

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

An Open Letter to DESE Board Members

Just before Christmas, the Superintendent of New Bedford Public Schools placed New Bedford High School on a turnaround plan which will require all teachers in the school to reapply for their jobs and allows only 50 percent of the teachers to be rehired. This is a horrendous and counterproductive educational practice. Unlike Springfield Public Schools that were forced to use the turnaround model for one-half of the Level 4 schools because of U.S. Department of Education regulations, the New Bedford Superintendent did not have to choose this model.

In Springfield, due to the number of schools in the district that teachers in turnaround model schools can transfer to (unlike New Bedford that has only one high school), the Springfield Education Association and the Springfield Public Schools' administration, working collaboratively with the support of the former assistant commissioner Carla Baehr, were able to mitigate some of the damage this model may have caused the district. Despite our collective efforts, in times of uncertainty with job security, teachers disseminated their resume and we lost far too many excellent teachers to surrounding communities.

I have traveled this Commonwealth and have been a part of many national education forums. Everywhere I go I ask this question to superintendents, principals, and administrators, "If you had to remove 50 percent of the teachers in any of your schools, would you lose teachers you need in order to move the school forward?" The answer has been a universal and resounding YES!!! Not only is this a poor educational practice of the New Bedford Superintendent that will be harmful to the children, it is a demeaning, disrespectful, and an unconscionable way to treat teachers.

I call on you to promulgate regulations that will not allow Superintendents to use the turnaround model unless it is required by the U.S. Department of Education regulation (the rule of 9 which requires any district with 9 or more Level 4 schools to use the turnaround model for one-half of the schools). I further call on you to lobby Secretary Arne Duncan and the U.S. Department of Education to eliminate the Rule of 9.

What the Superintendent in New Bedford is doing is a dreadful educational practice that, if not corrected, will leave far too many children behind.

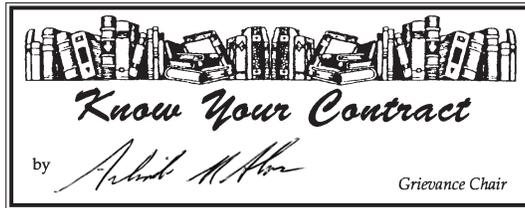
Sincerely,



Timothy T. Collins
President

If you would like to help, add your voice by communicating to Matthew Malone, Secretary of Education, and the members of the DESE Board. Addresses can be found on page 3 of this issue of *The Springfield Teacher* or on the SEA website: www.seateachers.com.

**OUR POWER AS A UNION
RESIDES IN THE ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT OF OUR MEMBERS!**



MATERNITY LEAVE

A. Your Rights

Amidst all the excitement surrounding the impending birth of a child comes the realization that provisions must be made to be out of work for a period of time. The amount of leave needed will depend upon many factors such as health of mother, health of newborn child, economic need, and childbearing demands and desires. Below, I explore several *Sections of Articles 12 and 13* of the *Agreement Between The Springfield School Committee And The Springfield Education Association* to show how, and to what extent, issues related to maternity and childbearing are addressed. Please note that the *Sections* on sick leave and maternity leave apply to teachers with and without professional status.

As your pregnancy advances and the time of birth approaches, you will need to identify a time when you will no longer be able to work. When and how you stop working prior to the predicted date of birth is very important. Usually it is determined by your doctor who will provide you with a note explaining the need for you to stop working due to your present medical condition. According to *Article 12-A-1*, “The parties agree that disabilities caused by and related to the pregnancy and childbearing of female teachers are compensable under the provisions of this Article.” That is, you are eligible for paid sick leave (provided you have accrued enough “sick days”) for the length of time your doctor indicates you should no longer be working due to your medical condition. Typically, the doctor’s note provides for you to be out of work at least two weeks prior to the predicted date of birth, but the doctor may specify more time, depending upon your condition.

After the birth of your child, your doctor will need to provide you with another note indicating the length of time requiring you to remain out of work in order to recover from childbirth. The length of time is usually six calendar weeks (eight for caesarean section) from the date of birth, but may be longer if your doctor feels you need more time to regain your health. You will continue to be eligible for paid sick leave, under *Article 12*, for the length of time your doctor specifies, using your accrued sick days.

