

# The Springfield Teacher

The UNITY newsletter of the Springfield Education Association 1000 Wilbraham Road, Springfield, MA 01109  
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## S.E.A. Office Hours

Monday 9:30 - 5:00

Tuesday 9:30 - 5:00

Wednesday 9:30 - 5:00

Thursday 9:30 - 5:00

Friday 9:30 - 5:00

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helping teachers teach

## *President's Message*

As we head into the final stages of the election season, I would like to share with you what I am looking for in a mayoral candidate and school committee candidates.

I am looking for candidates who will put events in a classroom first.

- A candidate who will review the school department budget with a fine tooth comb and insure that cuts occur as far away from the classroom as possible.
- A candidate who will eliminate the numerous consultants and consulting firms, who make their living off of the Springfield School System, before cutting teacher and para-professional positions.
- A candidate who, after making all possible cuts away from the classroom, will lobby for a proposition 2<sup>1/2</sup> override so that the children in their charge receive the education they deserve.
- A candidate who will actively and publicly lobby the state, federal, and city governments for the resources we need – resources sufficient to create the circumstances that will give the opportunity to be successful to all of the children in their charge.
- A candidate who will, at the very least, actively and publicly lobby for the suspension of the MCAS graduation requirement until the federal, state, and city governments provide the Springfield Public Schools with the resources required to create the conditions necessary for all children to have the opportunity to meet that standard.
- Someone who will publicly commit to extend the teacher contract and treat teachers with the same dignity and respect that the current school committee has shown the Superintendent and the Unit B administrators.

*President's Message, on page 2*

*President's Message, Continued from page 1*

- Someone who will work to attract and maintain the best possible teaching force by seeing to it that we at least keep pace with how the surrounding communities are treating their teachers.
- Someone who will reach-out and listen to the people who work with our children in our schools before making critical decisions.

I urge each and every one of you to get involved in this election. Our lives and the lives of the children we teach will be greatly affected by the outcome of this election. Let's all get involved.

Yours in unity,



## SUPERINTENDENT'S COMMITTEE

*By: Michele Hebert*

The Superintendent's Committee is a committee of five teachers, representing a cross section of membership, who meet with the Superintendent once a month. The purpose of this committee is to discuss matters of educational policy, curriculum, and improvements of educational climate in the Springfield Public Schools.

Before each meeting with the Superintendent, we hold a pre-meeting at the SEA office to set our agenda. At this time we invite you to bring your issues/concerns to us. Oftentimes, we will ask you to join us at the regularly scheduled meeting and speak to the Superintendent on your own behalf. Please take advantage of this opportunity by calling the SEA office or speaking to a committee member to find out when the next pre-meeting will take place. The committee members are: Diane Ascioti, Springfield High; Jose Bahamonde, High School of Science & Technology; Diane Brouillard, Dryden Memorial; and Debra Forni, High School of Science & Technology.

It has been my privilege to serve on this committee for the past several years, first with Dr. Negroni and now with Dr. Burke. It has been an incredible experience. I have learned so much about so many things! On October 31, 2003, I will officially retire from the Springfield Public Schools and the Superintendent's Committee. I hope one of you will opt to take my seat at the Superintendent's round table.

MAHALO AND ALOHA!!!

Michele

## HEALTH & SAFETY

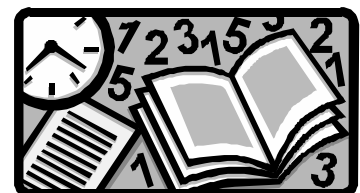
*By: Timothy T. Collins*

Last year, the SEA signed and implemented a Letter of Agreement with the Springfield Public Schools covering a number of areas. In this article, I would like to address the section of the Agreement that deals with painting and/or construction in any occupied building.

During my tenure as president of the SEA, I have received numerous complaints from members regarding the negative affect on their health when painting and/or construction are being done in their building. The Agreement between the SEA and the Springfield Public Schools calls for: 1.) the sealing off of the area in the building where painting and/or construction are taking place and 2.) forced ventilation to create negative pressure in the painting and/or construction site. This prevents the migration of dust and fumes to the occupied areas of the building.

The head of the City's Facilities Management Department is making sure that the workers follow the agreed upon protocol for painting and construction in occupied buildings. **It is the obligation of the SEA members to follow them as well. NO ONE should break the seals in the areas where painting and/or construction are taking place.** Breaking of these seals eliminates negative pressure in the construction site and allows the migration of fumes and dust to the occupied areas of the building.

Many of our colleagues and students have a high level of sensitivity to this type of dust and fumes. The health and safety of the people in our buildings will be protected if all of us follow the protocol of the Agreement.



## WHAT'S OUR UNION DOING FOR US?

*Mary Chamberlain*

On Wednesday, September 17, 2003, the Springfield Education Association hosted an information session for beginning teachers in Springfield. Peter Dupuis, the Professional Relations Associate, with the help of the New Teacher Committee hosted the event.

Many new teachers attended and learned about the benefits of joining the SEA/MTA/NEA. Some of the benefits include liability insurance, MTA benefits for car and house insurance, the collective bargaining agreement, and the dissemination of information important to the teaching profession.

