



The Springfield Teacher

December 2017

UNIONS UNDER ATTACK

As you know, unions around the country are under attack. There are many forces at work trying to undermine union members' collective power. In Iowa, legislators passed a law that took effect in February that was aimed at destroying unions. The state's new collective bargaining laws instituted a much steeper hurdle for unions to exist. Now, public-sector unions must vote to recertify every time they face a new contract negotiation — typically every two or three years. They need to win approval from a majority of all employees covered under their contracts — not just a majority of people who vote in the election. This certification vote then grants the union the ability to re-negotiate contracts

Thousands of Iowa teachers, snowplow drivers and corrections officers recently voted overwhelmingly to maintain their union affiliations in a round of high-stakes voting. Results issued by the Iowa Public Employment Relations Board showed 436 out of 468 public-sector bargaining units voted to recertify their organizations. Voter participation was 88 percent. As we face the possible loss of "Agency Fee," due to the case before the Supreme Court, we will need to follow the lead of the union members in Iowa and remember how important it is to protect our rights as members of a union.

SEEDs and MLP

Please remember to print your SEEDs documents periodically during the year especially after an observation, formative, and summative evaluation. We know of cases where the documents have been changed. Also print out your MyLearning Plan records every year because if you leave the district you will no longer have access to the documents. You will need the list of all your completed professional development points (PDP's) when you go to renew your teaching license.

SURVEY

As we continue to go into schools and meet with teachers we are hearing many of the same concerns. Student behaviors continue to be a worry. We are hearing often about teachers being assaulted by students. Teachers are also talking about feeling bullied and harassed in the workplace. In an attempt to find out more about these issues district-wide we have created a discipline task force. The task force has put together a survey that will gather information about these issues. The anonymous survey was sent to your personal email from the SEA on December 4. It is crucial that we get as many responses as possible so that the data will be reflective of the actual situations that many of you are experiencing.

MEETING WITH REPRESENTATIVE BUD WILLIAMS and SENATOR JIM WELCH

Members recently met with State Representative Bud Williams and Senator Welch to discuss two pieces of legislation that are very important to us as teachers. One is a bill that calls for a 3 year moratorium on high stakes testing and for the legislature to fully fund our schools. We made it very clear that the bill absolutely must pass for the teachers and students in Springfield. Members told their own stories about how the lack of funding and overabundance and emphasis on testing is hurting our children.

The other piece of legislation we discussed with them was Eric Lesser's proposed bill that would make it easier for the DESE to create "Innovation Zones" across the state. We made it clear that we oppose that legislation. We don't need more legislation that makes it easier for the state to eliminate local control of schools. Lesser's legislation does not reflect the Springfield Empowerment Zone. It has no language around Teacher Leadership Teams which we believe is the most important part of the Empowerment Zone. It also removes all local control over decision making for our schools

MTA/NEA SELF NOMINATION FORMS

The MTA Convention will be held May 4 and 5, 2018, in Boston and the NEA Convention will be held at the Minneapolis Convention Center in Minneapolis, Minnesota from June 30 – July 5, 2018 (travel dates are June 29 and July 6th). 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 (Forms tab) at www.seateachers.com. These forms are due at the SEA office before 5:00 P.M. on Friday, January 26, 2018. A sample ballot listing all candidates will be emailed to you so please be sure we have your current personal email address.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Recently, the members of the PD committee met to discuss a vision for the seven (7) professional development days we attend throughout the year. Our contractual agreement with the SPS is to collaborate and develop workshops that meet the needs of educators, counselors, and vocational staff. The goal of the PD committee is to achieve this outcome for future PD's. The PD committee is working on a survey tool to solicit your input to create workshops that address the topics educators' want for professional development. This survey will be available online in the near future. We want and need everyone's input!

Teachers know what they need to grow professionally! SEA Professional Development funds are being requested at twice the rate as last year. The Professional Development Committee has funds that can be used to attend conferences, workshops and classes. Each SEA member is entitled to \$300.00 every other year. If you are interested in using the funds you must complete and submit the "Application for Professional Development Funds" form. Once you have been approved for funds and have attended the event, you need to submit the "Request for Payment" form. Both forms can be found on the SEA website, www.seateachers.com. You can either mail the forms to the SEA office or email them to the PD Committee chair [**amurph-brown@seateachers.com**](mailto:amurph-brown@seateachers.com).

OHI

Many of you have been asking about the OHI surveys and the results. The district informed us that the results are confidential. The purpose of the survey is to help principals determine what they need to work on to improve the climate and culture of their school. The principals follow the protocols of the program and review the action plan with the staff.

