



SPRINGFIELD EDUCATION ASSOCIATION **ACTION LINE**

Hispanic Heritage Month Edition

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School Board Paso Doble

Let's dance, in honor of Hispanic Heritage Month, and the dancing world of education.

There are many but one of the more famous Spanish dances is the the [Pasodoble](#), a fast-paced dance based on the rhythm and movement of a bullfight. Paso doble literally translates to double step. It was used in the Spanish Infantry to set the speed of march, as

well as in 18th-century comedies, although its origins are in fact French. As a ballroom dance it is usually performed in pairs, one man and one woman, with the former said to represent the *matador* – or bullfighter. In Europe, Canada, and Asia, the Pasodoble is a social dance, but it's complicated choreography makes it better suited as a competitive dance form. It's one of the five international Latin dances performed at dance competitions worldwide, along with the [jive](#), rumba, [samba](#), and cha-cha-cha.

Over the last many decades, twice a month, on Monday nights, at 6:30 pm, the [Springfield 186 Board of Education](#) meets publicly at 1900 West Monroe, the SPS186 Board Office and Administration Building. Here, district administration and the board of education “dance”, sharing recent school district events that have been attended, touting site and facility updates, citing new contractor and consultant purchases, reviewing/updating board policy, examining current district financial status, pushing personnel resignations, hirings, and student discipline, and occasionally receiving student academic reports.

Often dramatic, this dance involves partners in systemic rhythm but opposing forces thematically. There is a union presence at nearly every meeting and, routinely, the SEA President will speak to issues surrounding our members and our overarching concerns, during the public comments section. The comments are always generated from thematic member concerns, and are born from collective needs from our students, classes, buildings and community. If done correctly,

they help align the board with our reality, and we can score a 10. That does not always mean, however, that they are well received or will be comfortable.

The Pasodoble is a wonderfully emotive dance but born out of bullfighting. And although deeply intertwined through Hispanic culture, some feel strongly against this dance's muse for its inhumane treatment of animals. Similarly, some (although supportive of the concept of the union in general) feel open advocacy, or the fight, by the union to be a bit unpalatable. Whether it be in one-on-one discussions, staff meetings, committee work or televised school board meetings, it is something that some may be uneasy with. Please understand that this dance though, is one of the many different dances that you, the district employee and the collective union have in their repertoire. Although sometimes truculent, it must happen publicly and, in the end, it is a necessary part of assuring that our students, schools and our professionalism are kept as the main interest on the larger community ballroom stage.

This is the dance and the stage and these are our students, our schools and our professions that we advocate and dance for. ¡Olé!



Teaching (and Learning) With Our Multilingual Wonders



This month, the United States celebrates and honors our Hispanic community. Many Springfield residents may be surprised to learn that Springfield School District 186 is home to a diverse group of bilingual learners supported by a team of specialists trained to meet their unique learning needs, our English Language Learner (ELL) teachers. Students enter

district 186 at all age ranges from every corner of the world with varying levels of English proficiency and are screened to determine the need for specialized English instruction, which we provide at nearly every school within our boundaries.

The Springfield School District's current Hispanic population consists of students from Venezuela, Honduras, Colombia, Guatemala, Mexico, Chile, and Cuba. These students bring to our district rich cultural backgrounds and varying educational backgrounds, which benefits all students and educators. The goal of our English Language Learner educational team is to provide equitable education opportunities for all learners, while creating a culture of learning that values and celebrates diversity.

Our ELL team is continually excited to learn about the cultures and values from our students and to share them district wide. Ir al disitro 186!



Soccer Societal Shifters

As millions of others did this past summer, I viewed and celebrated the 2023 Women's World Cup - Australia/New Zealand. And although the US Women's National Team (USWNT) did not fare as well as many of us had hoped, the overall play was the highest of caliber and much history was made this past summer in the world of futbol Down Under.

In the end, Spain (nicknamed - La Roja) was the team that won it all, in a striking and powerful match against England. These 2023 World Cup matches were some of the best women's match play ever, there were tons of historical firsts and there were some insightful life takeaways for us as fans and non fans alike.

