

NTEA CONNECTION

NORTH THURSTON EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

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PRESIDENT'S CORNER

MARCH 2017

*We've dodged
one bullet
with the
"levy cliff"
being
extended.*

The term "March Madness" may be defined differently depending on your audience. Most think of March Madness in terms of the NCAA basketball tournaments, which brings some leisure sports entertainment. Currently the term has taken on a new meaning for NTEA producing an evolutionary climate of uncertainty, unpredictability, declining morale, and increasing number of challenging student behaviors. All of which result in mounting undue stress or madness.



NTPS is a great District to be employed in, when we look at comparative contracts and offerings to students in terms of enrichments, and also what teachers may obtain through professional development. I'm confident we can rival any district in the state. In compensation beyond the State Allocation Model we remain in the top third of the 259 districts. Yet, even with all the positives that surround us, there are themes emerging.

Teachers are feeling that the ability to be creative is being taken away from them and that they are being micro-managed in every aspect of their daily teaching.

Even with an event such as parent teacher conferences, some are feeling like they "must" all fit into the same mold, and be present at the same time, and conference in the same fashion. These feelings are common to new teachers as well as experienced teachers.

The most common themes I hear are:



- Just let me teach!
- I feel that I am not trusted as a professional.
- I feel I don't have a voice.
- What is being done about the extreme behavior problems?
- My plate is so full, it is broken.

NTEA leadership is continually sharing these issues with administration and seeking help to solve the problems. We meet monthly in contract

administration, where NTEA leadership meets with District Office administration. I meet with Joe Bremgartner, Executive Director of Human Resources, on a weekly basis and often Assistant Superintendent Monty Sabin and Superintendent Deb Clemens will attend. There is continual two-way communication in an attempt to work together to help overcome some of the stress producing themes. Working at an office with the Olympia and Tumwater Association presidents, I can attest to the fact that the themes are not unique to NTPS. In fact they are not unique to Washington State. There is currently a tremendous amount of madness as to the unpredictable future of public education.

The past several months has left us with the uncertainty of funding for our upcoming year. Recently, as noted in the News Tribune article on 3/10/17, steps have been taken that should secure our levy funding for another year. Our district relies heavily on levy funds to finance our elective and arts programs. One of the attractions of NTPS is our extensive arts and elective programs that engage children from kindergarten through their senior year.

We've dodged one bullet with the "levy cliff" being extended. Keep informed to what may happen with the state allocation model; visit our voice at washingtonea.org.

We need to commend the NTEA bargaining team for the after hours and weekend work that they are doing to prepare for various scenarios that they may face while at the bargaining table. The unpredictable State funding will undoubtedly create a challenging bargain.

Thank you to everyone for all that you do. Take care, and remember working together we can make a difference.

Connie

'A BIG SIGH OF RELIEF:' CAPITOL REACHES DEAL ON 'LEVY CLIFF'

The News Tribune

BY MELISSA SANTOS msantos@thenewstribune.com

State lawmakers approved a deal to let school districts continue to collect the same level of local taxes for another year, delaying a 2018 deadline that school districts said would dramatically slash their budgets.

The House approved the bill to delay the so-called "levy cliff" on an 87-10 vote Thursday — a day after the same measure cleared the Senate.

Senate Bill 5023 now heads to the desk of Gov. Jay Inslee, who said he plans to sign the bill into law as soon as possible.

"It gives some measure of certainty to our school districts as they are doing their budgeting process, (so) that they can move forward," said state Rep. Kris Lytton,



D-Anacortes.

The bill lawmakers approved would extend school districts' current levy lid through January 2019. Without a change in law, the state's 295 school districts were estimated to lose between \$358 million and \$500 million in the 2018 calendar year.



That's because under current law, school districts are scheduled to lose some of their ability to raise local property taxes starting in January.

While the Democratic-controlled House passed its version of the levy cliff extension in January, the measure stalled in the Senate, which is controlled by a coalition of 24 Republicans and one conservative Democrat.

Republican Senate leaders initially said they worried delaying the deadline would reduce lawmakers' motivation to solve the larger school-funding problems plaguing the state, which mostly revolve around the use of local levies.

In the McCleary case, the state is in contempt of court because the Legislature hasn't come up with a way to end the unconstitutional use of local levies to pay for basic education.

The state Supreme Court has ordered lawmakers to come up with a plan this year to solve that problem — which will involve taking on local school district salary costs that should be paid by the state — by September 2018.

