

The Word

DECEMBER
2008



Retroactive Pay Checks will be in the mail the week of December 15th, 2008. Contract years 07-08 should be reflected on the check.

PR&R - Personal Rights and Responsibilities

Peggy Oberbeck and Jeff Sikich

Have you even been frustrated when a parent goes to your principal or administrator with an issue or concern before coming to you?

Well...let's remember that when we deal with each other.

We all want parents, colleagues, friends and/or family members to bring their questions to us first, to be resolved mutually. So, let's treat others as we want to be treated. Go to your colleagues and administrators to discuss situations and misunderstandings together first. If you're not comfortable or if you need an impartial facilitator include a building rep in your discussion.

When all possibilities have been exhausted then request support from Personnel Rights and Responsibilities chairpersons Peggy Oberbeck for secondary and Jeff Sikich for elementary. They will help negotiate a solution.

We're all doing our best to help our kids and it's better to try to work together. Following this procedure helps everyone involved.

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Teachers communicate all day long... with each other, with students, with administrators and parents. We've included some information about communication that is helpful for everyone to think about.

Four Principles of Interpersonal Communication

When it comes to messages, perceptions, and communication in general, studies suggest that it takes seven (yes 7!) encounters with a message to absorb it. These principles underlie the workings in real life of interpersonal communication.

Interpersonal communication is inescapable

We can't not communicate. The very attempt not to communicate communicates something. Through not only words, but through the tone of voice and through gesture, posture, facial expression, etc., we constantly communicate to those around us. Remember, people are not mind readers...people judge you by your behavior, not your intent.

Interpersonal communication is irreversible.

You can't really take back something once it has been said. The effect must inevitably remain. A good rule is to wait before responding to an emotional situation.

Interpersonal communication is complicated

No form of communication is simple. Theorists note that whenever we communicate there are really at least six "people" involved:

- 1) who you think you are
- 2) who you think the other person is
- 3) who you think the other person thinks you are
- 4) who the other person thinks s/he is
- 5) who the other person thinks you are
- 6) who the other person thinks you think s/he is

Interpersonal communication in contextual

Communication doesn't happen in isolation. Communication varies with who you are, the relationship between you and the other person, where the interaction takes place, the environment (noise, time, furniture, etc) and cultural behaviors.

Active Listening

Active listening is a way of listening and responding to another person that improves mutual understanding. It means listening attentively without judging or thinking ahead.

Active listening focuses the attention on the speaker by attending fully and repeating what you think the speaker has said. It doesn't mean you have to agree.

Active listening:

- forces people to listen attentively to others
- avoids misunderstandings
- tends to open people up to get them to say more

When people are in conflict, communication between them tends to get worse. Active listening can help communication stay positive and productive. It validates thoughts and feelings and can facilitate problem solving.



Nominations Scheduled

Julie Stringer Elections Chair

The West Allis – West Milwaukee Education Association will open nominations in January. Have you thought about running for office? Most locals rely on just a few people to get things done. Those who are "interested" hold multiple positions, concentrating the responsibility and ultimate authority in just a few hands. This model builds complacency and can encourage apathy and mediocrity. I can't say this has been true for WAWMEA. Our leadership has always included people who are committed to great public schools, devoted to the best interests of teachers and clearly possess a vision for education in our community, state and country. The best way to learn about the WAWMEA is to get involved. Nominate yourself!

Between January 14th and January 28th the Elections Committee will be taking nominations for: President, Vice President, Secretary, two Association Directors, one Director of West Suburban Council, twelve Delegates to the Representative Assembly of West Suburban Council, three Delegates to the WEAC Representative Assembly (LaCrosse Wisconsin, April 24-26, 2009), and four Delegates to the the NEA Representative Assembly (San Diego California July 1-6, 2009). The election will take place in each of our schools March 9th – 13th, 2009. The ballot count will take place at Hale High School.

Roles and Responsibilities

The **President** of our local Association serves a one-year elected term on the WA-WMEA Executive Board. Read more at:
http://www.wawmea.org/execboard/Define_President.htm

The position of **Vice President** (one year term) has historically been a very difficult one to describe. Vice Presidents are expected to do anything and everything. It is the responsibility of the Vice President to: Serve as "Assistant President" helping and

supporting the President in all of his/her duties.

