

Update

Lake
Washington
Education
Association

December 10, 2014

First charter school in Washington imploding

The first charter school in the state of Washington appears to be rapidly falling apart after just a few short months in existence. The school, First Place Scholars, was a private school that applied to become a public charter school under the state's charter school law. The school operates with public funds but doesn't have to follow the same regulations as regular public schools.

Since September, more than half the school's board of directors has resigned and the board president was unanimously voted off the board. The principal resigned last month, and a significant number of staff members have also quit.

Here are some of the more disturbing details of the story:

- The school has no special education teacher, despite the fact that 20% of the school's population has been identified with special needs.
- Special education students have not received any IEP services since the beginning of the school year, a clear violation of federal law and of the students' rights to a free and appropriate public education.
- In clear violation of the state's open meeting laws, the school's board of directors met in executive session to discuss issues not covered under executive privilege.
- The board of directors, required by the school's bylaws to consist of 15 members, only has 7.
- Background checks of school staff, required by law, were not conducted.
- Policy and procedure paperwork were found to be out-of-date, including the school's fire drill plans and emergency contact list which listed staff members who no longer worked there.
- The school's main office had no documentation of any teacher's certification.
- State officials could not tell if the school was planning on being in operation for 180 days.

So what's their remedy to fix this mess? Hire one of the remaining board members, Linda Whitehead, as the new principal. You might recall that Linda Whitehead was the superintendent of the Marysville School District whose leadership caused a 49-day teachers' strike, the longest in state history. The Marysville school board ended up having to spend hundreds of thousands of dollars to buy her out of her contract.

Prior to her tenure in Marysville, Linda Whitehead was a principal at Evergreen Junior High in the Lake Washington School District. LWEA was frequently at Evergreen dealing with leadership issues. Staff morale was at an all-time low, and many teachers feared retribution if they disagreed with any decisions the principal made. WEA was also deeply involved in trying to bring resolution to the significant concerns with the building's leadership, going so far as to send out an organizational development specialist to work with the staff and principal. Ultimately, Whitehead left the district.

The news of the state's first charter school sitting on the brink of collapse is not surprising given the overwhelming evidence that charter schools, on the whole, rarely outperform public schools with similar demographics. In fact, only 13% of charter schools have been found to perform better than public schools. That means that 87%---no, that's not a mistake---87% of charter schools perform either the same or worse than similar public schools.

Time will tell if these students get the education they deserve.

Information & news you need to know

Marysville-Pilchuck High School

Just before Thanksgiving, the collection of cards, banners, signs, snacks, and notes from LWEA members was delivered to the Marysville Education Association. Randy Davis, the MEA president, took everything to Marysville-Pilchuck High School where the staff was overwhelmed by the outpouring of support.

LWEA will continue to deliver cards and words of support throughout the remainder of this school year – please send all cards to the LWEA office.

Working less than 1.0 FTE?

Have you thought about working less than full time but didn't know how that would affect you? Making plans for the next school year? LWEA has an informational brochure that answers those questions and much more.

The brochure includes information on salary, benefits, dues, and calendar issues. You can also find that same brochure on the [LWEA website](#) and the LWSD Portal.



Prize puzzle – do you know the answer?

Which of the following statements are **NOT** correct?

- A. The second half of the Professional Fund money will be added to December paychecks.
- B. A transfer request for next year will be accepted if it's submitted by February 20 (after mid-winter break).
- C. If an additional day off is needed for vacation, it's possible to use sick leave to be out on Monday, 1/5/15.
- D. During winter break, staff will need to monitor all parent e-mails and respond in a timely basis.

If you know the answer – contact [Sheila Hagerman](#) in the LWEA office – you might win a \$10 Starbucks card! Representatives from all of the plans will be available to help with your questions.

LWEA Officers and Executive Committee

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LWEA / 425 822-3388

Vice President – [Ken Egawa](#)
Blackwell / 425 936-2520

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Muir/ 425 936-2640

Middle School Rep – [Peggy Solum](#)
Kamiakin / 425 936-2400

Senior High Rep – [David McGibney](#)
EHS / 425 936-1500

Special Services Rep – [Sarah Cooper](#)
Juanita Elem / 425 936-2570

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Lake Washington Education Association

Two need your help

We have two people in need of shared sick leave and we're hoping you can help.

Jamie Teteak, teacher at Smith Elementary, has just been diagnosed with breast cancer and will start treatment in January. Jamie is in her first year in LWSD and has used all of her sick leave.

