

## UPCOMING EVENTS

April 8, 7:00 pm  
AEL Executive Board  
Meeting, via Zoom

May 2, 2025, 7:05 pm  
AEL @ Orioles  
Game

May 13, 7:00 pm  
7:00 pm  
AEL Executive Board  
Meeting, via Zoom

June 10, 7:00 pm  
AEL Executive Board  
Meeting, via Zoom

June 18, 4-7 pm  
Spring Social—  
Blue Dolphin,  
Gambrills  
*Retirees to be honored*

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# AEL Leadership Forum

VOLUME 17, ISSUE 3

APRIL 2025

## Leading with Strength and Focus

*By Tracey Ahern, AEL President*

.As we enter the final stretch of the school year, it's a perfect time to recognize the work we've accomplished, the challenges we continue to face, and the importance of staying connected and steadfast as we move toward the finish line.

First, a big thank you to **Rick Kovelant** and **Edie Picken** for hosting our recent workshop on the discipline process. Their leadership and willingness to share expertise was invaluable. We're also grateful to the members who were able to attend—your engagement and feedback were overwhelmingly positive. We know many of you had scheduling conflicts and couldn't be there, and we're working on ways to get the information into

your hands. We hope to offer more workshops like this in the future—opportunities for learning, discussion, and support that meet the real-time needs of our members. If you attended the workshop, there is still time to fill out the Workshop Exit Survey, <https://forms.gle/ZQCrFjTckwPJDHEu6>,

We are still deep in the negotiations process, continuing to advocate strongly for the needs of our members. While there isn't "information we can share" at the moment, we are encouraged by the recent committee work focused on **PayScale Structures**. This has been a promising step forward in addressing long-standing inequities across our unit. While we recognize that this will be a process, we are

confident in the direction of this first phase. Special thanks to the members who volunteered their time and expertise to be part of this important workshop: **Stacey Smith, Jessica Alvear, Jason Campion, Melanie Parker, Erin Belcher, and Sheila Coffman**. Your voices are making a difference.

We are also moving forward with our workgroup focused on improving our **professional environment**. We've had productive early conversations with leadership and are excited to bring the group together to collaborate and identify the key factors impacting the quality of our work and our ability to thrive in our roles. This work is essential, and we appreciate everyone

*Continued on page 2*

## Leading with Strength...

*Continued from page 1*

who is contributing to this effort.

Administrators and coordinators are living in two worlds right now—balancing the demands of the current school year while simultaneously planning for 2025–2026. Hiring, staffing, scheduling, budgeting (adjusting to reduced budgets), writing School Improvement Plans, and decision-making for next year are already well underway, even as we continue to steer our current ships forward.

Assessments, and ensuring that we close the year with integrity, achievement, and energy.

**And yet, let us not forget—school is supposed to be fun.** As the weather warms, the days stretch longer, and summer looms on the horizon, it's easy to get caught up in the pressure of the “have-tos.” But we encourage you to find and protect the joy—the things that make the days worthwhile for students and staff alike. Spirit days, celebrations, field trips, and hallway laughter all

have a place in strong, thriving school communities.

Your leadership matters. Your presence matters. Your ability to juggle, lead, plan, inspire, and finish strong is what makes our schools great.

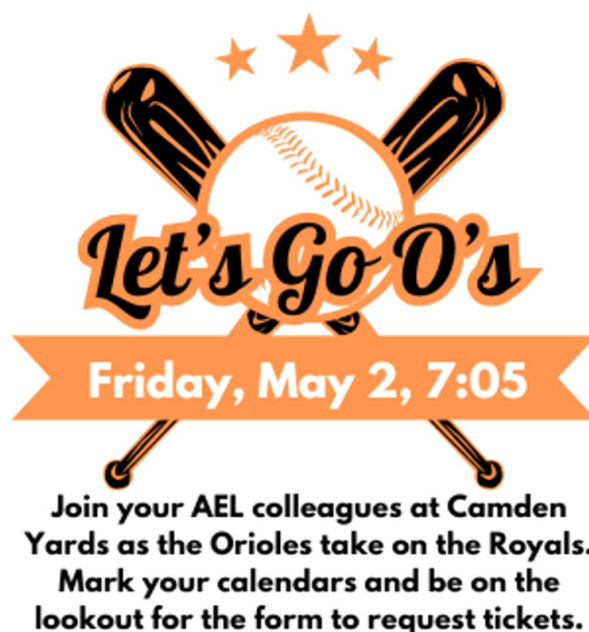
I am looking forward to our AEL outing at the Orioles game!!!

