

End Standardized Testing: Support the Seattle Moratorium

By Jeff Treistman, Librarian at Denny International Middle School

(Editor's note: At the Seattle Education Association's June Representative Assembly, the representatives voted for a New Business Item calling for a two-year moratorium on all standardized testing at the district, state, and federal levels and to open a public forum along with Seattle Public Schools on the best way to assess our students. Jeff Treistman started an online petition addressed to the School Board, Superintendent and school community in order to help build public support for the moratorium. Sign it online here: <https://tinyurl.com/ybcp6ghk>

Below, we reprint the Moratorium Manifesto that Jeff wrote. Please, follow, like, and comment on the Facebook page Seattle Moratorium on Standardized Testing: <https://www.facebook.com/betterthantesting/>)

Moratorium Manifesto

- WE are committed to fighting the standardized testing movement because progressive education and standardized testing are antithetical. The premise of progressive education is that the best learning happens when theory and practice come together experientially.
- WE understand that progressive education is at its best when it is culturally responsive and that cultures vary in their structures of discipline.
- WE believe that progressive education in America is anti-racist.

What would a moratorium on standardized testing do to stimulate progressive reform?

1. It would blow the lid off the narrow constraints that have been imposed on curriculum and allow the adequate implementation of ethnic studies.
2. It would allow PBLs to take a leading role in curriculum development.
3. It would be a bold step toward dismantling tracking.
4. It would open up the teacher-initiated referral for advanced learning opportunities.
5. It would allow for measure of musical, artistic, athletic, mechanical and interpersonal aptitude to be assessed on an equal footing with math and reading.
6. It would interrupt the deficit model cycle for low scoring students who hear year after year that they are below standard.
7. It would put the center of learning back in the classroom and out of the hands of distant technocrats.
8. Money that would have gone to Pearson and other testing companies could be put back into the classroom.
9. It would eliminate gaming the metrics and cheating.
10. Removing tests from the schedule would be a pain palliative.

KEXP's Mind over Matters Becomes Endangered!

By Karin Engstrom

KEXP was originally KCMU, a student and volunteer run 10-watt radio station, started in the Communications Building at the UW in 1972. I came to Seattle in 1993 from the Los Angeles area where I was accustomed to listening to Pacifica Radio (KPFK and KPFA) as my main source for "real" information about what was going on in my community, state and nation.

I was delighted to find KCMU's 6 o'clock evening news and interviews. It was through this station that I became involved in participating in Seattle's first Comprehensive Plan mandated by the state. They interviewed people who had addressed and initiated change in the community like Hazel Wolf. During 1994, someone at KCMU decided to cut this programming and I had the opportunity to protest and join a group who were challenging this decision.

Out of that effort came the program Mind over Matters (MOM), 6-9 am on Saturdays and Sundays. Saturdays start out with Alternative Radio, followed by other alternative programming local interviews and information on current issues. Mike McCormick and Diane Horn have covered this since that time and my favorite program, Eat the State with Geov Parish and Maria Tomchick keeps me well informed of local and state issues of all kinds, along with good humor. Jesse Hagopian has been interviewed many times.

While listening, I am always writing down names of people they interview or starting up my computer to go to websites. When I travel, I make sure I can tune in on my iPad or laptop. I depend upon their updates on the FCC, local environmental issues and actions, city and county government decisions and meetings, educational issues and more.

On September 23rd, Mike announced that KEXP was shutting down the program in January 2019. I wrote immediately only to get a very corporate answer back. Same old, same old! At this time, more than ever, we need to hear truth speaking to power to keep our First Amendment rights.

If you haven't listened to or aren't familiar with Mind over Matters, I ask you to tune in on Saturday or Sunday mornings, 6-9, 90.3 FM. Listen to Diane Horn's Sustainability Segment at: <https://www.kexp.org/podcasts/mind-over-matters-sustainability-segment/> We can make a difference for this invaluable resource. Please sign their petition and if you know the program, write an email to feedback@kexp.org

Supporters have set up a Facebook page and petition. <https://www.facebook.com/pages/category/Community-Service/Save-Mind-Over-Matters-1836383646451279>

Educators' Vision

Published By the Social Equity Educators (SEE)

November 2018

SEE and the SEA Defend All Trans and LGBTQIA Students

By Michelle Vecchio and Matthew Maley

Social Equity Educators and the Seattle Education Association stand in solidarity with all LGBTQIA identifying students. The rights of transgender and gender non-conforming people are under attack from the Trump administration's attempts to redefine gender as "a person's status as male or female based on immutable biological traits identifiable by or before birth". We agree with the spirit of NBI 3 approved by the 2017 NEA Representative Assembly when it says we:

"Call upon our members and society to promote a culture of safety, support, and affirmation that ensures civil rights and advocacy for LGBTQ members and students, including adopting policies that respect the civil rights of all educators and students, inclusive of transgender students and educators."

