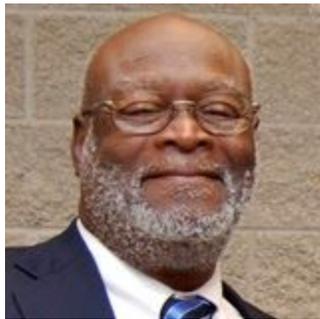




SEA-IEA
3440 Liberty Drive
Springfield, IL 62704
<https://springfieldeducation.org>

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: 217.707.7060



Educational Trailblazer - Leroy Jordan Remembered

A great man is a torch in the darkness, a beacon in superstition's night, an inspiration and a prophecy.

-[Robert Green Ingersoll](#)

Over the 2020 Labor Day weekend, as all educators in Springfield paused to take a calming breath after a week of remote learning, Leroy Jordan, Springfield educational icon, took his last in this world.

Leroy was a physical presence and a legend in Springfield circles. He was a man that created a brighter path for all educators to follow. He was the very first African American elementary educator in Springfield Public School District 186, became Assistant Superintendent, and was President of the SPS186 Board of Education at one of the most critical times in our history, court ordered desegregation of our school system. He worked in higher education at Sangamon State University, now University of Illinois Springfield, for twenty years and served in key leadership roles and on the boards of many civic organizations such as the Urban League, Faith Coalition for the Common Good, and the Dominican Sisters of Springfield, working tirelessly to improve race relations and to quell bigotry and its ugly byproducts within the school system and our town.

The impact that Mr. Jordan had upon our community and our public schools was uniquely significant, as he helped to create a new reality for those of the past and altered the future positively for those ahead. As we look back and consider the effects his time with within our ranks created, we would like to share some words of reflection from several black male SEA S186 educators and SEA members of the past and present:

Wayne Hamilton Jr, math teacher at Jefferson Middle School, remarked on Leroy Jordan as, "A warrior willing to risk his life to help progress our community toward reaching educational equality for blacks."

ReChad Bradley, math teacher at Southeast High School said, "I did not get to interact a lot with Mr. Jordan, but when we crossed paths he always inquired about how my teaching was going. We did not need to talk much, because I knew who he was and what he represented to my

profession. Just showing me the time meant a lot. His passing means that our profession has lost another person who was fighting for the same things that I am fighting for in the community. That void cannot be replaced, but I will do my best to become a *Leroy Jordan* to the next generation of young minority teachers.”

Jamar Scott, Principal of Hazel Dell Elementary reflected on the moment and expressed, “I am extremely thankful to Mr. Jordan for opening the door for me as a black male elementary educator in our district. He was always extremely encouraging to me every time our paths crossed. There is a strong link between the success of students and their representation within the school staffs that service them. We need to think about how we recruit and retain exceptional minority educators like Mr. Jordan. Every student needs to see future versions of themselves when they enter any of our schools. We need more Mr. Jordans to serve as role models for our diverse student population district wide.”

Jerome White, teacher at Feitshans Elementary remarked, “If it was up to me, there would be a lot more of African American male educators. Many kids in our District do not have father figures or role models and need them. In high school I had two such role models and they helped me to focus and look toward the future at a time when I really wasn’t set on doing so. I did not know Mr. Jordan personally, but my hat goes off to him. I guarantee that he opened the eyes of many and paved the way for me and others as black male educators.”

Most notably, Elbert Betts, retired District 186 and NAACP Alternative School principal who worked and celebrated life alongside Leroy for years declared, “ He was a man; a true man. He took an exceptional interest in the District and was absolutely instrumental in bringing in more black teachers. He was extraordinarily concerned about his community, and concerned about others. If anybody is going to heaven, he is going to go.”

The passing of Leroy Jordan reminds us all that history changes with the actions of each and every one of us. The pathway ahead for our organization, our students and our community is, and will continue to be, paved by each and every one of us. May we each reach and strive to have such lasting impact upon this earth as we share time here together. Rest in peace, Springfield 186 educational trailblazer, Leroy Jordan.

