

The Springfield Teacher

The UNITY newsletter of the Springfield Education Association 1000 Wilbraham Road, Springfield, MA 01109
TEL: 782-8300 FAX: 783-8812 E-mail: contact@seateachers.com Website: www.seateachers.com

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

During the recent city elections, the mayoral candidates spent some time commenting on who should be the superintendent in the Springfield Public Schools. There was very little talk about what the superintendent should be doing.

We need to have teachers communicate with members of both the School Committee and the Finance Control Board to express what we believe needs to be happening in this district to improve the quality of education for the children in our charge. We also need to communicate what our concerns are -- concerns such as:

- Why do we apply for grants without regard for the impact on the district when the grant money runs out (or even before --i.e. the Renaissance school)?
- Why don't we assess the effectiveness of the grant to see if it accomplished what it set out to do?
- Has the implementation of the Lesson Plan Bank been harmful to the educational process in classrooms?
- What is the affect of the Pupil Progression Plan on our students?
- Why does the district accept teachers with little or no classroom experience into Project LEAD when the district requires 7 – 9 years of experience to become an ILS or TL?
- How is it, with our new boundary plan, some schools have significantly larger class sizes than other schools?

You know the issues that never seem to be addressed! You know the issues that have a tremendous impact on our working conditions, which are our students' learning conditions! E-mail, write and/or call members of the School Committee and Finance Control Board with your thoughts (go to www.seateachers.com and click on Contact School Committee Members for contact information). It is high time that we the workers/practitioners have a voice in setting the agenda for this district.





I have received many e-mails and phone calls from teachers regarding issues related to preparation time. Below are some of the concerns teachers had and how the Contract addresses these concerns.

Question:

Is elementary prep time supposed to be 40 continuous minutes per day? And if so, does it not also apply to “non-classroom teachers” (example ESOL) or can the prep time for non-classroom teachers be broken up into bits and pieces of say - 30 minutes and 10 minutes (or 25 and 15) at different parts of the day?

Answer:

Article V, Working conditions, Section L. 5. states:

“All teachers (Early Childhood and K-8) 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 each day.

Question:

Can my principal schedule meetings during my prep time?

Answer:

Article V, Section S. Preparation Periods states:

“Preparation periods are those periods during which a teacher is preparing lessons, materials and instructional strategies often in collaboration with other teachers or any other educational activity that the teacher, in his/her professional judgment, deems necessary for his/her effective classroom performance.” You do not need to meet with the principal during that time, but you must meet with him/her, which means meeting before or after the school day.

Question:

My principal wants me to notify him if I plan to leave the building during my prep period. Do I need to do this?

Answer:

Article V, Section T. Length of Work Day Sub-section 5 states:

“All teachers may leave the building during school hours providing they have no assignments scheduled. A teacher will sign out as he leaves the building and sign in as he returns; in time to meet his next regularly scheduled assignment.” There should be a sign out log sheet located in the main office of each school and, as long as you sign out and back in, there is no need to personally notify the principal.

Spring Contract Courses

The Unit A Contract calls for the Springfield School Committee to offer two graduate courses per semester for Unit A staff members. Three courses are being offered this spring. The three offerings for the Spring 2008 semester appear below.

Physics First

Date/Time: Thursdays, 4:00 P.M. – 7:00 P.M. beginning January 10 to April 3, 2008
(*Snow Day: April 10th*)
Location: Springfield Central High School, Room 302
Instructor: Dr. Hilton A. Abbott
Audience: Secondary Science Teachers, preferably Grade 9 teachers

Course Description:

This course is designed to prepare teachers to present Physics to high school students. With content aligned to the Massachusetts Frameworks, teachers will learn principles of physics, perform lab experiments, engage in problem solving, and practice demonstrations. Participants will learn by active participation in class discussions, laboratory experience, and group solution of physics problems requiring the use of mathematics. Lecturing will be minimal. Participants will be personally responsible for reading, thinking about physics, completing homework questions and problems, and maintaining written documentation of their learning. Each participant will be expected to perform one classroom demonstration illustrating a physical principle. Weekly homework will be assigned. It will include reading, questions about physical principles, and physics problems to solve which require the use of mathematics.

