



*WEAC Region 2 - Protecting Rights
Providing for Professional Growth
Promoting Public Education*

From the President

Hearings have begun on the state budget—you can see those dates and locations listed at <http://weac.org/events>. Please note that since there are only four public hearings of the full joint-finance committee, other legislators have scheduled additional hearings to offer the public a chance to be heard, a schedule of those are included on the same web site as well. I will be attending the special hearing in Wisconsin Rapids on Thursday, March 19th where Representative Katrina Shankland is offering an opportunity for her constituents to speak about their concerns. It's clear in my conversations with people in our Region and across the state that many of us have become weary and jaded about state politics. Lots of us are wondering if our voice and these contacts, calls, and conversations really matter. The answer I give my colleagues and to all of you is this: **Our Voice Matters**.

We can't stop speaking out about the injustice of what is happening to our schools across Region 2. The statewide voucher program is diminishing our local school district's funding. Please, remember this. We may not be able to affect major change right now, but there is a broader goal and a vision of long-term change that we can affect. We have to continue our work together to save our public schools. Consider this to be more like training for a marathon, not a sprint. That means slow, methodical work building coalitions, placing phone calls, and having visits with elected officials. Each and every one of us, and our friends, neighbors, and colleagues, needs to contact our legislators about the budget and our concerns about school funding. We need to tell our stories about how this will affect our students.

Speaking of making our voices heard, Region 2 needs your input, ideas, and voice at the upcoming **WEAC RA on April 19-21** in Milwaukee and at our **Region 2 Representative Assembly on May 14th**. Please be sure that your local is represented at both of our annual Representative Assemblies. If you are interested in attending the WEAC RA, but your local can't afford the cost, please communicate that with Marsha Yulga, at the Region 2 office. We are trying to find cost savings by doubling or tripling up on room assignments with other local leaders. Additionally, we are willing to organize carpools from the Region 2 office in Mosinee to Milwaukee to save on the cost of parking and gas. The more representation that we have from Region 2 at these events, the more that the issues, opinions, and ideas that you each have will be a part of the policy for both Region 2 and WEAC. Again, **your voice matters**.

In Solidarity -

Peggy Wirtz-Olsen



EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE UPDATE

The transition from UniServ Councils to State Regions continues. In an effort to keep you informed, here are the highlights from the WEAC Region 2 March Executive Committee Meeting:

- \$200 in funding was approved for the Wisconsin Public Education Network (WPEN).
- Information needed regarding a new telephone system was requested by WEAC. The information was forwarded and no action will be taken until a response is received.
- Dan Lesniak notified the Executive Committee of his intent to resign as a Committee member and Region 2 Treasurer as of August 31, 2015.
- The Region 2 WEAC pre-RA meeting is scheduled for April 15th at the Eagles Club in Merrill. Start time is 6:00. All WEAC RA delegates from Region 2 are encouraged to attend. The WEAC RA is April 17th–19th in Milwaukee.
- Preparations for the Region 2 RA were discussed. Several executive committee seats will be up for election this spring. Two-year positions open include Vice-President, Secretary, and two (2) Member-At-Large positions. The office of Treasurer will be open as a one-year position to fill the remaining term of Lesniak.
- A Region 2 Board of Directors meeting dealing with the proposed 2016 Region 2 budget will be held on April 15th at the Eagles Club in Merrill immediately following the WEAC pre-RA meeting. Approximate starting time is 7:15.
- A Region 2 Executive Committee Meeting will be held April 15th at the Eagles Club in Merrill immediately following the Region 2 Board of Directors Meeting. Approximate starting time is 7:30.
- The *REGION 2 REPORTER* newsletter will be sent electronically to retirees requesting a copy provided there is a home e-mail address.
- Staff reports were distributed
- The next Executive Committee meeting is April 15th.

RUN FOR AN OFFICE OR POSITION ON THE REGION 2 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE At the RA on May 7th



The following positions will be elected at the Region 2 Representative Assembly:

OFFICERS:	Region 2 Vice-President	2 year term
	Region 2 Secretary	2 year term
	Region 2 Treasurer	1 year term
	Member at Large	2 year term
	Member at Large	2 year term

Hey Gov. Walker—DON'T TOUCH THE WRS!!



The WRS annuity adjustments (i.e. payments to WRS retirees) have been set. Increases will be applied to retired WRS members starting with the May 1 checks.

