

BEU CALENDAR

BEU ALANA (African, Latino, Asian, and Native American) Staff Networking Event

Nov 3 Golden Temple 4:30-6:30

BEU Action Team

Subcommittee Meeting

Nov 4 BHS Room 238 3:30pm

Executive Board Meeting

Nov 7 BHS Room 258 3:15pm

Election Day--No on 2!

Nov 8 Volunteers needed on Election Day and before. Email: johnsonsmizik@gmail.com

Action Team Meeting

Nov 9 Room 238 3:15pm

Mediated Contract

Negotiations

Nov. 9 6:00 pm Town Hall

Rally at the School

Committee! New Date!

Nov 10 5:15 Town Hall

BEU All-Member General

Meeting / Call to Action!

Nov 14 3:15 BHS Auditorium

Action Team Meeting

After General Meeting

Grievance Team Meeting

Nov 21 BHS Room 240

CALL TO ACTION for Fair Paraprofessional & Union Administrator Contracts!

The battle lines are once again drawn in Brookline – this time for the paraprofessionals, who are engaging in a major struggle for a barely acceptable wage and basic job security.

Negotiations ended after midnight on Tuesday, October 25 with no agreement and with the parties far apart, especially on wages and job security. The BEU wants to move significantly toward salary comparability with Newton. We want the salary for full-time Paras to have a floor of \$20,000. The School Committee is balking at that, offering wage increases that amount to less than \$2.00 a day for most, keeping their wages at under \$19,000 a year. We are also far apart on basic job security, with the school committee refusing any layoff and recall language for paraprofessionals.

ALL OUT TO SUPPORT OUR COLLEAGUES!
RALLY AT THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE MTG
TOWN HALL, THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 10
(NEW DATE)
RALLY AT 5:15PM & PUBLIC COMMENT

-- SEE PAGE 3 FOR ADDITIONAL ACTIONS --

ALANA NETWORKING EVENT -- THIS THURSDAY, NOV 3

Please join us for a Brookline Public Schools ALANA (African, Latino, Asian and Native American) Staff Networking Event on Thursday, November 3rd, from 4:30-6:30 PM at the Golden Temple in Brookline. This is the first of three Brookline Public Schools ALANA Staff Networking events sponsored by the Brookline Educators Union (BEU).

It will be great to come together to connect with colleagues, network and meet one another. Whether you have worked in Brookline two months, two years or twenty years please join us!

Free appetizers will be provided.

PLEASE LET US KNOW YOU ARE COMING (IF YOU HAVEN'T ALREADY)

EMAIL JEANETTE AT [SJEANETTE9@GMAIL.COM](mailto:sjeanette9@gmail.com)

CONTRACTS IN CONVERSATION



Dear Contract Corner:

I know the BEU has been very busy the last couple of years trying to negotiate a new contract for us. Thank you for all of your efforts. My neighbor was asking me questions about contracts. "Don't they restrict you?" he wanted to know. Also, he said, "Don't contracts make it impossible to get rid of bad teachers?" I wasn't sure how to answer him. Do you have some advice?

*Signed,
Backyard Conversation*

Dear Backyard Conversation:

You pose two really good questions, so I will try to answer them separately.

First, the contract between the Brookline Educators Union and the Brookline Public School Department doesn't restrict you from being the best educator you can be. Most of the parameters of your job are set by the School Department and not by the contract. Historically, contracts were thought of more as documents that outline and protect hours, wages and working conditions. Over the years, the contracts for educators have been fine-tuned to the needs of our particular profession, but this overarching idea remains the same. Beyond that, teachers, supervisors and paraprofessionals have many opportunities to use their professional judgment to make classrooms that are challenging, creative and engaging.

Why are contracts good for everyone? Language that both employers and employees agree to ahead of time prevents the need to discuss, debate or argue over every aspect of the teaching day, such as what meetings must be attended, what the workday is, how much prep time is available to educators, etc. Preserving and improving on our contract is only a part of what the BEU does, but it is an important part.

Your neighbor's second question shows a common misconception about contracts and unions. We have an evaluation process in place that has been and is being negotiated as changes are deemed necessary by DESE or the state legislature. This process includes steps that both sides agree to as meaningful in both evaluating and supervising staff members.

