

AEA FOCUS

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March 2008

Greetings,

Happy spring! The season denotes the beginning of the fourth quarter, a light at the end of the tunnel. It is a culmination of the many hours of preparing the students in ASD for the PSSA. What a relief! With those nice feelings noted, let me switch gears and talk union a bit. Sometimes we may ask ourselves, "Are Educators treated as professionals or mushrooms?"

Webster defines a professional as "a worker required to possess a large body of knowledge derived from extensive academic study, with the training almost always formalized."

Webster goes on to say that a **mushroom** is the fleshy, spore-bearing [fruiting body](#) of a [fungus](#), typically produced above ground on soil or on its food source. Many species of mushrooms seemingly appear overnight in the dark and may disappear by late afternoon on a hot day.

One might wonder, on the other hand, how I might define a professional or a mushroom.

In my estimation, a professional is an expert in one's craft, a creative, calculated risk-taker, with the ability to change oneself, enhance the qualities of others, and be a hard working goal oriented person.

A mushroom, on the other hand, is a fungus that survives off others, is kept in the dark, and is fed all that can be shoveled to it.

This analogy is my way of expressing what we may sometimes feel, and what I hear from our members on a regular basis. These feelings are mostly stirred by the position we have been placed in by Special Education regulations, PDE mandates, and the misapplication of ESEA. They are also fueled by the many uninformed, public education skeptics who believe that they know the classroom and student needs better than the professionals who work amid them each and every day.

If the "light of spring" is at the end of the tunnel, is it ever going to come to the educational field? It is time that we, the professionals, be treated in a professional manner, and not like mushrooms. It is time for us to take on a leadership role in our occupational field. It is time that our voices are heard in the school buildings of the ASD, on safety committees, CST, Liaison Committees and in other important leadership roles within our buildings. Lets get involved on the district level safety task force committee, Meet and Discuss, the Literacy (Ball) Committee, and a host of other committees set up that need our expert input and extensive knowledge.

If we have learned anything from history, many of the world altering changes didn't occur until groups of people got tired of being treated like mushrooms. Remember the struggle for US Independence, the Civil Rights Movement, and the efforts toward Women Suffrage. I challenge you to stand up for our profession and what is "right" in Education, and not to retreat and accept being treated like mushrooms.

continued on page 2

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HEADS UP...

Local, State, Federal issues and things that you need to know

- Reporting for child abuse – a teacher's responsibility is that he or she must report the act to the immediate supervisor and/or principal. The teacher is responsible for reporting the act in writing (e-mail is acceptable), but only to ASD – make sure to make a copy for your own record. The administrator is the direct reporter. After reporting this to ASD, you are no longer legally liable.
- Please be aware that you are not allowed to be video taped or audio taped without your written consent. Also be aware that this may be occurring without your knowledge. If you suspect that a student is doing this, contact your administrator immediately.
- Just a reminder that the Internet and e-mail at school is school property. The district can search and/or retrieve your use at anytime, including your prep-time use. If an unauthorized site comes up that is not blocked already, you need to close it out immediately and report the site to your building administrator.
- Attention special education teachers: A survey will be mailed to your household. Please complete it and send it back ASAP.
- Reminder – ask your doctor to write a 90 prescription to save on co-pay. The cost for prescriptions is \$5 for generic, \$25 for formulary, and \$45 for non-formulary. Visit www.express-scripts.com or www.capbluecross.com for a comprehensive list.
- Wells Fargo – this is a NEA endorsed vendor. They deal with home mortgage, car loans, college loans, refinancing, and all types of insurance. If interested in a local contact, e-mail Eugene.j.brown2@wellsfargo.com or call 610-997-7180
- Union elections will be occurring March 31 – April 4 in your building. Please vote!!
- The problem with the electronic filing for taxes still exists. You need to plan accordingly.
- Conference of Urban Locals will be held on May 9-10 in State College – there are still some slots available – contact AEA if interested or if you want more information about this.

CONGRATULATIONS!

One of our own ASD teachers has been selected to take part in NASA training at a space academy program in Alabama. The program is a week long and run by Honeywell and the U.S. Space and Rocket Center.

What an honor for him to be selected as one of 300 teachers from 16 countries.

SPECIAL THANKS

Thanks to everyone that has either donated money or time for the family of the late Brian Hassler (Dieruff Assistant Head Custodian). The Dieruff basketball game was a huge success. Please keep the family in your thoughts and prayers.

AEA Calendar

March 31 – April 4 ... AEA Elections

**April 9 – Faculty Rep Meeting @
Dieruff**

May 5 – Executive Comm Mtg

**May 7 – Outstanding Teacher
Awards Reception**

DEADLINES:

Professional Development Leave/Sabbatical – Due by May 1