

# 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*

I would like to thank all the teachers who participated in the "Morning Drive-Time Picketing" over the past two weeks. I would also like to thank teachers who got involved in the mayoral and school committee campaigns. I encourage all of you who were involved in the campaigns of successful candidates to reach out to them for their help to move the collective bargaining process forward.

I ask all of you to write letters to the editor regarding our current collective bargaining situation. Below is an example of one of the letters I wrote.

Letters to the editor

*Springfield Republican*

P. O. Box 2350

Springfield, MA 01102-2350

Dear Editor:

I am disappointed in the press/media coverage of the financial crisis in the city of Springfield. Over and over again, in all segments of the press/media, the number of police and firefighters who have lost their jobs has been reported. The number of teachers who have lost their jobs has never been accurately reported.

Over the last two years, the Springfield Public Schools have lost at least 190 teaching positions and 132 teachers actually lost their jobs. The student enrollment has continued to grow. Teachers are into their second year without a Contract and no raises. During this same time, federal, state and local regulations have required more and more from teachers, and teachers have answered the call for the children of this city.

The Mayor, through the implementation of state statute 656, has denied all city workers their raises, including their contractual step raises. He has also denied movement on the salary schedule for teachers who receive advanced education degrees. Teachers are the only municipal workers who are required by the state to earn a Master's degree. They receive no reimbursement for the cost of earning their degrees and the compensation they receive for these degrees pales in comparison as to how police are compensated by the city for equivalent degrees.

Last June, the School Committee and the Mayor extended the Superintendent's contract. The School Committee and the Mayor also extended the administrators (Unit B) contract (which expired the same

*President's Message, on page 2*

**President's Message.**

*Continued from page 1*

time as the teachers' contract) until a new settlement is reached. Springfield teachers have a bargained and signed *Letter of Agreement* from the School Committee to extend their contract but the Mayor and the School Committee have refused to vote to honor this *Letter of Agreement*.

Springfield teachers deserve to be treated with the same respect that the Mayor and the School Committee have shown the Superintendent and the Unit B administrators. The Mayor and School Committee have a responsibility to honor the commitment that they made at the bargaining table. The extension of the teachers' contract is a no cost issue for the city in terms of dollars. The failure of the Mayor and the School Committee to extend the teachers' contract will have a major cost in terms of teachers' morale and labor harmony in this city.

I urge all Springfield citizens to tell their elected officials to honor the commitments they have made—extend the teachers' contract and bargain in good faith. To continue to do otherwise denies the hardworking teachers of the city their dignity and the respect they deserve.

Sincerely,  
Timothy T. Collins  
President

To further assist you in drafting your letter, additional sample letters and talking points can be found on the SEA web site at [www.seateachers.com](http://www.seateachers.com).

Together we can and will make a difference.

Yours in unity,



**NEW TEACHER COMMITTEE**

The SEA's New Teacher Committee is a committee that supports new teachers and addresses their concerns and issues. At the present time, the committee has a few hard-working members. However, we would like to recruit new members for this committee.

In the next 5-10 years, beginning teachers will comprise a majority of the teaching staff of the Springfield Public Schools. It is important that we have a committee that is up and running with their issues and concerns. Help us out! E-mail ([contact@seateachers.com](mailto:contact@seateachers.com)) or call the SEA today and sign up for the New Teacher Committee.

The next two scheduled meetings are Wednesday, November 12 and Wednesday, December 10. The meetings begin at 3:45 and are held at the SEA office.

**ARE YOU REQUIRED TO TAKE THE MASSACHUSETTS TEST FOR EDUCATOR LICENSURE? HELP HAS ARRIVED!**

**What kind of help?** Tutors will conduct help sessions to prepare you for the Communication and Literacy Skills portion of the test. The focus of the sessions will be on reading comprehension, writing, vocabulary, and dictation.

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

**When?** See the schedule for 2003-2004 below. The sessions will run from 3:30-5:00. You may come in at any time during those hours.

