

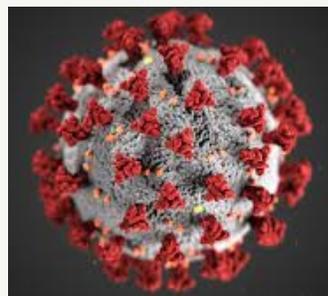


COVID Memorandum of Agreement

On February 2, 2022, the WHEA finalized negotiations with West Hartford Public Schools to reach a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) for the remainder of the 2021-2022 school year. The MOA, set to expire June 30, 2022, outlines working conditions related to COVID-19 for the remainder of the school year. The MOA addresses providing work for students required to quarantine at the elementary and secondary levels, guidelines for students streaming into classes, the use of administrative or sick time for teachers required to quarantine based on CEA guidelines and vaccination status, and the use of time for teachers with immediate family members who are required to quarantine but cannot be left unattended.

The long-term effects of COVID-19 are unknown. While West Hartford Public Schools' management did not agree to the clause, "All teachers who believe they have contracted COVID-19 at work are encouraged to apply for workers compensation," the WHEA encourages any member who believes they may have contracted COVID-19 as a result of their employment to get a doctor's note to that effect and to reach out to the WHEA to file a workers compensation claim. Workers compensation claims cannot be filed retroactively, so it is important that this step be taken at the time of contracting COVID-19.

Members of the MOA negotiations committee included Theresa McKeown, WHEA President; Elise Hendrix, WHEA Administrative Vice President; Brian Putkonen, Executive Vice President; and Sara Pomponi, WHEA's CEA Uniserv Representative.



SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

YOUR 2021-2022 OFFICERS:

President

Theresa McKeown

Executive V.P.

Brian Putkonen

Administrative V.P.

Elise Hendrix

Treasurer

Kathy Hardesty

Editor

Sara Tamborello

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WHEA News

Solidarity for Safe Schools

WHEA members wore black on Wednesday, January 12, 2022, in solidarity with teachers throughout the state. The day was intended to raise awareness of the need for proper masks, better access to testing, the need for additional staffing due to COVID-19 related absences, and a request for flexibility with the states legal minimum of 180 school days for students. This statewide initiative was organized by the Connecticut Boards of Education Union Coalition, an organization that the WHEA is an active member.



Top Right: Julia Kipphut (Webster Hill, Grade 3). Above: Left Charter Oak International Academy teachers Penelope Drown (Visual Arts), Dr. Melissa Zych (Vocal Music), and Glenn Horowitz (Physical Education). Center: Hall IA teachers Ellen Matos (Special Education), Noreen Branley (Special Education), Anna Matthews (Special Education), and Natasha Erickson (Speech/Language Pathologist). Right: Bristow Middle teachers Jamie Kaminski (Visual Arts), Lindsay Goltzman (Math Quest and Quest), Cliff Schofer (Band), Brittany Leghorn (Social Studies), Marcy Light (English), Tracy Bennett (Math), Chelsea Smith (English), and Jillian Olson (Reading). Below Left: Norfeldt Elementary teachers Lorie Campagna (Grade 3), Ellen Cercone (Grade 3), Lori Kobelski (Grade 1), Ali Campagna (Grade 4), Kathy Sweetland (Physical Education), Jessica Johnson (Grade 1), Lori Andrada (Library Media Specialist), Steve Muska (Grade 2), Kate Marques (Kindergarten), Christina Moavero (Grade 5), and Gabby Sebastiao (Grade 4). Center: Sedgwick teachers Lauren Masella (Math) and Sara Tamborello (English). Right: Pilar del Cacho (Spanish), David Simon (Spanish), Kristy Wronowski (Spanish), Bruno Koffi (French and Spanish), Connie Xu (Chinese), Michaela Volovsek (French and Spanish), Michelle Nicklas (Spanish), Carmen Irizarri (Spanish), Daisy Leone (Chinese), Meghan Kebernick (Latin and Spanish), and Jim Crabb (Latin).





WHEA News cont.



Above Left: Webster Hill Elementary pre-K teachers Randi Leopold, Kelsey Dhaling, and Elizabeth Cannone. Center: Morley Elementary teachers Debbie Antoinetti (Grade 3), Trudy Davis (Special Education), and Elizabeth Wallack (Grade 3). Right: Morley Elementary teachers Jennifer LaForte (Grade 2), Heather Alerte (Grade 1), Mari Beth Hixson (Kindergarten), and Sabrina Setton (Grade 2)



Above: Left Duffy Elementary teachers Tracy Scutari (Grade 4), Brittany Martin (Grade 4), Steve Lewis (Grade 5), Becky Pauluk (Grade 5), Sheila Levanti (Grade 4), Jill Dailey (Library Media Specialist), Leslie Bates (Grade 3), and Keli Bender (Grade 3). Right: Bugbee Elementary teachers Heidi Doyle (Kindergarten), Patti Farquhar (Grade 1), Anthony Weber (Grade 5), Kelly DiPietro (4), Valerie Hansen (Grade 2), Amy Vlosky (Library Media Specialist), Rachel Nelson (Resource), Lisa Roland (Grade 3), Courtney Phelan (Grade 4), Beth Mazur (Reading Intervention), Jeffrey Duquette (Psych.), Kate MacPhee (Speech), Dahlia Cherny (Grade 4), and Danielle Herbette (Grade 5).



