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The professional publication of the Wyoming Education Association

Our Vision
The WEA is an organization dedicated to creating the best educational environment for all learners and the best working environment for all educational employees.

Our Mission
The mission of the WEA is to advance public education at all levels by: creating equitable educational opportunity for all learners; promoting the highest quality standards for the profession; and expanding the rights and furthering the interests of the education personnel. The WEA will continue to build a learning community which will provide a high quality education for all.

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Welcome to the 2018/19 school year. I hope your year is off to a great start. As you take time to reconnect with your returning colleagues and get to know your new colleagues, please tell them about WEA and why you are a member. Let them know that we are standing together for public education in Wyoming. Ask them to stand with WEA and stand for students.

When we stand together, we have the power to ensure that every student in Wyoming receives high-quality education. WEA members are invested in education and each other. As members we are always there for each other – to lend a helping hand and offer a shoulder to lean on when needed. Our new teachers need you to reach out to them and be a mentor for them. As a mentor you can provide a positive and relevant relationship and will make a positive difference in their experience as a first-year teacher. You can be the difference between them just surviving their first year and thriving in their first year. When we stand together we can make a positive difference for the entire educational system. So, please ask the potential members at your worksite to join WEA and stand with us to stand for students.

Another easy way to stand with WEA is by wearing red every Wednesday throughout the year to show support for public education. This is WEA’s own Red Wave to show support for our schools. We want to let our elected officials see that people in Wyoming support our public schools. As our Red Wave grows throughout the year it will be a visible message to the legislature and our communities. Please spread the word and let’s get everyone wearing red every Wednesday. As it grows, hopefully community members and businesses will join in the Wyoming Red Wave in support of our public schools. This will be a very visible way to show the legislature that Wyoming supports our public schools, and they should too.

You may also choose to stand with political candidates who stand with WEA. Having the right people in state and local offices makes a big difference for students, educators, and schools in Wyoming. Please step up and help our endorsed candidates by talking to people you know about the importance of voting for pro-education candidates. If you want to do more, reach out to the candidate and offer to put a sign in your yard, go door to door, or make phone calls for them. It is essential that we elect pro-education candidates to the legislature and that we hold them accountable when they get elected. We must also ensure that we work to get positive people elected to our local school boards. Work with your local association to hold school board candidate forums so that the public can be informed about the people running for your local school board and talk to your friends and neighbors about these candidates.

I hope the 2018/19 school is a great year for education in Wyoming. As we stand together for students and public education in Wyoming, we will make a positive difference. Don’t forget to stand with WEA and stand for students by wearing red every Wednesday throughout the year!

Kathy Vetter
Executive Director’s Message

Ron Sniffen  
WEA Executive Director  
rsniffen@wyoea.org

Once again, WEA has your back!

We WON! As a result of WEA’s work, the School Facilities Commission backed down from their attempt to change the rules to increase the classroom capacity calculation from 16:1 to 25:1 in grades K-3 for all school buildings. Increased class sizes make reaching each student and connecting one-on-one difficult for teachers, and negatively impacts the quality of education delivered to our students. The leaders, staff and attorneys of the Wyoming Education Association are constantly vigilant to protect attacks that could diminish the quality of education constitutionally mandated for our Wyoming students!

The latest attack was an attempt to increase class size by allowing new school buildings to be built to accommodate a larger class size than what is currently mandated by law. The rule also affected current buildings that may be beyond capacity at the 16:1 ratio. The new calculation would have forced existing schools to increase their class sizes to 25 in grades K-3 before the School Facilities Department would pay for modular classrooms. This back-door approach to bypass the Legislative process comes from the School Facilities Department (SFD), an agency under the executive branch. At the behest of the SFD, the School Facilities Commission, a non-elected, governor appointed entity, implemented “emergency rules” with little or no real opportunity for public input. There was no “emergency.” The previous rules had been in place for years and there had been no move to revise them. It appeared that the SFD staff was attempting to set up a scenario where the “emergency” rules adopted with little public awareness input should now be made permanent through a rushed process, again without proper public information and opportunity for public input.

In response to these actions, WEA submitted a request for public comment opportunities. Only one public hearing was scheduled, which was September 18th in Cody. The hearing was scheduled during the day, making it extremely difficult for education employees to attend. Not to worry. WEA Government Relations Director Tammy Schroeder testified, relying on a 12-page document prepared by our legal firm, Hacker, Hacker and Kendal, which outlined the outrageousness of the emergency rules and the negative impact of increasing class size. As part of our campaign, the WEA launched a petition drive that generated more than a thousand signatures opposing the school facilities actions. Thank you to all who signed this petition!

This is just one example of how WEA has your back. You belong to WEA because you know we do this critical policy work. We know that your place is in the classroom, on the bus, in the school building or on campus. Your passion is for your students, and to provide the best education possible. Our passion is to be sure the legislature, school boards, and administrators give you the best tools possible to do that job.

WEA Has Your Back!

WEA President and staff monitor these entities’ meetings throughout the year. The work done by WEA at these meetings positively influences education policy and legislation in Wyoming.

State Legislature and Legislative Committees
- Influencing draft legislation
- Lobbying legislators, the governor’s office, and U.S. Congressional delegation
- Monitor and attend all committee meetings relevant to educational issues
- Attend every minute of every legislative session
- Meet regularly with legislators to inform them of education priorities

Professional Teaching Standards Board
- Certification issues
- Professional Development Resources

Wyoming State Board of Ed
- Promulgation of rules and regulations
- Appointment of committee participants

School Facilities Commission
- Funding and approval of school construction and major maintenance

Community College Commission
- Issues impacting Higher Education Issues

Wyoming Department of Ed
- Professional development
- Committee work around policies and regulations

State Lands Investment Board
- Protection of State School Trust Lands
WEA Members make a difference in political campaigns

by Tammy Schroeder, Government Relations Director

Much press has been given to the race for the Wyoming Legislature Senate District 19 seat. The seat, which includes portions of Park and Big Horn Counties, was held for 13 years by Sen. R. Ray Peterson. WEA staff and members organized to support long-time educator R.J. Kost, who won the race by a whopping 7.8% of the vote. RJ’s 30+ year career as a teacher and administrator in both counties, his involvement on the hospital board, and his life-long residency in the Big Horn Basin made him a desirable candidate to the voters. WEA organized a final push in the last days of the primary, getting members out knocking on doors, sharing RJ’s story, and listening to voters. Education is always a key issue to Wyoming voters, and this race was no exception. In their support for RJ, members shared his background in education and his understanding of local school funding needs. While it is true that Senator Peterson sponsored Senate File 0117, which proposed $114 million in cuts to public education, what is not true is that WEA ran a negative campaign to unseat the senator. The educators in the Big Horn Basin were well aware of the senator’s position and voting record on education funding, and in the end that is what inspired local members to canvass the county in support of R.J. Kost.

