

BEU CALENDAR

Grievance Team

March 16 BHS rm. 240 3:15

MTA Regional Health

Insurance Mtg.

March 18 Dedham

Alternative Assessment

Conference

March 21 Jamaica Plain

Pride Movie showing

March 30 MLK Room 5:30-8:00

Executive Board

April 6 BHS rm. 240 3:15

Contract Action Team

April 6 3:30

MTA Para/ESP Conference

April 11 Cape Cod

Reps Council

April 13 BHS MLK Rm.

April 18-26 Vacation

Grievance Team

April 27 BHS Rm. 240 3:15

BEU at the RED SOX

April 27 6:00pm

Why Do We Need Unions? A Tale of Two Cousins

In December, I lost a cousin on my dad's side. For the purposes of this article I will call him David. David was a bright-eyed energetic boy as kid, always up to something. We lived in different parts of the country so I didn't see him often, but when we did get together there was a lot of laughter. He was adventurous and kind-hearted. He was a talented cook and loved to bring home-made food to family gatherings.

David was only 40 years old, but he died of a heart attack. He was working in a non-union job, helping paint an Extended Stay Hotel in Dallas. Because he was non-union, his supervisor felt free to work him long hours, 14-16 hour days. And because he was non-union and earning low pay, he was forced to comply.

David had health problems, mental and physical. He had addiction problems, and sleep apnea that contributed to his heart attack. But he didn't have any health care, and few rights on the job. He also was working injured (he broke an elbow on the job over the summer), and at the same time was sick with pneumonia. His non-union job gave him no sick days to heal and get well.

This is the first answer I would give if asked why we need unions today. Here is the second.

On my mother's side, I have a cousin whom I will call John, who is in good health and doing fine. He also has a great sense of humor, and can set a room laughing until they weep with his imitations of various coworkers or family members. He grew up on the water and is a great sailor. We are very proud to see him continue a tradition that goes far back in our family.

John completed a program that teaches students to build with composites (multi-component materials used in construction, marine, aviation, etc). Because he loves the water and is a hands-on learner, the opportunity to participate in this program and learn how to build with them was a big draw for John. He did very well in the course and was hired quickly afterwards.

Unfortunately, John only earned \$16 an hour on the job. He was happy at first to get the experience, but money was tight. He couldn't do much more than pay his living expenses with this hourly pay. He gave up trying to live on his own, and moved back in with his parents. Even after doing this, he couldn't set aside money to fulfill his dream, which is to buy a house. The job is non-union, so there is no transparent pay scale with raises for experience. Also, there are no opportunities for advancement or leadership.

John has decided to change his field entirely to start a union apprenticeship as a carpenter. It is not his passion; the job does not have to do with boats or the water at all. He will have to travel far for the job, and is concerned about being away from his family and his new girlfriend. However, a family friend introduced the opportunity to him, and mentioned the starting wage, which will be double what John is currently making. There are opportunities

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SPRING IS ALMOST HERE!

BEU at Fenway! Apr. 27

TICKETS STILL AVAILABLE!

(CONTACT THE OFFICE)

Follow Jess on Twitter!

@BEUJESSWS

BEU & AFSCME LOCAL 1358

PRESENT THE MOVIE

PRIDE

MON. MAR. 30

BHS MLK Room

PIZZA @ 5:30; MOVIE AT 6:00

The Contract Corner:

183RD DAY



Dear Contract Corner:

I understand that all Unit A members must fulfill 6 hours of professional development. I'm confused about how to do this. Can you help me?

Signed,
Uncertain

Dear Uncertain,

Yes, some years we are told how to fulfill these hours and some years we have more choice. This year, we have some choice. Here is some of the contract language on the professional development day:

The Professional Development day may be converted to a minimum of six (6) hours of pre-approved professional development learning activities related to a goal(s) of the Public Schools of Brookline. The administration will publish a list of specific learning opportunities that may be used to fulfill this requirement and employees may select from this list or propose to participate in and seek approval for other learning opportunities not included on such list. All professional development activities used to satisfy the 6-hour minimum requirement must be pre-approved by the employee's appropriate supervisor(s).

Signed,
Contract Corner

Dear Contract Corner,

I'm still not sure what I can use to apply towards my 183rd day. Can you clarify?