Required Text: *Physics, a First Course by Tom HSU*

Revitalizing Writing in the Content Areas for Grades 3 – 8

Date/Time: Wednesdays, 4:00 P.M. – 7:00 P.M. beginning January 9 to April 2, 2008 no classes
February 20, 2008 (*Snow Day: April 9th*)
Location: Professional Development Center
Instructor: Western MA Writing Project Staff
Audience: Suitable for Grades 3 – 8 Teachers, up to 20 participants

Course Description:

The course is designed for teachers of grades 3 – 8 to provide participants an opportunity to explore current practices in the teaching of “writing to learn” in math, science and social studies while engag-

(Continued from page 3)

ing in these practices themselves. They will have the opportunity to examine the composition standards of the Massachusetts ELA curriculum framework and to reflect on the application of these standards to their own classroom practice. In order to experience the ways writing can improve learning, participants will also work on their own writing in multiple genres.

Sponsored by Western Mass Writing Project at UMass Amherst and partially funded by a grant from the **National Writing Project Urban Sites Network**, teachers will receive 3 graduate-level credits from the University of Massachusetts upon satisfactory completion of the course. Funding is provided through the Springfield Public Schools, Professional Development.

Literacy for Student Achievement

Date/Time: Thursdays, 4:00 P.M. – 7:00 P.M. beginning January 10 to April 3, 2008
 (Snow Day: April 10th)

Location: Professional Development Center, Room 203

Instructor: Fran Shute, Springfield Public Schools

Audience: Suitable for Secondary Teachers

Course Description:

The objective of this course will be to focus on the foundations of content literacy and literacy design principles as they affect teaching practices and student learning. Participants will familiarize themselves with literacy practices as they connect to the Massachusetts Frameworks. During these sessions, students will further explore, analyze, and discuss literacy practices through a series of reading and written responses; observe model lessons taught in four major content areas; while also interacting as learners. Students will work together in a small group format to plan units and lessons using the content literacy template to guide and deepen their knowledge of the district curricula and to improve teacher effectiveness and student achievement. Project-based construction and presentation of a 15 minute literacy-based module lesson and written lesson plan connected to the Principles of Learning and Standards-Based practices will be used to assess each participant's course work, along with consistent weekly course work and student attendance.

Required Reading/Text

Selected Articles and Handouts will be provided by the instructor

Teachers interested in enrolling in any of the courses should do so in writing to:

James Allfrey, Director of Human Resources
195 State Street
Springfield, MA 01102-1410
by **November 30, 2007**

Are You Required To Take The Massachusetts Tests for Educator Licensure? Help Has Arrived!

What kind of help? Instructional sessions will be conducted to help prepare you for the Communication, Literacy Skills, English Language Learner, General Curriculum, and Foundations of Reading portion of the test.

Where? All of the tutorial sessions will be held at the Meline Kasparian Professional Development Center.

When? See the schedule for 2007-2008 below. The sessions begin promptly at 4:00 and conclude at 5:30.

What is the cost? FREE!

SCHEDULE OF TUTORIAL SESSIONS 2007-2008

TEST: **November 17**

Tutorial: November 16

TEST: **March 8**

Tutorial: February 25, 26, 28, 29 March 3, 4, 5, 6, 7

TEST: **May 10**

Tutorial: April 28, May 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9

TEST: **July 19**

Tutorial: June 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 11, 12, 13

Test Registration Bulletins are available at the Office of the Licensure Mentors located at the PD Center, area colleges, or can be sent to your home if you call (413) 256-2892. If you have any questions, please contact Pat Coonerty, Supervisor of Licensure, at (750-2148).

I Can Do It

Routines, procedures, and strategies for working with students who exhibit challenging behaviors were a few of the topics discussed at the MTA *I Can Do It* workshop held on Saturday, October 27, 2007. This workshop was a joint initiative supported by the SEA, the MTA, and the Springfield Public Schools. SPS printed both handbooks that were distributed and picked up the nominal fee for the participants. SEA provided a continental breakfast and pizza from Leone's for lunch. MTA provided the expertise through two of their Professional Development Associates, Judy Ferrari and Carol Liff.

