



The Reporter

The Official Publication of the
West Virginia School Service Personnel Association
JANUARY 2008

A Message from Your President, Jackee Long

On the Move in 2008

Happy New Year! As we welcome another year, 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.

2008 promises to be an active one for us.

We are going to be *On the Move*, beginning with a press conference in early January, to announce the results of our safe schools opinion survey and efforts to address the increasing lack of discipline in our schools.

We are going to be *On the Move* at the capitol when the legislature convenes on January 9th. And we will stay there until the gavel comes down at midnight on March 8th. As in years past, WVSSPA will be at the capitol working and lobbying exclusively for school service personnel. That means we always have your interests front and center. A list of our priorities can be found inside this newsletter.

We are going to be *On the Move* as we rally at the capitol – on January 9th – just before the State of the State Address by the Governor.

We are going to be *On the Move* working to elect county school board candidates this spring who understand the needs of children and school employees.

We are going to be *On the Move* working to ensure that our organization remains strong and united and free from those who seek to divide and weaken us.

The officers and staff of the WVSSPA will be *On the Move* throughout the state working with you to advance the values and priorities of our membership.

There is no doubt that challenges await us in 2008. I am convinced that, if we work together with confidence and purpose, we can turn these challenges into opportunities. I invite you to join with me and make 2008 a memorable year for us!



Save these Dates!

2008 RALLY AT THE CAPITOL

Wednesday, January 9th

**(Meet between 4:30 - 5:45 PM at
WVSSPA Headquarters)**

**2008 WVSSPA
SPRING ASSEMBLY**

April 4-5

Holiday Inn - Charleston House



A Message from your Executive Secretary, Bob Brown

It takes a Team

Across the state, more than 13,000 school service personnel (most of whom are WVSSPA members) make up a significant and vital part of the education team. We know that school service employees are committed to making sure that students are safe, healthy and ready to learn. You are the men and women who perform the various tasks-transporting children to and from school, providing nutritious meals, making sure schools are safe and clean, tutoring those who need extra help and keeping academic records in tip-top shape-that really makes schools work! Unfortunately, these tasks and the people who perform them often get overlooked, unappreciated and underpaid. That's why school service personnel need an organization they can count on to fight for their rights, the WVSSPA.

The WVSSPA is the only organization with the experience and commitment necessary to best serve the needs of school employees. The WVSSPA is the only voice for all school service employees - teachers' aides, secretaries and clerks, bus drivers, food service employees, custodial and maintenance workers.

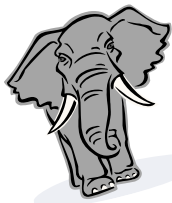
The WVSSPA is the voice for school service personnel at the statehouse. Ours is the only voice legislators hear when discussing school service personnel issues. Whether we are meeting with the leadership of the legislature or their staff, WVSSPA is the only organization present to represent school service personnel issues. When the Governor needs to meet with school service personnel, he calls the WVSSPA. He knows which organization represents school service personnel.

The WVSSPA has worked to make the grievance procedure more fair and equitable. In fact, I am pleased to report that I was elected Chairperson of the newly constituted state grievance board. This is the first time in the history of the grievance board that a representative of an employee organization has headed the board and this is a great honor for WVSSPA.

The WVSSPA has numerous programs and services to assist our members. Our number one priority is ensuring that our members have whatever they need-whether it's fair compensation or grievance representation - to go about the business of making schools work.

We are a team; education employees working together to ensure that our most precious resources - our students - receive the services and instruction they need to realize their true potential. As we move forward into 2008, let us continue to be reminded of what brings us together and fight those who seek to draw us apart.

I join President Long in extending to you my best wishes for a happy new year and I look forward to seeing you either at the capitol or in your counties.



All Politics is Local!

Twice a month, school board members are making decisions that impact school service personnel, teachers, children and families. In many counties, we are seeing a disturbing trend as school boards are taking an increasingly combative and anti-employee approach when it comes to our rights. Yet we have an opportunity every spring to defeat those school board members who are anti-employee and elect candidates that are pro-education and pro-employee. Many of our county associations are beginning to look at the school board races as an opportunity to bring about real change and better working conditions at the local level for school employees. Hopefully, in the not too distant future, there will come a time that, when we speak, the School Board will listen and act accordingly!



If you are interested in learning more about how to run an effective school board campaign and school board candidate recruitment, please contact the WVSSPA office.

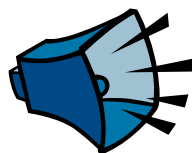
Are You Ready To Rally?

