

# Unity

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## Partners in Reform?

By Olga Addae, SEA President and  
Brian Lindquist, SEA VP

Arnie Duncan, Secretary of Education, addressed the National Education Association (NEA) in July of 2009. What was promising is that this is the first Secretary of Education to address the NEA in years. What is the message from the White House? According to Mr. Duncan the goals of the Department of Education are the following:

- ◆ Create a data system that “identifies teachers doing well or who are struggling.”
- ◆ Higher standards, and creating high quality assessments.
- ◆ Turn around the nation’s most troubled schools.
- ◆ Focus on the quality of the education work force.

He asked for us to “think differently about the role of unions in public education... that it’s not enough to focus on issues like job security, tenure, compensation, and evaluation. You must become full partners and leaders in education reform.”

The speech went on for awhile stating that what he learned about supporting students he learned from his mother who started and ran an after-school tutoring program in the south-side of Chicago. He says many of the students in the program became very successful because they “had my mother and others in their lives who gave them real opportunities, real support and guidance over the years and had the highest expectations for them.”

His experience taught the obvious: Give students extra support outside of school and their chance of success dramatically increases. Is this not the basic difference between students who have and students who don’t?

There were some disconcerting statements:

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## October 1 Deadline to Meet Class Size Limits

October 1 marks the date by which student load issues should be settled. Supervisors should be rearranging students and schedules to bring the class sizes in line with contract limits. The preferred solution is to reduce class size to the negotiated levels. If there are situations that cannot be rectified, individual teachers will be compensated for any days after October 1 during which he/she has an overload.

What follows are simply some highlights of applicable Workload issues in Article IX of the CERTIFICATED collective bargaining agreement. For the actual language, please go to [www.seattlewea.org](http://www.seattlewea.org) and under the COLLECTIVE BARGAINING tab, choose “2009/2010 Certificated Bargaining Agreement”.

### Section A: Workday

The elementary workday begins 30 minutes prior to the student day. It ends 6.5 hours later no matter how long the student day happens to be at your site. This includes a 30 minute duty free lunch.

The secondary workday begins 30 minutes prior to the student day. It ends 7.0 hours later no matter how long the student day happens to be at your site. This includes a 30 minute duty free lunch.

Building scheduled faculty meetings may not exceed more than one per week and may only last one hour beyond the regular work day.

JSCEE staff may flex hours to meet the needs of their responsibility.

### Section B: Employee Load

Combination/split grade classes should have one less student and be discussed with staff before assigning.

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## Partners in Reform (cont'd from p. 1)

"That school districts pay billions of dollars more each year for earning professional development credentials that do very little to improve the quality of teaching."

For turning around chronically low performing schools he states "We need to go into a room - states, districts, unions, administrators, foundation, think tanks, charters, non-profits, parents, and elected officials - lock the door, throw out the rule books, and start with a clean slate...we can't let our rules and regulations get in the way."

What are the national solutions?

- ◆ To ask congress for money to develop "compensation programs that will put money in the pockets of your teachers and support personnel by recognizing and rewarding excellence;"
- ◆ Having schools open longer hours;
- ◆ Invest in principal leadership;
- ◆ Deconstruct seniority rules to assure teachers are not put in schools where they can't succeed;
- ◆ Deconstruct tenure rules that allow ineffective teachers to remain in the classroom;
- ◆ If a school can't improve then school boards should consider mayoral control;
- ◆ Link student achievement and teacher effectiveness; "to remove student achievement entirely from evaluation is illogical and indefensible;"

- ◆ Recognize and reward great teachers, support struggling teachers, remove failing teachers.

However, the Secretary of Education states, "the key to making progress on education reform begins with respect for the labor-management relationship."

The goal of the current administration is for "America to produce the highest percentage of college graduates by the end of the next decade... It is an economic imperative and a moral imperative. This is the civil rights issue of our generation. The fight for a quality education is about so much more than education. It's a fight for social justice. And he's [President Obama] counting on you to lead that fight."

Some of you will read these statements and be in total agreement. Some of you will disagree. No matter your position it is imperative that we engage with each other to understand the different points of view that we as educators and daily practitioners hold. We can frame the debate on reform or be framed by it. If we are to engage and lead our community on what will really improve student learning, we must first engage and listen to the collective wisdom of our membership.

Therefore, the leaders and staff of the SEA office are planning site visits to each school by Winter break. These are just the beginning of informal meetings to hear concerns and hopes for the upcoming bargain and your views on "education reform." Please talk to your AR about setting up a meeting.

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## Colleagues Request for Sick Leave Donations

Delores Evans, Family Support Worker at Thurgood Marshall is requesting sick leave while recovering from knee surgery.