Thirty-four teachers voluntarily gave up their Saturday to learn more about classroom management. Most of the thirty-four teachers have 1-5 years teaching experience. Elaine Olive, a veteran teacher, accompanied some of the newer teachers at Balliet in order to support them back in the classroom. A student teacher, Jillian Generazio, Washington Elementary School, also attended.

After a spirited group discussion of what it means to create a *community of learners*, two participants, Gail Mailhott-Foster from Duggan and Elisabeth Budd from Kiley, shared the following acrostic

Children and teachers

Organized

Motivated

Model

Understand where to go for answers

Network for support

Internalize

Teach

Yes, I can



Open-minded

Fun

Listening to teachers and others

Engaged

Active learners

Respectful

Never give up

Excited

Responsible

Spend adequate time trying



SEA Executive Board Members



From left to right: Seated - Carolyn Harris, Recording Secretary; Maureen Heady, Member-at-Large; Mary Chamberlain, Retired Member-at-Large. 1st row standing - Yvette Ramos-Bishop; Member-at-Large; Susan Fielding, Treasurer; Barbara Dismuke, Member-at-Large; Ronnie Tillman, Member-at-Large; Margaret Fitzpatrick, Assistant Treasurer; 2nd row standing - Dennis Nelson Jr., Member-at-Large; Marianne Gleason, Member-at-Large; Arlindo Alves, Member-at-Large; Tim Collins, President; Mike DaFonseca, Member-at-Large; Peter Reese, Vice President. Not shown - Brenda Czuchra, Member-at-Large.

The SEA Executive Board's goal is to increase member activity through communication and listening so that SEA membership develops and shares power to obtain and ensure the working conditions necessary to guarantee a quality public education for all students in Springfield.

The members of the Executive Board are the President, Vice President, Recording Secretary, Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, and eleven Members-At-Large (which includes one retired member). They are elected every two years by the membership. The Executive Board members attend two board meetings a month and are expected to attend 80% of all scheduled Executive Board and Legislative Board meetings. Executive Board members are often involved with different subcommittees and special projects throughout the year.

As defined by the SEA Bylaws, the job of the Executive Board is to develop policies of the Association with input from membership and recommend those policies to the Legislative Board for adoption. Specifically, the Executive Board works with the budget. It is their responsibility to approve or amend and recommend an annual budget to the Legislative Board. The Executive Board can also approve or amend line item adjustments to the adopted budget. The Executive Board establishes/abolishes ad hoc committees with two-thirds (2/3) vote of approval and establishes accountability requirements for delegates to the MTA and NEA annual meetings.

Election for One Member-at-Large Position

The Executive Board election for one Member-at-Large vacancy will take place during extended day on Monday, December 17 or Tuesday December 18, 2007. Self-nomination forms were distributed at the November 15, 2007 Legislative Board meeting. Please see an Association Representative in your building for the information. The forms are also available on our web site. Go to www.seateachers.com, click on "About Us." Under the section titled "Executive Board," click on "download self-nomination form." **Completed self-nomination forms must be received at the SEA office no later than 4:00 P.M. on Thursday, November 29, 2007.**

Thank You, Association Reps

Thanks to all of the Association Reps who have stepped up this year to do the work of the union in their buildings. Some of you are first-time reps and some are experienced reps. No matter what your background experience is, please know that the people working in the SEA office are here to help you in any possible way: Tim Collins-SEA President, Arlindo Alves-SEA Professional Relations Associate, Nancy deProsse-MTA consultant, and Mary Chamberlain-SEA Executive Board retired member. We will be glad to meet with you at your building or at the SEA office before or after school. All you need to do is call the SEA office at 782-8300 and ask for one of us.