In addition, members of SEE would like to introduce the following NBI to be discussed and hopefully passed at the November SEA Representative Assembly:

Whereas, the rights of transgender and gender non-conforming people are under attack from the Trump administration's attempts to redefine gender as "a person's status as male or female based on immutable biological traits identifiable by or before birth"; and

Whereas, the 2017 NEA Representative Assembly approved NBI 3 stating: "The NEA will continue to advance the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning (LGBTQ) students and educators by taking the following actions to counter the continuing backlash against LGBTQ individuals:

1. Call upon our members and society to promote a culture of safety, support, and affirmation that ensures civil rights and advocacy for LGBTQ members and students, including adopting policies that respect the civil rights of all educators and students, inclusive of transgender students and educators.
2. Provide tools for affiliates and members to use at the state and local level to gain or secure protections for LGBTQ individuals at work and in schools..."

Therefore, be it resolved, that the SEA publish a list of resources for transgender students, such as free name change and legal support clinics for transitioning students; and

Be it further resolved, that the SEA do community outreach to local LGBTQIA non-profit organizations, such as the Gender Justice League and PFLAG Seattle, about creating professional development around the issues trans and gender non-conforming students face in schools; and

Be it further resolved, that the SEA call on the WEA to lobby in support of ensuring full civil rights protections for LGBTQ individuals; and

Be it further resolved, that the SEA encourage WEA to provide resources, trainings and professional developments to support SEA in providing adequate training to its educators.

Upcoming Social Equity Educator (SEE) meeting

All Seattle Education Association (SEA) members who believe in bringing social justice ideas into our classrooms and union are welcome and encouraged to attend.

**Our next meeting is: Sunday, December 2 from 9:30 am-11:30 am
Rainier Beach Community Center (8825 Rainier Ave S, Seattle 98118)**

For more information check out: socialequityeducators.org

facebook.com/socialequityeducators/

Call or text: 206.550.1609

Black Lives Matter at School Week February 4-9th

By Bruce Jackson and Jesse Hagopian

(Editor's Note: Social Equity Educators supports the national Black Lives Matter at School Week February 4-9th and encourages SEA members to pass the NBI below to encourage SEA members to take part in it this year. Black Lives Matter at School is a national committee of educators organizing for racial justice in education.

For more information from the national site: <https://blacklivesmatteratschool.com/2018/10/11/save-the-date-blm-at-school-national-week-of-action-2019-feb-4th-8th/>

Whereas the Seattle Education Association has taken a national leadership role in the Black Lives Matter at School movement, now inspiring dozens of major cities to join us in our movement for change,

Whereas there are far too few Black educators and educators of color in proportion to the number of students of color in the schools,

Whereas zero tolerance discipline and over-policing of our youth has proven to be ineffective in the reduction of discipline, and Restorative Practices has proven to be a powerful tool in the reduction of disproportionate discipline,

Whereas according to the Washington Post this year there have been 802 police involved killings, including 484 People of Color,

Whereas the creation and implementation of an Ethnic Studies curriculum is of critical importance to supporting the diversity of our students and is currently in development in Seattle Public Schools,

Whereas the Seattle Education Association RA unanimously voted to support a mandatory K-12 Ethnic Studies curriculum in SPS,

Be it resolved that for a third consecutive year, the Seattle Education Association join the national call for Black Lives Matter at School Week to kick off Black History Month during February 4th to February 9th.

Be it further resolved that SEA encourage its members to wear Black Lives Matter shirts to school on Monday and Friday of that week and teach lessons during the week about undoing institutional racism and the 13 principles of the #BlackLivesMatter Global Network.

Be it further resolved that SEA will send email reminders to its membership encouraging educators to join the Black Lives Matter at School rally at the School Board meeting on Wednesday, February 6th to advocate for hiring more Black Teachers, implementing restorative justice programs, and fully implementing ethnic studies in the Seattle Public Schools.



SOCIAL EQUITY EDUCATORS

Educators' Vision

Published By the Social Equity Educators (SEE)

SEE steering committee

Tracy Castro-Gill, Lauren Stark, Donte Felder, Jesse Hagopian, Ian Golash, Justin Vinson, and Darrin Hoop

Educators' Vision is a monthly newsletter of the Social Equity Educators socialequityeducators.org info@seattlesee.org

Mission

Social Equity Educators is a rank and file caucus of Seattle Education Association educators that focuses on democratic, anti-racist, and anti-oppression policies and practices in our classrooms, schools, and communities. SEE engages in local, national, and international social movements for liberation and radical change by building alliances and addressing the roots of institutional racism and other forms of injustice.

