

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

Volume XXV, No. 4

December 2003

EXECUTIVE BOARD

PRESIDENT

Timothy Collins

VICE PRESIDENT

Mary Chamberlain

RECORDING SECRETARY

Jennifer Stogner

TREASURER

MaryAnn Dion

ASSISTANT TREASURER

Susan Fielding

AT-LARGE MEMBERS

Jose Bahamonde

Robert Blodgett

Marilyn Daly

Roberto Diaz

Peter Dupuis

Donna Kells Wagner

Simon Quattebaum

Karen Shaw

Nina Tepper

Ronna Tillman

SEA E-MAIL ADDRESSES

Timothy Collins

contact@seateachers.com

Peter Dupuis

pdupuis@seateachers.com

Charlene Lonczak

clonczak@seateachers.com

Sandra Forni-Torres

sfornitorres@seateachers.com

Success Press

successpress@seateachers.com

E-mail General Information
or Questions to:

contact@seateachers.com

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

®  263-c

mta/nea

helping teachers teach

President's Message

I hope everyone has a joyous and restful holiday break. I only wish you could leave for this vacation with good news, but the prospect of that happening looks very dim.

As your President, I have been and will continue to do everything in my power to end the unjust and disrespectful treatment of the SEA membership. However, the real power of the SEA is not in the actions and efforts of the elected leadership. The real power of any union lies in the collective effort of its members.

We will be looking for your help to inform the public of how this situation is effecting the children of this city now, and the damage it will do to the children in the future, if this disrespectful and unjust treatment is not brought to an end.

It will take the collective action on the part of every SEA member to end this escalating crisis.

Yours in unity,



WHAT'S OUR UNION DOING FOR US?

Mary Chamberlain

The SEA has many committees working for you. The three committees featured this month are: the Success Press Committee, the Finance Advisory Committee, and the Meline Kasparian Scholarship Committee.

The **Success Press Committee** was originally started to counteract the teacher and public school bashing taking place in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Although the bashing is still happening today, the bashing at that time was about getting legislation for charter schools. Realizing that no one else was going to toot our horns, we decided to do it ourselves.

Therefore, the Success Press Committee publishes a newsletter 3 - 4 times a year with the intended audience of local and statewide elected officials, the Chamber of Commerce, the Board of Realtors, parent groups, community groups, local businesses, civic and church groups, and SCDM teams. This is the seventh year that we have been sending the newsletter out to the community.

At the present time, Mary Chamberlain, Sharyn Kakley, Nina Tepper, and Sheryl Stanton work on the committee. Sheryl is our computer expert. Therefore, the rest of us just need to know how to access the files and type articles into them. Sheryl does the rest! **The skill necessary is one of pursuing success stories in the schools.** We know that there are many success stories out there. It's just a matter of tracking them down and getting the facts to write the story or persuading the person involved in the success story to write the article. Because of their ownership in the success story, stories written by others often have more voice or passion than we can give it when we write it from an objective point of view.

Your Association Representatives have posted the latest edition on your SEA bulletin board or have left it in your teachers' room.

So...what are you doing for the union?

This is an all-call for articles and photo opportunities. Every member needs to think about success stories in his or her school and give us a call (750-2148) or e-mail (successpress@seateachers.com) us a

note or an article about them. We would also like to publish an all-photo edition this year. Therefore, we are looking for photo opportunities too. Call us. Let us help you celebrate a success story at your school. The graduation issue is now on the SEA web site.

The Finance Advisory Committee is another committee for review this month. The Committee consists of two members of the Executive Board, elected by the Executive Board, two members of the Legislative Board, elected by the Legislative Board, five members at large, appointed by the President with approval of the Executive Board.

According to the Bylaws, the Finance Advisory Committee prepares a year line item budget to be recommended to the Executive Board in preparation of the budget by the first meeting in April, except in a negotiating year where a supplementary budget may be necessary. They should also review Association finances bimonthly and make recommendations for budgetary adjustments to the Executive Board. The current members are Bob Blodgett, Diane Brouillard, Gail Carneiro, Mary Chamberlain, Burt Freedman, Mary Scherpa, and Ronnie Tillman.

