



The Bulletin



Volume LVII No. 2 The Seattle School Retirees' Association January-February, 2021



An Idea to Help Seattle Students Recover from A Degraded Year of Schooling by SSRA President Pat Cygan

What can Seattle Public Schools do in 2021 to jumpstart learning experiences for the many students who did not learn a lot from “ZOOM schooling”/remote learning/virtual teaching sessions? A recent *Seattle Times* article by local columnist Danny Westneat proposed an intriguing idea—*“Why not use the federal COVID relief money, which clocks in at \$824 million for K-12 schools for Washington state, on a jobs program in which we hire older students to do one-on-one tutoring in schools?”*

Danny Westneat had recently learned that two Brown University education professors proposed the idea of older-students-tutoring-younger-students on a national scale. For both, the best way to tackle any COVID-19 learning losses is to hire 300,000 to several million part-time tutors nationwide. They believe: *“Tutoring is among the most effective education interventions ever to be subjected to rigorous evaluation. Our blueprint is . . . high school students would tutor in elementary schools, college students in middle schools, and full-time 2- and 4-year college graduates in high schools via AmeriCorps.”* Robert Slavin, education research director at Johns Hopkins University, similarly proposed what he calls *“a tutoring Marshall Plan.”* **Professor Slavin believes that returning schools to the way they were before this pandemic began will not heal the learning damage students sustained.** Simply doing what we used to do won’t remedy the educational deficits we’re experiencing as we cope with this novel coronavirus. As I read Danny Westneat’s article in late December, I found myself concurring with this educationally sound proposal.

One-on-one tutoring just works. It would help our youngest students who were unable to start school last September when they were supposed to enter classrooms for the first time; tutoring could compensate for some of those lost experiences. Tutoring continues to be one of the educational extras that special-needs students have always been entitled to receive; however, since this pandemic hit our nation in early 2020, few special-needs students have been able to access tutoring assistance.

Statewide tutoring programs probably wouldn’t cost a lot—maybe about \$1000 per year per student. Tutoring just half of Washington State’s K-12 students might cost about \$550 million of the \$824 million in COVID-19 relief money our state expects to receive this year. That’s about 2% of what Washington State spends annually on schools!

Tutoring jobs would also create work opportunities for high school seniors and college kids whose job prospects have been minimal lately. More importantly, they would reintroduce our ZOOM-quarantined students who had been falling behind in their studies to one-on-one academic help from another human being. That’s priceless in our social-distancing-for-safety world! Isolation has not been a promising milieu for learning since our schools closed in March, 2020. I hope Seattle Public Schools will apply for a fair share of our state’s \$824 million to jumpstart a tutoring program for our District’s neediest students as soon as possible. It is the best COVID-recovery for K-12 education that I’ve heard thus far. I hope our District’s very capable superintendent, Denise Juneau, agrees and will choose to bring a District-wide tutoring program to fruition—to the mutual benefit of needy students and able/willing tutors.



In Memoriam

It saddens us to learn that the following members have passed away:

Norman Byrd, Carol Cook, Katherine Cooper, Gwen Fisher, Edwina Gannis, Christine Horner, Sybil Knudson, Nancy Minard, Miriam Puffert, William Riley, Frank Roberts, Dorothy Seay, Joan Seffernick, and Mary White.



***Gene Forrester
1928-2020***

Many of you know Gene Forrester for being the parliamentarian and a past president of WSSRA. He passed away May 16th and had a virtual memorial service on January 2nd.

Gene spent much of his career advocating for students to learn about careers in agriculture. He taught Agricultural Science at Ellensburg High for 17 years after serving in the U.S. Air Force. In 1968 he was voted state teacher of the year. From 1972 to 1991 Gene worked in the Office of the State Superintendent in various roles. He and his wife Vivian spent years working on a 170 acre parcel near Olympia. Among the many awards he received was the Washington State University Distinguished Alumni Award.

The family suggests that any memorial contributions be made to either the WSSRA Gene Forrester Memorial Scholarship Fund or the WSSRA Foundation.