**What is the cost?** FREE!

**SCHEDULE OF TUTORIAL SESSIONS 2003-2004**

**TEST:**                    **November 22**  
(Registering after October 10 incurs a late fee.)

Tutorial Sessions: November 14, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21

**TEST :**                    **February 28** (Register by January 16 to avoid late fee.)

Tutorial Sessions: February 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27

**TEST:**                    **May 15** (Register by April 2 to avoid late fee.)

Tutorial Sessions: May 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14

**TEST:**                    **July 24** (Register by June 11 to avoid fee.)

Tutorial Sessions: June 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11

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 Mary Chamberlain or Linda Christofori (750-2148).

# POP QU?Z

by  
*Peter Dupuis*



**1. My principal openly “scolds” teachers in hallways and in their classrooms. During a staff meeting, the principal spoke harshly to a staff member, actually insulting her in front of her peers. Are these incidents grievable?**

Yes. Article 21 section A states, “When a principal must talk with a teacher regarding events unacceptable to the principal ....those discussions shall not occur in the presence of parents, pupils, teachers or non-professional employees.” Section B of the same article states, “No adverse comments shall be given to teachers....in the presence of pupils, parents or other teachers.” In short, if the principal has something to say it is their obligation to do it in private. We all know the system and the people in it, principals included, are under tremendous strain, but this does not excuse them from communicating with their staff in a way that is both courteous and professional.

**2. How do I apply for paid paternity leave?**

You cannot. There is no contractual clause covering paternity leave. There is paid maternity leave for mothers immediately following childbirth. This leave is considered Medical Disability and is charged against the mother’s accumulated sick days. There is also extended, unpaid Maternity Leave (Article 13). However, if the father wishes to stay home following delivery, the School Department considers this unpaid leave. If there are complications with the birth which constitute a “medical emergency” requiring personal care from the father, he can apply for Emergency Sick Leave, sometimes called “Family Leave.” Remember, Emergency Sick Leave requires the teacher submit a “Statement of Circumstances” to the personnel office. It is the teacher’s responsibility to submit this statement, not the responsibility of principal or the principal’s secretary.

**3. If I have written a student up and sent them to the office, do I have to accept them back into my class with no explanation of discipline from administration?**

No. Article 7 of the Contract calls for the teacher to present a written report of any incident resulting in referral. There is a standard form for writing referrals. The form, on page 82 of the Contract, has an area for administration to report back to the teacher the disciplinary action taken. Disciplinary actions are clearly defined in the new Code of Conduct. The disciplinary actions in the code are to be standard, that is, they are not open to interpretation by administrators.

**4. I am a new teacher and I’m a little nervous about my evaluations. Can I ask to have my SEA building representative sit in on my evaluation meetings?**

According to the Federal Statutes known as your Weingarten Rights, you can have an SEA Representative present at the post-observation meeting. Following your post-observation meeting, you have 15 school days to have your written rebuttal to all or any part of your evaluation. You can only be observed by a certified administrator, not another teacher or counselor. You are also entitled to have representation at any meeting which could result in any form of discipline. If you are asked to meet with administration, you have the right to ask the purpose of the meeting. If you feel uncomfortable about the meeting, you should ask for representation.

## WHAT'S OUR UNION DOING FOR US?

*Mary Chamberlain*

There are many participants in the work of the union. This month I would like to highlight two Boards who work hard to keep you informed of SEA policies.

The members of the Executive Board are the President, Vice President, Recording Secretary, Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, and ten members-at-large. They are elected every two years to represent you. The members attend two Executive Board meetings a month. However, the time commitment goes well beyond those meetings as they often are involved with different subcommittees and special projects throughout the year. As defined by the SEA's Bylaws, their job is to develop policies of the Association with input from membership and recommend those policies to the Legislative Board for adoption. They also work with the budget. Their job is to approve or amend and recommend an annual budget to the Legislative Board. They can also approve or amend line item adjustments to the adopted budget.