In Uinta County, long-time teacher and WEA member Wendy Schuler unseated incumbent Paul Barnard in the Senate District 15 race. Wendy directed a strong door-to-door campaign, relying on friends, family, and former students to get the word out about her strengths as a candidate. Wendy’s continued involvement in her community as a city council member and community leader made her name practically a household word in the county. Her years as a much-loved teacher and her life-long residency in the Bridger Valley gave her the widespread recognition a candidate needs to win a local election. WEA staff worked with the local leaders in Evanston and Lyman to generate support for Wendy, and WEA provided campaign guidance and materials which helped keep Wendy’s name in front of the voters.
In Campbell and Converse Counties, incumbent and long-time friend of education Senator Jeff Wasserburger faced a tough challenger in Senate District 23. Wasserburger, who serves on the Senate Education Committee, has been a strong voice for Wyoming educators and students in his 16 years in the house and senate. WEA-PACE dollars provided to candidates like Jeff help them buy campaign materials, pay for campaign expenses, and insure they have the resources they need to run a successful campaign. WEA-PACE also provides endorsed and education-friendly candidates with in-kind support such as printing mailing labels for members in the candidates’ district, organizing canvassing events, and offering phone banking. WEA-PACE also mails cards to members with the names of supported candidates, includes their names in the WEA news, and pushes out Facebook, Twitter, and other social media communications in support of candidates.

For the general election, which takes place on November 6 this year, WEA is focusing on critical, winnable races. For each of these races, WEA is asking members in every local to help us canvass the districts of these candidates. By contacting your local president, you can get your name on a list of volunteers to help with the door to door campaign or with a night of phone banking. WEA staff will provide training for members who sign up to help support these candidates. WEA members made a difference in the primary, and we have six short weeks to have even greater impact in the final selection of the Wyoming Legislature. In this issue you will find a list of our endorsed and education-friendly candidates. Please contact your local president and give these candidates a hand!
Mariah Learned is an Early Career Educator Taking the Lead in Her Local

When Mariah Learned says she has done just about everything for the Albany County School District #1, she means it. Since age 17, Mariah worked doing pool and building maintenance, eventually becoming a detention monitor, Saturday-school monitor, and custodian. Mariah also worked as a paraprofessional in special education and technology. Now, she is a Title 1 Math and Reading interventionist. But, she does so much more. She serves as the co-president of the Albany County Education Association (ACEA), the Vice-President of the WEA Southeast Region, and as a member on the PACE Steering Committee, PACE Council, the Meet and Confer Committee, as well as numerous policy committees. Thus, in addition to teaching, she works hand-in-hand with district employees, board members, and the superintendent of the district.

Mrs. Learned, or “Mrs. Learn-it” as some students call her, reflected that, “I always wanted to be a teacher. My mom loves to tell stories about me rounding up all the neighborhood kids for Mariah’s School as early as my preschool years and teaching them what I learned that day.” Mariah has a desire to be an educator and to see other educators succeed. She said, “I love watching students have those light bulb moments, . . . . You can literally see that magic happen in their eyes.” Mariah believes that opportunities to advocate for students and educators exist every day. Maybe that is why she has been told that she has a huge heart, a condition quite often found in great educators.

Mariah’s teaching efforts match her efforts as ACEA co-president. Recently, ACEA faced familiar problems of leaders needing a break, transitioning administration, and a membership that was not engaged. ACEA needed
new energy. Mariah helped provide that spark. She serves as a co-president of ACEA with Ami Cass. Paige Gustafson, an ACEA member, calls Mariah “a strong fierce leader who is approachable.” Fellow ACEA member Bryon Lee shared that, “It is extremely difficult to NOT idolize Mariah Learned. Her dedication to the education community of Albany County is often showcased in her ability to expediently respond to issues we face with professional promptness and articulation that keeps all ACSD#1 employees informed and represented. She is a leader who demonstrates the need to be dedicated, informed, and willing to take matters to task.”

Despite high praise, Mariah is quick to share the credit, “In ACEA we are lucky to have a co-presidency. Ami Cass is not only my friend, she is the yin to my yang, and our strengths and weaknesses balance each other well.” Ami Cass said, “Having Mariah Learned as a co-president for ACEA is pretty darn amazing! To start, she is passionate about education and the students she works with in the district. Mariah brings many great qualities to the table – she is very organized, she is continually educating herself on what is happening in the legislature, and she continues to stand up for what is best for all members. Mariah says of Ami, “[we] both believe in helping others to amplify their strengths and to help them grow into more active roles within our local organization. We have seen great growth in the number of emerging leaders within ACEA over the past couple of years. I know that we are both excited about the emerging leaders who will soon step into fulfilling the co-president roles in ACEA.” And like all good leaders, Mariah is excited about the number of emerging leaders in ACEA.

Mariah also serves as the WEA Vice-President of the Southeast Region. She continues to advocate for members, seek additional education and training, and create other leadership opportunities for members. Mariah said she would not be where she is today without such opportunities. Still, members need to get colleagues involved. WEA President, Kathy Vetter, calls Mariah a true leader who gives credit freely to others and yet is willing to take the heat if things do not go well, a true sign of a great leader. Mariah wants to change the perception that teachers are not professionals, that we are not doing enough. The fact that many of the people making decisions about education law have no idea what education is about, or how hard teachers work, highlights a need for more educators to run for office.