I am a soccer nut. I have played the beautiful game since I was five, and I can't help pushing my love onto my students and my own kids.. Although I am more of a "rough carpenter" type of player rather than finish, I am absolutely awed by the finesse and grace of those who make the game appear so effortless but also by their spirit. The women of Spain, and every other country in the tournament, and the surrounding cast absolutely continued to [spark love and growth of the game for the future](#). The New Zealand fans packed the stadium against Norway with 42,137 fans, the most of any soccer match to date. The level of sportsmanship displayed by others in victory and loss was tremendous, as displayed by England in their quarterfinal victory win and conciliatory efforts for Columbia whom they narrowly defeated, consoling their opponents at games end. It was the first game ever played by a woman wearing a hijab, sported by Nouhila Benzina of Morocco, bringing cultural shifts long overdue. FIFA, the Federation International Football Association, attempted to ban LBGTQ armbands but were outflanked by players finding new and creative ways in which to express sexual orientation and support for fellow soccer players worldwide. South Africa's Thembe Kgatlana sported a rainbow haircut and Zew Zealand defender, Ali Riley, painted her nails in the colors of the Progress Pride Flag. All of these moments, and many more, helped to display hope for a more inclusive and caring world, focused around doing right by society and one fellow player as much as winning.

A second point of note was something often overlooked in professional sports, the referee. The referee for the final match was also a historic first. Her name is [Tori Penso](#) and she is from Florida. Although the US Womens Women's National Team did not make it to the finals, Tori did, selected above all of her referee peers world wide. And in doing so, she became the first ever US official to referee a World Cup final. Not only did she referee the game but did so flawlessly. She allowed the game to be played at full pace, always diligent to protect players from egregious acts of others and uphold the rules of the game... regardless of the pressure of the entire world watching. The influence of just one person dedicated to doing the right thing, affecting history in a positive manner.

Most significantly, the Spaniard women persevered, winning their country's first ever World Cup and changed the fabric of the soccer continuum. Just months ago, the [Spaniard Women's Soccer Team swirled in controversy](#) and were already counted down and out, before even entering the tournament. More than a dozen team members took a formal stand on what they described as more than a decade of systemic sexism ranging from paternalism and offhand remarks to verbal abuse. The players banded together to grieve and protest, and called for change. Sadly, FIFA and the Spanish Soccer Association stood behind the traditional and male dominated management, and some players elected to make some very tough decisions, leaving the team. After that, the remaining players feared that they could not persevere, especially without support from the top. But with sheer determination, the team somehow found strength and gained momentum all the way to the World Cup Championship. In an ironic twist, during their championship victory, the players' concerns came to light in front of the entire world as the Spanish Soccer Federation boss Luis Rubiales placed an unsolicited kiss upon star player, Jenny Hermosa, after the championship game was won. After much negative media coverage, he was eventually pressured to step down (as did the coach) and the women are still fighting to make change in not only Spanish soccer but the entire world.

In the end, this world cup made significant impacts not only on the game of soccer but also society. The players, coaches, referees and all others who advocated for better helped change the structure of their organization and soccer for everyone more than any cup in recent history. Viva las mujeres de Espana! Viva,

Soccer!

[Tiny Desk... Big](#)

[Effort](#) - The SSHS Drama Club is back! Ask us about our upcoming Spring play, fun biweekly meetings,



School-to-Work Stagehand Pipeline, and performance field trips. With a new membership of over 75 students (after just one meeting!), Spartan pride and excitement is in the air. Our Spartans are already shining an activist theater spotlight on an important social justice topic: confronting gun violence. In addition to performing in the beautifully renovated SSHS auditorium, the Springfield Southeast Drama Club will engage in a powerful, nationwide event called #ENOUGH! Plays Against Gun Violence. By invitation, and in cooperation with the UIS Performing Arts Center, SSHS thespians will perform a staged reading of one of 6 plays. Join us on Nov. 6th at UIS for #ENOUGH! to help bring nationwide awareness to gun violence through theater. Thank you in advance for your support of SSHS Drama Club, a revitalization providing new, equitable levels of access, inclusion, and relevance to so many students.

"Enough!" stage reading - <https://www.enoughplays.com/reading>

UIS "Enough" reading - <https://uispac.com/enough-plays-to-end-gun-violence/>

Policia de las Uniformes - Last spring,

the [SPS186 Board of Education looked inward at a uniform policy established back in 2008](#). In doing so, they discovered that four of the five middle schools had formal “uniform” dress codes (as did two elementaries) that were different from the rest of the district. These school’s students were mandated to wear certain pants, colors and official spirit wear, while the other schools only had to follow less prescriptive, traditional district dress policy. After some considerable debate and review, the school



board elected to eliminate this policy, arguing that it gave the impression of inequity, in a district claiming to be otherwise. And starting this 2023-24 school year, Grant, Washington, Jefferson, and Franklin Middle Schools and also Harvard Park Elementary, and Matheny-Withrow Elementary were brought into the traditional district dress code.

