

The Advocate

Teaching. Learning. Leading.

Bonnie Klakowicz, President Elizabeth Gordon, Christy Sullivan & Raven Wilkerson, UniServ Directors October 2008

Dear Association Members:

If you have been getting the weekly Tuesday Talks, you may have noticed my signature line. It is a quote from Laura Vernon, an Educational Support Professional from Wisconsin. Laura Vernon feels strongly that public education is the backbone and foundation of society, and so do I. It is through our efforts, as a team of classroom teachers, educational support professionals, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, and more that we can champion the cause of making sure every child in America receives an education preparing him to succeed in a diverse and interdependent world, and that we have the resources to get that job done.

This is why advocacy plays such an important role in our organization. Advocacy is our mission.

PWEA advocates for you through the Meet and Confer process. Your colleagues on the Meet and Confer Team carry your issues forward in formal dialogues with Administrators from the Superintendent's staff. Through this process, we lobby for your salary, benefits, professional rights, and working conditions. As one result of last year's dialogue, a Site-Based Management Task Force has been formed, and I am your task force representative, giving voice to your concerns.

PWEA advocates for you by attending School Board meetings and speaking up for you when necessary. During the budget process we make our presence known at the Board of County Supervisors' meetings, reminding our elected officials that the budget they adopt reflects their support of Prince William County public schools, its students, and education employees.

PWEA recognizes that support is an essential component of advocacy. We are here for you when you need support. We provide you with information so you can advocate for yourself. As your new President, I need your support. I need for you to be active and participate so that together we can be strong. Remember, we are an organization; sometimes we will need to organize and make our voices heard.

"Collective Action" is one of the core values of the National Education Association. We believe individuals are strengthened when they work together for the common good. As education professionals, we improve both our professional status and the quality of public education when we unite and advocate collectively.

This is my first time addressing you as the new Prince William Education Association President. It is a pleasure, an honor, and privilege to serve in this capacity on your behalf. I would love to hear from you. Let me know how I can advocate, support and serve you better. I thank you for the work you do everyday to advance the cause of public education. Have a great school year!

Bonnie Klakowicz, PWEA President

ARE YOU UP-TO-DATE?

In order for PWEA to maintain accurate records, please contact Kim Davis at the PWEA office by phone (703.361.2444) or e-mail [kdavis@pweaveanea.org] to update your information in the event you have experienced any of the following changes:

- ◆ name change
- ◆ home address
- ◆ phone number
- ◆ e-mail address
- ◆ work location
- ◆ employment status (i.e. full to part time)

Help us to better serve you by making sure that you continue to receive timely member information from your local (PWEA), state (VEA), and national (NEA) affiliates. Thank you!!

PWEA ANNOUNCES \$500 INSTRUCTIONAL GRANTS FOR MEMBERS

The intent of the PWEA grant program is to stimulate innovative ideas and to provide funds to support instructional projects, which benefit students and teachers. Two grants in the amount of \$500 each will be awarded. Please visit www.pweaveanea.org to download an application. The proposal deadline is Friday, December 12, 2008, and winners will be notified by Friday, December 19, 2008. Checks will be awarded in January 2009 and implementation of grant monies is expected to occur between January and June of 2009.

Notary available to members for FREE!
Kim Davis, PWEA administrative assistant and notary, is available by appointment to notarize personal documents. Contact Kim at 703.361.2444 or kdavis@pweaveanea.org for more information.

DELEGATES SOUGHT FOR APRIL'S VEA CONVENTION- FORMS AVAILABLE OCTOBER 20th

Based on total membership, the Prince William Education Association is entitled to representation by approximately 115 delegates at this year's annual Virginia Education Association Convention. Scheduled for Hampton, the convention will convene on Thursday, April 23rd and conclude at the drop of the gavel on Saturday, April 25th. While the Representative Assembly does meet to conduct the "official" business of the Association, delegates have an opportunity to meet delegates from other Associations throughout the state as well as sample local sights and attractions.

