Let Us Vote!

As we move forward in our unionization efforts, AEEA recognizes that all of us, on both sides of the issue, want to vote! Unfortunately, on behalf of our administration/board, the Jackson Lewis law firm has requested and has been granted yet another delay in our pursuit of equity and fairness.

Be informed. While we do not know why our administration/board would allow this process to be prolonged, we urge you to take advantage of the opportunity to further research the need for our unionization.

In an effort to help all of us understand the events that have taken place thus far, please refer to the following timeline:

- 9/26: Union supporters email staff to inform of organizing efforts
- 10/15: Momentum in the efforts to unionize increases as more supporters publicly announce their support of our union, despite fear of reprisal
- 10/19: petition for election filed (We were finally able to pursue a vote!)
- 10/20: PLRB assigns conference call where both parties work to agree on conditions of the election
- 11/14: Conference held with both parties and PLRB; Administration/Board did not agree that Instructional Coaches and RtII Coordinators should be part of the bargaining unit which would prevent them from voting and being part of our union; a hearing date was scheduled
- 11/15: Administration/Board requested a continuance of hearing
- 11/21: Hearing to determine if ICs and RtII Coordinators are part of the bargaining unit
- 12/7: Transcripts from the hearing received by PSEA/AEEA
- 1/18: Administration/Board is granted another request for continuance with new date of 1/27 for briefs to be post marked
- 1/30: Administration/Board is granted another request for continuance with new and current date of 1/3 for their brief to be post marked

Looking ahead:

Once administration/board’s brief is received, PSEA/AEEA will have 10 days to submit our brief. The PLRB will then make a determination regarding the status of the two positions in question. At that time, voting guidelines (how, when) will be put in place by the PLRB.

We will continue to keep you informed during this process. Learn more about the Jackson Lewis Law Firm representing our Administration/Board:

Sample Jackson Lewis Flyer

Right to Know Requests

In light of many new staff joining our Agora team and recently presented information by our administration to several staff and most newly hired employees, AEEA has sent Right to Know Requests for further information and clarification.

We want to keep new employees informed! See our request for a listing of all new employees here: RTK New Employees

Seeking Clarification of staff turnover percent presented by Kevin:
Letter to Kevin Corcoran

As of 1/23, Kevin responded that he feels a response is appropriate and would try to get a response in the next day.

See our request for staff turnover information here: RTK Staff Turnover

We anxiously await further clarification and collaboration from our administration.
What’s Really on the Table

With at-will employment status, “if the employer decides to let you go, that’s the end of your job—and you have very limited legal rights to fight your termination.”

Our current at-will status gives us no guarantees. Our contracts currently say that we can be terminated “at any time, for any reason, with or without cause, and with or without proper notice.” Being “at-will” means our current salaries, working conditions (to include time out of office), and benefits can be changed at any time.

Agora’s past history outlines the following abrupt changes:

- Lead teacher demotions (unexpected loss of stipend)
- Unexpected, mandatory home visits, requiring significant time out of office
- Insurance co-pay increases (office visit increase, significant prescription coverage changes, etc.)

AEEA will defend our rights and guarantee our protections through contract negotiations. Our employer is required to bargain in good faith.

We want a contract that outlines a fair, published pay scale, just-cause provision for termination, working conditions, and benefits. These negotiable items impact our lives! We deserve a say in what they provide.

We can be of better service to our students when we know what to expect.

Links of Interest:
- Agora Employee Contracts - Salary Discrepancies
- What is a contract?
- Sample Negotiated Contract

What is a Specialist?

This is an actual question that was asked this school year! AEAE thought some explanation of what specialists normally do might be helpful, as well as why we believe unionization has the greatest potential to capitalize on our specialists’ skills.

Specialists are teachers who are considered experts in their fields, with roles that vary according to a specific school’s needs. Some focus on teaching struggling students, while others are more involved with supporting teachers, and making recommendations to administration.[1] While math specialists are less common in schools than reading specialists, increasing demand for math support is giving rise to more advanced degree programs in this area.[2] Currently, no additional qualification beyond a high competency in math instruction is required to be a math specialist at Agora. However, PDE requires reading specialists to complete comprehensive training, resulting in an advanced literacy degree/certification. (Consequently, reading specialists are usually paid more highly than classroom teachers.[3]) Agora’s Title 1 program has been growing since the school’s inception, and up until this school year, specialists were part of a unique, developing team, overseen by specialist lead teachers. They taught at-risk students in small groups, with especially needy students receiving individual instruction; regular class attendance was a requisite for continuance in the program. Empirical research has demonstrated that one-on-one teaching situations are the ideal for successful remediation. While our school may feel unable to justify that student:teacher ratio financially, many Agora specialists feel this year’s model has moved farther away from the ideal, rather than closer to it. Our specialists are passionate teachers who want to serve their students authentically, but know that successful remediation must be based on proven best practices from the outset of the school year.[4]

AEAE believes unionizing will enable the development of more productive specialist programs. It will allow time for researching current best practices, engaging in relevant trainings, making appropriate recommendations, and implementing meaningful and potent remediation to benefit Agora students. In order to finish strong, however, we need to start strong - with a solid structure and a well thought-out teaching plan that will stand the test of an entire school year - and beyond.

