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Rally Round the Family

Philip Randall, organized labor and social rights activist once said, "Power is the flower of organization." Randall organized and led the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, the first predominantly African American labor union. It took Randall over 10 years to bring the union to fruition in 1925, his altruistic mission thwarted from many angles and inequities in the system. But his actions and righteous victory, changed the face of the labor movement for men and women of all color in America; giving all a seat at the table of the future.



As part of our last contract negotiations, your SEA Bargaining Team helped to secure a seat at the table for you... the table of significant and consequential decisions made within your school district and community. However, in order for that position to have any assemblance of power, it must have a diverse group of our union brothers and sisters seated in it, ready to tell truths and commit to the positive change that needs to be made.

Listed below, are the newest, action-oriented, collaborative committees and the bargained language around them. Please review the committees, seriously consider the merits of being a union leader and finally, don't overthink it... just volunteer. We have twenty five of these spots filled already but have twenty five left to fill. The initial time commitment for each, will only be a handful of meetings annually at approximately 90 minutes a piece (or less). And the reward for you, your colleagues, our students and community; potentially momentous. See your future. Be the change. Become an SEA Leader.

Professional Development Committee - *"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."*

Home Visit Training and Home / Parent Visits Committee - *"The district and the union agree to convene a work group to research best practices and available trainings on home visits."*

Grow Your Own Committee - *"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."*

Restorative Practices Committee - *"Restorative Justice / Equity Conference (has been established) 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 "Challenges" Committee - (tasked with) **Analyzing the issues within our District boundaries... issues centering around community challenges, neighborhood issues, lack of resources, attendance, and boundaries** -

"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."

Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) Structure/Process Committee - *"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."*

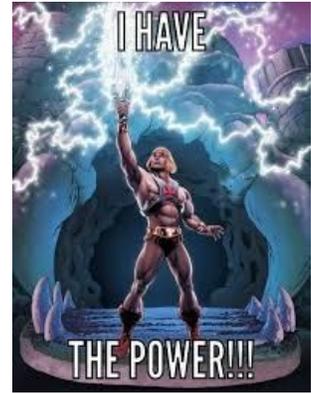
Psychologist and School Nurse Recruitment Committee - *"A committee will be formed with the Director of Student Support Services, the Lead Psychologist, and The Coordinator of Nursing with Union Representation in those categories to meet and discuss needs for additional staff, timing for staff postings, and recruitment strategies. This discussion will include the conversation of caseloads as it relates to school psychologists."*



If none of these committees strike your fancy, do not despair. The union has a place in leadership for whatever you are passionate about. This is your union, and its direction yours to determine. Your vision can be realized together with SEA.

By The Power of Grade School!!! - It may seem like a work of fiction, after a lengthy time believing that you cannot... but you can again. **YOU HAVE THE POWER!!!**

The new 2019-2021 contractual language states, “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 (social emotional learning), 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.”**



Please do not expect a formal notification, or lightning strike, advising you on adjusting the format of your day. It will not arrive. Remember, you are the professional, hired by the District to help students learn and develop. Unsheath your super powers and creativity to carve back time to further engage students in exploration around proven and developmentally sound learning around exciting concepts in space, physics, world cultures, the human body, the wonders of our inner mind and being AND math and literacy. There is no doubt, armed with this academic freedom, you can continue to electrify your classrooms and strengthen student engagement in your respective realms.

Love
YOUR LEADERS!

On Wednesday February 5th, amidst a flurry of winter weather, SEA held its first annual Love Your Leaders event. Nearly 100 of our members and dozens of leaders, movers and shakers from around the community were in attendance. We unearthed and presented a special award, the “Bob Goldman Friend of Education Award” to Amy Madigan Brown; Springfield citizen, public servant, yoga guru, and the leaders of the 1% County-Wide Referendum. We would like to thank the our very own Dawn Swaggerty and Angie Zinnen (celebrity bartenders), Kara and Ed Clark (our musical entourage), Ray Zinnen (our SEA

Grass Roots Political Activist), and our IEA staffers, Phil Banks, Treva Daniels, and Michelle Ishmael, and Sean Burns.



Thirty Days in the Hole - It has been over five months and we are officially more than half way through the 2019-2020 school year. And, as of January 30th, 2020, SPS186 is still over sixty key building positions short. We are forty plus attendant spots short, fourteen teaching positions short, three nursing positions short and one occupational therapist.