Thank you for all that you do—and all that you continue to do, day after day.

**“But we encourage you to find and protect the joy—the things that make the days worthwhile for students and staff alike.”**

*Tracey Ahern,  
AEL President*

When we return from Spring Break on **April 22nd**, there will be **38 school days** remaining until the last day on **June 13th**. In those 38 days, administrators and coordinators are expected to lead with strength and focus—to keep students and staff engaged, aligned with School Improvement Plans, and on course until the very end. We are tasked with maintaining high expectations, guiding students through State



# Investigations: The Unintended Impact?

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

I recently completed my first webinar and was grateful for the ability to share information in that venue. I was happy that more than 40 people participated in this exchange of information regarding the role of AEL in the disciplinary process, but greater participation by the nearly 300 plus AEL members would have been even better. This newsletter includes a copy of the AEL Representation Policies, which fairly tracks most of the points discussed during the webinar. Before I begin, I would like to thank Edie Picken, who was acutely aware of my technological short comings and helped me prepare for and present the Webinar. Her advice and assistance were invaluable.

Looking back over the 40 plus years of representing AEL and its members in the areas of disciplinary matters, I have periodically commented on the failure of the “due process” requirements that are in place when an

investigation occurs. I have now come to conclude that the sometimes devastating impact of this “due process” failure on individuals subject to this methodology has not been addressed as it should. Let me share some thoughts and observations that I have acquired over the years. In other words, I want to get some things off of my chest.

All investigations involving alleged misconduct start with a complaint. Not all accusations of misconduct involve a violation of policy and procedure. Many complaints involve performance failures. Certainly, not all alleged misconduct is of the same severity. Obviously, complaints involving student and faculty/staff welfare take precedence over complaints involving, for example, the failure to accurately report leave time for staff. Some complaints have involved the failure to properly follow procedures even though the

very procedures followed had been previously approved and authorized by their superior. Some complaints have been initiated as internal complaints from faculty or staff, some have been initiated by parents and others who have felt aggrieved by the conduct of an employed spouse. Even though the motivation of complainants should be always subject to question, it is rarely considered during this process.

The impact of an investigation, report and ultimately, discipline on the individual employee is profound. While in some cases the removal of an individual from the school during the course of an investigation may be necessary, especially when there are allegations of misconduct toward a student, other reasons for immediate removal sets the stage for emotional distress and reaction on the part of the

**“Not all accusations of misconduct involve a violation of policy and procedure. Many complaints involve performance failures.”**

*Rick Kovelant, AEL  
Executive Director &  
General Counsel*

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## Investigations ...

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**“...appropriate screening of complaints, determination of whether the complaint actually involves performance as opposed to policy violations and a prompt resolution of all issues will assist in mitigating the emotional impact...”**

*Rick Kovelant, AEL  
Executive Director and  
General Counsel*

employees being removed. Regardless of a favorable outcome, removal inevitably sets the stage for gossip and innuendo that will follow this individual for the rest of his/her career. The length of this removal pending investigation only heightens the anxiety. No priority is given to a prompt resolution of the issues surrounding the removal. If the basis for the complaint is proven to be true, a prompt and immediate investigation and imposition of discipline is to everyone's benefit. If the complaint is found to be baseless, a prompt resolution mitigates the impact on the individual being investigated and a

return to his/her assignment quells the rumors and validates his/her continuing role. The failure to treat both individuals who are alleged to have been in a consensual relationship in the same manner also allows one individual to be viewed as a perpetrator and the other individual a victim. Fraternalism is generally a two-way street.

Abandonment of support is a significant contributor to the emotional impact on the accused individual.

Contacting your superior or the proper individual to ask for assistance with an issue, receiving the advice and following it, ultimately being investigated for the conduct

associated with this advice and learning that the individual who advised you in the first place has disavowed giving you the advice is more than disingenuous.

The bottom line is that a mere investigation can, and often does, create a change in your career path, how you view your position and leaves an emotional scar. I am not suggesting that disciplinary investigations are not warranted. Certainly, if investigations pertain to students and physical and abuse issues, prompt and timely measures need to be undertaken which may include removal and reassignment. I am suggesting, however, that appropriate screening of complaints, determination of whether the complaint actually involves performance as opposed to policy violations and a prompt resolution of all issues will assist in mitigating the emotional impact that is a byproduct of the process.

