



SEA-IEA
3440 Liberty Drive
Springfield, IL 62704
<https://springfieldeducation.org>

Aaron Graves: SEApresident186@gmail.com
Sean Burns: sean.burns@ieanea.org
Treva Grant: treva.grant@ieanea.org

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Phone: 217.787.7060
Fax: 217.707.7080

New Year, New Contract,

New Deal November 11, at the SEA General Membership Meeting, the membership ratified the negotiated contract with a final vote 422 yes to 150 no. Following that, on November 21, the Board of Education also voted to approve the new contract. So what now as we head into the new year with a new contract?



First, all back pay should have been realized in your first December paycheck on 12/12/2019. There was an additional email sent out by human resources and payroll stating the incremental credit moves would begin with the December 26th paycheck and continue over several pay periods. Please check your pay stubs to ensure that your reimbursement and step movement is what you perceive to be correct.

Next, all principals were briefed on the updated language by the Superintendent and the Human Resources Department, and all language should be occurring in real time, unless otherwise stated in language. Your building Association Representatives were also briefed on the new language at the December 9th SEA AR meeting. Both administration and union are now on the same page. Please reach out if still in question.

To help address the information gap, this newsletter will highlight a portion of the new language bargained and its implementation to help increase transparency. However, much of it will need to be carefully worked through per situation and at each building. The Bargaining Team feels that the majority of the negotiation process was a win, but we understand if not all was not perceived as such. Please remember that answers to problems or concerns do not need to wait until formal contract negotiations time and that helping to solve problems is what we do as a union. Our new contract language is just another step in a direction that we take together as a union to improve life for you, your students and your school. But in the end, it is only as strong as each of us, the members.

#18 Student Rosters - Nobody can argue the importance of getting our student rosters in a timely fashion. In order to help all personnel plan and be prepared for the year ahead, we crafted the following language:

“Beginning in the summer of 2020, employees shall have access to available student rosters and records appropriate to the employees’ classification no later than the employee’s first contractual day with the understanding that student rosters may change.”



#33 - Safety and Security - Throughout negotiations, much of the membership spoke of safety concerns for their students, themselves and others in our Springfield Public Schools. It was actually the very last issue on the table and continues to be a concern. The improved (but not perfect) language, we accepted was as such:

*“The Board of Education and Springfield Education Association acknowledge the importance of **maintaining** safe, inclusive, and positive environments that support academic, behavioral and social-emotional success of all students. In order to fully implement the Board and Union’s joint goal, **the District has agreed (see TA 13.3) to continue its efforts to establish and maintain a restorative room in each building where the District and Union has identified significant needs related to social emotional learning. When established the District shall create positions and provide training and support to implement behavior interventions in a restorative room.***

When established restorative rooms shall be staffed at a maximum of not to exceed 1 to 14 with one certified staff or a combination of a certified and a classified staff member if resources are available and there is a significant need. Staff would be expected to complete paid restorative practice training.

*In addition, the Board shall annually receive **constructive** recommendations from faculty and staff to improve safety, culture, and climate in each school. Each school’s association leadership will work collaboratively with the building administration to develop the forward facing recommendations.*

** MOU that outlines the training that is needed District wide.*

As a continuation of our District Braided Behavior Support Systems and in order to train teachers and restorative room staff, the District proposes a summer of 2020 District 186.

Restorative Justice / Equity Conference to train school teams and individuals to address disproportionality in discipline, and professional development for restorative practices and resiliency training. In addition, we propose that we train 8 certified staff, jointly chosen, that will develop and plan the professional development during the Spring of 2020. The outcome will be modules of training that can be used on a recurring basis as well as the summer training. This will include District Administrative participation as well as community partners for the Springfield Resiliency Project including the IEA and University of Illinois at Springfield and other agreed upon partners.

District agrees to hire 3 additional security personnel this year and 2 additional security personnel in 2020-21, placement to be jointly determined. “

The District has worked with the union and under the auspices of creating equity district-wide, a new security personnel was added at Southeast High School, Franklin Middle School and one that will be a hybrid of security and our dog handler on full time and placed at certain schools when not doing search duties. The placement of the next two security personnel will likely be elementary with high needs that do not currently have a security professional in place. Your union is committed to improving things on this front.

#34 and #38 - MOU Home Visit Training and Home / Parent Visits - Some of our members in the pre-k and elementary world have struggled with the concept of home visits, their implementation and safety surrounding them. In order to allow flexibility for those wanting to do this and those who may not, while providing safety for all, we established this new language:



“The district and the union agree to convene a work group to research best practices and available trainings on home visits. The district and the union agree to convene a work group to research best practices and available trainings on home visits.”