An intense effort, by members from both the Springfield Education Association and Local 15 / SEIU has been leveraged, encouraging the District to get these spots filled. We have held several intimate meetings with District personnel and have spoken openly about this crisis. We have been candid about the chaos that is being experienced by some of our students, teachers, teacher assistants and attendants in these high needs arenas, and the irresponsibility of failing to staff the rooms of our most vulnerable and most needy students. We have pushed back with obvious ploys for more hours, more money and minimizing future health insurance effects on our lowest paid employees. And considering the level of crisis, SEA has even given the District the green light to take non-traditional human resource actions like “signing bonuses”, “refer-a-friend” gift cards, and paying for attendant certifications that we are hopeful to be heeded.

SEA realizes that you and our educational community’s learners need support. The District has committed to be down to thirty attendant vacancies in thirty days (Feb 29), and at that projected pace would resolve the hiring gap by year’s end. Please keep pushing and building support within the community on this issue. Teaching “in the hole” is no way to go. And as Bill Gates said, “Until we're educating every kid in a fantastic way, until every inner city is cleaned up, there is no shortage of things to do.”

Stay Golden, Pony Girl - “Mrs. Romer is one of the most kind hearted people you will ever meet,” said her ELA colleague, Katie Gibbs. “She genuinely cares about all students that she encounters and ensures they have a safe place to go in times of need.” “The most selfless educator I know,” expressed another colleague, “Nicola Rawls.



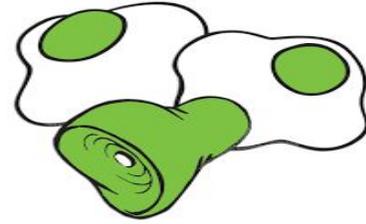
Gina Romer, 7th-8th grade, Social-Emotional Learning/English Language Arts teacher at Ulysses S. Grant Middle School (and active SEA member) has been nominated as a 2020 Golden Apple Award Winner. The Golden Apple Foundation’s mission is to inspire, develop and support teacher and school leader excellence in Illinois; striving to recognize master teachers especially in schools-of-need. She is one of thirty 4th-8th grade educators selected as finalists for the award, out of 732 nominations received from 64 counties in Illinois (and one of the only four nominees south of I-80). Her principal, Robb Schurman, proudly bragged “In my twenty seven years in District 186, I have never worked with a teacher as dedicated and committed to student success as Gina Romer... Gina instills in kids the belief that they can be successful and provides them the tools and skills necessary to achieve success.”

We know that our ranks are full of outstanding educators and educational support professionals, and our hats are off to those golden fruit of the past and future. The work that each and every one of you are doing inside the classroom and out is forever leaving a

lasting impact on tomorrow's youth. That being said, SEA would like to congratulate Gina Romer, the current apple of our eye. Stay Golden, Gina.

[SAMS I Am, Green Eggs and Sand -](#)

After extensive discussion during negotiations around responsible uses of District 186 Title 1 and [Title 2](#) dollars, an information request was filed by the Springfield Education Association in regards to [SAMS](#), [the National SAM Innovation Project](#). The District reported the following in an official FOIA response:



[SAMS](#) is a professional development process for principals and administrators to change a school and school administrative focus from school management tasks to instructional leadership—activities directly connected to improving teaching and learning. Over 700 schools in twenty-one states participate in [SAMS](#). In SPS186, four 1900 District level personnel take place in this process; the Superintendent, the Director of Special Education, the Director of Teaching and Learning, and the Director of Secondary Schools and Programs. In addition, thirteen other Springfield schools participate in this: Washington Middle School, Wilcox, Ridgley, McClernand, Matheny-Withrow, Lindsey, Lee, Hazel Dell, Fietsmans, Fairview, Butler, and Addams Elementaries (as well as Ball Charter).

The SAM process uses a data collection process called Time/Task Analysis to determine how much instructional, management and office time a principal/administrator uses during the work day. A SAM (School Administrator Manager or coach) is a person or team of staff members who meets with the principal or administrator regularly to schedule instructional leadership time. In our district, four of these are classroom teachers, seven are administrative/executive assistants or secretaries, six are literacy coaches, one is a social worker, one is an assistant principal and one a FACE liaison. None of the managers or coaches are paid for said duties, which consists of multiple hours per week spent between school and home performing said duties.