Peter Dupuis organized and gathered a plethora of door prizes which new teachers graciously accepted. They were also given the Jargon Jumble listed below. Before we publish the answers, perhaps more experienced teachers would like to test their alphabet soup knowledge of educational jargon. The answers will be published in the November issue.

### Jargon Jumble

<b>Chapter 766</b>	<b>NELMS</b>	<b>CSL</b>	<b>Para</b>	<b>Cum folder</b>	<b>PIC</b>	<b>DOE</b>
<b>PTO</b>	<b>BOE</b>	<b>SCDM</b>	<b>ELL</b>	<b>SPED</b>	<b>MTEL</b>	<b>SPAN</b>
<b>ETL</b>	<b>SSV</b>	<b>IEP</b>	<b>STAT</b>	<b>JLMC</b>	<b>Title I</b>	<b>LLD</b>
<b>AYP</b>	<b>MABE</b>	<b>LEP</b>	<b>SEA</b>	<b>SIP</b>	<b>MTA</b>	<b>DIP</b>
<b>NEA</b>	<b>NABE</b>	<b>COPE</b>	<b>MCAS</b>	<b>L Board</b>	<b>E Board</b>	<b>ESEA</b>
<b>NCLB</b>	<b>PTS</b>	<b>PD (This does not stand for Peter Dupuis!)</b>				

## TIPS FOR TEACHERS

Below are some tips for the month taken from the MTA's published Teachers' Calendar/Planner.

### ***Grading Policy***

- Consult your school's reporting system before determining your grading policy. You must match your assessment practices and grading system to the school's reporting system.
- Use a variety of measures and approaches to assess student learning – homework, worksheets, oral activities, observation checklists, work samples, tests, projects, etc.
- Determine the relative weight each assessment approach will carry when you prepare report card grades (e.g., 30% homework, 30% tests, 20% projects, and 20% class work.)
- Decide whether to have points, percentages, or letter grades for assessments. All have pros and cons. Discuss this with your mentor and/or colleagues.
- Inform your students of your grading policy.
- Decide how to record information in your grade book for student achievement, attendance, and conduct.
- Have professional yet realistic standards/expectations in assignments, homework, assessments, and grading.
- Compare your assessment data with information in the students' cumulative record folders. Discuss any major discrepancies or questions with your mentor and/or colleagues.
- Use assessment data in constructing lesson plans, assignments, and instructional groups.

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Bureau of Education and Research is presenting a one-day seminar at the Radisson Hotel in Cromwell, CT on October 29, 2003. The presenter is Susan Fitzwell, a special education teacher, author, and national trainer. The workshop is geared toward secondary teachers and is titled "Successful Inclusion Strategies and Techniques for Differentiating Curricula to Meet IEP Requirements for Students with Mild to Moderate Special Needs." In addition to acquiring strategies, each participant will receive a seminar resource handbook that contains adaptations, worksheets, tips on behavior management, and numerous forms. To register, phone 1-800-735-3503 or register online at [www.ber.org](http://www.ber.org).

The SEA Library now contains What Works in Schools, Translating Research into Action by Robert J. Marzano. This book analyzes school-level, teacher-level, and student-level factors in addressing real school reform. It concludes with a chapter called "The Critical Role of Leadership". Anyone wishing to borrow the book may check it out at the SEA office.

Please remember to submit your paperwork for Professional Development Funds in a timely fashion. The "Request for Payment" form and **accompanying receipts** must be turned in to the SEA office within 30 days of conference, workshop, or course attendance. Also, please notify the office if your plans to use funds change, as others will be able to use them.

*Nancy S. Fitch*

# POP QU?Z

by  
*Peter Dupuis*



In my Professional Relations activities throughout the year, I respond to many queries. Therefore, I thought it might be helpful to print some of the most frequently asked questions.

## **Q. When does the extended day begin and end?**

A. Extended day “extends” the school day by one hour and fifteen minutes. (Article 5-K.1) For elementary schools, the extended day begins at 3:05 and concludes at 4:20. For middle schools, the extended day occurs between 2:15 and 3:30. All the high schools, with the exception of Commerce and Science and Technology, have their extended day between 2:25 and 3:40. Commerce and SciTech meet for their extended day from 2:05 to 3:20.

## **Q. Can a teacher’s prep period be less than 40 minutes in length?**

A. According to Article 5-L of the Agreement, “All teachers (Early Childhood and K – 12) shall have the equivalent of a daily preparation period (40 minutes minimum) each day.” That means a teacher’s preparation period must be at least 40 uninterrupted minutes in length. The preparation period cannot be divided up between two different time periods such as 30 minutes at the beginning of the day and 10 minutes at the day’s conclusion.

## **Q. Our principal is scheduling meetings before school. Can we be required to attend these meetings?**

A. Article 5-T.3 of the Agreement recognizes that teachers will need to meet occasionally with the Principal *after school*. “The parties of the Agreement agree that fifteen (15) minutes may, on occasion, be insufficient to meet with the Principal if requested to do so...” There is no provision in the Agreement for such meetings before school. Your Principal should not be scheduling meetings before school unless the teacher has expressed a preference to have the meeting during that time.

