

BEU CALENDAR

Dec. 18 Grievance Team

BHS Room 240 3:15pm

Dec. 18 Mtg on Override--

Brookline BEU members

BHS Room 020 (Basement, next to Copy Center)

Jan. 5 ALANA social

Golden Temple 3:30-5:30

Jan. 8 Executive Board

BHS Room 258 3:15pm-5:00

Jan. 22 Reps Council

BHS Room 020 3:15-4:45

Jan 29 Grievance Team

BHS Room 240 3:15-5:00

Para Job Security Effort Begins

Our campaign last year for a fair contract for paraprofessionals focused on gaining more respect for paraprofessionals and the work they do. Our efforts to achieve a livable wage and to improve the working conditions of paras through fair scheduling and increased hourly pay continue. We also seek to strengthen job security for paras.

As part of last contract agreement with the School Committee, we agreed to form a joint labor management committee (JLMC) to discuss issues of job security. The three issues specifically listed are layoffs, changes in schedules, and clarification of probationary language. We seek to ensure that when a particular position or program is eliminated that members are offered a position elsewhere. We also want to make sure that the

life of a para is not upended by the imposition of a change to their schedule. Finally, our para contract includes language that strengthens due process rights over time. We want that language to be clear and consistent. We have met once, on November 29, and are scheduled to meet again on December 20.

The initial meeting gave the BEU team some hope. While there were some sticking points, it also seemed that both sides found some immediate common ground. With respect to lay-offs, we found both sides want to avoid any lay-off of individual members if there is no overall reduction in force. That is, there ought to be another position in the system for a given para whose specific assignment is no longer sustainable, unless the

continued on page 3

SAVE THE DATE!

THE ALLIANCE
FOR BROOKLINE SCHOOLS
IS PROUD TO WELCOME
NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED
EDUCATION JUSTICE ACTIVISTS

**RICARDO ROSA &
JEANETTE**

DEUTERMANN

TO JOIN A PANEL DISCUSSION WITH
BROOKLINE EDUCATORS ON

**WELLNESS, EQUITY AND
EXCELLENCE:
WILL STANDARDIZED TESTING
GET US THERE?**

TUESDAY, JANUARY 30
ALL SAINTS PARISH

6:30 REFRESHMENTS
7:00-8:30 PROGRAM

MTA SOCIAL & ECONOMIC JUSTICE CANDIDATES ENDORSED BY BEU

The Representative Council of the Brookline Educators Union devoted its December meeting to a panel discussion by all of the candidates for president and vice-president of our statewide union, Massachusetts Teachers Association. The MTA is the largest labor union in the Commonwealth and its leadership will be influential in setting the direction of the entire state labor movement in the months to come. Delegates to the MTA 2018 Annual Meeting on May 4-5 will directly elect the leaders. The BEU reps enthusiastically recommended that they support the candidates who have been endorsed by the current MTA president, Barbara Madeloni:

Merrie Najimy for MTA President and Max Page for MTA Vice-President.

Merrie and Max have each distinguished themselves as local presidents who recognize that the strength of unions lies in their courage to defend the values of true democracy and economic, racial, and gender justice for working people from all communities. Merrie and Max joined others, including members of the BEU, to form the caucus, Educators for a Democratic Union (EDU) after elected MTA officers made back room deals with the AstroTurf organization, *Stand for Children* that resulted in the use of

continued on page 2

IT'S YOUR PREP



Dear Contract Corner,

I usually meet with my learning center teacher or other specialists during my prep or lunch for consultation time, as mandated on a student's IEP and there are IEP or other meetings scheduled during my prep time. A colleague said I don't have to meet with specialists during my lunch or prep time. I feel bad saying "no" because we are meeting about the students we share. Is this OK?

*Signed,
Confused*

Dear Confused,

The contract states, "Each elementary teacher (K-5) 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." Starting next year, the daily preps must all be forty (40) minutes. "Such preparation periods are exclusive of the one half (½) hour duty free lunch period per day."

As a Unit A teacher, you are entitled to a 30-minute duty free lunch and prep period daily. As teachers, we are always meeting with specialists about our students, and sometimes the only convenient time to meet would be during lunch or prep time. However, this is YOUR time. Your colleague is right; if you cannot meet during your prep period or lunchtime, you do not have to do it. It is

not up to you to figure out coverage for these mandated meetings. It is up to the administration in your building to get coverage for you so you are able to have your prep and lunches.