AEAE looks forward to working with administration to research best practices and create positive change.

Thank you specialists for your service!

http://www.readingrockets.org/article/78/
http://www.math.virginia.edu/teach/specialist.htm
http://www.bls.gov
http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/
Agora Employee Education Association

**Agora Counselors**

Agora’s counselors provide an invaluable service to both the students and staff of our school. We all fully recognize the compassion that each counselor possesses along with the expertise and guidance they provide.

The commitment and sacrifice shown by our counselors is priceless. Each counselor deserves fair wages, working conditions, and benefits. AEEA wants our counselors to know that we will bargain for equity, not for a loss in pay. Negotiations would allow us an opportunity to bargain a salary scale that puts the higher salaries as a step on the salary schedule that all individuals with similar years of experience and education could reach.

We understand pay concerns to which we are currently subjected as at-will employees. We look forward to these concerns being alleviated with a negotiated contract outlining a fair wage and published pay scale.

**Thank you counselors for your service!**

**Office Staff Support AEEA**

As our enrollment continues to explode, many times our students’ first communications from our school comes directly from our main office in Wayne. AEEA is excited to welcome the many newly hired employees who have joined the Agora family, and we are hopeful that our administration will continue hiring amazingly skilled professionals placing equal focus on the needs of our office staff.

Our office staff will also receive representation in contract negotiations. Each one of us matter. Our hard working office support staff deserve protection of their rights. AEEA appreciates each of you, the work you do, and the support you give to AEEA.

**Thank you office staff for your service!**

**New Hire Conference Call**

All are welcome! We want to help keep you informed about our unionization and have provided an anonymous platform for asking any questions directly to AEEA/PSEA where they will be answered live.

Please mark your calendars and join us:

**Wednesday, February 8th**

at 7:00 P.M.

**Phone Number:**

1-888-537-7715

**Code:**

41507625#
**UPCOMING EVENTS AND INFO:**

**Newsletter Links:**
- **Webinar Registration**
- **Agora Employee Contracts - Salary Discrepancies**
- **What is a contract?**
- **Sample Negotiated Contract**
- **Jackson Lewis Request to Postpone Granted by PLRB**
- **Sample Jackson Lewis Flyer**
- **Know Your Rights**
- **Typical Responses to Union Organizing**
- **Lesson Plan Ideas**

**Informational Links:**
- **AEFA/PSEA Website**
- **Share Your Thoughts**
- **Document Library**
- **AEFA Facebook**
- **Board Meeting Recordings**

**Board Meeting Information:**
Please plan to attend the next board meeting!

**Tuesday, February 28, 2012**
6:30 P.M.

**Attend Board Meeting**

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**Our PSEA Supporters are pleased to answer your questions! Feel free to reach out to them:**

- **Kelby Waltman**, Director of External Organizing
dkwaltman@psea.org
- **Bim Arthun**, Organizing Specialist
barthun@psea.org
- **Jessica Sabol**, Organizing Specialist
jsabol@psea.org

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**Agora CCS Webinar**
February 1, 2012, 7-9 P.M.
Act 48 Credit
AYP and School Accountability

**Register Here**
Led by Chris Budano, Assistant Director of PSEA’s Education Services Department
Contribute to school discussions regarding improvement of our school with information attained in this session

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**AEFA Quick Contacts:**
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Melissa Hoffman-Long
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570.295.0916

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**WE’RE VOTING YES!**

**AEEA Organizing Team**

- **Brenda DiEugenio**
- **Kim Thompson**
- **Mike McNulty**
- **Tara Walker**
- **Theresa Keating**
- **Lori Waylonis**
- **Jessica Scott**
- **Tracie Lamb**
- **Ladonna Martin**
- **Tonya Bauer**
- **Jaclyn Empfield**
- **Kristin Barrett**
- **Lisa Fary**
- **Yvette Fleming**
- **Melissa Hoffman-Long**
- **Carol Bryan**
- **Amber Cross**
- **Michelle Cukauskas**
- **Elizabeth McEwen**
- **Kelly Krelowe**
- **Krista Stevens**
- **Kathryn Curry-Puskar**
- **Erin Howe**
- **Shannan Dieter**
- **Michelle Tilsner**
- **Erin Leddy**
- **Lynn Hampson**
- **Serena Loccisano**
- **Lynn Sieger**
- **Alicia Crawley**