

Unity

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Hearing Your Voice: Informing the Bargain on Critical Issues

By Brian Lindquist, SEA VP

This month SEA Governance and staff will hopefully reach our goal of visiting all of our school buildings in the district. Thank you to all the Association Representatives for helping us set up the education reform and bargaining conversations with members. We also want to thank all the members who participated and shared their thoughts on issues like alternative compensation, workload, struggling schools and evaluation. These conversations have been a critical first step in moving towards forming our own progressive proposals on issues we are likely to face at the bargaining table this spring and summer.

One of our next steps to prepare for the bargain is focus groups. We are holding meetings with randomly selected members on four dates in January and February. The four topics we are going to focus on and have deeper conversations are: Compensation, Staffing/Hiring/RIF, Evaluation, and Insurance Benefits. If you have been asked to be a participant at one of our focus groups, please respond to rfisher@washingtonea.org. We need your voice. We are also planning to do surveys and feedback groups as we move forward with our bargaining plans.

Our goal is to continue building a strong foundation for this bargain and beyond. We are actively listening and checking to see what we think we have heard. We are developing a shared understanding of our positions on public education in every building and program. Then we must continue to engage with the broader community on a foundation of mutual respect and mutual understanding. Our work-

Does the Union protect bad teachers?

By Maggie Crain, UniServ Representative

When I visit schools, members will sometimes ask me, "Why does the Union protect bad teachers?"

Here's what I say. SEA represents all employees and we know that every grade level, department and school is a collaborative team effort. We understand how important it is that employees are competent in their roles. Here's the process for administrators to address cert performance issues and how the union protects the rights of employees to a fair process.

The basic philosophy of the state law and the Collective Bargaining Agreement is that an employee needs to know that 1) their performance is not up to par; 2) what they are doing that needs improvement; 3) be given a chance to improve.

If an administrator has concerns, the contract says that the employee must be observed twice in the fall (before Winter Break) to give the employee the opportunity to show improvement. The employee needs to know ahead of time the observation is going to happen and then the findings of the observation need to be shared with the employee within six days to provide the best opportunity for accurate reflection. The administrator needs to explain what needs to be improved and what the expectation is. The employee needs to be given some time to recalibrate according to that information and then observed a second time.

If performance does not improve, the administrator can recommend probation to the Superintendent. Then a Probationary Performance Improvement Plan is put into place. The union monitors this

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ing conditions are our students learning conditions. Thank you to all of the Association Representatives, the Building Action Team members, and all 5,000 of you for your dedication and commitment to each other and our students.

The Legislative session begins on Jan 11, 2010 and will be a 60 day session. Going into the session, it is clear that there is going to be a \$2.6 billion short-fall for the next fiscal year.

In addition, the legislators will be looking at changes around education issues. Specifically, there will likely be changes in the regulations and protocols regarding schools that have not met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP).

If you wish to receive regular updates on the legislative session, you can access information at www.seattlewea.org, and www.washingtonea.org. If you are on Facebook, you may also want to join the Seattle Education Association page.

As education and revenue issues surface, stay informed and voice your opinion as an educator. The legislative hotline is 1-800-562-6000. Please use this number from a personal phone and outside your contract day. It is acceptable to use a cell phone during your duty-free lunch. Be assured that SEA will also be meeting with legislators on your behalf.

Colleagues Request for Sick Leave Donations

Katy Rohr-Smith, Sped Assistant at Hawthorne Elementary, is in need of sick leave donations due to an illness which required hospitalization.

Kate Baker, Multi-Arts Teacher at Maple E.S., will be on childbearing leave in February and would appreciate any sick leave donations.

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

Does the Union protect bad teachers?

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to make sure that the plan has clear expectations (what does success look like) and is reasonable (not trying to change 100 behaviors at once). Per the state law, twice a month, for 60 school days, the administrator does observations to document progress and reports this back to the employee.

For SEA members, WEA will provide a qualified outside observer to check the objectivity of the administrator's assessment of progress.

Washington state law says that if a cert employee on a continuing contract is not going to be renewed, they must be notified by May 15. So the probation must be completed before this date to let the employee know if they will be continuing or terminated.

If SEA and WEA can document that sufficient progress was made and the administrator just wasn't willing to acknowledge it, WEA will appeal the decision of termination. But if not, WEA doesn't pursue it.

The union protects the employee's right to a fair and reasonable process.

The state minimum criteria for evaluation is at <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=28A.405.100>

Job satisfaction down nationally

In an Associated Press article on January 5, 2010, it was announced that recent research indicates that workers' job satisfaction nationally is at the lowest point since this data has been kept. http://seattletimes.nwsources.com/html/business/technology/2010699539_apusunhappyworkers.html Workers cite reasons like: Job is not interesting; income has not kept up with inflation; and the soaring cost of health insurance eating away at take-home pay. What do you think? Write us @ Seattleea@washingtonea.org

Know your contract, Know your rights

Report on Class-Size Overage due in February

If you and your administrator were unable to work out a solution to your class-size overload, you will be asked to report each day's overload at the end of 1st semester for overload pay. You can be compensated for any day after October 1, 2009. So be sure your data is in order and submit your form in February.