Read more at:

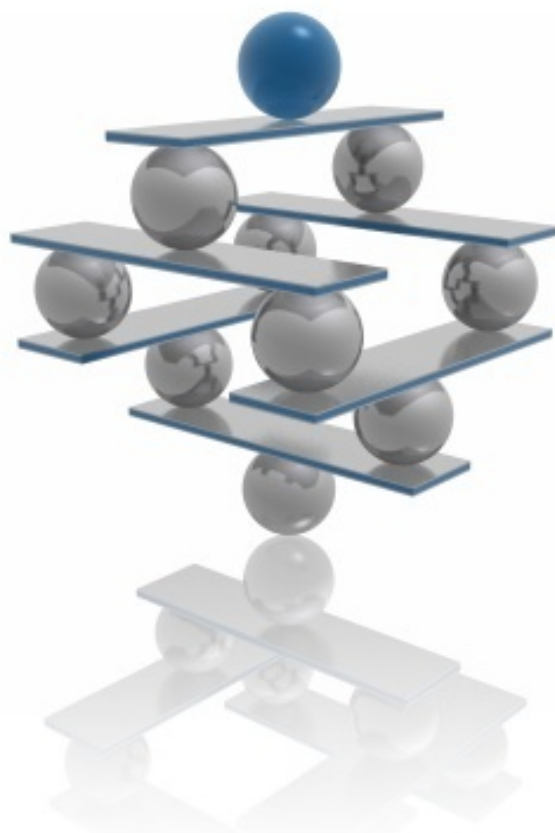
http://www.wawmea.org/execboard/Define_VicePresident.htm

A good **Secretary** (two year term) properly interprets the discussions at local association meetings. Failure to clearly record the proceedings of a meeting may confuse the officers and members of the association. Read more at:

http://www.wawmea.org/Execboard/Define_Secretary.htm

The responsibilities of each **Director** (two year term) will be to: Read more at:

http://www.wawmea.org/execboard/Define_Director.htm



Thinking About Retirement? Important Dates to Remember



Every West suburban Council bargaining unit has a different set of rules regarding notification to the District about retirement. If you are not eligible for any early or regular retirement benefits, there is no timeframe by which you must notify the District, but the earlier you notify the employer, the easier it is to find a suitable replacement. If you are not eligible for any employer paid retirement benefits, your retirement is technically a resignation even though you may be retiring. Important dates for each bargaining unit are listed below for those eligible for retirement benefits:

Wauwatosa Education Support Professionals

There are currently no employer paid retirement benefits and notices may be sent to the District at any time.

Wauwatosa Educational Staff Association

Notification must be made in writing to the Superintendent at least 60 days in advance of the intended date of retirement.

West Allis-West Milwaukee Educational Assistants

While there is no specific time-frame or notification requirement, I would recommend that any retirement notification be made in writing and sent to either the Director of Human Resources or the Superintendent.

Wauwatosa Education Association

Employees must notify the Superintendent in writing no later than February 1st of the year prior to the intended date of retirement. Therefore, employees wishing to retire at the end of the 2008-2009 school year must notify the District on or before February 1st, 2009. There are 9 remaining available retirement slots for this year. Lists with the eligibility ranking have been distributed to building representatives.

West Allis-West Milwaukee Education Association

Early Retirement

Employees must notify the Superintendent in writing on or before February 1st of the preceding school year. There are a minimum of 35 available early retirement slots and the first 5 regular retirements do not count toward that number. Employees who had requested a retirement waiver also do not count toward the 35 available slots.

Waiver Requests

Any employee who is currently eligible for early retirement who wishes to teach beyond the early retirement window may request a waiver to freeze their eligibility status. Requests for waivers must also be submitted on or before February 1st.

Regular Retirement

Employees who are not eligible for early retirement or a waiver, but who do have enough years of service to qualify for regular retirement must submit a written notice of their intent to retire to the superintendent on or before May 15th of the current school year.

Problem Solving Model