The Legislative Board meets monthly. The members of this Board are elected for a one year term at each school. There can be one Association Representative elected for each fifteen members of the faculty. Their duties are voting to adopt or amend general policy recommended by the Executive Board, implementing general policy, and approving or amending Executive Board's recommended budget. They also are your main source of communication as they pick up materials at the SEA office and then put the materials in your school mailboxes. They also run 10 minute meetings at your school. The objectives of 10-minute meetings are to encourage two-way communication between the SEA and its members and to seek involvement in the SEA and its decision-making. One 10-minute meeting takes place before the Legislative Board meeting so that the Association Reps can bring your issues to the meeting, and the other 10-minute meeting takes place after the Legislative Board meeting in order to share the latest information with you. The Association Reps are also instrumental at the beginning level of a grievance.

Four more of the Legislative Board meetings are General Membership Meetings. That means you!

**Save these dates: December 11, February 5, April 1, and May 6.**

The meetings start at 3:45 and are held at the SEA office - 1000 Wilbraham Road, right across from Duggan Middle School. The April General Membership Meeting is designated as the Annual Meeting. Please come to all of these meetings and find out what your union is doing for you.



## WEB SITE NEWS

### *Are you in need of.....*

- .... a Professional Development Fund Application?
- .... *Springfield Meds* information and forms?
- .... a *Massachusetts Child* Application?
- .... the past three years' salary schedules for retirement?

### *Would you like to.....*

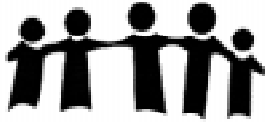
- .... send an e-mail to your elected officials?
- .... review up-to-date information regarding our contract negotiations?
- .... see the actions we are taking to unite in an effort to get our message out?
- .... view and/or print the "*Agreement Between the Springfield School Committee and the Springfield Education Association?*"
- .... read the current & past issues of the *Springfield Teacher* newsletter?

## The SEA Web Site is the Place to Visit!

We have been busy developing more and more pages and links to keep you abreast of what's happening in your union and to help make obtaining information easier for you. We're even trying out a members' only chat room. There's a lot happening every day on the site. So, check it out! Go to [www.seateachers.com](http://www.seateachers.com). To get you hooked on the site, we're challenging you to a quiz (see page 5 for quiz.) Don't be left out! Get hooked on the SEA Web Site!

## 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).



## THE MASSACHUSETTS CHILD

*The Massachusetts Child*, a non-profit charitable corporation started by the Massachusetts Teachers Association in 1997, aims to help children in need. The program offers two kinds of grants: The Matching Grant Program and the Catastrophic Grant Program.

**The Matching Grant Program** is designed to assist local associations meet the modest, immediate medical, clothing and educational needs of students in short-term crisis. Financial assistance will be shared between the MTA and the SEA. Examples of the kinds of needs that may be funded include:

### Medical

- Basic medical exams
- Basic dental procedures
- Eye exams and glasses
- Prescriptions

### Clothing

- Outerwear
- Footwear

### Educational

- Mandatory test fees on a limited basis
- Application fees (limited to the application fee to one Massachusetts public higher educational institution)
- Books, supplies, materials (which are not normally provided by the educational institution)
- Educational field trips

**The Catastrophic Grant Program** provides emergency grants of up to \$750 to meet the needs of individual children who are experiencing catastrophic emergency crises. The grant is funded by the MTA. Categories qualifying for a catastrophic emergency grant involve a major loss due to:

- Fire or other natural disasters
- Death of caregiver resulting in displacement of the child
- Extreme medical expenses/emergencies
- Family hardship

If you have a student who has a financial need that you believe can be assisted through a grant from *The Massachusetts Child*, please go to the SEA web site at [www.seateachers.com](http://www.seateachers.com) to download an application or call the SEA office at 782-8300 for an application. The SEA Executive Board will review your request and you will be notified of the Board's determination of eligibility. We are pleased to be able to offer you this opportunity to lessen a hardship experienced by a Springfield public school student.



Visit the SEA web site at [www.seateachers.com](http://www.seateachers.com), find the answers to the questions below, and submit your answers via the "Contact Us" link on our home page. Type the information requested in the required fields, type your answers in the "Comment" area of the page, and submit.