Need Confirmation

Dear Need Confirmation,

Here are some Q&A from Gabe McCormick, the Professional Development Director for the PSB:

Q. Do release days count toward the 183rd day?

A. No. Release days of any kind do not qualify for the 183rd day.

Q. Can I use an A day to complete a course for the 183rd day?

A. No, because A days are for important personal reasons not professional development and more significantly, it's double-dipping, you can't be paid twice for one day.

Q. Do courses from the summer 2014 qualify for the 183rd day?

A. Yes, any course taken during the FY 14 (July/Aug) qualifies for the 183rd day.

Q. Does RETELL course work count?

A. Yes, six hours of the RETELL course does qualify for the 183rd day.

Q. How many hours do Part Time Employees need to qualify for the 183rd day?

A. They need to complete hours on a pro-rated basis based on their FTE and will only be compensated at that proportion. For example: a .4 employee completes 0.4*6 hours of PD and is compensated accordingly.

Q. What should we do about employees taking a leave during the year?

A. They should make every effort to complete the 183rd day while they are still working. If there are extenuating circumstances preventing completion, contact Human Resources and will we consider the appropriate accommodate.

Q. Can a two day for 3 hours/day after school qualify for the 183rd day?

A. Yes. Any combination for a total of a six-hour course would work, such as the cultural proficiency course being offer.

Q. Should the teacher or supervisor submit documentation to the OHR/PD?

A. The teacher is responsible for submitting all required paperwork including the course approval form and selected evidence of course approval.

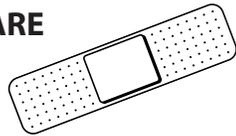
Dear Readers,

You can find the form to fill out by clicking on the Professional Development link on First Class. From there, click on Gabe's entry called 183rd day. You should see the form attached.

Signed,
Contract Corner

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

Deb Allen (at large)	Shelley Mains (BHS)
Dominique Aumiller (BHS)	Susan Moreno (BHS)
Sarah Blalock (Lincoln)	Jill Sifantus (BHS)
Jody Curran (Devotion)	Susan Stark (BHS)
Hillary Golden (Lincoln)	David Weinstein (Pierce)
Mark Goldner (Heath)	Jessica Wender-Shubow (BHS)
Rich Gorman (BHS)	



EXPENSIVE CHANGES TO GIC HEALTH INSURANCE

The GIC has approved plan design changes on Friday, February 13, that will effectively shift costs for GIC health insurance to subscribers beginning July 1, 2015. These changes will mean higher out-of-pocket expenses for us and hundreds of thousand of Massachusetts workers, retirees and their families. At its next meeting on March 4, the GIC will set rates for each of the health plans for the coming fiscal year.

The MTA has vigorously opposed these design changes. In the past few months MTA members have sent close to 80,000 e-mails to GIC commissioners urging them to reject plan design changes and lobby for a budget that fully funds current benefits for subscribers. The February 13 vote resulted from budget shortfalls that are largely due to chronic underfunding by the state, as well as increased claim costs.

The most significant changes approved are:
- The Tufts Navigator PPO and Harvard Pilgrim Independence PPO plans will be eliminated and replaced with Tufts Navigator POS (Point of Service) and Harvard Pilgrim Independence POS plans. Much like an HMO, a POS plan requires a primary care physician and referrals for specialists. The POS plans also have an out-of-network option similar to PPO plans. It is very likely that these changes from PPO plans to POS plans will require bargaining. The Public Employee Committee (PEC) will keep you informed. Jessica Wender-Shubow and I represent teachers on this committee.

Examples of plan design changes:

- ** Deductibles will increase for individuals from \$250 to \$300 per year and for families from \$750 to \$900 per year.
- **Co-pays for office visits to specialists will rise from \$25/\$35/\$45 to \$30/\$60/\$90.
- **Outpatient surgery co-pays will increase from \$125/\$150 per occurrence to \$250 per occurrence.
- **Inpatient hospital admissions will increase from \$250/\$500/\$750 to \$275/\$500/\$1,500.
- **Pharmacy co-pays for active members and Medicare eligible subscribers will increase from \$10/\$25/\$50 to \$10/30/\$65 for 30 day retail prescriptions and from \$20/\$50/\$110 to \$25/\$75/\$165 for 90 day mail order prescriptions.