You're not alone. Many educators are feeling this pressure more and more. For as difficult as it can be, it is OK to say, "No, I can't meet during that time. That is my prep or lunch time." It is hard to say 'no' to a colleague, however it's also very important that you take your 30 minute duty-free lunch and unassigned periods for preparation. Sincerely,

Contract Corner

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

MTA, continued from page 1

student test scores to evaluate teachers and severely weakened seniority. EDU pledged to strengthen MTA as a bottom-up union rooted in respect for the judgement of educators and in the importance of making public school teaching a sustainable and respected profession for teachers, paraprofessionals and other front-line union educators. EDU ran Barbara Madeloni for MTA president. She pledged not to allow the union to be exploited by business interests who seek to privatize education and to run public schools as if they are private companies, not public, democratic in-

stitutions.

Barbara won--and then won again. As she is term limited in office, Merrie and Max are prepared to extend the MTA's remarkable achievements secured under Barbara's leadership. From the start, Barbara demonstrated what a fighting union is capable of. Early in her presidency, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Ed (DESE) threatened to tie teacher re-licensure to student test scores. Rather than calling them up and begging them to compromise, Barbara mobilized the phone lines and called the bus companies to prepare to bring thousands of educators to confront DESE in per-

son. Soon DESE was calling her, begging her to call off her members, and that was the last anyone heard of that DESE proposal. Similarly, when Wall Street started pouring tens of millions of dollars of dark money into the state to recklessly unleash charters (the Wall Street front group has since been found guilty of corruption), Barbara won the support of the grassroots in the MTA to build a coalition of labor and community to stop the Question 2 ballot question. Once again, the union was able to show that the public respects teachers. They, along with thousands of members of other or-

continued on page 3

Paras, continued from page 1

district itself is shrinking (an unlikely prospect). We also agreed that lay-offs should occur within positions that are given some right to "bump" into another position, if the employee is qualified for the position. Questions came up about how to exactly define a distinct position, and how to define qualified.

With respect to changes in schedules, both sides agreed that there should be better/earlier notification of paraprofessionals' schedules for the upcoming year. In addition, there was agreement that there should be more consistency in everyone's schedule. There was less agreement on making changes to the schedules during the school year (i.e., requiring an employee to increase or otherwise change

their hours) and about possible reductions in hours.

Probationary language issues seemed the most complicated. During the probationary period, a para has fewer contractual rights than subsequently. The contract has three statements that define what the paraprofessional's probationary period is, and the language is, in part, contradictory: after two years, you cannot be dismissed or suspended without cause during the school year; after three years, you cannot be disciplined or suspended without cause at all; but there is also language that says you can be non-renewed within your first five years. The sentences were written during different sets of negotiations. We hope to clarify what the rights are.

There is much here, but we hope this

committee can successfully come to an agreement to recommend changes in the Paraprofessional contract. We will be keeping you informed along the way, asking for input and support when needed. Some of our updates may be by email or phone, so if you are not getting the general BEU emails that are sent to the membership, please contact the BEU to give us your contact information: beu-mta@hotmail.com or 617-277-0251.

We hope you all have a great holiday and well-deserved vacation.

Roylene Hunte (Pierce) , JT Leno (Upper Devotion), Wendy MacMillan (Lynch), Janice McKeown (Runkle), Jessica Wender-Shubow (President), Eric Schiff (Negotiations Chair), Philip Katz (MTA Representative)

MTA, continued from page 2

ganizations, went door-to-door and, to the shock of many, the corporate campaign lost by a landslide. "When we fight," Barbara likes to say, "We win."

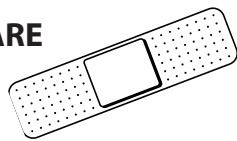
Both Merrie and Max have demonstrated their skill and dedication to effectively helping to build power at the level of the worksite while at the same time recognizing that we are being

confronted with concerted attacks on working people and the very principles of race and gender equality. An Arab-American, Merrie has lead workshops on Islamophobia for MTA members. While she was the president of the Concord Teachers Association, educators united with bus drivers facing privatization and brought open bargaining to the state so that members of the community could

work with educators in fighting for schools children deserve. As president of his UMASS local, Max helped to form PHENOM (Public Higher Education Network of MA). The group is part of an education justice coalition committed to free, high-quality public education from pre-K through college. For more info, search *Merrie and Max for MTA* To get involved, contact Jess.