### Free Help When You Need It: 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.

# AEL Negotiated Agreement Up Close —Did You Know?

*By Stacey Smith, AEL First Vice President*

## Bereavement

AEL members are entitled to **five calendar days** of absence (bereavement leave) without loss of pay. These five calendar days may be taken **consecutively or broken up** to support your needs. Weekends do **NOT** count! See below:

### Bereavement

Each Unit II employee shall be granted five (5) calendar days of absence without loss of salary on the death of a child, parent, spouse, sibling, aunt, uncle, parent-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, niece, nephew, grandparent, grandchild, or one who has lived regularly in the household of the Unit II employee. Upon written request from the Unit II employee stating the circumstances which make additional time necessary, the Superintendent may authorize additional days. This leave shall not be charged against annual leave or sick leave.

## Compensatory Time

AEL members are **entitled to compensatory time** during regular work hours per our negotiated agreement. When you feel your duties as a Unit II member have become excessive, you may request compensatory time from your direct supervisor. We have the right to do this! AEL does not think it is unreasonable to be granted an hour or two of compensatory time, periodically, without having to use a half day when taking care of a personal need. We encourage everyone to start asking and keep a folder/log of your emails and responses from your supervisors. This will be important data to assist our Working Conditions group! See below:

### Required Work Hours

Regular daily work hours totaling forty (40) hours per week, exclusive of time for lunch, shall be established for Unit II employees by their immediate superiors. It is recognized, however, that the job requirements of professionals are of such a nature that they cannot be adequately met within a specified time frame.

The normal workload for professional personnel in Unit II includes such activities as:

- Job-related late afternoon and evening meetings with other staff employees, students, parents, community representatives and Board employees
- Supervision of student-oriented activities
- Independent planning and work sessions beyond regular work hours as required to promote efficient execution of one's duties
- Emergencies

When the amount of time a Unit II employee spends in the performance of the employee's duties is excessive, the staff employee to whom the Unit II employee reports may grant compensatory time during regular work hours.

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# Did You Know?...

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## Travel Allowance

AEL members are **entitled to a travel allowance** or what is commonly known as mileage reimbursement for travel when the business mileage exceeds the commuting mileage. What does that mean? Think about your “normal” travel for a typical day. If you are required to travel above that “normal” mileage, you have the right to seek reimbursement! If you must return to your work location, the same day, you have the right to seek reimbursement! If you have to travel on the weekend and it is related to work, you have the right to seek reimbursement! We encourage all members to fill out the paperwork and seek what is rightfully yours. See below:

### Travel Allowance

The mileage allowances for reimbursable travel shall be based on the prevailing U.S. Government (IRS) standard rate in effect at the time of travel.

Daily business travel for reimbursement purposes shall be the total miles traveled by private vehicle in the discharge of official duties less commuting mileage, which is the distance from residence to the Unit II employee's assigned principal working location. Although all business travel shall be reported, the employee shall qualify for reimbursement only when business mileage exceeds commuting mileage.

If the Unit II employee's duty requires a return to the employee's principal work location a second time during the day, the mileage of the second trip may be reported as business mileage for reimbursement. This provision shall not apply, however, when the employee goes home for lunch or other personal convenience.

When duty requires an employee to return to the employee's principal work location on weekends and on holidays which are not duty days, the trip may be reported as business mileage, with a zero deduction for commuting mileage.



# MRSPA and AARSPA Updates

*By Edie Picken, President/Director Emeritus*

As in previous issues, I am providing you with updates from the Maryland Retired School Personnel Association's (MRSPA) Legislative Committee and the Anne Arundel Retired School Personnel Association (AARSPA).

I have thoroughly enjoyed these past nearly three years in retirement as a member of MRSPA's Legislative Committee, that focuses on bills and issues that affect

retirees and those still working. We gave a great deal of attention to continues attempts to legislate curriculum, and spent time working toward, with the help of AARP, to continue lowering the cost of those currently identified drugs for everyone. The committee supported legislation that would protect vulnerable individuals and senior adults from theft by a caregiver, family member, or household member, and continued to express our desire to alleviate the

financial burden that many working and retired individuals face when taking care of parents and other family members in the form of tax breaks. We supported bills attempting to provide income tax credit for long-term care premiums while consistently opposing bills that require proof of identity at in-person voting. We

have supported legislation that would preserve telehealth access, as well as legislation that would increase earnings to the maximum average for those who have retired and are re-employed. These are just some of the bills we reviewed, discussed and provided a response.