Fei Lu, teacher at LWHS, needs more sick leave to care for her husband who underwent surgery near the start of school for a brain tumor and in the process became paralyzed. He is being released from the hospital this week to return home. Fei needs additional time to care for her husband.

To donate sick leave, simply fill out a donation form and send it to HR. You should be able to find a form in your building – check with your office manager for assistance.



Changes to TRS Plan 3

In 2009, the IRS ruled that the TRS Plan 3 would not be qualified if the rate flexibility currently offered to plan members is retained.

So what does all of this mean to you? It means that TRS Plan 3 members have one last opportunity in January 2015 to select new contribution rate options. After January 2015, you would only be able to change rates when you change employers.

This change only affects TRS Plan 3 – no other plan is affected.

If you need to determine if you should make changes to your plan rate, here's an easy way to calculate what you currently have. **DO NOT** contact Payroll to ask your percentage rate. Simply divide your contribution by your gross earnings to get your percentage.

If you have specific questions, go to the [DRS website](#) or contact [Barbara Biddle](#) in Payroll.

Looking for you!

LWEA is sponsoring Newbie Nights - a support group for teachers with 6 years or less of teaching experience. We'll provide you with an opportunity to hear from experts on various topics as they share strategies for surviving your first years in the classroom.

Our next session will be on Wednesday, January 14, from 4:30 – 7 PM. The focus of this session will be on learning how to build connections with students and their families that support a foundation for learning. We'll also investigate how family engagement connects to the current PGE and strategies for successful family communication.

We will have a panel of experienced educators who will answer questions and share practical tips and tricks for handling challenging conversations and how to encourage support for student learning at home.

To register – contact [Sheila Hagerman](#) in the LWEA office. Both the class and dinner are free, and clock hours will be available for \$5 (payable at the session).

Questions? Check the LWEA website under [Professional Development](#).

Future Newbie Night sessions:

Feb. 25, 2015 (4:30-7:00 PM)
Mastering the Difficult Conversation

Apr. 29, 2015 (4:30 – 7:00 PM)
Navigating the Certification Pathways

Calendar

Dec. 16	Rep Assembly
Dec. 22- Jan. 2	Winter Break – Enjoy!
Jan. 5	Back to Work
Jan. 13	Executive Committee
Jan. 14	Newbie Nights
Jan. 19	ML King Jr Day

MARKETPLACE

FREE

Loveseat/hide-a-bed, frame in good condition. Slip covers (2) included. Looking for immediate pick-up. Joe Clay (Evergreen) 425-742-0166.

FOR SALE

Executive desk, L-shaped, will need assembly. Need immediate pick-up. \$25. Joe Clay (Evergreen) 425-742-0166.



DONORSCHOOSE.ORG

[DonorsChoose.org](https://www.donorschoose.org) is a nonprofit organization that connects public school teachers in need of classroom materials and experiences with individual donors who want to help. Public school teachers can submit project requests for the specific materials their students need to learn. Donors from across the country browse the website and fund the projects they find most compelling.

All full-time, front-line educators at public schools (teachers, librarians, guidance counselors, and school nurses) who spend at least 75% of their time working with students are eligible to request materials on the [website](https://www.donorschoose.org). Check it out!

Recognition makes a difference

Jaime Escalante, the teacher on whom the movie Stand and Deliver was based, tells an amazing story about a mistaken identity and the difference it made in a young man's life.

This teacher had two students in his class who were both named Johnny. One Johnny was an excellent student, a happy child, and always had his homework completed on time. The other Johnny was always in trouble, never had his work finished, and generally made the teacher's life miserable.

The night of their first PTA Open House of the year a mother stayed after the meeting to ask about her son, Johnny, and how he was getting along in the class. Assuming it was the mother of the "good" Johnny, the teacher replied, "I can't tell you how much I appreciate him. I am so glad he's in my class."

The next day, for the first time all year, the "problem" Johnny had all of his work done, he spoke up in class, and never once caused a disruption. He even volunteered to help another student. The teacher was astounded!

At the end of the day when everyone else had left, "problem" Johnny came up to the teacher and said, "My Mom told me what you said about me last night. I haven't ever had a teacher who wanted me in his class."

That Johnny became one of the best students the teacher ever had – and all because of a mistaken dose of appreciation! No matter who we are and what our situation in life is, we all want and need to be appreciated.

Pending available space, ads are run in the Update on a first come, first served basis.
Ads are accepted only in written form – send directly to Sheila Hagerman – shhagerman@lwsd.org.
Ads are subject to approval by the LWEA Executive Committee and may be edited for length.