WHO ARE WE?

**Theresa (Tracy) Dawson**
- SEPEA Past President/Current VP/Contract Representative
- All-around great 6th grade teacher
- Southeast Polk Graduate...knew Joe in HS
- Kids in the system/graduates

**Joe Horton**
- Associate Superintendent
- Southeast Polk Graduate...knew Tracy in HS
- Once pulled over by Tracy’s dad (warning only)
- Kids in the system/graduates
Creating a collaborative team—challenges

- Did not begin as a bed of roses, some not-so-positive labor relations history; had to turn around an “us vs. them” mentality
- We were new to the roles, with the exception of the UNISERVE Director and school attorney (they showed us how to be effective)
- Had to/continue to negotiate contracts and work in times of scarcity.
- Negotiated two contracts during a $4 million budget reduction process that included limited reductions in force.
- The past four years: Budget reductions totaling an additional $4 million due to legislative funding levels and Governor’s across the board cut. No reductions in force.
- Recent changes in Chapter 20 have strained labor relations across the state and have left teachers wondering.
Creating a collaborative team—actions taken to make things different

- **Committed to try to always be somewhere on a continuum between cooperative and collaborative**
- “*Play fair*” in negotiations (norms: direct, candid, understanding competing interests to build a positive system, compromise, respectful of one another/each individual’s role, we are friends when this is over)
- **Multiple-stakeholder process for mission, vision, and core values (shared ownership)**
- **Multiple-stakeholder professional development committee (ideas, design, presentation, authentic examples, implementation, evaluation, and continuous improvement)**
- **Committed to two committees: Insurance Committee (meets quarterly) and Labor-Relations Committee (meets monthly)**
- **TLC: collaboration on the structure, grant creation, SBRC, continued evolution of the teacher leadership system**
- **Committed to the PLC concept and shared governance, an inherent part of the model**
Creating a collaborative team—celebrations

• **Limited mission drift due to the shared commitments of a critical mass (vision, mission, values)**
• **Positive contracts every year.**
• **The Labor Relations Committee continues to work toward solutions to problems and issues.**
• **We are proud of the lack of RIF during our tenure; the hard work has paid big dividends.**
• **One of the first 37 schools in Iowa with a TLC system; we now cannot imagine how to get it all done without one. We like our TL system, and not just because we built it.**
• **Currently in year five of a real commitment to becoming a professional learning community… We are not “there” yet, but collaboration has changed teaching at SEPCS for the better.**
• **Shared leadership opportunities, both formal roles and informal ones, and teachers and administrators are working hard at building the next generation(s) of teacher leaders.**
• **Named three consecutive times to the DM Register Top 150 Workplaces in Iowa.**
• **In the wake of changes to Chapter 20, we have approached change methodically and collaboratively.**
Creating a collaborative team—formal processes/protocols that supported/developed the labor-management relationship and the work

- Labor Relations Committee
- Collective Bargaining
- Teacher Leadership and Compensation
- Collaboration in the Spirit of Building a Professional Learning Community
- Insurance Committee
- PD Committee
- Mission, vision, and core values work
Creating a collaborative team—the focus of collaborative work

- **What is best for kids**
- **Making Southeast Polk the best organization it can be**
- **Moving the needle on student achievement, continuing a northward data trend**
- **Continuous improvement toward improved outcomes for all stakeholders**
Creating a collaborative team—the sustainability plan

• Communicate, persevere, and increase mutual commitment to Southeast Polk as a whole
• Currently transitioning a new SEPEA president (being thoughtful about succession)
• Shared leadership continues to organically grow…our industry demands it
• Collaboration is a district core value at Southeast Polk. It is a work expectation for teachers and administrators, so it has become the means, manner, or spirit in which the work is to be done. Labor relations is no different.
• How do we sustain or pass along esprit de corps, professional respect, and an understanding that this is about all people in the organization and putting kids first? Hire/appoint/elect/groom people who already believe in these things.
Anything else beneficial…

• **Somehow, this works for us.**

• **This work has been and is difficult. Simple, worth every effort, but difficult.**

• **Some of these ideas may or may not work for all districts, and we do not consider them novel or exceptional. They work for us, reflect the core values of the district, and reveal who we are. We share only with the hope that they help you somehow.**