

BEU CALENDAR

April 14-23 Vacation

April 24 Grievance
BHS Room 240 3:15pm

April 24 Preconvention Mtg
for MTA Delegates
Woburn, 4:30 pm

May 1 Executive Board Mtg
BHS Room 258 3:15pm

May 2 Town Election
Volunteers needed. Contact Jess

May 3 MTA Para Bargaining
Summit
Dedham Hilton 4:00-7:00pm

May 8 Reps Council
BHS Room 258 3:15-5:15pm

May 15 Grievance Team
BHS Room 240 3:15 pm

May 19-20 MTA Annual
Meeting of Delegates
Hynes Auditorium, Boston

May 20: Rally for Public Ed

June 5 BEU Retirement Tea

June 30-July 5 NEA
Representative Assembly
*Boston -- volunteer opportunities
see Massteacher.org or contact Jess*

THE CAMPAIGN TO ELECT SUZANNE AND PAUL IS AN EXCITING OPPORTUNITY FOR EDUCATORS TO TALK WITH BROOKLINE VOTERS ABOUT WHAT OUR SCHOOLS NEED

**PLEASE HELP THE CAMPAIGN
REACH VOTERS:**

DOOR-TO-DOOR OR BY PHONE

BROOKLINE RESIDENTS:

ASK FOR A YARD SIGN

SIGN UP AT

OURBROOKLINESCHOOLS.ORG

ELECT SUZANNE FEDERSPIEL & PAUL HARRIS TO SCHOOL COMMITTEE!

The BEU is part of the Alliance for Brookline Schools that is working to elect Paul Harris and Suzanne Federspiel on May 2. They are running on the platform below. *See bottom left on how to get involved!*

**TEACHERS MUST HAVE THE TIME,
SUPPORT, AND FREEDOM TO TEACH
THE WHOLE CHILD.**

During public comment at school committee meetings over the past two years, teachers and paraprofessionals have shared eloquent testimony about how top-down mandates and an intense, misguided focus on data collection and processing that do not help them teach have affected morale and robbed them of time to do what they know is in the best interests of their students. Suzanne and Paul want to bring back a more balanced and sensible approach to assessment. They know such an approach can increase engagement in learning, keep student and teacher anxiety from rising to unhealthy levels and still provide truly useful information about our students and schools.

Brookline recently lost a beloved teacher, David Weinstein, who would have continued his career if not for the way testing and data collection were getting in the way. In a WBUR interview, David said, "[Teaching is] a much more pressure-packed kind of job than it used to be. And it's challenging. The pace is intense and I feel for kids, because they're rushed.... You only get to be a child once. And you don't get to enjoy childhood when you're constantly being rushed from this place to that place to this, and being assessed in this way...What

becomes problematic is when an outside party is asking you to collect data which isn't tremendously useful to my tailoring instruction to children. And that — that becomes frustrating to me as an educator, when I'm spending the limited time that I have each day collecting data, as opposed to developing lessons and working with children."

It doesn't have to be this way. For example, Finland ranks at or near the top in international education comparisons but has taken a radically different approach. Finnish students take far fewer tests, have little homework and young students have plenty of time for play. In addition, Pasi Sahlberg told CNN, "the average teaching load of junior high school teachers in Finland is about half what it is in the United States. That enables teachers to build professional networks, share ideas and best practices. This is an important condition to enhancing teaching quality." All told, "Education in the United States is too much defined by testing and data."

**RACIAL JUSTICE & EQUITY MUST BE
A CENTRAL FOCUS OF PROGRAMMING
AND DECISION MAKING.**

Suzanne and Paul understand that structural racism exists in the Public Schools of Brookline as well as in our town, state and country. As white people, they are committed to using their privilege to examine how structural racism impacts all Brookline students negatively. They realize that at BHS (where students of color are 43% of enrollment) structural racism has led to increased segregation and an over-representation of White and

MOVING AND SAYING NO



Dear Contract Corner:

I've been told that I have to move my classroom next year. I have a lot of materials, including science equipment, files, etc. I think it's going to take a long time to pack all this stuff up. Do I have to do that on my own time?

*Signed,
Don't Make Me Go*

Dear Don't Make Me Go:

Section 3.19 of the Unit A Contract gives you some guidance on moving and packing. Here is the language: Packing. If a member of this bargaining unit is asked to pack school materials and supplies, the following criteria will be used:

1. Each supervisor will jointly determine with each employee in his/her department an agreed upon number of hours for packing. In case of disagreement, the supervisor will make the determination. Once an agreement is established, the employee is free to perform the task at his/her reasonable schedule. These hours are for both packing and unpacking from a staff member's move.