Some Tips for Reps

Schedule regular short meetings with each other and make a plan to share responsibilities such as:

- **E-mail:** Who opens e-mail on a daily basis? That should be the person with the responsibility to open all SEA e-mails and pass along the information to the other reps. When that person is designated, please e-mail Sandi Forni-Torres to let her know – sfornitorres@seateachers.com. Please indicate *association rep e-mail* in the subject line of the e-mail.
- **Pick-ups:** Who will be responsible for the pick-ups at the SEA office? This person should also open e-mails on a daily basis because the quickest and most efficient way to communicate when a pick-up is necessary is through an e-mail. Sandi needs that information also – sfornitorres@seateachers.com. Please indicate *SEA pick-up* in the subject line of the e-mail.
- **Grievances:** Who will handle the level one grievances in your building? Arlindo Alves will be holding Grievance Training sessions during the year to help in this area. If all the reps in your building are not experienced reps or teachers, please call us for help!
- **Communication Network:** How will you get information to all SEA members in your building? Create a Communication Network. The reps from 15 schools who attended the Legislative Board training in October learned some tips for creating the network. If you would like to learn more about this, call or e-mail Mary Chamberlain at cranberryknoll2230@yahoo.com. Please put *rep communication network* in the subject line.
- **10-Minute Meetings:** Have a 10-minute meeting before the monthly SEA Legislative Board meeting to gather issues and concerns to bring to the meeting. Hold another 10-minute meeting after the L Board meeting to report back to the staff and update them on things you learned at the meeting. Too many meetings? Remember to keep them short – just 10 minutes!

What are the Powers and Duties of Association Reps?

According to the SEA bylaws, the Legislative Board members:

- Will meet once a month (Remember to sign in!)
- Will vote whether or not to adopt or amend general policy recommended by the SEA Executive Board
- Shall implement general policy
- Shall approve or amend the Executive Board's recommended budget
- Shall act as a liaison between SEA and building members, distributing SEA communications and keeping their members informed of L Board policies
- Shall have a vote in all areas of the Legislative Board and can recommend policies.

REMINDER EXTENDED DAY

There is an extended day every week, even on weeks during which we work fewer than five days. The School Centered Decision Making Team in each school determines the day of the week on which the extended day will occur and also determines an alternate day in the event the extended day falls on a holiday, vacation and/or a snow day.

In particular this school year, we return from the holiday vacation on Wednesday, January 2, 2008. Extended day will have to be held either Wednesday, January 2 or Thursday, January 3, 2008 as determined by the School Centered Decision Team.

There may be occasions where a double extended day is being contemplated. Double extended days can be set only by the S.C.D.M. team and then **only after approval is received from BOTH the Superintendent of Schools and the President of the SEA. The request for approval must come from the S.C.D.M. Team.**

Any request for a double extended day program must be made, in writing, by the S.C.D.M. Team to both the Superintendent and the President of the SEA. The written request should detail the nature of the program to be conducted and an explanation as to why the double extended day is necessary for the successful implementation of the program.

The double extended day policy is written in the Springfield Public School's *Policies and Procedures Reference Manual, page 23.*

Attention Instructional Leader Specialists

The Springfield Public Schools and the Springfield Education Association will be working collaboratively to write a job description for the Instructional Leader Specialist position. Any ILS who wishes to be considered for membership on the SEA Committee that will be working on the job description with administration should e-mail the SEA at contact@seateachers.com. Please put ILS Job Description Committee in the subject line.

Any ILS who would like to submit suggestions as to what should be in the job description can e-mail them to SEA at contact@seateachers.com. Please put ILS job description in the subject line.

SPECIAL VALUE FOR TEACHERS

FREE STAPLES GIFT CARD When you open a new checking account at STCU Credit Union.

* Some restrictions apply see details below



Become a member of STCU Credit Union and open a new checking account and we'll give you a \$25.00 STAPLES gift card.

If you're already a STCU Member, **INTRODUCE A FELLOW TEACHING PROFESSIONAL, family member or friend** to STCU Credit Union and if that individual opens a new checking account you'll receive a \$25.00 gift card and, we'll give a \$25.00 gift card to that new member.

It's a limited time offer and could end at anytime so act quickly!



You'll Feel Right At HomeSM



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STCU Credit Union provides service to anyone who works or lives in Hampden, Hampshire or Franklin counties.



