



The Springfield Teacher

November 2017

Have you ever thought about the benefits you receive because you are the member of a union? When you think about your membership do you think about:

- ◆ The fact that you can only be required to stay after school 2 days a month and that you know what days those are going to be when the school year starts?
- ◆ That you are entitled to cancer screenings, sick leave, maternity leave, and adoption leave?
- ◆ That you get workers comp that allows a teacher to be compensated a full salary for an entire year instead of the 60% as provided by Massachusetts state law without using accumulated sick time?
- ◆ That the district sponsors two graduate courses which can be used for college credit at a reduced fee?
- ◆ That you are entitled to severance pay or a buy back of your accumulated sick leave when you retire from the SPS?
- ◆ That as a teacher who prepares MCAS alts you get compensated for additional time?
- ◆ That you are protected from layoffs because of reduction in force language?
- ◆ That there is language that outlines a grievance process?
- ◆ That there are assault and battery protections?

We often just think of the monetary benefits that come with being a member of the union. But working conditions and protections that are provided by our contract are very important also!

WINS

- ⇒ We were able to get back pay for one of our members. The principal reported that the teacher had not attended PD but through Peter's dogged perseverance we were able to provide pictures and sign in sheets that showed she had indeed been working.
- ⇒ We were also able to get a teacher moved to the proper step and educational level. It included back pay for the 18 months that she was being paid on the wrong scale.
- ⇒ In another building when the teachers joined together and spoke with one voice they were able to get the administration to reexamine the class schedules and make it better for the teachers and the students.

WBGY FAN DAY

The MTA was one of the sponsors at the WBGY Fan Day on November 3rd. Over 1000 kids attended the event. Each sponsoring group had a table that reflected a different PBS TV show. The SEA as part of the MTA had a table based on the show "ODD SQUAD." We had a math game that corresponded to a decoding activity. Each child made a badge which is a unique part of the show. Thanks to our volunteers who manned the table!

HOLIDAY PARTY

Once again, the organizing committee is planning the Holiday event of the season! The committee is looking for help on Nov. 17 at 4:00 to decorate the offices and meeting rooms for the big event. Mark your calendar and save the date for Saturday, Dec. 2 from 2-4PM. All members are welcome to come with their children, grandchildren, nieces and nephews to this wonderful event. There will be games, food, activities and a performance by the Dan Kane singers! Santa will be there to listen to wish lists! It is a great event and we hope to see you there!!

CLARIFICATION ON PERSONAL DAYS

We have had many of you asking us about personal days. We were able to get the District to withdraw their proposal that personal days cannot be used during testing periods or before or after vacations.

There are no black out dates!

You do need (except in the case of emergency) to get written approval from your Principal seven days in advance of your requested date of absence.

CLASS DOJO

We have heard from a few teachers that they think Class DOJO is a great way to connect to students and families. We would encourage everyone to be careful about the privacy settings on the app and make sure that parent communication and responses are going to only you and not all parents in the class.

Unfortunately, we have heard of some situations where parents were posting inappropriate things that could be seen by all the parents in the class.

Like all technology it is great when it works right, but can be a nightmare if misused.

IMPORTANT REMINDERS

Use personal emails:

- ⇒ If you need to contact us please remember to do it through your personal email. Remember we are not allowed to conduct union business using SPS email.

Building Rep Elections:

- ⇒ If you haven't already done so, please remember to hold building rep elections. If you've held your elections please be sure to return the building rep election form (it's pink) with the information that lists your building reps. If you've lost the form, email us at contact@seateachers so we can send you a new form. We are no longer mailing information to reps in buildings so we need to have personal emails to guarantee timely communication.

UPDATE

As we have visited schools, we have heard many of the same concerns regarding staff safety and student discipline. The discipline task force, which was started in September, is open to everyone. In an attempt to determine all the issues, district-wide, the task force has created a survey that will be used to assess discipline and safety issues in our schools. Please look for the anonymous survey that will be sent to your personal email from the SEA near the end of November or early December. 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

CHANGE IN THE LEGISLATIVE BOARD MEETING TIMES

We are going to try something different for the December Legislative Board meeting. In an attempt to make it easier for those of you who have earlier dismissal times (secondary schools) we are going to run the monthly meeting for the secondary schools from 2:45 to 4:15.

We will keep the meeting time the same for elementary schools and the schools that have a later dismissal time. That meeting will run from 4:15 to 5:45 as we have always done.

