

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

The election is over - - the political work of advocacy begins. I want to thank the SEA members who got involved in this election. Your efforts are greatly appreciated. Our work as political advocates, on behalf of public education, needs to be more and more vigorous over the next two years.

The legislature will be dealing with the state budget, including Chapter 70 funding formula (state school spending). The legislature can also impact the testing in our schools, collective bargaining rights of public employees, pensions and health insurance, and tying relicensure to student test scores, just to name a few things that have the potential to seriously impact our lives as well as the lives of the children in our charge.

No matter who you supported or voted for in this election, we all need to become advocates for our students, our schools, our rights as public employees, and the future of public schools in the commonwealth.

Please keep an eye on emails from the NEA, MTA, and SEA. We will keep you informed on the actions of our elected officials relative to proposed legislation that could impact our lives, both positively and negatively. Then, let your voice be heard. Contact your elected officials and tell them what you think and feel; tell them how you want them to vote on legislation that is important to you.

It makes a difference when voters speak out between elections. This is the only way to hold elected officials accountable for the things they promised when they asked for your vote. As one of my high school teachers and coach, Ed Mason of Technical High School, would say, "What you do speaks so loud that I can't hear what you say."

Working together en masse we can make a difference.

Yours in solidarity,



What's Our Union Doing For Us?



I've been hinting at this in the last couple of articles; this is my last contribution to *The Springfield Teacher* as your Vice President. I took some time to scan my writings for this newsletter and found that the onslaught of attacks against us have not been stopped. At every juncture, we have been successful in deflecting pieces of the most onerous of these initiatives against us, but, overall, the enemies of teachers and public servants, in general, have been consistently beating us down. The names of the players, organizations, programs, mandates, etc. change, but the war rages on!

One of the top themes seems to be member voice. Many times, I called for our members to get out and get vocal. Be seen! Be heard! Raise your concerns! Many have answered the call and we have seen results. Contacting your state and local politicians to voice the immediate need for action on their part has a positive effect for us. My concern is that there are not enough members taking action to make the difference we so need to deliver control over our professional lives.

Teachers are leaving Springfield in droves. It's like gazelles at the watering hole with the lions bearing down on them. Without the proper defenses in place, the logical alternative is to run like hell. We are running out of places to run. We are leaving Springfield for reasons directly related to the policies, mandates, regulations, and statutes aimed at micromanaging our every move. As onerous as the federal and state incursions into our lives are, it's the homegrown pressure that hurts the most. The top two reasons I hear from teachers who have left, have given notice, or are ready to decide to leave are the workload is horrendously heavy and my administrator(s) is (are) ridiculously overbearing and demanding to the point that both are affecting my health and family life. This is criminal! The reply so often is yes, but we are making gains; we are advancing with these tactics! The first thing that comes to mind is that Adolf Hitler also realized great territorial gains for a while. Also, I am not quite sure, but I have a sneaking suspicion the gains our students make are due to the creativity and drive of the teachers of Springfield in spite of the pressures from above.

Nothing will get better until we make it better. Time has become a precious commodity; we no longer have the luxury to sit back and see what happens. Will it affect me? Will it affect my school? Will it affect my district? Will it affect my state? Yes! Again, I remind all of the great movements that began with simple tactical baby steps: the civil rights movement of the 50's and 60's under leaders such as Martin Luther King Jr. and the independence campaign for India led by the example set forth by Gandhi. Think hard how change (although not perfect nor complete) came about when the real power brokers (the workers) set their collective mind to a task.

It has been an honor to serve all of you for the last seven years as VP. I hope I have helped our cause along the way. I hope to be able to help many of you directly as your Professional Relations Associate. Please vote in the upcoming SEA election. We have three excellent candidates for my, now vacant, vice president position.

As always,

Keep Smiling

Peter J. Reese

School Committee Meeting Dates

Below are the School Committee meeting dates for December 2014. The full calendar for the 2014 – 2015 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.

December 4, 2014 6:00 High School Reps.
 6:30 Regular Session

December 18, 2014 6:00 Speak Out
 6:30 Regular Session



I really want to stress Weingarten Rights this month. I've touched upon these rights in the past but there seems to be a need to make everyone aware of the importance of safeguarding our members. Weingarten basically protects your right to union representation during an investigatory meeting. I lifted the content below from an old MTA training around investigatory meetings and Weingarten.

