

West Virginia Professional Educators

A Student's Mind Is Too Precious To Be Bargained For

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NEWS

WVPE Announces 2018 Legislative Goals

Each year members of WVPE are surveyed for their input and concerns. The results are tabulated and annual goals are developed by the Executive Board. The results of the survey and a sampling of comments are included in this newsletter. While the concerns were many, items receiving the greatest responses were used to create the goals below. Thank you to all who responded.

The goals below will be shared with members of the West Virginia Legislature, members of the State Board of Education, and other state leaders. WVPE's Legislative Liaison, Ben Beakes, will be representing the organization in his work in the coming months.

WVPE Annual Goals for 2017-2018

- Chronic student absenteeism and truancy is an urgent issue that needs to be addressed.
- Social workers are needed in all counties to address mental health issues, truancy and attendance issues, and family situations.
- Members of the West Virginia State Board of Education should be elected or should be a combination of elected and appointed individuals.
- To attract and retain quality teachers, teacher salaries should be increased.
- PEIA must be fully funded, and proposed PEIA plan changes must be addressed.
- To retain quality teachers hired after 2015, they should also be allowed to accrue sick days toward retirement.

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Editor's Corner



Libby Surface

Season's Greetings to All! I'm excited to include an article by Associate Director David Gladkosky as a new feature in our WVPE newsletter. David is off to a running start in this new position, and as you will read, he is representing WVPE in a variety of ways. Thank you David!

David and I had the opportunity to attend the Education Alliance Education Summit in November. This event included a student expo that featured incredible collaborative projects with schools and businesses.

As an example, students at the Ben Franklin Career Center in Dunbar are building light boxes that use solar panels. These light sources are being donated to Navajo families out west. Each device costs \$150 to build and ship. If you are interested in learning more about this project or donating to this project, please contact Mountain-eerPower.energy@gmail.com.

This is the first of a new column that will focus on what is happening at WV State Board of Education meetings. I'll keep you informed of changes taking place as policies are adopted and approved, and the achievements and concerns in our 55 counties. Here are the highlights:

- The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) was approved for submission to the US Dept. of Education. This plan includes implementing new academic standards & assessments, improvement plans for underperforming schools, school accountability and its support system for students and teachers. A new assessment for grades 3-8, to be implemented in the spring, called the AIR (American Institute for Research) assessment, replaces Smarter Balance. It will closely align with the state's current curriculum standards.
- Changes in teacher qualifica-



President's Message

Alicia Mullins

Recently, I noticed a post from a teacher friend on my Facebook newsfeed that asked what "union" she should join—WVEA, AFT, or WVPE. And, within the public conversation, I noticed that one person had commented on the significant difference in cost between WVPE and the others. I could not help myself, and had to join the conversation.

I first shared with her that one thing I love about WVPE is that we are not a union, we are a professional organization. (Though, I am sure many of you hear your colleagues call us the "other" union.) The major difference is—WVPE believes you have a choice about whether to join an organization—not everyone should be required to be part of a union or similar group. Because of that, you will not find us pressuring anyone to choose to join. We provide a grievance manager, liability insurance, and a lobbyist to make your opinions known at the State Legislature.

I shared with her how I love that WVPE forms its opinions directly from us, the members, with our legislative survey. And, I love how helpful our grievance manager is to me in times of crisis. When asked about the cost, I explain that we "keep our nose" out of elections and political issues that do not directly involve education. In other words, we don't endorse political candidates and allow our members to form their own opinions on noneducational issues of concern.

I hope that you are all able to share some of the things you love about our organization with others! And, I hope you are all enjoying this unique time of the year. Christmas can be such a stressful, hectic time. But, if we are careful to maintain our focus on our family and the true meaning of the season, it can become one of the most renewing, refreshing times of the year! Merry Christmas to all!

From the Desk of the Associate Director

David Gladkosky

tion and licensing requirements (policy 5202), addresses teacher shortage. Those with a bachelor's Education de-



Engineering Job Shadowing Project Display by Edison Middle School, Wood County. Pictured here with a participating student are STEM Teacher Marjorie Politz, Josh Frash of Chemours, and Libby Surface.

gree meeting a minimum grade point average, are exempt from having to pass the basic knowledge test. Those with a non-education master's degree, with 5 years of directly related work experience, are exempt from passing the content knowledge test.