NEW CHECKING ACCOUNTS Requirements: Checking account must be a new account and arrange to have direct deposit of recurring income source. This offer applies to new checking accounts opened at STCU Credit Union only and offer is limited to one per member. Offer good on personal accounts only. Minimum opening deposit is \$25 in savings to establish membership. Gift awarded when account is open and STCU reserves the right to substitute a gift of similar value. Checking accounts will be debited \$25 if closed within one year of opening. Gift Card Value may be considered as earned interest.

Springfield Teachers Club Membership

Hopefully, by the time this newsletter is distributed, you will have noticed something in your school about Springfield Teachers Club (STC) membership. Your membership dues make it possible for the STC to continue. It's a worthwhile \$7.00 investment!

For new staff, here's the lowdown on what the STC does. The STC has been around since 1897 - over 100 years!! The club was originally established as a social club, which brought teachers together to share ideas. Speakers were brought in to provide professional development. The club also sponsored dances and card parties.

The STC eventually evolved to providing services for the children of the Springfield Public Schools. Our Relief Fund has provided relief such as free eye exams and glasses, hearing exams, wigs for cancer patients, and donations for fire victims, to name a few. Our Scholarship Fund provides eleven to thirteen \$500.00 scholarships each spring to Springfield seniors. Also, we recently made a large donation to the new Children's Chorus of Springfield.

For teachers, the STC would make a donation to a teacher in need, for example, as the result of an accident. Each December, we distribute cookies to retired teachers who are in nursing homes or homebound.

So when your STC Rep or Principal asks you to join- please do! Your support is needed to continue the mission of the STC!

Lisa Hraba
STC President
Mary M. Walsh School

NEA Executive Committee Candidate Fund Raising

Many SEA members who have been past delegates to the MTA annual meeting and/or the NEA Representative Assembly know Len Paolillo. Len has been active in both the MTA and NEA for many years. Len is running for a seat on the NEA Executive Committee. This is a national campaign. It is very expensive to mount a competitive national campaign. Many past delegates from Springfield are helping Len by making a donation to his campaign. If you would like to make a donation of any amount, it would be greatly appreciated. Please make your check payable to: The Campaign to Elect Len Paolillo. Your check can be mailed to either Sue Fielding or Ronnie Tillman in care of the SEA office, 1000 Wilbraham Road, Springfield, 01109

Massachusetts Teachers' Retirement Board Election

The MTA recommends Karen Mitchell for the Massachusetts Teachers' Retirement Board.

Karen Mitchell has been a classroom teacher for 21 years and is a seasoned activist for Massachusetts teachers. Karen is a leader of the Education Association of Plymouth and Carver and a member of the MTA Board of Directors. She is a skilled negotiator with extensive experience representing teachers in contract disputes and arbitration. On the MTRB, Karen will be a strong and active guardian of our benefits and an advocate for teachers statewide. The MTA recommends Karen Mitchell because she is the candidate who can be trusted to protect our retirement.

VOTE! Your future depends on it!

Don't throw your ballot away! Ballots are due by December 10, 2007.

Association Representative Training

Training for Association Representatives was held on October 12 and 13, 2007. Topics such as Energizing, Organizing, and Mobilizing our Members, Building Union Power in our Schools, and the Grievance Process were discussed. Kudos to the following Association Representatives who attended the training: Lisa Pasay and Connie Ryder, Balliet; Dan Manseau, Boland; Ludmila Tsairidis, Brookings; Debbie Askwith, Brunton; Maureen O'Shea, Forest Park; Shauna Barbeau and Mary Dickson, Glenwood; Brenda Czuchra, Homer; Charlesetta Smith, Johnson; Carolyn Harris and Shirley Peaks, Kennedy; Elisabeth Budd and Robert Francesca, Kiley; Marianne Gleason, Liberty; Carol Alminas, Lincoln; Elaine Karalekas, Claire LaBonte, and Bridget Talbot, Milton Bradley; Joyce Welch, Pottenger; Carl Skeene, SAFE Middle School; Victor Anoje, Irma Matos, and John Scott, Sci Tech; Erin Bordeau, Van

Printed Contract UPDATE!

The Contract has been printed and will be distributed via the Association Representatives in your building. A rep from your building will be called for a special pick up provided an updated building list has been submitted to the SEA office.

