

# 2016-17 Wareham Education Association Annual Report

## **President's Report** *Brian Fitzgerald*

Writing my Annual Report is always a challenge, as what is contained below is the work of a strong team working on behalf of our diverse membership. While the summary below represents the lion's share of my work, it is imperative to note that almost none of this work was done in isolation. Our accomplishments this year are rooted in the efforts of dozens of WEA colleagues, as well as our allies in our MTA.

My phone reports that since my last annual report, I participated in 84 scheduled meetings in my role as WEA president across a variety of forums. Subject matter and formality varied – from the highly organized MTA Annual Meeting, Summer conference, weekend and evening forums with dozens of local presidents in Massachusetts, formal negotiations sessions with the Wareham School Committee, testifying publicly before that committee, to one-on-one conversations with members of the media, School Committee, and WEA.

Approaching my work, I remain mindful of the three roles which I perceive describing the responsibilities of WEA president:

Protecting and strengthening our members' rights. Working with our PR & R Chair, I have responded to many concerns about district policies and moves that threaten our rights. I have spoken to principals about inclusions in handbooks that contravene relevant contracts, attempts toward discipline that violate principles of fair and productive administration. There have been a range of grievances in which I have been involved, reacting to a range of decisions from irritating to career-threatening. While confidentiality prevents the use of details, I detect a pattern of evading the evaluation process by exaggerating incidents in some cases so they can serve as pretexts to terminate educators the district does not value. At the same time, I continue to work on evaluations both by sitting on the Evaluation Committee, and joining monthly meetings of all evaluators and the assistant superintendent. Work continues to simplify that system.

Our Unit C unanimously ratified a tentative agreement at the end of last school year, and our Unit A ratified the same by over 97% in favor in May. The votes were comparatively early in the contract cycle, each coming months before the expiration of the previous contract. This represents the strength of our negotiations teams and leadership their respective Chairs. In both processes, every session was followed by an update to members distributed the next day, after having built a proposal from survey responses from our members. This process involved 10-12 meetings.

An unexpected issue arose at the turn of the year, when the town of Wareham mooted an offer to eliminate the most popular (and expensive) level of health care plan, the Legacy plan, in exchange for taking on an additional 1% of the premium split. Later calculations convinced the town to remove the offer, but not before the Association arranged in-building meetings and explanatory material in preparation for a cancelled vote on whether to accept the offer. On this, and safety-related issues, our Health and Safety Director played a key role.

Serving as the voice of Wareham educators. This past year, this portion of my role has been in the background. I did provide background information concerning Question 2 to local media, and did respond to requests for comment for one or two articles. Our Vice President worked to engage members on this campaign, which happily ended in a clear defeat on Election Day in Wareham and across the state. While I have occasionally spoken to the School Committee in public comment, most recently on the question of an IBM-run platform to hoover up data about our students in the name of some sort of “individualized learning”, I have not been as vocal as in the past. Attempts to unite educators and parents in a PTO flagged, with anemic turnout and interest in the early stages of the project. That effort is on hold.

Building the Strength and Accountability of our WEA. The impact of our communication routes – the *Beacon* newsletter (produced in conjunction with our Communications) Chair, Facebook page, and website, continues to grow steadily based on feedback and statistics. Our Ways and Means and Scholarship Directors continue to build our solidarity, and give me the honor of welcoming people to our annual Member Appreciation Night, and debuting a Trivia Scholarship Showdown fundraiser. Through closely monitoring our spending and finding more efficient uses of our dues, our Treasurer continues to move us to more solid footing.

I will end this report by mentioning a few goals for next year:

- Meet the overwhelmingly likely end of agency fee by retaining over 90% of our members at the end of 2017-18
- End the next fiscal year clearly in the black
- Set a 2017-18 WEA calendar for distribution on the first work day
- Elect a group of leaders to meet the WEA’s challenges beyond June 2018.

## **Vice President’s Report** *Deanna Semple*

It has been my pleasure to serve as the WEA Vice President for this year. This year has been a busy one specifically at the elementary level. At Minot there were some issues with scheduling and staff start times. There have been several issues at Decas Elementary:

- Duties outside of staff contractual time.
- Roof renovation (room changes, special scheduling, staff compensation/time to move)
- Unprofessional and abusive behavior toward staff from administration
- Discipline
- Improper use of evaluations
- Prep time and scheduling for substantially separate classrooms

As the MTA Political Action Representative I have attended numerous phone banks, sign holdings and spread the word in Wareham neighborhoods by handing out information on the issue of charter schools and attended meetings as our district’s political action leader.

