

HEA Hot Sheet – March 2018

by Lisa Begley, HEA President

Keeping Members Informed – If you are not receiving union e-mails and would like to keep up with the latest information please provide your name and personal e-mail to Jill Bouchard and Jeff Blaustein. Jill will verify dues payments and then Jeff will add your information to the I-contact list. “I contact” is the service that we use for our communications to our members. If you are not looking for our e-mail and it goes to spam four times we will never be able to use that e-mail address again. So, if you choose to keep in contact with us you must look for our e-mails and accept them and then make sure your service recognizes our email address.

Special Education Issues – I keep learning more and more as I listen to special education teachers across the district. Recently I was a part of a meeting that included Mrs. McDonald the special education director. She knows special education is a fluid entity. Students are referred for testing by both parents and teachers. When a qualified special education teacher tests a student, it means that they can't be in two places at once. They are either testing or providing remediation, or intervention services. Not all special education teachers have the qualification for testing within Haverhill. We are discussing how we can bring in professional development to assist those who do not yet have the training to administer and interpret the testing that is performed. When a special education teacher sees that they are not able to provide services as stated within students' IEPs they should let their principal and ETF know. Mrs. McDonald will work with any school that needs to have additional staff brought in for testing so that services can still be appropriately administered.

I am aware that many special education teachers have been giving up their lunches and preparation periods to complete testing. Both lunch and prep are necessary for the success of you and your students. Lunch refuels you and provides you with the energy to complete your many tasks that are still left for you to complete. The preparation period, although it is never enough time to complete all that is necessary, is for you to plan lessons, look over students' work and provide appropriate feedback. As such, it is yours to manage. It is not for testing or IEP meetings and was never intended to be used as such. I fear that too many of you have been giving up these things thinking that you are helping a particular student. However, I would argue that the pace is unrealistic and will not enable you to do what is so important for your students in the long run.

We need to identify when there is not enough time within the day (even with brining work home!) and when additional personnel are necessary for testing students while the special education teacher can in fact provide the services called for on the IEPs of our students. We need to have the confidence that Mrs. McDonald will provide the assistance with additional personnel or at the very least advocate that additional personnel are necessary for the number of special education students that we have with the Haverhill School District. Please keep in mind that the IEPs identify who is to provide services. A teacher must provide some services whereas either a teacher or a paraprofessional may provide other services.

Lunch – Remember it is the law that you are allowed to have a lunch. This is not a guideline that one can chose to be follow or ignore. If there is an emergency and you don't get lunch please let the administration know. They can't give you what they are not informed about. It is your responsibility to let them know. Please try to do this before you miss the entire lunch if possible. (What you deem to be an emergency may not be considered an emergency by others. Communication will often work to alleviate these issues.)

SBIRT – Do you need SBIRT training? We are trying to have conversations with the administration on how to get a course at Haverhill for those that need the training and who were rejected from participating in the training when they tried to sign up for it when it was free. Are you one of those individuals? Do you have an e-mail rejecting you from participation? Stay tuned as we hope to try to see what can be done to assist these individuals as well as individuals that need the course who are new to teaching.

Secretarial Unit Negotiations – The March 12th meeting has been rescheduled to March 26th. We will be presenting a proposal for consideration at this time.

ESP Unit Negotiations – Our last meeting had to be rescheduled due to the superintendent search. We have been going back and forth trying to find a date that we can meet again. It seems to me that everyone does wish to meet and would like to have it sooner rather than later however, there are a lot of meetings that have had to be moved due to the school board doing their site visits, which are very important as well. We are close to completing the process and hope that we can agree to a few more language issues at our next meeting. We will let you know when that happens.

Teacher Unit Negotiations – Thank you to everyone that came to the meeting at HHS where we prioritized what we wish the negotiations team to concentrate its efforts on. We need to meet with our MTA representatives and start the process for the wording of our items that we will go into negotiations with. Once this is close to being complete we will then request to start negotiations with the School Committee. New requests to add to the current negotiations are not being taken at this time, but as we begin to exchange proposals with the School Committee members will be kept up to date.

Social Media – Just a friendly reminder that social media is not always used in a positive way by some that have their own agendas. Individuals that use social media for the purpose of hurtful messages or to spread rumors and half-truths are not ones to give your personal time to. Even when someone tries to take the high road and looks to “correct” misinformation it still gives those who want to comment a platform to be heard. Recently we had teachers that were targeted by hurtful words. Using social media seems to

provide a sense of power to bullies. Take this springtime as a time to go through your settings and protect your privacy; block anyone who is harassing you. Don't let others bring you down with a tool that should not be used so carelessly.

