

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

Happy New Year! I hope you had a restful and rejuvenating holiday vacation.

I want to give serious kudos to Lisa Rahilly, White Street, who spoke eloquently and passionately at the December 19, 2013 School Committee speak-out. I also spoke at this meeting. I asked the School Committee to reach out to the Massachusetts Association of School Committees urging those members to then reach out to the Massachusetts Education Partnership to collectively lobby the DESE board and, if necessary, the U.S. DOE in an effort to bring some sanity to the timelines relative to the implementation of the new evaluation, Common Core, PARCC, DDM, and RETELL. This needs to be a local grassroots effort of teachers lobbying their state union leadership, superintendents lobbying their state leadership, school committees lobbying their state leadership, administrators lobbying their state leadership, and so on.

The statewide leaders of some of these organizations worry about harming their relationship with Commissioner Chester. That is why all of us need to reach out to the School Committee, our state union leadership, our administrators, etc. so these leaders will tell Commissioner Chester there is a groundswell of people closest to the work saying the timelines, if not significantly changed, will do more harm than good for the children in our charge. Every statewide leader needs to hear from all of their local constituents.

I ask each of you to add your voice to this effort. Please call, email, or speak directly to MTA president, Paul Toner, and the members of the Springfield School Committee. Tell them your personal stories as to why the plethora of mandates and timelines facing the people closest to the work are counter productive and harmful to students.

It is well past the time for those of us at the ground level of public education to take back control of the work. These politicians and education bureaucrats need to hear that their edicts and top-down command and control mandates are taking the joy of learning away from students and the joy of teaching away from us.

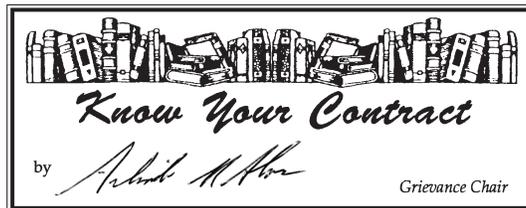
I have been reaching out to union presidents across the state. Everyone I speak to agrees; we need to collectively act now if public education is going to move forward in a positive direction that truly benefits all of the children in our schools.

Together we can make a difference.

**This is your profession, our future, and the future of the children in our charge;
let's take it where it needs to be.**

In solidarity,





WORKPLACE INJURIES

It's that time of year again; over the past few weeks we have had several snowstorms and ice is on the ground. It appears that this is going to be a very challenging winter. I'm concerned that, despite the attempts to keep up with the ice, snow, and wet floors, some accidents may result from the slippery conditions generated by this weather. Slips and falls are the leading causes for teachers to be injured on the job. If you should have an accident or sustain an injury at work due to the inclement conditions or any other misfortune, I want you to be aware of your rights and responsibilities in such a situation.

Every year, I receive a call from a teacher who was injured on the job, but failed to report it properly creating a difficult situation to deal with. Please read the information below and follow it if you are injured on the job.

If you are injured or have an accident while at work:

a) Fill out the *School Department Employee's Notice of a Work-related Injury and/or Occupational Disease Report* (Accident Report), immediately if possible. (Do not confuse this with an *Incident Report*.) Your principal will be able to provide you with the blank report to fill out. Give the completed report to your principal. Your principal needs to send the completed report to Central Office within twenty-four hours.

b) Keep a copy of the report.

If your injuries require medical treatment:

a) Call Concentra Medical Center (746-4006) and ask for the Patient Services Representative; you will be scheduled in the next appropriate and available time slot with an Occupational Medicine Clinician.

b) If after the initial visit to Concentra you decide you would rather be treated by your own doctor, you may do so as long as he/she is willing to take payment from workers' compensation.

c) Record the date and time of all medical visits.

d) Explain that your injury was work related and will be covered under workers' compensation through the City of Springfield. Because this is a work-related injury, **do not** give the medical provider your Health Card.

e) Make sure your doctor submits any procedures or treatments to a utilization review prior to beginning the treatment.

If you have any issues related to your claim:

Contact Carolyn Scyocurka, Claims Adjuster at FutureComp, 413-750-4254.