- Revisions for Policy 2510 if approved, reduces the minimum graduation requirement to 21 credits, down from 24. Its design gives students more flexibility, and enables them to take more college classes. A blended learning approach for Physical Education requirements is also proposed.
- Policy 3234, (school calendar) giving counties flexibility in developing their school calendars was approved. This will allow for 30 minutes to be added to the school day to "harvest" 5 days for continuing Ed, or snow days. This will achieve an equivalent to

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FOR YOUR INFORMATION

DON'T FORGET 7 GRADING ESSENTIALS

Excerpts from Barbara Blackburn blogpost

Posted 11/5/17 on Middleweb

Submitted by Jacke McDaniels

Note: For the full article including samples and examples, read this blogpost on Middleweb. Barbara Blackburn is an author of 16 books and can be reached through her website, blog, or Twitter.

Grading is one of the most challenging parts of a rigorous classroom and no more so than for new and novice teachers. Many of the aspects of grading, such as whether to grade homework, are individual choices for a teacher. However, we should be careful to incorporate effective grading practices in all that we do.

Blackburn's Effective GRADING Indicators

Grade According to Your Policy

In a rigorous classroom, teachers provide a clear grading policy so that students and parents know what to expect. Ideally, you would work together with teachers at your grade level, in your team, or in your department so there is consistency. That may or may not be possible in your school.

Grading policies should be communicated early in the school year, ideally in writing. They are important for all grade levels, including the primary level. Remember to match the language and format of the policy to the level of your students.

Rubrics Can Be Helpful

Rubrics are written descriptions of the criteria used to grade an assignment. They show students what they are expected to do. Todd Stanley in his book *Performance-based Assess-*

ment for 21st Century Skills, provides six steps to creating rubrics.

Align Grading to Standards

It's important to align your grading to your standards, goals, and objectives. That may sound basic, but I've often seen an assignment that called for certain outcomes based on the standards, but the grade was based on other criteria. How frustrating for a student.

Don't Count Effort, Behavior, or Attendance

One of the mistakes I made as a young teacher was grading for things that didn't involve the actual work. For example, if a student "tried hard," I gave them credit for their effort. So as long as they attempted to do the work, the student received partial credit, whether any of it was correct. I've since learned to give students multiple opportunities to complete the work correctly, along with coaching and encouragement, but effort alone does not qualify for a high grade.

If I could jump in my teaching time machine and return to my classroom to do it again, I would remove these three factors from my grading. A grade should reflect the quality of work, not anything else.

Involve Students in Grading

Research affirms that students feel more ownership when they are involved in the grading process. So, involve them in the grading process. Be sure they understand what the grade represents, have them look at samples and grade the items themselves, ask them to self-assess their work, and let them create rubrics that make sense to them for your review.

After your students create the levels, guide them through the process of what would be an "A," or "B," etc.

Talk about the quality indicators and how they relate mastery. Student ownership doesn't mean you aren't involved; it simply means you guide the process rather than doing it all yourself.

After the rubric is finished, ask students to assess a sample paper so they see how the rubric applies to actual work. Then, revise it together, and you can move forward with its use. It's an excellent way for students to feel ownership and be invested in grading.

Never Give Zeroes

Too often, students don't complete work that requires a demonstration of learning. Typically, this results in a low grade. We often think this means students learn the importance of responsibility, but more often they learn that if they are willing to "take a lower grade or a zero," then they do not actually have to complete their work.

For some, that is a preferable alternative to doing the work. Perhaps they don't fully understand the assignment, or they may not want to complete it. However, if we truly have high expectations for students, we don't let them off the hook for learning.

Grade for Quality, not Completion

Also, be sure that your grade reflects the quality of the work and the evidence of understanding, not just completion or the quantity of included items. This is a particular danger when teachers determine grading for a project. With many tasks to accomplish, it's tempting to assign points or values to every task or step just to keep students organized – and lose sight of the ultimate objective, a demonstration and assessment of learning.

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From the Desk of the Associate Director David Gladkosky (Continued from page 2)

180 days of instruction.

- Also approved were Policy 2460 (acceptable use of electronic resources), Policy 4373 (expected behavior in safe schools), and Policy 5202 (license/salary revisions).

- Drop in student enrollment is a concern. WV schools lost about 2,460 students in the past year. For example, Ritchie County Schools lost 10% of their student population and \$300,000 in appropriation funds. 16 public systems now have reserves under \$1 Million, and 2 are in a deficit. The board hopes that the road bond levy, and other new economic developments will help reverse this trend.

- Also, the SBA (School Building Authority) practice of hiring construction managers will soon be changed.

Here are bright spots in educational developments around our state:

- WV Project Launch, a program that refurbishes and installs new hard drives in computers, available for any school that needs them. They've assisted with computer labs in schools in 40 counties and can custom build to suit any need.