SSRA Leadership for 2020-2021

President.....Pat Cygan
 President-elect.....Someone New
 Immediate Past President.....Sharon Green

Recording Secretary.....Mary Wallon
 Treasurer.....Sue Battin

Committee Chairs

Audit Review.....Roxanne Trees
 Budget.....Jim de Jarnatt
 Communications/Outreach.....Ron Cygan
 Community Services.....Marilynn Miller
 Drawings and Baskets.....Marilynn Miller
 Health Services.....Myrna Muto
 Historian.....Open
 Legislative.....Edith Ruby and Mary Wallon
 May Luncheon.....Margaret Nelson
 Membership.....ALL SSRA MEMBERS
 Parliamentarian.....Edith Ruby
 Programs.....Pat Cygan
 Resolutions/Bylaws.....SSRA’s Board
 Retirement Seminar Planning.....Open
 Scholarships.....Patricia MacGowan
 Burbank Rideout/SEED Grants.....Kathy Purcell
 WSSRA-PAC.....Mary Wallon and Edith Ruby

NOTE: If you are willing to chair our Retirement Seminar Planning Committee or become SSRA’s next President, a Co-President or Historian, please call SSRA President Pat Cygan at 425-493-0352.

Thoughts for the Day

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”

Margaret Mead, American anthropologist

“A good storyteller is a person who has a good memory and hopes other people haven’t.”

Irving S. Cobb, American humorist

The Bulletin is published five times per year by the Seattle School Retirees’ Association. **Membership meetings** are held on the first Tuesday from September through May (but not January nor February); in April we meet on 2nd Tuesday) with a buffet lunch served at twelve noon; then a meeting and guest speaker/program follow our buffet luncheon at **The Canal Restaurant** located at 5300 34th Ave. N.W. No lunches have been served since March of 2020. Our SODO office is rarely staffed, but you can reach us at 206 521-5170 and leave a message or by e-mail at ssra44@iuno.com.



A Year to Play Defense

by Mary Wallon and Edith Ruby, SSRA Legislative Committee Co-chairs

Recessions are dangerous times for those of us who depend on Washington's state legislature for our financial wellbeing. As state revenues shrink, competition for funds becomes fierce. Following the 2008 recession legislators cut school retirees' Medicare eligible healthcare benefit from \$183/month to \$150/month and permanently eliminated the Plan 1 Uniform COLA. Not until 2019 was the healthcare benefit restored to its 2010 level. Only twice since 2010 have Plan 1 retirees received a COLA, 1.5% in 2018 and 3% in 2020. With this year's legislature struggling to help our state recover from the economic impact of COVID-19, demands on the budget will be many. WSSRA believes it wisest to fight benefit cuts for our members rather than push for enhancements.

WSSRA's four priorities:

- **Protect Retiree Healthcare Benefits.** The healthcare benefit is a line item in the state budget rather than a bill to vote on. When writing the budget, legislators have the option of increasing, decreasing, or eliminating this item. With insurance premiums increasing every year, WSSRA's legislative team will advocate strongly for maintaining the \$183 benefit to help keep medical insurance affordable for our retiree members.
- **Make the Actuarially Recommended Pension Payment.** Each biennium there is a budget line item for the amount to be deposited in state retirement funds. The amount is recommended by the Washington State Actuary, but legislators can reduce it. From 2001-2011 the legislature approved less than the recommended amount in Plan 1 funds, adding significantly to the funds' deficits. In 2012 the legislature agreed to a plan for higher payments each year to eliminate Plan 1 unfunded liability by 2027. It is essential that our legislators continue to support funding the full amount recommended by the Actuary.
- **Manage COVID-19 Risk in Schools by Reducing Early Retirement Penalties.** An issue for older actively employed members is possibility of contracting COVID if forced to return to the classroom before vaccination is available. Some may want to retire earlier than planned. HB 1032 would help members who may be close to retirement. While the governor's emergency COVID-19 proclamation is in effect it would allow retirement without financial penalty at age 60 for employees with at least 30 years of service. Employees with fewer than 30 years would also see some penalty reduction. For full bill provisions search HB1032 at www.leg.wa.gov.
- **Provide an Open Enrollment Window for PEBB Retirees.** This year PEBB is offering two additional Medicare Advantage plans whose premiums are a bit lower than Kaiser's premiums and less than half of Uniform Medical's (UMP). In the past, there were areas of the state where UMP was the only plan available. Retirees who found UMP too expensive and did not have access to Kaiser, or found it unsatisfactory, chose not to participate in PEBB. Because retirees must at the time of retirement make a one-time choice whether to participate in PEBB those opting out do not now have the option to enroll in one of the new PEBB plans. HB1040 offers a one-time open enrollment window this November for current retirees to purchase PEBB insurance starting in 2022.

