



# SEAF ACTION LINE

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## "A SEA of Red" - S.E.A. September Education Rally 2019

- "It was an the army of red shirts stretched as far as I could see," said Larry Hale. On September 16, over five hundred SEA and pro-SEA family, friends and District staff gathered for our first rally supporting our efforts toward an improved contract for 2019 and beyond. The rally was a bellowing voice that cried WE are firmly committed to better working conditions, WE stand fast on our collective concerns that benefit children, and WE will not waiver on improved pay and benefits for our members.

"The energy felt at the rally was electric," echoed Tianna Durr, "and I am so proud to be standing up and working for the changes needed tomorrow!" As drums beat rhythmically, and our members beamed with pride, we marched side by side, eventually amassed together on the steps of 1900 Board Office. "It displayed solidarity, unity, and support for the staff, students, minorities and the community," declared Doug Collins. Julie Vanderslick added, "It was inspiring to see everyone standing up for their rights and the rights of their fellow SEA members." We love our District, we love our kids, and we love ourselves. And at this moment in time, we require the Board of Education to stand firmly with us and commit the resources necessary to help make every one of these better. "It is immensely powerful when we advocate publicly, for our students, ourselves and each other - our energy is infectious and our actions essential for the health and well-being of our entire community," concluded Elizabeth Marcy. Union strong, SEA Members!



**The Compass of Contract Negotiations** - Districts all across the state have settled contracts, reached tentative agreements or have drawn a line in the sand on improved supports, working conditions and 4-5% raises. Kaneland settled for 20.38% over five years August 8, 2019 (4.1% annually). Murphysboro and Carbondale are holding fast at 4% (Carbondale has a tentative agreement awaiting ratification). And, the Chicago Teacher's Union says 5% is their absolute bottom line. All of these are percentages on the schedule, not down and/or over. We are all in the same boat and the members of SEA have sacrificed, worked in ever more difficult conditions and given up decent raises for the last eleven years to help our district. Now, we need paid back for the years of lean harvests. It is merely a matter of prioritization and commitment from the District and Board to you and the resources you require in your schools. Please stand fast and together for what we all deserve. #standing4students



**SEA (Supporting Education's Arts ;)** - September 20 and 21st, the Springfield Education Association donated our time and financial support to the Fine Arts Fair at Edwards Place. My own daughter bought her first piece of art there and was amazed by the wonders and joy that an Art fair can bring. SEA emphatically supports our local artists and organizations who are the true creative pillars of our community.



**Federal Mediation** - With a federal mediator present, the SEA Bargaining Team will meet with the District again Wednesday, October 16 from noon until 6 pm. The mediator is there to help facilitate, and it is our hope that he can make that happen. The mediator will stay involved as long as it takes to reach a settlement. If the Board of Education refuses to budge and deliver a fair contract to all SEA members, we will stand firm in our desire that everyone gets a fair contract. At some point soon in the process, the SEA Bargaining Team will be holding

another general membership meeting. Hopefully it will be for the ratification of a new contract. If not, then it will be to give every member a status update as to where the two sides are apart. If you hear "stories" about what SEA is bargaining for don't hesitate to reach out to the chairs and the team. Don't let disinformation divide us. This process CAN work, but only if the District is willing to allow it to, financially. We are cautiously optimistic.

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**Here Today, Here Tomorrow** - At the September 16 BOE Meeting, the [District Approved the Budget for the Fiscal Year 2020](#) (see attachment FY 2020 App Dist Bud). Many members expressed concern that this occurred but we have no contract, fearing enough money was not budgeted. The truth is however, that it passed so easily because the money is there...