- The Communities In Schools program is a nationwide program that focuses on student poverty in target counties, and is stylized like a dropout program. It is currently being used in

Greenbrier County with much success, and they are the guide model for development in other counties. Target counties include McDowell, Wyoming, and Berkeley.

- The WV Higher Education Policy Commission has resources available for students to help pay, plan, and apply for college and the Promise Scholarship. The plan is called "Leading the Way: Access, Success, Impact", and students can access it at the College Foundation of WV website: www.cfww.com.

On Nov. 1st, Libby Surface and I attended the 5th Annual Education Summit in Charleston.

This year's focus was on Personalizing Career Readiness for WV Students, with discussions on personalized learning. Local and state business reps were interviewed about what they look for in new employees; problem solvers with good attitude, team oriented, skill-based aptitudes. There were insightful sessions by Susan Patrick of the International Assoc for Online learning, Superintendent Dr. Steven Paine, and Commerce Secretary Woody Thrasher. Our lobbyist, Ben Beakes was also in attendance. There is a wealth of info on the WVBE site: I will continue to monitor it weekly and encourage you to do the same!



David Gladkosky and WVPE Legislative Liason Ben Beakes at the Education Summit.



WVPE IS ON FACEBOOK!

Be sure to "like" West Virginia Professional Educators today!

WVPE Annual Legislative Survey Results and Sample Comments

Below are the results of the 2017 Survey. Thank you to all who responded and commented. Space does not permit the printing of all comments; a complete list can be obtained from Executive Directors Ernie and Alma Page.

Q1 In what setting do you work most
PreK/Elementary 38.78%
Middle School 22.45%
High School 38.78%

Q2 What is the size of the student body at the school you work with most?
1-250 students 11.22%
211-500 students 33.67%
501-1000 students 31.63%
1000+ students 23.47%

Q3 Private or home-schooled students should be allowed to participate in public school sports or other extra-curricular activities.
Strongly Disagree/Disagree 52.12%
Neutral 22.34%
Agree/Strongly Agree 25.53%

Q4 An appeals process should be created for inappropriately placing students in general education classes.
Strongly Disagree/Disagree 6.38%
Neutral 26.6%
Agree/Strongly Agree 67.03%

Q5 There is a need to provide more preparation time at the beginning, middle, and end of the school year.
Strongly Disagree/Disagree 12.9%
Neutral 10.75%
Agree/Strongly Agree 76.34%

Q6 The issues of chronic student absenteeism and truancy must be addressed.
Strongly Disagree/Disagree 1.08%
Neutral 8.60%
Agree/Strongly Agree 0.33%

Q7 Classroom teachers must be included to be a part of the Eligibility Meeting for Special Education Services.
Strongly Disagree/Disagree 5.32%
Neutral 17.02%
Agree/Strongly Agree 77.66%

Q8 Members of the West Virginia State Board of Education should be elected or should be a combination of elected and appointed individuals.
Strongly Disagree/Disagree 3.19%
Neutral 12.77%
Agree/Strongly Agree 84.05%

Q9 Mental Health Services, as passed in State Board Policy 2425 several years ago, must be expanded throughout the state.
Strongly Disagree/Disagree 1.09%
Neutral 25.00%
Agree/Strongly Agree 73.91%

Q10 Social Workers are needed in all counties to address mental health issues, truancy and attendance issues, and family situations.
Strongly Disagree/Disagree 1.06%
Neutral 7.45%
Agree/Strongly Agree 91.49%

Q11 Funding provided by my county school system for teaching materials/classroom projects is adequate.
Strongly Disagree/Disagree 53.19%
Neutral 20.21%
/Strongly Agree 26.59%

Q12 Student achievement should be assessed by a student's annual progress rather than their score on one standardized test per year.
Strongly Disagree/Disagree 0%
Neutral 4.35%
Agree/Strongly Agree 95.65%

Q13 General Summative Assessments should only be given in 5th, 8th, and 11th grades (once at each school level).

Strongly Disagree/Disagree 3.30%
Neutral 15.38%
Agree/Strongly Agree 81.32%

Q14 Kindergarten and First Grade assessments, taken on computers, must be better aligned with current standards and developmentally appropriate for young students.
Strongly Disagree/Disagree 0%
Neutral 17.39%
Agree/Strongly Agree 82.61%

Q15 Students should be held accountable for their performance on the General Summative Assessment.
Strongly Disagree/Disagree 3.26%
Neutral 17.39%
Agree/Strongly Agree 79.35%

Q16 West Virginia should be locked into statewide adopted assessments for no less than five years so that growth can be consistently measured.
Strongly Disagree/Disagree 7.78%
Neutral 12.22%
Agree/Strongly Agree 80.00%

Q17 Seniority should be the primary factor in making layoff and recall decisions when making RIFs (reduction in force).
Strongly Disagree/Disagree 13.19%
Neutral 20.88%
Agree/Strongly Agree 65.94%

Q18 The Faculty Senate at each school should have some input in the hiring and evaluating of the school level administrators.
Strongly Disagree/Disagree 7.78%
Neutral 6.67%
Agree/Strongly Agree 85.56%

Q19 Hiring Policy 5000 needs to be revised so that each category considered in the hiring process is equally weighted.

