

Dear MIEA Members,

I hope your week goes well.

## MIEA UPDATES

This week, the **MIEA bargaining team** and I have been very busy answering member questions and meeting in preparation for bargaining. We analyzed the survey data and have created a final survey, which we sent out Friday, in which you will be able to prioritize the items that rose to the top. We met with members of the District bargaining team to determine a shared financial understandings of the District's current financial projections and costing.

- [MIEA Classified and Certificated Members Prioritization Survey](#)
- [MIEA Classified Follow-Up Survey](#) (in addition to the above survey)

Results of the above surveys, as well as the "COVID Working Conditions" Survey, will be shared with members via Zoom meetings the week of June 15, 2020. Stay tuned for more information.

We also finalized the **Personal Leave MOU for COVID-closure**. We cleaned up the language to more clearly state members will be allowed to roll-over up to three unused personal days and also cash-out up to three unused personal leave days. New this year is that certificated staff will not have to account for extra time worked on the form. Forms should be coming out this week and will be due June 30, 2020.

Additionally, I met with Fred Rundle about the **re-opening school work groups** that are being formed to plan and advise our re-opening bargaining team on potential scenarios for next fall. In this meeting, MIEA and MISD created a joint survey to find interested members for these work groups. MIEA will have designated members to keep our Executive Board and bargaining team in the loop while also making sure the broader perspective of our membership needs as a whole are being considered. We will bargain the details around re-opening schools separate from the larger long-term contract negotiations.

Some things to keep in mind as we approach June:

- **Personal Hours Cash-out or Roll-over** (up to 3 days for each) - if you wish to cash out any days, forms are due June 30, 2020 (forms should be coming week of 6/1 from HR)
  - **Certificated MAPL Hour Forms** - [MAPL forms](#) must be turned into your evaluator no later than August 10, 2020
  - **MISD Job Openings** - MISD is posting many "internal only" job openings on the District job posting site. If you are on a limited letter of assignment or contract, you can apply internally to these positions:
    - Visit [jobs.mercerislandschools.org](https://jobs.mercerislandschools.org) and click "internal" in the upper right corner
    - If you were hired during the last two years, you should already have a login and profile established. HR does not have your login but you are able to retrieve your login and password by clicking "I forgot my username and password" on the right side of the page
    - If you have questions about the position postings, please contact HR or your supervisor
  - **The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act** passed on March 27, 2020. This federal law expands how employees can use their Medical Flexible Spending Arrangement (FSA) and Health Savings Account (HSA) funds. More information here: [CARES ACT LINK](#)
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## WEA UPDATES

With just a few weeks of school left, your Association has been working hard at finding and shaping solutions to ensure educator voices are included in the process of reopening schools for the 2020-21 school year. WEA President Larry Delaney summarized the efforts underway in our blog. If you missed it, read his [blog post](#).

They update their [COVID-19 web page](#) regularly.  
In today's edition:

- Graduation ceremony guidance
- WEA organizers are reaching out to potential members statewide
- WEA member crisis funds still available
- Special Education reminders
- Unemployment fraud
- ID protection now available through NEA Member Benefits

### Graduation ceremony guidance

The state Department of Health has issued guidance regarding high school graduation ceremonies during the different Safe Start phases, and outlined options for remote and/or socially distanced celebrations. The department re-emphasized that health/safety remains the top priority, but noted that decisions about ceremonies are up to school boards and superintendents if they comply with restrictions still in place from the governor. [Download a pdf copy of the guidance](#) for full details.

### This is not a scam!

WEA organizers are using **Hustle**, our interactive text messaging app, to start conversations with potential members across the state who are early career educators. After connecting with our early career educators, organizers plan to reach out to our other potential members, too. Please give a heads up to your potential members that while they have heard of numerous scams out there, the WEA outreach messages are genuine.

