent** with Public Health Guidelines and the Governor's Stay at Home order.
- **Special education** (CLPs, compensatory services, ESY)
- **Clarifications related to grading and evaluation**
- **Room moves and building moves** for next school year (see above about plans for this to be done in a safe way consistent with state guidelines and orders)
- **Summer school**
- **Reopening schools (including our August PD and pre-service days)** – The Governor has convened stakeholder groups that will work over the next weeks to review and make recommendations to the Governor how and when schools can reopen safely. WEA will be participating in this work at the state level. Once we have guidance from the Governor and OSPI, IEA will work with the district ahead of implementation on how schools will reopen in our district. Please click [here](#) to see OSPI's plan as of now.

Ongoing Issues that were delayed by the March 12th closure—the 2021-2022 school calendar; issues related to the 7 period HS schedules; changes to Title/LAP; and Wa-Kids Stipend.

Please know your bargaining team has devoted many hours to working with the District. The members of the team include Gary Arthur (IEA President); Derona Burkholder (Sunny Hills and IEA President-elect); Donna Burns (Grand Ridge/IVE/Newcastle); Katie Carey (Cougar Ridge); Lisa Dagg (Sunset); Josh Moore (Tech TOSA); Ben Reed (Gibson Ek); Carolyn Santos (Pine Lake); and Jamie Scordino (Skyline), led by our WEA UniServ Representative, Kathleen Heiman.

Bargaining about our working conditions during the closure is ongoing and we will update you as we reach agreements.



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4. Grading We have worked with the ISD to clarify and, in some cases, modify, closure-related grading policies they released during the past few weeks. Many hours of conversation about the implementation have occurred, with some still to occur as we work together to monitor and adjust. A number of IEA reps participated in these conversations with the District, including Anthony Jackson (Issaquah Middle); Donna Burns (Grand Ridge, IVE, Newcastle) ; Carolyn Santos (Pine Lake); Courtney Teddy (Clark); Heather Weider (Pacific Cascade); Camille Wright (Maywood). A meeting to discuss high school grading is occurring this week---our representatives are Donna Abbey (Liberty); Kristie Bennett (Skyline); Emily Combellick (Issaquah); Greg Harrington (Issaquah); Joan King (Liberty); and Alex Sedlacek (Skyline).

5. VEBA stands for Voluntary Employees' Beneficiary Association. It refers to a program that allows retirees to put unused sick leave into an account that can be used for post-employment health care costs, including premiums and copays. There are also investment options within VEBA that many people elect to participate in. When a district goes with VEBA, all retiring members have to use the program---one cannot opt out. This is a great value for most people: when a school district has a VEBA plan, each day of unused sick leave a retiree contributes is worth a full day of pay, whereas in a district without a VEBA plan a retiree can only get one-fourth of the value of his or her unused sick leave. ISD and IEA have had a Memorandum of Understanding about VEBA for many years, and this agreement is renewed annually. Since it only applies directly to those employees who are eligible to retire, we will send a ballot ONLY to those members of our bargaining unit who have at least 15 years of service credit in TRS plan 2 or 10 years of credit in plan 3. This ballot will be forthcoming in the next couple of weeks along with an explanation of VEBA. State law (WAC 392-136-020) allows us to keep ¼ of the value of our un-used sick leave up to 180 days (1,260 hours) but membership in VEBA permits qualifying retirees to use all their unused sick/emergency leave without paying tax on that money. There is some information about the program here: <https://www.veba.org/about>

6. Zoom & Google Call As you will recall, IEA had significant concerns about the safety of our members' use of Zoom accounts that weren't districted-supported or licensed. By now you should have received information about the ISD-licensed version of Zoom available to you. If you choose to use Zoom, we recommend you use the version you acquire through ISD, which the District says is compliant with FERPA and COPPA. You can find those instructions by visiting Staff Hub → Departments → Educational Technology → Remote Learning and then scrolling all the way to the bottom where it says "setting up Zoom for safe and secure learning." Remember, however, that our MOU does not require any IEA member to hold live or recorded sessions with students.

Ideally, phone calls can be initiated by your building administrators from a District phone line, but that may be very difficult and impractical in some circumstances. If you must make calls from your personal phone, we do not recommend the *67 method (which shows up on the recipient's phone as "Unknown Caller") because your phone itself could be subject to a public records request. As of this writing, we believe Google Call is a safer option since the call log (time, number, duration of call) would be stored on your google account instead of on your physical phone.



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7. WEA Certification Trainings: These popular trainings have expanded our participant capacity. WEA certification trainings are open to WEA members only and provide free clock hours. We have six offerings. For more information, please email Charlotte Cole at CCole@washingtonea.org.

- Teacher Certification 101 (3 hours)
- Educational Staff Associate (ESA) Certification 101 (3 hours)
- National Board Information Session (2 hours)
- Professional Growth Plan 1 (3 hours)
- Professional Growth Plan 2 (2 hours)

8. Grant Opportunity Issaquah's chapter of Alpha Delta Kappa. ADK is comprised of mostly retired and a few active Issaquah teachers. For decades we gave two to three \$1000 scholarships a year to high school seniors in our district with preference to those going into the field of education. They've created a grant to help ISD educators pay for continuing education. Any IEA member may apply, as can any paraprofessionals who are working on getting a teaching certificate. This grant is very easy to complete and funds can cover registration fees and supplies up to \$500 for classes/workshops/conferences in progress or planning to enroll in.

[Cover letter](#)

[Grant Application](#)

9. Salary Schedule for 2020-2021 We are completing year 2 of a 4 year collective bargaining agreement. In the coming year (2020-2021) we negotiated a 4% raise on base salary, which includes the Implicit Price Deflator (IPD) of about 1.6%. You may find the salary schedule [here](#).

10. Personal Leave Cash-out If you have at least five days of personal leave, you are eligible to cash-out or some or all of them. We may keep a maximum of ten personal leave days in our personal leave balances, and at the beginning of each school year a full-time staff member will be awarded two days. If you have nine days in your personal leave balance, you should submit [this form](#) to payroll no later than June 30th so you don't lose one.

11. Paid Administrative Leave related to COVID 19 prior to the closure If you used personal or illness/emergency leave between March 6-13th because of COVID-19, you might be eligible to have some of your leave restored [after the closure](#). Under the current Memorandum of Understanding between IEA and the District, eligible staff include those who fell into these categories:

- They themselves tested positive or lived with someone who tested positive for COVID-19;
- A medical professional or agency advised them to self-quarantine;
- They were symptomatic and sought medical advice and weren't able to participate in work activities;



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- They or someone they lived with could be categorized as “high risk” (defined as over 60 years old, a weakened immune system, pregnant, or with an underlying health condition such as heart or lung disease or diabetes).

12. Colleagues in need of leave-sharing donations

The following colleagues are in need of leave sharing donations. Alice Badgley (Grand Ridge); Antoinette Fox (Issaquah High); Barbara Cowgill (Sunny Hills); Bree Chang (Maywood); Jana Dalpez (Maywood/Liberty); and Jenn Cucinelli (Skyline).

[Click here](#) to access the form to donate.

Sincerely,

Gary Arthur, IEA President

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425-505-3998/cell