Nearly a month and a half now into the new and amended SPS186 Student Dress Code, we have several SEA members similarly concerned about the antiquated dress code language for district staff, found within SPS186 School Board Policy [500.21](#). The language contains guidelines on piercings and tattoos. It cites suits, sportcoats, and blazers for men and blouses and skirts and jumpers for women; something much more formal than has been our accepted norm for decades. It also does not address jeans and the new stretch/type pants, a staple in all staff and many administrator wardrobes. Additionally, it does not include the manner in which relaxing our dress code (ie jeans days and spirit days) is inextricably tied to fundraising for every school and our overarching SPS186 United Way campaign. Fundraising is positive and oftentimes necessary, but neither students, nor staff, should feel entitled to pay significant amounts of money in order to have a preferred dress over another. Over half of our students (55.9%) meet the federal poverty guidelines. Sadly, we have paraprofessional staff members on food stamps and government assistance and we all know that teaching doesn't make one rich. This unspoken policy of "pay to relax" that we have adopted, District wide, needs attention and refinement. All of these together, add (if only ever so slightly) to the stressors of staff members, detract from a culturally diverse environment, and potentially limit our recruitment and retention potential.

The union has spoken with administration, within the buildings of concern, in an attempt to find a common ground, before bringing this to the top. These administrators seem to understand our concerns, as a union, however they feel entitled to uphold the rules/regs as set forth in the board policy. In light of that, we are establishing an ad hoc committee, consisting of board member(s), cabinet level leadership, building administrative (principal), SEA members, SEIU members and community (if possible) to review and establish a modern, practical and professional guideline for our school adult image guidelines. The superintendent has agreed to this and we hope to have this committee up and running in the next 3-4 weeks, with recommendations for our members (and administration) soon

[Cultural Humility for \\$500](#) - It won't be long before the leaves have all fallen and Thanksgiving in the United States will be here. It wouldn't take long for any group of Americans to list all the key requirements for a successful Thanksgiving dinner. Yet, each of us at some point on our journey first encountered a family that did Thanksgiving wrong. It may have been your in-laws. Or Thanksgiving at your brother's when his wife offered to cook for the family. "No (pumpkin, apple, pecan) pie? What is wrong with these people?" "Who makes dressing this (dry or soupy)?" "Are they REALLY going to leave the football game on during dinner?"



While we can broadly agree on what a Thanksgiving dinner looks like we also can agree that our family's dinner traditions are the best! Traditions are an important part of culture and an individual's identity. While Thanksgiving traditions are surface culture, they are illustrative of our habit of believing that our way is the right way. Deeper cultural aspects like race, gender, concepts of fairness and justice or time are also embedded in our habitual way of thinking. Humans can easily fall into the habit of believing that their culture is the right culture. In its worst form this way of thinking looks culturally arrogant (i.e., racism, sexism, colonialism). Cultural arrogance is not conducive to building positive relationships with those outside of our own identity group. Historically speaking cultural arrogance was used as a rationale for oppression.