[SAMS](#) is paid through [TITLE II](#) Federal dollars. SAMS Professional Development costs are \$34,000 (\$2,000 per team for the 17 administrators participating). Our SAMS consultant is retired administrator, Jane Chard. There is also a voluntary annual conference in Marco Island, Florida. Fees for the conference are \$1,925, which includes registration, hotel, meals, and two full days of professional development. The sessions are monitored for attendance and each attendant also receives 3-5 books from national speakers free of charge. The highlight of the conference is access to professional speakers and that the District 186 SAM teams meet teams and network with others from across the US. The total cost for the event is estimated to be \$2,325 per person and with 29 people in attendance about \$67,500.

In summary, SAMS is a contractor that the District pays to guide administrators on whether or not they are utilizing time effectively and focused properly on academic leadership. Roughly \$100,000 in Title 2 money is spent annually. SEA Members are not compensated for said SAMS work. There is an annual conference in Marcos Island, Florida. Like many District initiatives, SEA leadership believes that the SAMS program, along with other Title funded programs, is in need of review. The issue is not simply a choice between good or bad initiatives. SEA is committed to a more analytical approach to spending in these difficult times when shortages in teachers and ESPs are critical and even catastrophic

in some instances. How the District is spending its funding should be open for scrutiny and debate.

Metamorphosis of a Union - What is it exactly that SEA is? Is it an advocate?

Is it legal protection? Is it a mediator? Is it our collective bargaining agent? By charter and bylaws, "the purpose of SEA is to promote the general welfare of the membership, provide and maintain a professional staff of superior quality, provide effective channels of communications in all matters affecting the profession, strive for an educational system that seeks to meet the educational needs of all persons, encourage educators to exercise their rights and privileges as citizens and to accept leadership in civic affairs, and provide leadership and coordination in the efforts of the membership in the attainment and maintenance of a comprehensive matters agreement."

And as descript as that may be, the exact definition of what SEA is is rather vague. By definition, here is how Merriam Webster might define us:

Organization (n) 1) an organized body of people with a particular purpose, especially a business, society, association, etc.

Union (v) 1) the act of uniting two or more things. 2) the state of being united. 3) something formed by uniting two or more things; combination. (n) 1) a number of persons, states, etc., joined or associated together for some common purpose



Fellowship (n) 1) the condition or relation of being a fellow 2) friendly relationship; companionship 3) community of interest, feeling, etc. 4) communion, as between members of the same church.

Collective (adj) 1) forming a whole; combined 2) of or characteristic of a group of individuals taken together (n) 1) a collective body; aggregate 2) a business, farm, etc., jointly owned and operated by the members of a group.

Association (n) 1) an organization of people with a common purpose and having a formal structure 2) friendship; companionship 3) the connection or relation of ideas, feelings, sensations, etc.; correlation of elements of perception, reasoning, or the like 4) an idea, image, feeling.

Thinking broadly, SEA could be all of these things and more.... a combination or what the organization has been, what we need your union to be, and what we want our collective to become. It could be a beating heart, bringing oxygen to our colleagues, pumping courage to our thoughts, and helping to sustain the future of public education in the communities in which we practice; not infallible and definitely not static. One intended to be the vehicle through which its members voice their concerns safely and garner the support of their

colleagues through a collective understanding; able to navigate the vastness of public education itself.

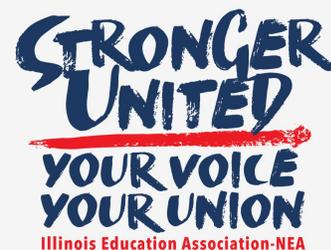
Have It Your Way - The newly developed contractual language, per the SEA / SPS186 Board of Education agreement, states the following: **“SEA Collaboration Hour** - It is a priority of the district that staff be provided collaboration and team time so that curriculum, assessments, and data may be accurately 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”.**”



Together, your SEA Collaboration Committee worked alongside District administrators to craft a District calendar that all buildings have. This template allotted specific Wednesdays to SEA members for ANYTHING WE DEEM REASONABLE WITHIN THE EDUCATIONAL SPHERE that they needed to be engaged in. There need be no documentation of said activity, no prior authorization, nor intricate accountability processes performed by SEA members to ensure this time be “used appropriately”. We are busy and active professionals, and have crafted language to be honored as such. Please assure that this language is being adhered to and contact your buildings ARs or SEA Executive Leadership if there appears to be a misunderstanding.