YOUR HEALTH CARE



The PEC (Public Employees Committee) and the Town have reached an agreement to remain in the GIC for two more years beginning July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2020. If we left the GIC now, we would not be able to re-enroll for three years. Blue Cross Blue Shield gave us a three-year plan, but no guarantee of premiums and costs.

The GIC will have three commissioner meetings within the next month. On January 10th at 12:30 PM they will hold their Annual Public Forum Meeting to get feedback from statewide membership. Hopefully at this meeting they will tell us what old and new health plans will be included next year. They are looking to consolidate or remove plans that are not cost effective and offer new plans. We will notify you as soon as we hear anything new from the GIC.

The PEC will continue to negotiate with the Town on healthcare language. We want to make sure that we maintain our Health Reimbursement Arrangement (HRA) and the premium split of 83% that the Town pays and 17% that we pay.

As always, please feel free to contact us with questions or concerns:

Jessica Wender-Shubow

Sheila Leach (2sheilaleach@gmail.com)

-Sheila Leach, PEC Rep

FINANCE FOR EDUCATORS

MUCH ADO ABOUT INVESTING



How to Select a Financial Advisor You can Trust Part II:

Investors are naïve, if they assume a financial advisor will always act in their “best interests.” Financial advisors, especially those not legally obligated to uphold the fiduciary standard – which is the case for far too many financial professionals - regularly face countless conflicts of interests. It’s difficult for an advisor to overlook the incentives for selling his company’s proprietary products as opposed to a low-cost index fund or the opportunity to earn a 7% commission for selling an annuity that may not be in the client’s best interests. In short, selecting the “right” financial advisor can be a daunting task.

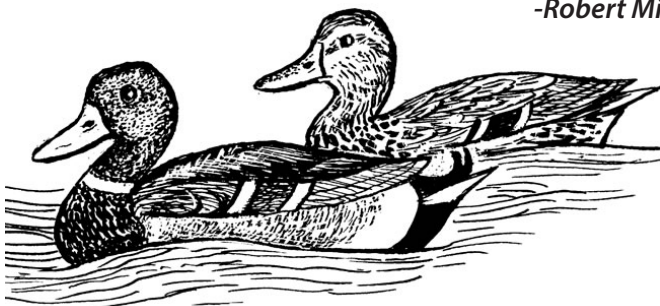
One clearly defined roadmap for navigating the challenging process of finding a financial advisor comes from the WSJ columnist Jason Zweig in his article: “A Grand Inquisition in 19 Easy Questions.” I encourage you to read the article, but in the meantime I’ve provided a sampling from his battery of vetting questions for a potential advisor and what you should expect as an answer:

- Are you always a fiduciary and will you state that in writing? (Yes)
- Do you participate in any sales contests or award programs creating incentives to favor particular vendors? (No)
- Will you itemize your expenses in writing? (Yes)
- Do you believe you can beat the market? (No) – This should be an emphatic NO!
- Are your fees negotiable? (Yes)
- How often do you trade? (As seldom as possible, ideally once or twice a year at most)
- Can you tell me about your conflicts of interest, orally and in writing? (Yes, and no adviser should deny having any conflicts.)

Navigating the New Vanguard Enrollment Form:

In an alleged effort to both simplify and optimize the benefits of your 403b plan, Vanguard has thrown us a Clayton Kershaw curve ball. In short, Vanguard has hired a subcontractor, The Newport Group, to administer the 403b plan. On a positive note, your investment options remain the same; on a less appealing note, the new group’s role represents a less than seamless transition. The Newport Group now requires two-step enrollment procedure as opposed to the Vanguard’s one-stop enrollment which could be completed during a 50 minute workshop. At this point, I’m biding my time while the Newport Group and Vanguard endure some necessary growing pains. In the meantime, I’m crafting a new enrollment packet and plan to schedule the next enrollment workshop on January 25th at the Runkle School.

-Robert Miller, Devotion



The President’s Work

The Brookline Select Board is off to a bad start in its effort to win the confidence of the community as it starts seeking support for an Override. The recent attack in the TAB by a member of the 2014 Override Study Committee on Metco and on enrolling employees’ children in the schools is a reminder of how important it is to have members on this year’s committee who are school employees.

But the Select Board rejected Heath teacher, parent of PSB graduates, Town Meeting Member, and property tax payer Bob Miller’s application. There is still time to reverse that poorly considered decision.

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