

# PERSPECTIVE



Central Valley Education Association

December 2012

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## Winter Break Reflections

This has been an incredibly busy fall for CVEA, much of the work generated by uncertainty. The McCleary decision, wherein this state Supreme Court found the state in violation of its constitutional requirement to “amply fund” education, has resulted in a flurry of political activity that has disrupted the normal cycle of public education activities. This coupled with the nearly hysterical rush to “educational reform” has generated a mountain of regulation, often complicated by lack of clarity in language and intent.

As a result of all of this, the district and CVEA had to delay several important elements in the negotiation of a new contract last spring. Now committees are being or have been formed to do the arduous work of preparing contract language proposals as clarification is made by the state on these issues. This is the work that is generated by the uncertainty referred to at the beginning of this column. The good news is we have made substantial progress in this work and believe that it will be accomplished by the deadlines we have established.

I wish to thank all of those who have agreed to serve on committees and encourage those who might be willing to serve to let their Building Reps know. I would like to thank the Building Reps for all that they have done so far this year, and I would like to wish you all a wonderful winter break.

*Steve*

## VEBA VOTE

In January, members who started the school year with at least 180 days of accumulated sick days and/or are eligible for retirement as determined by the district will be given an opportunity to vote on their VEBA options. Some of you will have to vote on both issues.

VEBA is the Voluntary Employee Beneficiary Association, which allows employers to set up tax-free accounts to be used by employees for health care related expenses. While employed you may use this account to cover out of pocket expenses such as co-pays. Retirees can apply these funds toward medical premiums as well. If you have any questions about VEBA you can contact them online at [www.veba.org](http://www.veba.org), or email them at [veba@rehnonline.com](mailto:veba@rehnonline.com) or call 1-800-VEBA-101.

The Sick Leave Vote: If you have at least 180 days of sick leave on

Sept. 1 of the year, you may roll your unused sick leave days from the previous calendar year into your VEBA account at the rate of 4 for 1 provided the group votes to do so, or you can choose to cash these days out. Your vote will help determine what is done with these extra days.

The Retirement Vote: Upon retirement you may convert your unused sick leave days at the rate of 4 for 1 to either be placed in a VEBA account or to be cashed out. State law requires the decision be made by all employees eligible for retirement. If the body votes to convert these days to cash there will be no VEBA option available. If the VEBA option is chosen you can still cash out your days but with an added penalty. Explanations of these options will accompany the ballots.

VOTE and return your ballots to the CVEA office. A mailing label will be attached to the ballot.



## CVEA Elections

Once again it is time to begin the electoral process for CVEA officers and Assembly Representatives. At least this election will be less costly, contentious, and time consuming than what we have just completed at the State and National level.

CVEA Officer positions open this cycle include:

- Vice-President
- Secretary

Executive Board positions:

- Elementary At-Large
- Middle School At-Large
- Secondary At-Large
- Specialists At-Large

In addition we will be electing Representatives to the WEA Representative Assembly and the NEA Representative Assembly. There are twelve openings for WEA RA which will be held in Seattle April 25-27, at the Meydenbauer Center. There are two openings for NEA RA which will be held in Atlanta, GA July 1-6.

The job description for the officers is as follows (from CVEA Bylaws)

### SECTION II - VICE PRESIDENT

*The Vice President shall:*

- *Act as President in the absence of the President or if for any reason the Presidency shall become vacant. If the President becomes incapacitated for any reason, the Vice President shall take over for the remainder of the term or until the President is able to resume the duties of the office.*
- *Hold the funds of the Association, disperse them as approved by the Executive Board and keep an ac-*

*curate and complete record of all transactions.*

- *Keep the President and Executive Board informed of the financial condition of the Association.*
- *Prepare an annual financial statement.*
- *Disperse the assets of the Association in accordance with policies established by the Representative Council.*

### SECTION III – SECRETARY

*The Secretary shall:*

- *Be responsible for keeping accurate, complete minutes of the Executive Board and Representative Council and General Meeting.*
- *Maintain official files.*
- *Assist the President with the Association correspondence.*
- *Maintain a roll of members and supply a copy to the president.*
- *Report to each meeting of the Representative Council.*

### SECTION V – EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBERS AT-LARGE

*The Executive Board Members At-Large shall attend all Executive Board meetings.*

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WEA and NEA Representatives will be need to attend the sessions of the Assemblies and to participate in voting and listen to/participate in the debates on issues. These Representative Assemblies are the governing bodies of the Association.

The election calendar, in order to comply with our Constitution and Bylaws, is as follows:

- December 11 - Nominations open and Nomination Forms provided to Building Reps.
- January 8 - Written nomination deadline (due at the CVEA office)
- By January 15 - Notice to members of upcoming General Me-

bership meeting (for candidate speeches)

- January 22 - General Membership meeting (just prior to the Building Representatives meeting), nominations from the floor, nominations closed and candidate speeches given nominations from the floor
- February 4 - Deadline for candidate statements to CVEA office for the Newsletter
- February 5 - Special Edition Newsletter for election information
- February 6 - Ballots out to buildings
- February 14 - Ballots back to CVEA office
- February 20 - Ballots counted
- By February 22 - WEA RA delegates list reported to WEA office.

