WVEA held its annual Delegate Assembly April 28-30 in Charleston and re-elected President Dale Lee and Vice President Wayne Spangler to new three-year terms.

Lee is a special education math teacher on leave from Princeton High School to serve as WVEA president, and Spangler is an elementary school teacher at Peterstown Elementary in Monroe County.

The delegates also elected members to three-year terms on the WVEA Executive Committee, which is the decision-making body of the WVEA. They are:

- Jonas Knotts, president of the Webster County Education Association and a teacher at Webster County High School
- Allyson Perry, president of the Marion County Education Association and a teacher at Barrackville Middle School
- Debra Sloat, president of Berkeley County Education Association-ESP (education support professionals) and a bus driver in the county

The delegates welcomed a visit from Gov. Jim Justice, who spoke about ongoing budget negotiations with legislators and shared a few laughs.

Delegate Mike Ferro, D-Marshall and a friend to WVEA, spoke at DA about the importance of standing up to bad legislation that will hurt teachers, ESP and public education.

Educators at DA also made several changes to streamline the 2017-2018 Legislative Agenda, and heard Lee’s plan to convene a taskforce that will explore new ideas about how to grow WVEA.

Also, two key awards were presented during the annual Saturday night banquet at the Charleston Marriott.

Greg James, the band director at both Richwood Middle and Richwood High School, received the WVEA Ermalee Boice Community Outreach Award.

James has worked diligently to make sure students in the flood-ravaged Richwood community have access to school and community activities, said Richwood Middle School Principal Gene Collins, who nominated James for the award.

Collins, a former student of James, said the band director knew he could retire this past year but decided against it because “my community needs me and my students need me.”

James was unable to attend Delegate Assembly due to a previous band commitment. Collins accepted the award on James’s behalf.
Officers and executive committee members elected; agenda set at Delegate Assembly

The Wetzel County Education Association (WCEA) received the WVEA Mary Titus/Janet Zevnik Award for Professional Courage for their efforts during the 2015-2016 school year in standing up to a former county superintendent.

WCEA saw hostility toward association leaders and employees, while programs and activities beneficial to students were put at risk.

WCEA members stood up for themselves and called out the superintendent for violating state board policies and employee rights. They garnered community support in their response to these violations and actively supported board of education candidates who shared their concerns.

By the end of last school year the Wetzel County school board bought out the superintendent’s contract.

“Things are back to normal in our hometowns. People go to work every morning dedicated to their schools and to their students,” said WCEA Co-President Josh Weekley. “Morale is growing all the time. ... I hope the lessons of last year are never forgotten in Wetzel County.”

WVEA DA Actions Include:

- Delegates adopted the 2017-18 WVEA budget of $3 million.
- Honored locals who increased membership or met their membership goal for 2016-17.
- Debated and updated the WVEA Legislative Agenda. The revised 2017-18 Legislative Agenda can be found on the WVEA website, www.wvea.org.
- Delegates also approved a motion to “clean up” the Legislative Agenda by combining like items and issues, wordsmithing for grammar and punctuation, and deleting obsolete items. A committee will be formed to do the work and bring the proposed changes to the 2018 Delegate Assembly for approval.
- Delegates to the Assembly raised nearly $5,000 for the NEA’s Fund for Children and Public Education.
2017 Delegate Assembly Awards

WVEA AWARDS

WVEA Ermalee Boice Community Outreach Award – Greg James

WVEA Mary Titus/Janet Zevnik Award for Professional Courage – Wetzel County Education Association

WVEA Geraldine Noell PAC Award – Summers County Education Association

LOCAL NEWSLETTER AWARDS

GROUP 1

First Place – “Classroom Connection”
  Webster County Education Association
  Jonas Knotts, editor

GROUP 2

First Place – “Action”
  Marion County Education Association
  Brenda Giannis, editor

GROUP 3

First Place – “MCEA Matters”
  Monongalia County Education Association
  Heather DeLuca-Nestor, editor

LOCAL WEBSITE AWARDS

Category 1 – Webster County
  Jonas Knotts, webmaster

Category 2 – Mason County
  Elaine Matheny, webmaster
Governor Justice stops by WVEA’s Delegate Assembly

West Virginia Governor Jim Justice addressed the delegates to WVEA’s Delegate Assembly on Friday, April 28, 2017.

Justice’s visit comes just days after his veto of three bills designed to harm public education and weaken employees’ ability to organize and speak out. His vetoes included:

- HB 2196 was generally known as the “Tim Tebow” bill. It would have allowed homeschooled students to play sports and any other WVSSAC-sanctioned activity. It also allowed private and parochial school students to participate in those interscholastic activities if their school didn’t offer the sport or activity.