With the Capitol building closed and most legislative activities during the 2021 session conducted virtually, we have many questions about how business will be done and what will be accomplished. You will find more information about the session in the winter issue of WSSRA's *Journal*. SSRA's three WSSRA Legislative Team members, Mary Wallon, Patricia MacGowan, and Edith Ruby, are making Zoom appointments with area legislators to share WSSRA's priorities and explain why they are important to the welfare of our members. We are constantly mindful of the warning of 19th century lawyer Gideon Tucker: No man's life, liberty, or property are safe while the legislature is in session.

Because situations can change quickly during the session, we can best inform you of legislative action that may impact your finances if WSSRA has your email address. To Join WSSRA's email list (1) go to WSSRA.org (2) Scroll to bottom of page (3) Join our Email list. We promise to contact you only on a small number of important issues.

SSRA's Committee Reports• [Health Committee](#)[Myrna Muto, Chair](#)**Dietary Guidelines for People 60 and Older**

The foods and beverages that people consume have a profound impact on their health. The documented scientific connection between food and health can help people achieve and maintain good health and reduce chronic diseases. Since 1980, the Dietary Guidelines for Americans have provided science-based advice on what to eat and drink to promote health, reduce risk of chronic diseases and meet nutrient needs. The US Departments of Agriculture and Health and Human Services are charged with publishing guidelines every five years. The following information is for adults 60 and older from their 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

Older adults should follow a healthy dietary pattern because of the changing dietary needs and the heightened risk of malnutrition that occurs with age. The nutrients of public concern--calcium, vitamin D, potassium and dietary fiber--apply to this age group. Underconsumed during this life stage also include dietary protein and vitamin B12 which help to prevent the loss of lean muscle mass that occurs normally with age.

Most older adults are meeting or exceeding weekly recommendations for meats, poultry, and eggs. However, seafood, dairy and fortified soy alternatives, as well as beans, peas, and lentils are underconsumed. Many older adults can improve their dietary pattern and meet their nutrient needs by choosing from a wider variety of protein sources. This may mean using seafood more often in place of meats, poultry, or eggs or using beans, peas, and lentils in mixed dishes, such as soups, rice, or pasta dishes.

Many older adults do not drink enough fluids to stay hydrated. One reason for this is that the sensation of thirst tends to decline with age. Concerns about bladder control or issues with mobility also may hinder intake of fluids. It is important that older adults drink plenty of water (six or more glassfuls) to prevent dehydration and aid in the digestion of food and absorption of nutrients. In addition, choosing to drink unsweetened beverages such as 100% fruit or vegetable juice and low-fat or fat-free milk or fortified soy beverages will support fluid intake to prevent dehydration.

The Dietary Guidelines do not recommend initiating alcohol consumption for any reason. To help older adults move toward a healthy dietary pattern and minimize risks associated with drinking, older adults should limit alcohol intake to 2 drinks or less in a day for men and 1 drink or less in a day for women. Older adults may experience the effects of alcohol more quickly. This puts older adults at higher risk of falls, car crashes, and other injuries that may result from drinking alcohol. Older adults tend to have a greater number of comorbid health conditions. Alcohol use may adversely affect the condition or interfere with management of any disease. Older adults who drive or operate machinery, participate in activities that require skill, coordination, and alertness, take certain over-the-counter or prescription medications, have certain medical conditions, or are recovering from alcohol use should avoid drinking alcohol completely.