When you are no longer eligible for sick leave, either because your doctor has determined you are ready to return to work or because you have run out of sick days, you may wish to continue your stay at home for a period of time to care for your newborn. This is allowed under *Article 13-A*: “A teacher who wishes child-rearing leave shall be granted leave without pay up to two years from the date of termination of pregnancy. Such leave will be extended to the first day of the teacher school year, unless the parties agree to an alternative date that is mutually agreed upon immediately following the normal expiration of the two year period.” Because you are not ill, you are not eligible for paid sick leave during this time. Once on child-rearing leave, you will have the right to return to work only on the first day of the teacher school year, unless the parties agree to an alternative date that is mutually agreed upon immediately following the normal expiration of the two year period.

Send notification of your intention to return to work to the Superintendent through the Chief of Human Resources (Melissa Shea). Upon receiving written notification of your desire to return to work from an unpaid leave of absence such as child-rearing leave, the Chief of Human Resources will attempt, but is not obligated, to place you in the same position you left. According to *Article 13-G*, “...(the teacher) will be assigned to the same position which she held at the time said leave commenced; if available, or, if not, to a substantially equivalent position.” You may be given another assignment, including one located at a different school, than the one you left.

(Continued on page 3)

B. Your Responsibilities

During and after your pregnancy, you must keep the Superintendent, through the Chief of Human Resources, informed of your plans. When you know the date you will be leaving work due to the upcoming birth, send written notification to the Human Resource Office and provide a copy to your principal. You should include your doctor's note with your letter. If that is not possible, indicate when the doctor's note will be sent.

After your baby is born, inform the Chief of Human Resources, in writing, of the date of birth and include your doctor's note indicating how long, following your child's birth, you will need to remain out of work. This note is separate from the one you sent prior to childbirth. Keep your principal informed, as well.

If you will be taking child-rearing leave, you must notify the Superintendent, via the Chief of Human Resources, of your intention. This is an unpaid leave for up to two years following your child's birth. *Article 13-A* states, "Prior to the expected birth of a child a female teacher will notify the Superintendent of Schools, in writing, except in the case of emergency, whether or not the teacher will be returning to work, after the period of medical disability and measured from the date of termination of pregnancy."

Please note -- when you are working or on sick leave, the School Department pays seventy-five percent (75%) of your insurance premium. While you are on childbearing leave, the School Department will continue to make that payment, but, if you will no longer be receiving a pay check because your accrued sick days have been exhausted, you must make arrangements with the Benefits Office in City Hall for payment of your portion of the premium. If you are considering taking child-rearing leave (unpaid leave up to two years) and need to continue to carry your insurance, you will be responsible for the entire premium and must make arrangements with the Benefits Office in City Hall for payments.

Questions? Please give me a call at 782-8300.

Classroom Management Seminars

During the 2012 – 2013 school year, the SEA provided an opportunity for teachers to gather at the SEA office to have discussions about classroom management issues and concerns. This opportunity is being offered again during the 2013 – 2014 school year on a bimonthly basis. The dates are February 12 and April 9, 2014. The seminars will be held at the SEA office from 4:15 P.M. – 5:30 P.M. It is necessary to register for each seminar by emailing Mary Chamberlain at, mchamberlain@massteacher.org.

Please type "CMS" in the subject line of the email. If there is anyone interested in co-facilitating these sessions with Mary Chamberlain, please email Mary at mchamberlain@massteacher.org. Please type "co-facilitating" in the subject line of the email.

DESE Board Members and Mailing Addresses

Mitchell D. Chester
Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education
MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
75 Pleasant Street
Malden, MA 02148

Matthew Malone, Secretary of Education
Executive Office of Education
One Ashburton Place, Room 1403
Boston, MA 02108

Maura O. Banta, Chairperson
Daniel Brogan
Vanessa Calderon-Rosado
Harneen Chernow
Karen Daniels
Ruth Kaplan
James O'S. Morton
Penny Noyce
David Roach

MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
75 Pleasant Street
Malden, MA 02148

What's Our Union Doing for Us?

By 

Happy February! Winter vacation is near. I think this is a good time for reflection. We have passed the half-way point, the transfer process will begin soon, and mid-point data are available. The cold weather provides an excuse to relax in your favorite chair and muse over the progress of our district.

