

Tracey Eide

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.

There is little that I believe is more important than having a good education. An education can open doors and change the course of a life more than anything else. That being said, I am strongly in favor of not just adequately funding public education, but comfortably funding education. I do feel that the State of Washington has a paramount duty to amply fund our public schools and will continue to vote in support of our schools and, through them, the children of this state.

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? I support.

Please explain your position:

My oldest and dearest two friends are public school teachers. Additionally, my brother-in-law and sister-in-law are both public school teachers. I understand very well the difficulties faced by the teachers of this state as our teachers are grossly underpaid. This is especially true when one considers the financial concerns faced by all Washingtonians during these difficult economic times, which compounds the problem of teacher underpayment. My stomach churns each time we delay I-732. The initiative was not passed with a funding mechanism. That is no excuse for the legislature - we must find a way to make I-732 a reality. Next session I fully expect I will not vote to suspend and instead insist we fund I-732.

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? I support.

Please explain your position:

Attracting and retaining qualified and caring teachers and support staff in Washington's public schools requires treating them as the professionals they are and paying them a professional wage. Beginning pay for teachers must be comparable to that for other college graduates who enter fields requiring similar training and responsibilities. Currently, new teachers earn less than other professionals, and the longer they teach, the larger the salary gap becomes. This is an unacceptable reality.

We need these higher education faculty and staff professionals in this time of large unemployment and re-training. This cannot be done unless we hire and can retain qualified teachers, professors, instructors and staff. By supporting a minimum starting salary, we can better hire and retain these valuable professionals.

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? I support.

Please explain your position:

Tying teacher salaries to test scores? That's ridiculous. I believe tests (especially standardized ones) are imperfect measures of student performance and even worse measures of teacher performance. Such pay plans pressure educators to teach to the test and they often encourage teachers to focus on students who score just below a state's mandated proficiency level at the expense of other students who may be even further behind. Another unintended consequence of pay for test scores is that teachers may see students not as children wanting and needing help in learning, but as potential barriers to monetary rewards.

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? I support.

Please explain your position:

An alternative compensation system that is to work well must be acceptable to those implementing it and to those employed under it. If any of the parties involved do not accept the compensation system, then it is definitely doomed to fail. I feel that the people affected by any changes in this area should be able to have their voices heard and considered on the matter. I am strongly in favor of the right to organize and negotiate and feel that this issue falls within that right. Of course, the danger in any local alternative compensation package is to further exacerbate the disparity of education outcomes we see existing now largely due to unequal funding between school districts.

**WEA opposes differentiated pay based on the subject taught.
Do you support or oppose WEA's position? I support.**

Please explain your position:

Differentiated pay is thought by some a way to attract teachers to instruct in hard-to-fill subject areas such as math, science and special education. One problem with this idea is (that) the extra money might attract teachers not qualified to teach these subjects with a resulting adverse impact on students. Another, (is that) it could lead to disparate impacts on subjects in general as far as the quality of teachers or teaching attracted to these different subjects. Further, if a program such as this were implemented, it could then become less attractive to fill the positions that currently teach those subjects that are easier to fill. Because of these and more potential problems I cannot support differentiated pay based on subject taught.

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? I support.

Please explain your position:

I was proud to have voted for HB 2262 during the 2007 session that provided a bonus of \$5,000 each year for teachers who maintained the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. I was even more proud to be present as my dearest friend received an award for obtaining certification by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. It is appropriate for those teachers that go above and beyond and strive to increase their skills by obtaining these certifications to receive salary bonuses and other support. It only makes sense – those who make the time and work investment into their teaching are an added benefit to the education system and the state and should thus be rewarded for that.

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.

Do you support or oppose WEA's position? I support.

Please explain your position:

Allowing educators to retire with their full pension based on the number of years worked instead of requiring them to reach an arbitrary age is a common sense policy.

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? I support.

Please explain your position:

I will keep the promise to better fund education and will continue to work toward funding education and supporting our schools and children. Unfortunately, the current budget situation has made adequately funding anything in this state an incredibly difficult, if not impossible, task.

The Legislature has been forced to deal with the budget effects of the greatest economic crisis since the Great Depression and the largest revenue shortfall in state history. A recession-weary economy has produced a multiyear budget challenge for this Legislature that is simply unmatched in our lifetimes. After closing a gap of more than \$9 billion without a tax increase in 2009, the Legislature faced a \$2.8 billion hole in 2010. In the past 2 years the State has lost about 1/3 of its budget.

