

News and Views of
SUB-STANCE



A publication of the Seattle Substitutes Association,
a department of the Seattle Education Association

Rick Harlan, President
Wynne Stout, Interim Vice President
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June, 2006

Wynne & Sub-Port Go National

We must be proud but we also must be good! —Jim Politis, Pres. NSTA

SSA VP Wynne Stout has been invited to be a presenter at the National Substitute Teachers Alliance 5th annual convention (in San Bernadino June 24-25: www.nsta-subs.org; go if you can!). Wynne will demonstrate our dept website, Sub-Port with all its bells and whistles, like maps to the schools and instant lesson plans. She'll show how attendees can make a website for their locale.

So lots more good folks dedicated to professionalizing substitute education will be "visiting" us here in Seattle via our website. Have U visited us? www.seattlewea.org, click on SUB-PORT! (It's also easy to click on our sections in the Contracts.)

Great Schools for a Great City Campaign:

Call the campaign if you don't have petitions to circulate to Seattle voters.

Rick also has signature sheets for pick-up, 271-8871 after school hours.

YES on 87
Invest in Student Achievement!

The two Seattle City initiatives would:

- Restore funds for arts, music and enrichment programs;
- Reduce class sizes by four students per class;
- Provide all-day kindergarten for all students; and
- Put money directly into schools so all students receive the resources and help they need to succeed.

From Your President

Hey honestly, I know about half of you fellow substitute educators reading this don't think of yourselves as a year-to-year 'substitute'— because you're looking for a *regular* job. And the other half of you don't self-identify as a 'substitute' much— because of all your years in education as a regular teacher, or otherwise on-staff.

So nearly all of us are less comfortable saying that we ARE substitutes, than saying we are substitute-ING.

Well, I'm going to speak directly to substitute teachers for a bit, but everybody hang on 'til the end.

We want respect and compensation commensurate to our responsibility. How people think about us, refer to us is important in that struggle.

Our lot IS with "the teachers", and with all other educators. In fact we **are** teachers, substituting. We do get noticed as much for "teacher" as for the "Substitute."

In fact, somehow "**substitute teacher**" has come to mean something different than "teacher". This can be measured via pocketbook, benefit levels, etc.

How can we ST's **play the name game to our advantage** (and for our students and colleagues, too!). I see two complementary strategies:

1. We can **reclaim respect for our traditional job name** and its parts. When the context is respectful, we use our full title, Substitute Teacher/s. e.g.: use in contracts, collective bargaining agreements. In recent negotiations, we laboriously

changed over 60 references in the SPS/SEA contract from "substitute/s" to: "**substitute teacher/s**", "**substitute paraprofessionals**" and "**substitute SAEOPs**". We also changed our local SEA union Policies and Procedures to embody this intention to be specific and respectful about names for us as education substitutes. And our monthly newsletter SUB-STANCE uses one of the few positives for the 'sub-' prefix, as does our new website, SUB-PORT.com.

Who are "Substitute Educators"? Substitute teachers needn't lose **solidarity** with other education substitutes in our quest for credibility as teachers. So we should use the title Substitute Educators when appropriate, including fellow substitutes for instructional assistants and for virtually every other school employee, all educators. As Substitute Educators we are a huge and crucial cross-section of the facets of education. We deserve a national day of appreciation. In fact, now we have one! Substitute Educators Day info is at www.nea.org/aew. Substitute Educators Day is about us substitute teachers and also about many so many more who 'save the day'!

2. Ok, I admit it; reclaim-the-name "Substitute" will take time. So, WHILE the 'Sink the Sub' culture, built up over the years, recedes... replaced over time by equitable respect for all educators, we can also actively **promote the use of alternate names:**

Guest Teacher is a title used by whole districts, like Highline near Seattle, in programs to increase general respect and student coopera-

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Next meeting is Wednesday, June 14, 2006

4:30 - 6:30 @ John Stanford Center
Room 2750
2445 3rd Ave S (@ Lander)
SoDo district, Seattle



June's Meeting

Agenda:

"Sub"consciousness: Substitute Educators' natural solidarity with all.

Increasing awareness of the underlying issues wherever we go. The power and enjoyment of Compassionate Communication.

Also: YES on 87 & 88 Initiatives

Seattle Education Association, 5501 4th Ave S, Suite 101

Seattle, WA 98108 206.283.8443 x 220 (substitute voice mail)

Ben Ibale, UniServ Director serving substitutes; Rick Harlan, SSA President, after school hours @206.271.8871

Unemployment, hiring, recommendation, retirement notes

Unemployment: Substitute employees who are assured work next year are not eligible, but long-term substitutes WITH health benefits that will extend over the summer, and who are not hired for next year, have NOT been assured continued employment at comparable level of remuneration are eligible. These substitutes can file following their last day of work. www.go2ui.com

Hiring: Many substitute educators are hired into regular positions each school year. Substitute educators who have served in long-term assignments prove themselves to the administrators and staff who serve on the *site-based* hiring committees.