On September 23, SEA members attended the Ball Charter Board of Directors Meeting to support our colleagues and their efforts to attain a fair contract. At that meeting, a CPA from Eck Punk and Shafer, LLP talked at length to the improved financial position of Ball Charter and District 186 as a result. Weeks prior, at the September 3 SPS186 Board of Education meeting, Donna Moore stated that she felt one of her biggest accomplishments was getting the District into a sound financial position before stepping down. And, as you have heard before, the county-wide 1% sales tax referendum is bringing money in to the tune of \$10 million a year with additional legislation passed this past summer in House Bill 1561 that states a portion of these monies can go to pay for mental health and security personnel (see [HB 1561](#)). [Illinois Evidence-Based Funding](#) has brought nearly an additional \$1 million per year in 2018 and 2019 to SPS186 in state funding. Local revenue has increased nearly \$2.6 million in the last year. The District has increased its days of cash on hand from by over 30 days since 2014 (an average of about 6 days per year). And, each of those days is worth approximately \$0.5 million in the bank (over \$40 million). And, there is over \$10 million in [Title 1 and Title 2](#) federal funds flowing into SPS186 annually (see Title 1 and Title 2 Budget attachments for SPS186 spending). Long story short, the money is there.

SPS186 has extensive financial reserves and SEA will not accept the short changing of our personnel while we look rebuild and revolutionize the buildings and structures of District 186.

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**Shorten The Sails** - Benjamin Franklin once said, "Beware of little expenses; a small leak will sink a great ship." In Union contract negotiations, we are all on that same ship. In order for us to reach our destination in good health, we would ask that you consider a few things.

The worst case scenario, a strike, is the very last resort in negotiations and totally controlled by majority of the union member's votes. While we hope that it isn't necessary, but like good sailors we need to be prepared! We would ask that you please consider a few things in advance: First, consider all possible ways to tighten the financial belt (temporarily), if necessary. Secondly, if a strike came to be, IEA and SEA would assist in helping members with lines of credit and short term loans at little to no interest. **In the end, we will demand your back pay in any agreement, and the better off you are financially, mentally, and internally, the stronger the eventual return of "our ship" will be.** This is the worst case scenario, but if the District is not willing to budge and we decide to push back, it will be challenging to do so from a position of weakness. Remember, a hurricane rarely sneaks up on a savvy crew.

[People ARE Listening](#) - Dial in to Jim Leach (Director of News/Talk 94.7 & 970 WMAY) reporting on what is important to you, the community and our students. We HAVE support in the community and they believe in our members, our mission and our cause. #standing4students  
<https://www.spreaker.com/user/midwestfamilybroadcastingspi/jim-leach-show-sea-contract-083019>

[New Friends and Old Friends](#) - On Friday September 27th, after school, we had our first SEA social of the 2019-20 school year. It was held at Boone's Saloon and was a tremendous success. We had over one hundred fifty people in attendance. And, underneath the autumn breeze, accompanied by live music from local artist Joel Honey, we strengthened our bonds as educational professionals. We are actively looking for ideas and concepts of events you think would be fun for members and/or their families. More details unfolding soon on our next.



[New Board Member - Tiffany Mathis](#) - Subdistrict 5, the, received a new SPS186 School Board Member, September 3, 2019. After five and a half years on the Board, Donna Moore officially stepped down from her duties, stating that her family is moving and thus she cannot represent the District in that capacity further. Tiffany Mathis, who had just been appointed member of the Ball Charter Board of Directors, stepped down from that board and became the new SPS186 Subdistrict 5 BOE member.



She was selected by the current BOE amongst a field of other citizens (Katherine Eastvold, Amy Madigan Brown, Amber Boone and Nathan Mihelich). It was refreshing to see so many strong candidates willing to be a part of changing the face of education in our community. And, if Mrs. Mathis' [life accomplishments thus far](#) are any indicator, she will do great things alongside SEA. Welcome aboard!

## [Fore Score and Many Professionals Ago](#)

Currently, we are nearly ten teaching positions short (actually more if you count the fact that we are using full-time subs brought back from retirement to cover classes all year). We are still roughly twenty teacher assistant short. And we are over fifty attendants short and over 50% of those attendants have been working for less than five years in the District. There are pre-kindergarten, elementary and middle school special needs classrooms on all sides of town with missing personnel. In short, it is a great market for those looking for jobs, but a poor market for students looking for teachers and paraprofessionals.