MTA President Barbara Madeloni testified against these changes: *"To ensure immediate stability," she stated, "the MTA strongly supports a supplemental appropriation to address the fiscal 2015 budgetary shortfall. Public employees should not be penalized as a result of this lack of funds. In addition, we ask that the Commission reject any options to shift additional costs to members by modifying plan designs."*

MTA is holding a meeting to explain and discuss the situation in Dedham on Wednesday, March 18 from 4-7:00 (with dinner). BEU president, Jess Wender-Shubow, and I will attend. Contact Jess if you'd like to join us. Members are welcome.

-Sheila Leach, PEC Rep

Need Unions

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for advancement, too. Once he starts, John will be able to move out on his own, and start setting money aside for a house.

This is the second answer I'd give about why we need unions today.

Recently, I attended a forum for the Boston Public Schools superintendent search. I was offended to hear one candidate for the job share the opinion that parents "don't care

about unions, they care about kids." If this candidate had either of my cousins as his child, I don't think he would have said this.

We all need unions. As workers, as parents, and as children.

If we had more unions, my cousin John would be able to pursue his passion. If we had more unions, my cousin David would be alive today.

-Jen Rose-Wood (BHS)



FINANCE FOR EDUCATORS

THE INTERSECTION OF MONEY AND MIND



Why do most people struggle with investing? Why do people make poor investment decisions – often times repeatedly? Why do investors get swept up in the herd mentality – as millions did who lost billions when the Dot-com bubble burst in 2000? Why does the individual investor feel compelled to sell at the market low – as so many did in the 2009 financial crisis- and buy at the high? Why do so many investors procrastinate when it comes to preparing for their financial future? Why, oh why, is investing so complicated for most individuals?

One of the more insightful answers to this question comes from Cassius in Julius Caesar: “The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars, But in ourselves, that we are underlings.” Yes, the source of the problem – not to mention the solution - for most investors lies within ourselves. And this is where the relatively new field of behavioral finance come into play. It offers some critical guidance about the human condition, how an investor’s brain functions – or malfunctions - and how our emotions often lead us to make irrational decisions.

In a prescient statement during the Dot-com bubble, Fed Chairman Alan Greenspan, referred to investor enthusiasm as “irrational exuberance.” A few years later in 2000, when this “irrational exuberance” was on steroids, a Gallup Poll asked: “Do you think that now is a good time to invest in the financial markets?” Not surprisingly, 78% of investors agreed that it was a “good time to invest.” Fast forward two years, the NASDAQ lost almost 80% of its value and the DOW almost 30%. What were these investors thinking? Were they simply swept along like mindless lemmings fanatically following the pack over the precipice? Or, perhaps the fault is that our brains are hopelessly hardwired to make decisions not conducive to successful investing.

So what’s the antidote to the human brain’s destructive tendency to overreact and make poor financial decisions? To start with, the individual investor needs to “know thyself.” You need to recognize that the minds of most individuals – even the best and brightest – are unsuited to rationally respond to the dynamics of a volatile stock market on a day-to-day basis. You need to recognize that when the stock market drops 1000 points in a day, your brain is hard-wired with one of two different responses: flight or fight. And for too many investors, the instinctive, protective reaction is to flee the market and protect their assets

To “know thyself” is to avoid the trap and the delusion that you can “predict” the market’s direction. To “know thyself” is to recognize that temperament has no place in the calculus of investing. In short, to “know yourself” is to recognize that successful long term investing requires a detached, disciplined and systematic approach.

Next Month: Temperament & Successful Investing: “Success in investing doesn’t correlate with I.Q. once you’re above the level of 25. Once you have ordinary intelligence, what you need is the temperament to control the urges that get other people in trouble.” Warren Buffett.

-Robert Miller, Devotion

The President’s Work

As the thermometer ticks up and the melt begins, the BEU negotiators are cool and collected as they go back to the bargaining table this week. There is tremendous pride in the vision of public education that the BEU proposals uphold: prioritizing direct educational services that are locally determined and human-scale; that honor the professional judgment of skilled educators; and respect the work and the dignity of paraprofessionals.

Around the Commonwealth, members of union locals such as the BEU are gathering to talk about the schools all students deserve. At the recent Bargaining Summit and in our buildings, we are uniting to defend quality public education.

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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Brookline Educators Union

115 Greenough Street

Brookline, MA 02445

Tel: 617-277-0251

Email: BEU-MTA@hotmail.com

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Amie Buchman, Communications Chair

Jessica Wender-Shubow, President