Another committee that is important for every member with children or a relative who is attending college is the SEA's **Meline Kasparian Scholarship Committee**. Any relative of an SEA member can apply for the scholarship. The applications are available at the SEA office in February. Last year we awarded five \$1000 scholarships. It's a great committee to join. We read all the applications and score them, using a rubric. It's always a difficult decision deciding who the recipients will be. On the other hand, there is always a tremendous sense of hope for the future. Do you have a relative who is or will be attending college? Send them an application when they become available in mid February. Do you think you would enjoy serving on this committee? The Scholarship Committee for the 2002-03 included John Kagan, Lisa Bakowski, Debbie Brown, Sally Suomala, Lynn Russell, and Mary Chamberlain.

CAN YOU FIGURE OUT THE ANSWER TO THIS RIDDLE?

Eighty percent of kindergartners who were asked this question got the answer, but only twenty percent of Stanford graduate students got it. Can you get it?

What is greater than God, What is more evil than the devil,
The poor have it, The rich need it,
And if you eat it, you will die?

For the answer go to, www.seateachers.com



School Department E-Mail System - The Springfield School Department provides its employees with an SPS e-mail address and access to an inter-system network which utilizes those addresses. The intention of providing this system to employees is to support education and facilitate communication relevant to the effective education of the students. The policy states, "Users should not have an expectation of privacy or confidentiality." The School Department considers e-communications and files in the same category as lockers, therefore they are subject to being opened and searched by administration. The policy further states, "Electronic messages... may be inspected by appropriate school administrators." The "Acceptable Policy" can be viewed on the Springfield Public Schools' web site under District Plans and Policies.

Extended Day - 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 Sci Tech meet for their extended day from 2:05 to 3:20.

Daily Prep Period - 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.

Meetings Scheduled Before School by Principal - 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.

Class Coverage - 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.

Advancement on the Salary Schedule - Many of you will be completing fall course work within the next few weeks. Although advancement on the salary schedule has been frozen, it is still important for you to prepare your documentation for the Evaluating Committee. February 20, 2004 will be the final date for submitting your paperwork.

As you prepare to submit your documentation to the Evaluating Committee, c/o the Personnel Department, please take a moment to review the requirements as outlined in **Article 27** of the *Agreement Between the Springfield School Committee and the Springfield Education Association*. Use the APPLICATION FOR ADVANCED SALARY RATING form and attach to it copies of **all** transcripts from which credits will be applied towards salary advancement, even if you have previously submitted any of those transcripts (keep a copy of everything you submit for your own file.) Application forms are available at the school and from the Personnel Department at Central Office.

Also, to ensure that your application for salary advancement is not rejected, please check that your application meets all criteria listed below. (Note that the information below does not apply to the vocational teachers at Putnam Vocational-Technical High School.)

Know Your Contract, Continued on page 4

Know Your Contract, Continued from page 3

- A. For advancement to Level IV A:
1. Must be certified as a teacher
 2. Must have a Bachelor's degree
 3. Must submit at least 15 credits that were earned **after** receiving Bachelor's degree (SCDM credits can also be used)
 4. All course grades must be "B" or higher unless courses are part of a degree program, such as Master's degree, in which case the grades must be at least a "C"
- B. For advancement to level V:
1. Must be certified as a teacher
 2. Must have a Master's degree
 3. All degree course grades must be "C" or higher
- OR**
1. Must be certified as a teacher
 2. Must submit at least **34 credits** earned subsequent to Bachelor's degree (could also include SCDM credits)
 3. All course grades must be "B" or higher, or at least "C" for degree program courses
- C. For advancement to Level VA:
1. Must be certified as a teacher
 2. Must have a Master's degree
 3. Must submit at least 15 credits earned subsequent to Bachelor's degree (could also include SCDM credits)
 4. All course grades must be "B" or higher, or at least "C" in courses that were part of a degree program
 5. Courses in a Master's degree program that can be clearly identified by the college as **not** part of the Master's degree program can be submitted.