I am particularly interested in the impact the various consultancies and mandates have upon our schools. We, as a profession, have been subjected to an abundance of initiatives purportedly aimed at “fixing” what’s “wrong” in our schools. The “fixing” is usually aimed at the “wrong” actions of classroom teachers. I am so thankful for the observations, data, feedback and suggestions emanating from these experts such as the following: Recently the EdLab group performed a rather prolonged drive-by (that’s a drive-by carried out in a traffic jam) at the Level IV schools. After their observation period, they cite items needed to rectify. These targets are tiered. Tier one targets should be solved within two weeks, tier two items should be dealt with by their next visit, and tier three items should show progress through the year. A report of their observations and edicts is then generated and given to staff. Here is one of their tier one observations (I quote verbatim from the report). “During our visit, we observed multiple students in the hallway during transitions.” Can you believe it, kids in the halls while changing classes? Yikes! I don’t see how we are going to dig tunnels and/or connecting doorways to every classroom in two weeks! I would like any suggestions from other schools as to how they have students change classes without entering a hallway. How much have these insurgencies cost us in terms of staff and resources?

Do any of you ever go to the SPS website and look at the Strategic Dashboard Targets? I do, ever since I stopped watching sitcoms I needed to fill the void. There are 17 categories of data that are tracked. Each has a target goal and either a red, yellow or green light as to whether or not the goal is at hand. Let’s look at some!

- Student attendance: target is 91.4%, we are now at 90.1% and the percent historically goes down as year progresses - GREEN LIGHT
- Teacher attendance: target is 96%, we are now at 95.5% and the percent historically goes down as year progresses - YELLOW LIGHT
- Parents trained through Parent Academy: goal is 1,000; last year, 542 attended – YELLOW LIGHT
- Teacher voluntary resignation: target is 50 per year we are now at 137 (this number spikes in June); we have never come close to 50, but have hit as high as 185 - YELLOW LIGHT

Anybody see something funny here? Student attendance is currently 1.3% shy of the target and teacher attendance is currently .5% shy of target, but one group is right on while the other is being cautioned. How about the target for training parents which is off by almost 50% - that’s only a caution. The most telling is the number of teachers voluntarily resigning from our district every year – roughly 8% of our teachers resign yearly – that, too, is only a caution. Has anyone asked WHY?

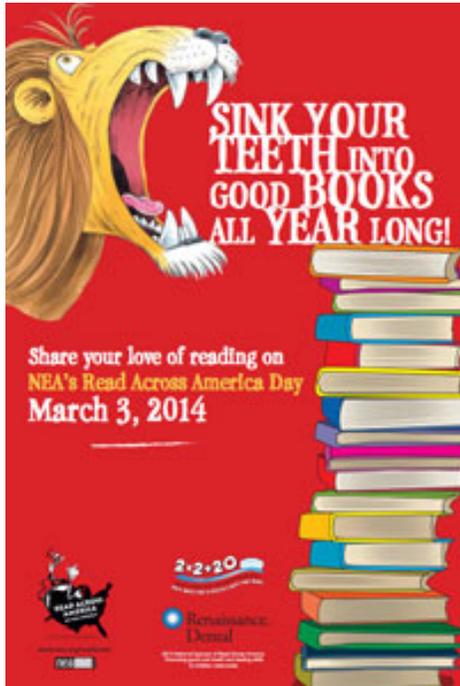
Happy vacation and Keep Smiling,

Peter J. Reese
Vice President

MTA Grievance Training TIME CHANGE

The MTA Grievance Training Part II – I Can Do It, scheduled for Wednesday, February 19, 2014 at the MTA Holyoke Office, 55 Bobala Road, Suite 3, will take place from **10:00 A.M. to 2:00 P.M.** The time was originally posted to take place in the evening, but because the 19th falls during the vacation week, the training will take place during the day.

2014 Read Across America Day is Monday, March 3



Get ready to grab your hat and read with The Cat in the Hat on Monday, March 3, 2014 for the 17th annual Read Across America Day. The Seussical celebration will kick off a week of reading across the nation

as NEA members gather students, parents, and community members together to share their love of reading.

It's never too early to plan your event and NEA's Read Across America will be posting tips and resources at www.nea.org/readacross to help you make your event Seussational!