I have worked with numerous staff members throughout the district to provide our students with prescription glasses, exams, shoes and clothing through the MTA Mass Child Funds, using almost all the amount dedicated to Wareham.

## Secretary's Report *Linda Stewart*

### Executive Board Meetings

- Attended and participated in nine Executive Board meetings.
- Submitted attendance records to WEA Treasurer.
- Recorded and submitted Minutes of nine executive board meetings between June 2016 and May 2017.
  - Maintained attendance records for officers, building representatives and guests.
  - Recorded all motions and the resulting votes, including the following:
    - At the October 3, 2016 meeting the following motions were acted upon:
      - At 4:30 p.m., Sean Brown made a motion to appoint John Sousa Building Representative for Wareham High School. Jeninne Alexander seconded the motion. John was appointed by a unanimous vote.
      - At 4:40 p.m., Mary Shaw made a motion to appoint Ellen Osborn Building Representative for Decas Elementary School. Deanna Semple, Vice-President, seconded the motion. Ellen was appointed by a unanimous vote.
      - With the resignation of Ellen Osborn as Chairperson of the Unit A Negotiations Committee, a vacancy was created. Fortunately, an experienced member of the Negotiation Committee agreed to fill the position.
      - At 4:45 p.m., Brian made a motion to appoint Sean Brown Chairperson of the Unit A Negotiations Committee. Susan Akins, Director of Ways and Means, seconded the motion. Sean was appointed by a unanimous vote.
      - Brian noted that upon the retirement of Ann Marie Brooks, the position of Director of Health and Safety became vacant. This vacancy was made known to the membership in the recent edition of *The Beacon*. Nancy Hanson expressed an interest in filling this vacancy. At 4:50, Susan Akins made a motion to appoint Nancy Hanson as Director of Health and Safety. Kristen Kelley, Director of Scholarship, seconded the motion. Nancy was appointed by a unanimous vote.
    - At the November 11, 2016 meeting the following motions were acted upon:
      - At 4:00 p.m., Nancy Hanson made a motion to appoint Meghan Costa as Building Representative for Wareham Middle School. Michelle Lefrancois seconded the motion. Meghan was appointed by a unanimous vote.
      - At 4:05 Michelle Lefrancois made a motion to advance a grievance to arbitration. Linda Stewart seconded the motion. The motion passed by a unanimous vote.
    - At the March 6, 2017 meeting the following motions were acted upon:
      - At 4:50 p.m., Nancy Hanson made a motion to authorize the Board members at Decas to determine if and when a vote of No-Confidence in the Decas principal is necessary and beneficial. This was seconded by several members, including Mary Shaw. The motion passed unanimously.

### Goodwill Correspondence

- Obtained cost-effective greeting cards and maintained a supply of postage stamps.
- Between October 8, 2016 and May 26, 2017, twenty-one cards were mailed to members. These included expressions of sympathy, get well wishes, and expressions of congratulations upon the birth of a child and upon the news of a marriage.

### Building-level Member Meetings

- Co-facilitated, along with Mary Shaw, the Wareham Middle School building representative, member meetings.

### Attendance at Wareham Education Association Events

- Health Insurance informational meeting for the Unit A members.
- May 11, 2017 contract informational meeting for the Unit A members.
- WEA Retirement Party, June 2017

### Building-level Unit A Contract Ratification Vote

- Co-managed, along with Mary Shaw, the Wareham Middle School building representative, Ratification vote for the Unit A contract.

## **Health and Safety**      *Nancy Hanson*

As Health and Safety Chair, I attended a number of meetings this year with the focus of protecting our staff. In the fall I met with a number of the staff at Decas to hear their concerns about the safety issues with the roof project. I also attended a number of meetings regarding potential insurance changes both with the Mayflower Group and the Town Administrator. Based on the Town's figures, I held a meeting at the Middle School to inform the staff of potential changes. Fortunately, the final numbers for insurance premiums was not as high as Town Manager Derek Sullivan thought, so no vote was needed.

During this school year, there were over 70 accident reports filed with the majority of them resulting from aggressive students in sub-separate classrooms. The breakdown by school is as follows: 20 from Minot; 17 from Decas; 25 from WMS, and 10 from WHS. As I have not received many injury reports from the elementary schools since winter, I believe that there may have been more incidents than reported. Some members mentioned that they were discouraged from filing accident reports and others without professional status felt uncomfortable filing. I spoke with the Town Manager regarding this and he stated that it was important for all accidents to be reported so the town can be financially protected. He was going to reiterate this to administration to make sure that all staff members report any incidents where they may be injured.