All donations are greatly appreciated. If you can help, see your school secretary for a Sick Leave Donation Form or call Roxana Melville, at 206. 252.0293/or email remeville@seattleschools.org

### School Board Endorsement

**At the September Association Representative Assembly, the Association Representatives voted to endorse the following School Board candidates:**

**Position 5- Mary Bass  
Position 7- Betty Patu**

### Initiative Recommendations

**Reject I-1033  
Approve R-71**

## **Know your contract:**

### **My Supervisor wants to talk**

#### ***Your Weingarten Rights: The right to union representation.***

There are moments in the life of an education employee that may cause concern about participating in a meeting with your principal or supervisor without someone else being present. This is not every time your principal/supervisor wants to talk to you, but it does happen.

**Under the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) (Article III, Rights and Responsibilities in all contracts) employees have Weingarten rights during investigatory interviews:** An investigatory interview occurs when a supervisor questions an employee to obtain information which could be used as a basis for discipline or asks an employee to defend his or her conduct.

If an employee has a reasonable belief that discipline or other adverse action may result from what they say, the employee has the right to request union representation. This can be the building/program Association Representative (AR) or an SEA UniServ Representative/staff person. **When the employee makes the request for union representation to be present, the principal/supervisor should stop the meeting and the meeting shall not be delayed more than 72 hours to allow SEA to**

**provide representation.**

Once you've asked for union representation, any attempt by the principal/supervisor to continue asking questions before a union representative gets there violates the CBA.

**Know the limits:**

Just as it's important to know what your Weingarten rights are, it is also important to know the limits.

You are not entitled to have a representative present every time your principal/supervisor wants to talk to you. Remember, if the discussion begins to change into questioning that could lead to discipline, you have the right to ask for representation before the conversation goes any further. If you are called into your supervisor's office for an investigation and directed to stay, then you must stay to avoid an accusation of insubordination. However, if you request representation, you are not required to answer questions until you have the opportunity to speak to your representative and have him/her present.

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## **Transit Passes, Can I Save Money?**

The district is now offering transit passes to all SEA members which can save you money. During the bargain, your SEA team made a proposal to allow our members to have the same discounted transit passes that were already available to employees working in the John Stanford Center. The District's bargaining team agreed to our proposal. Both teams were lacking a clear understanding of what the "discount" really meant. Bus passes are not sold at a discounted price but if you purchase one

from the District, you will save money.

Employees may purchase bus, train or vanpool monthly passes on pre-tax bases through payroll deductions. The IRS allows a few specific items, including transit passes, to be paid for by an employee using pre-tax income (gross) up to \$110 per month. This has the effect of reducing the employee's wage base upon which payroll taxes are calculated while he or she also takes advantage of the transportation benefit. The higher the tax bracket you are in, the more money a person will save.

Here are examples of potential savings:

<b>Bus Pass Cost</b>	<b>20% tax bracket</b>	<b>30% tax bracket</b>	<b>40% tax bracket</b>
\$72	\$14.40 per month	\$21.60 per month	\$28.80 per month
\$90	\$18.00 per month	\$27.00 per month	\$36.00 per month

Please contact Theresa Salmon at 252-0700 or email [tsalmon@seattleschools.org](mailto:tsalmon@seattleschools.org) if you are interested. You can also get the necessary form to start saving money by going to our website: [www.seattlewea.org](http://www.seattlewea.org). The deadline for obtaining passes is the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month.

## Class Size Limits (Cont'd from p.1)

Secondary teachers should not have more than three preparations.

### Section C: Preparation-Conference-Planning (PCP) Time

Elementary PCP should be at least 150 minutes per week during student day.

Secondary PCP should be the equivalent of one full class period each day.

### Section D: Class Size and Staffing Ratios

A joint committee will make recommendation to the bargaining team by January 2010.

K-3 should be no more than 26; 2 students over the limit trigger addressing the overload.

4-5 should be no more than 28; 4 students over the limit trigger addressing the overload.

Core 6-12 should be no more than 150 daily with no more than 32 in an individual class

Non-core 6-12 classes are limited by space, safety, equipment, and effective instruction.

If these limits cannot be met by October 1, the administrator and affected teacher must determine a solution. An SEA Representative may be involved.

### Section E: Elementary Specialists

Same class sizes apply.

Specialists will be involved in the scheduling of classes and their PCP time.

### Section F: Special Education Staffing Ratios and Workload Issues

This section is extensive and cannot be appropriately summarized in this article.

Special Education teachers, please read the new/existing language at the link listed at the beginning of this article.