At the same time, administrators who are familiar with your work in a school are the best ones to approach for a letter of **recommendation**. Don't hesitate to offer a draft to a principal. Take your recommendation to Human Resources and keep a copy to include in your applications. Keep track of deadlines through "Employment" on the SPS website or JobLine. Substitute employees are eligible to apply for jobs after all displaced employees are placed (by category, job title). Sometimes there is a lot of activity just before and after school starts. Remember: applying or not, positive evaluations and letters of recommendation keep your **personnel file** sweet. Often the only time principals think about evaluating a substitute is when something goes wrong. So be proactive to keep your personnel file a balanced picture of your work.

Substitute teachers can pay into the WA **retirement** system. In most cases you will have to have worked a minimum of 70 hours per month in 5 months in a school year. You can pay the service credit after the school year ends. For more details, visit www.drs.wa.gov

Enough work this year?/Nuf work 4U?

Have you found it easier to get jobs this year than last? Fact: 41 thousand **jobs** by the start of June this school year is about 2 thousand more than last year. And we can assume that the **number** of substitute certs and classifieds on the books and working actively is about the same as last year.

So if you personally have had an easier, or harder, time finding enough work this year, it could be because of a third factor. **Pre-arrangement** is rising. That is, a school office and/or school staff are increasingly contacting substitute educators personally and arranging for us to work on particular days, ahead of time. The longer we work in the school district the more we can be recognized and trusted and called upon. And pre-arrangement helps our day go better and students to learn more if we aren't spending so much time getting used to each other.

So it's beneficial all around for substitute educators to be proactive about making sure schools and school staff know us, and know how to get in touch with us when needed. So, adopt-a-school for next year! Consider asking to attend the August 29th all-district in-service day, at a school of your choice. No pay for you, but a good get-to-know day. The first weeks are always sparse in substitute educator jobs. First student day is Sept. 6.

From Substitutes Services:

- To all certificated substitutes: Certificated substitutes **must** arrive at assignments at the start time listed in Sub Finder. Schools are reporting many substitutes are not arriving to assignments at middle and high schools until 2nd period when the substitutes are aware that the first period is a prep period for the absent teacher.
- Look for our annual packet of information for next year in the mail sometime in early summer.
- Thank you to all our hard working and dedicated substitutes for your work with our students this year. You do make a difference and you are appreciated.

— Chris and Sue

End of the year appreciations

Thanks: VP Wynne Stout made a huge difference to us this year. Kudos! And to Maggie Crain who formats this newsletter so well; to Ben of course; to Chris and Sue; to outgoing officers; to incoming Sec. and Treas. Alice and Daria; to ongoing dept. Representatives; to all you who attended one or more Association meetings; and to readers— like you right now!

Best to everyone for what you wish for this summer. If you'd like to be involved with some of the work this summer and fall: for equity/cultural competence, or professional development, or parts of the website, or furthering/realizing the Best Practices for Substitute Teachers, or attending the monthly big union meetings as one of our Representatives, or..?: PLEASE contact Wynne, wdstout@seattleschools.org, the SEA office 283.8443. Many hands. —Rick

www.seattlewea.org

click on Sub-port

Letter from the President

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tion with substitute teachers. In Seattle, after trying for 5 years, substitute employees won the option to receive district employee photo identity badges. The agreed-upon titles?: Guest Teacher and Guest Educator. Jim Politis also mentions Visiting Teacher. I've heard of others like Interim Teacher. And in England, Supply Teachers are counted on to supply very high quality on-call teaching, and are paid somewhat like on-call nurses can be: above and beyond regular teachers pay—"in lieu of benefits".

I have two personal favorite job names (besides reclaiming the positive in Substitute Teacher and Substitute Educator). One is simply "Teacher". Because that's what we do. "Teacher" would seem to me to do well enough on an application. We are specialist teachers. There are many kinds of teachers. We are crucial to almost all the others.

I often use 'teacher' to refer to myself when people ask what I do. I say "teacher," then they usually follow with "Oh— where do you teach?" or "What do you teach?" At that point I get to use a droll "Everywhere!"... or "Everything!". It's a good way to keep education supporters guessing about what superpeople we are. How could we possibly be everywhere, and know everything?

Of course we aren't, and we don't. But that's basically what we're asked to do. And for way less pay, with no benefits, with few thanks, and sometimes suspicion. But we do DO it, as best we can, which is often amazingly well. As a song I wrote about us says, "We Do It All"!

And my other favorite job name? This may turn out to be the best of all— **Teachers On Call**. I hear that TOCs is the standard terminology thruout British Columbia. And note, Teacher On Call is one term that starts with the operative word, then follows it with a fine descriptive. Respected professionals that are "on call" include nurses, military special forces and, in baseball, relief pitchers and pinch batters.

Thank goodness tho that we aren't expected to do EVERYTHING in society "in a pinch" ! Just in schools!... Still, ready or not, we are THE crucial on-call professionals for jobs that arguably have no other jobs more important to the future....

So, one last time this school year, I thank you for what you do— whatever you call it. Just remember: whatever you call it has an effect!

—Rick Harlan, President, Substitutes