NEXT GENERATION LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

A very exciting PD opportunity is a program called the **2017-2018 MTA Next Generation Leadership Program**. This program will teach MTA members how to create bottom-up activism and help make local associations powerful and effective organizations. All members who are interested in engaging more actively in their union are welcome to attend whether you've been a member for 1 year or 20 years. Sessions are starting in January. Registration information can be found on the SEA or MTA website.

The program requires commitment for the entire session you choose. MTA will provide overnight lodging in a hotel nearby the training location, if needed.

Sessions will be held in different regions of the state, each over one weekend, according to the following schedule:

MTA Lynnfield Office | Friday, January 26 at 4:30 pm - Sunday, January 28 at 1:00 pm

MTA Auburn Office | Monday, February 19 at 4:30 pm - Wednesday, February 21 at 1:00 pm
(February break offering)

MTA Raynham Office | Monday, April 16 at 4:30 pm - Wednesday, April 18 at 1:00 pm (April break offering)

MTA Headquarters in Quincy | Friday, May 18 at 4:30 pm - Sunday, May 20 at 1:00 pm

There are a number of professional development opportunities available through the Massachusetts Teachers Association (MTA): Visit the MTA/ Professional Catalog for additional information pertaining to the variety of relevant workshops and conferences available for educators in and outside of the classroom.

http://massteacher.org/news/conferences/pd_catalog.aspx

TOOLS 4 TEACHING

A Free Recycling Store for Teachers

When: The 2nd and 3rd THURSDAY of each month (except July) 3:00-5:30 . We follow the SPS schedule for school closings (snow days and/or emergencies). An SPS ID is required for shopping.

Where: 70 Tapley St. in the Congressman Richard E. Neal Municipal Operations Center across the street from Oak Grove Cemetery at the traffic light.

Who: The SEA Committee of Retirees; we also welcome volunteers from the community. For more information email Chris Williams at **chrisew76@gmail.com**.

BUILDING REP TRAINING

We held our first building rep training of the year in November. Reps came for breakfast and learned about our rights under the law and our contract. Many people had great questions and hopefully everyone left feeling more comfortable in their role as a building rep. Remember that your building rep is a valuable resource for you and are there to help you and answer your questions. We will be having a beginner and intermediate rep training that is open to all of our members on February 3rd from 8:30-12. More details to follow.

WHY SHOULD I BE A UNION MEMBER?

The US Supreme Court decided in October to hear a case that will essentially make all states “right to work states.” That means people do not have to join the union to benefit from the collective bargaining the union does.

That sounds like a pretty good deal right? Why not get something for free?

If 50% or more of the Springfield Education Association members begin to feel that way, the union will be decertified which means we will no longer have collective bargaining rights.

The district would no longer have to bargain over salaries, working conditions, or benefits.

So it is important to think about the benefits of belonging to a collective group of people who work together to protect our jobs, our profession and our public schools.

I know it often seems we’re disrespected and not paid nearly enough for all the work we do, but do you think you would have any of the following if the district didn’t have to negotiate over these benefits?

***Paid lunch duty**

***40 minute prep period each day**

***7 hour work day**

***5 day work week (no weekends as some charter schools require)**

***sick time**

***regular raises**

***health insurance—75% paid by employer, 25% by employee**

***Legal representation that is paid for because you are a union member**

Or just ask a teacher who got their job back after being wrongfully terminated why you should belong to the union!

NEW MEMBER UPDATE

The MTA has assigned staff member Ashley Adams to help us reach out to new members. He and our new member engagement coordinator, Erin Burns, have begun planning ways to engage with new members (those within the first 5 years of employment). We know that teaching in Springfield can be overwhelming, exhausting, draining and difficult. But experienced teachers also know that it can be incredibly rewarding, fulfilling and gratifying. We want to help all new members navigate the challenges so that they can reap the rewards. Keep watching for information about upcoming events. We would love to hear suggestions as well. Email contact@seateachers.com if you have ideas to help welcome new teachers or, if you’re a new teacher let us know what we can do to help!

HELPING OUR NEW STUDENTS FROM PUERTO RICO

As you all know, we have been joined by several hundred new students from Puerto Rico. We have \$5000 available to us from the MTA’s Mass Child program. We can purchase supplies that these students need like winter coats, boots, hats and mittens, school supplies, etc. We are working on identifying the organizations that can distribute the things we buy. Meanwhile, If you have students in your school who need supplies you can contact us with a list of what you want to buy, then buy the supplies, and we will reimburse you. If you would like to help with this project please email us at contact@seateachers.com or call the office at 782-8300.

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