***Growing Educator Leaders Program***

The ***Growing Educator Leaders***(GEL) program is part of a nationwide effort to improve public education. Funded by the American Federation of Teachers, the program is designed to tap into the knowledge of *real* education experts: those who work with students every day.

The GEL program brings educators together for **meaningful learning opportunities** and **action research activities**. If you are selected to participate in the GEL program, you will become a member of a **supportive** **network of** **educators** who advocate for our students, educators, and schools.

**KEY OBJECTIVES of the GEL program:**

* Understanding the major challenges facing public education and uncovering possible solutions
* Growing our leadership skills and learning to bridge the research-to-practice gap
* Representing our profession and gaining confidence in our voices as educators
* Strengthening the partnership between our union and education policymakers

**Participants will DEVELOP SKILLS related to:**

* Articulating issues in public education and framing them as questions for inquiry,
* Conducting action-oriented research and transforming findings into plans,
* Creating a collaborative culture and becoming active in their union, and
* Advocating for your students, colleagues, schools, and profession.

**Program INFORMATION:**

GEL sessions are held on **Saturdays from 8:30 am to 3:30 pm** at the SPFT office (23 Empire Dr, St Paul).

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| * **October 13, 2018**
 | * **January 19, 2019**
 | * **April 27, 2019**
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| * **November 10, 2018**
 | * **February 16, 2019**
 | * **May 7-9, 2019 (TBD)**
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| * **December 8, 2018**
 | * **March 16, 2019**
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**Any and all members of SPFT are eligible to participate.** Bring your wisdom and love of learning to the program and apply today!

**To APPLY:**

****Applications and letters or recommendation are **due by 4:00pm on Sept 11, 2018**. Group interviews will be held following that date. Visit this link to fill out an application and upload your letters of recommendation: [**https://tinyurl.com/GEL2018**](https://tinyurl.com/GEL2018)

If you have any questions or need an application link sent to you, email **Heidi Springborg at** **Heidi.springborg@spps.org****.**

***Growing Educator Leaders Q&A***

**What is GEL?**

The Growing Educator Leaders (GEL) program is designed to help educators be confident and prepared to discuss and advocate for public education policies and issues, both in Saint Paul and nationally. The program, funded jointly by the Saint Paul Federation of Teachers (SPFT) and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), is an affiliate of the national Teacher Leader Program. Members of this team of educators participate in learning and research activities one Saturday per month for seven months. At the end of the program, the members will share the findings of their work.

**Will I be paid to participate in this program?**

After successful completion of the program, participants receive a stipend from AFT for $1,500.00

**Who can be involved in the GEL program?**

ANY educator who is a member of SPFT can be involved! This includes School and Community Service Professionals, Educational Assistants, Teachers, and other Licensed Staff. There is no educational requirement to participate.

Ideal candidates have a passion for supporting the success of students and the school systems; a desire to develop their own leadership skills; and curiosity about the intersection between research and educational policy and practices. Candidates must be members of SPFT.

The application and interview process is friendly for educators with all levels of educational backgrounds and professional experiences. Program staff are deeply committed to promoting equity in the development of education leaders.

**How can I apply for the GEL program?**

Those interested in participating must submit a short GEL Program application by 4:00 pm on September 11, 2018. To apply, complete the application here: [**https://tinyurl.com/GEL2018**](https://tinyurl.com/GEL2018)**.**

The application consists of general questions about your role in SPPS, short essay questions about your interests and why you are interested in the GEL program, and two letters of recommendation from anyone who can speak to your skills and interests. It should take no more than 30 minutes to complete once you start as long as you have your Recommendation Letters ready to upload.

After the application closes, SPFT and GEL staff will review the applications and select eligible candidates for a group interview. Candidate will be asked to participate in a group interview on one of the following dates:

* Tuesday, September 18, 2018, from 3:30 - 4:30pm
* Wednesday, September, 19, 2018, from 4:30 - 5:30pm
* Saturday, September 22, 2018, from 9:00 - 10:00am

You can choose the date that works best for you.

 Up to 12 final candidates will be selected. Final participation will be contingent on the ability to commit to all of the pre-scheduled Saturday sessions (listed in the online application). All decisions should be made by 9/28/18, and our first session will occur on 10/13/18!

**If I’m selected to participate, what would be expected of me?**

You must commit to attending all of the Saturday sessions. You will conduct an action research project, alone or with a group, about a topic that interests you and supports AFT/SPFT’s mission. At the end of the program, in May, you will do a very short (10-15 min) presentation about your project.

**What if I don’t know how to research or if the idea of it seems intimidating?**

You will be supported by GEL leader to successfully complete all of the required components of the program.

GEL and SPFT are committed to *Growing Educator Leaders*. This means that we know that everyone will start the program with different skills and interests, but by working together, we will each grow in meaningful ways, professionally and personally.

**How do I get more information about GEL and/or the application process?**

Email Heidi Springborg at Heidi.springborg@spps.org or heidispring@gmail.com to ask questions or get any additional information about the program or the application process. If desired, follow-up via phone can be arranged!