14,400 Minutes - Class Size Language

According to the [agreed upon contract between the Springfield Education Association and the SPS186 Board of Education](#), “*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... High school and middle school P.E. class sizes will be limited to 45 students per teacher per period.

But as with contractual language, sometimes agreed upon expectations are circumnavigated to get business done. If such classes exceed contractual limits, the following language also applies: *A. The principal will notify the Superintendent or his/her designee. The classroom teacher or Association Representative will notify the SEA President or his/her designee. This notification will be completed within five student attendance days of the initial violation. B. The District has a grace period of 10 student attendance days (15 if at the beginning of the school year) from the day the overage occurs to resolve the class size violation without grievance from the Association.*

The Union completely embraces the concept of grace and flexibility, however the fact that we are operating under an alternate learning reality does not mean that class size limits, or any contractual language for that matter, should be precluded. Please reach out to your building representative (ARs), SEA Executive Committee, Uniserv Director (Sean Burns) or SEA President (Aaron Graves) if you have questions or require additional support in this matter.

Your Strong Union Team - Meet your SEA Executive Committee. They are a diverse group, tasked by our union bylaws to provide leadership and support to you. If you should have any questions or need additional support outside of your building ARs, these are great folks to turn to. Do not hesitate to reach out. These association leaders are here for you.

 <p>Angie Meneghetti - Vice President and Grant Middle School science teacher</p>	 <p>Mary Tenant - 2nd Vice President and Administrative Intern at Matheny-Withrow</p>	 <p>Jasmine McCray - Secretary and Wilcox third grade teacher</p>	 <p>Mike Brown - Treasurer and Franklin Middle School World History teacher</p>	 <p>Dawn Swaggerty - Grievance Chair and Jefferson Middle School 6/8th math teacher</p>
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Juan Morrison -
Minority
Solutions
Co-chair and
Lanphier
Security



Mia Jefferson -
Minority
Solutions
Co-Chair and
Butler
Elementary third
grade teacher



Meghan Kapnik -
Elementary
Solutions Chair
and Jane Adams
third grade
teacher



Abby Bensten -
Middle School
Solutions Chair
and Grant Middle
School
music/band
teacher



Mike Watson -
High School
Solutions Chair
and Southeast
High School
english teacher



Kara Clark -
Special Ed
Solutions Chair
and Harvard
Park resource
teacher



Kathy Johnson -
ESP Solutions
Co-chair and
Douglas Prep
security



Christine
Sanders - ESP
Solutions
Co-chair and
Early Learning
Center teaching
assistant



Marsha Stout -
Sick Bank Chair
and Graham
Elementary
kindergarten
teacher



Ray Zinnen -
Grass Roots
Political Action
Chair and
Franklin
Middle School
history teacher



Lacey Harrison -
S-PACE Chair and
Jefferson Middle
School
band/music



Simon Wilson -
New Member
Involvement
Co-Chair and
Butler
Elementary fifth
grade teacher



Tammy Ziemba -
New Member
Involvement
Co-Chair and
Grant Middle
School science
teacher



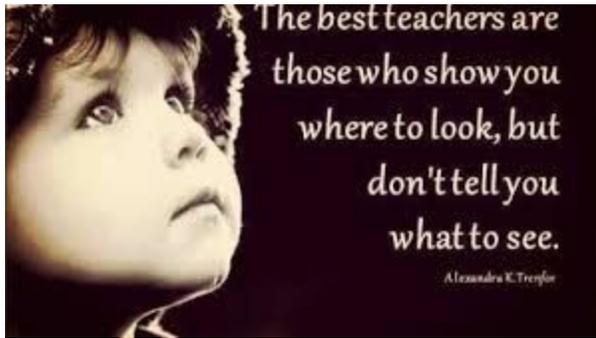
Tianna Durr -
Bargaining
Support Chair
and Franklin
Middle School
health teacher