In September, building lists were given to Association Representatives so that each teacher would verify the contact information and make changes if needed. Once updated, the lists need to be returned to the SEA office. We are still waiting for several updated building lists.

When the building list has been updated and returned, the Contract will be distributed to your school. The SEA needs this updated list first!

SEA Association Representative Election REMINDER!!

If you have not held your SEA Association Representative election as yet, please do so as soon as possible. There is one representative for every fifteen members, e.g. 28 members – 2 representatives.

Association Representatives: please complete and submit the election result form that was provided in a mailing in September. If you did not receive one, call the SEA office at 413-782-8300.

ATTENTION ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVES

If you have not returned your school's updated building list, which was distributed in September, please do so as soon as possible. Send it to: SEA, Attention Charlene, 1000 Wilbraham Road, Springfield, MA 01109 or fax it to 413-783-8812.

**Do NOT Send It Through
Interoffice Mail!**

NEW ENGLAND CONSULTING SERVICE

GRADUATE COURSES FOR EDUCATORS

3 Graduate Credits
67.5 PDP's
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**Consensus Building in School
Related Situations**
Course number - 14.771

Instructor: **Michael Smist**
This course is appropriate for all K-12 Educators

FIVE SATURDAYS

DECEMBER 1, 8, 2007
JANUARY 5, 19, 26, 2008

For information and registration call:

(239) 498-9451
or
(413) 596-3309



President's Notes

- With all you have to do, getting to a bookstore may seem impossible. That's why NEA has developed an online bookstore that contains dozens of professional titles just for you. It's called the NEA Professional Library. Find out what's new at the Professional Library by subscribing to *First Edition!*

First Edition is a free monthly e-newsletter that is packed with the latest publications, "must reads" and resources that address the issues you face everyday. With your FREE *First Edition* subscription, you have access to special online sales, educator discounts and great gift ideas – all in one convenient place.

Convenience, professional resources and special discounts...delivered right to your inbox. **Sign up for *First Edition* today at www.nea.org/books and click "Newsletter Signup."**

- **Pop Goes the Educator** - on screen and in music, educators get some eyebrow-raising treatment. Check out the pop culture timeline, take the poll, and vent about Hollywood's take on teachers and ESPs. Go to www.nea.org/ref?popculture.
- **You've got game** - Today's hottest video games are more complicated, and educational, than ever. Find lesson ideas and test drive hit titles at www.nea.org/ref?games.
- **Art Therapy** - A troubled student might have left school if not for his art therapist. See his art work and hear that therapist's commentary. Go to www.nea.org/ref?artherapy.
- More than 9 out of 10 teachers agree that color enhances learning. Engage your students with all 20 vibrant EXPO® Dry Erase Markers and bring the power of color to your classroom today. Go to expomarkers.com to find lesson plans, teaching tips and other classroom ideas. While visiting their web site, teachers can enter to win a \$25,000 classroom makeover!

<p>EXECUTIVE BOARD</p> <p>PRESIDENT Timothy Collins</p> <p>VICE PRESIDENT Peter Reese</p> <p>TREASURER Susan Fielding</p> <p>ASSISTANT TREASURER Margaret Fitzpatrick</p> <p>RECORDING SECRETARY Carolyn Harris</p>	<p>AT-LARGE MEMBERS</p> <p>Arlindo Alves Brenda Czuchra Michael DaFonseca Barbara Dismuke Marianne Gleason Maureen Heady Dennis Nelson, Jr. Yvette Ramos-Bishop Ronna Tillman</p> <p>RETIRED AT-LARGE MEMBER Mary Chamberlain</p>	<p>SEA E-MAIL ADDRESSES</p> <p>Timothy Collins contact@seateachers.com</p> <p>Charlene Lonczak clonczak@seateachers.com</p> <p>Success Press successpress@seateachers.com</p> <p>Arlindo Alves aalves@seateachers.com</p> <p>Sandra Forni-Torres sfornitorres@seateachers.com</p> <p>E-mail General Information or Questions to: contact@seateachers.com</p> <p style="text-align: right;"> helping teachers teach</p> <p style="text-align: center;"> 263-c</p>
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