Points of Unity

- ◆ Organizing and bargaining for equity from the bottom up
- ◆ Anti-racist, anti-oppression pedagogy and practices
- ◆ Supporting social movements through community alliances
- ◆ Full and equitable funding for public education
- ◆ Opposing corporate education reform

Seattle School District Threatens to Evict Native K-8 School

(Editor's Note: The Licton Springs K-8 Parent Teacher Organization published the following press release on November 14. Social Equity Educators stands in solidarity with their struggle.)

Seattle, WA – After only 14 months in its new building, Licton Springs K-8 once again fights for survival as Seattle Public Schools proposes to evict or dismantle the school. With these actions, the district continues to marginalize the Native-centered K-8 program, which has fought multiple closure attempts and been housed in three buildings over the past six years.

In 2013, the Seattle School Board promised Licton Springs K-8 a permanent home with room to grow in a shared building with Robert Eagle Staff Middle School in North Seattle, a sacred Duwamish site (renewing the promise in 2017). Robert Eagle Staff also houses the district's Highly Capable program.

The shared building is over capacity in its second year, despite warnings from parents in 2013 when the district redrew the school boundaries. To solve the capacity issues, the district is proposing to shut down the middle school program at Licton Springs or relocate the school to the Webster building in Ballard (although only 6% of Licton Springs students live in the attendance area).

Licton Springs K-8 (formerly AS1 and Pinehurst) is an option school with an emphasis on Native education and social justice. It is a Title I school that serves at-risk students, with a population composed of 22% Native students*, 61% students of color, 51% students on free and reduced lunch, and 19% students who receive special education services.

Although Licton Springs was promised room for 250 students, today at 175 students, the lack of classrooms is forcing middle school classes into hallways and stairwells—including special education classes, violating a federal mandate.

In a letter to Seattle Public Schools, Payton, a 7th grader at Licton Springs says, “We have three names because we have been tossed around like an animal and we’ve been moved around to several different schools. This needs to stop. . . I want to go on Rites of Passage in 8th grade, but SPS is trying to take that away from me. We are a K-8 community, not an elementary school.”

David LaSarte-Meeks, a member of the Coeur d'Alene tribe and a Licton Springs parent, says, “They named the Robert Eagle Staff school after an Indian educator, recognizing his work in fighting for marginalized Native students. They have murals all over the campus, recognizing Indian leaders from hundreds of years ago who fought for marginalized Native peoples, and yet, [Seattle Public Schools] continues to marginalize Native students in their system at the exact same campus. The irony and frustration at this point are just really overwhelming.”

The district cites low enrollment as a justification for closing the middle school. Jo Cripps, a middle school humanities teacher who has fought for the survival of the school since 2008, points out, “As long as the school's future location is unclear, families will act proactively and send their children to stable, secure programs. . . The physical space that the middle school has been awarded

makes it immensely unattractive to most families. What family wants their child learning middle school math in an open hallway? What family wants their special education child learning in a wide-open space that strips students of their privacy and dignity? And what family wants their child enrolled in elective classes with a nomadic teacher who hauls around curriculum on a cart and has no access to a legitimate classroom with basic technology?”

Seattle Public Schools initially pushed for a decision by January, but after impassioned responses from Licton Springs and Robert Eagle Staff families at a contentious community meeting, SPS officials decided to slow down the process of solving the building capacity issues.

Robert Cruickshank of Demand Progress attended the community meeting and observed, “The room was united in agreement that the way the district structured this meeting was flawed. The room was united in agreement that the options presented were flawed. The room was united in agreement that the district had done a poor job of involving parents in this process to date. And the room was united in agreement that Licton Springs should remain a K-8 and that the parents there should decide the question of its location.”

The district has scheduled no further meetings nor given a new timeline, leaving the future of Licton Springs K-8 hanging in the balance.

*The Seattle School District counts multi-racial students in a separate category. At Licton Springs, 22% of students identify as Native, including multi-racial students with Native heritage.

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Six Things You Need to Know about School Policing

By Alexis McKenney

(Editor's Note: The following summary comes from a new report “We Came to Learn: A Call to Action for Police-Free Schools” co-written by the Alliance for Educational Justice and the Advancement Project. As Alexis McKenney describes it, the report, “Provides an evidence-based analysis that confirms the true function of school police as way to further criminalize and abuse Black and Brown youth.” SEE encourages educators to read the summary and full report and join us in discussions about building a movement to eliminate police from all Seattle Public Schools.)

