

# ...Portland French School to close

**(From Page 1)**  
 pro-union,” Scanlan wrote. “We may lose students whose parents oppose some of their tuition being forwarded to the union by teachers,” Scanlan continued — an opinion based on his “decades of dealing with high net-worth individuals and in politics.”

Soon after, the school was awash in conflict. Anti-union parents pressed

teachers to vote no. Arguments erupted between pro- and anti-union parents, pro- and anti-union teachers, between parents and board members, board members and teachers, between Mbengue and parents and teachers.

The union election went forward April 16, 2010. Support staff voted 7 to 3 to unionize, but teachers split 12 to 12 — a loss for the union. The NLRB eventually ruled that the employer labor law violations tainted the election, and set aside the teacher vote result. AFT was given the right to request a re-run election, but decided to wait until Raclot’s reinstatement.

While it waited, the school imploded. Parents withdrew their children, unhappy with the school’s governance and weary of the conflict. Enrollment for the 2011-12 school year was projected to drop by one-third, from 225 to 150. Meanwhile, according to an April 17, 2011, letter to parents from the school’s board, the school ran up \$170,226 in legal bills related to the “labor dispute.” [The Barran Liebman law firm represented the school throughout, with up to three attorneys present at legal proceedings.] On top of that, when the board terminated Mbengue’s own employment contract on Feb. 6 “without cause,” the school became liable for \$100,650 in his salary for the remainder of the school year.

Facing a cash crunch, the board announced the school would close at the end of April. Parents rallied over a period of several days and raised \$175,000 to fund the school for the month of May. Now the school is set to close May 31, after which it’s expected to declare bankruptcy and liquidate assets.

Notwithstanding the closure, the NLRB scheduled a “re-run” union election for May 24 at the union’s request. They might not be employed a week later, but if teachers unionize, the school might be obliged to bargain terms of dissolution, and they’d have representation in the unlikely event the school reconstitutes itself as a new entity.

## NEA considers early Obama endorsement

The National Education Association’s (NEA) Political Action Committee has approved endorsing the re-election of President Barack Obama in 2012. The action now must be approved by NEA’s governing body — the Representative Assembly — which meets July 2-5 in Chicago.

“The mid-term elections have shown us what can happen when education legislation and decisions are left in the hands of politicians who do not support public education — those of us in education call this a teachable moment,” said NEA President Dennis Van Roekel. “This is the time to make decisions about the direction of our country, and we have real choices to make. As activists, engaged educators, we should get involved now.”

## Washington CLUB golf set June 16-17

The Washington CLUB — Contractors, Legislators, Unions and Business — Charity Golf Classic will be held June 16-17 at Gold Mountain Golf Complex in Bremerton, Washington.

The Pre CLUB on June 16 is a two-person best ball format on the Olympic Course. Registration is \$125.

The main event June 17 is a four-person scramble, with various levels of sponsorships. All proceeds raised go directly to three charities — Holly Ridge Center, The Children’s Hospital-Seattle, and the Diabetes Research Institute.

In 10 years, the tournament has raised over \$750,000.

For more information or to register, go online to [www.wa-club.org](http://www.wa-club.org) or call Brian at 206-432-9014.



## Letter Carriers help stamp out hunger

Letter Carrier Allison Schmuck (right) picks up a bag of food May 14 for the National Association of Letter Carriers’ annual Stamp Out Hunger food drive. The food was donated by Lynn Alsobrook (left) and her husband, Bob, who live in the Sullivan’s Gulch neighborhood in Northeast Portland. In its 19th year, the event has grown into the largest one-day food drive in the country, with union letter carriers throughout the nation collecting millions of pounds of food. In the Portland metro area, members of NALC Branch 82 brought in 554,833 pounds of food, according to preliminary numbers reported by Secretary-Treasurer Kevin Card, who coordinates the event for the union. The food was sorted by volunteers at area postal stations and taken to the Oregon Food Bank for distribution to those in need.



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