

Reminder...

**SUPPORT YOUR
NEGOTIATORS
AND YOUR
ACTION TEAM!**

BE AT THE BEU GENERAL MEETING

**NEGOTIATIONS UPDATE
& ACTION PLAN**

**MONDAY, MARCH 28
BHS AUDITORIUM
3:15 PM**

BEU CALENDAR

Contract Negotiations

Mar 24 6:00pm

BEU General Meeting

Mar 28 BHS Auditorium 3:15pm

Childcare Provided

Contract Negotiations

Mar 31 6:00pm

Executive Board Meeting

Apr 4 BHS Room 214 3:15pm

Contract Negotiations

Apr 4 6:00pm

Reps Council Meeting

Apr 11 BHS Room 214 3:15pm

April Vacation

Apr 16-24

Grievance Team Meeting

Apr 25 BHS Room 240

Contract Negotiations

Apr 25 6:00pm

FAIR CONTRACTS--NOW!

We have no contract; we continue to take action. FURTHER ACTION AND A NEGOTIATIONS UPDATE WILL BE THE SUBJECTS OF THE **BEU GENERAL MEETING, MON. MARCH 28, 3:15 BHS AUDITORIUM**. All members are encouraged to attend. *Please let your BEU organizing team know you'll be coming.*

Since the fall, we have had an ongoing action campaign with each action increasing the pressure on the School Committee. We have gone from lining the hallways at Town Meeting to leaving school at the end of the contractual day once per week. We have gone from pickets to petitions. We have spoken at the School Committee and are ceasing many voluntary activities. We will continue our actions until a fair contract is in place.

We have in place, and are continuing, with the following actions:

- Keeping bulletin boards clear of everything except instructional materials where necessary.
- Reducing "on-line presence" to a minimum: only what's required for instruction.
- Keeping parent meetings to "office hours" to greatest extent possible (See 4.3 L of the Unit A contract)
- Email: automatic message -- to external mail-- that you will answer emails only during contract hours.
- No volunteering for new activities (e.g. chaperoning dances).
- Also, some additional voluntary activities will be suspended. e.g. class/grade newsletters, not posting HW on Canvas if it has been posted elsewhere, etc. *Discuss these in BEU building meetings.*
- Walking out together at end of contract day on Mondays.

- Wearing buttons every day.

The Action Team has also come up with some new plans to continue to intensify the pressure on the School Committee. Note: Some of this pressure will also likely come from parents.

- Insist on your right to a daily prep period, **EVEN DURING MCAS TIME.**

- o If there are violations, **CONTACT THE BEU** so that grievances can be filed. The BEU cannot go to bat for you unless you tell us!

- Insist on your right to a 30-minute duty free lunch: (get your yellow placard from your organizing team.)

- o Teachers: See 4.3 A of the Unit A contract. (Contracts are on Groupsite)

- o Unit B Administrators: 4.3 of Unit B contract.

- o For paras: 30 minutes during work day OR allowed to leave 30 min. early See 3.2 of Paraprofessional's contract.

- o If you are "ordered" to do other things during your lunch period, this is a violation of your contractual right.

- Upcoming K-6 parent conferences: only during contractually-designated times. See 4.3 L of the Unit A contract (Hint for managing this: take the total number of allotted minutes and divide it by the number of students in your class, leaving time for transitions, to work all conferences into allotted time.)

To paraphrase from the Pierce Action Team "Our hope is that by standing up for what's best for our students and schools, we will be ensuring that children receive now, and in the future, the high-quality education that they deserve."

STAY STRONG & STAY ACTIVE!

**Kathy Hitchcock, Action Team
Coordinator**



LUNCH AND PREPS

Dear Contract Corner:

I'm a little confused about how much time I can take for myself during the workday to eat and to plan for other parts of my day. Can you shed some light on this?

*Signed,
Working Hard*

Dear Working Hard:

You have not just the BEU but also the whole labor movement to thank in fighting hard to make sure you get adequate time in your day to eat, rest and do your job effectively. At the end of this answer, I have included language from all three BEU/School Committee contracts with the language about lunches and unassigned periods.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT THAT YOU TAKE THIS TIME?

Sometimes the workload can get away from us and everyone else that makes a school run smoothly. We can start to feel our lunch and unassigned periods getting encroached upon by all the work that fills up one workday. But as in any other profession or industry, taking time to take care of yourself; with time to eat, to take a breath and to think about what's next, is really crucial. We want to assure the efficacy of the system running well in the short run as well as our ability to stay the course in the long run. I think we all know that carrying out a career as a dedicated educational professional is a marathon and not a sprint. If we give up our unassigned time and the time we use to refresh ourselves now, even more will be demanded of us later. Don't let this happen to you.

So...take time to eat lunch and let others know you are on your lunch break. If you feel repeatedly imposed upon during this time, contact the BEU Grievance Team and we will talk this over with you. In addition, remember that you have control over your "unassigned periods" as times when you can do what's necessary to make you a good educator.