Mariah leaves us with this: “If there isn’t a convenient opportunity, find a way to make it happen. Education is always a cause worth fighting for.”
Eva Trevino-Linton

Eva Trevino-Linton is a true educator – a single mother of four kids in grades pre-K through 6th – she loves coaching soccer, making soap by hand, reading, and teaching students. She teaches English Language Learners to proficiently understand, speak, read, and write English as an ELL paraeducator at Powell Middle School and Southside Elementary in Park County School District #1.

While she loves her work as a paraeducator, she doesn’t qualify for health and other benefits and she must supplement her income by working a second job at a daycare. Her work as a paraeducator is also precarious. When a student she worked with as a Special Education paraeducator moved away last year, Eva suddenly found herself without a job. After much effort, she was finally offered her current position one day after school began this year.

Eva is passionate about serving kids who have immigrated to America. Her own paternal great-grandfather was an undocumented immigrant from Mexico and her maternal grandparents immigrated from France and Quebec. Working in public schools and discovering her talents as an educator have inspired her to make plans to further her education and become a teacher. She is proud to be a WEA member, especially for Early Career Educator programs that will support her efforts to serve her students professionally and well.

Farren Markworth

Farren’s career as a teacher “fell into her lap.” Even though she worked as an aide in her mother’s classroom growing up, Farren started a short career in journalism prior to working as an ESP in her district. That position led her to seize the opportunity to go back to school and get her master’s degree in special education and her current position at the Casper Classical Academy.

A member of the Natrona County Education Association, Farren considers it a “phenomenal privilege” assisting young adults to experience academic success as well as life success. She applauds the focus on the whole child while maintaining the high standards and expectations in the classroom. Citing her previous work outside of the educational setting, Farren feels she brings insight and a unique skill set to her students as they develop their professional goals.

She wants her students to remember her as one who was not just focused on their academic success but also their success and growth as human beings. She hopes that her students know what a privilege it is to teach them.
Marcy Harton

How many educators in Wyoming speak Hungarian? One, at least, and she teaches English and drama at Jackson Hole High School. A first-generation citizen, Marcy brings the ability to relate to a diverse student population where she teaches her students to focus on the power of language. Citing her high school English teachers, Marcy firmly believes that literature can teach kindness and compassion and she stresses to her students that words should be chosen carefully and used well. Marcy shares that she discovered this while working at a bank in Jackson with her degree in English literature. She realized not utilizing her degree made her question her choices, so she returned to the University of Wyoming for teaching certification, worked as a long-term substitute, and eventually moved into her current position.

Marcy wants her English students to remember her as the teacher who helped them realize how powerful language can be and that she helped them understand the why in addition to the what. For her drama students, Marcy hopes they will remember her as the teacher who helped them think outside of the box and step out of their comfort zones. She wants her theater class to be remembered as a second family – a place where students could truly be themselves.

Mason Magagna

Empowering students to be the best they can be is the reason Mason Magagna choose education as his profession. Knowing that he wanted to be in the classroom since 2nd grade, Mason is currently instructing students in Spanish at Cheyenne East High School. “I love the moments at school when the kids say they enjoy being around someone who cares about them. We’re giving them that opportunity.” He goes on to credit his teachers from Rock Springs – Mrs. Olsen, Mrs. Sempsis, and Mr. Atkinson – for helping him realize that we need to plant shade for our children and grandchildren, even though we don’t get to enjoy that shade for ourselves.

Mason is an active member of the Cheyenne Teachers Education Association, having helped host social events designed to introduce early career educators to the value and opportunities found in CTEA and WEA. He has also served in the role of association representative at the building level during his tenure in Cheyenne.

When asked what allows him to be successful, Mason sates that he is proud of the fact that he is a Wyoming millennial who is always open to trying new things and getting people to work together.
Kim Amen’s eyes welled with tears as she told the unthinkable tales of violence she heard from people across South Africa where citizens from the frontlines of apartheid are still healing.

“The survivors truly speak of forgiveness and their message made me hopeful about humanity,” Amen explains.

Apartheid lasted from 1948 through the early 1990s, but for those in South Africa who lived through the institutionalized racial segregation and violence, the past is still alive. Kim Amen was able to experience their stories first hand as a NEA Global Fellow. Through the fellowship program, she and a cohort of 45 other teachers from across the United States bonded through peer mentoring, a year-long professional development global education program, and a social media group before embarking on two weeks of travel in South Africa this past summer.

“Everyone we talked to were embodiments of Nelson Mandela’s teachings,” she explained. Mandela is known for leading South Africa’s emancipation from white minority rule after he was imprisoned and tortured during apartheid. He then served as his country’s first black president, becoming an international representation of dignity, unflinching bravery, and forgiveness.

Amen learned that even with the end of apartheid and a change in leadership, South Africa’s education system is ill-equipped due to poverty and a lack of government infrastructure. The minimum wage, only recently passed in South Africa, is a mere $269 per month. She explained that there are free government schools, however they are not funded properly. “There are simply no resources and a lack of qualified teachers. Students who want to be guaranteed a quality education must pay for private schools unless they are lucky enough to get into a low-fee school, and those opportunities are few and far between. As we were visiting schools, I realized how depressing and emotional the trip was and also how grateful we all were to be there learning.”
Amen came back to the states with a renewed commitment to adding global education to her classroom curriculum. “Learning how to integrate global education into your curriculum and standards across all subjects is challenging to wrap your head around. I am doing my best to not make it harder than it needs to be. Global education is about teaching students how to understand diverse perspectives, how to understand their connection to a wider world, effectively communicating and collaborating across cultures and countries, and using knowledge to take action on issues that matter to them in the wider world. It is about giving students the ability to begin understanding the importance of that human connection.”