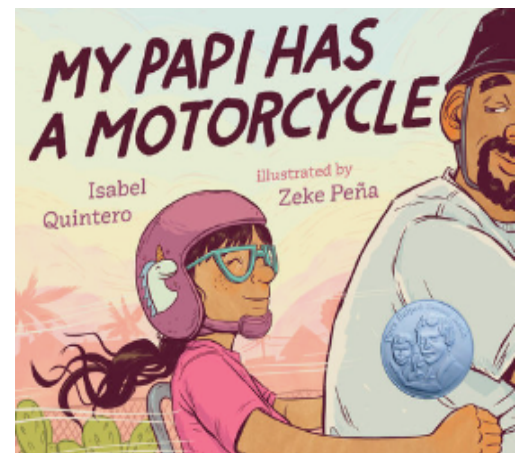
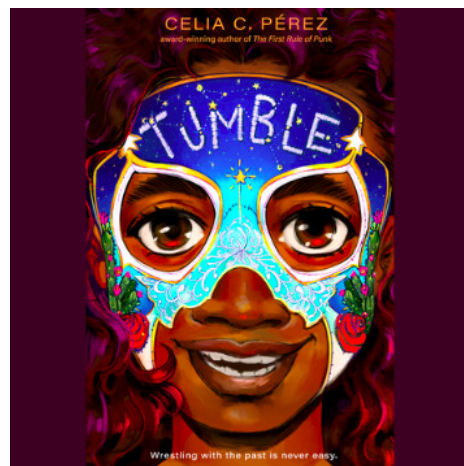
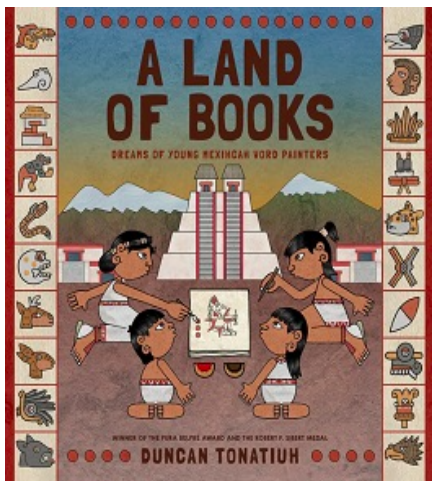
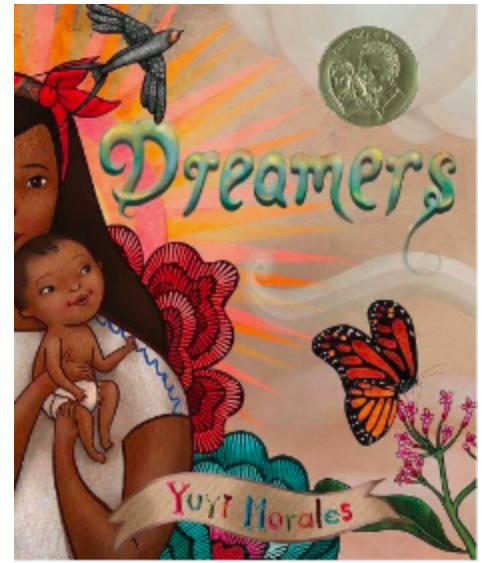
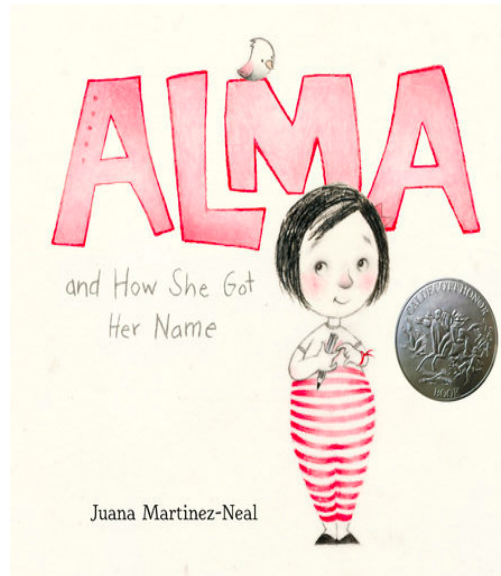
The good news is that we don't have to present ourselves as arrogant because we can, with self-reflection, become culturally humble. The Springfield Office of the IEA is offering an **Introduction to Cultural Humility on October 18** at the **Professional Development Center (PDC)**. The training is from **4:30 until 6:15**. You can sign up at the following link: tinyurl.com/IEAOCT2023

Cultural humility involves an ongoing process of self-exploration and self-critique combined with a willingness to learn from others. It means entering a relationship with another person with the intention of honoring their beliefs, customs, and values. It means acknowledging differences and accepting that person for who they are. You are not required to change your own identity to understand that someone else may have a cultural identity that is different than yours. If you are interested in building a connection with a student and their family being culturally humble will help. Working to fix power imbalances is an essential part of cultural humility. Culture changes. Change can create anxiety and fear. Recognizing that fear and choosing to react in a more thoughtful way can help you build relationships built on trust and mutual respect.

-Sean Burns

IEA Uniserv Director

[A Bouquet of Hispanic Children's Books](#) - Your union fervently supports literacy and everything that is best for our students. As such, we sought out some of the very best hispanic authored and themed books from our newest SPS186 TIL and Illinois Reading Council President, [Julie Hoffman](#). But if her professional recommendation isn't quite enough, just look at those beautifully enticing covers. What kid could resist such visual temptation? Extraordinario!!!!