1. The employee must make a clear request for Union representation before or during the interview.*
The employee cannot be punished for making this request.
2. After an employee makes the request, the supervisor has three options:
 - a. grant the request and delay the interview until the union representative arrives and has a chance to consult privately with the employee; OR
 - b. deny the request and end the interview immediately; OR
 - c. give the employee a choice of having the interview without representation or ending the interview.
3. If the supervisor denies the request and continues to ask questions, this is an unfair labor practice and the employee has the right to refuse to answer. The employee cannot be disciplined for such refusal, but is required to sit there until the supervisor terminates the interview. Leaving before this happens may constitute punishable insubordination.

CITING YOUR WEINGARTEN RIGHTS

“If this interview* or my responses to your questions could lead to my being disciplined or terminated, or adversely affect my personal working conditions, **I want to have union representation.** Until my representative arrives, I choose not to answer any questions.”

OR, simply, “I want union representation for this interview.”

*There is always reference to an investigatory *meeting*, but it is not always a meeting— this is important: if a supervisor asks you to write a statement about something that could possibly lead to disciplinary action, this must be construed as a *meeting* for which you are entitled union representation. See your building rep or call me at the SEA office before writing any statement of this nature. Explain to your supervisor that you want union representation before answering her/his request.

Keep Smiling

Peter J. Reese

Professional Relations Associate

Executive Board Election REMINDER

The Executive Board Election for the vacant Vice President, Retiree At-Large and At-Large positions will take place during extended day on **Monday, November 17 or Tuesday November 18, 2014.**

Association Representative Election Results Form

Kudos to the following schools that have held their Association Representative Elections **AND** have returned the election results form to the SEA! (As of 11/4/14.)

Balliet	Pottenger
Brightwood	Walsh
Brookings	Zanetti
Brunton	Chestnut South
DeBerry	Chestnut TAG
Dorman	Duggan
Ells	Forest Park
Glenwood	Van Sickle
Homer	Central
Kensington	Liberty Prep
Lincoln	Spfld. Pub. Day Elem

Updated Building Lists

Kudos to the following schools that have updated and returned their school's building list to the SEA! (As of 11/4/14.)

Balliet	Sumner
Brookings	Walsh
DeBerry	Warner
Glenwood	Zanetti
Harris	STEM
Homer	Van Sickle
Kensington	Putnam
Liberty	Assessment Center
Lincoln	Liberty Prep
Lynch	Spfld. Public Day Elem
	Spfld. Public Day Middle

If you have not held your school's 2014 – 2015 Association Representative Election and/or have not returned the election results form to the SEA, please do so as soon as possible. Each school may have one representative for every fifteen members, e.g. 28 members = 2 representatives. Returning the election results form is very important. It is the only means by which the SEA is able to update each school's Association Representative/Legislative Board data. You may send the results by email to contact@seateachers.com (type "Association Representative Election" in the subject line of the email), postal mail to the SEA, Attention Charlene, 1000 Wilbraham Road, Springfield, MA 01109, or by fax to 413-783-8812. The results form may also be downloaded by going to the SEA website, www.seateachers.com and clicking on "Legislative Board." The form must be submitted even if no election needed to be held in your school. It also needs to be submitted even if you phoned the results information into the SEA office.

Updating and submitting your school's building list, which was distributed in September, is also very important. This is the information the SEA uses to insure our data accurately reflects the members who are in your school. Please update and return your building list as soon as possible. Send it to: SEA, Attention Charlene, 1000 Wilbraham Road, Springfield, MA 01109 or fax it to 413-783-8812.

DO NOT SEND THROUGH INTEROFFICE MAIL

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.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Maureen Colgan Posner

The Professional Development Committee met with Kate Fenton and Katie O’Sullivan in October. The meeting started with a very interesting conversation. We discussed the fact that SEEDs should be driving PD and that, in order for professional development to be meaningful, teachers must have some buy in. Kate asked one of the committee members what school based two day PD she attended in August. The teacher paused, thought and then responded “I don’t remember.” Kate was shocked because she remembered what the teacher did based on her building. The teacher replied, “Oh yea, you’re right; I did do that. That was a task that needed to be done, but it didn’t develop me professionally.”