MTA/NEA Conventions 2014

The MTA Convention will be held May 9 and 10, 2014, in Boston and the NEA Convention will be held in Denver, CO, from July 1 – July 6, 2014 (travel dates are June 30th and July 7th).

Self-nomination forms have been distributed to Association Representatives in your building. See an Association Representative to obtain the forms or download them from our website at www.seateachers.com. These forms are **due at the SEA office before 5:00 P.M. on Wednesday, February 26, 2014**. A sample ballot listing all candidates will be posted in each building from March 3 to March 17. Elections will be held in all buildings on March 17 and 18, 2014 during extended day.

Springfield College
Springfield Public Schools
Supporting the Development of Effective Educators

S³ Information Sessions Initial Licensure Program for Secondary Math or SPED

DATES: February 26, 2014

March 5, 2014

March 26, 2014

TIME: 4:00 P.M. – 5:00 P.M.

LOCATION: The S³ Information Session will be held on the Springfield College campus at The Bistro, which is located on the lower level of the Richard B. Flynn Campus Union. The Campus Union is located on Naismith Green, and it is the building with the bell tower.

DIRECTIONS: Parking is available in the large parking lot at the corner of Wilbraham Avenue and Alden Street. Park your car and walk a short distance across the green to the Campus Union.

Light refreshments will be served.

Please RSVP to Bonnie Roy at royb@sps.springfield.ma.us two days prior to each session.

Contact Information

Dr. Linda Davis-Delano, Program Director, Director of Educator Preparation and Licensure, Education Department
Chairperson: ldelano@springfieldcollege.edu

Patricia Cutler, Co-Director: 413-748-3614 pcutler@springfieldcollege.edu

Diane DeVivo, Co-Director: 413-748-3614 ddevivo-panico@springfieldcollege.edu

Bonnie Roy, SPS Human Resources Manager: 413-348-3874
royb@sps.springfield.ma.us

Tools 4 Teaching



Recycling Store for Springfield Teachers

FREE FREE FREE FREE FREE

Established in August of 2013, the SEA Committee of Retired Teachers created an environmentally responsible way for recycling resources to help Springfield Public School teachers. On a monthly basis, retiring teachers, teachers who are changing grade levels or content areas, local businesses and organizations are given the opportunity to donate no longer needed materials which are then repurposed into FREE classroom learning materials for current teachers.

When: Second AND Third Thursday of each month for drop-off AND/OR “shopping” for FREE materials (Springfield Public School I.D. needed for shopping)

Time: 3:00 P.M. - 5:30 P.M.

Location: 70 Tapley St. in the Congressman Richard E. Neal Municipal Operations Center at the corner of St. James Avenue and Tapley Street (behind the big green storage tank) and across the street from Oak Grove Cemetery. Please use glassed-in front entrance and follow signs for Tools 4 Teaching.

Come in and check us out – did we mention that all of our excellent resources are FREE

Professional Relations Associate Position

The process of filling the SEA Professional Relations Associate position is under way. It is the intention of the SEA to have a new Professional Relations Associate selected by the end of the current school year. By doing so at this time, it will allow the person selected to avail themselves of summer training at the annual MTA Leadership Conference in Williamstown. The person selected will also have the opportunity to work with Arlindo Alves over the summer, getting acquainted with the job and what it entails.

The primary skill required for this position is the ability to deal with people, often in highly emotional situations. The person selected will represent approximately 2,700 members in a myriad of situations. The Professional Relations Associate is the liaison between the individual member and the many bureaucracies that impact us as teachers.

Candidates should be detail orientated and exceptionally well organized. This job requires dealing with a number of complex situations simultaneously and allows no leeway for inattention to details. We would hope that candidates have some union experience, preferably within the SEA. And, because this position is based on contract enforcement, familiarity of the Contract and a working knowledge of the grievance process is a plus for any candidate.

If you are interested in applying for the Professional Relations Associate position, please e-mail your resume to contact@seateachers.com (type Professional Relations Associate position in the subject line of the email) or mail it to the SEA at 1000 Wilbraham Road; Springfield, MA 01109 **NO LATER THAN FRIDAY, MARCH 28, 2014.**

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References
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Communicating To Our Members

Keeping our members informed about issues affecting public education, your profession, and the children of Springfield is vital. The SEA offers four vehicles to accomplish this – the SEA website (www.seateachers.com), SEA Facebook page (www.facebook.com/SEASpringfieldMA) this monthly newsletter (*The Springfield Teacher*), and blast emails sent to your personal email address.