The evaluation process has always had and will continue to have language that allows for close supervision and consequences for teachers whose work and methods fall below community standards. To be honest, it is more often the fault of burdensome caseloads for evaluators or complicated new regulations that require training and practice to implement successfully that hamper the effective evaluation and supervision of educators. This is not the fault of the union. In fact, the union serves as a safeguard against random dismissals and groundless disciplinary action.

The push and pull between the BEU and the School Department can be a healthy action in clarifying what we expect out of our staff. To contrast, people who work in professional jobs with high expectations and no unions can often feel like they are being scrutinized every moment of their work lives and might be dismissed without cause at any time.

I hope this helps to clarify your questions and that you can pass this on to your neighbor.

Signed,
Contract Corner

If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact the BEU. Email BEU-MTA@hotmail.com or call 617-277-0251. One of the following grievance committee members will get back in touch with you.

Deb Allen (Devotion, retired)
Jody Curran (Driscoll)
Hillary Golden (Lincoln)
Mark Goldner (Heath)
Rich Gorman (BHS)
Anna Maclver (Runkle)
Shelley Mains (BHS)
Susan Moreno (BHS)
Jill Sifantus (BHS)
Susan Stark (BHS)
David Weinstein (Pierce, retired)
Jessica Wender-Shubow
Sue Zobel (Lincoln)

READY FOR RETIREMENT?

For members retiring in 2017

The MTRS (MA teacher retirement system) staff will be presenting our popular seminar, "Ready for Retirement," across the Commonwealth in November and December. "Ready for Retirement" is a free, optional, two-hour program (4-6 p.m.) designed for members retiring in 2017. They are reaching out to soon-to-be retirees before the retirement season starts so that when they begin the application process, they will know just what you need to do and when. Topics include:

- the retirement application process and the benefit calculation formula,
- timelines and service expectations,
- first payment information,
- health insurance, tax and working after retirement issues
- cost-of-living adjustments after you retire.

Please note: Personalized account information and pension estimates are not offered during these sessions.

To attend, simply choose the date and location that is best for you, and then register online at:

<http://mass.gov/mtrs>

NO DISTRICT-LEVEL BUSINESS-AS-USUAL!

The Public Schools of Brookline are in crisis due to the School Committee's failure to both pay paraprofessionals a fair wage and provide other incentives to stay. A third of the Paraprofessionals left for other jobs at the end of last year and openings remain at the start of November. BEU educators have pledged to cease volunteering for district initiatives until there is an agreement on the paraprofessional and BEU administrator contracts.

Guidance from the Action Team

to implement our withdrawing from administrative duties and committees.

These lists contain both unpaid and paid positions.

You should get a prorated stipend when you withdraw from a paid position.

The BEU has decided that we STOP VOLUNTEERING for administrative duties and committees

1. School Council
2. PD Council after Nov 8
3. Site Council
4. Beautification committees
5. Hiring committees
6. Administrative Advisory Council
7. Olweus committees
8. Release Day Planning Committees
9. Faculty Planning Teams
10. Piloting and beta-testing

You may STAY on committees that involve direct service to children (what helps YOU teach, rather than what helps RUN THE SYSTEM)

1. Child Study Teams
2. Professional Learning Groups
3. Club/Sports
4. November 8 PD Day, including planning & facilitating
5. PD Council until Nov 8
6. Field Trips and planning
7. Race Reels
8. Family Network
9. SEED Training
10. Identity Curriculum

Use your PROFESSIONAL JUDGEMENT on some committees (keeping in mind the "new normal" - do what is useful for your teaching and is not an excessive burden.)

1. Curriculum development
2. Prepping for staff meetings - if it's about our teaching and solidarity with our fellow BEU members.
3. Tech Team
4. Literacy Team
5. Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports Committees



YOUR HEALTH CARE

Our Health Care Agreements are negotiated by the PEC (Public Employees Committee) and the Town Administrators. All Brookline municipal unions are represented on the PEC and Jess and I represent all teachers on this committee...active and retired.

