

The Springfield Teacher

The UNITY newsletter of the Springfield Education Association 1000 Wilbraham Road, Springfield, MA 01109
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April 2004

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successpress@seateachers.com

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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

® GCIU 263-c

mta/nea

helping teachers teach

President's Message

In every school I visit, the number of teachers who are angry and frustrated is increasing. We all have every right to feel this way. Over the past three years, we have been asked to do more and more with less and less. We have watched the salaries of teachers in surrounding communities catch up and surpass our salaries. Your elected leadership and bargaining team have worked longer and harder than any group has, since the strike in 1980, and are extremely frustrated with not being able to bring to you a contract proposal for ratification.

We need every SEA member to become actively involved in our effort to bring this collective bargaining crisis to a conclusion. We will be surveying all teachers, within the next few weeks, in order to determine your willingness to participate in a number of actions.

If there is ever a time for all of us to stand together in solidarity, that time is now.



ISSUES TO DISCUSS WITH LEGISLATORS

The Mayor has indicated that, without additional revenue from the state, the city will either have to lay off a significant number of employees or go into receivership with the state. He has also indicated he does not believe the city can function with additional layoffs therefore, receivership is the only option. Receivership has the potential for dire consequences for all city workers and their contracts. We need to lobby our legislators to help the Mayor in this effort.

When you call your state representatives and senators, here are some issues to discuss:

- Springfield is the third largest city in the Commonwealth, yet we are thirty-sixth in the amount of “additional assistance” received from the state
- The amount of Chapter 70 money (education funding) the city receives is the result of the State Supreme Judicial Court’s ruling in 1992-1993 which calls for an equitable funding formula
- Funding is again inadequate and we are back before the State Supreme Judicial Court
- Charter Schools have funding and regulation advantages
- Special Education underfunded mandates (e.g. Special Education circuit breaker)
- Cuts to class size reduction grants
- Cuts to literacy grants
- Cuts to full day kindergarten grants
- Cuts to school building assistance
- Cuts to health grants (school nurses)
- Cuts to transportation (busing)
- 80% cut of our MCAS remediation money
- 190 teaching positions lost over the last two years
- Teachers and other school department employees have had no raises for two years
- Teachers have been denied step raises and payment for earning advanced degrees
- Attacks on our pensions
- Attacks on our collective bargaining rights (actually trying to eliminate them for teachers in schools that have not met AYP)
- NCLB requiring 20% of our Chapter I money be set aside and used for transporting students from schools that have not met their AYP to other schools, or to offer tutorial services. These services are provided by state approved private-for-profit vendors who are not required to hire licensed, highly qualified teachers and face none of the accountability that our schools face under NCLB
- Putnam Vocational High School close to losing accreditation due to inadequate building and facilities

Senator Brian Lees

617-744-1291
413-543-2167

Rep. Stephen Buoniconti

617-722-2060
413-737-9071

Senator Linda Melconian

617-722-1660
413-785-0820

Rep. Christopher Asselin

617-722-2470
413-737-6646

Rep. Cheryl Rivera

617-722-2090
413-739-1503

Rep. Mary Rogeness

617-722-2100
413-567-5480

Rep. Gale Candaras

617-722-2040
413-599-4785

Rep. Benjamin Swan

617-722-2692
413-939-8572

Rep. Thomas Petrolati

617-722-2255
413-5897303

GRIEVANCE UPDATE

The committee met on March 9, 2004. The current grievance status is:

New Grievances:

2003-18 The teacher had been out on medical leave. When the School Department could not find him an acceptable assignment, he was laid off without pay. This layoff violates *Article 28 F-2*.

Outstanding Grievances:

2003-16 The teacher has yet to be allowed to assume the duties of Department Chair. A hearing is scheduled for April 1, 2004 to attempt to resolve this grievance. *Article 10-C*

2003-15 The HVAC system at Sumner Avenue Elementary School has yet to be repaired. The School Department reports it will be repaired this summer. When repairs are completed and the staff indicates the problems have ended, we will close the grievance. *Article 5 B-1*

2003-13 A directive from the Superintendent seems to put the responsibility for entering Student Success Plan data on the Counselors. This would be a non-negotiated change in working conditions. *Article 5*

2003-11 A team of middle school teachers has been assigned duties during their team time. *Article 32 B-1*

2003-10 Flooding of the parking lot at High School of Commerce. *Article 5 B-5*

2003-06 Teachers have been assigned as inclusion teachers during their duty periods. *Article 6 B-1*

2003-05 Salary advance freeze. *Article 27 E-1*

2003-04 Counselor/student ratios. The School Department responded on February 9, 2004 citing the present financial state as an "impediment to progress" in achieving the stated goal of one counselor per 300 students. *Article 8-3*

2003-01 Teacher denied access to summer workshop resulting from "short posting" of the workshop. *Article 5 L-2*

2002-03 The position of Director of Extracurricular Activities continues to be filled on an acting basis. *Article 11 C-6*

1998-007 Insufficient and inadequate parking at DeBerry Elementary School. *Article 5 B-5*

Resolved Grievances

2003-17 A high school teacher assigned three subjects requiring preparations. Withdrawn.