Adjustment to the CORE FUND: 2.9%
Adjustment to the VARIABLE FUND: 2.0%

This is the second consecutive year of positive adjustments following the 2008 financial crisis. Additional proof of the soundness of the WRS system.

UPCOMING EVENTS & Events of INTEREST

Thurs. March 26—In Wausau

Citizen Koch video

The Unitarian Church, 504 Grant St., Wausau **6:30 PM**

With the U.S. Supreme Court's Citizens United ruling opening the floodgates for unlimited political spending, it's now easier than ever to buy an election. But what happens when the voters realize that the billionaires and corporations doing the buying do not have the people's best interests at heart?

Thurs. March 26—In River Falls

Funding Our Children's Future—What's at Stake

The First Congregational United Church of Christ,
110 North Third Street, River Falls **6:45 PM**

A bipartisan forum on school funding and the impact of poverty, declining enrollment and decrease in school funding. Join Dale Schultz (R) and Mandy Wright (D) as they speak about the flaws in the state school funding formula, and discuss solutions to provide a path forward to keep WI's top-tier educational system working.

Sat. April 11—In Stevens Point

Student WEA Drive-In

UW-Stevens Point—College of Professional Studies Building,
1901 Fourth Ave., Stevens Point **9:30 AM**

A one-day professional development seminar for Student WEA members and teacher members with one to five years of experience. Check the WEAC website for more information and registration.

Missed *Dr. Julie Mead?* Or *The Impact of Big Money on Wisconsin Politics?*

Both programs are available via Wausau's Public Access Channel.

Public Schools and Privatization: What's at Stake?

Featuring the results of research by Dr. Julie Mead on Wisconsin Institute for Public Policy and Service Website

The Impact of Big Money on Wisconsin Politics

Featuring Jay Heck from *Common Cause* focusing on campaign finance, ethics, lobby reform, and the open meeting law.



VOTE on April 7th... OR VOTE EARLY

Spring elections will be held on April 7th this year. There are several important items on the ballot including a WI Supreme Court judge and local school board candidates.

Beginning Monday, March 23 – April 3 you can vote early! It is a simple process. You can vote in person at your municipal clerk’s office. Be sure to call ahead for office hours. Your “in-person” ballot must be cast at the municipal clerk’s office before 5:00 on Friday, April 3rd...but be sure to check closing time. Since April 3rd is Good Friday, your clerk’s office may close early.

You can also vote early by mail. Send an e-mail or fax to your municipal clerk requesting a ballot be sent to you. The clerk will need an original signature from you before your ballot can be counted so print a copy of your request and sign it. Include the signed copy when you return your completed ballot. Be sure it is OUTSIDE of the certified ballot envelope.

Encourage your family, friends, neighbors and colleagues to go to the polls...or to VOTE EARLY!

Every vote counts!



Constitutional Amendment on the Ballot...



On the April ballot is a constitutional amendment brought to the voters by the extremely conservative Wisconsin state legislature. Currently the role of Chief Justice is given to the most senior member of the Supreme Court. In an effort to have even more control of the court, the legislature wants to change the constitution so that members of the court elect the Chief Justice to serve a two-year term. The current Chief Justice is Shirley Abrahamson who, like Justice Bradley, has a record of fairness and non-partisanship. If this amendment passes, then big money donors will continue to chip away at the regulations that protect workers and all people of Wisconsin. Their goal is to concentrate the control into the hands of big business thus ending protections for workers.

Wisconsin voters have twice elected the current Chief Justice Shirley Abrahamson. As the most senior justice, she has the respect of the voters. This amendment would strip the power from the voting public and put it in the hands of a few justices. This will make the court more political and partisan.

WEAC and the Regions have endorsed **“Vote No” on the constitutional amendment.**

This is an 11.29 communication with WEAC members



FOR SUPREME COURT...

The April 7th election will impact how Wisconsin citizens are treated by our justice system, and your vote will help to determine the outcome.

Supreme Court Justice Ann Walsh Bradley is up for re-election. Justice Bradley has a strong record of being tough, fair, and independent. While the Supreme Court has continued to grow more conservative with justices clearly beholden to the right wing special interests, Justice Bradley continues to be a voice committed to upholding the tradition of the Supreme Court being a fair, neutral, and non-partisan court where all Wisconsinites have the opportunity for an equal chance at justice.