It was such an “aha” moment. It wasn’t planned, it wasn’t rehearsed, it was just honest. The PD had nothing to do with that teacher developing her content area or professional practice. The conversation continued when Katie O’Sullivan suggested the teacher talk to her administrator about what she would like to do during the three school based PD days. It seems like a perfectly logical suggestion, but we all know that those days are too often based on what the administrator thinks will align with the district’s goals – not the teacher development plan, i.e. SEEDs.

We suggested that one of the PD days be used for the GCN training (a compliance training that is being rolled out in stages; some schools have already done it, others will be) that takes more than five hours to complete online. Kate suggested teachers would rather do that on their own time and spend five hours with an expert in their content area. I would like to hear members’ responses to that idea so please email me at moposner@comcast.net and let me know what you think. The PD committee will continue to work toward professional development that is about the teacher.

Interior • Exterior



Painting

Mike
Free Estimates (413)537-8476
Springfield Teacher

Extended Day

Extended Days are to be held on the first and third Monday or Tuesday of each month (for a maximum of twenty work weeks during the school year). All teachers shall remain one hour and fifteen minutes, for the one hour extended day meeting, beyond the end of the instructional day. In the event the first or third Monday or Tuesday of the month occurs during a vacation week, the day will be made-up the following week. The district posted a calendar for the Extended Days so that there is no confusion as to when an Extended Day is to be held.

Article 5, Section K.1 of the Agreement Between the Springfield School Committee and the Springfield Education Association states

“The School Centered Decision Making Team in each school shall determine whether the extended day shall occur on Mondays or Tuesdays, and will develop a plan to make-up school cancellation days (but not on a Friday or the day before a holiday or school vacation).”

With the winter months approaching and the potential for cancelation of school due to inclement weather, the School Centered Decision Making Team in your school should have a plan in place in the event school is canceled on an extended day.

DELAYED OPENINGS

The “Policies and Procedures” Reference Manual states: “The Springfield Public Schools expects you to use reasonable judgment and caution, but to understand your employment responsibility in this matter.” In other words, you are expected to be in your building as soon as it is reasonably safe. If you know you are going to be late, you are expected to call and let your principal know. You are not expected to endanger yourself.



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

When: Saturday, December 6, 2014

Cost: \$35.00

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. Rockefeller Center (driver will confirm)

Return time: 9:30 p.m. at the 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 \$35.00. 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 \$35.00. I understand it is my responsibility to be at the return pick-up area (Rockefeller Center) 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.

SEA Classroom Management Book Study & Seminar

This year the SEA's book choice is *Causes and Cures in the Classroom: Getting to the Root of Academic and Behavior Problems* by Margaret Searle. This book is about Executive Function. It is defined as...“the brain processes that drive our ability to focus, solve problems, organize ourselves, remember that information, learn from mistakes, and manage impulses, all of which help us learn efficiently and develop important social skills (Blair, 2002)”. We will study a problem solving process that can be applied to any type of behavioral or academic problem at any grade level. There is a five-step protocol that leads from observed problem or behavior to root causes to goals and intervention plans. This book focuses on individual student issues with some suggestions for large group applications. Learning about Executive Functioning will help you extend your classroom management skills (PBIS).

The book study will be on the following Wednesdays:

(4:15 P.M. - 5:30 P.M.)

January 21: Chapters 1-3 – What is Executive Function & How Does It Affect School Performance; Planning and Problem Solving; Memory Skills

February 25: Chapter 4 – Organization

March 25: Chapter 5 – Focusing Attention

April 29: Chapter 6 – Impulse Control & Self-Monitoring

May 27: Conclusion: Tips for Supporting Students

You must register by e-mailing Mary Chamberlain at mchamberlain@massteacher.org by December 19, 2014. You can order the book through Amazon or other sites. SEA will reimburse you after a participant has attended at least 3 of the 5 sessions. The book study and seminar is limited to 15 participants. Please check the dates carefully before registering.

I'm Your Handyman!