- HB 2589 would have allowed students from private schools and those who are homeschooled to attend a county or multi-county vocational school. By placing those students on equal footing with public school students, the bill could have allowed the bumping of public school students from enrollment in a vocational school program in favor of non-public school students.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5
Governor Justice stops by WVEA’s Delegate Assembly

- SB 239 was a partisan political attack on labor organizations making it more burdensome for an employee to have union dues, charitable deductions and credit union savings deducted from their paychecks. SB 239 would have weakened our ability to make positive changes for teachers and service personnel at the Legislature, the state board, PEIA, CPRB, and in local counties. The government should not regulate where you choose to spend your hard-earned money.

WVEA had asked the Governor to veto each of those bills.

During his discussion with the delegates, Governor Justice reaffirmed his commitment to public education. He was apologetic for only being able to propose an $808 salary increase this year and he fully understands the need to increase the salary of all education employees. He stated that he intends to include the salary increase in his bills for the special session on the budget. He also cautioned the delegates that there are a lot of legislators who are out to destroy our association and public education.

Justice also told delegates of the need to move the state forward and not allow cuts to public education funding. He stated his frustration over the lack of movement on the state’s budget and some Republicans’ insistence on continuing to cut programs to balance the budget.

WVBE considering significant changes to special education regulations

Changes being considered by the State Board to Policy 2419 could increase special education class sizes for kindergarten through fifth-grade Level I services, among other changes. Your comments are needed on the policy. Comments may be submitted through June 12.

The proposed change to Policy 2419 (students with exceptionalities) would allow eight students in those special education classrooms, up from six, when one teacher is in the room. If between nine and 12 students are in the room another qualified adult must be present to help provide instruction, per the policy changes.

To comment on the policy, visit WVEA’s website at www.wvea.org. Click on the “Teaching/Learning” tab on the left side of the homepage and then click on the “State Board Policies” tab.

The state Department of Education believes the 1-to-8 ratio is reasonable because students at Level I have milder exceptionalities than Level II and Level III. If one Level II student were in a classroom with Level I students, however, then a 1-to-6 staffing ratio must be followed, said Susan Beck, an assistant director in WVDE’s Office of Special Education.

Some other proposed revisions to Policy 2419 are:

- Modified Diplomas will be changed to “Alternate Diplomas,” which will count toward a county’s graduation rate.
- Language was added that the percentage of students with disabilities must not exceed 50 percent of the total class enrollment in general education settings.

Your comments are needed!
WVEA TODAY • MAY 2017

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

WVBE considering significant changes to special education regulations

- Language was added for children who are deaf or hard of hearing, which says a comprehensive language assessment must be completed in the child’s language and communication mode. Also, a requirement is added that a lack of progress in receptive or expressive language for deaf or hard of hearing students must be explained.

- Some changes and clarifications were made regarding Student Assistance Teams (SATs) and Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), including allowing a county school system to temporarily adopt the previous IEP of an out-of-state student.

The policy remains on public comment until June 12.

WVEA Retired holds Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting of WVEA Retired was held on Thursday, April 27, 2017 at WVEA Headquarters in Charleston, WV. In addition to electing members to the WVEA Retired Executive Committee, members discussed several issues during the business session.

Those include:

- Better ways for the leaders to communicate with members

- The need for a funding source to support retiree benefits. This conversation lead to WVEA Retired delegates at WVEA’s Delegate Assembly to propose an addition to the Legislative Committee Agenda that states: “WVEA supports legislation that will provide for a ½ percent or higher severance tax on gas from Marcellus and Utica Shale and other additional new shale gases. WVEA will work in conjunction with other organizations to secure passage of such legislation to support retired public school employees’ benefits.”

- Discussions on PEIA, the upcoming Legislative Special Session and the state budget.

The following individuals were elected to three-year terms on the WVEA Retired Executive Committee: Doris Tuckwiller-Wood (president), Norma Taylor, Ken Twentier and James Keller.

WVEA Retired Officers and Executive Committee Members for 2017-18 include: Front Row – Left to Right: Charlie DeLauder (Treasurer), Doris Tuckwiller-Wood (President), Darlene Kelchak (Vice-President), Eileen Poling (Secretary). Back Row – Left to Right: James Keller, Leonard Walker, Mary Ann Ferris, Carol Bailey, Norma Taylor, Terry White, Jean Grant, Ken Twentier

WVEA Retired members listen during the business session.
Check your savings website for all theme park deals near you.
WVEA members can enjoy a deal-finding app that delivers big discounts from the brands you know... and at local places you actually want on your phone or tablet. Whether you're close to home or on the road, simply show the coupon from your mobile device and save up to 50% on restaurants, shopping and more. You’ll find tons of savings in every big city and in most small towns in America.

Our vendor, Access Development, negotiates these deals directly with the merchants, which means you get the best offers available. You’ll save hundreds on the things you buy every day.

FEATURES:

- No printing! Just show your mobile coupon and save.
- Multiple-use coupons. Save as often as you wish.
- GPS search. Find deals near you—wherever you are.
- Over 200,000 locations... and more being added daily.
- Deals near home, the office, or wherever you travel in the U.S.

Simply go to iTunes or Google Play and download the My Deals app. For questions, drop Access a line at customerservice@memberweb.com.