Amen is now doing just that in her Cheyenne fourth grade classroom. She explains, “Global education opens doors for everyone. It gives students the opportunity to investigate the world and learn how to make a difference by creating compassion and empathy for people throughout the world.”

“Teachers in South Africa literally motivated students with nothing. With the resources I have in the United States, I know I can do more. After all, how can you experience something like talking to people who survived apartheid and not have it change you and how you teach?”

Amen was part of the first year of the application process for the NEA Global Learning Fellowship Program. Previously, only those who were presented with the NEA Foundation for the Improvement of Education award were eligible. Since that has changed, WEA is able to congratulate yet another NEA Global Fellow, WEA minority board representative, Lydia Rayfield as she joins the 2019 cohort, following in Amen’s footsteps in South Africa.

Kim Amen serves as the Treasurer of the Wyoming Education Association Board of Directors and is committed to the work of WEA and NEA. To learn more about the NEA Global Learning Fellowship Program go to: www.neafoundation.org.
Purple Passion for Learning

by Elise Robillard

In many cultures, purple is a magical color. It combines the calm stability of blue with the enticing energy of red. Purple is often a sign of creativity, wisdom, and mystery. Serving portions of the Wind River Reservation, purple is also the color of Fremont County School District #6 – one of the largest districts in Wyoming in terms of geographical area served. The superintendent of Wind River Schools, Diana Clapp, is a visionary leader with a lifelong commitment to students. In 2013, she secured federal funds to begin a mobile preschool program to serve the families who have children ranging in age from birth to five years and who live within the 2,400+ square mile boundaries of her district.

Inspired by the “book mobile” model, the Little Cougars Mobile Preschool – lovingly referred to as “The Purple Bus” – has been the perfect vehicle to overcome the obstacles faced by the families and preschool students in Wind River Schools. The first obstacle to overcome is the most obvious: distance. Many families in the Wind River School district do not have adequate resources to access to the necessary means to get their children to preschool every day.

Another obstacle to overcome is the historical wounds associated with educating the children of the Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapahoe tribes on the reservation. There is a history of taking children from their families to educate them. Although this practice has been condemned, there can still be an initial sentiment of mistrust between Native American parents and those who educate their children. By bringing early childhood education programs to families and allowing parents to participate in the lessons with students, parents and educators build a relationship anchored in striving to improve their students’ learning skills.

A final noteworthy obstacle that this bus helps to overcome: Lack of access to resources. When the program started, there are no licensed daycare centers. There are no local medical service providers. Children in the remote areas of the Wind River Reservation have limited interactions with other children and need stimulating enrichment opportunities to develop the

When the Purple Bus arrives, the children are excited and ready to play and learn.
skills to be successful in kindergarten and beyond. When the Purple Bus arrives, the children are excited and ready to play and learn. Their parents may join them in lessons, and families are provided books and other manipulatives to enhance their child’s learning, until “The Purple Bus” returns a week or so later.

Emily Smith is a vivacious early career educator – now in her second year as the teacher and the bus driver on The Purple Bus (she taught 4th grade for two years before accepting this assignment). When she heads out to bring school to her students, she is accompanied either by nurse Kelli Walker or paraprofessional Shino David. The nurse conducts health screenings and provides health information for the students and their families. The paraprofessional supports the lesson plans for the day and helps keep all the young students engaged in learning. Since this program began in 2013, its positive impact has resulted in a significant increase in early childhood learners reaching age-appropriate benchmarks and readiness for kindergarten.

The daughter of two career-educators from Torrington, Emily is a graduate of the University of Wyoming and a proud WEA member. Every day she wakes up excited to serve the 70+ students who rely on The Purple Bus to bring learning experiences to them. Emily employs kinesthetic and experiential learning strategies with her students, regardless of their age. She uses sensory bins, learning activities, toys, and manipulatives to develop reasoning and communication abilities as well as literacy and numeracy skills, which the students will need to be successful in school. Her thematic units focus on content that the students may not otherwise be exposed to at home such as science, space exploration, music and the arts. Her greatest joy is to see children pressing their noses to the front window of their home waiting for a glimpse of the bus, and then jumping up and down because they are truly excited to learn.
### WEA Supported Candidates

#### Endorsed: Statewide Races

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#### Endorsed: WY House of Representatives

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<tr>
<td>HD 50</td>
<td>David Northrup</td>
<td>R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HD 51</td>
<td>Cyrus Western</td>
<td>R</td>
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<tr>
<td>HD 57</td>
<td>Jane Ifland</td>
<td>D</td>
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<tr>
<td>HD 58</td>
<td>Patrick Sweeney</td>
<td>R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HD 59</td>
<td>Laurie Longtine</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HD 60</td>
<td>John Freeman</td>
<td>D</td>
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#### Endorsed: WY Senate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
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<th>Party</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SD 07</td>
<td>Stephan Pappas</td>
<td>R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD 09</td>
<td>Chris Rothfuss</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD 11</td>
<td>Lee-Ann Stephenson</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD 13</td>
<td>John Hastert</td>
<td>D</td>
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<tr>
<td>SD 15</td>
<td>Wendy Schuler</td>
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<tr>
<td>SD 17</td>
<td>Mike Gierau</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD 19</td>
<td>R. J. Kost</td>
<td>R</td>
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<tr>
<td>SD 21</td>
<td>Hollis Hackman</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD 23</td>
<td>Jeff Wasserburger</td>
<td>R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD 25</td>
<td>Sergio Maldonado, Sr.</td>
<td>D</td>
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#### WEA Ed-Friendly Candidates

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<thead>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HD 12</td>
<td>Ryan Lindsey</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HD 12</td>
<td>Clarence Styvar</td>
<td>R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HD 14</td>
<td>Dan Furphy</td>
<td>R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HD 14</td>
<td>Lorraine Saulino-Klein</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HD 24</td>
<td>Paul Fees</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HD 44</td>
<td>Sara Burlingame</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HD 44</td>
<td>Paul Johnson</td>
<td>R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HD 52</td>
<td>William Pownall</td>
<td>R</td>
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### Election Day (General):
Voters may register and vote at their polling places.