It is the Union’s intent to bring about positive change, training and a systematic district plan in this realm to support our students and our staff members in community outreach.

#32 and #25 - Nurse and Social Worker National Certification - For years, social workers and nurses have had issue with the fact that their other colleagues can attain additional compensation for advanced certifications. This contract, we helped to solidify language to provide equity across all certified realms with this new language:

“Social workers shall be eligible for an annual stipend of 10% of step 1/column 1 for having earned the LCSW certification awarded through the National Association of School Psychologists. Social workers must provide new verification every three years in order to maintain the stipend.

PELCSN shall be eligible for an annual stipend of 10% of step 1/column 1 for having earned the NCSN certification awarded through the National Board of Certified School Nurses. PELCSN must provide new verification every five years in order to maintain the stipend.”



#27 - Employee Assistance Program -

The first week in December, all District employees received a notice in the mail from our employer touting a new Employee Assistance Program for all employees. What most do not realize is that, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics in 2016, 54% of of civilian workers had access to EAPs. And, the Employee Assistance Program that our

district offered years ago was cut as a cost saving measure to help “balance the budget”.

To the union, there is nothing more important than mental health for our members and our families. That being said, we were able to get the District to make a commitment

(however not nearly as robust as we would like for the future) to help to take care of its most precious commodity... its employees, with this language:

"The District in coordination with the expansion of Memorial Choice is in the process of development of an Employee and Crisis Support Program that will include behavioral health evaluations and counseling sessions with our Memorial Counseling Associates and Memorial Behavioral Health Staff and on-site assistance in the event of a tragedy.

This would include a free, timely and confidential consultation meeting for any employee needing assistance. This meeting will help the employee chart a course of assistance for their individual needs.

If the employee or family members receive District Insurance and are a member of Memorial Choice, services will be available for up to 3 free visits per plan year for the employee to a professional to address the following:

- *Counseling for anxiety*
- *Depression*
- *Stress*
- *Substance abuse*
- *Child behavior*
- *Marital issues*
- *Trauma*

Any visits over the first three visits would be billed as normal to your insurance carrier. The District will provide reasonable assurance that this will be signed annually and will be maintained the cost over the life of the current contract."

We feel that this is a step in the right direction, but look to all members of the union to help inform us on what this program needs to better serve you and your families in the future.



#24 Health Insurance Reserves - For the past 3-4 years, our self funded insurance claims have outpaced the amount of money that we are paying into the fund. Last year, as your SEA Insurance Committee sat across the table from the District nearly \$2.5 million dollars in deficit, it was proposed that every member of the plan would have to take a 20% premium increase. This was unacceptable to us, and we pushed back. In the end, the District agreed to a 10% premium increase on the member plus one plans (family) and a 16% on the single plans. To help offset

these drastic increases in the future and create a more stable financial insurance adjustments, we established this language:

"SEA and the District are creating a work group exploring the benefits of a dedicated reserve of funds with the Insurance Committee stakeholders for the purposes of serving the interests of its plan part



#23 Professional Development - In all workplaces, including our own, there may be all levels of professional development. In order to improve what we offer to our membership, what is offered to us, and help own what the future looks ur students like, the following language was adopted:

“The parties agree to appoint an equal number of members to a committee that will meet annually to collaboratively discuss and provide input on the needs of individual schools, and curriculum implementation supports as the funds are prioritized for professional development based on federal and state guidelines.”

#22 District “Challenges” - If one were to spend any considerable amount of time analyzing the issues within our District boundaries, they would find that many of the issues center around community challenges, neighborhood issues, lack of resources, attendance, and boundaries. In order to help truly unpack these, the SEA Bargaining Team established this language:

“The following constitutes an agreement between the Springfield Education Association and District 186 regarding structural and institutional challenges facing District schools and student learning.

The parties agree to appoint equal number of members to a committee that will meet at least five times prior to the end of the current contract. The committee shall include equal numbers of community stakeholders collaboratively agreed upon, in addition to Board appointed District personnel and Union appointed members.

Among the issues to be discussed shall be the feasibility of creating community based schools, student retention, alternative education, student transfers, analysis of student demographics and ensuring students receive an excellent and equitable education.

The committee shall issue a joint report to be available for presentation to the public prior to June 30, 2021.”