We have a Health Reimbursement Account (HRA) which covers some of the copay amounts for specific procedures.

- Out-patient Day Surgery up to a maximum reimbursement of \$150.00
- Inpatient Hospital Admission up to a maximum reimbursement of \$500.00
- Emergency Room \$50.00 per occurrence
- High-tech imaging (MRI, CT, or PET scans) up to

\$100.00 starting with a third occurrence for the same illness or condition.

The Town or HRA Administrator must receive eligible claims for reimbursement within sixty (60) calendar days of the billing date, though we are currently negotiating a longer period (watch for updates). The Town has put \$70,000 into this fund. You can get information and a form on BEU website.

We are also eligible for a Long Care Disability Program. You should be receiving information and forms for an Open Enrollment period that ends December 24th.

Please feel free to contact Jessica or me if you have questions or concerns. Navigating Healthcare information can sometimes be confusing and daunting.

Take care....Sheila Leach

-Sheila Leach, PEC Rep

FINANCE FOR EDUCATORS

SELECTING A FINANCIAL PATH TO "SOMEWHERE" PROFITABLE



"Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?"

"That depends a good deal on where you want to get to," said the Cat.

"I don't much care where—" said Alice.

"Then it doesn't matter which way you go," said the Cat.

"—so long as I get SOMEWHERE," Alice added as an explanation.

"Oh, you're sure to do that," said the Cat, "if you only walk long enough."

-A conversation between Alice and the Cheshire Cat in Alice's Adventures in Wonderland.

Yes, I'm back as your BEU financial consultant who will guide you on which way to go in the often confusing forest of investing, help you to establish a 403(b) retirement plan and provide you with a time-tested, long term investment strategy.

Let's begin with a quick introduction. I'm Bob Miller, a former Brookline English teacher, an expert on the 403(b), and a passionate advocate for financial literacy. Over the past 16 years, I've written monthly articles about finance and investing for the BEU newsletter – ranging from paying off student debt to securing a new mortgage - and conducted over 50 workshops for Brookline educators.

As your BEU financial consultant, my major focus has been to enroll teachers in the 403(b), a retirement savings program – almost identical to the 401(k) in the private sector – that is made available to employees in schools & non-profits. One of the defining characteristics of Brookline's program is that it exemplifies "best practices" in investing. All vendors – companies that are eligible to sell you investment products - have been carefully vetted ensuring that teachers have access to stellar investment choices. Based on the investment wisdom of the legendary investor, Warren Buffet, teachers are encouraged to invest in a balanced portfolio of low-cost, Vanguard index funds.

The enrollment process is straightforward and only requires a smart-phone, a laptop and 60 minutes of your time. The first enrollment workshop for 2016 will be held in the BHS faculty room on Thursday, November 10 at 3:10 PM. The next workshop will held in the Driscoll faculty room on Thursday, December 8 at 3:10 PM. I will post the remainder of the 2017 dates for 403(b) enrollment workshops on the BEU website in November.

In "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland," she encounters countless puzzles that defy both logic and resolution, an experience not uncommon to many investors in the stock market. My goal and promise is simplify the investing process, solve the investing puzzle and, in the process, enable you to save hundreds of thousands for your retirement.

-Robert Miller, Devotion



The President's Work

BEU Reps and Action Team members had an intensive training recently on how to engage the membership in workload oversight. The law protects the right of union members to negotiate with their employer over working conditions and the BEU will soon be ramping up this bargaining with the help of members in the buildings.

Union members also have a right to negotiate how state regulations on educator evaluation will be implemented. Our current agreement expired last year. The BEU team is gearing up to sit down at the bargaining table in November. The membership must ratify any agreement.

Watch for updates!

We hope you enjoy this newsletter and find it informative. If you are represented by the BEU but are not a member, we ask you to join us.

Please note: Non-members represented in Units A and B and non-members employed more than 3 years in the Para Unit are responsible for paying an agency service fee, about 75% of the dues, billed late spring or summer.

THE BROOKLINE EDUCATOR

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BEU.groupsites.com All members are encouraged to join using a personal email address.

Amie Buchman, Communications Chair

Jessica Wender-Shubow, President