### General Election:
September 21 – November 6, 2018
(absentee and early voting will begin September 21st for the General Election. Please contact your County Clerk for further assistance.)

### Absentee Voting:
Absentee ballots may be requested at any time in 2018 prior to the day of an election.
Frequently Asked Questions

What Is WEA-PACE?

WEA-PACE is the political arm of the Wyoming Education Association, a member organization representing Wyoming education employees.

Why Do We Endorse Candidates?

We endorse candidates who will protect safe and quality professional working conditions for all education employees, support due process rights for all education employees, continue support for the constitutional mandate for equitable and adequate funding, and support adequate funding for K-12 education and community colleges.

What And Who Is Involved In The Process?

Every Wyoming candidate who filed for political office was invited to participate in the endorsement process. Candidates seeking the WEA-PACE endorsement participated in an extensive process starting with completing a questionnaire, then participating in an interview at the local level. Statewide candidates were interviewed at the WEA headquarters in Cheyenne, while WEA members interviewed legislative candidates in their districts. Once interviews were completed, the Candidate Interview Teams, made up of WEA members in communities throughout the state, made recommendations to the WEA-PACE Council for endorsements.

Will WEA-PACE Endorse For The General Election?

Candidates could receive endorsement for both the primary election and general election or just for the primary election. The WEA-PACE Council convened again after the August election to determine several additional general election endorsements.

What Does An Endorsement Mean?

WEA-PACE will provide assistance to endorsed candidates, ranging from monetary donations to WEA member grassroots support.

Are My WEA Dues Used For Endorsement?

WEA dues dollars cannot be used for candidate endorsements. All WEA-PACE donations are generated by voluntary contributions. Historically, WEA-PACE is among the largest political action committees in Wyoming.

How Can I Help?

Fill out the form on our website, http://wyoea.org/wea-pace/, to contribute to WEA-PACE, and vote for pro-public education candidates endorsed by WEA-PACE.
A Warm Welcome Arthur Huron WEA’s NEW SE UniServ Director

Greetings! I am originally from Texas and it is an honor and a tremendous pleasure to be included with such an awesome group here in Wyoming!

I started school in Dallas, where I attended Eagle Ford Elementary, the same school that Bonnie and Clyde attended. I graduated from high school in Dallas then attended the University of Texas at Arlington. My first job was at the military prison at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, as a Finance and Accounting Officer.

After the military, I went to work for Mercantile National Bank in Dallas as part of the International Department amongst other departments. Next, I worked at Austin Community Colleges as the Busar. At that point, I decided to teach adult learners.

For 12 years I worked as a bilingual teacher in adult education then as a recruiter and organizer for 12 years for the American Federation of Teachers.

I enjoy working with people, especially those in need of help. I enjoy advocacy and especially enjoy recruiting and organizing.

I am very excited to be here and even more excited to meet all of you soon! Please feel free to contact me at any time for any needs or questions you may have. You can contact Arthur by emailing him at aheron@wyoea.org or by calling him at 307-286-6563.

Kwaku Akomah joins WEA Staff

The management of information technology is a vital function of any organization. WEA is fortunate to announce the hiring of our new part-time Information Specialist/Office Assistant, Kwaku Akomah.

Kwaku brings an amazing set of skills to fill this position, in particularly around information technology. He started in this position July 5th.

With WEA’s increased reliance on technology, and the adoption of NEA360, his skills will help WEA achieve full implementation and help us face new technological challenges moving forward.

He was a Help Desk Analyst for New York Life, a lead Technical Consultant for IBEX Global, and a Customer Service Representative for Tri-State Petroleum. He also has a depth of experience as an office assistant while serving as an Administrative Clerk for the Department of Agriculture, as well as a support clerk for the US Embassy in Tokyo. He also earned several commendations while serving in the US Navy.

His family comes to Cheyenne to follow his wife’s career as a surgical nurse.

This is a newly reorganized position that is 20 hours per week. Much of the work he will do was previously completed by Cherie Cox, who recently retired.
Leadership keeps the boat afloat at this year’s NEA Representative Assembly! Congratulations to WEA President Vetter who was recently elected to represent state presidents on the NEA Program and Budget Committee for a two-year term. This newly formed position on the budget committee was created through a by-law change at the 2018 Representative Assembly.

Leaders from across Wyoming join the rest of the nation at the annual Representative Assembly.

Members from Northwest College enjoy a back-to-school event in Powell.

Members of Natrona County Education Association prepare to recruit new members in Casper.

Rock Springs member, Kevin Harper, at a recent membership event.

Members of the Albay County Education Association and SE Region President, Amy Simpson, gather for back-to-school activities.

Members of The Powell Education Association gather for a back-to-school picnic.
Almost in spite of myself, my retirement is relatively secure. I can’t take much credit. I was lucky enough to work for the State of Wyoming for 34 years. Maybe I was underpaid in the marketplace, especially when I started, but I took comfort from two things when pay raises were small and slow to come: public service was my life’s work, and my pay came in a total package that included great retirement benefits. As one public servant to another, there is a lot your employer and you can do to support good retirement outcomes.

Most public employees in Wyoming, including school district employees, are in the Public Employee Pension provided by the legislature and managed by the Wyoming Retirement System (WRS). WRS also sponsors a tax-advantaged supplemental savings plan to which employees can voluntarily contribute, specifically the WRS 457 Plan. School districts can offer the WRS 457 Plan, as well as vendor provided 457 plans and another type of plan known as a 403(b) plan.

I’m not in your shoes, but if I had it to do over again, I would think much more consciously about what I could have done, some of it with my employer’s nudge, to make my retirement even more secure. So I’m going to itemize some of my mistakes because they’re probably not that unusual, and you and your employer can take some easy steps to avoid them:

**Lack of knowledge.** When I started state employment, I knew there was a tax-advantaged savings vehicle, but I just never gave it much thought. I didn’t know how important it is. If you are not yet in this type of plan, you need to be. It’s just as necessary as the pension and Social Security system you contribute to. It is a vital part of the “three-legged stool” of retirement security.