**POP
QU?Z**

by
Peter Dupuis



It seems as though there are a lot of consultants working for the School Department. Couldn't we let some of them go and use the money to give us a raise?

According to the Executive Director of Finance, Carey Sheehan, the City is currently receiving services from fifteen consultants. Of these, six are being paid with School Department money. They are paid a total of \$417,669 annually. This amount is equal to one third of one percent of any future raise we negotiate.

The other nine consultants are paid by grants, totaling \$664,580. The two largest of these are, Compass Consulting at \$320,000. And University of Pittsburgh at \$220,000. The School Department is allowed some discretion in the spending of grant monies therefore, conceivably, a percentage of these grant dollars could be reapplied in ways that would free up funds to be applied towards salary advances, which would include "column raises" for professional advancement.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Nancy S. Fitchin

The Professional Development budget has been totally encumbered. However, since not all the funds have been expended, a waiting list is being compiled. Should a member, for whom money has been encumbered, decline funds, SEA members on the waiting list will be notified. Please be advised that if your Request for Payment and receipts are not submitted within 30 days after your conference or course concludes, the money will be freed up for the next member on the list. Members not using the money they applied for must notify the SEA Office. Notice should be in writing. Anyone not using funds he or she applied for and who doesn't notify the office will be ineligible for funds during the next academic year. **There will be no exceptions.**

The School Department is currently busy compiling its call for courses. The SEA will soon review the proposed coursework with the Professional Development Director and staff. Shortly thereafter, it will be course selection time for Springfield teachers. Please gear your course selection toward offerings that will allow you to become highly qualified, if you are currently not. Once you have earned that status, you have it. It is different from licensure, although licensure is also required.

2003 – 2004 EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING ATTENDANCE

13 meetings have been held to date during the 2003 – 2004 school year

Name	# of Meetings Attended
Timothy T. Collins	13
Mary Chamberlain	12
Jennifer Stogner*	10
MaryAnn Dion	13
Susan Fielding	13
Jose Bahamonde	13
Robert Blodgett*	5
Marilyn Daly	13
Roberto Diaz	10
Peter Dupuis	12
Donna Kells Wagner	12
Simon Quattlebaum	3
Karen Shaw*	9
Nina Tepper	12
Ronna Tillman	13

*New Members – 10 meetings held since elected

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: 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).

TIPS FOR TEACHERS

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

Working With Parents:

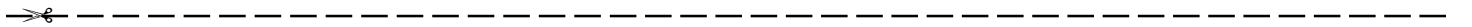
- Contact parents often.
- Keep copies/records of all communications with parents. This includes phone calls and e-mails, as well as attempts to contact them to which parents have not yet responded.
- If parents become angry or abusive towards you, stay calm and rational. Seek a colleague's assistance, contact the SEA office, or politely end the meeting. Report the incident.
- Be positive even when delivering bad news. Parents look at you for both honesty and advice.
- And remember – parents are trusting you with their most precious possessions.

FRIEND OF EDUCATION GUIDELINES

The *Friend of Education Award* is given in recognition of service or actions during the past school year which promote, advance, and enhance the cause of public education for all students and teachers in the city of Springfield and support the educational policies of the Springfield Education Association.

Guidelines

1. No more than one award will be given in any one school year except in the case of a tie in which case two awards may be given.
2. No announced candidate for public office at the time of nomination is eligible.
3. No Springfield School Committee member is eligible.
4. No employee of the Springfield Public Schools is eligible.
5. A nomination form will be published in the *Springfield Teacher* in April.
6. The completed form must clearly demonstrate the rationale for recommendation of the nominee, that is, identification of service or actions during the past school year that promote, advance, and enhance the cause of public education for all students and teachers in the city of Springfield and supports the educational policies of the Springfield Education Association. The completed form must be submitted to the SEA office by May 3, 2004.
7. The completed nomination forms will be copied and distributed to Association Representatives at the May Legislative Board meeting.
8. Ballots will be distributed at the June Legislative Board meeting. The candidate who receives the majority vote will be awarded the *Friend of Education Award* at the September Legislative Board meeting. In the event of a tie vote, a second award may be given.