If you must take leave from work as a result of the injuries:

Under Article 15-D of the *Agreement Between the Springfield School Committee and the Springfield Education Association*, "All members of the bargaining unit are covered under the applicable provision of the Massachusetts Workers' Compensation Law, currently Chapter 152 of the Massachusetts General Laws." Under that law, workers who are incapacitated for five or fewer calendar days are not eligible for cash benefits. Therefore, those days out of work are covered by your sick leave. Beginning the sixth day, compensation is paid and you should not lose any more time from your sick leave while out due to the work-related injury (for up to one year). If, due to your injury, your absence from work lasts for twenty-one days or longer, those initial five days are to be restored to your sick leave, in accordance with the law."

Write to the Human Resource Department and request the number of sick days you have available. After you return to work, follow up that request to ascertain your injury has been charged against the appropriate number of sick days. (If it appears that you have been charged with sick leave incorrectly, please contact me.)

Contact the Massachusetts Teachers Retirement Board as soon as possible to notify them of your injury. If your injury results in complications later on, such notification may mean the difference between an accident disability allowance and a smaller allowance of another type.

(continued on page 3)

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Finally, if your injury is the result of an intentional assault, follow the above, plus:

- a) Your principal must report the incident to the superintendent in accordance with Article 21-A.1. You should fill out an *Incident Report* for your principal. Also, complete a report with the Quebec Team if possible. Keep a copy of all reports filed.
- b) Contact me at the SEA as soon as possible at 782-8300. If you wish to press charges for assault, we will be able to provide you with legal assistance through the MTA, *if you are a member of the SEA*.
- c) Write a detailed account of the incident as soon as possible to supplement the *Incident Report*.
- d) If your personal property is damaged during the course of the assault, the School Committee is responsible for reimbursing you the cost of the damaged property (*Article 21-C.3.a*).

MTA Grievance Training

The collective bargaining agreement is just a collection of empty promises unless and until the union has the skill and power to maintain and enforce it. The extent to which we can deliver on this responsibility to maintain and enforce the contract, to a large extent, provides the answer to the perennial question that the MTA hears from members in one form or another, “What do I get for my dues?” Since the source of our power resides in our members’ involvement, members whose perspective on the above question is unclear or negative will generally not be in a mindset to help the union build its power through active involvement. Consistent with the MTA’s Strategic Action Plan, MTA is in the process of rethinking their approach in all areas, including, how to approach grievance processing to inspire the involvement of more members.

Due to the rapidity and complexity of new issues and problems confronting our members, in addition to topics and issues that MTA traditionally covered in previous grievance workshops, MTA updated the training to deal with the new environment. They will be discussing new tools and techniques to more effectively involve and advocate for our members, whether or not issues fall within the four corners of the contract.

Grievance Training Part II – I Can Do It will be held on Wednesday, February 19, 2014 from 4:00 P.M. – 7:00 P.M. at the MTA Holyoke Office, 55 Bobala Road, Suite 3. To register, type <http://www.cvent.com/events/mta-grievance> in the search field (not your browser).

School Committee Meeting Dates

Below are the School Committee meeting dates for January, February, and March 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.

January 23	Working Session
February 13	High School Reps Regular Session
March 6	Speak Out Regular Session
March 20	Regular Session

What's Our Union Doing for Us?

By



Welcome back from our extended holiday break. I hope all are well and warm! This month I have some housekeeping items to discuss.