**Procrastination.** Even after I was aware of its importance, I wasted five years before enrolling in WRS 457 Plan. I told myself I had justifications: I was tired of having little discretionary income; we had a house payment to make; it was great to have a new car; we needed to plan for children. Well, guess what? When I did start to contribute every month, I didn’t miss it. What I did miss out on was a lot of investment growth. The state now automatically enrolls new state agency employees in the 457 plan, with an opt-out provision. As of this article, none of the school districts are auto enrolling. I encourage school district employees to ask their employers to auto enroll.
**Complacency.** When I did start saving in the WRS 457 Plan, I rarely increased my contributions, except when I got a pay raise. Even though I never missed the salary taken out by payroll deduction, I kept my savings percentage essentially the same for decades. I should have planned to increase my contribution once a year. Some states and other employers do this automatically for employees, again with an opt-out provision. WRS is taking a look at this option. You and your employer should also look into this.

**Unrealistic risk aversion.** I invested too conservatively. Knowing little about the stock market or asset allocation or any of that esoteric stuff, I invested 100% of my contributions in the most conservative option in the 457 Plan investment menu. I was avoiding any market risk, yet exposed myself to the real risk of not outpacing inflation. The WRS 457 Plan now offers a choice of target date investments that align age with decreasing percentage of risk as your age increases. If you want help determining your investment mix, these funds are suitable for you.

**No goal-setting.** I did not set a specific amount I wanted to have in my 457 account at retirement. Why not? Beats me, but I know I would have had more in there if I had just taken that small step.

You have to navigate even more decision making than state agency employees, because you might also have access to 403(b) plans available to educational employers. When it comes to 403(b) offerings, it is important for the buyer to beware. That market can be rife with high-cost and low-quality products. For detail, see the New York Times’ five-part series on the issues with the 403(b) market originally published in 2016.

I recount the things I wish I had done differently to 1) encourage individuals to be more informed about retirement planning and 2) encourage employers to use advances in the retirement industry to guide their employees in the right direction. Thanks to a Nobel Prize winning economist, Richard Thaler, the retirement industry and related laws now support automatic features that “nudge” people. The private sector has fully embraced automatic enrollment, or the opt-out approach, to enrolling employees in private sector 401(k) plans because it creates better retirement outcomes.

The WRS Board of Trustees advocated to change state law to allow automatic enrollment into the WRS 457 Plan. The State of Wyoming has been auto-enrolling new state agency employees for three years, with excellent results. Employees see it as a service the employer provides; very few opt out. I want to make sure school district officials and employees alike know that a school district can elect to implement automatic enrollment into the WRS 457 Plan. You and your employer should consider it, and contact WRS to implement it.

I hope this article has been a help to get you to think of steps you can take on your own and with your employer to make retirement even better for you. Believe it or not, it will be here before you know it!

*Disclaimer. This article has not been submitted to the Board of Trustees of the Wyoming Retirement System. It is based on the author’s personal experience and knowledge of the Wyoming Retirement System, and expresses the personal views of the author.*
**Visionary Leadership Quest**

**WEA is on a Visionary Leadership Quest**

For the first three days of August, WEA leaders and emerging leaders from across the state came together in Casper for the inaugural WEA Visionary Leadership Quest. This conference was a shared learning journey that targeted transformative experiences to support our WEA leaders, and ultimately all of our members and future members. Our “Quest” defining our visions for what our state and local associations will be and do as they grow in membership; engage all members in the important work we do on behalf of Wyoming’s students, schools, educators, and communities; and, grow in power and effectiveness to take on the important challenges facing public education in Wyoming.

To guide us we have NEA’s vision of “Great Public Schools for Every Student.” Envisioning the work we have to do is crucial to our students’ and our communities’ futures given our current economy, the challenges of serving both rural and urban areas, and the constant attacks on the great public education system we have built in Wyoming.

Part of the discussion at the WEA Visionary Leadership Quest focused on how we develop our collective power, how we use it, and how we nurture it. We must first start by building relationships with colleagues, parents, community leaders, civic groups, and elected officials from school boards to the legislature to the governor’s office. We, as leaders, need to be willing to do the work – to “suit up and show up” – and bring others along in this work. In bringing our skills and community relationships to our work with the association, we must do what we do best – EDUCATE! We must share our personal stories, our vision, and the urgency of our important work.

Here is a simple exercise from the WEA Visionary Leadership Quest: If you had to name visionary leaders who inspire you, who would they be? Martin Luther King, Jr.? Steve Jobs? Malala Yousafzai? Oprah? A respected teacher, pastor, or relative? What qualities do these visionary leaders exemplify? How do you carry their work forward in your own work? How is your vision for the future of public education inspired by their example, their teaching, their sharing? Whoever inspires us, they are our teachers. They have a vision of how the world could be, what human potential could accomplish, and the power of communities. In sharing their vision with us, they become our guiding beacons, our points of reference, and the measure we use to calibrate our work. Our challenge is to keep our focus on our vision and to share it with others, so they may look to us for inspiration, guidance, and support. In sharing our vision, we are leaders. In welcoming others to “suit up and show up” with us, we are leaders. In celebrating every small victory along our path to our shared vision, we are leaders. We lift each other up and provide the energy we need to continue toward our goal.
Football season is here, so let’s wrap up this article with an insightful quote from Coach Vince Lombardi:

“To me, a leader is a visionary that energizes others. This definition of leadership has two key dimensions:
A) Creating the vision of the future, and
B) inspiring others to make the vision a reality.”
- Coach Vince Lombardi

Tap into your local association. Step up to the line. See the goal on the horizon. Let’s move together and score the points needed to make our vision for Wyoming’s schools and WEA’s members a shining example of effective leadership, setting the bar high for ourselves and our colleagues. Our students deserve our vision becoming their reality.
Grants

What would you do, where would you go if you could receive a $2,000 grant to enhance your professional skills and knowledge? Would you go to a national conference in an interesting place? Attend a training or seminar? Design your own field learning experience? Michelle Anderson, WEA member and social studies teacher in Riverton chose to travel to France for the 100-year anniversary of the first battle fought by American soldiers in World War I and to visit sites related to the Great War.

