

# AEL Leadership Forum

VOLUME 14, ISSUE 9

AUGUST 2021

## UPCOMING EVENTS

August, 2021  
No Meeting

Sept. 1, 2021  
AEL Executive Board  
Meeting  
5 pm

Oct. 6, 2021  
AEL Executive Board  
Meeting  
5 pm

Nov. 3, 2021  
AEL Executive Board  
Meeting  
5 pm

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## Argh!!!

By Edie Picken, AEL President

There is no doubt, AEL, in spite of our efforts to get what we know we are owed and deserve, will have to go to impasse—AGAIN!!! Last week, a memo came from Jessica Cuches indicating that Units V & VI have reached a financial agreement. Once again, they have lined their pockets with 6%+ increase in their salaries. Those in Unit V that had back steps owed to them, received them if they were in Unit V back in 2011-2012 AND 2012-2013 along with a 3% COLA. Each back step was equivalent to 4%. This clearly is not fair to those of us who are school based adminis-

trators, coordinators, or special assistants to the superintendent. What makes this incredibly difficult to swallow? The chief negotiator literally negotiated for her own salary since her position is in the superintendent's group receiving this award.

The negotiating team has continued to fight for what we are owed—ALL back steps owed to those of use who are still behind. We also want at least a 3% COLA on top of all of that which all of Unit II would receive. The come back from the negotiator stated we asked for too much. No, we did not! We

asked for what we believe we should receive as a result of the ongoing workload dumping that does not appear to phase the superintendent. It is clear, he be-



lieves we are simply workhorses that are to respond to the whip no matter what. His message with respect to negotiations? He does not care!

AEL continues to try to get our rank and file to send e-mails to the Board of Education

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## Argh! ...

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**“AEL continues to try to get our rank and file to send e-mails to the Board of Education members outlining your specific concerns.”**

members outlining specific concerns. Unfortunately, and I mean this, you don't! AEL hears all the time that if one of you should speak up you won't be promoted, you may have a poor rating, or you may face disciplinary action. The Board of Education members constantly remind us that we as a union are not as loud as the others, which then falls of deaf ears. They do not see us as serious about our concerns when only I or the executive director speak up.

AEL's frustration as you can see is twofold—we have to go to impasse

again to fight for what we believe we are owed and deserve, and AEL's membership remaining silent. SPEAK UP! This will not cause you to be disciplined, have a poor rating, or keep you from being promoted. When you communicate directly with the Board members, they will honor your anonymity when you request it. Let them know about your concerns and who is communicating to you that if you do, you will face some form of repercussion. They want to know. The superintendent works for them—they do not work for him. We have their

ear. I know this is true because I regularly communicate with them and their responses have told me so. AEL's fight is OUR fight—not just the executive board's fight on your behalf.

As we progress through the continued battle for compensation, we will do what we can to keep you abreast of where we are. What we need from you, is your voice. This will bring great support to the negotiating team who continues the fight for all 343 Unit II employees.

## Welcome new members

**Joseph Lustgarten, Assistant Principal, Bates MS**

**Brendan Rowe, Assistant Principal, South River HS**



# Same Old Song

*By Rick Kovelant, AEL Executive Director & General Counsel*

I have found, much to my chagrin, that the older you get, the more you find that you are frequently repeating yourself. While sometimes this can be annoying to the listener, there are somethings that require repeating. After all, we can learn by repetition. So, for the sake of repeating myself and with the hope my message may, in some small part resonate, indulge my repetitive plea to become involved with AEL and lend your support, and not just your dues.

As I write this article, negotiations are at a standstill. Current contract terms will continue to apply until an agreement is reached, either

by negotiation or through the impasse procedure. Unfortunately, this is not the first time, or even the last time that AEL will find itself in this position with the BOE. As usual, the biggest impediment to the resolution of the contract is the issue of compensation. The reason for this stalemate is simple. The BOE, with the knowledge that Unit VI and the Superintendent have benefited from significant pay raises over the years while Unit II employees were left with increased workload and substandard pay increases, has once again elected to provide an excessive compensation package to this group. This award to Unit VI continues to

erode the pay differential between the top paid supervisory employees and those they supervise, which happens to be YOU!

This differential and excessive compensation issue is not cured by merely offering the same percentage increase to Unit II employees as that being given to Unit VI employees. By illustration, assume the average Unit VI employee salary is \$150,000 per year (It is probably more) and this average salary has been increased by 3%. That would mean, very simply, that this individual's paycheck is \$4,500 better than it was. Assume

***“This award to Unit VI continues to erode the pay differential between the top paid supervisory employees and those they supervise, which happens to be YOU!”***

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## Same Old Song ...