The first 15 members to respond, via the "Contact Us" link from our web site's home page with the correct answers, will receive a coupon for a free pint of Ben and Jerry Ice Cream. The 16<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> members to respond, via the "Contact Us" link from our web site's home page with the correct answers, will receive a Dunkin Donuts "\$1.00 off" coupon. The first 2 members who also answer the bonus question correctly will each receive two "\$1.00 off" coupons for Dunkin Donuts in addition to the Ben and Jerry coupon.

**Question #1** Springfield teachers joined in Unity in front of City Hall on October 2, 2003. Signs held by some members expressed an equation of "New Math". What is that equation?

New Math ... \_\_\_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_\_.

**Question #2** What is the date of the 2003-2004 SEA Annual Membership Meetings? What time is the meeting **and** where is it being held?

**Question #3** Writing your legislators couldn't be easier. There's a direct link on the bottom of our home page. What information do you need to enter? By entering this information, where does the site bring you?

**Question #4** What are the titles of the nine (9) links accessible from the home page under "Links?"

**Question #5** What steps need to be taken to obtain a *Springfield Meds* form?

**Bonus Question** What information is required to access the "Members Area?" What item do all members have that would provide this required information?

## MAIL ORDER PRESCRIPTION PLANS

The **Express Scripts Mail Order** program has been in place for many years. This option allows plan members to receive a three month supply of prescribed medication for a single monthly co-payment.

To participate, the plan member obtains a form (from the Personnel Department at City Hall) and sends the completed form and appropriate co-payment(s), and the prescription(s) (**prescriptions may be faxed by the physician only**) in the provided envelope. The medication is mailed to the member's home. The prescription should be written for a three month supply with three refills. The member needs to call Express Scripts in the third month to arrange for the refill and method of co-payment.

The **Springfield Meds Mail Order** program is a voluntary option developed by the Insurance Advisory Committee. It operates in a similar manner as the Express Scripts. The completed forms, available at some workplaces, union offices, and on the Springfield Meds' web site at [www.springfieldmeds.com](http://www.springfieldmeds.com), can be mailed or faxed. The prescriptions can be mailed. Faxed prescriptions must come directly from the physician's office. The medication is sent insured to the member's home. This will require a signature for delivery. No co-payment is required for medication from Springfield Meds. A representative from Springfield Meds will call the member in the third month of the initial supply to arrange refills.

## REBATE PROGRAM

The Insurance Advisory Committee and the City of Springfield recognize that a very small number of employees will not be able to participate in the mail order plans, due to the nature of their medications. Certain substances cannot be mailed. Members who are prohibited from securing long-term medications through mail order, because the prescription is not available through either mail order plan, will have a portion of the increased co-payment amount refunded to them. For example, a member who must purchase a tier three medication on a monthly basis from a local pharmacy will have \$25.00 of the \$35.00 co-payment refunded. The employee will bring their receipt to Room 7 in the Richard E. Neal DPW building at 70 Tapley Street in Springfield. An insurance clerk will be available to assist in the processing of the refunds. Their office can be reached at 750-2777.

**If you have any further questions, the City of Springfield Personnel Office can be reached at 787-6057 or 787-6028.**

## JARGON JUMBLE:

Here are the answers for October's Jargon Jumble.

Chapter 766: MA law for Special Education

CSL: Community Service Learning

Cum folders: cumulative folders for student records

DOE: Department of Education

BOE: Board of Education

ELL: English Language Learners

MTEL: MA Test for Educator Licensure

ETL: Evaluation Team Leaders

IEP: Individual Education Plan

JLMC: Joint Labor Management Committee

LLD: Language Learning Disabled

MABE: MA Association of Bilingual Educators

SEA: Springfield Education Association

MTA: Massachusetts Teachers Association

NEA: National Education Association

COPE: Committee of Political Education

L Board: Legislative Board

NELSM: New England League of Middle Schools

Para: Paraprofessional

PIC: Parent Information Center

PTO : Parent Teacher Organization

SCDM: School Centered Decision Making Team

SPED: Special Education

SSV: Springfield School Volunteers

Title I: Federal monies for schools with a large population of economically disadvantaged students

AYP: Adequate Yearly Progress

LEP: Limited English Proficiency

SIP: School Improvement Plan

DIP: District Improvement Plan

NABE: National Association of Bilingual Educators

MCAS: MA Comprehensive Assessment System

E Board: Executive Board

PD: Professional Development

PTS: Professional Teacher Status

Congratulations to new teachers, Rose DeNucci at Forest Park and Leyda Andino at Kennedy, for having the most correct answers.