2. Reimbursement is only to pack boxes and throw old materials away. Employees will not be reimbursed to review items in detail. Employees are not expected to move boxes or furniture and should use reasonable caution in the packing process to avoid injury. Any individual with a pre-existing concern over potential injury should opt out of the packing process rather than risk injury.

3. Employees will be compensated for this work at the workshop rate (see Appendix B.7). Payment will be made within 60 days of an Administrator's submittal of hours to his/her supervisor or designee.

4. Work compensated at the workshop rate is expected to take place outside of normally assigned duties and release time.

5. The Superintendent or his/her designee may choose to relieve employees of any duty (e.g. teaching, administrative) in order to do this work instead of paying the workshop rate.

6. Any employee may choose to not pack or unpack in which case the supervisor will arrange for the packing and moving of materials.

*Signed,
Contract Corner*

Dear Contract Corner:

From time to time, I'm asked by my supervisor to do some school-related activity beyond my working hours. I want to be a team player, so I often feel bad saying no. But I have obligations to my family and other non-school activities. Do other people feel this way, too?

*Signed,
Feeling Guilty*

Dear Feeling Guilty,

This is a very common experience. Educators are among the most caring members of society. It's in our nature and our training to be helpful for the sake of the students. This makes it hard to say no when asked to go the extra mile. However, to have a long and fruitful career in education, we all have to learn to set a reasonable pace and to take care of our families and our personal needs. It's not only okay to say no, but it can be beneficial to everyone in the long run.

We can be better teachers if we have a flourishing personal life and time to disengage from the stress of the demands of education. Take a few minutes to review your contract to see what rights and obligations you have as an educator. For example, taking your prep periods and your 30 minute daily duty-free lunch is a good place to start making sure you're looking out for yourself. Good luck!

*Signed,
Contract Corner*

If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to email the BEU at 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 (system)
Sue Zobel (Lincoln)



DEFENDING THE PROMISE OF PUBLIC EDUCATION

Asian students in Honors and AP and of Black and Latino kids in Standard and Basic courses. They know the problems are complex and the solutions must be as well. They are committed to honoring Black, Latino and anti-racism voices of educators and students, and parents of color and to changing policies, practices and procedures. They know that this requires that time be opened up for students and educators to do pragmatic, ongoing anti-racist work in the schools. Suzanne and Paul will join with others to support using an anti-racism framework in their work on the Brookline School Committee.

The education scholar Gloria Ladson-Billings wrote in "From the Achievement Gap to the Education Debt: Understanding Achievement in U.S. Schools": "I want to argue that this all-out focus on the 'Achievement Gap' moves us toward short-term solutions that are unlikely to address the long-term underlying problem."

THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE MUST BE A TRANSPARENT & DEMOCRATICALLY ENGAGED PARTICIPANT IN OUR COMMUNITY.

The endless collection of data vision of schools is a dreary, anti-human vision, and certainly not what made Brookline public schools great in the first place. Suzanne and Paul have a different vision. They believe that the school committee must be a transparent and responsive body that represents the interests of parents and students. Their vision puts the teacher and the student at the center of education. Teachers need to be free in the classroom so that they can be a living example of critical thinking, creativity and autonomy. Our children need critical thinking so they can understand what's real, solve problems, explore the world, and participate fully in our democracy.

Brookline parents Katherine and Matthew Stewart wrote in a Brookline Tab commentary, "Do we want a version of the top-down, standardized-testing, blame-the-teachers, consultant-driven, privatization strategy that has demoralized educators and damaged school systems around the country? Or do we want a system of the kind that places the highest priority on the teacher-student experience—the kind of sys-

tem that has long been the source of Brookline's reputation for excellence in public education? No doubt there is room for debate. But let's have it in the open."

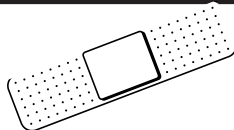
BROOKLINE SHOULD BE A LEADER IN OPPOSING STATE AND FEDERAL MANDATES THAT ARE HARMFUL TO CHILDREN.

Brookline has long been widely recognized for excellent teaching and high-quality schools. All the more reason our school policymakers can and should be leaders when it comes to advocating for quality and equitable public schools in Brookline and across Massachusetts. They can and should also speak out against state and federal policies that do more harm than good. Suzanne and Paul are proud of what Brookline schools have accomplished and are ready to advocate for home-grown innovations and against policies that hinder learning or divert scarce funding from publicly accountable schools to privately managed ones.