#21 Professional Discussions Around Adult Placement - In order to prevent the likelihood that a person's grade level or subjects taught may be changed to "encourage" them to seek employment elsewhere, your SEA Bargaining Team helped to craft language centered around mandatory professional discussions between employee and employer. It reads as such:

*" **Elementary K-5** - Tentative Class (grade -level) assignment for the following year will be communicated before the voluntary transfer process. A collaborative process will be used to discuss any vacancy to determine whether there are any volunteers for the principal to consider. **Middle and High School** - The Department Chairs will survey department members for interest in teaching assignments for the following year, which shall be communicated to the principal. The principal will collaboratively meet with each department chair to discuss the development of the schedule. "*



#20 Wednesday 1:30 Collaboration Time - From the visits to buildings, and input about the current manner in which some school's Wednesdays were being used, it was obvious that the original intent and spirit of the Wednesday 1:30 was not being observed. In order to regain some assemblance of its original intent, the following language was bargained:

*"It is a priority of the district that staff be provided collaboration and team time so that curriculum, assessments, and data may be accurately monitored and sustained at the highest current educational levels. To achieve and sustain that goal, District 186 will adopt a weekly one hour early dismissal plan for students in District 186. The purpose of the collaboration hour is to allow for team planning (grade level, subject, or cross-grade level) which might include, but is not limited to: analyzing student work, SLO assessment work, analysis of writing assessments, backwards planning and/or other team work which is conducive to positive culture of classroom learning. **Every other week this time may be used for personal preparation, parent meetings, and disciplinary conferences; until such a time that other teacher work time is made available. This time may not be used for any other activity that pulls a staff member out of the hour and into "other duties".***

*The school administrator along with members of the ILT will create agendas, **for the alternating weeks**, which support a culture for learning, assessment for learning, engaging students in learning, and reflection of learning and present them to the teachers monthly. Attendance at locations specified on the agenda is expected during the hour and this time is to be considered part of the regular work day.*

Professional development that provides new information or facilitated learning (symposium topics, SLO trainings, report card trainings, etc.) by a district resource or internal staff member shall be limited to no more than three hours of the first six weeks of the school year and one hour per month thereafter. The hours used for facilitated learning will include, whenever possible, collaboration time following the delivered material. This learning should follow the above guidelines on content and be planned by the ILT and administration.

#30 Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) Structure/Process Committee - This language was crafted to address functional gaps in building leadership model to ensure greater say from the ranks.

“A committee will be formed with equal numbers appointed by the SEA President and superintendent to study the Instructional Leadership Team model across the district. The committee will study the theoretical foundation from which the teams were established and study Appendix U of the agreement. The committee shall make a determination of any professional development needs or structural recommendations.”

#19 Grow Your Own Committee –MOU

For years, our district has struggled with recruitment and retention of minority personnel and other commodity positions. And, recently, it has even struggled to fill classically overstaffed positions. Rather than place blame, and in order to help propel our organization into a more robust and diverse membership, SEA chose to utilize the strength of our members to help the District recruit and retain with the following language:



“Beginning in the Fall of 2019, the union and district will initialize a collaborative work group centered around the recruitment and retention of certified personnel with specific emphasis on minority certified personnel. The group shall focus a majority of its time in its first year on developing and funding a grow your own campaign and will produce an annual report to be given at the board of education meeting in conjunction with the annual report to the Board of Education regarding minority recruitment and hiring.

Possible Sources:

SEPI Grant – Scaling Education Pathways in Illinois

New Laws for Teacher Recruitment

Consent Decree of 1976 Finishers (Calls for a Grow Your Own)

Past Grow your Own program materials (This Used to be a State Grant)

Participants:

Department of Teaching and Learning

Assistant Director of HR and Minority Recruitment

Springfield Education Association

Possible Higher Education Partners

Outside Community Support (Collaborate with these groups):

Minority Recruitment and Advisory Council (MRAC) Representative

NAACP Representative”



#15 Rodents and Pests- After years of member concerns over lice, bed bugs, roaches, bats and other pests with our students and staff members, we moved the District toward agreed upon language to address said issues:

“Beginning in the fall of 2019, a joint meeting of principals and union leadership, will be held to discuss concerns, data reports, and solutions surrounding pest management. These meetings will be led by the Director of Operations and

Maintenance and any other departmental employees and outside consultants that are deemed appropriate by the District or the Union.

Two meetings will be held. One will be held in the fall and one in the spring as a subset of a Leadership meeting scheduled by the Superintendent.

These meetings may include professional development around pest control and prevention, and treatment solutions that meet school code standards.

Models for communication to staff, families, and other stakeholders will be analyzed as well as protocols and timelines for treatment expectations.”