As stated above, I have focused on only those areas where errors in applications occur most frequently. Always review **Article 27** as you prepare to engage in any type of professional development to ensure that you receive all the credit you deserve. Also, in keeping with **Article 27-F.8**, submit the APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL OF PROPOSED ACTIVITIES FOR PROFESSIONAL IMPROVEMENT to the Evaluating Committee, c/o the Personnel Department, prior to beginning your coursework.

I want to wish you and yours a happy holiday season and a prosperous New Year!

GRIEVANCE UPDATE

The Grievance Committee met on Monday, November 24, 2003. The members spent two hours reviewing the grievances that are currently outstanding. As always, the Committee members had some fresh ideas for resolving some stalled grievances.

I met with Dr. Cirillo, Acting Executive Director of Human Resources, on Monday, December 1, 2003. At that meeting, we informally discussed the seventeen outstanding grievances. Of the seventeen, we agreed on resolving four, we put three aside pending hearing dates, and came up with a possible resolution for the other ten. In every case where I gave the Committee's suggestions for resolutions, they were favorably received by Dr. Cirillo. The ten possible resolutions will be submitted to the Superintendent for approval and could be resolved before Christmas.

SEA WEB SITE QUIZ

Kudos to Linda Christofori, Professional Development. She was the first member to respond with the correct answers to our web site quiz and receive the prizes.

Here are the answers.....

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 the equation?

Answer: New Math...Contract = Respect

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

Answer: April 1, 2004 at 3:45 p.m. at the SEA office.

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?

Answer: Zip Code → Zip Plus 4 or address → brings us directly to our specific legislators.

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

Answer: MTA, NEA, MA DOE, MTRB, SPS, Spfld. Meds, US DOE, SPS New Teacher, MTA New Teacher.

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

Answer: Go to "Links", click on Spfld. Meds, and select Dependant or Employee Form.

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

Answer: User name and password. Your MTA membership card (name as it appears on card with no spaces/membership number is your password.)

SPRING CONTRACT COURSES

The current Unit A contract calls for the Springfield School Committee to offer two graduate courses per semester for staff members. The two course offerings for the Spring, 2004 semester appear below:

Learning Math.: Patterns, Relations, and Functions

Instructor: Joan Beardsley
Dates: Wednesdays, January 14, 2004 – April 7, 2004
Location: Meline Kasparian Professional Development Center
Time: 3:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.
Audience: 25 participants (Recommended for K–8 math teachers, Collaborative Professional Development Math teachers, and Special Education teachers who teach Math or work with Math teachers)

Course Description: “Patterns, Functions, and Algebra” explores the “big ideas” in algebraic thinking, such as finding, describing, and using patterns; using functions to make predictions; understanding linearity and proportional reasoning; understanding nonlinear functions; and understanding and exploring algebraic structure. The course sessions include video programming and activities provided online and in a print guide. Two of the sessions use spreadsheets to develop and define patterns (previous work with spreadsheets is not required). The 11th session explores ways to apply the algebraic concepts you have learned in K-8 classrooms. The final session provides an opportunity to provide feedback and discuss student work.

Course Requirements: Participants will be expected to:

- complete readings and assignments and journals connected to the course;
- participate in class discussions;

- share teaching experiences with teacher participants;
- design lesson modules; and
- provide feedback and assess student work.

Regular attendance at class is required along with a project presentation. Three graduate level credits will be available to participants at a minimal cost.

How to Meet the Diverse Needs of Your ELL Students:

Bilingualism/Biculturalism:

What Every Teacher Should Know

Instructor: Susan Moore
Dates: Thursdays, January 24, 2004 – May 13, 2004
Location: Elms College
Time: 3:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.

