

West Virginia Professional Educators

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

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NEWS

Ernest A. Page, Jr. Dedicated Educator and Visionary Leader



August 15, 1930 – January 27, 2018

WVPE Executive Director Ernest Page passed away in January. Along with wife Alma Page, Ernest selflessly devoted time, energy and knowledge to West Virginia Professional Educators for more than 30 years. His experience and wisdom founded WVPE and helped this organization grow from about a dozen teachers to over 1100 educators and friends today. Ernest will always be remembered for his deep faith, unmatched kindness and commitment to service.

Ernest Page is a prime example of a lifelong learner dedicated to education. He was born in Morrisvale, West Virginia, and remained a loyal Mountaineer throughout his life. At his memorial service in February, it was shared that at the age of four,

Ernest grabbed an armful of books and pronounced he was ready to go to school! Ernest served educators and students in many capacities. He worked as a teacher and principal before serving as Assistant Superintendent in Wood County and superintendent in Mineral County.

Ernest's career provided invaluable experience to serve West Virginia Professional Educators. Legislative Reporter and Executive Board member Elizabeth Mow shared that at first, Ernest was Executive Secretary of the West Virginia Education Association. When that organization changed into a union, Ernest resisted that change and was forced out of his position. It was at that point that Ernest and others decided to form an alternative organization based on the principle that every student has the right to an uninterrupted, quality educa-

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Editor's Corner



Libby Surface

Happy Spring – Finally!

After all of the events of this January and February, I know many of us are ready for some warm weather and to finish this school year strong. I cannot urge you enough to read all the information and announcements in this newsletter. WVPE wants you! Many opportunities are ahead!

I would also request that you send me any information and news of accomplishments of WVPE members so that we can acknowledge the work members do for the students of our state. Also, please feel free to send in remembrances of “Ernie” Page. Many years ago Ernie accompanied me to a personnel hearing when my position was being cut. With his guidance, I was able to address the issues and keep my position. I would love to continue to honor his legacy and share your memories.

Are You Connected With WVPE?



WVPE is utilizing email and Facebook more than ever to reach members efficiently and quickly. Be sure we have your preferred email address for our listerv. If you did not receive the Legislative Updates by email, then we need your email address. You should have received hard copies as well, but email gets the information to you sooner! Also, don't forget to connect with us on Facebook!

Send your current email to Jackie McDaniels today!



President's Message

Alicia Mullins

The 2018 Legislative Session truly made history in West Virginia. Many of us were stressed and anxious about the entire situation. Many articles in this newsletter address that time and the outcomes. The day we all returned to school, a colleague of mine made the observation that he found there was a lot he did not know about the legislative process and how laws are made in our state. Most likely, we all can hum the tune of School House Rock's “I'm just a bill...” For many, our knowledge of the process does not go much beyond that.

I truly believe this made us all aware of just how much we take for granted about our government and also about how our professional organization works. Many of us go about our daily lives never thinking of the behind-the-scenes work that WVPE does nor how it affects us. Below are just a few of the rumors and myths that many of us heard throughout the work stoppage. I am hoping that having answers to these questions will help you make more informed choices about your representation and also share with your colleagues exactly what WVPE is all about.

Myth: WVPE is run by the Republican Party/Democratic Party.

WVPE is an independent organization. We have no political affiliation. Our only mission is to improve education for our students. We involve ourselves only in educational legislation. We believe that it is up to each individual member how to vote and what political party, if any, to support. In fact, each year WVPE shares a Fall Legislative Survey with you to get your input. One unique thing about our organization is that its goals are based on the opinions of our members.

Myth: WVPE will kick you out if you participate in striking.

This one truly surprised me. While

striking is considered an illegal action and WVPE's philosophy does not condone striking, above all else, we are supportive of our members. We believe members have the right to choose their level of participation in such situations and should not be dictated to by a select few. WVPE offers you representation in any disciplinary situation – even if it stems from participation in a work stoppage. We represent you!

Myth: WVPE supports charter schools.

WVPE does not support charter schools because you do not support charter schools. Our membership has voiced their dislike of such legislation several times. We do not campaign in favor of any charter school bills. Those lobbying on our behalf are very aware of the collective WVPE opinion and always represent us with integrity and sincerity.

Myth: “You get what you pay for.”

WVPE does collect significantly less in dues from members than similar organizations. There are two major reasons are costs are less. First, WVPE does not offer membership incentives such as discounted hotel rooms, tickets, discounts on purchases, etc. Everyone pays lower dues and everyone saves – not just those taking advantage of those type of programs. Secondly, WVPE does not endorse political candidates. We made no campaign contributions to any local, state, or national politicians. We believe each member should decide who to support and how to support them. WVPE uses the dues collected to offer the services that most are looking for in a professional organization – representation in personnel situations, liability insurance, publications, and campaigning for education reform based on our membership's concerns.

From the Desk of the Associate Director—David Gladkosky

It has been a tumultuous time in the lives of all WV educators, and WVPE has been very active in its role to voice our concerns, our goals and represent our teachers, counselors and administrators. On day one of the legislative session, our boots were on the ground with our lobbyist, Ben Beakes, advocating for us in offices of both the House and Senate. On the same day, I had the privilege of presenting our 2018 Goals to the WV State Board of Education. WVPE also made our presence known at the Education Rally on Jan. 15th, and the educational press conference on Jan. 24st. Here are highlights of actions taken at recent WV State Board of Education meetings:

Two Updates from last newsletter: Policy 2510 was revised and passed to make changes in graduation credits (min. 24), giving counties more flexibility in students class scheduling, and, the revised ESSA plan was approved by the US Dept. of Education, after a second draft was made addressing the Quantile/Lexile point system and its conversion from the AIR and SAT standardized tests.