Bon appetit!

Contract Corner

Unit A Contract

4.3C: It is understood and agreed that each high school teacher shall be scheduled for the equivalent of at least 4 standard periods per week as unassigned periods plus X block, exclusive of the one-half hour duty free lunch period per day.

4.3G: All teachers will have a 30-minute duty-free lunch period to be taken at the following times.

- i. In the elementary schools, during the regular student lunch period of their grade level where practicable; and
- ii. In the High School, in accordance with present practices.

4.3I-K: I. Each elementary teacher (K-6) will be scheduled for a daily preparation period. In a five-day

week, at least four (4) of these preparation periods will be scheduled for at least forty (40) minutes in length, while the fifth will be scheduled for at least thirty (30) minutes in length. Such preparation periods are exclusive of the one-half (1/2) hour duty-free lunch period per day. The employee's supervisor shall have the responsibility to schedule preparation and lunch periods.

J. Teachers responsible for grades 7 & 8 only, will have a minimum of five unassigned periods, exclusive of the one-half hour duty free lunch period per day and will usually be responsible for a homeroom.

K. Teachers of art, home economics, industrial arts, music, physical education and specialists (except nurses), and teachers responsible for instruction in more than one school in grades K-8 will have a minimum of five unassigned periods per week exclusive of the one-half (1/2) hour duty-free lunch period per day.

Paraprofessional Contract:

A paraprofessional who is scheduled to work more than 6 hours per day shall receive a 30 minute duty-free unpaid lunch break, normally scheduled within 30 minutes before or after the aggregate lunch breaks for students. Subject to the operating needs of any school as may be determined by the building administrator or designee, a paraprofessional who is scheduled to work more than 5 hours per day may receive a lunch break. By mutual agreement with his or her supervisor, a paraprofessional shall eat lunch at the workplace while on duty without a break, in which case such paraprofessional's scheduled quitting time for such day shall be 30 minutes earlier.

Unit B Contract

2.4.3 All administrators will have a 30-minute duty-free lunch period.

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

Deb Allen (Retired)
Sarah Blalock (Lincoln)
Jody Curran (Driscoll)
Hillary Golden (Lincoln)
Mark Goldner (Heath)
Rich Gorman (BHS)
Anna MacIver (Runkle)
Shelley Mains (BHS)
Susan Moreno (BHS)
Jill Sifantus (BHS)
Susan Stark (BHS)
David Weinstein (Pierce)

YOUR ACTION TEAM

At the last Action Team meeting we asked some of the members to take a minute to say why they joined the team, and what it has been like for them during this negotiation period. Here are some of their answers:

I am on the action team because change is necessary. It has given me the opportunity to help develop a plan to move Brookline education in the right direction.

-Ben Conlon

I believe that we need changes to our contract to ensure that we can do our best work as teachers, and give our kids the education that they deserve.

-Lauren Kelly

It's important to stand up for ourselves as professionals. It's been very powerful watching educators from across the district stand together for the integrity of their profession and the students they teach.

-Andrew Winston

I'm on the action team because we all need to take responsibility for maintaining the quality of education in Brookline, which includes the working conditions and compensation of all the staff. Being part of this group is my contribution. Without us, there is no Brookline Public Schools.

-Laurie Sheffield

A fair contract is the right thing. To work toward this goal means a lot because working conditions, quality of experience for students, and gaining fair remuneration are all very important. What inspires me to keep up the efforts is that I know from 30 years of experience that persistence in Union actions helps to achieve the goals we seek.

-Leon Kestenbaum

I'm passionate about my profession. I have been teaching for over 25 years. It is important for me to take a stand, both for myself and others to make sure we are

treated with the respect we deserve as professionals, fairly compensated for what we do and that our own time and personal lives are honored.

-Mary O'Connell

I am on the Action Team to learn more about being a part of our union and help my fellow union members be more involved in union matters. In such an important year, I feel proud to help colleagues and friends stand up for what is best for our students and our profession.

-Emily Mackie

It gives me an opportunity to think strategically about how to support my colleagues and achieve what we deserve. It's a constructive outlet for my frustration with the contract dispute this year. I continue attending meetings to get a more immediate and complete picture of how we're doing across the district.

-Jesse Kirdahy

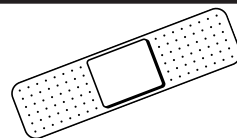
I want a contract that respects the teaching profession and values student learning. But, also because I believe that unions are essential to our community. Being part of a team helps to strengthen our union by encouraging colleagues to participate.

-Jill Sifantus

We are on the action team because we, teachers and paraprofessionals, want to be respected as educators and want to get our voices heard. We want to strategically plan next actions that we think will help our district (and our school). Being on the action team gives us a voice and gives our school a voice. Additionally, being on the action team means solidarity. Knowing that we are standing strong as a district and not conceding on this contractual round, we are inspired to continue to fight for respect.