Remember to:

- ==> **Check Out** your website at www.seateachers.com
- ==> **Like Us on Facebook** at www.facebook.com/SEASpringfieldMA
- ==> **Look for** *The Springfield Teacher* distributed to your school every month
- ==> **Submit** your personal email address (SPS CANNOT be used) by sending an email to mailing@seateachers.com* indicating your full name and school (please type “email address” in the subject line of the email)
- ==> **Add** the Springfield Education Association email address (contact@seateachers.com) to your personal email contacts so that emails do not go into your junk mailbox
AND
- ==> Of course, **OPEN** the emails sent by the SEA -- YOUR union!

By utilizing these four vehicles of communication, you will stay informed and on top of important information affecting you and the children in your charge.

* This email address is being used for the sole purpose of gathering information and should not be used for regular correspondence with the SEA office.



Guess what time it is!

For many of us, this June is license renewal time!

Therefore, SEA will host two MTA regulatory workshops for License Renewal in March.

Who is invited:

Anyone who has a Professional License that needs to be renewed

When:

Monday, March 24, 2014
3:00 P.M. - 4:30 P.M.

Or

Tuesday, March 25, 2014
4:15 P.M. – 5:45 P.M.

Where:

SEA office

How:

Register at the following e-mail address:

mchamberlain@massteacher.org

Please type March 24 or March 25 in the subject line of the email.

MTA Licensure Workshop

Appropriate for all educators who hold Temporary, Preliminary, or Initial stage licenses or who are working under waivers.

Join us and learn about:

- Regulatory requirements covering licensure and RETELL
- How a teacher moves through the stages of licensure from Preliminary to Initial to Professional license

When: Tuesday, April 1, 2014
4:15 P.M. - 5:45 P.M.

Where: SEA Community Room
1000 Wilbraham Road

How: The workshop is limited to 50 educators.
Therefore, you must register!

Register by e-mailing Mary Chamberlain at Mchamberlain@massteacher.org. Please type “Licensure Workshop” in the subject line of the email. Include your name and school in the body of the e-mail



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 five \$1,000 scholarships will be awarded. The deadline for submitting a completed application is March 14, 2014.**

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 envelope, along with your request to: Springfield Education Association, 1000 Wilbraham Road, Springfield, MA 01109, or stop by the office.



The SEA Announces The SEA/Peter Dupuis Alternative High School Scholarship

The SEA Scholarship Committee wishes to announce the availability of applications for the Peter Dupuis Alternative High School Scholarship. **To be eligible for this scholarship one must be a graduating senior from one of the Springfield's Alternative High Schools* who is committed to furthering his/her education. One \$1,000 scholarship will be awarded. The deadline for submitting a completed application is March 14, 2014.**

If a student would like an application, one can be downloaded from the SEA web site at www.seateachers.com or a written request for an application, along with a self-addressed envelope, can be sent to: Springfield Education Association, 1000 Wilbraham Road, Springfield, MA 01109, or stop by the SEA office, or see a guidance counselor at one of the S.A.F.E. high schools.

*charter schools do not fall under a Springfield Alternative School



Joan Cormack Scholarship

The SEA Scholarship Committee wishes to announce the availability of applications for the Joan Cormack Scholarship. **To be eligible for this scholarship one must be a Springfield Public High School* senior or graduate who is currently enrolled in a college/university. This year, one \$1,000 scholarship will be awarded. The deadline for submitting a completed application is March 14, 2014.**

If a student would like an application, one can be downloaded from the SEA web site at www.seateachers.com or a written request for an application, along with a self-addressed envelope, can be sent to: Springfield Education Association, 1000 Wilbraham Road, Springfield, MA 01109, or stop by the SEA office, or see a guidance counselor at one of the high schools.