*FOR MORE INFO & TO GET INVOLVED:
OURBROOKLINE.SCHOOLS.ORG*



YOUR HEALTH CARE



Open Enrollment for our GIC healthcare is from April 5 thru May 3, 2017. By now you should have received and read your new (July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2018) GIC Benefit Discussion Guide. All changes you need to make in your healthcare must be turned into Scott O'Shea, Benefits Administrator, no later than May 3rd. If there are no changes, your current plan will automatically renew. Three plans are CLOSED to new members: Tuft's Navigator, Harvard Pilgrim Independence and Fallon Health Select Care. If you decide to opt out of these plans, you will NOT be able to re-enroll.

Open Enrollment is also the time that active members can sign up for the Flexible Spending Account. This account lets you set aside a portion of your paycheck TAX FREE to pay for certain health and dependent care expenses. Contributions are deducted from your paycheck

prior to federal and state taxes. No tax on your contribution, that saves you money. You will get a Benny Card, similar to a debit card, to use when needed to pay these expenses.

Also we have a Healthcare Reimbursement Arrangement (HRA). This is for copays incurred for ER visits (\$50.00), outpatient procedures (\$150.00), inpatient procedures (\$500.00) and High-Tech Imaging (\$100.00 after three occurrences for the same illness or condition). Please do not use Benny Card for these procedures. The HRA is money already set aside by the Town to help pay these specific copays.

Please feel free to contact us if you have questions...Take Care... Sheila Leach 2sheilaleach@gmail.com

-Sheila Leach, PEC Rep

FINANCE FOR EDUCATORS

STAMINA, PATIENCE & SUCCESSFUL INVESTING



Everyone knows beating the market is hard. What most investors still don't seem to realize is that even surviving the market is hard.

In a recent WSJ article by Jason Zweig, "Do You Really Have the Stamina to Be Wealthy?" he begins with an insightful observation about how difficult it is for mutual fund managers to both beat and ultimately survive the stock market.

How hard is it to both survive and succeed in the stock market, even for those would-be financial gurus who manage mutual funds for a living? Brace yourself, mutual fund investors. Over the past three decades, the majority of actively managed mutual funds - almost 75% - have not only failed to beat the market averages, but over 50% have suffered the same fate as the dodo bird. Of the 525 U.S. stock mutual funds that came into existence thirty years ago, 300 have closed their doors and, in the process, lost billions for their trusting investors. (All of the Vanguard Index Funds recommended for your 403b are both open to new investors and successful.)

Zweig goes on to focus on a couple of exemplary mutual funds, Ariel Fund and Gabelli Asset. Not only did these two funds survive the severe and extended market downturns like the Financial Crisis of 2007-2009 when the S&P lost 55%, but they posted market beating returns. One common thread for both successful managers Zweig points out was their ability to be patient when others panicked and, of course, their STAMINA in the face of adversity: Of all the qualities an investor needs to succeed, stamina may be the most underrated.

For you, the 403b investor, Zweig's core investment message is fairly straightforward: "stamina is the key to success and patience is the key to stamina." To achieve investment success according to Mr. Rogers from the Ariel fund requires "not chasing bubbles and not getting fearful during the crises." The successful investor needs to maintain an unflappable conviction in the market's long-term viability and an understanding that short term problems, also known as corrections, are ephemeral in nature

Finally, I'd like to draw on the wisdom of the iconic investor Warren Buffett for the final word on investing and stamina. "If you aren't willing to own a stock (in the case of the 403b investor a mutual fund) for ten years, don't even think about owning it for ten minutes." Successful investing requires the patience of Job and a steadfast belief in Warren's time-tested tenet that "over the long term the stock market news will be good."*

* I strongly recommend reading Warren Buffett's prescient article, "Buy American. I Am." Warren's timely article was written in 2008 in the throes of a financial crisis when the DOW dipped below 8,176. (It's currently over 20,000!) If you had heeded Warren's advice on that day, your portfolio today would be up almost 143%!

-Robert Miller, Devotion (retired)

New pay to be added:

UNIT A: New rates applied: 4/13
UNIT A: Retro pay added: 4/27
UNIT B: New rates applied: 4/27
UNIT B: Retro pay added: 5/11
PARA UNIT: New rates applied: 4/13
PARA UNIT: Retro pay for last year added: 4/27; Retro pay for this year added: 5/11

Workload Oversight:

BEU organizing is putting a break on "job creep." Even before the new committee is underway, here are a few examples:

- 1) Middle School educators with 5 classes or full caseloads will not be assigned Advisory.
- 2) Vice Principals saddled with MCAS duties are released from other duties.
- 3) Specialists will get time to do their hundreds of Progress Reports.

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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Amie Buchman, Communications Chair

Jessica Wender-Shubow, President