

From: <SEA.President@WashingtonEA.org>
Subject: **SEA President's Report - SPECIAL EDITION**
Date: March 4, 2008 9:43:05 AM PST
1 Attachment, 27.5 KB

Dear SEA Members,

Please take a few moments to read the attached Special Edition of the President's Report regarding overload and class size. A hard copy of this will be delivered to you by your SEA building rep. If you have questions, please see your building rep.

Thank you, and I hope to see you Monday, March 10th!
Elizabeth

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SEA President's Report

SPECIAL EDITION – OVERLOAD & CLASS SIZE UPDATE

March 4, 2008

Since last fall, the Shoreline Education Association has been engaged in ongoing discussions with district administration to fix the problems we first raised last fall: overloaded, unbalanced class sizes that affect our students and our workloads.

Through the collective action of our membership, we've highlighted the administration's poor decisions, exerted pressure, forced some improvements and strengthened our association. After our one-day strike on Sept. 27, the district allocated additional FTE into the buildings, some splits were eliminated, additional classes were created, and more support was provided to classrooms. Building Representatives and SEA leadership have also put pressure on district administrators throughout this year with repeated tough questions and frank discussions, as well as through our contract grievance, filed in September over Shoreline's longstanding practice of balancing class sizes.

In last Tuesday's grievance mediation, the final stage of our grievance process, district administrators agreed to work with us on logistical and procedural issues; for example, to give teachers more input on how students are assigned during the year and to establish a timeline for when teachers will receive notice about their overload support. But the district administration refuses to make any firm commitment to balancing class sizes for this coming year. In our discussions, *the administration told us that they feel they cannot use additional resources to solve this problem.* One solution that SEA proposed, based on this year's numbers, would call for hiring a single FTE, which we believe is possible even under the district's fiscal constraints. Under that proposal, class sizes would be balanced within 2 students. The administration rejected this reasonable resolution.

So, how do we convince the school board and administration to fix this problem? We must continue to keep up the pressure. Last fall, we filed an Unfair Labor Practice complaint over the district's bad-faith bargaining on this issue. Unfortunately, a decision on the ULP would come too late to improve class sizes for the 2008-09 school year. Moreover, a ULP hearing would be expensive for the district, and the SEA Executive Board and Representative Council have decided that we would rather the district spend its money *balancing class size*, instead of on litigation costs.

So now it is up to you, SEA members, to show district administrators that our withdrawal of the ULP does not mean that we have given up, nor that we accept 'super-size' classes as the new 'Shoreline way.' We need to show the administration and school board that we are still united, that students, parents, and teachers are demanding that they balance class sizes next year – and in the future.

On March 10, at 7:00 PM there is a School Board meeting at the Shoreline Center. Join us. We need to send a message and show support for our colleagues as they share their stories of 'super-size,' overloaded classrooms this year. We have shown our strength before, and it has made a difference. We must exert our collective strength again to say that withdrawing our ULP means: "Make students and teachers the priority. Take that money and use it to balance class sizes this coming fall. And, school board members and administrators, here's why you *must*, for students' and teachers' sakes, balance class sizes."

Please attend the School Board Meeting on March 10 at 7:00 PM at the Shoreline Center to tell the Shoreline School Board and administration that we

expect balanced classes for the 2008-2009 school year!

Contact your SEA building rep if you plan to attend or have questions. I hope to see you on Monday!
~ Elizabeth Beck, SEA President