Angela Cooper
- Scholarship
Chair and case
manager

			<p>Sean Burns - Uniserv Director</p>	<p>Treva Grant - Uniserv Associate</p>
<p>Alicia Bresnahan - Social Chair and Lee Elementary kindergarten teacher</p>	<p>Marc Butler - Membership Co-Chair / Webmaster and Iles fourth grade teacher</p>	<p>Ben McKinney - Membership Co-Chair and Fairview third grade teacher</p>		

Employee Assistance and Equity - Last year, after years of minimization of



mental health and safety supports, your SEA Bargaining Team was able to get District 186 administration to bring back the beginnings of an Employee Assistance Program for all District 186 employees. The language states as such:

Employee Assistance –Beginning 19-20 school year 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. 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

Thoughts From the Membership:

Remote learning expectations rigid,

unrealistic - I write to you as a teacher with District 186, a family with a student in district, and a concerned citizen. The last semester was stressful and frustrating at times for everyone involved. We were (and still are) learning the ins-and-outs of “Remote Learning” together. Now, as we all prepare for returning to school, I beg of you to encourage the school board to reconsider the district’s plan concerning daily Zoom requirements for its classrooms. This expectation is too rigid and unrealistic for the teachers, students, and families.



Currently, for the first semester everyone will be learning remotely. I was very relieved at this decision, but I had already planned on being remote due to a childcare issue. Many district families are experiencing the same struggle. Affordable childcare was a crisis before COVID, and now it has only increased the issues. On a personal level, I worry about being able to handle constant Zooms, my children, and our household. As an advocate for my students, I am extremely worried that this will unfairly affect a large amount of our students on the lower half of the

socioeconomic scale. Young students may find themselves in new, unfamiliar environments to their learning, such as in a daycare, with other family members, or friends. Our older students may find themselves the daily caregivers of younger siblings, having to balance their education with helping their siblings.

I also worry that this rigid schedule will punish our working students. Last year I had students on many occasions tell me that they missed school in order to go to work. Their families counted on their income. The pandemic has brought about some of the largest levels of unemployment our country has ever seen. A more flexible schedule (but still rigorous) would allow these students to keep up with their academics during the time they feel they can focus most.

Before learning of the required Zoom times, I had planned on a large amount of my lessons and discussions to be completed by my students asynchronously, or not at the same time. This would have been achieved mostly with a video message board app. This app gives me the capability to edit the video and film it at a convenient time without my kids interrupting. This also gives my students time to craft/edit their response back to me and each other. The feedback from my students last spring was that they didn't feel as anxious working this way vs. live video sessions. I did plan on having Zoom office hours where I would be available to help anyone having issues on a more one-to-one basis.

This district has invested quite a sum of money into the professional development opportunities it has offered its teachers. I have been fortunate to attend some great workshops and learned valuable information to implement in my classroom. I implore our community to encourage the Board Members to give those of us teaching the flexibility needed to provide the best class environment for our students to reach their highest potential for the upcoming and unprecedented school year. We aren't trying to get out of teaching our students, just making it accessible to all.

Emelie Cherrone lives in Springfield and teaches at Springfield High School.



[Young Guns, Old Allies](#) - Each year, another group of fresh educators and educational professionals ride into town, to begin the work that we all know and love. They are armed with steely enthusiasm, a desire to change the world, and are fueled by the newness and passion that breathes life into public education. Their horse galloping at full speed across educational plains, ready to harness the wind.... a thing of sheer poetic beauty.

This year, nearly 60 new teachers and social workers, alone, join our ranks. I had the annual privilege (along with a few of your other SEA Executive Officers) of boring them with my bad jokes and unionism speech the third week of August at the New Teacher Orientation. They were obviously new, because they still had exceptional manners and were overly kind... not yet jaded by years of being ignored by students, kicked around by a few annual parental figures, and arm wrestling with those at the higher end of the educational food chain (lol). In that moment, I had an epiphany. These new employees are our future. They will

continue our legacy. Not at all dissimilar than our students, the future of our schools and community rests in their hands, and they rest in ours as their colleagues. Deep, huh?