*excludes charter schools

NEW ENGLAND CONSULTING SERVICE

GRADUATE COURSES FOR EDUCATORS

3 Graduate Credits

67.5 PDPs

4.5 CEUs in 5 classes

Integrating Poetry Across the Curriculum

Course number – PRDV 77716

Instructors: **JoAnn Bourquard & Donna Rollins**

This course is appropriate for all K – 12 educators

FIVE SATURDAYS

March 1, 8, 15, 22 & 29, 2014

For information and registration contact:

Marilyn Spedding (413) 596-3309 or newenglandconsulting@charter.net



SEA/MTA/NEA
Dues for Year 2013

January – June

13 Pay Periods @ \$38.41 = \$499.33

August – December

9 Pay Periods @ \$39.41 = \$353.52
\$852.85

Prior year's dues can also be found on the SEA website, www.seateachers.com.

A DAY TRIP TO NEW YORK CITY
(Sponsored by the New Teacher Committee)

When: Saturday, May 17, 2014

Cost: \$30.00 Transportation: 56 passenger King Ward Coach Line Charter

Departure: 7:00 a.m. from the SEA parking lot

Arrival: 10:30 a.m. two drop off points - Times Square area and Museum area

Pick-up time: **Promptly** at 6:00 p.m. near St. Patrick's Cathedral

Return time: 9:30 p.m. at SEA

Please complete the registration form below and send it to the Springfield Education Association, 1000 Wilbraham Road, Springfield, MA 01109 with a check made payable to SEA for \$30.00. There will be a waiting list. If there are cancellations, refunds will only be made if the space is filled.

If the bus is filled, the tip for the driver is included in cost. If not, we'll pass the hat.



Registration for Day Trip to New York City
(Sponsored by the SEA New Teacher Committee)

First Come First Served

Name _____

Address _____

Phone number: _____ Cell _____

Personal E-mail (not sps) _____

(Please print clearly)

Enclosed is a check for \$30.00. I understand it is my responsibility to be at the return pick-up area (St. Patrick's Cathedral) before 6:00 p.m. as the bus will leave promptly at 6:00 p.m. If I am not there, I will be responsible for finding an alternate way to return to Springfield!!



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Springfield Teacher

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE BYLAWS

Proposed amendments to the bylaws shall be **submitted in writing prior to 5:00 P.M. on March 15, 2014** to the Committee on Bylaws, SEA Office.

Proposed amendments to the bylaws, submitted by individual members, shall be reviewed, and, if necessary, combined and/or edited without substantive change by the Bylaws Committee and then submitted to the membership at the Annual Meeting.

The Bylaws Committee shall, within 30 days of taking action on a proposed amendment, issue a report of its action to the submitter of the amendment.

Prior to the March deadline, the committee will make reasonable effort to assist interested members in achieving their intent so that proposals are legally worded and are consistent with other sections of the bylaws.

The Bylaws Committee shall recommend to the Annual Meeting procedures for consideration of amendments to the bylaws.

All bylaws must be in accordance with MTA-NEA bylaws.

School Committee Meeting Dates

Below are the School Committee meeting dates for February, March, and April 2014. The full calendar for the 2013 – 2014 school year can be found on the SEA website, www.seateachers.com.

Unless otherwise indicated, all regular meetings will be held in Room 220, City Hall, 36 Court Street; Springfield, MA. **Working Sessions will be held at a location of the committee's choice.** The regular meetings will begin at 6:30 P.M. Working Sessions, Speak Outs, and Meetings with Student Representatives will begin at 6:00 P.M.

February 13	High School Reps Regular Session
March 6	Speak Out Regular Session
March 20	Regular Session
April 3	Middle School Reps Regular Session
April 17	Regular Session



Does A Picnic Sound Great Right Now?

Save The Date

**For Our Annual SEA Picnic
May 22, 2014**

EXECUTIVE BOARD

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Timothy Collins

VICE PRESIDENT

Peter Reese

TREASURER

Kelli Nielsen

AT-LARGE MEMBERS

Arlindo Alves

Phil Dowgiert

Brenda Dunn

Luis Fialho

Margaret Fitzpatrick

Marianne Gleason

Susan Kennedy

Yvette Ramos-Bishop

Elaine Sgueglia

Charlesetta Smith

David Tilley

RETIRED AT-LARGE MEMBER

Patricia Sullivan

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Charlene Lonczak

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Sandra Forni-Torres

sfornitorres@seateachers.com

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or Questions to:

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