This year, the State legislature submitted 2,614 proposed bills. MRSPA reviewed 31. Of the 31, MRSPA opposed 12, four of which focused on the budget. Of those we opposed, eight failed—they were curriculum focused. Five we are monitoring, and two we took no position. Nine have passed both the House and the Senate, while two have passed the House and we await the vote of the Senate. Our involvement in this process has proven effective.

The Anne Arundel Retired School Personnel Association (AARSPA) is incredibly active. AARSPA works closely with MRSPA jointly advocating for pension protection and on

**“AARSPA works closely with MRSPA jointly advocating for pension protection and on other issues affecting retirees. .”**

*Edie Picken, President/  
Director Emeritus*



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## Updates ...

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**“Just because you retire does not mean you stop caring about what you have done for your students and community.”**

*Edie Picken, President/  
Director Emeritus*

other issues affecting retirees. The Annearrundell Free School Museum is operated by and maintained by AARSPA volunteers. And ARSPA is the organization that raises the funds that provides five graduating seniors with Scholarship for Scholars scholarships. The Community Service committee has been acknowledged for its continued commitment to providing supplies to needy students in schools where poverty is highest and collecting items that some of the smaller senior living facilities need and cannot afford. And AARSPA's

executive staff meet regularly with the superintendent and keeps a close eye on budget cuts that may affect the cost of, or potentially elimination of, our medical insurance we get to keep upon retirement.

If you are planning to retire, I strongly encourage you to consider joining both of these highly active organizations. Just because you retire does not mean you stop caring about what you have done for your students and community. I also encourage those who are not retired to look at both of these organizations

website to see what they are up to currently. You can access them at:

[www.mrspa.org](http://www.mrspa.org) and  
[www.facebook.com/mrspa1945](https://www.facebook.com/mrspa1945)

[www.aarspa.org](http://www.aarspa.org) and  
[www.facebook.com/AARSPA](https://www.facebook.com/AARSPA)

I encourage all Association of Educational Leaders (AEL) members to attend the spring social in June. Information is forthcoming. This is where you will get the latest updates on AEL's mission on your behalf and the opportunity to celebrate those members who are retiring. I hope to see you there.

## 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.



## AEL Highlights 5- Star Recognition

### **Betsy Werner, Nantucket Elementary**

Betsy works hard to establish positive, collaborative relationships with parents to support growth. She approaches parent conversations as an active listener, making connections as a parent, and providing reasonable solutions.

~Megan Edwards

### **Demetria Keller, CCT Office**

Demetria is a wonderful human whose passion for all things CTE resonates in everything she leads. As a new Coordinator of CTE, her impact to the office has been pivotal to support the initiatives of the CCR office and blue-print mandates. Her positive attitude, open mind and tenacity to fight for what our AACPS students and teachers need to have a great experience in CTE is amazing! She is doing a wonderful job moving the needle towards students having more innovative opportunities in the CTE world and beyond. ~Autumn Baltimore

### **Shelia Coffman, Center of Applied Technology North**

Sheila has consistently demonstrated an exceptional commitment to kindness, hard work, and a genuine desire to make a positive impact on both adults and children. She always goes above and beyond to ensure the best outcomes for those she works with and is always willing to help. ~Caroline Hathaway

### **Kristyn Madeja, South River High School**

I am nominating Kristyn Madeja to be recognized for the 5-Star Highlights. Kristyn has many roles and responsibilities at South River HS, including Grader 1, Principal's Designee, Senior class, STEM program, Equity PD's, transportation, Project Graduation, Chromebooks - the list goes on. Kristyn is knowledgeable, detailed and thorough on all administrative tasks, completing them efficiently and effectively. Teachers, staff, parents and students respect Kristyn. They know that they can go to Kristyn for answers if they have questions. Kristyn collaborates with staff members to create a quality learning environment for all students. As her first time in the designee role, Kristyn did a great job staying calm-cool-collected, responding to necessary incidents, and keeping the school operating. Kristyn goes above and beyond the call of duty and is a quality AP. ~Brandon Rowe

### **Karlie Magazu, Glen Burnie High School**

Ms. Magazu is an incredible instructional leader, driver of school improvement and shifter of school culture. She goes above and beyond to support students, encourage teachers and build staff morale. Her energy seems limitless and is very solution oriented. ~Kevin Carr

To nominate a Unit II member, please complete the google form: [AEL 5 Star Highlights](#)



Let's keep the celebrations going!