I voted for politically unpopular choices last session. The 30th District is a "swing district". I voted to suspend I-960 and raise taxes because I understand these revenues will fund desperately needed education services.

One reason I voted to suspend I-960 was to be able to close over \$98 billion in combined tax loopholes and credits. For example, we closed some tax loopholes and credits on out of state businesses helping level the playing field for in-state businesses. I also voted for I-960 to shift the tax burden from those least able to pay (low-income people and families) to those who can pay (wealthy corporations).

Despite rhetoric of opponents, government has a vital role in our state. Government provides services that the private sector can't or won't provide. Public schools and teachers and school employees, law enforcement, prisons, health care, transportation, services to the poor, unemployment benefits... When our economy plummeted, the need for government services increased. I will not turn my back on our public schools or employees, working families, the

poor, the environment, or our health care systems. To maintain the critical infrastructure provided by government is another reason I voted to suspend I-960 and to increase taxes, which would help to keep our promise and fund education.

I will seek to close more loopholes next session. Without additional votes in the Senate these moves are most difficult. I had proposed no tax increase, some cuts, and an across the boards 5% reduction in ALL tax loopholes. I could not achieve the necessary votes for passage. I am hopeful next year will bring further study and restructuring of tax exemptions in order to ensure adequate funding of vital services in our state – most importantly, education.

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? I support.

Please explain your position:

Class sizes have been shown to have a direct effect on student performance and learning. The smaller the class size, the more one-on-one time a student will receive, the better the student will do. I am a firm advocate of small class sizes and will continue to work hard to make sure that we meet our goals in reducing class sizes to ensure a better learning environment for our children.

However, as usual, the primary enemy of reducing class sizes has been due to a lack of funding. This two-year budget cycle has been the worst since the Great Depression. Given that we lost about 1/3 of our budget here's what I supported and what the Legislature enacted in the 2010 session:

- Made no cuts to basic education and preserves 54,658 teachers,
- Preserved critical preschool programs for children under three,
- Protected Working Connections childcare for 37,000 families,
- Fully funded all-day kindergarten,
- Maintained the Apple Health for Kids program serving 486,000 children,
- Preserves levy equalization funding for rural school districts,
- Secure state financial aid for 57,000 young adults,
- Provide retraining in high-demand fields for an additional 3,800 workers

This budget leaves \$484 million in reserve, a responsible sum to help the state weather any additional economic aftershocks during the remainder of the two-year budget cycle and get a jump on tackling future budget challenges.

I voted for politically unpopular choices last session in order to try to support the services that this state provides that are so vital to our citizens. I voted to suspend I-960 and raise taxes because I understand these revenues will help fund our education system. Initiatives to over-turn

the Legislature's decision to suspend I-960 and raise taxes are likely to be on November's ballot. The first step to increase education funding is to make sure these Initiatives are defeated.

In addition to the above, I have also previously worked to ensure funding for education and in support of public education in general. I am very proud to have prime-sponsored the Simple Majority every year I've been in office until it became part of our State Constitution in 2007. It took me over a decade with opponents fighting it tooth and nail. Here's the difference simple majority made in the just February 2010 elections:

I welcome the current lawsuits filed to force full funding of education. We simply do not have the votes in both Houses to agree on definitions and stable funding. I am hopeful our current studies prompted by the threat of court action, will resolve this issue. I am an alternate on the Quality Education Council during this interim working on both definitions and funding.

Commonsense Education Reform and Accountability

In the 2010 legislative session, WEA helped draft and pass SB 6696, a research-based approach to improving student achievement. This legislation was forged between the Governor, the Legislature and education stakeholders, and it represents a major step forward in reforming teacher evaluation, assistance to struggling schools and teacher certification. SB 6696 establishes statewide criteria for teacher evaluations and allows local school districts and education associations to develop their own local evaluation systems. The legislation was tailored to the needs and conditions of Washington State and will allow our state to compete for federal Race to the Top funding. WEA supports SB 6696 as passed by the Legislature in 2010 and opposes further changes to the law.

Do you support or oppose WEA's position? I support. I voted for it.

Please explain your position:

Schools across the state are making heart-wrenching decisions with regard to district budgets, thus it is vital for Washington to enter the RTTT competition. The Race to the Top competitive grant provides a great opportunity for Washington State. I believe that the federal administration will recognize the work that we have done in the past and will recognize the initiatives in this legislation, which builds on EHSB 2261. Additionally, local evaluation systems could be very beneficial to school districts and teachers alike.

