

Unity

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Achievement/Opportunity Gaps and the Support Needed To Close It.

By Olga Addae, SEA President and
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From the Elementary Secondary Education Act (ESEA), to its revision called No Child Left Behind (NCLB), to the recent passage at the state level of HB2261, the Nation and State have been struggling with one paramount question. How do we close the Achievement Gaps, now called Opportunity Gaps? There are many "Gaps"; The academic achievement gaps of students who:

- are ethnic minority,
- are poor or who live in poverty,
- are homeless,
- are from single parent homes,
- have parents who aren't involved with their school or education,
- are of low birth weight,
- do not have food security,
- live in high crime neighborhoods,
- change schools frequently,
- watch too much TV.

These just name a few, all of which are factors outside of the classroom. In the sixty's, the nation commissioned a study called the Coleman report. At the time, it was the largest study commissioned to answer the question. The Coleman report determined that the leading factor to determine a student's success in school was where the school was located. For example in schools located in high poverty areas, the students had a low rate of success. ESEA, which followed soon after, determined that the students in these schools came to school with a

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American Education Week

NEA's American Education Week (AEW) spotlights the importance of providing every child in America with a quality public education from kindergarten through college, and the need for everyone to do his or her part in making public schools great.

NEA's annual tagline, *Great Public Schools: A Basic Right and Our Responsibility*, reflects the Association's calling upon America to provide students with quality public schools so that they can grow, prosper, and achieve in the 21st century.

The 88th annual American Education Week will take place **November 16–20**. Each day during the week spotlights a different aspect of school life:

- **Monday, November 16:** Open House Day. From national commemorations to local community events, millions of Americans celebrate public education.
- **Tuesday, November 17:** [Parents Day](#). Schools invite parents into the classroom for a hands-on experience of what the day is like for their child.
- **Wednesday, November 18:** [Education Support Professionals Day](#). Individuals who provide invaluable services to schools are recognized for their outstanding work.
- **Thursday, November 19:** [Educator for a Day](#). Community leaders are invited to serve as educators to get a glimpse at a day in the life of a school employee.
- **Friday, November 20:** [Substitute Educators Day](#). This day honors the educators who are called upon to replace regularly employed teachers.

SEA hopes that you will take the opportunity to honor yourselves and each other. Keep up the great work!



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Achievement/Opportunity Gaps

(Cont'd from p. 1)

cultural deficit. In other words, home life was significantly different than school life and the students needed extra assistance to help them succeed. Thus Title 1 monies were directed at schools. This is a "student as deficit model" approach to addressing the achievement gaps issue. Well, forty years later the model has shifted, but not much. There are also school factors that affect the academic achievement gap of students:

- Class size
- Rigor of the curriculum
- Teacher Quality;
- Teacher preparation
- Teacher experience
- Teacher absence and turnover
- Culturally relevant teaching practices
- Student fear and safety at school
- Technology in the classroom

Most of these factors focus on the education system as a whole, legislated by the state and determined by school boards. But the education reform debate focuses on one factor: Teacher Quality. No doubt a quality teacher is an important ingredient to a quality teaching environment which includes the other factors. So, it seems the only thing that has changed in the past forty years is the model. At the national and state level, the new approach seems to be a teacher as deficit model.

It is time to change the model. Instead of accepting any "deficit" model, the public should hear what educators say are supports needed to close the "Gaps". Here are suggestions from your Association Representatives at the October Representative Assembly.

School Support: (In no particular order)

- Work with disruptive students instead of excluding from class
- Home visits
- Significant interventions for failing/struggling students
- Range of options for discipline problems
- Students with special needs have to have ways to move in and out of inclusion according to their behavior
- Extra personnel for special needs students

- Cultural competence
- Title one should be based on percent rather than a threshold
- cut-off
- Co-teaching
- More movement for K-5 – use brain research
- Multiple arenas for students to show excellence
- Change the situation with respect to disproportionately in funding of extra support, classes, even teachers (dollars raised by PTA's, etc.)
- Give new programs time to succeed
- Observe colleagues work (release time)
- Up math requirements
- Up pay for teachers
- Tutoring of students not meeting standard
- Dollars for field trips – enrichments activities
- Dollars for students who can't afford equipment (TI-83 Calculators, planners, etc)
- Help in classrooms (more IA's)

Outside School Support:

- More parent involvement in their children's education
- Parent support of what goes on in the classroom on a daily basis
- Kids need to see that their parents value what their children are learning in school
- Getting families involved – support parents to become better educators at home
- Hold parents accountable too
- Before and after school programs funded and structurally sound
- General education – get the parents involved
- Academies for the parent

And finally, the most crucial; **More Funding!** Educators have ideas. The question remains; is anyone listening? Is the public ready to pay the cost of true support to educate **all** children?

The SEA remains committed to hear your ideas, if you have not had a school visit by SEA Governance or Staff, please speak to your AR to set up a meeting.

Thank you for all you do on behalf of all the students in Seattle Public Schools.



Know your contract:

Evaluations

(Procedures are different for certificated and classified)

Classified evaluation:

Newly hired employees shall receive monthly evaluations for the first three months.

All other employees shall be evaluated by the supervisor at least once each year at any time prior to April 15. The supervisor shall discuss the evaluation in detail with the employee. The evaluation should be signed by the employee to acknowledge receipt. The employee shall receive a copy of the Performance Appraisal form from the supervisor at that time.

An employee's performance will be considered unsatisfactory if an employee receives one unsatisfactory mark in the following categories: Attendance and Punctuality or Competency in Skills Required at Entry. An employee's performance will also be considered unsatisfactory if the employee receives two unsatisfactory marks in any of the performance categories.

