



The Reporter

The Official Publication of the
West Virginia School Service Personnel Association
SPRING 2009

A Message from your President, Jackee Long

“Ready to Meet the Challenge”

To those of you who I have yet to meet as I travel around the state, I would like to wish each of you a happy and healthy New Year; May it bring all that you seek and provide you with professional and personal satisfaction.

As we enter the New Year, I am pleased to announce that our membership has increased by over 1,500 this school year! We have welcomed new members into our great organization and many have “rediscovered” the benefits of membership in WVSSPA. With new member benefits, additional staff, and an aggressive agenda that places school service personnel issues front and center, our organization is ready to overcome any and all challenges that will come our way. ***And challenges we will face in 2009.***

We will be challenged during this legislative session on two fronts. First, we will have to find the funds within the Governor’s budget to provide a salary increase for education employees. While we recognize the uncertain and difficult time in which we live, we too must adjust our household budgets as we watch the price of healthcare, food and gas increase. We expect legislation to weaken many of our work rules and contract out our jobs.

We will be challenged to build our membership despite the presence of competing organizations that do not advocate for school service personnel, yet attempt to take all the credit. The presence of these organizations does not help our efforts to secure better salaries and improved benefits for our members.



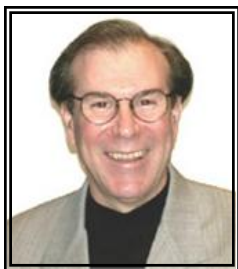
We will be challenged to restore public confidence in our schools and increase support for our goals and objectives at the county level. The need to build coalitions will continue and assume even greater importance.

We will be challenged to make sure that our share of the Federal Stimulus Education funds are used for their intended purpose – to help our students achieve and assist our employees in the delivery of services.

And we will succeed! Why? Because we are over 9,000 strong and growing every day. Our organization is changing, and we are poised and ready to meet any and all challenges that come our way.



WVSSPA members rally on February 11th for the Governor’s State of the State Address at the Capitol.



A Message from your Executive Director, Bob Brown “The State of WVSSPA”

As we hear about the state of the nation from our new President, and the state of the state from our Governor, I would like to take a moment to tell you about the state of WVSSPA.

I am pleased to report that WVSSPA is in a stronger and more viable situation than at any time in recent history and our future looks bright as long as we stay the course. There are a number of reasons for our good fortune.

We recruited over 1,500 new members into the ranks of WVSSPA since school started. Not only are we growing in those counties where we already had members, but we are seeing remarkable growth in regions absent of real WVSSPA membership. For example, under the leadership of our new president in Ohio County, Nancy Smith, our membership has grown dramatically to the point where we are once again a recognized organization by the Ohio County Board of Education. In Wirt County, we have revitalized what had previously been a very weak association.

Our partnership with AFT-WV has provided us with the opportunity to add two full-time release staff in addition to having President Long working full-time for WVSSPA. As you know, up until September, 2008, our staff consisted of just John Roush, Kimberly Levy, Gordie McClanahan and myself (in addition to our two clerical staff, Carolyn and Kay). As great as they are, they could never keep up with the level of services our members expect and deserve. But, since September, we

have had two full-time release staff plus Jackee Long working the state, recruiting members and assisting with grievances. The fact that our membership has increased speaks volumes for the work we all do and the increase in staff.

Our ability to offer free and discounted member benefits has also helped to make us stronger. Now, school service personnel can enjoy the free liability insurance and other programs at no cost! Best of all, this benefit is a “member benefits only” program. Those who are not members of WVSSPA are not eligible for these services. Yet another reason to recruit members into the WVSSPA family!

Finally, there is a renewed sense of ownership in the organization by our members. Having just come off a two week tour of the state in which your executive committee and I held regional meetings, I witnessed the enthusiasm and pride our members have in their organization and the sense by those that attended that we are moving forward and in the right direction.

If I have learned anything over these past few months, it is that we are moving in the right direction and we should stay the course. All our activities, our message and the changes that we have implemented since the start of the school term are resonating with our members. They like who we are, they approve of the new direction for WVSSPA and the future is truly ours for the taking. As Jackee mentions in her column, there is little we can't accomplish if we continue to work together. United by a common vision and shared values, I look forward to a successful year.

House Legislator, Rick Moye, Fayette County SSPA and Pleasants County SSPA members patiently await Governor Manchin.



WVSSPA Legislative Proposals

Although the legislative session officially started on February 11th, WVSSPA began working the halls of the State Capitol, meeting with the leadership of the House of Delegates and the State Senate, as well as the Governor, in an attempt to gain support for our proposals. While we are disappointed that the Governor did not propose a salary increase in his state of the state address, we will comb the budget looking for “spare change” in order to fund an across-the-board salary increase. In addition, while we support the Governor’s concern to address school calendar issues, we believe the calendar contains ample time to provide the desired days and amount of instruction. Perhaps the best way to look at the Governor’s budget is that it is a starting point for discussions to begin on our salary request and other parts of the WVSSPA legislative agenda.

Here are our legislative proposals:

Salary

- ◆ An across-the-board increase in the state minimum salary schedule.

Retirement

- ◆ An extension of the timeline for the buyback provision under the pension transfer.
- ◆ A Cost of Living benefit increase for retired school employees.

PEIA

- ◆ A redefinition of the “80/20” provision of the PEIA plan so as to provide affordable health care.
- ◆ Assistance, in the way of premium reductions, for retirees.