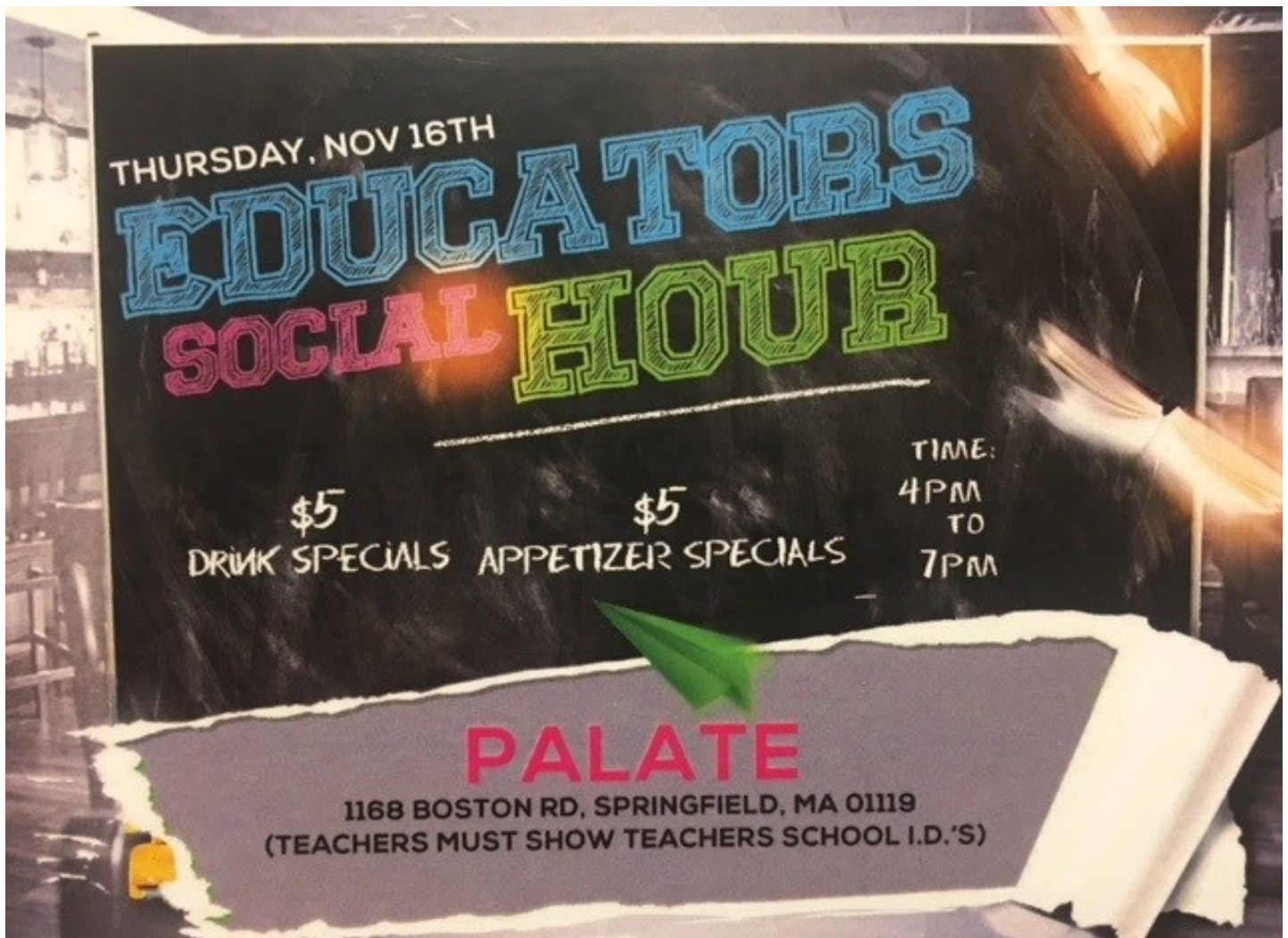
INFORMATION

DYKnow is available for all teachers. It allows you to see every computer in your classroom and monitor the work of students as long as they are signed into their SPS account.

It is vital that all teachers be aware of this and able to use it so that you can be protected from the one student who goes home and reports what they did today at school, which is completely different than what they were supposed to be doing at school!

PAY DAY HANG OUT—NOVEMBER 16

We had our first pay day hangout at Nathan Bills on September 22. We went to where we know our members already are and got a chance to talk and mingle. We also used it as an opportunity to talk about the upcoming Supreme Court Case that may dismantle the current collective bargaining rights as they currently exist. More importantly the hang out gave members the opportunity to win some raffle prizes like a free appetizer from Nathan Bills or gift cards to places like Red Robin or Barnes & Noble. Our next pay day hang out is going to be at Palate on November 16 h, after school. Hope to see you there!



WHY SHOULD I BE A UNION MEMBER?

We believe that there will most likely be a case heard this year in the United States Supreme Court 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!

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT—MARY JEAN HOUGH

Mary Jean Hough is a devoted teacher who has worked in the district for over 40 years. She has spent her career in middle school teaching Language Arts. She has been a building rep for many of those years, only stepping down this year to allow for others to step into the role of helping their fellow teachers. She is the first person to respond when a family is in crisis. Thank you for all of your hard work and dedication.

NEW MEMBER UPDATE

The MTA has assigned a staff member to help us reach out to new members. We will be rethinking ways to engage with new members (those within the first 5 years of employment). We know this job can be overwhelming, exhausting, draining and difficult. However, 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!

TOOLS 4 TEACHING

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. Please use glassed-in front entrance and follow signs for Tools 4 Teaching.

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

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