On January 9, 2008, the legislative session will begin. Our Executive Secretary, Bob Brown, has spent the last 10 months educating legislators on the need to address pension reform, discipline in our schools and salaries. In addition, he has had several meetings with the Governor and his staff to press our case. But to make our message truly heard, **we need you to attend a rally at the state capitol** on the opening night of the legislative session. Just as we did last year with our historic rally, we need you to drive to Charleston so that the minute the session starts, our collective voice will be the first one heard. As the Governor and members of the legislature walk into the House chamber, let's remind them of our priorities! Joining us will be the teachers, retirees and other education employees, as all organizations agree that all education employees deserve a pay raise, pension reform and safe and secure schools. Thanks to our coalition, last year's legislative session was one of the best for school service personnel in many, many years. Plan to be at the WVSSPA building between 4:30-5:45PM (food will be provided) as we will march to the Capitol and rally inside shortly thereafter. So mark your calendar – **plan to be in Charleston on Wednesday, January 9, 2008.**

Are you ready to Lobby?

We have an aggressive legislative agenda that includes, but is not limited to:

- ▶ A fair and equitable salary increase
- ▶ Pension reform
- ▶ Safe and orderly schools



Salary: As you know, last year for the first time in over 20 years, school service personnel and teachers received the same salary increase. We achieved equity due to the efforts of the WVSSPA and our coalition partners. Everyone understands that a loaf of bread and a gallon of gasoline cost the same whether you are a teacher or a school service employee. We will be seeking an increase equal to what other education employees receive this year.

Pension Reform: WVSSPA already has legislation drafted to provide a one-time window to voluntarily allow those employees in the new retirement plan the option to transfer into the old system. WVSSPA, along with AFT-WV and WVEA, has met with legislative leaders and the Governor to gain their support for our efforts.

Safe and Orderly Schools: Real learning can only occur in a safe, orderly and mutually respectful environment. WVSSPA was a strong supporter of the 1995 Safe Schools Act. But it is time to tackle these issue again as well as the lack of discipline on our buses and in our schools and the verbal and physical abuse our school employees are subject to on a daily basis. We will be seeking to pass legislation that will afford every school employee a safe and secure work environment.

Just as in past years, much of our time will be focused on resolving issues that have been the subject of grievances filed by our members. We also anticipate warding off renewed attempts to privatize transportation and other services provided by our members.

Are you ready to protect PEIA health insurance benefits for our Retirees?

The PEIA Finance Board recently adopted a new plan. The good news is that there are no changes to active employees (those currently employed). We will not have an increase in premiums, co-payments or deductibles. The new plan does contain some encouraging news for retirees:

- ▶ Retirees will no longer pay the 20 percent co-insurance payment. This will minimize, to an extent, retirees' financial burden, especially those who were paying the \$500 annual out-of-pocket maximum with just one stay at the hospital. This will take effect July 1, 2008.
- ▶ For the approximately 5,000 retirees whose prescription drug co-payments increased from a \$15 level under PEIA to a \$50 level under Advantra Freedom, the co-payments will be returned to the \$15 co-pay effective March 1, 2008.

The WVSSPA argued and lobbied for these changes and we are appreciative of these changes. However, the new plan has not resolved a major concern; too many of our retirees are still having problems transitioning to the new plan (MAPD).

We believe that it is time for the legislature to step in and assume oversight responsibilities of PEIA and we will be seeking this during the legislative session.

Top Ten Reasons Why School Service Employees are members of WVSSPA

1. The WVSSPA is like an old friend.
2. The WVSSPA will fight for you when no one else will.
3. It's wonderful to always have someone like WVSSPA on your side.
4. The WVSSPA keeps us well informed. They make available school law and school policies.
5. The WVSSPA is the one voice for school service personnel who otherwise would be left unheard.
6. The WVSSPA is the only organization that exclusively represents and fights for school service employees. Our business is school service personnel issues.
7. When I needed help, no one seemed to care, WVSSPA was there!
8. WVSSPA will go the extra mile to help service personnel.
9. WVSSPA is an organization for workers. Since administrators are not allowed to join, there is no conflict of interest. I feel that I have fair representation.
10. WVSSPA listens to my issues, my concerns and fights for me. No other organization will do that for me.

IF YOU ALREADY BELONG TO WVSSPA, PLEASE PASS FORM BELOW TO SOMEONE WHO IS NOT.

**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 (\$72 annually plus county share) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Substitute (\$40 annually plus county share) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Retiree (\$2 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: _____

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