Working Conditions

- ◆ Implementation of the cook/meal ratio.
- ◆ One pay grade increase for “Cafeteria Manager”.
- ◆ Employment of at least one Custodian IV in each school.
- ◆ Limitations on, and extra pay for, “itinerant” status.
- ◆ Multi-classification title holder be paid one-eighth higher salary and be funded with local funds.
- ◆ Additional clerical help in schools based upon student enrollment.
- ◆ The surviving spouse of a school employee shall benefit from any unused personal leave of the employee.
- ◆ Providing extra pay for aides and paraprofessionals who work in classrooms where the number of students exceed 20 in Kindergarten and 25 in grades 1-4.
- ◆ Workload of custodians based upon square footage.

Much of our work at the legislature involves fighting off attempts to weaken public education and our employment rights and benefits. To that end, WVSSPA will oppose:

- ◆ Changing the statutory 43-week school calendar.
- ◆ Contracting out service personnel jobs.
- ◆ Repealing the intent of the service personnel seniority and substitute provisions.
- ◆ Merit pay.
- ◆ Permitting control or regionalization of school service personnel jobs to RESA’s.
- ◆ Changing termination and transfer notice dates.
- ◆ Establishing a different premium and benefit PEIA program for new employees and diminishing the value of unused sick leave days to pay PEIA premiums.
- ◆ Conversion of service personnel positions to professional positions.

IMPORTANT DATES FOR YOUR CALENDAR

- **February 11-April 11** West Virginia Legislative Session
- **May 29-30** WVSSPA Spring Assembly: Flatwoods



Inside the Capitol, our members are gathering to see the Governor and Legislators as they enter.



Left to right: Berkeley Co. SSPA officers, Mike Plant & Dave Shamburg; WVSSPA President, Jackee Long; National AFT Secretary-Treasurer, Antonio Cortese; and AFT WV President, Judy Hale.

WVSSPA Executive Director, Bob Brown speaking to members.



Everyone is lined up excitedly waiting and having a great time!



Benefits of Joining WVSSPA

These are some of the many benefits available exclusively to WVSSPA members:

LEGAL ASSISTANCE- Our WVSSPA legal staff are knowledgeable in school law and stand ready to protect your rights during RIF and transfers. They can assist you with grievances, workers' compensation, and other work issues.

KEEPING YOU INFORMED -WVSSPA members can stay in the loop through *Legislative Updates*, *The Reporter* and news bulletins as they occur.

PEACE OF MIND PROTECTION

- FREE \$1 Million Dollar Professional Liability Insurance
- FREE Life Insurance (\$12,000) for one year
- FREE Accidental Death and Dismemberment Coverage
- FREE Discount Program (auto insurance, mortgage, dental, magazines, hotel - just to name a few.)

For information on our insurance and discount programs, please contact Brandon Tinney (see back page.)



Attention: WVSSPA Members

The Free Life Insurance policy provides for an additional benefit of \$12,000 that will be paid in the event of an accidental death for a total of \$24,000. There are no medical exams or blood tests required for this policy. The only requirement is that you are an active member of WVSSPA. If you have not completed the Free Life Insurance forms, please contact our office at 1-800-642-9150.

NOT A MEMBER? All you need to do is complete and return the attached application and mail to: WVSSPA, 1610 Washington St. E., Charleston, WV 25311. This will give YOU the opportunity to take advantage of the many benefits offered as a WVSSPA member.

West Virginia School Service Personnel Association MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Date of Application: _____ Social Security No: _____
County of Employment: _____ School Where Employed: _____
Home Phone No: _____ Work Telephone No: _____
Name: _____ E-Mail: _____
Address: _____
City: _____ Zip: _____

Check your classification category:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Custodial | <input type="checkbox"/> School Lunch |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Maintenance | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Office | <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher Aide |

Check member status:

- | |
|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Regular Member (\$85 annually plus county share) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Substitute (\$45 annually plus county share) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Retiree (\$5 annually plus county share) |

CHECK ONE: CASH PAYROLL DEDUCTION

The Following Paragraph Applies to Payroll Deduction Only

I hereby attest that I am a continuing member of my service personnel association, and, in accordance with the laws of the State, hereby assign to the West Virginia School Service Personnel Association such money as necessary to pay the annual cost of the dues for my service personnel association, the said amount to be deducted from the salary due me from the _____ County Board of Education, and in such manner as agreed between the Board and my county school service personnel association. It is understood that this assignment is entirely optional with me, reserving the right to cancel such for any succeeding year before Sept. 1 in writing to the county board of education.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

INTRODUCING.....

WVSSPA & AFT-WV

Member Benefits Coordinator Brandon Tinney



Hello. My name is Brandon Tinney and I'm the newly hired Member Benefits Coordinator for WVSSPA and AFT-WV. I encourage everyone to take advantage of the benefits of belonging to AFT-WV. We offer very reasonable life insurance policies (Free \$12,000 one-year term life policy for **new** members) with no physical required and only one medical question, disability income plans, catastrophic major medical insurance that you can carry over to retirement, pet insurance, credit cards, mortgage loans, online tax preparation, discounts on flowers, books, theme parks, car rentals, hotels, Wyndham Resorts and much more. Visit our website at <http://www.aftplus.org>.

One of the most popular features is our partnership with Liberty Mutual Insurance. Members receive a 15% discount on car insurance and 10% on homeowners insurance. You will need to contact Steve Adams at 1-304-549-8074 for a quote and ask for the AFT discount.

If you need information or have questions, please call at me. I look forward to speaking with you.

(W)1-800-222-9838; (C)1-304-651-4264; FAX 1-304-345-5955.

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