Currently, I am planning on having meetings in each building in the fall regarding safety and reporting of incidents. As the majority of accident reports revolve around the same issues, I am hoping to find ways to support our members and hopefully decrease the number of incidents.

This spring I attended the Plymouth County Education Association Recognition dinner where I saw many districts honoring their peers. It was a pleasure to witness the recognition of our own staff but I would love to see more members recognized in the future. We have a talented and dedicated group of professionals who go above and beyond every day and we need to celebrate that.

## **Ways and Means** *Sue Akins*

We started the year running and before we knew it was already November. We sent a personal invitation to all new district employees and invited all WEA members to attend our E-board meetings. The purpose was to give them a better understanding of how the board functions.

We hosted a Member Appreciation on November 10, 2016. 49 WEA members attended and a great time was had by all.

Our December Executive Board Meeting was a dinner meeting to celebrate the holidays.

A retirement celebration was held June 2, 2017 at the Gateway Tavern from 3PM-6PM. We honored 8 retirees and a great time was had by the 42 people that attended.

## **Scholarship** *Kristen Kelley*

I want to thank all of you who helped and supported me this year as the chair of the Scholarship Committee. I could not have done this job without the support of the representatives and members of the board. We raised over \$1,000 more this year than last year! A huge thank you to Sean Brown for donating his Massachusetts Insight Education award!

Activity for the year:

- October 2015 - scholarship plea notifications were sent out in an effort to collect pledges in the fall rather than wait until the spring.
- Continued to collect pledges each month.
- March - Calendar fundraiser - this brought in \$458 . 50/50 raffle winner Anne Marie Fillion who generously donated half of her winnings back! Thank You :-). Daily winners won gift cards.
- April - Trivia Pursuit at the Gateway. Cleared \$150.00 Charged teams of 4 \$20.00, and sold raffle tickets for 3 prizes, Itunes Giftcard, N.E. Patriot Superbowl Sweatshirt, and Facial/Massage Gift card to Secret Garden. We had 6 teams participate and Brian Fitzgerald asked the questions. Would like to do this in the Fall too.
- April - sent out reminder notices to individual members who made a pledge in the fall but had yet to make their donation.
- Also sent out the requirements for applying for the WEA scholarship. Deadline was April 26th.
- April 27, 2016 - attended the scholarship meeting at the high school. Received the applications from Wareham H.S. seniors on May 15th.
- May - met with Janice St. Pierre to go through the applications and determine the monetary awards.
- May - Checks and award letters went out. Awarded 11 members children \$230 each.

- 5 awards of \$150 each went to 5 Wareham High School Students, and another 2 scholar/athlete awards of \$50 each went to 1 Wareham High School Student and 1 member's child.

Pledges -	\$1470.00	Decas \$120	Minot \$230	Middle \$790	High School - \$330
March Calendar -	\$458				
Trivia -	\$150				
PCEA -	\$350				
Sean Brown's donation -	\$750				
Rochester Police Brotherhood -	\$100				
Balance from previous year -	\$130				
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$3408</b>				
Awarded	\$3380				
Balance	\$28				

#### W.E.A. Merit Award Recipients

- Victoria Antonellis - \$230.00
- Brendon Borges - \$230.00
- Michael H. Houdlette - \$230.00
- Maura Johnson - \$230.00
- Nicholas Kais - \$230.00
- Connor Kelley - \$230.00
- Matthew Kiernan - \$230.00
- Kara Lyons - \$230.00
- William Paling - \$230.00
- Brian Reynolds - \$230.00
- Hunter Thatcher - \$230.00

#### W.E.A./P.C.E.A Award Recipients

- Sara Tyma- \$150.00
- Abigail Glidden - \$150.00
- Austin Allen - \$150.00
- Neely Eddleston - \$150.00
- Shamika Erasme - \$150

#### W.E.A. Top Scholar Athlete Award Recipient

- Nicholas Kais - \$50.00
- Neely Eddleston - \$50.00

## **Unit C** *Ellen Braillard*

The activities of Unit C during the year have focused primarily on providing support to the paraprofessionals in Unit C that may have had issues regarding their employment contract rights and dispute resolution.