Additional factors to consider when supporting healthy eating for older adults include: Sharing meals can help increase food enjoyment and promote adequacy of dietary intake. Experimenting with preparation of foods from all food groups can help identify textures that are acceptable, appealing, and enjoyable for adults who have difficulties chewing or swallowing. Good dental health is critical to overall health, as well as the ability to chew foods properly. Practicing safe food handling procedures is important for older adults

SSRA Committee Reports Continued

- [Scholarship Committee](#)

[Patricia MacGowan, Chair](#)

Here are a few comments from those who received our Teacher Intern Scholarships:

Ashlye Allison wrote “WOW! Thank you so much for the great news! I so appreciate your consideration and this award! It will make my dream of becoming the best teacher that I can be for my current and future students!”

Diana Herrerias Reyes wrote “I’m so thankful and honored to receive this award.”

Breanne Johnston said “I am spilling over with gratitude and appreciation! Wow, I am dancing around with this news.”

Noelle Morrison wrote “Wow, thank you so much! This is incredibly exciting. This scholarship will definitely help me in paying for my Master’s of Arts in Education at PLU.”

Anna Radzi said “Wow! This is great news! I am so honored to receive this scholarship! Thank you so much!”

Marie De Los Angeles wrote “Thank you for this honorable award! I am thankful to you and the committee for helping me pursue my goals.”

I would also like to express my gratitude for all members regarding our \$12,250 contribution to Seattle Public Schools scholarships for graduating seniors as well as the two \$2500 scholarships for future elementary school teachers in honor of Lynn Fuller, the two \$2500 scholarships for future secondary teachers in honor of Phil Konkel and for the above-mentioned \$5000 Teacher Intern grants.

SSRA 2020 scholar recipients include:

Jonathan Barrerra and **Jaime Spott** for the Lynn Fuller Scholarships.

Isaiah-James Draculan and **Mario Daniel Garcia** for the Phil Konkel Scholarships.

Those listed above as the Teacher Internship grant winners.

These will be amazing future teachers and SSRA is proud to support them. SSRA will continue to help fund the Seattle Public Schools scholarships, the Lynn Fuller scholarships, the Phil Konkel scholarships and four Teaching Intern scholarships in 2021.

Please help promote these programs. All scholarship applications are available on the SSRA website (www.seattlesra.org) or from Patricia MacGowan at pmac@uw.edu or by phone at 206 851-0232.

We would also like to thank these recent donors to the SSRA Scholarship Fund and the S.E.E.D. Grant fund:

Genevieve P. Gardipe in memory of William Gardipe

Pat Siggs in memory of Joan Trunk

Helen L. Anderson and **Donald S. Anderson** in memory of Sharon Green

Madelene L. Lickey in memory of Sharon Green

Kenji Onishi and **Martha M. Onishi** in memory of Sharon Green

Nancy C. Bush in honor of Sharon Green

and **Jimmie** and **Carol Simmons** in honor of Sharon Green.

Committee Reports Continued on Next Page

- [Community Services](#)

[Marilynn Miller, Chair](#)

Because of COVID 19 and the resulting economic slow-down, people in the Seattle area need help more than ever. Please contribute what you can to a neighborhood charity that you support. Also keep in mind **Mary's Place** which helps women with children who are needy and **Operation Nightwatch** which still provides support for the homeless.