WEA opposes linking teacher evaluations to student test scores.

Do you support or oppose WEA's position? I support.

Please explain your position:

Tying teacher pay or their evaluations to student test scores is like paying a doctor based on how well their patient recovers. Every student is different and learns differently. If we were to rate

teachers by their students' test scores, we would not get even close to an accurate gage of the teaching ability of the teacher, only a picture of how well the students can take a test. I support the WEA's position on this issue.

ESHB 2261 established the Quality Education Council (QEC) and individual workgroups on issues such as educator compensation. WEA believes the QEC and related workgroups should solicit the professional input and judgment of public education employees. Any final recommendations should be based on sound research and the expertise of Washington educators.

Do you support or oppose WEA's position? I support.

Please explain your position:

I am very proud to have been selected as an Alternate to the Quality Education Council. Any decisions made on educator compensation must be based on research and also input by those affected, in this case Washington public educators. This appears to be in full agreement with WEA's position.

WEA opposes linking the High School Proficiency Exam (HSPE) to student graduation. (Passing the HSPE is currently a graduation requirement.)

Do you support or oppose WEA's position? I support.

Please explain your position:

Students in Washington now take the new High School Proficiency Exam (HSPE) that serves as the state's assessment for graduation. I oppose any efforts to use a single indicator for making decisions about individual student opportunities such as grade promotion, high school graduation, or entrance into specific educational programs. I support multiple measures of student achievement and for graduation.

Protecting Workers' Rights

WEA strongly supports the right of public education employees to organize, bargain collectively and engage in the political and legislative processes. WEA believes commonsense education reform can be developed effectively and collaboratively at the local level through the collective bargaining process. WEA supports legal protections against discrimination or intimidation for workers who exercise their right to organize. WEA supports workers' rights to due process.

Do you support or oppose WEA's position? I support.

Please explain your position:

Due process is a right granted under the 5th and 14th Amendments to the US Constitution to procedural and substantive fairness in situations in which the government would deprive the

person of life, liberty or property. I fully support our Constitution and WEA workers' right to due process and their right to organize.

WEA supports the right of public school employees to engage in the political process, both individually and collectively.

Do you support or oppose WEA's position? I support.

Please explain your position:

I am always pleased to meet with public school employees in my legislative district or in Olympia; during the interim period or during the legislative session. My door has always been open and will always be open to all teachers and all school employees. Regardless of their position on any particular issue teachers have the same right as any other person to be involved in the political system. In fact, I think they should be more involved than they have been in the past.

WEA supports giving community and technical college faculty the right to bargain salaries at the local level, a right enjoyed by all other education union members in the state.

Do you support or oppose WEA's position? I support.

Please explain your position:

Community and technical college faculty should have the same rights and privileges as those enjoyed by all other education union members (indeed any worker) in the state.

Education Experience

Who was the most influential teacher you had in school and why?

Mr. Cosgrove, my high school civics teacher, was the most influential teacher I had in school. He taught me the importance of exercising my right to vote and be involved in the process and make a difference. We were the first group of graduates that were able to vote at the age of 18 at that time, so his teachings on the subject were extremely important, especially to me. I suppose if he hadn't been so adamant about it that I may have turned out a much different person!

Campaign Plans

Please describe your campaign plan for fundraising and doorbelling.

I will launch a strong and effective doorbelling campaign with the help of volunteers and plan to knock on every door in the district. This will be my 5th legislative campaign and the fifth time I will door bell my district. I anticipate raising \$200,000 and have about \$70,000 cash in the bank.

Please list endorsements by noteworthy elected officials.

Since it is so early in the campaign process, I have not received any endorsements, save the endorsement of the Women's National Political Caucus. Since June is rapidly approaching, I expect things to speed up and for more endorsements to be made soon.

Tell us about your plan for getting your message out to voters.

I will doorbell; put up yard signs; send direct mail; launch a website; message through television, radio and the Internet; participate in community events. I expect to have a small army of volunteers to help.

Name: Senator Tracey J. Eide

Office Sought: Seeking reelection as 30th Legislative District Senator

Campaign Address:

1025 South 320th , Suite 205

Federal Way, WA 98003

Telephone Number: (253) 941-7574

E-mail address: re-elect-eide@hotmail.com

Campaign Website: Not yet established