There are new forms which can be found in the SPS inside website under HR, Budget/staffing forms. Each form has the mailstop listed where it should be mailed, which is:

33-157	General Ed
31-680	Special Ed
31-676	Bilingual Ed

Claims will be verified centrally and then paid.

Staff can vote to work Jan. 29

January 29 is a non-work day. (No students, no staff: an unpaid day) Staff in schools can vote to move the Professional Development Day from June 23 to January 29 if they so choose. If the whole staff does not agree to that, the certificated staff could also vote to use that day as a building-directed TRI day. The contract language gives the staff rights to decide on the use of the three waiver days (Oct. 9, March 19 and June 23); the Learning Improvement Day (last Sept. 3); and 5 early release days (Sept. 30; Oct. 28; Feb. 3; Mar. 3; May 19) and certs can also decide on the 16 hours of Building-Directed TRI time.

Everything but the Building-Directed TRI is calendared but the June 23 date can be moved per agreement: So staff should vote whether they want to use Jan. 29 for TRI or move the 6/23 professional development day.

Should I Buy Short Term Disability Insurance?

What is the advantage to buying Short Term Disability Insurance?

Short Term Disability Insurance is payable after 3 days of disability (sickness or injury that are not work related) and after you have used all of your accumulated sick leave. It is a way to protect your salary during the 45 calendar days before Long Term Disability Insurance benefits may be payable. Short Term Disability Insurance is voluntary and is offered ONLY to benefit eligible employees whose accumulated sick leave as of December 31st is less than 33 work days (approximately 45 calendar days).

If you are eligible you MUST enroll by the end of the yearly open enrollment period (usually it is from mid-February to mid-March) and be actively working on April 1, 2010 for coverage to begin on April 1, 2010. The coverage is for one calendar year and premiums will continue through March 31, 2011.

There is no other time to enroll in the plan until the following year.

If you have less than 33 days of sick leave, you will receive a letter in **February** advising you of your eligibility and describing your premium and benefit. The enrollment form and deadline dates will be included.

Orca Update

Metro KC is overwhelmed with the implementation of their Orca card and has requested that Seattle Schools continue with monthly Puget Passes for transit only until March. They will not provide train or ferry passes. It is up to the individual to pick up these passes.

The District has had to delay new enrollment in the pretax benefit until Metro works through the implementation of their new program. Most of the new enrollment wanted to use the e-purse benefit of the Orca card. This is not the same as the monthly pass. Implementation in a new program always has some quirks and we hope that Metro KC will get the Seattle Schools onboard soon.

The District does have all the forms of individuals that are interested and will notify them of the progress with Metro KC.



WEA Board and WEA/NEA Elections

Nominations are being accepted for the WEA/NEA Representative Assembly Delegate Election. Candidates need to complete a nomination form which is available from Association Reps or online at: www.seattlewea.org/static_content/nom2010.pdf. 33 Delegates will represent Seattle at the WEA RA and 16 at the NEA. The WEA Representative Assembly is in Spokane on the evening of May 13, and all day on May 14 and 15. (One release day is provided on Friday, May 14). The body decides the priorities and policy of our state organization. The NEA RA is in New Orleans July 1-6.

Seattle elects two delegates to the Washington Education Association Board of Directors. These are two-year positions. All SEA members will be receiving a ballot in February. The following are the four candidates. You will be able to vote for two:
Antoinette Felder, Administrative Secretary, Concord E.S.

Joyce McDonald, Teacher, Lowell E.S.

Jonathan Knapp, Teacher, West Seattle H.S.

Brian Lindquist, former CTE teacher and current SEA Vice President.

Nominations are open until Jan. 25.

National Board Meeting

There is a General Information Session regarding the National Board process which will be held on Monday, January 11, at 4:00 pm in room 2700 at the JSCEE.

The 57 newly certified Seattle NBCTs will be honored at the January 20 School Board meeting.

The SEA would like to congratulate our SEA Members who achieved National Board status. To see these members please log onto :

http://www.seattlewea.org/static_content/nb.pdf.

Calendar



Upcoming Association Meetings:

SEA Board meeting: Mon., Jan. 11th, 4:30 p.m. at SEA.

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

redmond@washingtonea.org.

Parapro Meeting: Tues., Jan. 12th, 5:00 p.m. @ SEA.

Rep Assembly: Mon., Jan. 25th, 4:30 pm., at Washington.

Sub Meeting: Tues., Jan. 26th, 4:00 at SEA.

Upcoming Interview Training:

Interview Training- Thurs., Jan. 14th, 4-5pm,

JSCEE, Rm. 2772/2774. Register by contacting Richard at 206.283.8443, or rfisher@washingtonea.org.

In Memory...

Bruce Schwartz – Teacher
Ballard High School

Stephanie Humicut –
Family Support Worker



SEA Board of Directors 2008/2010

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