## Calendar



### Upcoming Association Meetings:

**SEA Board meeting:** Mon., Oct. 12th, 4:30 p.m. at SEA.

To address the body in the Speak Out section, email:

[redmond@washingtonea.org](mailto:redmond@washingtonea.org).

**Parapro Meeting:** Tues., Oct. 13th, 5:00 p.m. @ SEA.

**Rep Assembly:** Mon., Oct. 19th, 4:15 pm., at Washington.

**Sub Meeting:** Tues., Oct. 27th, 4:00 at SEA.

### Upcoming Interview & PGC Training:

**Interview Training-** Tues., Nov. 17th, 4-5pm, JSCEE, Rm. 2700.

**PGC Training-** Monday, Oct., 26th, 4-7pm, JSCEE,

Rm. 2765 (only 30 spots available)

To register call 206.283.8443 or email:

[redmond@washingtonea.org](mailto:redmond@washingtonea.org).

## Best Practices for Inclusive Schools

Saturday, October 17, 2009

9 a.m. - 2 p.m.

JSCEE, 2445 3rd Ave S

A conference sponsored by the Seattle Special Ed PTSA and SPS that will feature Dr. Fraturra from University of Wisconsin. She has written extensively on the Integrated Comprehensive Service delivery model and helped with the SPS audit in 2007.

There will be a panel of Seattle educators to discuss best practices. Then there will be time for small groups to discuss SPS move forward on the ICS model: how can we leverage strengths and mitigate challenges; what resources are needed?

Please RSVP by October 12 to [seattlespedptsa@gmail.com](mailto:seattlespedptsa@gmail.com)



## SEA Board of Directors 2008/2010

### Officers:

SEA President : Olga Addae  
(206) 283,8443 ext 107

[omaddae@washingtonea.org](mailto:omaddae@washingtonea.org)

SEA VP: Brian Lindquist  
(206) 283,8443 ext 115

[blindquist@washingtonea.org](mailto:blindquist@washingtonea.org)

SEA Treasurer: Verleeta Wooten  
Garfield H.S. (206) 252,2416

[vmwooten@seattleschools.org](mailto:vmwooten@seattleschools.org)

### High School Cert Reps:

Mark Epstein, Rainier Beach

[mdepstein@seattleschools.org](mailto:mdepstein@seattleschools.org)

Noam Gundle, Ballard

[njgundle@seattleschools.org](mailto:njgundle@seattleschools.org)

Michael Lawson, Franklin

[milawson@seattleschools.org](mailto:milawson@seattleschools.org)

### Middle School Cert Reps:

Kathy Saxon, Denny

[kmsaxon@seattleschools.org](mailto:kmsaxon@seattleschools.org)

Debra Tarpley, Washington

[datarpley@seattleschools.org](mailto:datarpley@seattleschools.org)

### Elementary Cert Reps:

Marianne Bratsanos, B. Hill

[mabratsanos@seattleschools.org](mailto:mabratsanos@seattleschools.org)

Kent Daniels, Orca

[tkdaniels@seattleschools.org](mailto:tkdaniels@seattleschools.org)

Dazanne Davis-Porter, Brighton

[dldavis@seattleschools.org](mailto:dldavis@seattleschools.org)

Joyce McDonald, Minor

[jomcdonald@seattleschools.org](mailto:jomcdonald@seattleschools.org)

Donna Shy, Bryant

[dshy@seattleschools.org](mailto:dshy@seattleschools.org)

### Centrally dispatched Cert Rep:

David Abrams, Franklin

[ddabrams@seattleschools.org](mailto:ddabrams@seattleschools.org)

### SAEOP Reps:

President: Debbie Passi, N. Beach

[dpassi@seattleschools.org](mailto:dpassi@seattleschools.org)

VP: Vivian Belcher, Blaine

[vlbelcher@seattleschools.org](mailto:vlbelcher@seattleschools.org)

### Parapro Reps:

President: Marguerite Jones, WSH

[mjones@seattleschools.org](mailto:mjones@seattleschools.org)

VP: Grace Saturnino, Aki Kurose

[mjsaturnino@seattleschools.org](mailto:mjsaturnino@seattleschools.org)

### Substitute Reps:

President: John Dunn

[dunn570@seattleschools.org](mailto:dunn570@seattleschools.org)

VP: Wynne Stout

[wstout@gmail.com](mailto:wstout@gmail.com)

### WEA Board:

Brian Lindquist, SEA

[blindquist@washingtonea.org](mailto:blindquist@washingtonea.org)

Verleeta Wooten, Garfield

[vmwooten@seattleschools.org](mailto:vmwooten@seattleschools.org)

### ESP At, Large & NEA Board:

Marguerite Jones, West Seattle

[mjones@seattleschools.org](mailto:mjones@seattleschools.org)