Course Description: How can a teacher meet the challenges of teaching students from different languages and cultures? This course is designed for monolingual teachers who want answers to the following questions: How can I identify and assess bilingual students? What laws relate to their education? Which educational strategies can I utilize in my classroom to better include bilingual students? How will culture impact my teaching? What resources are there to better meet the needs of my bilingual/bicultural students?

Course Requirements: Regular attendance, class participation, reflective papers, assessments, and a demonstration lesson are requirements of this course. Three graduate level credits will be available to participants at a minimal cost.

Teachers interested in being considered for enrollment into this course should do so in writing by submitting a letter to Dr. Mario Cirillo, Assistant Superintendent, 195 State Street, Springfield, MA 01102-1410 by **December 18, 2003**, expressing interest in the position.

SUPERINTENDENT’S COMMITTEE

The Superintendent’s Committee held its pre-meeting on Tuesday, November 25, 2003 to discuss issues to be brought before Dr. Burke at the committee meeting on Monday, December 1, 2003. Present at the meeting were: Tim Collins, SEA President; Co-Chairs José Bahamonde and Debra Forni, Sci-Tech; and committee members, Diane Ascioti, Springfield High; Diane Brouillard, Dryden; Joanne Garstka, Indian Orchard; and Mary Hough, Forest Park. Topics to discuss with Dr. Burke include: the district’s discipline policy, the new fire code, and the issue on substitute teaching. If there are any topics of concern that need to be brought to the committee’s attention, please contact any committee member, or send an e-mail addressed to the Superintendent’s Committee at contact@seateachers.com.

**ARE YOU REQUIRED TO TAKE
THE MASSACHUSETTS TESTS
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.

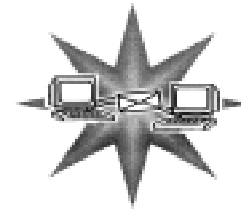
Where? All of the tutorial sessions will be held at the Meline Kasparian Professional Development Center.

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: 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).



**>>>UPDATE<<<<
E-MAIL BATCHING
AND
SEA WEBSITE**

Remember, there's a lot happening on the SEA Web Site. New pages are popping up all the time. Don't miss out. Go to www.seateachers.com and check us out.

We're still looking for members' e-mail addresses. In this time of crisis, batch e-mailing is the most efficient means of communicating vital, up-to-date information regarding public education.

You may submit your e-mail address to the SEA by sending us an e-mail (SPS cannot be used) at mailing@seateachers.com. This SEA address is being used for the sole purpose of gathering your e-mail information and should not be used for regular correspondence with the office. When you e-mail us, be sure to indicate your full name and school. This is essential for identification purposes. You may also see an Association Representative in your building and provide them with your e-mail address, name, and school. Or, just jot it down and send it to us at the SEA Office, 1000 Wilbraham Road, Springfield, MA 01109. Write legibly please!

TIPS FOR TEACHERS

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

Substitute Files:

A "substitute" file or binder should contain:

- A daily schedule, or weekly if there are substantial day-to-day variations: names and times of specialists; names and schedules of students who routinely leave the classroom; daily routines such as taking attendance or collecting lunch money.
- Seating chart or roster with comments about students with special needs.
- A "name to know" list: reliable students who can be called on for assistance; a nearby teacher to consult with questions; aids or paraprofessionals with a description of their general duties.
- Forms, such as attendance sheets that are routinely needed.
- A copy of your classroom rules and expectations. A map of the school: highlight areas, such as restrooms, teachers' lounge, office and copiers.
- Several appropriate activity sheets that could be quickly reproduced or the location of a back-up activities folder.
- Remember that having clear, complete lesson plans and materials ready for the next day before you leave each afternoon will make your life – and a substitute's life – easier.

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 or a snow day.

There may be occasions where a double extended day is being contemplated. Double extended days can be set only by the SCDM 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 SCDM Team.**

Any request for a double extended day program must be made, in writing, by the SCDM Team to both the Superintendent of Schools and the President of the SEA. This 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 Schools' *Policies and Procedures Reference Manual*, page 23.

INJURED ON THE JOB?