WHEA News cont.

Elementary Scheduling Committee

The WHEA's representatives for the Elementary Scheduling Committee were announced December 1, 2021. They are Christine Kavanaugh (Duffy Elementary), Kelly Downs (Aiken Elementary), Christina Fedolfi (Charter Oak International Academy), and Theresa McKeown (WHEA President). The committee, along with three administrative representatives, has been tasked with formulating "an equitable, consistent elementary teachers' schedule." Its recommendations must go to the Board of Education no later than April 1, 2022. According to the Memorandum of Understanding, "the recommendations of the Committee shall be subject to the approval of the Board and the Association. In the event that the Committee does not reach consensus or either the Board or the Association reject the recommendations of the Committee, the matters in dispute shall be submitted to mid-term interest arbitration in accordance with the provisions of the Teacher Negotiation Act." The committee's recommendations and Board's decisions will be shared with WHEA members.



Know Your Contract FAQ

Q: How many personal days do I have?

A: Check your paystub for your current totals! As outlined in section 7.3, pages 18 and 19 of the contract, WHEA members have a set number of personal days for family illness (up to 3), bereavement (up to 3), religious holidays (up to 2), and situations outside of the employee's control that cannot be taken care of outside of the school day (up to 2). Be sure to fill out the Personal Day Request form in advance of an absence or within 2 days of returning from an absence if the absence could not be anticipated in advance.

Steps Toward Solving the Substitute Coverage Shortage

On December 6, 2021, the WHEA and West Hartford Board of Education reached a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) to take steps toward resolving the substitute shortage problem. The MOA allows teachers to be compensated for substituting for an absent teacher during their preparation period and is in effect for the remainder of the 2021-2022 school year.



WHEA News cont.

Contracts for the 2022-2025 School Years

Printed contracts for the 2022-2025 school years have been distributed to each building. Have you picked up yours? If not, contact one of your building's WHEA representatives for a copy.



Retiring This Year?

If you are preparing to retire this school year, we want to hear from you! The June issue of *WHEA World* will be featuring bios of teachers retiring this school year. As you prepare for the next, exciting chapter, please be thinking about your fondest memories of your time in West Hartford, what you will miss most about teaching, and words of advice or wisdom that you would like to pass on to teachers continuing their teaching journey in West Hartford. Feel free to select a photo that captures you at best to add to your bio. If no photo is available, your most recent WHPS ID photo will be used.

Save the Date!
May 19, 2022

The WHEA will be honoring teachers retiring this school year, teacher of the year, and citizen of the year at the spring social at GastroPark in West Hartford. Be on the lookout for an email from WHEA Social Chair, Eric Feeney with more information as we get closer to the event.



CEA News

CEA

What's Real in Education Forum

On February 28, 2022, the CEA held it's [*What's Real in Education Forum*](#) both virtually and in person at the Sheraton Hartford South featuring panels of teachers and legislators. The panels of teachers discussed issues involving anti-racist teaching and the proposed Educator's Bill of Rights. Legislators shared their desire to support teachers by asking them to be active and help to educate their local legislators about what life in the classroom is really like. Check out CEA's article and social media campaign on ["What You Don't See in Connecticut's Classrooms: Soaring Rates of Trauma, Depression, Anxiety, Stress, and Suicide"](#) in response.

WHAT'S
REAL 
EDUCATION



CEA's Podcast: Two T's in a Pod

Check out [CEA's podcast, *Two T's in a Pod*](#) for interviews, discussions, and tips to improve your teaching practice and professional advocacy.





NEA News

NEA

Fully Repeal Unfair Social Security Penalties

Contact your legislators and ask them to repeal the [‘Government Pension Offset’](#) (GPO) and [‘Windfall Elimination Provision’](#) (WEP). Why? As a teacher in Connecticut, your earned Social Security benefits and any spousal survivorship benefits are cut by two-thirds and this disproportionately hurts retirees who earned lower wages at work. It immediately affects “second” or “late” career educators, and of course, those who find themselves facing the devastating loss of their spouse. [Go to the NEA’s website to help repeal the bill by contacting your legislators.](#)



Quick Tips

Quote:

“Change does not roll in on the wheels of inevitability, but comes through continuous struggle.”

— *Martin Luther King, Jr.*

- Check out upcoming events, e-mail addresses for officers at www.whea.org.
- Attend your building rep’s monthly 10 minute meetings. Stay informed!
- Check out the home mailings from NEA and CEA. If you are not receiving them contact your building rep.
- Check out the Member Benefits pages at www.nea.org and www.cea.org.
- Stay informed with school policies and information by visiting www.whps.org.
- Read *WHEA World* at www.whea.org. To add your news, please email the PR Chair.
- Watch for your news in upcoming editions.
- Questions, concerns? Talk to your building rep.
- Check the website for the Foundation for West Hartford Public Schools Grants at www.fwhps.org.