JOIN YOUR COLLEAGUES

# AEL SOCIAL

# JUNE 18

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4 pm - 7 pm  
Free to AEL Members  
Door Prizes, Buffet Dinner, Dessert &  
a Complimentary Beverage

Join us to honor our 2025 retiring  
colleagues

*RSVP By June 2 to  
[smsmith1@aacps.org](mailto:smsmith1@aacps.org)*



## 2024-25 AEL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE/BOARD/STAFF

|                             |                   |                         |                 |                                                              |
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| John Wojtila (2022-26)      | Secretary         | P, High Point ES        | (o)410-222-xxxx | <a href="mailto:jwojtila@aacps.org">jwojtila@aacps.org</a>   |
| Lindsay Abruzzo (2023-2025) | Treasurer         | P, Magothy River MS     | (o)410-544-0926 | <a href="mailto:labruzzo@aacps.org">labruzzo@aacps.org</a>   |
| Shira Dowling               | Director at Large | P, Rippling Woods ES    | (o)410-760-7900 | <a href="mailto:sdowling@aacps.org">sdowling@aacps.org</a>   |
| Kristy Snyder               | Director at Large | P, Piney Orchard ES     | (o)410-672-7591 | <a href="mailto:klsnyder1@aacps.org">klsnyder1@aacps.org</a> |

### Network Representatives

|                    |                |                             |                                                                    |
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| Angie Riccluti     | Network 1      | (Overlook ES)               | <a href="mailto:ariccluti@aacps.org">ariccluti@aacps.org</a>       |
| Melissa Connelly   | Network 1      | (Woodside ES)               | <a href="mailto:mccconnelly@aacps.org">mccconnelly@aacps.org</a>   |
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| Kellie Snell-Ramey | Network 2      | (Van Bokkelen)              | <a href="mailto:ksnell-ramey@aacps.org">ksnell-ramey@aacps.org</a> |
| Michalene McDonald | Network 3      | (Crofton MS)                | <a href="mailto:mmcdonald1@aacps.org">mmcdonald1@aacps.org</a>     |
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## REPRESENTATION POLICY

AEL currently provides representation to all Unit II employees regardless of membership in the Association. Since AEL by its composition represents both the supervisor and those that are supervised by virtue of their position in the school system, it would appear that there are potential conflict of interest areas that need to be addressed and understood and policy created so that all AEL members are aware of the limits of representation that can be provided. To that end, a committee has been appointed to define the role of AEL in providing representation to individual members and suggest a policy to be adopted by all members at the next scheduled membership meeting.

AEL represents its members through the services of the Executive Director and General Counsel ("EDGC"). In this capacity the EDGC represents the membership as a whole on issues that impact the Association. This includes review and advocacy of contract issues, negotiations of the Negotiated Agreement, breach contract actions as they impact the Agreement, and regarding policy matters that are outside of the Agreement but germane to the membership as a whole.

In the area of individual representation, there appears to be some concern as to how representation should be provided when the nature of the conflict involves two Unit II members. This usually occurs in the following areas:

1. Grievances initiated by a subordinate employee against his/her supervisor pursuant to the contract or based on BOE policy.
2. The defense of a grievance initiated by a non-Unit II employee that does not involve the AEL contract.
3. The complaint is initiated outside of the contract by a Unit II member involving a Unit II member, and
4. The complaint is initiated by a Unit II employee apart from the school system that is not pursued by AEL.

### GRIEVANCES INITIATED BY A SUBORDINATE EMPLOYEE BASED ON CONTRACT OR POLICY

The AEL Negotiated Agreement provides for a defined grievance procedure when an individual believes that his/her contractual rights are being violated. In this regard, the process calls for an informal conference followed by a number of formal steps. AEL at step 2 in the process, if asked, reviews the grievance and at that point may elect to represent the employee or not as the case may be. If representation is elected, the EDGC provides that representation to the grievant and the BOE, if need be, represents the interests of the individual against whom the grievance is being brought. There does not appear to be a conflict situation, as the grievant is in reality challenging management's interpretation of the contract on behalf of the BOE employer. The same would also be true when the application of BOE policy is being grieved. The employee grievant would be represented by AEL and the individual who is applying or interpreting the BOE policy would be represented by staff as the supervisor is, in reality acting on behalf of the BOE.