The Senate approved an amended version of the levy cliff measure after adding accounting provisions that lawmakers said would help prevent the unconstitutional use of local levy dollars to pay for state educational responsibilities.

Some members of the House who voted against the measure Thursday said they still fear it will reduce the incentive for lawmakers to complete their overhaul of the school system.

"My concern with this bill is that we are once again removing the urgency from the situation," said David Taylor, R-Moxee, who voted against the bill.

"What I hear from my folks at home is, 'Will you stop doing these temporary fixes?'"

The amended bill would require school districts to ensure they aren't spending their local levies on basic education costs, such as teacher salaries.

To make that happen, districts would have to get approval from the state Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction before putting new levies on the ballot — something Senate Republicans had proposed in their larger plan to overhaul the

state's school system.



School districts would also have to track that local tax money separately from education dollars that come from the state.

District officials praised the passage of the measure Thursday, but they also said they were unsure of how some of those accountability provisions would actually work.

Tom Seigel, superintendent of the Bethel School District, said he's happy his district no longer has to worry about cutting \$12 million from its budget in the 2017-18 school year and can move forward with hiring about 75 new teachers.

He was less thrilled with the requirement that districts seek state approval to put new levies on the ballot, calling it "just one more bureaucratic hoop you have to jump through."

"It basically suggests the Legislature does not trust the local school districts to follow the law," Seigel said.

"If the Legislature had been providing enough money for public education over the years, none of this discussion would be occurring now. That's the reality," he said.

Still, Courtney Schrieve, a spokeswoman for North Thurston Public Schools, said the bill's passage has caused "a big sigh of relief" among district officials. North Thurston stood to lose about \$10 million next year if the levy cliff took effect.

"Hopefully we can figure out how to divide the money and which goes where, and that sort of thing," Schrieve said.

Dan Steele, lobbyist for the Washington Association of School Administrators, said resolving school districts' immediate budget concerns should help lawmakers re-focus on the multibillion dollar problem in front of them in the McCleary case.

He said lawmakers' ability to compromise on the levy lid extension provides a "little bit of hope" that they can also come together to fix how the state pays for schools.

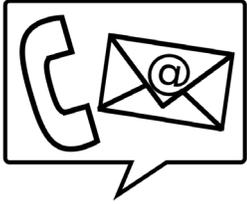
"We are very happy this is done, and we can now take this distraction off the table and focus on this big fix," Steele said.

LEGISLATURE CONTACTS

Below find the contact information for local legislators. Remember to use your own computer or smartphone to make these contacts!

A great way to stay informed is through WEA's OurVoice, full of up to the minute reports on legislative action.





Legislators' Contact information

To contact your legislator see the list below or use WEA's simple email system found on WEA's home page at www.washingtonea.org. Just click on OurVoice Political Action, click Take Action!, and follow the links. You may also contact your legislators via the Legislative Hotline at 1-800-562-6000.

2nd Legislative District

~Sen. Randi Becker	360-786-7602	e-mail: randi.becker@leg.wa.gov
~Rep. J.T. Wilcox	360-786-7912	e-mail: jt.wilcox@leg.wa.gov
~Rep. Andrew Barkis	360-786-7824	e-mail: Andrew.barkis@leg.wa.gov

20th Legislative District

~Sen. John Braun	360-786-7638	e-mail: john.braun@leg.wa.gov
~Rep. Richard DeBolt	360-786-7896	e-mail: Richard.debolt@leg.wa.gov
~Rep. Ed Orcutt	360-786-7990	e-mail: ed.orcutt@leg.wa.gov

22nd Legislative District

~Sen. Sam Hunt	360-786-7642	e-mail: sam.hunt@leg.wa.gov
~Rep. Beth Doglio	360-786-7992	e-mail: beth.doglio@leg.wa.gov
~Rep. Laurie Dolan	360-786-7640	e-mail: laurie.dolan@leg.wa.gov

35th Legislative District

~Sen. Tim Sheldon	360-786-7668	e-mail: timothy.sheldon@leg.wa.gov
~Rep. Dan Griffey	360-786-7966	e-mail: dan.griffey@leg.wa.gov
~Rep. Drew MacEwen	360-786-7902	e-mail: drew.macewen@leg.wa.gov

JUST TEXT 4 1 4-1 1

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Knitting machine - all parts, weights, case, ribber, stand etc. \$200 - contact Ronna Reed 360-459-3567 - Leave a message and I will return call.