## **Q. When we are short substitutes, my Principal will reassign the Foreign Language teacher to cover another teacher’s class for the entire day. Is that a violation?**

## **Q. When the Title I teacher is out, the Principal tells me to keep the students who would normally be reporting to the Title I teacher. Shouldn’t the Principal be assigning teachers to cover?**

A. The answer to both of these questions is Yes—collapsing a class rather than assigning teachers to cover is a violation of *Article 5-F.3*. No teacher, including Title I, Academic Resource/Encore and Special Education teachers, can be taken from his/her students (that is, the classroom is shut down for the day and students are sent to other classrooms) and reassigned to a class that does not have substitute coverage. Further, a teacher cannot be required to combine his/her class with another class to provide coverage for the day, nor can any teacher who is teamed with another teacher be required to cover the entire class alone during his/her teaching partner’s absence.

## **Q. After attending a union meeting, my Principal wanted to speak with me about an issue I raised at the meeting. Is that a violation? Do I have to meet?**

A. Anything said in a union meeting is “protected activity.” Under Massachusetts General Laws c. 150E, union members have the right to assemble without interference from their employers. Your Principal questioning anything you said in that meeting is prohibited under M.G.L. 150E, §10, and therefore a violation of our collective bargaining agreement and the law. However, if your Principal insists upon meeting with you and you refuse, the Principal will be able to charge you with insubordination. In order to avoid that from happening, meet with the Principal if required to do so and file a grievance afterwards.



# Teachers' Stress Relief Night

Every Thursday

4-5 pm FREE Smorgasbord

4-8pm Shamrock Street with Charlie Bongiovi & Larry Lynch playing your favorite Irish Music & Top 40s

8-12 pm Entertainment by Various Bands

Breakfast Every SUNDAY 9am-12pm



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## BACK TO SCHOOL SPECIALS!

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"My husband and I worked out in virtually every gym in the area & have joined countless fitness classes. Master Han's Adult Exec U Fit is the best! Through attending classes 2x a week, we have developed lots of confidence, patience and have a great new outlook. I am much calmer and do not get stresses as often! AND, WE ARE IN GREAT SHAPE! My husband is getting 6 pack abs and we both look and feel better than ever! Plus... We are learning lots of great self defense! I feel so much more confident when I walk down the street."

Jan and Marc Peterson

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- TAI CHI

US Academy of Martial Arts  
East Longmeadow  
Stop & Shop Plaza



EDUCATORS & YOUR FAMILIES ENJOY 1 FREE

## ATTENTION ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVES

If you have not returned the Association Representative List for your building for the 2003–2004 school year, please do so as soon as possible. Send it to: SEA, 1000 Wilbraham Road, Springfield, MA 01109.

**Do Not Send It Through Interoffice Mail.**

## **SCHOOL CENTERED DECISION MAKING ELECTION GUIDELINES ELECTION OF TEACHER REPRESENTATIVES**

- A secret ballot election is to be held during the Faculty meeting in October.
- Only members of the bargaining unit are eligible to vote.
- Teachers can self nominate.
- Candidates must address the Faculty orally or in writing as to why they wish to be elected.
- A candidate is elected when s/he has received a majority of the votes cast plus 1 (50% plus 1 vote) by teachers present and voting by secret ballot. e.g. If 75 teachers cast ballots, a candidate must receive at least 38 votes to be elected.
- Teachers are members of the Team immediately upon being elected.

For further information refer to Article 6 (pages 18 and 19) of your "Agreement Between The Springfield School Committee and the Springfield Education Association."

## **HAS YOUR ADDRESS CHANGED?**

If your address, telephone number, or e-mail address has changed, please e-mail the SEA office at [contact@seateachers.com](mailto:contact@seateachers.com) or call us at 782-8300. We will also inform the MTA and the NEA of the address change so you can receive the mailings from our affiliated associations (and your union card, which you should have received by now).

## **NOTES FROM THE PRESIDENT**

- Get ready for American Education Week 2003! Join NEA November 16 – 22 to recognize the educators and school staff who keep our children safe and healthy, as well as help them achieve. You can download tools to help launch a successful celebration in our own community at <http://list.nea.org/t/545902/894674/46/0/>
- Just for New Teachers... The MTA for Educational Quality and Professional Development, New Teacher Committee, and Professional Development Council are sponsoring a full day (6.5 contact hours) of professional development for new teachers. Two sites have been chosen for the conference. On Monday, November 3, 2003 from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., the conference will be held in the Metro West Area. On Friday, November 7, 2003 from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., the conference will be held in the Springfield area. The cost is \$45.00 per person and includes: general sessions, workshops, all instructional materials, morning coffee, and lunch. For more information and to register go to [www.massteacher.org](http://www.massteacher.org).
- The Community Anti-Drug Coalition of Hampden County, Inc provides substance abuse prevention services throughout Hampden County. They deliver presentations to adults and youths, provide prevention materials, and participate in community events, health fairs, and seminars. Their services are provided to businesses, schools, organizations, and individuals at no cost. Check out [www.drugfreemass.com](http://www.drugfreemass.com).