Frizzy by Claribel A. Ortega

Alma and How She Got Her Name by Juana Martinez-Neal

Dreamers by Yuyi Morales

A Land of Books by Duncan Tonatiuh

Tumble by Celia C. Perez

My Papi Has a Motorcycle by Isabel Quintero

* [Check out these Hispanic authored adult books as well.](#)

[“A la esperanza” \(To Hope\)](#) by [Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz](#)
(1648–1695)

To Hope

Green spell that so beguiles humanity,
unreasoning hope, gilded delirium,
dream that the sleepless dream, unrescued from
the fantasy of fortunes not to be;

soul of the world, old age dressed handsomely,
imaginary blossoming of some
bare branch, the lucky man’s today—“to come
tomorrow,” says the luckless man, “for me”:

Let them who will follow and live for you,
those who, green-spectacled, pursue in vain
chimaeras they create and trust too much.

Saner about my fate, I keep my two
eyes in my two hands, and find it plain
there’s nothing I can see but what I touch.

A la esperanza

Verde embeleso de la vida humana,
loca esperanza, frenesí dorado,
sueño de los despiertos intrincado,
como de sueños, de tesoros vana;

alma del mundo, senectud lozana,
decrépito verdor imaginado,
el hoy de los dichosos esperado
y de los desdichados el mañana:

sigan tu sombra en busca de tu día
los que, con verdes vidrios por anteojos,
todo lo ven pintado a su deseo:

que yo, más cuerda en la fortuna mía,
tengo en entrambas manos ambos ojos
y solamente lo que toco veo.



* Sor Juana Ines de La Cruz was a Mexican feminist, poet, philosopher and scholar who, aptly put by Virginia Wolfe, managed to succeed and create a “room of her own” in a world dominated by men. She is a national icon of Mexico whose face adorns the nation’s currency. Her writings are still relevant and coveted now over 300 years later. Sor Juana de La Cruz, “The Tenth Muse”.

[SEA Karaoke Cantina](#) - Whether it be Selena, Enrique

Iglesias, Los Lobos, Daddy Yankee or Shakira, Latin music is a deep and colorful ribbon streaming through our American quilt of music culture. There is something elegant, familial and celebratory about the style of music, composed and delivered by our Spanish speaking artists. In honor of these and others, SEA is hosting a Karaoke Krush event at Club Clique, Thursday October 19 as we wrap up the first 9 weeks of school. Come celebrate your hard work and profession together rekindling and serenading each other as we sing our favorite songs of all...



Know that this year, the union is not only focused on positive educational change, but also the fun for all our members. Your SEA Social Committee has a vision for inclusivity. We will be providing events throughout the year for those to participate in with their kids and without. Please let us know if you should be interested in being part of the committee or just happen to have a few unique ideas.



[“Rethinking Reading” \(Illinois Times 2021\)](#) -

Melissa Hostetter teaches language arts to seventh graders at Washington Middle School in Springfield. She's currently undergoing training on how to teach dyslexic students. Hostetter also moderates an online group of about 250 Illinois educators dedicated to the "science of reading." It's a method for learning that claims to be more grounded in decades of cognitive research than more widely used, traditional models. Those models have assumed kids learn words based on cues, such as context and pictures, and that they will naturally pick up words by being around books. Meanwhile, the science of reading calls for a structured focus on phonics – how letters and their various combinations sound – particularly during early childhood.

Hostetter said she was teaching fourth grade in Chatham when she realized, "many of my students were unable to sound out multisyllabic words." She has noticed the same challenges in District 186, where only 27% of students who took the SATs were proficient in English during the 2018-19 school year. As a tutor, Hostetter did research on reading before deciding to use a phonics-based approach and said she "saw incredible growth in my students."

Some of the more recent debate over reading ignited after journalist Emily Hanford reported stories for American Public Media about how reading is mostly being taught, throughout the country, in ways that counter what researchers have found to be best. Most curriculum, in other words, strays from science. Reading is well-researched. Hanford has pointed to numerous studies, such as a landmark report from the National Reading Panel two decades ago, that show systematic phonics instruction is key. While it's not the answer alone – language comprehension is also crucial – without knowing how to decode words by sound, many kids will fail to become proficient readers.