In April 2017, Jennine Alexander and I met with Superintendent Dr. Kim Shaver-Hood regarding Unit C sick bank. To date three Unit C paraprofessionals have used the sick bank.

In May 2017, Michele Lefrancois, a Unit C paraprofessional member and I met with Superintendent Dr. Kim Shaver-Hood regarding a Level II grievance. That grievance has been resolved.

Thank you for the opportunity to represent our group of dedicated paraprofessional educators this past year and I look forward to working with our Unit C in the future.

## **Professional Rights & Responsibilities** *Michele Lefrancois*

Dear colleagues,

This year we have filed five major grievances to date, one based on evaluation issues which is currently in arbitration, one for a paraprofessional which resulted in a level 2 resolve, another which also went to level two where there is apparently a letter in the member's file, which we are still in dispute of (due to clerical errors), one resolved with a letter in a member's file with his/her acceptance, and lastly a level 3 which is set to be heard in June by the Wareham School Committee.

Along with trying my best to fulfill the duties of the PR&R Chair, I attended numerous meetings at Decas regarding the administration and some of the actions the members at Decas have endured this year. Unfortunately, the communication at Decas still poses an issue and members are still dealing with this.

I was a member of the Unit A Negotiations Team for our WEA, and am happy to report the proposed contract for 2017-2020 was ratified. This was a new exciting experience for me and I was proud to be a voice in the process.

At present, I also attend the sub-committee for evaluations to better streamline and enhance a member's role in their evaluator process. I look forward to changes we may see with that in the future.

Lastly and sadly, I was called in for a suspension of a member at Decas, in which the member has been placed on paid leave pending an investigation on allegations made. This was a particularly emotional meeting and I felt helpless, as even our contract cannot protect from such allegations. And, I also had to be witness to a non-renewal of a non-professional status teacher which was also difficult as again, our contract doesn't allow extensive protection for such a case.

In all this year has been fraught with highly emotional issues that mostly have arisen from outside issues encroaching into our profession in the manner of social media and personal allegations.

I would therefore use this platform to caution each and every member of our WEA, and other staff to be extremely cautious with personal and professional boundaries. We are **always** in the public's eye, and though we are allowed a private life, it should be with great thought, that which we choose to make public in forums that anyone can see. To that end, we are also increasingly judged by our manner, demeanor and attitude towards the population we stand before each day, and their parents, I realize such judgments are unfair, but we must be diligent in setting the best example possible.

In closing, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to serve as the PR&R Chair and look forward to next years' challenges.

### **Unit A Negotiations** *Sean Brown*

The 2016-2017 school year was a Unit A contract negotiation year. A Unit A negotiations team was formed consisting of the following members; Sean Brown (Unit A Chair), Ellen Osborn (Vice-Chair), Brian Fitzgerald (WEA President), Carl Junier (WMS Representative), Michelle Lefrancois (Decas Representative), Nicole Roberge (Minot Representative), and Marissa Smith (WHS Representative). We also had MTA representation from Audra Makuch and Steven McGuinness.

The negotiation team requested feedback from the membership and analyzed this data for information on what priorities to set. Several meetings occurred in order to build a preliminary package that was shared with management on our first joint meeting on January 30, 2017. After each meeting, membership was given a brief on what occurred in the meeting the previous night. These updates also had a question to the membership which was collected and helped inform the negotiation process.

The team met with administration on 1/30, 2/13, 2/27, 3/7, 3/21, 3/29, and on April 4, 2017 where a tentative agreement was reached. At that point an informational meeting was held with membership on May 11, 2017, where a presentation was held and questions from the membership addressed. All buildings voted on May 12, 2017 and the WEA Unit A membership voted in favor of the contract 136-3. On May 24, the School Committee ratified the contract in a 5-0 vote.

I wish to thank the excellent work, professionalism and determination that our negotiations team displayed, as well as the copious amounts of feedback from our engaged membership.



## **Communications** *Wendy Nault*

Throughout this past year I have edited and distributed the Beacon newsletters to our WEA membership throughout the district. I have worked with building representatives to ensure that an ample number of copies of the Beacon are sent to each building every month so that all members are able to access pertinent information.

I have also made signs to post in each building throughout the year to alert members to important meetings to try to increase membership participation.

I also joined fellow WEA officers and building representatives at meetings with the superintendent at her office and at Decas to attempt to resolve continued issues which are plaguing the building.

I have also been working with the Wareham Elementary PTA president and Minot Forest representatives to plan our volunteer appreciation reception. Last year's event was very successful and we hope to continue to work closely with the PTA to make our schools better for everyone.

