

Marion County Education Association

Newsletter January 2005

2005 Legislative Session to Begin

The 2005 Legislative Session begins on February 9, 2005, with Governor Manchin's State of the State address. The entire legislative agenda as well as specific position papers are available on WVEA's Website at www.wvea.org in the "Legislative Action Center" section. Members can keep informed during the session by accessing *Lobbyline* and the *Legislative Updates* online. *Lobbyline* provides daily updates that are usually posted by 7:00 p.m. Once the session is underway, the WVEA mails *Legislative Updates* to all Association Representatives. These mailings are usually sent each Friday to be posted or copied for all employees in the building.

WVEA, with the help of NEA, has also developed a powerful way for you to instantly communicate with your legislators during the session. Simply enroll for "e-alerts" and WVEA will send you e-mail notification when action is needed during the legislative session. To enroll, go to the "Legislative Action Center" page on the WVEA Website and click on the words "Click Here" in the gold box under the picture of the Capitol.

MCEA Address Board of Ed for Salary Support

Linda Bond, MCEA President presented a petition to the members of the Board of Education requesting their support for the WVEA plan to obtain 15% salary increase during the next 5 years. With this plan the average increase in salary for professional educators would be \$1,540 the first year.

Dr. Phares said he supported the plan and recognized the hard work and dedication of the teachers in Marion County. He will recommend the board sign this petition at the next board meeting.

PEIA and Pension Reform

WVEA is also proposing legislation to address pensions and PEIA. The recommendation for pension reform is to allow the participants in the TDC program(new) to vote on whether they want to merge their program with the state's defined benefit program(old). WVEA recommends combining the two programs.

WVEA also is recommending the Legislature eliminate or at least modify the 80/20 statute. If the statute is not eliminated then employees should only be charged 20% of the actual claim. Additionally deductions and co-payments should be acknowledged.

Mark Your Calendars!

WVEA's Mid-Winter and Minority Affairs Conference will be held February 11-12, 2005 at the Embassy Suites Hotel in Charleston. Registration materials have been sent to local CEA presidents. If you are interested in attending, contact Linda Bond.

Know Your State Government Day

The WVEA sponsored Know Your State Government Day is scheduled for high school juniors and foreign exchange students on Monday, February 14, 2005 beginning at 12 noon at the Cultural Center in Charleston. This will be the 55th year that the WVEA has sponsored the event. Information and registration forms have been sent to every high school principal, faculty senate chair and superintendent in the state. If you want to participate, but haven't received the forms, contact Judy Meadows at 1-800-642-8261 extension 124 for details.

“Read Across West Virginia” – WVEA Postcard Contest

WVEA will once again hold the annual Read Across America art contest. In keeping with the Read Across America theme, WVEA's contest will once again depict in some way “Read Across West Virginia.” The contest is open to all classes and grade levels, not just art classes. Entries must be received at WVEA Headquarters at 1558 Quarrier no later than **February 18, 2005**. Complete contest rules can be found on page 16 of the *Winter 2005 WV School Journal*.

Statewide Lobby Day on March 30th

WVEA has developed a plan to approach the salary gap and other issues of great concern to educators such as PEIA, retirement and paperwork. WVEA members are the vital component in getting that plan implemented. There is a marked difference in WVEA's success during the legislative session when WVEA members are directly involved at the Capitol. That participation can range from contacting your legislators, writing letters to local newspapers and participating in lobby days. Marion County's Lobby Day is scheduled for March 24th.

In addition to the lobby days scheduled for individual counties, WVEA has scheduled a statewide lobby day for all education employees on March 30, 2005. Please mark your calendars and join us—together we can achieve our goals, but our elected leaders must know that we are serious and speak with a united voice. There will be a briefing at WVEA Headquarters at 9:00 a.m. for each lobby day except for Saturday, April 9, 2005. That briefing will begin at 10:00 a.m.