“I felt like Eric Garner because I couldn't breathe. I felt like I was going to die that day,” is how Brian Burney described a violent encounter with a school police officer while walking to the restroom without a pass. During the exchange, Brian was punched in the face twice, slammed on the ground, and placed in a chokehold by the officer.

As the number of police officers in schools rise, so do the amount of surveillance techniques, student arrests and assaults. Policies authorizing these changes have been heavily championed by those who wrongly believe they prevent mass school shootings (they don't) and deter crime (wrong again).

1) School Policing is Rooted in the Historic Suppression of Black & Brown Student Movements

Policing in schools is directly connected to the United States' continuous oppression of Black and Brown people. As a result, students of color have historically been targets of violence from officers in their schools. In 1967 when Philadelphia students protested for Black history courses, they were met with 100 police officers in full riot gear. Months later, 13 student organizers were beaten after 15,000 Chicano students staged a walk-out demanding a curriculum that included their heritage. Students of color have always

A Climate of Racism Took Two Lives at My Kroger

(Editor's Note: In October, two Black grandparents were gunned down by a white supremacist in a Kroger supermarket in Louisville, Kentucky. Michelle Randolph, who teaches fourth grade in a school with a majority of Black and immigrant students in Jefferson County, Kentucky, lives in the neighborhood and shops at the Kroger that was targeted. Randolph helped organize the over 5,000 Kentucky educators who shut down schools in 30 counties and rallied with students, parents and unionists on the state Capitol for education funding. Kentucky educators were part of the “Red State Revolt,” which included strikes that shut schools down in more than five states dominated by Republican legislatures — including West Virginia, Oklahoma, Arizona and North Carolina — and won many millions of extra dollars in education spending for their school districts. Below is a small excerpt of her interview.)

Interview of Michelle Randolph by Jesse Hagopian

Jesse: Tell me about the impact of these shootings on you and on the people of Louisville.

Michelle: My first job was working at that Kroger. That's how close my family and my parents live. I think the first thing you have to recognize about this violence that you see is that people are feeling emboldened to take violent action against things they feel are threatening. I will not name the shooter, as to give any recognition to him and what he's done. But he's not the only person who pulled that trigger that day. There were several people who had a hand and played a part.

That's the climate of our country right now. We have people in office, in the state of Kentucky, who support people who are against equal rights. They're against fair pay. They're against supporting educators and students of color. They make comments from the highest office in the land that embolden dangerous people. These were two grandparents who paid their dues. Who went to church. Who raised awesome families. Were productive citizens in their respective communities. I know Mr. Stallard was in fraternity.

You think, “If I, as a Black person, can get them out of the west end of Louisville, if I can get my child and my family and myself to this eastern area, then we should be okay. We can live a life where we're accepted. We can live a life where we will not have to worry about racism. We won't have to worry about some of the things that we would necessarily see in these other neighborhoods.” It's a violent and very sad reminder that it's everywhere. There are no neighborhoods to move to if you Black.

Read the full interview: <https://socialistworker.org/2018/11/14/a-climate-of-racism-took-two-lives-at-my-kroger>

Elections for SEA Contract Bargaining Teams

By Connor Lee and Justin Vinson

(Editor's Note: At the September Representative Assembly, SEA member Jeff Morgen introduced a by-law change that would require elections for all SEA contract bargaining teams. His proposal will be discussed and voted on at the November RA. While SEE agrees with elections, we offer the following amendments to Jeff's proposal because we believe we need a larger team and one that better incorporates educators from all the various grade levels in our schools and categories of staff. Finally, we look forward to discussing how to best craft the language to ensure the team properly represents the diversity of our staff with regards to ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation.)

Jeff Morgen's proposed changes:

Whereas there is significant sentiment in our union community that transparency and democracy could be more apparent . . .

3.41d.4 shall include at least one member but not more than five members of each SEA department who is elected to be a member of the bargaining support team, and

that all members of the bargaining team be elected, and

that candidates for the bargaining team submit their candidature at least seven months before bargaining begins with elections for bargaining team members taking place six months before bargaining begins.

Proposed amendments to the above are underlined:

3.41d.4 shall include at least one member but not more than five members of each SEA job class - HS cert, MS cert, K-8 cert, Elem cert, Substitutes, Paras, SAEBOPs, and ESAs - who is elected to be a member of the bargaining support team, and

that all members of the bargaining team be elected, and

that candidates for the bargaining team submit their candidature no later than the first student day after Winter Break with elections for bargaining team members taking place during the April RA, and

that candidate profiles will be made available to members on the SEA website and Unity Newsletter.