## **Plymouth County Education Association** *Amanda Fitzgerald, Jacqui DeGrace, Nicole Roberge*

- PCEA Reps. - Jacqui DeGrace, Nicole Roberge & Amanda Fitzgerald – Minot
- Amanda Fitzgerald continues to be the PCEA Secretary.
- December - WEA contributed \$100 in gift cards for the annual collection for the Old Colony Y and Radius Pediatrics.
- PCEA Annual Awards' Banquet was held at The 1620 Hotel in Plymouth on April 3, 2017. From Wareham, there were 4 retirement awards, 1 Honorary Life Membership award (30 years), 0 Professional Service Award (35 years), 7 Honor Awards, and 2 Rookie Awards. 15 Service Awards were distributed between Minot Forest School and the Wareham Middle School.
- A Volunteer Award Reception will be held in June for both Decas and Minot volunteers, in partnership with the Wareham Elementary PTA.
- Wareham was awarded \$350 in scholarship money this year.
- PCEA continued to contribute to Mass Child.
- PCEA offered seminars throughout the school year for PDPs.
- Deadline to register for PCEA Summer Courses is June 23, 2017.
- MTA Summer Conference information is on the MTA website.
- PCEA was awarded another grant from MTA for Public Relations. They distributed t-shirts and pins to PCEA members and pencils and candy to others at community events throughout Plymouth County, including Wareham's Cranberry Festival.
- PCEA will hold their Annual Meeting on Monday, June 12, 2017, where all PCEA members are invited to attend.

## Treasurer's Report *Justin Skelley*

This report does not reflection what the numbers will be at the end of the fiscal year, June 30, 2017. For comparison purposes:

May 31, 2016 our numbers were in the red -\$16,763.32, we ended up in the red -\$4,704.90. This year as of May 29, 2017, we are in the red \$11,949.09....

So we will be in better shape than last year...it's tough to project, but my best bet is we will be nearly balanced, which will be really good! I will share the final numbers with you on July 1, 2017 after the close of the fiscal year.

### Banking Summary - Current Year

7/1/2016 through 6/30/2017

Category	7/1/2016- 6/30/2017		
<b>INCOME</b>			
Interest Inc	79.17		
MTA Grant			
Mass Child	343.58		
TOTAL MTA Grant	343.58		
MTA Reimbursement			
MTA Political Action	350.00		
Office Reimbursement	6,048.00		
TOTAL MTA Reimbursement	6,398.00		
Payroll Deduction	158,017.22		
Scholarship			
WEA	3,353.00		
TOTAL Scholarship	3,353.00		
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>168,190.97</b>		
<b>EXPENSES</b>			
Contract Printing	131.97		
Corporation Filing	18.50		
Functions			
PCEA Awards Banquet	455.00		
TOTAL Functions	455.00		
Insurance	257.00		
Meeting			
Member Appreciation Function	57.50		
TOTAL Meeting	57.50		
Membership Goodwill	95.79		
MTA Dues	155,588.09		
MTA Grants			
Mass Child	862.88		
TOTAL MTA Grants	862.88		
Newsletter Printing	644.46		
Office Supplies	595.77		
Payroll Taxes			
One Check Payroll	2,268.02		
TOTAL Payroll Taxes	2,268.02		
		PCEA Dues	3,645.00
		Postage and Delivery	66.60
		Scholarship Award	
		WEA	3,380.00
		TOTAL Scholarship Award	3,380.00
		Stipends	
		Board Members-Chairs	963.21
		Building Reps	986.61
		MTA Political Action	350.00
		Negotiations	1,009.38
		Officers	8,044.28
		TOTAL Stipends	11,353.48
		Workers' Compensation	
		Norfolk and Dedham	720.00
		TOTAL Workers' Compensation	720.00
		<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>180,140.06</b>
		<b>OVERALL TOTAL</b>	<b>-11,949.09</b>
<b>WEA Cash Balance - As of 5/29/2017</b>			
		Account	5/29/2017 Balance
<b>ASSETS</b>			
<b>Cash and Bank Accounts</b>			
		CD Savings	15,000.00
		Checking	30,763.24
		Money Market	2,006.53
		Savings	13,357.73
		<b>TOTAL Cash and Bank Accounts</b>	<b>61,127.50</b>
		<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>61,127.50</b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>			
			<b>0.00</b>
		<b>OVERALL TOTAL</b>	<b>61,127.50</b>