

Reclaiming the Promise



AFT-West Virginia 2015 Legislative Agenda

At the September 2014, American Federation of Teachers - West Virginia Legislative Summit, members from across the state gathered in Charleston to prioritize a legislative agenda. The union identified seven priorities for the 1st Session of the 82nd Legislature:

1. HIGHER QUALITY OF EDUCATION FOR ALL STUDENTS

- Funding to provide a highly qualified teacher in all areas of critical need.
- Employee driven professional development and mentoring appropriate for professional growth with emphasis on new teacher support.
- Funding for additional alternative education settings at all grade levels
- Increased planning and collaboration time for all educators, with elementary teachers granted a daily planning period commensurate with secondary teachers, but not less than 60 consecutive minutes.
- Class-size equity must be addressed for all grade levels and content areas
- Special education students included in a preK-12, regular-ed classroom (including elective classes) not exceed 30% of total students.
- Fair and equitable evaluation system
- Reduction of high stakes standardized testing of students

2. IMPROVED COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS FOR ALL EDUCATION PERSONNEL

- Adequate funding for a 4-year salary package for teachers and service personnel with across-the-board implementation:
Year 1-\$2,000; Year 2-\$2,000; Year 3-\$2,000; Year 4-\$4,000.
- Binding legislation that SB 541 (2007) revenue be used to increase salaries and/or benefits for education personnel.
- A state tax exemption of up to \$500 on out-of-pocket classroom expenses accrued by educators.
- Automatic cost of living increases.
- Providing retired teachers their daily rate per employment as a substitute.

3. CONTAINMENT OF HEALTH CARE COSTS FOR ALL PUBLIC EMPLOYEES

- Increase PEIA employer contribution to match employment numbers
- Re-instating the retiree subsidy for new hires as of July 1, 2010.
- A return to the coordination of benefits for Medicare eligible retirees.
- Stronger health care cost containment legislation.

- More legislative oversight of PEIA Finance Board by requiring LOCEA approval of major board actions.

4. HIGHER EDUCATION OVERHAUL TO PROTECT EMPLOYEES AND STUDENTS

- Protect tenure system
- An exemption for higher education from any proposed budget reduction.
- A bifurcated salary proposal: Staff and faculty will receive an annual cost-of-living increase. Merit increases will be given only after the annual cost of living increase, as funds are available. In addition, increase the Annual Experience Increment to \$100.
- Raises given to all personnel when HEPC approves raises for administrators.
- Providing fairly distributed increases in state-level appropriations for higher education.

5. TRANSPARENCY AND REDUCTION OF TOP-HEAVY ADMINISTRATION

- Consolidate county school systems to form Metro-like boards of education.
- A requirement that all central office administrators be fully certified.
- Closing the gap between administrative pay and teacher pay.
- Conduct a thorough audit of all county BOE's, RESA, OEPA, and other educational agencies that receive state and federal education dollars to account for their impact on the educational process.
- Systems to publish all matters that impact state and county BOE, WVDE, and Higher Ed administration to provide transparency, accessibility, and clarity

6. PROVIDING A SAFE AND ORDERLY SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

- Implementing uniform processes and training for classroom disciplinary actions and all issues that affect the learning environment.
- Strengthen and enforce the Safe Schools Act, clarifying the responsibility of all stakeholders to ensure a safe learning environment.
- Secure funds for resource officers, social workers, and counselors.
- Extending mandatory immunizations when age appropriate to include pre-kindergarten children.

7. AUTOMATIC COST-OF-LIVING INCREASES FOR RETIREES

- Automatic cost-of-living increases for retirees.
- A state tax exemption for retired educators up to \$20,000.

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

In addition to these priorities, AFT-West Virginia supports the right of education employees and other public employees to bargain collectively. We believe that education employees have the right to choose the bargaining agent in their county/institution through free and open representation elections.



AFT-West Virginia

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