

SEA Bargaining Team in Action



What Happened at the table?

For the week of Aug 5 – 9 the SEA Bargaining Team focused on these SEA bargaining priorities:

1) Support for English language learners

The team is working to ensure that ELL staffing reflects the diverse needs of our ELL student populations within each school ensuring that resources are targeting highest need populations. Recognizing that ELL communities benefit from increased collaboration and training with their general education colleagues, the team is also exploring ways to increase these opportunities for all educators.

2) Special Education

The SPED bargaining team subcommittee met with district administrators and discussed SEA's proposals for ensuring all students with special needs receive appropriate support.

Our Special Education Team went from 8:30am to 8pm on Friday Aug 9! The team went over ways we can support our assistive tech staff (who have seen a nearly 200% increase in their workload over the last few years), vision staff, psychologists, SPED program specialists, and so much more. Our team is committed to ensuring all students with special education needs receive appropriate support and ensuring that special education staff have the supports they need to be successful.

****Stay tuned early next week -- we'll share what we've learned about the district's finances in our bargaining update.****

3) We believe students should be the district's top budget priority

SEA's budget team met with district bargainers to discuss the district's financial status.

Putting students first is the core principle that guides the Seattle Education Association Bargaining Team in contract negotiations. Racial equity, competitive compensation and meeting the needs of the whole child are top SEA bargaining priorities.

As professional educators, SEA members believe meeting the needs of *all* Seattle students should be the top budget priority in our school district. In particular, SEA members believe we must do more to support special needs students, English language learners and students of color.

Every time we negotiate a new contract with the Seattle School Board and SPS administrators, there is a debate about the budget. District administrators often claim they don't have enough money to meet the needs of students and staff.

This year, we're hearing the same argument from district administrators at the bargaining table -- the district administration says it can't afford to invest in the staff and programs our students deserve.

We disagree, and furthermore, SEA strongly opposes any district proposal that would take money away from services for one of group of students to fund services for other students.

It's important for SEA members and the public to know the truth about the Seattle Public Schools budget. A team of SEA members worked with a longtime WEA school funding expert to study Seattle Public Schools' finances. This research has been extremely helpful to the SEA Bargaining Team.

The Seattle School District budget review revealed three important facts:

- The annual district budget approved by the Seattle School Board doesn't match the reality of where money is actually spent.
- Last year the district fund balance (surplus revenue above actual expenditures) was three times the budgeted level, and the district's budget surplus is now at a four-year high. District administrators have built up their reserve accounts with money that SEA believes should be spent supporting our students.
- The SPS budget says that spending on the classroom is the budget priority, yet the district actually spent *\$167.8 million less* in the classroom than what was budgeted during the last four school years.

Bottomline: For the last four years district administrators predicted budget deficits and warned that the district would spend more money than it took in. ***That didn't happen.*** In reality, district administrators spent less than they budgeted, especially for classroom support, and they built a larger budget surplus instead.

As contract negotiations continue, and with our Aug. 21 settlement deadline approaching, the Seattle Education Association Bargaining Team is committed to bargaining a contract that makes students the top budget priority. While district administrators will try to make this bargain a debate about funding, we believe arguing about budget numbers is a distraction.

SEA is going to remain focused on what matters most – making sure our students have the support and resources they need to be successful. Many thanks to our SEA Budget Study Team – Davina Diaz, Karen Kazanjian, Chelsea Gilgore, Gary Thomas and Derek Grandbois

Other Bargaining News:

- Aug 12: The SEA Budget Team will provide a presentation on the district budget at JSCEE for Picket Captains
- We continue to address staffing and compensation at the bargaining table.

A word from the Bargaining Team...



“I choose to join the bargaining team again this year to continue the work we started. It felt like we had unfinished issues in special education. My priority as a special education teacher and SEA member is to do what’s best for students and educators. As a single-issue bargaining team member, I can say we are still fully engaged in the interest-based process to find common ground. There are a few areas where SEA and SPS agree.”

Libby - Cert

Upcoming Bargaining Dates in July/August:

Aug 12 | Aug 13 | Aug 14 | Aug 15 | Aug 19 | Aug 20

Important Dates

- ❖ **August 12 - Picket Captain Training (South Seattle CC – Georgetown Campus) 10am-3pm**
If you are a building leader, please sign up using this link:
<https://tinyurl.com/LEADER-SIGN-UPS>
- ❖ **August 14 – Overpass morning sign waving. Two locations: Northgate and Albro**
- ❖ **August 27 - General Membership Meeting Benaroya Hall**
- ❖ **Sep 3 - Ratification Vote (tentative) at Benaroya Hall**

SEA Bargaining Priorities

- *Professional Compensation and Fair Workloads*
 - *Meeting the Needs of the Whole Student*
 - *Supporting the Professional Growth for All Educators*
 - *Centering a Lens of Racial Equity Across all we do (School Board Policy 0030)*
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