How can educators tell the difference? Our organizers are NOT trolling for their sensitive information. WEA is doing a check-in conversation to see how things are going during the pandemic school closures, and setting up a scheduled time for a more in-depth, one-on-one chat. Organizers will offer educators links to resources including [WEA's COVID-19 page](#), the NEA crisis text line and information about what it means to be a union member.

### WEA member crisis funds still available

The WEA Board approved financial assistance grants for WEA members who have experienced a loss of pay due to the coronavirus crisis. The purpose of this fund is to provide one-time, temporary financial relief for Active WEA members (WEA-Retired and SWEA members are not eligible) who have personally experienced a loss of income due to the COVID-19 school closures. Crisis grants are \$575 each and are intended for those WEA members hardest hit from lost income due to the pandemic.

Funds are still available, and grants will be made until the funds run out. There are two ways to apply: [online](#) or by calling 253-765-7093. Callers should leave a voice mail which will be returned in the order in which it was received.

### Special Education Reminders

WEA's Annie Lamberto reminds people that IDEA and Section 504 services must continue under the schools closure, but that IEP services may look different than what was originally planned.

- The [Continuous Learning Plan](#) template from OSPI is one way to document what services will look like during the closure.

- Documentation of services being provided to students is required, what that documentation looks like is a decision made at the district/local level. Workload issues/supports that may result need to be bargained.
- Leaders can seek information from council staff, who have access to examples of documentation that districts are using.
- There is no "hold harmless" for IDEA or Section 504. Services and documentation of those services should continue.

### **Unemployment Fraud**

A high number of fraudulent claims are being filed for unemployment insurance, and educators are among the several groups of workers being targeted. This is happening across many sectors, probably due to previous data breaches of large companies such as Equifax, which affected about 40 percent of all Americans. Employers must verify each application, so school districts should be contacting people if they have been targeted. Some people may have been contacted directly by the Employment Security Department (ESD).

Check-in with HR/Payroll (Erin Anderson) to ensure no one has filed a claim in your name, and if so, [notify ESD as soon as possible](#) that they have not filed a claim. This will protect you in the event you need to file for unemployment later on.

If you receive a letter from the Washington State Employment Security Department (ESD) regarding an unemployment claim and you have **not** filed for unemployment, you may be the victim of identity theft and unemployment fraud.

If you have not received a letter, but are concerned about your personal information being used for unemployment fraud, you can attempt to set up a SAW account on the Employment Security Department's (ESD) website at <https://secure.esd.wa.gov/home/>. The system will tell you if your social security number is already associated with another account.

If you discover that you are a victim of unemployment fraud:

- Report the fraud via email to Erin Anderson in the Payroll Office and
- Report the fraud to the ESD via their website  
at: <https://esd.wa.gov/unemployment/unemployment-benefits-fraud>

Some other steps you can take are to:

- Go to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) identity theft website at <https://www.identitytheft.gov/> for fraud reporting resources.
- Request your free credit report via <https://www.annualcreditreport.com> and review for fraudulent activity.
  - Report any fraud to the three major Credit Bureaus:
    - Experian 1-888-397-3742
    - TransUnion 1-800-680-7289
    - Equifax 1-888-766-0008

### **ID protection is now a feature available through NEA Member Benefits**

With all the various scams that have arisen during the pandemic shutdowns, educators have expressed concern about being the victim of identity theft. NEA Member Benefits partner California Casualty has joined with CyberScout, a leading provider of identity services to bring educators ID Defense at no additional charge if they have auto or home insurance coverage through California Casualty.

The service provides advocacy through CyberScout to help handle the recovery by placing fraud alerts, calling creditors, and assisting for as long as it takes to restore the good name and peace of mind for identity theft victims. For more information, members can call California Casualty at 800-800-9410 and choose Option 3, or visit [calcas-idtheft.com](https://calcas-idtheft.com) for information online.

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I hope you have a relaxing weekend. Please reach out to me or your MIEA Building Reps. if we can be of assistance/answer questions.

Stay well and informed.

Sincerely,

Sally

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