Later that night, flipping through movies, I stumbled back across the 2012 spaghetti western drama, *Django Unchained*, produced by Quentin Tarrantino. In the movie, Django Freeman, slave turned bounty hunter apprentice (played by Jamie Fox), aligns his interest with an older bounty hunter, Dr. King Schultz (played by Christopher Waltz), to save his beloved Broomhilda from sadistic white slaveholders. While the movie is wildly violent, and has been criticized by many in certain circles as falsely or fictionally portraying a time in America that should not be made light of, the movie has become a cult classic and lauded as a favorite by movie critics and layfolk of all creeds and colors.

While revenge, racism, freedom, capitalism and law are the most overt themes of the film, the theme of survival and aligned interests, are what I find most timeless about it. In the movie, Dr. King Schultz and Django become stronger together working toward righteousness. Schultz wants the financial reward of killing outlaws and Django wants to rescue his wife Brunhilde from slavery. Schultz needs Django's passion and brawn, as much as Django needs Schultz's wisdom and wit, to meet their goals. So, they strike a compromise to satisfy their desires. Django bounty hunts with Schultz for six months, and in return for which Schultz will help Django to free his wife from slavery. In the end, the two establish a friendship based upon loyalty and a sense of commitment to one common goal, justice.

We have one common goal as educators. And whether we are young or old, black or white, current supporters of in-person or remote, we all want to help educate kids and make their lives better. This is our bounty and, working together, we can find that reward.



[CENSUS 2020 - Don't Let Hollywood Get ALL of the Good Stuff](#) -

The 2020 Census counts every person living in the US and its five US territories. It provides critical data that lawmakers, business owners, teachers, and many others use to provide daily services, products, and support for you and your

community. Data collected over the past many months will be used to determine congressional districts, and \$650 billion of dollars of federal funding for firefighters, school funding, public bus routes, sports fields, community centers and a myriad of other supports essential to our local communities are distributed across the country. Please take part in it and ensure every member of your household, your family and friends, and street is counted. Get counted today!

https://2020census.gov/?cid=20003:census%202020:sem.ga:p:dm:en:&utm_source=sem.ga&utm_medium=p&utm_campaign=dm:en&utm_content=20003&utm_term=census%202020

See No Answer, Hear No

Answer - Throughout the 1970's, 80's, and 90's, Richard Pryor and Gene Wilder teamed up to make some of the decade's most gut busting comedies: *Silver Streak*, *Stir Crazy*, *See No Evil*, *Hear No Evil* and *Another You*. They were an unlikely duo, whose comedic actions brought truth to race and found humor and solution to very obvious societal



inconsistencies. My favorite film of theirs, *See No Evil, Hear No Evil*, had the two of them comically talking past each other as they continuously struggled to communicate and narrowly escape one harrowing situation after another. Whether one can find humor in it, there are some strong parallels in the duo's fictional relationship and the State of Illinois budgetary situation.

Like Pryor and Wilder's unexplainable comedic on screen relationship over many years, the Illinois deficit issue has been so over the decades. In 1995, 25 years ago, with our State's pension funding already in crisis, the state's "leaders" vowed to remedy it and come up with a solution. However, the plan made was not sound. The initial contributions were not enough, and Illinois state leadership didn't make the politically difficult choices of tax hikes or spending cuts to get the budget on a sustainable path. And to add insult to injury, both the democratic and republican lawmakers would return to the house year after year, patting themselves on the back, stating that they had passed a budget... knowing all along that they were underfunding their state, and not living up to their legislative responsibilities. Most of them gone now, the liability still remains.

In 2020, the State of Illinois started the budget year with a \$3.4 billion deficit, \$8.5 billion in unpaid bills and an unfunded public employee pension liability of \$137.2 billion, caused by years of turning a deaf ear and blind eye to the issue. Linear state number crunchers have proposed options, including cutting state spending on education, public safety and social services by 15% or raising the flat tax rate to 5.95% for Illinois taxpayers. But traditionally people do not have the stomach for receiving less services, weathering job or agency cuts, or raising taxes.