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**“The BOE seems to have no problem working equivalent dollars into Unit I’s compensation package so they receive the same real dollars offered to Unit II. So why, should there be a problem doing the same for Unit II.”**

the average Unit II salary is \$100,000 per year (taking into account all Principals, Assistant Principals, Coordinators, etc.) and by the BOE’s sheer generosity it offers a 3% pay increase. The average Unit II paycheck, using my example, would only increase by \$3,000. To be even with the average Unit VI’s compensation, in this example, the Unit II employee would need an additional \$1,500 by way of increased steps or by an increased COLA or both. My point is simply that equivalency in terms of percentage increases between these groups is not related to the same percentage increases in actual compensation

dollars. Without an equivalent amount of money paid to Unit II employees, the pay differential between Unit VI and Unit II only becomes greater. The BOE seems to have no problem working equivalent dollars into Unit I’s compensation package so they receive the same real dollars offered to Unit II. So why, should there be a problem doing the same for Unit II.

If none of this upsets you, then you don’t have to read any further, because this is where I begin repeating myself. A handful of dedicated elected officers meet on a regular basis to negotiate and represent the interests of Unit II em-

ployees. This group, along with myself, have requested your participation. Write an email to the BOE members and tell them how you feel. Show up at budget hearings or Board meetings and express your concerns. Do not fear retaliatory measures or that you will be passed over for promotion. Provide information when requested so data can be collected and submitted. Get angry that your contribution to the educational process is considered less important and therefore, less compensable than others who do not deal with daily instruction, discipline, parents, the public, and supervise all

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## Same Old Song ...

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types of staff. In short,  
GET INVOLVED!

COVID was, admittedly,  
an impediment to partic-  
ipation. I get it. Unfortu-  
nately, the participation  
level before COVID was  
not exactly at any award

-winning level either.

The future of this organi-  
zation will rest with you. I  
know that this article  
sounds like the same old  
song (incidentally, a hit  
record by the Four Tops),

but if you just continue to  
listen to the words and  
music over and over with-  
out doing more, you will  
never learn to play the  
tune and improve the  
repertoire. I am sorry for  
repeating myself, but you  
were warned.

## Line in the Sand

*By Will Myers, AEL President Emeritus*

Growing up in the '50s,  
I was a Davy Crockett  
fan. Disney's Fess Par-  
ker was my favorite. I  
followed his adventures  
right up to his fateful  
end at the Alamo. The  
Alamo has become an  
iconic representation of  
a small group of people  
making a stand against  
a larger oppressive  
force. In all the film ver-  
sions of that historic  
fight perhaps the most

dramatic moment is  
when young colonel  
Travis takes his saber  
and draws a line in the  
sand and asks "who will  
cross and stand with  
me"? Most defenders  
crossed that line and  
the rest is history.

A line in the sand. Isn't  
it time we crossed that  
line and take our stand  
for equitable compensa-  
tion and reasonable  
working conditions? Our  
frustration with how our

system operates will nev-  
er change without direct  
action by our members.

We are about to enter the  
battle for a new contract  
which recognizes our  
hard work and continued  
sacrifice. Your Executive  
team is working tirelessly  
to ensure the best possi-  
ble outcome in our effort  
to obtain a new contract.  
Are you willing to cross  
the line and make a  
stand? I surely hope so.

***"Our frustration  
with how our  
system operates  
will never change  
without direct  
action by our  
members."***

The logo consists of the letters 'AEL' in a bold, white, sans-serif font, centered within a solid red square. The square has a thin black border.

## When in Doubt, Call Rick

If you need help, advice or just need to ask a question, please remember to contact **Rick Kovelant**. He is AEL's legal counsel and has a wealth of experience in assisting our members. He is a valuable resource and **available to you as part of your AEL membership**. He can be reached at 443-848-8022 (Pacific time).



## AEL Mission Statement

The Association of Educational Leaders exists to ensure all Unit II employees are fairly and equitably treated in the course of their employment.

We commit to accomplishing this mission on behalf of Unit II employees by ensuring:

1. Adherence to our Negotiated Agreement.
2. All Unit II employees are adequately and equitably compensated for their responsibilities and work load.
3. Personal and professional needs shall be respected.
4. Fair, consistent and equitable practices shall be adhered to when dealing with hiring promotions, assignments and evaluations.
5. Fair, consistent, equitable practices in dealing with matters relating to discipline and conflict resolution.
6. Fair, consistent, equitable practices in resolving school and community conflicts.

The Association of Educational Leaders  
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