(Continued on back)

WVPE Legislative Survey (Continued from page 3)

Strongly Disagree/Disagree.... 10.99%
 Neutral 42.86%
 Agree/Strongly Agree..... 46.16%

Q20 Hiring Policy 5000 should be reviewed by a committee of stakeholders, including current educators.

Strongly Disagree/Disagree.... 1.10%
 Neutral 27.47%
 Agree/Strongly Agree..... 71.83%

Q21 Teacher salaries should be increased.

Strongly Disagree/Disagree.... 0%
 Neutral 2.22%
 Agree/Strongly Agree..... 97.77%

Q22 WVPE should support the proposed PEIA plan and its changes to premiums, pharmaceutical coverage, tiers, copays and Healthy Tomorrows program.

Strongly Disagree/Disagree.... 47.19%
 Neutral 35.96%
 Agree/Strongly Agree..... 16.85%

Q23 More options and incentives should be created for retiring educators.

Strongly Disagree/Disagree.... 1.11%
 Neutral 18.89%
 Agree/Strongly Agree..... 80.00%

Q24 Retirees should be given a cost of living increase in salary.

Strongly Disagree/Disagree.... 1.12%
 Neutral 10.11%
 Agree/Strongly Agree..... 88.76%

Q25 Teachers hired after 2015 should also be allowed to accrue sick leave days toward retirement.

Strongly Disagree/Disagree.... 2.25%
 Neutral 10.11%
 Agree/Strongly Agree..... 87.64%

Sampling of Survey Comments

- I feel the most strongly about the GSA only being for 5th, 8th, and 11th grade. It is developmentally inappropriate for 3rd graders.
- Thank you for providing a conservative alternative to the liberal education unions.
- Concerns about General Education as well as Special Education students remaining in the classroom when behaviors get out of control and occur on a regular daily basis. What will it take???? Other students are displaced or their education is being disrupted because the student is acting out in class.... Process needs amending!!
- Too many concerns!
- Something has to be done with health care and pay. We cannot continue to take a pay cut every year. Why would anyone want to stay or come here for the long term?
- Many core subject teachers were RIFFED in my county this past year. How can we expect student growth in core subject areas if we lose these positions making class sizes larger?
- Keep up the good work! You are appreciated!
- Salary should be number one consideration.
- Every school should be required to have a certified Library Media Spe-

cialist, and at the middle/high school level the schedules should remain flexible so that solid library media programs can be developed to assist in boosting student achievement. The research proves this is true.

- Without pay raises, we have essentially had a considerable reduction in home pay. The PEIA changes over the years continue to chip away at our income. Also, I reached the “glass ceiling” a few years ago and no longer receive the small yearly increase.

- PEIA has got to be fixed! It WAS the glue that held educators to teaching positions in our state. PEIA is failing our educators! Vacancies will be higher than ever!

- The shortage of qualified teachers needs to be addressed. Teachers should also have more options on where they would like to teach, regardless of what county they live in. They should not be held back by their tenure or lack of tenure in another county.

- I think all employees should be able to use sick days towards retirement. Also, pay is inadequate. People working in the board office make substantially more than those in the schools. There needs to be a balance. The hiring system is worse than before be-

cause it is all about who you are and know. Not fairly done.

- The Panhandle needs higher pay due to cost of living.

- The process to hire and evaluate administrators is completely unfair!

- Teachers need a pay raise. We need more support from admin AND teachers should be able to evaluate admin, especially if they are lemons and lack any kind of support towards teachers. Teachers are there for the kids, admin SHOULD support teachers.

- At the survey start, you should include a choice of “Retired.” We may not be teaching daily, but still support your efforts and want a voice in decisions. made by WVPE.

- SPED classes need a hard cap of 6 in elementary. 12 is not a small group especially when the students are with a disability and need individual attention. The special education population is only growing.

- The questions in this survey were excellent! These issues are on the minds of all educators. Also, consider the addition and retention of staff. The issues of allowing more control while nepotism is rampant is an issue!