FRIEND OF EDUCATION

Nomination Form

The *Friend of Education Award* is given in recognition of service or actions during the past school year which promote, advance, and enhance the cause of public education for all students and teachers and support the educational policies of the Springfield Education Association.

I wish to nominate the following individual for the *Friend of Education Award*:

I am recommending this candidate for the *Friend of Education Award* for the following reasons:

Name: _____ School: _____ Date: _____

Nominations must be submitted to the SEA by MAY 3rd

Ballots will be distributed at the June Legislative Board meeting (Association Representative Dinner). The candidate who receives the majority of the votes cast at the meeting will be the recipient of the *Friend of Education Award*. In the event of a tie, two awards may be given.

The recipient of the *Friend of Education Award* will be invited to the September Legislative Board meeting (Association Representative Dinner) to receive the award.

Please note: At the time of nomination, no announced candidate for public office, no current Springfield School Committee member, and no current employee of the Springfield Public Schools is eligible.

SUPERINTENDENT'S COMMITTEE

The Superintendent's Committee met on Tuesday, March 2, 2004. The following two topics were discussed:

- Summer School was the main concern. Teachers interested in working the Summer School Program should keep an eye out for postings. If you wish to commit to working the Summer School Program, please let the Superintendent's Committee know by sending us an e-mail addressed to the committee at contact@seateachers.com. It will be helpful to get an idea of the number of teachers willing to work during the summer in an effort to address the needs of the students effectively and improve the Summer School Program.
- The other issue on the table was concerns regarding the guidelines and appropriate behavior of the Special Education Advocate during meetings. All meetings should be controlled by the person holding the meeting. All who attend should conduct themselves in a professional manner.

The next Superintendent's Committee meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 6, 2004. The meeting for the month of May will be held on Tuesday, May 4, 2004 with the pre-meeting being held on Tuesday, April, 27, 2004. If you have any concerns or issues you would like to have addressed, please contact the committee at contact@seateachers.com.



Meline Kasparian Scholarship

The SEA Scholarship Committee wishes to announce the availability of applications for the Meline Kasparian Scholarship Fund. To be eligible for this scholarship one must be related to an SEA member. Up to six \$1,000 scholarships will be awarded. Because of a donation from David Cruise, we are able to award an extra Scholarship this year. **The deadline for completed applications is May 1, 2004.** Please keep in mind, this year, May 1st falls on a Saturday. The SEA office hours are Monday through Friday. **Applications delivered to the SEA Office on Monday, May 3, 2004 will be considered late.**

If you would like an application, one can be downloaded from the SEA web site at www.seateachers.com or please send a self-addressed, stamped envelope, along with your request to: Springfield Education Association, 1000 Wilbraham Road, Springfield, MA 01109, or stop by the office.

HEALTH & LIFE INSURANCE OPEN ENROLLMENT

The Open Enrollment for the City's Health/Life Insurance will be **May 1, through May 21, 2004**. For any member who is not enrolled in any health plan or wishes to switch plans, this is the time to do so.

Enrollment is also open to eligible employees who wish to register their domestic partner/household member. Domestic partners and household members **must** have shared their principal domicile with the city employee for the past twelve months. Benefits are available in accordance with city policy, city ordinance, and/or the respective collective bargaining contract.

The Personnel Office at City Hall is open from 8:15 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Additional sign-ups may be done at the Meline Kasparian Professional Development Center

May 4, May 12, and May 18, 2004 from 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

You may also go to the Tapley Annex

**70 Tapley Street, Room 7
Tuesday & Thursday
7:45 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.**

Wednesday

7:45 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

YOU ONLY NEED TO COME TO THE OPEN ENROLLMENT IF YOU WANT TO ENROLL OR MAKE CHANGES TO YOUR PLAN

For more information call Linda at 787-6057, Gloria at 787-6028, or Paul at 750-2777.



