

**RE: Lesson Plans**

Madame President, members of the board, Superintendent Paine -

As most of you know, I am Dale Lee – president of the WVEA. I come before you today to make you aware of numerous concerns expressed to us by our members about lesson plans.

Let me begin my discussion by sharing with you the fact that WVEA embarked on a statewide listening tour this fall. We visited 12 locations across the state and held discussions with education employees. The conversation was centered around public education, their daily work and areas that need improvement. I would love to come back at a later date to share some of the details regarding our findings, but today I come to share the angst created in many schools over lesson plans. At every forum teachers raised their concern over lesson plans and nearly every day someone, somewhere in the state contacts our staff regarding lesson plan requirements.

The statute is clear – and I quote, “...lesson plans are intended to serve as a daily guide for teachers and substitutes for the orderly presentation of the curriculum...” The statute goes on to list items that are **not** required on lesson plans such as color coding, teach re-teach strategies, etc. And the statute concludes with the statement that “...classroom teachers must be free of unnecessary paperwork so they can focus their time on instruction.”

Reality, however, is vastly different when it comes to actual lesson plans. Teachers are told by their administrator they must put the essential question in their plans, Blooms taxonomy, Marzano strategies, which CSO’s are covered, and on and on. One county even uses an online plan with 16 pull down boxes. Many of the excluded items spelled out in statute are required by the school or county to be on lesson plans and we fight with administrators all the time over those items.

The conversations during our tour all came to the same conclusion – our lesson plans are not guides for teachers or for substitutes; they simply are requirements of proof for various items OEPA asks the principal to document as part of the verification procedure for the High Quality Standards section of an OEPA Audit. If you take the page from the OEPA manual and look at some lesson plan requirements, they are exactly aligned.

Lesson plans like this may help the principal in the case of an OEPA audit, but they are not beneficial as a guide to daily classroom instruction. As such, they become simply more paperwork requirements.

The frustration that exists over lesson plans is tremendous. I have had teachers tell me they spend 4 hours or more each time they have to prepare plans to turn in. That is time away from their students, planning for instruction or family in order to turn something in that they will never use again. Lesson plans have evolved from a vital component to guide daily instruction to an instrument used by the administrator to indicate OEPA compliance.

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I am here today to stress that something has gone inherently wrong with our system. OEPA indicates the annual performance measures and standards required for school accreditation, but an increasing number of administrators are passing their responsibility for documentation requirements on to their teachers. OEPA indicates that certain items must be present in a school; therefore, the administration passes that requirement on to teachers. A teachers' time is short – to fill it with OEPA reporting instead of instruction based work is shortchanging both the teachers and students.

Needless requirements like these are what drive quality teachers crazy. Their desire is to spend time planning effective, challenging 21<sup>st</sup> century lessons for their students, instead they are saddled with burdensome paperwork.

I urge you today to take a position and make it known, beyond a doubt, to administrators and OEPA that lessons plans have a specific purpose – to guide daily instruction- and these additional requirements of teachers in their lesson plans is not acceptable and will not be allowed.

Thank you very much for your time today.