This November, you, and all voters will be asked to vote on the fair tax (progressive tax proposal that will allow the state to increase taxes on those more able to afford it while generating the revenue necessary to pay for schools, police and fire protection, without having to make drastic cuts. The Pritzker administration and the General Assembly have already set the proposed rates (click to see the rates and an interactive map displaying county residents who will pay the same or less <https://ieanea.org/fair-tax/>). From my research, it appears that the tax rate would drop to 4.75% for the first \$10,000 of income for single and joint filers. Income between \$10,000 and \$100,000 would be taxed at 4.9%, and the rate would remain at 4.95% for income between \$100,000 and \$250,000. From there, single filers would be 7.75% for income between \$250,000 and \$350,000, and 7.85% for income between \$350,000 and \$750,000. Joint filers would be taxed at 7.75% on income between \$250,000 and \$500,000, and 7.85% on income between \$500,000 and \$1 million. All income for single filers that make over \$750,000 or joint filers that make over \$1 million annually will be taxed at 7.99%.

Voting on big issues is never easy. I don't see this as one either. But it is a way forward and a way without cutting jobs or funding. Each and every person and their families will need to

weigh their own situation. If your family is far under the threshold of \$250,000 then your decision may not be difficult. If your income surpasses a quarter million dollar mark, then it may be a more difficult one. In the end however, we cannot continue to cover our eyes and ears, chuckle and gibe at our state fiscal situation, pretending that will fix itself without taking some personal responsibility. As Henry Emerson Fosdick, Fundamentalist preacher of the late 19th and early 20th century once said, "Democracy is based upon the conviction that there are extraordinary possibilities in ordinary people." Comics like Pryor and Wilder did that for comedy, and I venture we can too for our state.



[A Serious Curveball - Rooting for You in the Health Insurance Dugout](#) - Chadwick

Boseman, Hollywood phenom, recently passed away from [colorectal](#) cancer, a terribly crippling, personal and common disease affecting nearly 5% of the nation's population. As an actor, he played the parts of three different types of heroes, Hank Aaron, James Brown and the Black

Panther... all heroes in their own right, pushing back against the grain and coming out on top. Each character played, whether historical or fictional, had a great many curveballs in life thrown at them and persevered. Chadwick Boseman's premature demise was a timely and tragic reminder of the importance of [prevention](#), [identification](#), treatment of all cancers and the potential support necessary for all of us and our families.

According to [cancer.org](#), the chances of developing many types of cancer are actually higher than we would like to accept. The percentage of average risks each year are:

- Lung and Bronchis - 6.7% male / 6.05% female
- Prostate - 11% - male / Breast - 12.83% - female
- Colon and Rectal - 4.41% male / 4.01% female
- Melanoma - 2.77% male / 1.79% female
- Non hodgkin Lymphoma - 2.43% male / 1.93% female

Based on data from the National Cancer Institute, approximately 38.4% of men and women will be diagnosed with cancer at some point during their lifetimes. And, our African American colleagues are still at a higher statistical risk than our white colleagues, although that gap is closing. From the Union's perspective, we want to better serve our members by reducing the risks, both physically and financially. It is our intent this year to dig deeply into medical costs and work with the SPS186 Board of Education to establish better financial and emotional support for our colleagues as they navigate difficult medical issues such as cancer, and stave them off if possible. Life can be tough, and we can't prevent that. But your SEA team is in your dugout, and they are rooting for you.