## REPRESENTATION POLICY, continued

### DEFENSE OF A GRIEVANCE INITIATED BY A NON-UNIT II EMPLOYEE

In this scenario the grievant would be a non-Unit II employee who believes that BOE policy or the terms of an applicable negotiated agreement is being violated by a Unit II employee. To the extent that the alleged violation arises out of an interpretation of BOE policy or contract, the Unit II supervisor would be represented by BOE staff. Further involvement by AEL would be optional and not required and would not be a conflict.

### THE INIATION OF AN ACTION OUTSIDE OF THE AEL CONTRACT OR BOE POLICY BY ONE UNIT II MEMBER AGAINST ANOTHER

Should two Unit II members have a dispute that does not involve either the Negotiated Agreement or BOE policy, the Attorney Code of Professional Responsibility as it would be applicable in terms of the EDGC becoming involved in the case. Given the fact that both participants are dues paying members and through their affiliation with AEL have access to the EDGC, it would be better to refrain from providing representation to either party should this situation arise. Taking either side of this type of controversy would undermine the goodwill of the Association.

### THE INIATION OF A COMPLAINT BY A UNIT II MEMBER APART REGARDING THE SCHOOL SYSYTEM NOT PURSUED BY AEL

Should a Unit II AEL member wish to pursue a course of action against the school system that AEL has not elected to pursue does not necessarily result in a conflict. Before representation is provided by the EDGC in his individual capacity of an attorney, AEL should be advised of the nature of the claim and a decision reached as to whether or not the representation would be in conflict with AEL policy.

## THE OBLIGATION OF REPRESENTATION

It is generally recognized that a union provides representation in the areas of wages, work hours and working conditions. While the areas of Wages and Working Hours seem to be easily defined and encompass more limited items clearly falling within the negotiation process, the term, "Working Conditions" extends well beyond negotiations and is subject to far greater interpretation. In this area, the responsibilities of a union, and in this case AEL, are somewhat amorphous. There is, therefore a need for the membership to understand the parameters of AEL's responsibilities to the employees it represents within the meaning of "working conditions".

Recently, several situations have occurred that warrant a discussion of what services AEL is obligated to perform in the course of providing representation to Unit II employees who believe their issue impacts on their "working conditions." Since conduct and performance impact an employee's employment in the sense it has an impact on his position, compensation and working condition, AEL provides representation to an employee. The following should provide an understanding of AEL's role in each of these areas.

In the area of grievances against an employee's supervisor, a violation/breach of the Negotiated Agreement, AEL, through the grievance process will, when appropriate' represent the grievant. The supervisor, who is the subject matter of the grievance, is represented by the school system's counsel and eventually by the Board's attorney should the matter proceed to the State Board of Education appeal level.

In the event a Unit II employee is the subject of an investigation for misconduct, arising out of a violation of BOE policy or regulation, AEL will represent the individual through the investigatory process, the discipline phase, and appeals through the State Board of Education level.

Evaluations and resulting personnel actions associated with the evaluation are matters where AEL provides assistance in preparing the Unit II employee for an Evaluation Appeal and thereafter, representing a Unit II employee who is demoted or reassigned based on a finding by the Appeal Review panel that an incorrect evaluation occurred and the subsequent transfer, demotion or reassignment was in error.

Two cases have been brought to AEL's attention that have questioned the role of AEL in providing representation to Unit II employees. In both of these situations, threats were made against Unit II employees, by parents in one case and by an anonymous individual in another. In the latter case, the threats and derogatory comments which could be defamatory were posted and distributed via the Internet. While these cases clearly impact on a Unit II employee's working conditions, the role of AEL is secondary to the responsibility of the school system in providing the employee with a safe work environment by taking all appropriate actions to protect the physical and emotional wellbeing of the employee. AEL's role is to ensure that the BOE becomes engaged in this process and extends aid and assistance to its employees. The primary role of AEL is not to engage the responsible perpetrators. Rather, AEL's role is to engage the school system and to challenge the school system if they decline to become engaged on behalf of the employee or once engaged ineffectively provide the required support.

Independent legal problems encountered by a Unit II employee are not in and of themselves subject matters that require union representation. Domestic cases, criminal activity, traffic citations and the like may impact on a Unit II employee's job, but standing alone, are not areas where AEL provides legal assistance. To the extent that these areas become a subject matter of a potential adverse job action, AEL, will at the school system level, provide legal assistance.

As a final caveat, AEL may, in certain circumstances, decline representation through its Legal Counsel, should a conflict of interest issue or a potential lawyer confidentiality issue exist. In those cases, alternative representation will be considered.

Richard Kovelant, Executive Director and  
General Counsel