PWEA arranges professional leave for delegates through the Office of the Superintendent. The county, not your individual school, incurs the cost of your substitute. Also, PWEA delegates receive an ample stipend to help defray routine convention costs. Traditionally, it has cost only their time and what they choose to spend out of pocket on goodies for family and/or friends.

Are you new to the Association or its activities? Attending convention is a GREAT way for veteran and not-so-veteran members to see both the local and state organizations at work. So...how do you become a delegate? A simple nominating form will put YOUR name on the delegate ballot. These forms will be available beginning October 20th by contacting the PWEA office at 703.361.2444 or via e-mail at pweaoffice@pweaveanea.org. Nominations must be filed in the PWEA Office by the close of business on January 5th. Interested, but have questions? Again, please call or e-mail. We'd love to have you as part of the delegation!

SAVE THE DATE: February 27 - March 1, 2009

SPARKS is a totally free, fun, and rewarding weekend event for teachers and education support professionals who have five or fewer years of experience in public schools and little or no experience with the Virginia Education Association.

Members will learn skills and form relationships with other members, while gaining a better understanding of the Association. We survey each participant ahead of time and design the weekend around what participants want to learn or gain. VEA SPARKS allows members to make discoveries about fellow educators and the Association.

SPARKS is held at the Wintergreen Resort [www.wintergreenresort.com] outside of Charlottesville, Virginia. There will be time for skiing and fun group activities.

The weekend is FREE. Lodging, food and professional development activities are covered. Costs associated with tubing, skiing, and transportation will be covered by individual members.

If you wish to participate please contact Liz Gordon at egordon@veanea.org and ask to be put on the SPARKS mailing list. Shortly after, you'll receive a brochure with full registration details.



**Don't Forget to Vote!!
Tuesday, November 4th**

CELEBRATE AMERICAN EDUCATION WEEK WITH PWEA

All PWEA members are invited to attend socials planned in celebration of American Education Week, November 17 through November 21. We will gather on Tuesday, November 18th at On the Border in Woodbridge and on Thursday, November 20th at KC's Restaurant in Manassas. Both events will begin at 3:00 PM and end at 5:30 PM.

Please mark your calendars now and plan to join us in this casual setting. Make new friends, reconnect with colleagues for some purely social time and take the opportunity to meet members of your PWEA Board of Directors and UniServ staff. Hope to see many of you in attendance!

IMPORTANT PWCS REGULATION INFORMATION

Good News! Because of the diligence of our UniServ staff, **PWCS School Board Regulation 561.05-1** has been changed to state that during a meeting to investigate complaints, the employee may be accompanied by a silent witness. "Such silent witness may be another employee or a representative of the employee's professional organization, but shall not be an attorney. Attorneys shall only be allowed at such meetings with the approval of the Associate Superintendent for Human Resources after consultation with Division legal counsel."

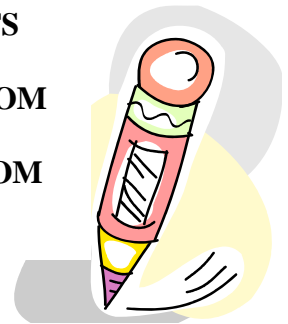
PWCS School Board Regulation 506.03-1 remains the same as it has always been. When a conference "concerns dismissal, placement on probation, or suspension, or when another supervisor is present at such conference, the employee shall have the right to have present during the conference a silent witness of the employee's choice".

Members with questions regarding acceptable use of employee email should review **PWCS School Board Regulation 295-1**, "Employees are to utilize the Division's computers, networks, and Internet services for school-related purposes and performance of job duties. Incidental personal use of school computers is permitted as long as such use does not interfere with the employee's job duties and performance, with system operations, or other

system users. "Incidental personal use" is defined as use by an individual employee for occasional personal communications not occurring during instructional time, which use is not otherwise prohibited by this regulation."

Finally, please be aware when signing documents that your signature indicates receipt of said document, not agreement with it. According to **PWCS School Board Regulation 505.01-1**, "The employee's initials shall signify the employee has received a copy of such information whether the content of such information is acceptable or unacceptable to the employee. The employee should receive copies of such information within a reasonable time period of the actual event of achievement or reprimand."