[I Will Gladly Pay You Tuesday](#) - Two years ago, in the spring of 2019 with District health insurance costs continuing to rise, the District recommended a 20% premium increase to all employees taking health insurance with the District. After Union negotiations, the Board eventually settled on a 10% increase for employees who had any version of a family plan

(Employee with dependent, Employee with spouse, or Family) and a 16% increase for members on the single plan. However, the District did not provide any additional money from District funds to cover plan costs, thus further exacerbating the insurance plan debt. And, in May of 2019, the District elected to borrow \$3,000,000 (without consensus or notification of the Insurance Committee), making the fund appear more solvent on paper. This money borrowed came at a cost of approximately \$90,000 in annual interest.



At the end of 2019, our collective SPS186 district employee medical expenses were \$21,914,255 (still a fortune, but actually down \$237,912 from the previous year and a historic first). The amount allotted from employee and district contributions, has come up short of that total, but perhaps the meteoric rise in costs had slowed. And in the spring of 2020 (in the first month of the pandemic), against the recommendation of the contractually established District Health Insurance Committee, the following minimizations of your health insurance plan were made under the guise troubled financial times on the horizon:

- Aggregate deductible increase on singles from \$1250 to \$1500 and the family deductible from \$3750 to \$4500
- Increase in the aggregate out of pocket expense on single from \$3250 to \$3900 and family from \$9750 to \$11,700
- Increase the ER copay from \$250 to \$300
- Increase the Office Visit (OV) copay to \$30 and the OV specialist copay to \$50
- Increase the drug card expense \$5 on generic/preferred brand name/non preferred brand name (from \$10/\$35/\$50 to \$15/\$40/\$55)
- Major reduction in pharmaceutical benefits through the forced implementation of [prior authorization](#), member pay the difference, [step therapy](#) and [balanced formulary](#).

Your Union Health Insurance Committee wants to remind you that your health insurance is a bargained benefit, Article 7.5, Section B.2. It states, "*The employee's share of the cost for individual medical coverage shall not exceed 4.5%.*" Each time the deductible, the out of pocket, the emergency room cost, and pharmaceuticals are increased, the benefit that was bargained for you by those in the past is worth less. Furthermore, if your salary increase is not keeping pace with your family or individual medical costs, such large health insurance "tweaks" are regressive, and literally inching you and your colleagues closer to poverty. SEA is encouraging you to keep an accurate count of additional money spent on health insurance this year. It was our prediction that many would incur additional costs of anywhere between \$2000-\$3000, unfortunately. If this proves an accurate hypothesis, we would ask that you reach out and share your story and data with the union. Armed with collective accurate information, we will be better prepared to push for a reestablishment of some of your hard earned, and recently minimized, health insurance benefits.

Remember, you have to be in the healthiest place possible to do your best by your students. As famous Civil Right activists, John Lewis once said, "When you see something that is not right, not fair, not just, you have to speak up. You have to say something; you have to do something."

Slow Moving Train - Impact Bargaining - Immediately after the



collaborative group of over 100 SEA members concluded as part of the COVID-19 Task Force July 21, it was crystal clear that we had a ton of work to do advocating as a union. As always, SEA had no problem fielding strong and willing volunteers and sixteen SEA members got right to the task. Rachel Johnson, Karmen Goodrich, Nick Pickett, Amanda Chahal, Hirut Harris, Lindsey Rudd, Kittie Hose, Ben McKinney, Diane

Covey, Tiana Durr, Scott Russel, Spring Shaon, Linda Murphy, Susan Smith, and Lacey Harrison volunteered to do the work of impact bargaining, negotiating sessions which may be held after the contract is settled to address sudden changes in working conditions or other mandatory subjects.

The 500 questions generated in the FAQ back at the end of July gave us a tremendous head start, as did the weeks of dedicated work put in by the COVID-19 Task Force from July 7 -July 21. Your Impact Bargaining Team has logged in over 50 hours already, and is still hard at it. Together, they have pushed hard on the District to do what is right by you and your students, have worked collaboratively in solutions based efforts, and dedicated themselves to making this tough situation as good as it can be, all of it in their free time this summer or after school hours (with no financial compensation, mind you.)