Representatives of the “U”nion - On March 4, your eleven, elected SEA delegates will carpool up to Rosemont, IL to attend the [2020 Illinois Education Association Representative Assembly](#). Your representatives for the RA are: Angie Meneghetti, Angela Koerwitz, Corey Bond, LeAnn Divjak, Denise Whiteman, Larry Hale, Kelly Sholtis, Meghan Kapnik, Mike Brown, Crysta Weitekamp, Morgan Fretz, Juan Morrison, Tammy Ziemba, Juan Morrison and Aaron Graves.

They will be out of their respective buildings on March 5th and 6th, attending the assembly. However, the debates and decisions made by the delegates help guide the direction of your union for the coming year. Please send specific directive with your representatives to help guide them in IEA legislation and initiatives that you feel need heard at the state level. Upon return, this team will report back to the Association



Representatives at the April 14 AR Meeting. Remember, as always. This is your union and your voice and your opinion should always be heard.

SEA Elections - It is time for the SEA Elections again. In order to provide total transparency and encourage maximum participation, your SEA Executive Committee wanted to reshare the SEA bylaws. ARTICLE IX – ELECTIONS, covers all elections, and this article will attempt to summarize those processes.

Section one specifies the rotation of positions up for elections. It states, *“an election of officers shall be held annually in March, for the president, 1st vice president, and secretary in even numbered years to serve two years (the 2nd vice president and treasurer shall be elected in odd numbered years to serve two years). In addition, two elementary, one middle school, one high school, two ethnic minority representatives, and two ESP representatives shall be elected annually by their respective constituents.”*

Section four details the process. *“A member of the Association seeking an elected office must file for said office by presentation of his/her name to the secretary of the Association at least one month prior to the election. At this time, he/she will be issued an official petition requiring the signatures of not less than 5% of the members represented. Said petition must be resubmitted to the election committee for validation of signatures at least 10 school days prior to election. In the event that there is not at least one candidate for each office on the ballot, the election committee shall nominate a candidate from the general membership who has indicated a willingness to run. In such case, no nominating petition shall be required. Members running for multiple offices will file a petition for each office.”*

Section five further details the process, stating, *“... it shall be by written ballot. In addition, the election committee shall have prepared ballots at least three school days before the election date. A polling place with a sealed ballot box shall be set up in each building for one school day and shall be supervised by the Association Representative or his/her designee at all times or be locked in a secure location. Voted ballots must immediately be placed in the ballot box by the member. Voting will occur on election day. Voting times and location will be posted three school days prior to the election. Voting times shall be set so that all members in the school have a reasonable and fair opportunity to vote. Prior to the election, a list of members in each building should be provided to each head Association Representative. Voting members will sign membership roster. The Association Representative shall be responsible for delivering the all completed and unused ballots, voter list and tally sheet, in the appropriate sealed envelope, to the SEA office at the end of the election day. Failure by the Association Representative to follow these guidelines may result in the ballots of that building being invalidated. In no case shall a member supervise an election in which he/she is a candidate.”*

Finally, section three defines those to implement the process. *“An election committee shall consist of the following members of the Representative Assembly and be approved by the executive committee so that each organization level is represented: ethnic minority representatives, elementary representatives, ESP representatives, middle school representative, and high school representative. The election committee shall ensure that the election rules and procedures are properly established and implemented.”*

It is the Union’s hope that these bylaws, clearly delineates the process of elections and provides transparency to all members. For any further details, open up your SEA

bylaws at <https://springfielddeducation.org/sea-bylaws-table-of-contents/> or contact your building or executive union leadership.

The nomination forms are to be submitted no later than February 18 at 4:00 pm and the elections will be held March 10th.

2019-2020 Evaluations of Champions -

February 1, 2020 was the final day for summative teacher practice ratings to be submitted to SPS186 Human Resources and be valid in the current year ratings. And, as this season of evaluations sadly comes to an end, your union wanted to capture a few of the key highlights noted in the SEA / District 186 Joint Agreement on evaluations processes.

