

WEA PAC
Your Voice – Your Vote

Kevin Parker

*State Representative
6th District*

WEA-PAC 2010 Legislative Candidate Questionnaire

Washington Education Association members advocate for our students and the education profession. We have three legislative priorities:

- Education funding, including educator compensation
- Commonsense education reform and accountability
- Protecting workers' rights to organize and bargain collectively

Please indicate whether you support or oppose the following WEA positions, and explain why.

Education Funding, including educator compensation

Washington Education Association members believe the State of Washington must fulfill its paramount duty to amply fund our public schools.

The 2009 Legislature passed SHB 2363, which suspended the annual cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs) for education employees for two years. The COLAs were mandated by voter-approved Initiative 732. SHB 2363 requires the Legislature to reinstate educators' annual COLA in the 2011-12 school year AND incrementally restore the COLA percentage educators lost during the two-year suspension. After four years, educator salaries will be what they would have been without the suspension.

WEA supports current law (SHB 2363), which reinstates the annual COLA for educators in the 2011-12 school year and incrementally restores the lost COLA percentage over four years.

Do you support or oppose WEA's position? Support Yes x Oppose

Please explain your position:

I generally support initiatives that are passed by the citizens of Washington. I am in support of incrementally restoring the lost COLA over time. The challenge will come in restoring the lost COLA's for educators. No question that I support COLA, but funding will dictate this issue. Our school districts at this juncture cannot support the COLA's as it would potentially crush their budgets, but as the economy recovers, and as we as a state prioritize funding, we will have the ability to restore the COLA's.

WEA supports a minimum starting salary of \$45,000 for teachers and other certificated education employees. We also believe education support professionals deserve at least a living wage as starting pay, and we support salary increases that exceed the cost of living for higher education faculty and staff.

Do you support or oppose WEA's position? Support Yes x Oppose

Please explain your position:

In general, I do support the minimum \$45,000 salary for educators. We do have a large discrepancy between the salary levels of beginning educators and I think this will help level that off. Also, studies have shown this will lead to a higher retention rate among teachers which creates a better school environment for both school administrators and students.

The 2009 Legislature passed ESHB 2261, which sets out to "enhance the current salary allocation model" through deliberation and input from "teachers, administrators and classified employees. WEA members oppose tying teacher pay, in whole or in part, to student achievement or test scores.

Do you support or oppose WEA's position? Support Yes Oppose

Please explain your position:

I voted in favor of ESHB 2261 back in 2009. Many, many factors go into how well a child does on a test including socio-economic status, parental involvement, disabilities, teacher's effectiveness, etc. Therefore, I do not believe teacher compensation should be tied "in whole" to student achievement or test scores. However, I do think it can play a small role in determining pay, a smaller piece in a larger puzzle.

WEA believes any alternative compensation system must be subject to local collective bargaining, fully funded, available to all and based on objective criteria.

Do you support or oppose WEA's position? Support Yes Oppose

Please explain your position:

Currently collective bargaining is relegated to work in higher ed and not pay. When an organization and citizens are in agreement, collective bargaining can be a useful too. I also think we should explore regional salary structures as a way to address regional cost of living.

WEA opposes differentiated pay based on the subject taught.

Do you support or oppose WEA's position? Support Yes Oppose

Please explain your position:

Its too important not to investigate it is complex and the legislature doesn't want to stub their toe on this issue. It needs to be explored and will make my assessment with input when that times surfaces. This is important to the math and science positions that are hard to fill.

WEA supports the current practice of providing salary bonuses and other support for teachers who achieve certification by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

Do you support or oppose WEA's position? Support Yes Oppose

Please explain your position:

I am in support of paying teachers more who gain more knowledge and learn new skills and techniques in teaching our kids. We should compensate those who go the extra mile for our students. I was pleased to see this funding restored in the final budget.

Washington educators currently are required to work until they reach age 65 to qualify for their normal retirement pension, regardless of the number of years they serve. Some educators must work more than 40 years before earning their normal pension. WEA

supports legislation that allows educators to retire with their full normal pension based on the number of years they work rather than requiring them to reach an arbitrary age of eligibility.

In principle yes. In application, it becomes difficult with a pension system that is eight billion dollars in the negative. When the legislature confronts the pension shortfall, this should be included in that conversation.

Do you support or oppose WEA's position? Support__ Oppose__

Please explain your position:

The 2009 Legislature passed ESHB 2261, which changes the definition of basic education and makes other changes to the K-12 school system. WEA members called ESHB 2261 a "false promise" because it ignored the current underfunding of basic education and did not include new funding. WEA members believe the state Legislature should keep its promise and fully fund the programs called for by this bill, which is estimated to cost an additional \$3 billion annually.

Do you support or oppose WEA's position? Support_ Yes__ Oppose__

Please explain your position:

I voted in favor of this bill and SHB 2776 in 2010 and do intend to work to see Washington Constitutionally fund education. I was happy to co-sponsor legislation which would make education the number one funding priority in the state.

The 2010 Legislature passed SHB 2776, which promises to reduce the average K-3 class size to no more than 17 students per teacher by the 2017-18 school year. Washington currently has some of the nation's largest average class sizes, and the Legislature recently eliminated Initiative 728 class-size-reduction funding. WEA believes the Legislature must restore funding for Initiative 728 and provide the additional state funding to reduce class sizes as promised by SHB 2776.

Do you support or oppose WEA's position? Support_ Yes_x_ Oppose__

Please explain your position:

I voted in favor of SHB 2776 and will work to see this fulfilled and supported sufficiently according to the State Constitution. I do believe, as studies have shown, smaller class sizes in K-3 do have an impact of student success over time.