If an employee's performance is rated unsatisfactory on the Performance Appraisal form, the supervisor shall:

1. Complete a Performance Improvement Report form (the employee shall have the right to have an SEA representative present).
2. Observe the employee for three (3) work weeks.
3. If, at the end of the three weeks, the employee is performing satisfactorily based on the objectives set out in the Performance Improvement Plan, the employee will be rated satisfactory.
4. If, at the end of the three weeks, the employee is still performing **unsatisfactorily** in the same category(s), the employee will be placed on **probation for three (3) work weeks**. At the end of this probationary period, the employee will be re-evaluated and:
 - a) Be removed from probationary status,
 - b) Be placed on extended probation (which is normally three (3) work weeks), or
 - c) Be terminated.

Certificated evaluation:

At the following schools, certificated employees will pilot an evaluation system that will include three tiers in which staff will be evaluated on a differentiated cycle throughout their career: Hale, Ballard, Eckstein, McClure, Orca, Blaine, Leschi, Gatewood, Emerson, and Olympic View.

For all other certificated employees, there are two possible **evaluation** processes: Performance Cycle and Professional Growth Cycle (PGC) which will be described in more detail.

All certificated employees shall:

1. receive an annual evaluation.
2. meet with the supervisor by November 15 to set annual goals linked to the SPS' Strategic Plan and the school's CSIP.
3. have **equal responsibility** between the supervisor and the employee to set annual student achievement goals and **mutually agree** how student achievement will be measured.
4. be evaluated using the state mandated criteria as well as academic achievement growth as required by the state and aligned with SPS' Strategic Plan and the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA).

Performance Cycle:

For all certificated employees who meet any of the following criteria: are new to SPS, have less than four consecutive satisfactory evaluations, have non-continuing or provisional contracts, informed in writing by supervisor of performance concerns on PGC, personal choice of employee, or supervisor needs to more closely observe the employee (this could be for reasons such as change of assignment, grade level or similar factor).

All certificated staff on Performance Cycle shall:

1. be observed at least twice for a minimum total of sixty (60) minutes.
2. be observed at least once before winter break.
3. have a pre-observation conference to discuss professional activities to be observed prior to the first required observation. Any other pre-observation conference will be optional.
4. have option to request a post-observation conference with the evaluator within one (1) week. If scheduling is not possible, the evaluator shall inform the employee of the reason.
5. receive a written report on the Observation Report Form (Appendix J1 and J2) within six (6) working days of the observation unless either evaluator or employee is physically unavailable.
6. If a first year provisional employee, or first year with a contract in Seattle, the first observation must be within 90 days.
7. be evaluated based upon minimum evaluation criteria in state law (WAC 392-191-010) and CBA.

A) For classroom teachers (Instructional skill; Classroom management; Professional preparation and scholarship; Effort toward improvement when needed; Handling of student discipline and attendant problems; Interest in teaching pupils; Knowledge of subject matter; Professional responsibility)

B) For ESA's (Knowledge and scholarship in special field; Specialized skills; Management of special and technical environment; The support person as a professional; Involvement in assisting pupils, parents and educational personnel; Professional responsibility.

Know your contract: (cont'd from p.3)



Professional Growth Cycle (PGC):

For certificated employees who have a minimum of four consecutive years of Satisfactory evaluations on the Performance Cycle and have completed a joint SEA/SPS training on the PGC process have the choice to participate in the PGC.

Space does not permit a summary of the entire PGC section, but the following points are essential for the Plan Development:

1. No later than November 15 of the first year of the PGC, the employee will arrange a conference with the evaluator to discuss the initial Professional Growth Plan. The employee and the evaluator have a **joint responsibility** to develop the growth goals in a **collaborative manner**.

2. Prior to the end of the school year:

A) the employee will review the Professional Growth Plan, gather data and/or evidence for growth measurement, assess progress, and make any appropriate revisions.

B) the employee will arrange a conference with the evaluator to discuss the employee's review and assessment of the Professional Growth Plan. Prior to this conference the employee will review and reflect upon the student achievement that the employee established for use in the annual evaluation document.

The Professional Growth Plan will not be retained in the employee's personnel file.

Certificate Renewal: Oops, My Certificate Lapsed.

In order to work in a classroom position you must have a current valid teaching certificate; check your certificate for the date of expiration. This statement may seem rather obvious, but SEA is receiving more calls about SEA members who have let their certificate lapse. In some cases it is because staff have not completed the 150 clock hours to renew their certificate or they have not passed a teaching test for each endorsement. The District has limited options once a certificate has lapsed; ultimately it is the individual's responsibility. One excellent website is OSPI at www.k12.wa.us/certification; it describes the types of certificates, the requirements and frequently asked questions.

Colleagues Request for Sick Leave Donations

Margaret Poore, who works in Special Education on the Assistive Technology Team, is requesting sick leave donations. She has been on half-time medical leave since March due to Chronic Fatigue Syndrome and has exhausted all leave.

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

Calendar



Upcoming Association Meetings:

SEA Board meeting: Mon., Nov. 9th, 4:30 p.m. at SEA.

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

rredmond@washingtonea.org.

Parapro Meeting: Tues., Nov. 10th, 5:00 p.m. @ SEA.

Rep Assembly: Mon., Nov. 16th, 4:15 pm., at Washington.

Sub Meeting: Tues., Nov., 24th, 4:00 at SEA.

Upcoming Interview & PGC Training:

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

PGC Training- The November 16th PGC Training is full. There will be no further PGC Trainings offered this year.

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