NEA MEMBER BENEFITS PARTNERS WITH CLASSROOMDIRECT.COM TO OFFER MEMBERS SAVINGS ON CLASSROOM NEEDS AND SUPPLIES



Looking for a great source of everything from scissors to classroom furniture? NEA members qualify for an extra 10 percent off all orders plus free shipping on all in-stock orders thanks to a partnership between NEA Member Benefits and the Classroom Superstore. Visit www.veanea.org and click the "In the Classroom" header, then "Supplies and Materials" from the dropdown to be connected. Most orders ship within 24 hours for three-day delivery.

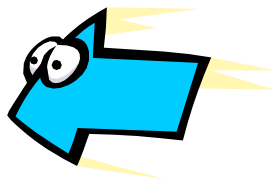
WHEN SHOULD I CONTACT MY PWEA UNISERV DIRECTOR?

Three UniServ Directors (UD), employed by the Virginia Education Association, work directly with the members of the Prince William Education Association. The UD's are responsible for advocating for members, organizing around issues that impact education, conducting trainings on educational issues, keeping our members informed and involved in Association activities. You need to contact your UniServ Director immediately if:

- you have questions about your evaluation,

- you are being placed on an action plan,
- you need help writing a rebuttal,
- you have questions about your pay,
- you are injured on the job,
- you have a Family Medical Leave question,
- you think that you are teaching over your caseload,
- you have a problem with another employee on the job,
- you have a question about your licensure,
- you are contacted by Child Protective Service, Risk Management or the police,
- you need a medical accommodation,
- you suspect unfair treatment from your immediate supervisor.

Check out PWEA's website at:
www.pweaveanea.org



Q & A: CAN YOU PLEASE EXPLAIN HOW CLASS LOADS ARE DETERMINED?

During the month of September, we receive many questions about class loads. The state standards are different for middle school and high school classes.

The Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia state, *Beginning with the academic year 2008-09 a middle school classroom teacher's standard load shall be based on teaching no more than 5/6 of the instructional day with no more than 150 student periods/day or 25 class periods/ week.*

The secondary classroom teacher's standard load shall be based on teaching no more than 5/6 of the instructional day with no more than 150 student periods per day or 25 class periods per week. Teachers of block programs that encompass more than one class period with no more than 120 student periods per day may teach 30 class periods per week. Teachers who teach very small classes may teach 30 class periods per week, provided the teaching load does not exceed 75 student periods per day. If a classroom teacher teaches 30 class periods per week with more than 75 student periods per day, an appropriate contractual arrangement and compensation shall be provided.

In another section it states, *Middle or secondary school teachers shall teach no more than 750 student periods per week; however, physical education and music teachers may teach 1,000 student periods per week.*

Each time you see a student, it counts as 1 student period (for example: if you see one student 3 days that week, the student counts as 3 student periods). If you teach on a block schedule, you will need to calculate your class load over a two week period of time.

Please note that elementary teachers are not protected by similar work load standards but do have class size maximums. If you believe this standard is not being met, please contact your UniServ Director for further assistance.

PWEA CALENDAR OF EVENTS

October

- 15 PWCS School Board Meeting, 7 PM
- 16 Make-up Rep Training @ 4:30 PM, PWEA Office
- 18 Northern Virginia Regional Reading Conference, 8 AM- 3 PM, George Mason University
- 20 VEA Convention forms available
- 23 New Member Orientation @ 4:30 PM, PWEA Office

November

- 4 Election Day
- 5 PWCS School Board Meeting, 7 PM
- 6 PWEA Board of Directors Meeting
- 13 All-member meeting @ 5 PM, PWEA Office
- 18 PWEA social, On the Border, 3-5:30 PM
- 18 PWCS School Board Meeting, 7 PM
- 20 PWEA social, KC's Restaurant, 3-5:30 PM

December

- 3 PWCS School Board Meeting, 7 PM
- 17 PWCS School Board Meeting, 7 PM

The *Advocate* is published by the Prince William Education Association.
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