What's not up for debate is that kids are largely failing to succeed at reading. According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), in 2019, across the nation – only 37% of 12th graders were proficient at reading. Those who struggle within the current system can get help, if they can afford it. But parents who lack resources don't always have the means to set their kids up with private tutors. Literacy is an equity issue. The education gap means Black and Hispanic students fare worse than their white peers when it comes to reading scores. Access to effective reading education can factor into lifelong health and economic outcomes.

In recent years, many states have proposed or adopted legislation aimed at training teachers on evidence-based practices, such as explicit phonics instruction. In Illinois, legislation called the Equity in Early Childhood Education Act was originally part of the omnibus education bill that passed the General Assembly earlier this year, but it was scrapped during deliberations.

Stand for Children, an education advocacy organization, supported the measure. Jessica Handy is the government affairs director for the Illinois chapter. She points to statistics that show just 35% of fourth graders in the state meet or exceed reading standards, according to NAEP. And according to a 2010 report from the Annie E. Casey Foundation, by third grade, if kids are not proficient readers, they are four times more likely to drop out of high school than their proficient-reader peers, and six times more likely to drop out if they are from low-income families. The bulk of youth in juvenile detention struggle with reading, and education advocates point to literacy as a shield against the school-to-prison pipeline.

Handy said the legislation, which has been filed unsuccessfully for multiple years, is aimed at ensuring early learners get foundational math and reading skills. "We need to provide sequential, explicit and systematic instruction in phonemic awareness and phonics," she said. Stand for Children advocates for an evidence-based approach to literacy which, in addition to phonics, includes a focus on fluency, vocabulary development and reading comprehension. The legislation would have also required instruction for teachers to repeatedly and explicitly include those components of reading.

According to a 2018 report from the National Council on Teacher Quality, Illinois "does not require a sufficient test of the science of reading for either elementary or special education teacher candidates." The Equity in Early Childhood Education Act's sponsor, State Rep. Rita Mayfield, D-Waukegan, told *Illinois Times* she planned to refile a similar version of the bill during the spring session.

Contact Rachel Otwell at rotwell@illinoistimes.com.

September Calendar of Events

25 - [Yom Kippur](#)

25 - (4 pm) OT/PT, BCBA Workload/Caseload Meeting - IEA PDC

26 - (4 pm) SEA Grievance Meeting - IEA PDC

26 - (5 pm) District 186 Equity Meeting - 1900

27 - (4 pm) EL, MS, HS Solutions Meetings - Individual Locations

28 - (9am - 12pm) District 186 Curriculum Council - IEA PDC



October Events

2 & 16 - Board of Education Meetings - 6:30 p.m. - [View Live On Channel 22](#)

4 - (4 pm) Special Education Solutions - IEA PDC

4 - (6 pm) Political Action (S-PACE) - IEA PDC

4 - (4 pm) SEA Sick Bank Meeting - 1900

5 - (4 pm) MS/HS Special Ed Teacher Workload/Caseload Meeting

9 - Columbus / Indigenous People's Day

10 - SEA Exec

10 - (4:20 pm) - SEA AR Meeting

11 - SEA Equity Development

23 - (4 pm) - Cross-Cat, Autism, Life Skills, ED Teachers

23 - (5 pm) - District 186 Equity Meeting - 1900

24 - (3 pm) - District 186 / NAACP / SEA Meeting

24 - (4 pm) EL, MS, HS Solutions Meetings - Individual Locations

31 - (4 pm) - Grievance Meeting

31 - Halloween



November Events

1 - (4 pm) - Special Education Solutions Meeting - IEA PDC

1 - (6 pm) - Political Action (S-PACE) - IEA PDC

4 - (4 pm) SEA Sick Bank Meeting - 1900

6 & 20 - Board of Education Meetings - 6:30 p.m. - [View Live On Channel 22](#)

8 - SEA Equity Development

12 - Diwali

13 - (4 pm) - SEA Literacy Task Force

14 - (5:30 pm) SEA Exec

14 - (4:20 pm) - SEA AR Meeting

22 - (4 pm) MS Solutions Meetings - Individual Locations

28 - (5 pm) - District 186 Equity Meeting - 1900

29 - (4 pm) EL & HS Solutions Meetings - Individual Locations

30 - (9 am - 12 pm) - Curriculum Council - IEA PDC