The Board looked at STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) Education. The Appalachian Regional Council is working to promote and validate STEM programs around the state, and is in the process of creating a state wide support system.

State Superintendent Paine, stated that 38% of our math classes are being taught by non-certified personnel. A new Virtual Program is being evaluated to make use of two retired math teachers that would assist non certified teachers with the PRAXIS requirements to become certified.

A 5-year grant for WV Project AWARE has been up started in 3 counties (Berkeley, McDowell, Wood). It deals with mental behavior, student anxiety and depression, and family issues. This program will aid in creating mental health programs, increase the # of counselors, and take some of the burden off teachers. Incidents of bullying have decreased since the program started in these 3 counties.

Grants need to be secured to expand AWARE to other counties. Marshall University has created the

WV School Calendar Web Application; a new on-line program for central offices to easily create their school calendars, much easier than the EXCEL program they are currently using. It is still in development by Marshall students; more features will be added.

View it at <https://wveis.k12.wv.us/school-calendar>. During the March meeting, Dr. Paine stated that he wants to conduct a 2 day Teacher Summit sometime this summer, to address the needs and concerns of all WV teachers. He wants to work on better communication, and put more effort into listening to our teachers. He acknowledged that for several years, teachers in WV have felt degraded and disrespected. WVPE will keep you posted on this event. The 5% pay raise will be achieved by reducing spending in other areas including the Dept. of Tourism, Division of Commerce, and a transfer of Lottery revenue. During the course of the work stoppage, WVPE placed its focus on PEIA concerns and continue to be active in pursuing a permanent funding

stream. WVPE did not get a seat on the Governors PEIA Task Force, as multiple requests were denied. We have logged our protests, and voiced our concerns. We will have Del. Roger Hanshaw attending the meetings and advocating for us. I also attended the first organizational meeting. It was brief with little discussion. The members will be divided into three sub-committees:

- a Coverage Plan Review Committee
- a Cost and Revenue Committee (looking at options for cost cutting)
- a Legislative and Public Outreach Committee

These committees will meet in between the main Task Force meetings where they will present their options. Also, Task Force members will be divided into regional sub groups to conduct the public hearings. Mike Hall, chairman would like to have a report ready by early summer. WVPE will continue to monitor their progress. Please contact us with any and all feedback.

Looking for Future Leaders!

Through recent weeks many WVPE members have expressed interest in becoming more involved and looking for ways to assist the organization. Please consider being part of the Executive Board in the coming year. Ballots will be sent in early summer, and fresh faces are always welcome!

First, there are positions on the Executive Board; some are elected while others are appointed by the State President. Please call, write, or email Alicia Mullins if you are interested in serving. Share your expertise and skills to make WVPE even stronger. Second, consider starting a county chapter and/or serving as an area contact. Again, let Alicia know of your interest to serve; her email address is aliciarmullins@hotmail.com.

Ernest Page (Continued from page 1)

tion. In addition, the group believed that all educators should be free from all forms of compulsory membership and should not be forced to join a national union in order to teach. WVPE was founded in 1980, and Ernest became the Executive Director in 1988.

Other organizations also benefitted from Ernest's love of service. He was a dedicated volunteer in West Virginia 4-H for 50 years and the Putnam County Parks and Recreation Board for more than 30 years. As a member of the Cross Lanes United Methodist church, he was involved in the community feeding/dinner project. Alma

and Ernest were married for 63 years and together were active community members and volunteers. They have four children as well as grandchildren, great-grandchildren, nieces and nephews.

Ernest will be deeply missed and always remembered for his dedication and vision for WVPE. Countless members have been assisted and guided by his leadership through the years. All are welcome to send more remembrances to be shared in future newsletters; send these to Alma Page or any Executive Board or Staff member.

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Opportunity is Knocking! WVPE Mini-Grants Available

Mini-Grants for Growth

WVPE is experiencing a surge in membership and interest in the work of our organization. Now is an opportune time to get involved in the excitement and growth!

Mini-grants of up to \$250 are available to individuals or county chapters wishing to promote WVPE. These funds are not to be used for fund-raising or for an activity benefitting members only. Some examples of possible projects would be handing out materials, mugs, promotional items to new teachers; holding a picnic for members and new teachers; newspaper ads; or providing supplies for a special project or need. County chapters should not apply if sufficient funds are available in its treasury.

Don't have a county chapter? That is easily remedied! Contact any Executive Board member for more information and assistance. A county chapter can sponsor special projects and scholarships; during the recent work stoppage county chapters were able to disseminate information as well.

To apply for this grant, send a letter of request to the Executive Director or State President. Addresses can be found on the front page of this newsletter. The letter must include a description of the activity and an estimate of the amount of funding needed. The Executive Board will determine if the request fits grant criteria. The Treasurer will be notified and monies issued. Receipts for items must be sent to the Treasurer along with any unused funds.

Grants for Classroom Needs Coming Soon!

More information will be coming this summer for the Ernest Page Memorial Grants. These grants will be for projects, materials, and supplies that directly impact student learning. One of WVPE's core values is that West Virginia students' education is our top priority. Many times educators could use additional funding to support their work. WVPE is excited to provide this assistance and to honor the late Ernest Page as well. Watch for this information to come!

Planning for Future Events

Your Input Is Needed!

Please use the QR code below or the survey monkey link that will be emailed to you via the WVPE listserv. WVPE desires to sponsor events such as an annual meeting, regional meetings, or state conference that will serve your needs.



WVPE IS ON FACEBOOK!

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