- [Program Committee](#)

[Pat Cygan, Chair](#)

The lovely lunches and informative programs SSRA held in recent years at The Canal Restaurant near Ballard's Locks came to an abrupt end after our March 3rd, 2020 luncheon as Washington's governor closed such gatherings for safety reasons amidst COVID-19 outbreaks in our state. Jewell Hospitality, our host at The Canal, has ceased operating since then—and we will really miss their meals and service. We do not know when SSRA members' luncheons and programs will be able to restart. We do not know where or when we'll be able to safely gather since most of us have probably not yet been vaccinated PLUS Governor Insley has not yet authorized our form of gathering. Do you have any suggestions on **where** we could meet in the future? **Any ideas on a good restaurant with ample FREE parking, reasonable lunch prices for delicious food, and a decent Program-delivery space within Seattle?** Maybe it only needs to be a meeting place where we can share our brown-bag lunches or a snack while we enjoy a program I'll schedule. Maybe we'll just provide a ZOOM-Program Speaker. I'm eager to learn your suggestions—by email at rcygan@earthlink.net.

- [S.E.E.D. Committee](#)

[Kathy Purcell, Chair](#)

S.E.E.D. Grant applications are still being accepted during this unusual school year. Be patient for a response since this coronavirus pandemic has precluded prompt replies for a number of good reasons.

S.E.E.D. Grant Applications for Active Members are available on the organization's website: www.seattlesra.org. Remember, grants are available for out-of-pocket expenses by teachers for student projects up to \$500 per school year for SSRA members and up to \$200 *one-time only* for non-members. All requests must be okayed in writing by a grant-requester's principal or project manager.

Ring in the New and Dealing with the Past

Here is a poem by comic strip creator Greg Evans from his "Luann" series that sums up much about this past year:

A Poem to 2020

We welcomed you with fireworks
 What a perfect year!
 A twenty/twenty vision
 Of the future, finally here!
 But wow, you really messed up
 You blew it from Day One
 You filled our lives with misery—
 We're so relieved you're done!
 Now we greet another year
 Remembering what we lost
 Let's ring in 2021
 And keep our fingers crossed...





Hear Ye! Hear Ye!

Attached at left is a copy of the Proclamation signed by Governor Inslee and promoted by WSSRA to make March 15-21 School Retirees' Appreciation Week in 2021.

In these difficult times we all need some appreciation!

Thinking About Future Retirement?

For those of you public school employees still working and looking forward to retirement there will be a ZOOM webinar planned for February 18th. The session is organized by WSSRA. You may register by email by logging on to: Tara@wssra.org. You may also phone WSSRA at 360 413-5496 or going online at the WSSRA website at www.wssra.org. There will be no charge for this seminar which will cover benefits for those in Plan 2 or Plan 3, medical and dental options, sick leave buyout, Social Security Options and Medicare.

Art Glossary Quiz

See how you do on these art terms. Answers are below and upside down.

1. A picture that is a copy of a painting.
2. A representation of an individual intended to capture his or her likeness.
3. The thin board on which an artist holds and mixes paint.
4. One of three base colors.
5. A method showing distance by making far away objects smaller.
6. Any of various pale or light colors.
7. French for "chewed up paper."
8. A picture or series of pictures representing a continuous scene.
9. An insoluble powder to be mixed with a liquid to produce paint.

1. Print 2. Portrait 3. Palette 4. Primary (color) 5. Perspective 6. Pastel 7. Paper-mache 8. Panorama 9. Pigment



Seattle School Retirees' Association
 151 South Lander St. #C
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SSRA Scholarship and/or S.E.E.D. Grant Fund Donation Form

Date _____

Enclosed is my gift for:

SCHOLARSHIP FUND



Helps provide scholarships for post-secondary education and training for graduates of Seattle Public Schools.

BURBANK RIDEOUT SEED FUND



Seattle Education Enhancement Dividend provides mini-grants to school employees for special classroom projects.

If a box is not checked above, your donation will be placed where the need is greatest.

Amount enclosed: \$ _____

Person or family (and address) to be notified of my gift: _____

In honor of _____

or

In memory of _____

My name _____

Please make checks payable to SSRA Scholarship and Grant Fund

Mail to: SSRA, 151 S. Lander St. (Suite C) Seattle, WA 98134

Donations are tax deductible as a charitable contribution to the extent allowed by law. You may double your gift by enclosing a matching donor form from your (or your spouse's) employer. Please check here if you would like information about including the Scholarship and/or Burbank Rideout SEED Fund in your estate planning.