What would you do, what great learning experiences would your students have, if you received a $5,000 grant to promote student achievement? Perhaps you would create an aquaponic garden in your school with cross-curricular applications for science, agriculture, and life skills – that’s what WEA member Wendy Smith at Powell High School did. Watch her video at http://bit.ly/CoolGrant. If you received this grant, maybe you would bring in speakers or implement a school-wide program to foster critical thinking, promote cultural understanding, or prevent bullying.

As a WEA/NEA member, all these ideas and more are possible through the NEA Foundation Grants for Educators. Every year, there are three grant deadlines: October 15, February 1, and June 1. All WEA members who have student instructional roles – teachers, paraprofessionals, counselors, librarians – may apply. For more information, visit www.neafoundation.org and ask your regional UniServ Director for assistance.

ESSA Announcements

In the Nortwest Region, members can learn about ESSA initiatives in sessions during the NW Region Fall Retreat at Riverton High School on Saturday, October 13 from 9:00 am to 3:30 pm. There will be training later in October for local association leaders in ESSA organizing for districts that serve students from the Wind River Reservation. On November 1, there will be a community outreach meeting led by local leaders to bring ESSA information to parents, community leaders, and educators. For more information about ESSA opportunities in the NW Region, members should contact Elise Robillard, WEA NW Region UniServ Director at erobillard@wyoea.org.

The Green River Education Association (GREA) was recently awarded a 50/50 Grant from the National Education Association to help educators and the community understand the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). This grant, that was awarded directly to GREA and will be administered by GREA, will provide ESSA training in all the Sweetwater County School District #2 school buildings. All community members will be invited to the school that resides in their district for ESSA training on a date and time to be announced on various media outlets. GREA will be providing food and babysitting services on site at each training location. ESSA mandates that all educators, including Education Support Professionals, parents, students, and community stakeholders have a voice at the table when decisions are made regarding their schools. For more information about this opportunity, members should contact their GREA President, Lisa Robison.
How Your 2018–2019 Dues Dollars Are Allocated

The chart below shows how your NEA dues ($192.00; $116.50 ESP) are allocated to support and represent members and affiliates in their efforts to achieve NEA’s mission.

- Increase Educator Voice, Influence, and Professional Authority: $5.32 (ESP $3.23)
- Recruit and Engage New and Early Career Educators: $5.43 (ESP $3.30)
- Advance Racial Justice in Education: $7.79 (ESP $4.73)
- Provide Professional Supports: $13.40 (ESP $8.13)
- Secure the Environment to Advance the Mission of the NEA and its Affiliates: $22.72 (ESP $13.78)
- Legal and Insurance Support: $19.38 (ESP $11.76)
- Enhance Organizational Capacity: $62.03 (ESP $37.63)
- Enterprise Operations: $54.80 (ESP $33.25)
- Contingency: $1.13 (ESP $0.69)

Save With Dave

NEA Click & Save

This is our most popular discount program for NEA members and their families. This exclusive shopping service offers savings on brand name merchandise from hundreds of top retailers, online stores, and local merchants. Save on clothing, electronics, restaurants, jewelry, movie tickets and more! This is a wonderful way for you to recoup your dues dollars and participate in a shopping rewards program. Within this site you can save money from stores like Best Buy, Home Depot, Macys, movie theater tickets, theme parks and so many additional places. The key is to shop at these stores through Click and Save instead of going directly to their sites. As a bonus you will also have access to WOW points which you can redeem as a discount off of future purchases. As an added bonus you can also share this shopping experience with other people by selecting the Invite A Friend option. Now when you get ready to take that trip to Disney, go to a restaurant, go out for a date night to the movies, attend a local sporting event or anything else be sure to look into Click & Save to see the many available savings options that await you. Visit www.neamb.com register your account with your personal email address and start taking advantage of your benefits and put some money back in your pocket.
Continue your professional learning!

**Computer Science Edmodo Group Established**

Join the new Computer Science Edmodo group for Wyoming teachers to share resources with other computer science educators. Visit the WDE Standards page at https://edu.wyoing.gov/educators/standards/, scroll down and clink on the Statewide PLC on Edmodo link, then click on the computer science link.

**National Board Certification Running Start Workshop**

October 4-6. You must be a National Board Candidate and have paid your registration fee as well as your portion of the component fee to the NBPTS to attend this workshop.

http://wnbci.org/index.php/workshops/

**2018 Wyoming Innovations in Learning**

November 7-9, Evanston


**2018 NCTE Annual Convention**

November 15-18, Houston TX

http://convention.ncte.org/

**NCSD Professional Development Courses**

Fall courses include work in: Instructional strategies, classroom management, inclusion, and technology integration. PTSB and UW Graduate Outreach Enrichment credit available. For course questions, contact Jeff Brewster or Marie Puryear at Jeff_Brewster@natronaschools.org, Marie_Puryear@natronaschools.org.

“Why do I let this sunflower grow here? Because I am a teacher. Not all my students end up in the flower bed. Some are in the cracks. I could tear it from its spot and attempt to transplant it, force it to grow where all the flowers are expected to grow. What are the chances it will flourish? If that flower has the guts to grow in that crack, then I’m gonna water it where it’s at, and watch it grow!”

— Pam Greek, Worland High School Art Teacher and WEA Member
Member Spotlight

Getting to Know: Kate Steinbock

Ten questions with the new Higher Ed Representative to the WEA Board of Directors

1. Name?
Catherine Steinbock – I prefer to go by Kate.

2. Current role at your college?
I am a faculty member in the Arts, Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences Department at Eastern Wyoming College, and I teach early childhood and elementary education courses. I have been in this position for 11 years. In addition, currently I am the department head for our department and have been serving in this role since January 2018.