First, Informal observations must occur at least one time, twice per year. Feedback which has been provided to the staff member on the info system may be used in the formal evaluation of that cycle. Written feedback **must be provided within seven days** of the informal observation to be counted on the next formal evaluation.

Secondly, **A planning conference will be held prior to the formal observation** and the certified staff member shall complete the planning conference form and submit it to the evaluator at least one day prior to the conference so that it may be used in the planning conference. At the conference both the evaluator and staff member shall discuss the planning conference form.

Third, the formal observation shall consist of the evaluator **observing the certified staff member for at least thirty consecutive minutes or one full lesson and recording evidence of practice as it is observed.**

Fourth, within three days following the formal observation the staff member will submit the reflective conference form to the evaluator.

Fifth, **within twelve days from the date of the formal observation the evaluator and staff member shall meet again for the reflective conference.** The certified staff member will bring any relevant evidence to the reflective conference. The purpose of this conference shall be to reflect on and discuss the lesson which was observed. If enough evidence has been collected at this time, domain and component ratings may be discussed. Final professional practice ratings are discussed at the summative conference which may be had at the same time as the reflective conference or at a later date after sufficient evidence has been collected to arrive at a summative rating.

Finally, **staff members shall have the opportunity to write responses to the evaluator's comments on the info system prior to the final teacher practice rating being sent to Human Resources. The final teacher practice rating must be turned in to HR within 15 days of the summative conference and all comments must have been made and submitted by that time.**



If there are any discrepancies in these matters or other evaluatory concerns, please reach out to your union. We will either address it individually or add it to the agenda for the SEA / District Evaluations Committee Meeting in late February / early March.

Political Landscapers - The union has received many inquiries into [Tier 2 Retirement](#). For those personally unaffected by the tiering of retirements, remember this was [legislation passed in 2010](#), proposed to reduce the state pension liability but simultaneously cut back the retirement benefits and savings of certified educators and educational professionals from 2011 forward. The following chart shows how drastic the disparity is. The IEA still has this as a priority for its members, but first we must tackle the [Fair Tax Reform](#). Are you ready to chip in and advocate? Click the link, be part of the solution, and help our youngest and neediest.

What are the changes in retirement eligibility?	
<p>Retirement eligibility for Tier I teachers and administrators is set according to a sliding scale:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members can retire at age 55 with full benefits if they have 35 years of service credit accumulated if the member has elected to have his/her pension determined by the 2.2% formula and paid the required fee. Members also can retire at age 55 with at least 20 years of service credit and receive a benefit that is reduced by 6 percent for every year the member is under age 60. Members can retire at age 60 with 10 years of service and receive benefits that the member has earned. For example, 10 years of service multiplied by 2.2% equals 22% of the final average salary. Members can retire at age 62 with five years of service and receive full earned benefits. 	<p>The new law requires Tier II teachers and administrators to be 67 years old and have accumulated 10 years of service credits in order to qualify for full benefits that a member has earned. Tier II members may retire at age 62 with 10 years of service, but will receive retirement benefits reduced 6 percent for every year the member is under age 67.</p> <p>Ten years of service is equal to 22% of the member's average salary before any age reductions.</p>

Contractual Cousins - Congratulations to our union brothers and sisters in SEIU - Local 15. On Saturday, January 25th, after months of bargaining, they ratified their contract. Our SEIU friends and colleagues in the attendant, food services, custodial, secretarial/administrative assistant, and operations and maintenance worlds are inextricably bound with all SEA members. We are all committed to students and the community and SEA is thankful that some financial stability has been garnered by your collective bargaining efforts. Well done!

February Calendar of Events

- 1-29 Black History Month
- 3 - Board of Education, 1900, 6:30 p.m
- 5 - AR Meeting - 4:20 pm
- 5 - Love Your Leaders - 5:00 -6:30 pm
- 6 - Sick Bank, 1900, 4:00 pm
- 11 - Middle School Solutions - 3:45 pm
- 18 - Board of Education, 1900, 6:30 p.m

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

representation
 representation|
 is vital
 otherwise the butterfly
 surrounded by a group of moths
 unable to see itself
 will keep trying to become the moth

- Rupri Kaur