MTA Delegates Convention – The MTA Delegates Convention is scheduled in Boston on May 4th and 5th. Haverhill is allowed to have seventeen delegates. We usually try to see who can drive in together and the HEA pays for the parking and for lunch on Saturday. We have never had to hold a vote to see who will be representing Haverhill however, we would love to have so much interest than one would be required. Please let me know if you are interested to attend this year. Let me know if you are interested by March 28th. This is an opportunity to have your voice heard. We vote on many items to include the MTA budget, and MTA executive board. I will not be able to attend this year as my son is graduating from college.

ESP Convention by the MTA – As stated previously the HEA is willing to pay for five ESP's to attend the ESP convention by the MTA for up to \$75.00. We would like to give the opportunity to new individuals so anyone that was selected last year is not eligible this year. The first five ESPs that would like to attend need to send a request to Lisa Begley. You will be notified if you are the one of the first five eligible individuals. Remember that hotel is not covered for this event. If I do not get any names for new individuals then we will open up the opportunity to members who have previously been selected.

When EPSs Substitute – Remember there are two different forms to complete if you have substituted for a teacher. One is for a full day substitution and the other is when you have covered six different periods over several days. It is the ESP's responsibility to complete the form and to submit to the secretary for pay. Remember that the administration had to agree to the teacher being out of the room. Testing, absence, or having to attend an IEP meeting would be some examples.

Tilton Turn Around Plan – From the Tilton School: *"Tilton School has been implementing year one of the Two Year Turnaround Grant that it was awarded at the end of the last school year. As part of the grant, we have been able to implement an extended day tutoring program that includes transportation home, which allows all students the opportunity to participate. A PBIS team has also been formed this year and is currently in year one of their training. We have also have implemented a Math and Writing Coach, which supports our teachers and students. Tilton School is looking forward to working together with the community to raise student achievement and community involvement at Tilton."*

Haverhill High Turn Around Plan – Haverhill High School (HHS) developed a Turnaround plan that focuses on three priority areas: (1) Instructional Practice; (2) Tiered System of Support; and (3) Professional Development. The HHS Turnaround plan focuses on those three priority areas that align with the Turnaround practices that contribute to expeditious improvement. HHS has recently applied to DESE for a grant of approximately 123K to support our efforts in Turnaround.

Silver Hill Teachers Reject Innovation School – A ballot vote was taken at Silver Hill on Monday February 26th at Silver Hill to determine if teachers were interested in pursuing an innovation school or not. Mrs. Ferreira, a parent who initiated the proposal, was present for the vote. The results were 33 "No" votes and 1 "Yes" vote. Mrs. Ferreira says that she will honor the teachers' wishes for this school year.

Chyten Contract – Unfortunately, we recently learned that our belief that any teacher that agreed at the high school to teach an additional SAT prep course for the company Chyten would have these wages as part of their retirement was incorrect. The school agreed to pay the teacher (Only one was actually hired due to numbers of students who signed up.) through normal payroll. The MTRS informed us that this was not enough to satisfy the requirement for retirement consideration due to the teacher(s) being evaluated by Chyten for the class and for the hourly rate that Chyten pays for the training portion. This was a mistake by all parties. The teacher that had agreed to teach this course has resigned and we are looking for a replacement at HHS. The person though needs to agree to a sixth class, which would remove their prep period four days a week. They have to agree to this knowing now that this will not assist with their retirement. Our apologies go out to our HHS teacher for not having this work out how we understood it to be.

Retirement Plus Update – Have you applied to be a part of the legal proceedings that the MTA has begun in regards to the MTRS removing them from the retirement plus program? If you received notification from the MTRS that you were no longer eligible then you need to reach out to us at the HEA so that we can get you proper representation. So far over 400 MTA members have reached out. If you are one and have not yet contacted us and provided the letter that you received please do so immediately!

Legal Services for MTA Retired Members – Remember that to receive legal services involving health insurance and or pension issues you must continue your membership in the MTA as a retired member. Your time to gain membership to deal with any of these issues starts on your retirement and you must have become a retired member of MTA and NEA prior to January 1st of that membership year. The membership rates can be paid yearly or via a one-time lifetime membership fee. The cost is minimal to pay per year. Members retiring this year should think about using the honorific they receive from the HEA to pay for the first year of membership. It is truly money worth spending for this and many other reasons.