In the September 18 edition of the Illinois Times, two of our members, Cathy Turner and Jasmine McCray, were able to speak to this crisis. The article is called, "[Attracting Teachers 101](#)" and is authored by David Blanchette. Cathy, who teaches at SHS, is in her 25th year and Jasmine in her 5th at Wilcox Elementary. Together, they advocated strongly for our members and public education. Please take the time to read the article, thank them for their efforts and consider how you might get our truth to the public. Our crisis is real, and people need to know. It is time to tell your truth.

[NEA Insider's Track](#) - Am I paying higher fees than I should on my 403B? Should I start one? How do I get discounts on travel and products by using NEA Member Benefits? Have I named my beneficiary for my FREE NEA life insurance? Will public service loan forgiveness work for me? Am I prepared for retirement? Contact Tim Wallin for your financial NEA Member questions at 217-494-774 and Katie Dunn for all of your other NEA member questions at 309-212-2187.



## What if I Told You??? - Uploading Evaluation Documentation

As an organization, we have had an internal struggle with the concept of our current evaluation process and what is an evaluator's and what is an evaluatee's responsibility. In the third week of September, after multiple past discussions with the Superintendent and the BOE, the SEA Grievance Committee submitted a communication to all principals informing them of our current stance on this issue.

It read as such: *"It has come to the attention of the SEA Grievance Committee that some Principals are requiring our members to "upload evidence" as part of their evaluation. This is in violation of our contract. Nowhere in Article XIV is "uploading evidence" part of the evaluation process, nor is it a requirement to score a distinguished on their evaluation. In addition, the absence of evidence should never be interpreted as a deficiency on the part of the teacher, unless the practice is required (i.e. no evidence of lesson plans). Any suggestion that creating evidence portfolios for the evaluator is required or necessary for a good evaluation will result in the SEA filing a grievance."*

We have heard your concerns and we are taking action. One can be fantastic educator, and also advocate for what is truly the best use of your time and energy. Union strong!



### Express Yourself! #standing4students

In the last few weeks, the media is abuzz with articles about education. Members have changed their FB profile to reflect their pride of being educators and educational professionals. Many have shared their tales of professionalism and stories of struggle. And, the posting and reposting of articles about public education is at an all time high! Keep up the great work advocating for yourself and your students!

**Magic In The Middle** - Region 11 is the IEA region that we represent. It's nickname is "The Magic in the Middle." It consists of Springfield District 186 and Ball Charter. The region surrounding us is comprised of Chatham, Rochester, New Berlin, Plains, etc. They are Region 47. Angie Mehneghetti is our Region Chair and, as your chair her duties include: organizing the IEA and NEA RA groups, promoting professional development through the union for all members, and attend the monthly IEA Board Of Directors meetings representing you with IEA. If you should have any questions, please let her know. [aghetti@sps186.org](mailto:aghetti@sps186.org)

## Calendar of Events

### October

- 3- Sick Bank, 1900, 4:00 p.m.
- 3- ESP Solutions, PDC, 4:30 p.m.
- 8-AR Meeting PDC, 4:20 p.m.
- 7 & 21-BOE, 1900, 6:30 p.m.
- 15- Grievance, PDC, 4:00 p.m..
- 15- HBCU College Fair
- 22 -Exec Meeting, PDC, 4:20 p.m.
- 24 - Early Dismissal P/T Conf.
- 25 - P/T Conf.
- 29 - Elementary Solutions, PDC
- 31 - Halloween

### November

- 7 Sick Bank, 1900, 4:00 p.m.
- 12 AR Meeting, PDC, 4:20 p.m.
- 4 & 18 BOE, 1900, 6:30 p.m
- 19 Grievance, PDC, 4:00 p.m..
- 26 Exec Meeting, PDC, 4:20 p.m.
- 28 Thanksgiving

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