#14 Class Size - There has not been a contractual class size reduction in over 30 years. But anyone who has spent more than a few days in a class knows that the size of the class matters and each realm has ideal maximums. In order to begin moving toward the new way a 21st century classroom must operate, we were able to craft the following class size reduction language:

“11.4

Class Size Reduction:

Beginning with the 2020-2021 school year, no class in grades K-2 will exceed 26 and no class in grades 3-5 will exceed 29. No class in grades 6-12 shall exceed 31 except in special education, physical education, driver education, music, team teaching, individualized instruction, and similar programs. High school teachers shall have a student load maximum of 165 students. All alternative education sites shall have a class size limit of 14.

Where space will not allow for another physical classroom to reduce class size, numbers in that particular grade in elementary classrooms K-5 can revert to 30.

Middle and High school classrooms can revert to 33 if space is not available.

All efforts will be made to make classrooms available for classes before being used for coaching areas and or offices, if consultation with those members has been held with union building leadership.

Possible Solutions:

**** Where staff is not available to teach a classroom the district and the union will work together to collapse classrooms where numbers allow and move staff to where they are needed.***

****Teacher or teaching teams will be consulted if there is a mid-year increase in class size as to what will happen with their numbers.***

If solutions are not viable class sizes will stand.”

#13 Teacher Autonomy - After countless post-No Child Left Behind internal discussions over curriculum, recess, equity, pedagogy, rigor, professionalism, and the like, the SEA Bargaining Team has helped to secure a piece of language that speaks to all of these. It is our hope that this will help to bring about a refreshing look at what we are able to do and for students and reinvigorate those who feel their creativity and passion stifled.



*“Elementary teachers shall teach to the guidelines the District has adopted and on which it annually reports, with the understanding that flexibility is allowed to account for SEL, health, science and social studies. The teachers shall communicate via lesson plans any variance from guidelines to administration. **It is understood that teachers shall have the professional autonomy to differentiate instruction within district curriculum guidelines and resources to the benefit of student learning.**”*

The internal swell of strength, support, and sheer numbers present at various union activities throughout the past many months is indicative of Springfield Education Association’s might. The conviction of our voice is once again echoing throughout our buildings and is finding its way into not only our teacher’s lounges, but also into purposeful meetings with administration, raised at staff meetings, openly at our school board meetings and intentionally with the media. We were able to accomplish much during contract negotiations because of you, the members.

In order to make the bargained language have any sort of true power though, we must build our own union capacity. **We need independent, critical, and forward thinkers and doers who are willing to speak their truth.** And, please consider volunteering (or recommending a colleague) for one of the following bargained improvement committees:

- **Psychologist, Social Worker, and Nursing Caseload Committee**
- **Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) Structure/Process Committee**
- **Collaboration Committee**
- **District Challenges Committee**
 - **Community Based School**
 - **Student Retention**
 - **Alternative Education**
 - **Student Demographics**
 - **Equity in Education**
- **Restorative Justice / Equity Committee**
- **Home Visit Committee**
- **Grow Your Own and Minority Recruitment Committee**
- **Walk Through Merit Committee**
- **Professional Development Committee**



As the calendar year concludes, and we approach a clear break point in the 180 day school calendar, know that your dedication to doing what is best for students, pushing for what is right and holding the line has reset the gauge of public education in District 186. I would like to personally thank each and every one of you for your efforts and conclude this issue of the SEA Action Line with a poem by Robert Frost. It is titled "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening." I hope that its timeliness and beauty matches its message and our mission as a union moving into 2020. Happy Holidays, SEA.

- Aaron

Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening
by Robert Frost

**Whose woods these are I think I know.
His house is in the village though;
He will not see me stopping here
To watch his woods fill up with snow.**

**My little horse must think it queer
To stop without a farmhouse near
Between the woods and frozen lake
The darkest evening of the year.**

**He gives his harness bells a shake
To ask if there is some mistake.
The only other sound's the sweep
Of easy wind and downy flake.**

**The woods are lovely, dark and deep,
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep.**

January Calendar of Events

- 1 - New Year's Day - No School
- 2 - Teacher Institute
- 3 - Student's Return To School
- 6 & 21 - Board of Education, 1900, 6:30 p.m
- 9 - Sick Bank, 1900, 4:00 p.m.
- 13 - Elementary Solutions, PDC, 4:20 p.m.
- 14 - AR Meeting, PDC, 4:20 p.m.
- 15 - Special Ed Concerns, PDC, 4:15 p.m
- 19 - Grievance, PDC, 4:00 p.m.
- 23-25 Boy's City Tournament - BOS Center
- 29-30 Girl's City Tournament - BOS Center

* All meetings at IEA PDC (3440 Liberty Drive) unless noted.