Please know that we absolutely realize that many of you are having a very difficult time in this crisis, and we are committed to supporting you, as we are you. It is our sincere hope that your District administration is listening and is willing to make process adjustments that are in the best interest of students, staff and parents. It is not too late for our leaders to get on board with what we are asking. The train has only just left the station...

“Ode to Teachers”

Pat Mora

I remember
the first day,
how I looked down,
hoping you wouldn't see
me,
and when I glanced up,
I saw your smile
shining like a soft light
from deep inside you.

“I'm listening,” you encourage us.

“Come on!

Join our conversation,
Let us hear your neon certainties,
thorny doubts, tangled angers,"
But for weeks I hid inside.

I read and reread your notes,
Praising
my writing
and you whispered,
"We need you
and your stories
and questions
that like a fresh path
will take us to new vistas."

Slowly your faith grew,
into my courage
and for you-
instead of a note
or an apple or flowers-
I raised my hand.

I carry your smile
and faith
inside me like I carry
my dogs's face,
my sister's laugh,
creamy melodies,
the softness of sunrise,
steady blessing of stars,
autumn smell of gingerbread,
the security of a sweater on a chilly day.



September Calendar of Events

ALL EVENTS SUBJECT TO RESCHEDULING

8 & 21 - Board of Education Meetings - 6:30 p.m. - [View Live On Channel 22](#)

8 - AR Meeting - Time and Format TBA

11 - Remembrance of 9/11

October Calendar of Events

ALL EVENTS SUBJECT TO RESCHEDULING

1 - Sick Bank 4pm - **PLEASE ENSURE THAT YOUR APPLY BEFORE YOUR DAYS EXPIRE.**

5 & 19 - Board of Education Meetings - 6:30 p.m. - [View Live On Channel 22](#)

12 - AR Meeting - 4:20 via Zoom Invite

20 - Grievance - Contact DAWN SWAGGERTY or SCOTT RUSSEL with any questions. They are here as SEA Grievance Co-chairs to support you.

The delicacy of our personal and familial fabric, the most obvious first. Watching others overseas experience fear and loss through social media or on the news is powerful, but often we are shielded from collective tragedy by selfless actions of our ancestors and the good fortune of being an American. This time it is different though, possibly it is our family having possible compromised immune systems or respiratory issues, and every action we take, viewed through those concerns... no one immune to the immense power of a virus with no vaccine and everyone a potential carrier.

The fragility of our economy, medical resources and supply chain, also quite revealing. The initial blitzkrieg by our neighbors on grocery stores, depleting them of essential items, to the point many were questioning if they may have to make alternate plans for basic toileting... in itself, made me briefly question our societal judgement. Medical providers unable to acquire basic protective gear and equipment, having to rethink their best judgement as professionals. And the stock market's plummet, local run on banks for cash (after a strong run of unprecedented gains), reminded me that everything hinges so delicately on the other.

Questions as to continuity of government, education, social services, and the like made me think of the previous freedoms taken (or not yet granted) from those in this nation and others abroad. As edicts arrive from state and federal authorities and screening processes are put into place, one can't help but wonder how, as scary as this seems, what life may be like in a government with malintent. Again, so very fortunate to be weathering the storm here.

Last, but not least, my eyes clearly open to our inexplicable irony of social interaction. For the past 10-15 years, we have been intentionally withdrawing from each other and society, into our social media and online worlds. But now restricted from personal interaction, due to social distancing protocols, our potential quality time with our family, friends, neighbors, colleagues, civic and religious groups and the like has come to a screeching halt. And now all of a sudden, what didn't seem so important... the basic gift of socialization, is once again viewed as a treasure.

There are certain to be many more life lessons to be learned and tough times ahead, so until we are on the other side of this thing, please continue to put your families first, pay heed to all certified medical and governmental regulations, lean on your friends and colleagues (within social distancing protocols), let your Union know of any needs or concerns you may have, and look positively forward to a time soon that we can look back on all of this stronger and wiser and say, we made it through that by standing TOGETHER. Union strong.

-Aaron