Plumbing, electrical, carpentry

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(former Putnam Vocational Teacher)

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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 taking new assignments, local businesses and organizations are given the opportunity to divert usable materials – both purchased and homemade - which are then repurposed, organized, and made available to current teachers.

▶ ▶ ▶ Breaking News ◀ ◀ ◀

Teachers, if you don't have time, your para may shop for you.

◀ ◀ ◀ ▶ ▶ ▶

When: Second AND Third Thursday of each month.

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.

Tools 4 Teaching will follow the SPS schedule for school closings (snow days and/or emergencies).

Please support our 2014 – 2015 contributors: STCU and Big Y.



Massachusetts Child

Raises Winter Clothing Drive to \$300

We are pleased to announce that the Massachusetts Child Board of Directors has voted to increase its annual winter clothing grant to \$300. This means local associations can make purchases up to \$300 for jackets, gloves, boots, and other outerwear for students in need without effecting the annual base grant.

To qualify, winter apparel must be purchased and receipts submitted with the reimbursement form, which can be found on the SEA website, www.seateachers.com, by **March 15, 2015**.

In the 18 years since the MTA established the Massachusetts Child, student needs have changed. When the Massachusetts Child was launched as a charitable program to reimburse educators who purchased basic necessities for students going through hard times, requests were mostly for clothing, classroom staples, and eyeglasses. As the nature of the requests have evolved, the Massachusetts Child Board of Directors has provided clarification to what it can provide. The categories for reimbursement can also be found on the SEA website. What has not changed is the Massachusetts Child's mission: **"To help children in crisis in ways that make it possible for them to succeed in school."**



Week-End Backpack Program

Students who go to bed hungry, especially on weekends when schools are not in session, is something that should never occur, and Sodexo (a leading organization in the fight against hunger), in conjunction with the schools, is determined to prevent that as much as possible.

Started in October 2007, Sodexo, along with school principals and counselors, have been providing "filled backpacks" to students in need who can use a meal or two during weekends. For the past seven years, over 7,500 backpacks filled with food have been distributed anonymously to students in the Springfield area.

In short, here is how it works; the principal, along with their counselor(s) and/or teachers will designate a student or a family (up to five per school) that can benefit from a backpack filled with food to supplement them over the weekend. The student will pick up the backpack in the office or kitchen right before the end of day on Friday. The student is then expected to return the empty backpack on Monday or Tuesday. The food items come from three possible sources; The Western MA Food Bank, donated nonperishable food items, and monetary donations used for food purchases at local stores.

If you have questions about the Week-End Backpack program, would like to recommend a student/family, and/or would like to make a donation, please call Joyce at 413-732-1121.

Save The Date

SEA Building Rep & Membership Training

Saturday, January 31, 2015
(snow date – February 7, 2015)

SEA Office
1000 Wilbraham Road
Springfield, MA

8:30 A.M. – 9:00 A.M.
Full Breakfast

9:00 A.M. – 1:00 P.M.

Topic will be determined based on members' feedback.

Keep an eye out for an announcement of the topic and registration instructions in your personal email and in December's issue of *The Springfield Teacher*.

NEW ENGLAND CONSULTING SERVICE

GRADUATE COURSES FOR EDUCATORS

3 Graduate Credits
67.5 PDPs
4.5 CEUs in 5 classes

Designing an Effective Writing and Thinking Program for the Classroom

Course number – PRDV 70315

Instructor - *Susan Gilbert*

This course is appropriate for all K – 12 educators

FIVE SATURDAYS

December 6 & 13, 2014
January 10, 24 & 31, 2015

For information and registration contact:
Marilyn Spedding (413) 596-3309
or newenglandconsulting@charter.net



Bring a guest!
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get 6 smoked wings Free

Valid Tuesday and Wednesday
only through 12/3/2014
Excludes alcohol, not to be
combined with any other offers

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(Corner of State and Andrew Street)

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Are you a new teacher?

Join us for a SPECIAL EVENT

(just for new teachers in your first 3 years of teaching in Springfield)

Tuesday, January 13, 2015 4:15 - 7 pm

Come celebrate with us!

John Boyle O'Reilly Club

33 Progress Street

Springfield

Please RSVP by January 6, 2015 to: sfornitorres@seateachers.com

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Helping Teachers Teach

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