3. Current role in WEA?
I am the higher education representative to the WEA Board.

4. How did you get to where you are today/history?
   a. Why teaching?
   When I first went to college, I had no idea what I wanted to do. I was undecided between nursing and education. I always enjoyed my science courses, but I was not sure what I wanted to do for a profession. Once I transferred to the University of Wyoming, I found that I enjoyed the smaller class sizes in the education program and decided to pursue home economics education as a major.

   b. What did you want to be when you were growing up?
   It usually depended on the day, but it was a toss-up between a teacher and a nurse.

5. Greatest joy in current position?
One of the aspects of my current position that I enjoy the most is student advising. I like working with students to organize and plan their schedules and transfer programs. I find it to be rewarding when a student is able to finally articulate a plan and set some goals for their future profession. I also love teaching. Although I have had opportunities to move into administration, I have been hesitant to make the move away from teaching full-time. I anticipate the day will come when I will make the adjustment, but for now I am happy to continue teaching in the classroom. I think that public education is making progress in working with students to move them forward. I also think there are some incredibly innovative programs working to train students for careers that are more non-traditional than what we typically see public education doing and I am encouraged by this new momentum.

6. Greatest frustration in current position?
One of my greatest frustrations in my current position is the bureaucratic loopholes that keep education from moving forward. I think it is important for educators to be responsive to the needs of business and commerce in order to prepare students for their future careers. Unfortunately, higher education tends to work at a snail’s pace when it comes to change – I would like to see higher education be more responsive to necessary change.

7. Unique skills? What do you bring to the table that allows you to be successful?
I am not sure if it is unique or not, but I am what I call a “processor” – I spend a fair amount of time listening and asking questions. Then, once I get the information I think I need, I spend time processing the information. I like to be prepared before I speak or offer my opinion and/or advice. I think that some tend to misjudge that aspect of my personality as being aloof or shy, but that simply is not the case. I just need some time to process.

8. What advice would you give yourself in your first year of teaching?
I’d have told myself to “not sweat the small stuff” and it will get easier.

9. Was there a teacher/mentor who had a great influence on you? And if yes, what did you learn from them?
Like most people, over the years, I have had some amazing teachers whom I consider to be the “salt of the earth”, but there are a few who stand out. The first person who comes to mind was my advisor for my master’s program, Dr. Michael Day. Dr. Day was the first teacher who ever told me I was smart and I had the potential to complete a master’s degree. Not only did he provide guidance and support, he was one of my biggest cheerleaders when I started graduate school. Never in a million years did I believe I could earn a graduate degree, but he believed in me even when I did not believe in myself. Of course, he did not have to do that, but I am so grateful that he did. One of the things I learned from Dr. Day that I will always remember is the concept of just starting something is half the battle. During those times when I would start to worry about being able to write at the graduate level he would tell me “start writing and you can fix it later – just start”. All of these years later – it is still great advice.

10. How would you like your students to remember you?
I hope that my students remember me as a teacher who was supportive and encouraging of their goals. However, I also hope that they remember me as having high standards but always knowing that I believed they could achieve those standards.
The Student Wyoming Education Association (SWEA) is a student organization based out of the College of Education at the University of Wyoming. We are a branch of the Wyoming Education Association and desire to fulfill the National Education Association’s goals, visions, and requirements. Our main goal is to provide our educators with the three P’s: Professional Development, Political Action, and Public Service.

Our three P’s aim our visions and projects we do within our organization. The first P, Professional Development, is achieved every meeting. There are many Professional Development opportunities for our educators each meeting, such as: Resume building, Classroom Management strategies, Student Teaching Survival, Interview Tips, and many other skills our future educators will need. The second P, Political Action, is addressed with visits from current legislative members in Wyoming who update and inform us on the current standings of our education legislature. The third P, Public Service, is our favorite mission because we get to give back to the community. These three P’s guide our activities and help us develop into outstanding educators.

This semester we will be part of many events within the community. We will be participating in The Big Event, Homecoming, Safe Treat, and Literacy Night. Many of our meetings will include resume building, interview tips, legislative night, Special Education recognition, and many other beneficial professional developments.

In the future, we hope to continue providing professional development opportunities along with legislative knowledge to our members in order for them to grow as educators. Within the National Education Association comes many great benefits to further our members development; therefore, we hope to give back to NEA and continue utilizing its amazing service. We continue looking ahead into another great year with outstanding members, goals, visions, and services.

Amy Simpson, a music teacher at Hobbs Elementary in Cheyenne was nominated for the Award for Teaching Excellence from the National Foundation for the Improvement of Education this year. The program recognizes educators from around the country who shine in their schools, their communities and their own learning. Though she was not a finalist for the national award, her nomination recognizes her as the best of the best in her profession and she represented Wyoming’s commitment to excellence in education as a nominee for this prestigious award.
Collaborate and Learn with Project ECHO!

University of Wyoming Project ECHO and Wyoming Department of Education invite you to participate in:

- Virtual Professional Development on-line & no-cost (PTSB approved)
- Peer Learning & Collaboration
- Opportunities for sharing best practices & successes

Scan the code to learn more and sign-up to receive information on the 2018-2019 education networks.

Connect to the education networks via text message:

- Autism - Text echo autism to 31996
- Assistive Technology - Text echo at to 31996
- Secondary Transitions - Text echo transitions to 31996
- Behavior Supports - Text echo behavior to 31996
- Student Health - Text echo health to 31996
- Early Childhood - Text echo childhood to 31996

Like us on Facebook @uwechoeducation
uwyo.edu/wind/echo

Visit the WEA website at www.wyoea.org to access more information and opportunities to get involved. You may also follow us on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. Don’t forget that NEA EdCommunities for members only gives you access to WEA board minutes and other critical membership information. Our group in EdCommunities is called WYOEA Members.
Valued at $7,500

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We’ve seen your remarkable dedication firsthand and we’re proud to show our appreciation. So we would like to help you transform your school lounge from ordinary to extraordinary.

Create a cheerful, restful environment where you can collaborate with colleagues, nurture your creativity, or just plain catch your breath.

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