Bradley's opponent is a strong contrast to her record of fairness. The conservative running against Justice Bradley has already signaled he will be more partisan, if elected, by aligning himself with Governor Walker, Wisconsin Manufacturers & Commerce, Club for Growth and the other groups who support him financially.

WEAC and its Regions have endorsed Justice Ann Walsh Bradley for re-election and encourage you to **vote to re-elect Ann Walsh Bradley for Supreme Court.**

This is an 11.29 communication with WEAC members.

2015-17 State Budget
AT A GLANCE

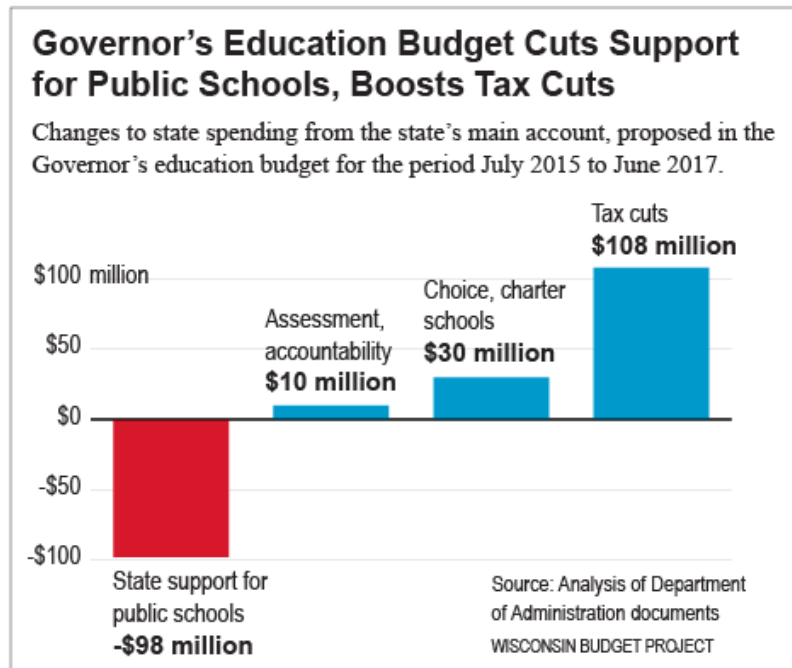
K-12 EDUCATION

- Reduces state support for education and forces local public schools to cut spending by an average of \$150 per student in the 2015-16 school year
- Takes funding directly from local public schools to pay for the statewide expansion of Gov. Walker's taxpayer-subsidized private school voucher program
- Removes local control of schools by creating an unaccountable and unelected statewide charter school board
- Permits people with no background in education, and no proven skills they can adequately teach our kids, to become licensed teachers

Senator Chris Larson @SenChrisLarson · 2h
With RTW behind us, now we focus on how this bad budget is #WrongforWI and how #WICanDoBetter. Here is K12 at a glance pic.twitter.com/86WShZk79H



Wisconsin Budget Project has released a new [summary of the impact of the budget on public schools](#). The report gives more details, but this graphic says it all:



Wisconsin Is Now the Nation's 25th Work For Less State

Scott Walker signed the so-called right-to-work bill into law on Monday morning, March 9, after two weeks of fierce opposition from citizens and Democrats in the Legislature. President [Barack Obama condemned the law](#) on Monday night.



In the wake of the bill's passage, Wisconsin AFL-CIO president Phil Neuenfeldt and secretary-treasurer Stephanie Bloomingdale released a powerful statement of solidarity and strength for the future of education, labor and justice organizations in our state. They call on all of us to continue to demand that Walker and the Legislature serve the people of Wisconsin and not ideologically extreme interest groups and campaign donors:

"Amidst strong opposition from Wisconsin citizens and businesses across the state, **Gov. Walker signed Right to Work into law today**, making Wisconsin the 25th RTW state in the nation.

"By signing Right to Work, Gov. Walker continues his crusade on the hard-working, middle-class families of Wisconsin. From refusing to expand **BadgerCare** for the sick, to enacting tax cuts for the rich, **gutting education** and **eroding collective bargaining rights** for working people - Gov. Walker has shown a **true disregard for Wisconsin families** who work hard every day to put food on the table and a roof over their head.

"By enacting Right to Work, Gov. Walker continues to tip the scales against working class families in favor of his millionaire and billionaire buddies who fund his campaign. Gov. Walker's political stock amongst the campaign funding elite may be rising, but **it is the people of Wisconsin who are paying the price of his unchecked political ambition.**"