The first item is the change in sick leave - how the days are allocated to your personal bank. As you know, our new collective bargaining agreement (the "Contract"), which will be in effect through June of 2016 contains language that has changed the process of receiving these leave days throughout the year. I bring this up because I have been inundated with questions as to how the new system works. Most of the confusion is centered on the total amount of days allocated in one year. In the past, 15 days were added to your bank at the beginning of the year. These days were withdrawn from your bank for various uses such as illness, business, graduation of immediate family member, etc. (for a complete description see Article 12 of our Contract). The major change to this is that you will now be allocated only 10 of those 15 days at the beginning of the year with the other 5 days being "earned" based on attendance. If you are absent from work for 4 or less days in the school year, 5 days will be added to your sick leave bank at the end of that year (June). For example: a teacher has 39 days in her bank from the 2012-2013 school year. She has 10 days added to her bank at the beginning of this year (2013-14) which adds up to 49 days in the bank. Through this year, she uses 4 sick days. This reduces her bank to 45 days. She has used 4 or less sick days therefore she is entitled to receive the 5 additional sick leave days at the end of the year. This will bring her total banked days in June to 50. If the aforementioned teacher used 5 or more sick days through the year, the scenario would change this way. Last year's total days were 39. Add 10 days for this year which will equal 49 days. She was out sick 5 days so the balance in her sick leave bank is now 44 days. She used more than 4 days therefore she is not entitled to receive the 5 additional days at the end of the year. Her total days in her bank remain at 44 days until the following year when the cycle begins again. I know it's a bit of a hassle, but the Contract, with all the changes to it, is on our website (seateachers.com) for you to read for yourself the agreed to language.

The second item is the Joint Labor Management (JLM) commitment to address the workload of Springfield educators. As an update, I can report that the two sides have had an initial meeting. A representative from the district and I are scheduled to meet on the 17th of January to formulate an agenda based on the work study and other concerns from staff in preparation for whole-group meeting scheduled for the 23rd of January. I will remain open to any and all input you wish to give regarding workload issues. If you need to contact me directly, please email me at peterese@yahoo.com. I will use this venue to report to you the progress of the JLM Workload meetings.

As always, Keep Smiling
Peter J. Reese
Vice President

WANTED

**Teachers to Serve
on One of the Most Rewarding
SEA Committees
The Meline Kasparian/Peter Dupuis/Joan
Cormack
Scholarship Committee**

Serving on the SEA Meline Kasparian/Peter Dupuis/Joan Cormack Scholarship Committee is one of the most rewarding endeavors one may participate in, as far as union work goes. Over the past two years, a streamlined process has been in place to make it easier. The time commitment is not huge. The responsibilities of committee members include: attending an initial procedural meeting, reading applicants' packages, scoring applicants in categories specific to each scholarship, attending a final meeting to determine the year's recipients, and attending the Legislative Board/Awards Dinner in May (optional).

If you are interested in being a committee member for the 2014 scholarship recipient selection, please send an email to contact@seateachers.com (type "Scholarship Committee Member" in the subject line of the email).

Thank you,

Peter J. Reese
SEA Vice President and Scholarship Committee Chairperson

“TOOLS 4 TEACHING”



*Recycling Store for Springfield
Teachers*

FREE FREE 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!

Many thanks to our newest donor, Costco!

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.



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

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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.

Memorial to Fallen Educators

The names of Massachusetts educators Colleen Ritzer, Math teacher at Danvers High School killed outside her school on October 23, 2013, and Rev. Theodore Brown, Guidance Counselor at Springfield High School stabbed to death in a classroom on December 5, 2001, will be etched into a monument dedicated to fallen educators, along with dozens of others who have died violently while working in U.S. schools.

The National Teachers' Hall of Fame (NTHF) conceived of the Memorial to Fallen Educators, which is being built on the campus of Emporia State University in Emporia, Kansas, after the tragedy at Sandy Hook Elementary School.

The monument, which will have more than 60 names, will be the only national memorial to fallen educators in the country. It will resemble a six-foot-by-six foot black granite book. A donors' wall, benches, and walkway will complete the memorial plaza. Dedication is set for June 2014.

We believe this memorial is an appropriate way to remember these educators who made the ultimate sacrifice while simply doing what they loved – teaching children. If you are interested in raising funds for the effort, The NTHF is encouraging classrooms to display jars to collect “change to make a change,” then turn the coins into a check and send it, along with a photo of classroom students, to the NTHF Memorial Fund, 1200 Commercial, Campus Box 4017, Emporia, KS 66801. Each school participating will receive a certificate and have its photo displayed on the NTHF website. For more information about the monument and the NTHF, visit www.nthf.org. For more information about the fund raising project, contact Carol Strickland, NTHF Executive Director, at nthfdirector@emporia.edu or 620-341-5660.

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 will be 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.

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