Do you know other Jargon Jumbles that should be added to the list? Send them to [successpress@seateachers.com](mailto:successpress@seateachers.com).



## NEW ENGLAND CONSULTING SERVICE

### GRADUATE COURSES FOR EDUCATORS

3 Graduate Credits

67.5 PDP's

4.5 CEU's in 5 classes

### Strategies for Effective Teaching

Course number - 14.769

Instructor: *Michael Smist*

This course is appropriate for all K-12 Educators

#### FIVE SATURDAYS

December 6, 13, 2003

January 10, 24, 31, 2004

For information and registration call:

(239) 498-9451

or

(413) 596-3309



## 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



## Donovan's Irish Pub

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A COVER  
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### VACATION RENTALS

Key West, February vacation '04 or '05. Studio efficiency ([www.galleonresort.com](http://www.galleonresort.com)), beach, pool, 5 star resort; walking distance to all places of interest; sleeps 2 \$750. Or, Provincetown at the Sandcastle (near Truro), July 17-24 or 24-31; bay, beach, 2 pools, tennis, sleeps 6; \$750/week. Contact Tom Mitchell at the High School of Commerce or at 860-668-6616.

# NOTES FROM THE PRESIDENT

## TIPS FOR TEACHERS

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

### Homework:

- Homework serves a number of purposes: to enhance student learning, to review previous content, to introduce new content.
- The amount and frequency of homework needs to be appropriate for the grade level. Talk to other teachers at your grade level to get a perspective about what is reasonable.
- Homework needs to be part of your overall assessment system.
- Provide students with guidelines for when and how to complete homework (e.g., assignments always displayed in a designated area; students informed of procedures, requirements.)
- Select a process for providing feedback and grading homework.
- Determine how you will handle late work (grade reduction?) and what will happen when work is not turned in (after school tutoring, loss of privileges, etc.)
- Do not use homework as a punishment.

- The Legislature's Joint Committee on Education, Arts, and Humanities will hold a public hearing on bills relating to bilingual education and English immersion. If you would like to submit written testimony on the effect of the new English immersion law on your school, particularly around the "sue the teacher" provision, please do so. For further information, please call Julie Johnson at Governmental Services at 1-800-392-6175 extension 8315 or e-mail her at [jjohnson@massteacher.org](mailto:jjohnson@massteacher.org). Written testimony can be sent to the Division of Governmental Services at MTA's Boston office, 20 Ashburton Place, Boston, MA 02108, or faxed to 617-624-9655. They will make sure your testimony gets to the Committee.
- The Legislature's Joint Committee on Education, Arts, and Humanities will hold a public hearing on bills relating to charter schools. All comments are welcome and will be helpful. Written testimony can be sent to the Division of Governmental Services at the MTA Boston office. The staff will insure your testimony gets to the Committee. Go to [www.seateachers.com](http://www.seateachers.com) to see Tim's testimony.
- **JOIN THE SEUSSENTENNIAL CELEBRATION!** Seussentennial is a year-long tribute to Ted Geisel, the man known and loved by children of all ages as Dr. Seuss. "Seussentennial: A Century of Imagination" will celebrate Geisel's creativity, imagination, and his invaluable contributions with events and activities honoring all aspects of Geisel's life, from his celebrated books to his lesser known advertising career and his award-winning film work. For event and activity ideas go to [www.nea.org/readacross](http://www.nea.org/readacross).
- As a Read Across America initiative, teachers and their students could win a \$500 grant to fund a youth-led literacy service project. Youth Leaders for Literacy is a joint initiative of the NEA and Youth Service America to help youth direct their enthusiasm and creativity into reading-related service projects. The deadline for the grant application is December 1, 2003. For more information go to [www.nea.org/readacross](http://www.nea.org/readacross) or [www.ysa.org](http://www.ysa.org).

*Happy  
Thanksgiving*