NEW ENGLAND CONSULTING SERVICE

GRADUATE COURSES FOR EDUCATORS

*3 Graduate Credits
67.5 PDP's
4.5 CEU's in 5 classes*

Strengthening Multicultural Perspectives in the Classroom

Course number - 14.750

Instructor: *Claire LaBonte*

This course is appropriate for all K-12 Educators

FIVE SATURDAYS

May 1, 8, 15, 22
June 5, 2004

For information and registration call:

(413) 562-4647

or

(413) 596-3309



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“The Ideal Schedule and Program for Children of School Teachers”

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www.trinitynurseryschool.com

*Trinity Nursery School and Kindergarten is a Nationally Accredited preschool and kindergarten which has been providing high quality education for the children of Springfield and surrounding communities since 1946.

CLASSICAL CONDO FOR SALE

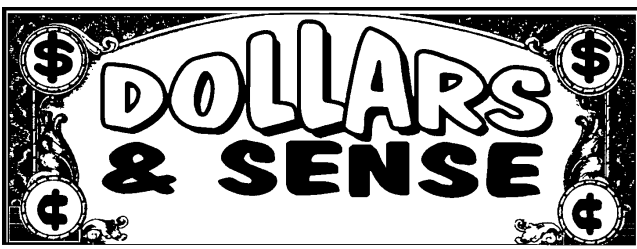
**235 State Street
Springfield, MA 01103**

- Newly Remodeled Condo
- 5 rooms (living room, kitchen, study and dining room, and large bedroom)
- 962 square feet
- w/w Carpet, AC
- Laundry – washer and dryer in unit
- Appliances – washer/dryer, microwave, dishwasher, stove, and refrigerator
- Lots of closet space
- Parking available

If interested, please call 413-786-1071

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 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).



SEA/MTA/NEA Dues for Year 2003

January – June

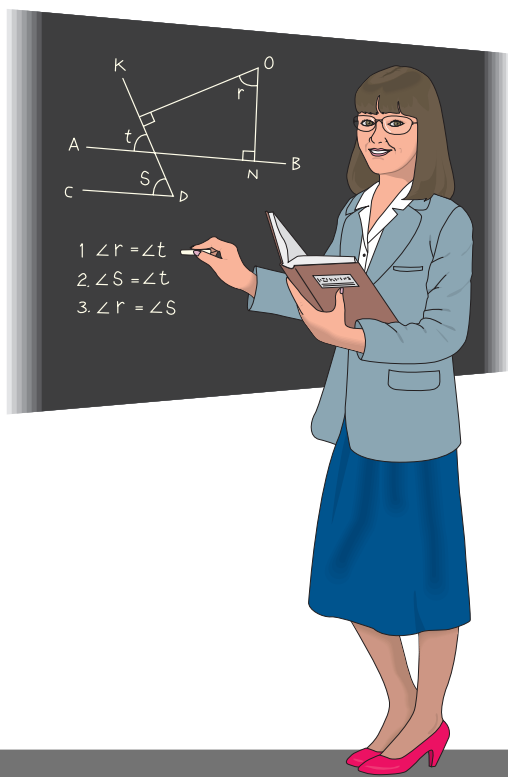
13 Pay Periods @ \$27.87 = \$362.31

August – December

10 Pay Periods @ \$28.14 = \$281.40

TOTAL \$643.71

When comparing dues paid from previous years, please note that dues for August – December 2003 reflect ten pay periods (because of the Wednesday, December 31, 2003 payday) not the typical nine pay periods reflected in most yearly dues.



NOTES FROM THE PRESIDENT

- If you haven't looked at OWL.org lately, then it's time to check it out again. The site has a new look with more stories, features, and education resources than ever before, such as lesson plans and curriculum materials. Register at www.OWL.org to take advantage of discounts and discussion forums on topical issues and classroom advice.
- Try interactive Mathematics Miscellany, and Puzzles at www.cut-the-knot.org. The author, Alexander Bogomoly, describes the purpose of this web site as a call for mathematics appreciation in response to math anxiety and stereotypes. The Mathematics Miscellany and Puzzles are intended to initiate curiosity to foster learning of Mathematics.
- 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.
- Download *A Practical Guide To Talking with Your Community about No Child Left Behind* at www.learningfirst.org. Developed by the Learning First Alliance, a partnership of education associations, the guide provides talking points, strategies for community dialogues, tips for school personnel, and more.
- NEA's web site features a "Help for Parents" site. When parents are involved in their children's education at home, children do better in school. And when parents are involved in school, children go farther in school – and the schools they go to are better. Get tips to share with parents at www.nea.org/parents.
- Check out NEA's *Guide to Online High School Courses* for tools and strategies to help educators ensure the quality of successful web-based classes. Good web classes help students use their online study time wisely. Go to www.nea.org/technology/distanceed/highschool.