-Chad Pelton / Janice McKeown

YOUR HEALTH CARE



April 6th thru May 4th, 2016 is the GIC Annual Open Enrollment period. Brookline will hold a Wellness Fair Thursday, April 7th. from 12:00 to 4:00 PM. The GIC holds statewide fairs throughout the enrollment period also. If you are thinking about changing plans or have benefit questions, these fairs can be very useful.

The GIC Commissioners voted the health plan rate package on March 2nd and the AVERAGE rate increase across all health plans for FY17 is 3.6%. Because this is an average, some plans are higher. We should be receiving the actual plan rates and the Benefit Decision Guides soon.

The Harvard Pilgrim Independence Plan will be experiencing changes next year mostly due to spending beyond its premium rates. The plan will be closed to new members for coverage effective July 1, 2016. Existing members can stay in the plan or can change their coverage (e.g., individual to family) within 60 days of a qualifying event. The GIC will be sending letters of explanation to members in the plan.

Beginning July 1, 2016: the deductible year will run July 1, 2016 - June 30, 2017. For most of us that will mean a new deductible year of \$300.00.

The PEC (union) meetings with the Town (Jess and I will be there at the next meeting, March 24,) always discuss the much under utilized HRA (Health Reimbursement Arrangement). These are copays when you have to visit an ER, have outpatient or inpatient procedures or MRI Imaging. The Town pays most of these copays so please remember this before you pay with your Benny Card which is, of course, your money.

Much of the GIC information above can be found on the GIC website. If you have trouble navigating that or need more HRA information, I would be happy to help you. Take care, Sheila
2sheilaleach@gmail.com

-Sheila Leach, PEC Rep

FINANCE FOR EDUCATORS

LOOKING FOR LOVE-AND FINANCIAL COMPATABILITY- IN ALL THE WRONG PLACES



Let's begin with stating the obvious about love, finances and enduring relationships. There are no fairy godmothers – or godfathers - who will whisk you away from life's financial challenges and with a wave of the wand and the old "bibbidi-bobbidi-boo" arrange the "perfect" partnership. Quite simply, you're lookin' for love in all the wrong places if you choose to pursue the old fairytale love story and overlook the critical issue of financial compatibility with your would-be Prince or Princess Charming.

Not that this comes as a surprise to anyone who has been in a serious relationship, but MONEY is one of the most contentious issues in a marriage or a domestic partnership. In a recent study, the Family Relations Journal examined the data for 4,574 couples and financial disagreements were found to be the #1 predictor of divorce. In another study by the Institute of Divorce Financial Analysis, (a group that trains financial planners who specialize in resolving financial disputes between divorcing couples) disagreements over money were identified as the core cause of 25% of all divorces. What to do? If you're in a serious relationship and contemplating marriage, there are a few steps to consider before tying the knot and discovering that you're not financially compatible.

1. Full disclosure of financial background

While it's less than romantic, let's be real. Too many young people today have enough financial baggage to fill up a tractor trailer. If you're interested in establishing a successful long-term relationship, it's time to be completely forthcoming: full disclosure of your student loan debt, credit card debt, car loans and, if divorced with children, your child support.

2. Exchanging credit card scores before the rings

Again, while it's hardly romantic, the science of data analytics used in determining an individual's credit score offers some invaluable insights about financial compatibility. In a recent article about love and credit scores, WSJ writer Jo Craven McGinty highlights a study conducted by researchers from the Federal Reserve's consumer finance section. After examining "the credit histories of 12 million consumers, (the researchers) identified romantic partners and then tracked their unions and breakups over a 15-year period." Not surprisingly, the data demonstrated a very strong correlation between the duration of relationships and couples with similarly high credit scores. Perhaps credit scores provide a type of litmus test for finding a responsible partner whom you can trust.

3. Laissez-faire = Live in Disharmony and Disagreement

While Eisenhower was hardly Dr. Phil, his quote about planning could be used as a roadmap for a successful, long-term relationship: Plans are nothing: planning is everything. One of the hallmarks of an enduring relationship remains regular communication and planning. Partners need to engage in an ongoing dialogue about financial plans and not assume that finances just happen. Compatible couples also need both to share some basic financial core values and, at the same time, find room to acknowledge differences. In many marriages, couples avoid merging everything. Nevertheless, they maintain a joint account to cover general family expenses while at the same time allowing for separate bank accounts. This arrangement ensures a sense of communality for each partner as well as a much needed feeling of independence.

Despite my reservations about the Cinderella story, I am a dyed-in-the-wool romantic who believes in the notion of living happily ever after. At the same time, I'm a data guy who knows that the numbers don't lie, and that prudent money management matters facilitates a stress-free harmonious relationship. Keep lookin' for love and a long-term relationship, but don't forget financial compatibility.

***Next retirement account enrollment meeting scheduled for Pierce School on Thursday, April 28 at 3:10 PM.**

-Robert Miller, Retired

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 in the spring or summer.

THE BROOKLINE EDUCATOR

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