To expedite the Workmen's Compensation process, City employees injured on the job should call RiverBend Medical Group first for treatment. A representative of RiverBend Medical Group will direct you to one of their facilities or, if necessary, directly to an emergency room.

RiverBend Medical Group has locations in Springfield, Agawam, Chicopee, and Westfield. A representative can be reached by calling:

796-6814 M-F 8:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m.
594-3111 M-F 5:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m. &
Sat./Sun. 8:30 a.m.-5:00p.m.

If injured outside of these hours, City employees should proceed to Mercy Medical Emergency Room.

For further information, call the City's Personnel Department at 787-6013.



CT Lic. #HIC577983



Quality Carpentry, Plumbing and Electrical Services

Lincoln Brooks
Owner

Phone: 860-763-5530

Fax: 860-763-5824

Email: librooks@snet.net

RAINDROP

SCHOOL SUPPLY

46 Robbins Road, Springfield, MA

413-746-3335 Fax: 413-731-9669

LOTS OF MATERIALS FOR CHRISTMAS

EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS IN ENGLISH
AND SPANISH: BULLETIN BOARD SETS,
RESOURCE BOOKS, LEARNING GAMES,
AND MANY, MANY MORE.

10% 10% 10% 10%

DISCOUNT TO ALL EDUCATORS!!!

10% 10% 10% 10% 10%

Directions: 291 East, Exit 5A (Indian Orchard Exit),
turn right on Robbins Road (Near Teachers' Credit
Union and Cambridge College)



www.raindropsupply.com



NOTES FROM THE PRESIDENT

- The next meeting of the Superintendent's Committee will be January 6, 2004. The Committee will hold its pre-meeting on Tuesday, December 16, 2003 at 3:45 p.m. at the SEA office. The pre-meeting is open to all SEA members who wish to present issues they believe the Superintendent should address. If you are unable to attend the pre-meeting, you can contact a member of the Committee with issues of concern. The Committee members' names and schools are listed in the Superintendent's Committee article in this newsletter.
- Tell your member of Congress at www.nea.org/lac to support the Student Testing Fairness (H.R. 3049) Bill. The Bill will end reliance on a single test as a measure of a student's achievement, give schools credit for improving a student's academic growth over time, and create more ways to assess students with disabilities and limited English language proficiency.
- Today's math homework is different, and the amount may be different too. Visit www.nea.org/math to review the latest on teaching and learning math from groups such as the National Research Council. Plus, a brochure for parents is out. Order "A Parent's Guide to Helping Your Child with Today's Math" by e-mailing aprejean@nea.org.
- The NEA Foundation is accepting member applications through February 2, 2004, for the NEA Fine Arts Grant Program. The grants are available through local affiliates to grades 6-12 art educators who create and implement programs that promote learning among students at risk of school failure. Get details at www.nfie.org/programs.finearts.htm.
- The Senate voted to more than double special education grants to \$2.2 million for 2004 under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Still, the Federal Government does not fully fund the law that serves more than 6 million children, forcing communities to cover the shortfall. Thank your senator at www.nea.org/lac.
- To honor Ted Geisel, otherwise known as Dr. Seuss, on the anniversary of his 100th birthday, NEA, with support from Dr. Seuss Enterprise and Random House Children's Books, has developed materials to help educators and others take children on an odyssey to learn about the man behind the pseudonym. "The Many Hats of Ted Geisel" materials will help educators from K-12 explore with students the many hats Ted Geisel wore and open their minds to inspiration from the creative, imaginative genius of Dr. Seuss. Educators can use these materials as part of a year-long writing project, a special writing unit, or select from the activities to enhance language arts programs. Students will enjoy building skills and imaginations through pre-writing, writing, editing, illustrating, reading, publishing, and advertising activities. The activities are designed to help students through the creative process of writing their own children's book, but each activity can also stand alone as a useful classroom exercise. Details can be found by going to www.nea.org/readacross, clicking on Resource Kit, and going to page 63 of the document (classroom activities start on page 71.)