## Read Across America is coming!

Read Across America is scheduled for March . Go to the [Read Across America page](#) of the NEA website for a wide variety of ideas and resources. There are free resource kits and calendars (while supplies last) to help with your school's activities.



## NOTICE

(John Okamoto, WEA Executive Director)

As a means to reduce the paperwork for school districts and enhance healthcare plan information for participants, after Jan. 2, 2013, WEA Select Medical, Dental and Vision plans will be administered ONLY through two websites and special call centers.

We have taken extraordinary efforts to reach out to school districts to ensure they are adequately prepared including:

1. Meetings with the Washington Association of School Administrators, numerous Educational Service Districts and presentations to Washington Association of School Business Officers.

2. Notice letters to the school districts from WEA on March 7, 2012 and May 25, 2012, providing background information about the project and announcing the revised “go live” date.

3. Advisory Boards: created two advisory boards representing 22 school districts large and small from across the state.

4. Training: provided two series of training sessions across the state. We know this is initially a workload issue; we have provided manuals & reference guides to prepare school district staff for the change to the new system.

5. Established unique mailboxes for district staff.

6. Shipped plan member enrollment (YBR) guides to school districts for their reference and will be sending additional communications tools for participants leading up to open enrollment.

7. Call Centers: established specially trained call centers for school district staff and plan members

8. Working with WSIPC and Skyward so that some of district reports can be uploaded into payroll or insurance tracker – a significant improvement and time saver for payroll staff.

Additionally, we will schedule information sessions for governance leaders and plan members leading up to open enrollment in the fall of 2013.

Why are we sending you all this info now?

Despite the preparation work and notifications to school districts and planned communications with plan participants, we expect there may be some concerns raised during this startup phase.

We are confident the benefits of the new system for school districts and plan participants far exceeds these initial start-up concerns. This is the direction of healthcare administration nationwide; the system is far easier and more convenient, and provides better security than a paper-driven system. WEA has partnered with the best to build the system: Aon Hewitt is a respected leader in the field of healthcare administration, managing plans for 20 million participants across corporate, state and federal organizations.

## Committees Update

**The K-5 Co-curricular Teachers Committee** has met once and has another meeting scheduled. They are working on contract language proposals to address several workload issues.

**The Spokane Valley Tech Committee** has met with district personnel and has agreed in principal to contract concepts. They will be working on potential contract language over the next several months.

**The Insurance Committee** is waiting for state regulatory code to be written and/or clarified before meeting to prepare contract language proposals.





## Sick Leave

In January of each year the District will ask you what you would like to do with your unused sick leave for the February payroll. On the surface this sounds like a relatively simple question but it can be confusing.

Each year you earn 12 days of sick leave and the unused days can accumulate to a maximum of 180 days. If you have more than 60 days you have the option each year to cash out the unused days from the previous calendar year at a 4 to 1 ratio. For example, if you had 5 unused sick days for the year, you would get 1.25 days of per diem pay.

When you have 180 days, you have the option of converting any unused sick days into your VEBA account at the same rate of 4 for 1. This is contingent on the VEBA vote taken each year (see related article on page 1). If the group votes for the VEBA option, a cash out is available with an added penalty.

If you start the year with between 168 days and 180 days, and would like to participate in the VEBA option next year, you will need to manage your sick days carefully. You may cash out any portion of

your unused days from the previous calendar year.

Remember too that the 60-day and 180-day thresholds refer to the number of accumulated sick days you have at the start of the school year, before the next 12 sick days are front-loaded.

## INCENTIVE FOR ANNOUNCING RETIREMENT

Are you thinking of retiring this year? The CVSD is offering a financial incentive to announce your retirement early again this year. If you officially notify the District before February 15 of your intent to retire, the District will put \$1000 directly into your VEBA account. If you announce after February 15 but before March 1, it will go down to \$500. Remember that this benefit is tax-free and will be available to help cover medical costs immediately and premiums when you retire.

The CVEA would encourage you to consider this option if retirement is in your immediate future.

## CVEA Executive Board

### President -

Steve Lalonde

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Cell - 842-6768

email - [cvea@aol.com](mailto:cvea@aol.com)

fax - 891-9183

### Vice President -

Scott Knowles

Opportunity Elementary

228-4550

### Secretary/Treas -

Vicki Arnold

North Pines Middle School

228-5020

### Elementary Rep -

Keith Hoekema

Broadway Elementary

228-4100

### Middle School Rep -

Monica Larson

Evergreen

228-4780

### High School Rep -

Vicky Jensen

University High School

228-5240

### Special Services Rep -

Heather Graham

Greenacres/Liberty Lake

228-4200 / 228-4300

Happy  
New Year  
2013