

BEU CALENDAR

Stipend bargaining

May 16 Town Hall, 11:00am

Paraprofessional JLMC Mtg

May 17 Town Hall, 3:00pm

Mtg on Participatory Action Research

May 17, 2:30pm

Educators for a Democratic Union Mtg (Worcester)

May 19 1:00pm-4:00pm

Grievance Team Mtg

May 21 3:15

Public Employees Committee (PEC) Mtg

May 31 11:00am

Retirement Tea

Jun 4 Temple Emeth 3:00-5:30pm

Executive Board Mtg

Jun 11, 4:00pm

AALANA & Para Ice Cream Social

Jun 15, Pierce Patio 2:45-4:45pm

MTA Annual Meeting

[The big news of the weekend was the election of Merrie Najimy (Concord kindergarten teacher) as president and Max Page (UMass Amherst professor) as vice president by a solid margin of votes. These officers have promised to continue the transformation of the MTA started under Barbara Madeloni's leadership, including rank-and-file organizing for power, standing up against the privatizers, fighting for our vision for public education, and acting in coalitions to win economic and racial justice.

The following are comments from several of your elected delegates from Brookline.]

I feel exhilarated! Merrie and Max winning the MTA election was the best outcome possible for educators in all of Massachusetts. We can continue to move forward and be the union we should be, a union that protects the rights of educators and defends public education. I took on a role on an MTA board this past year as an advisory budget member and took on the role as treasurer for the Merrie and Max campaign and so this weekend has been powerful and rewarding in so many different ways. I challenge you all to get more involved because the wins we have locally are just as invigorating as the wins we have statewide. *-Wendy MacMillan, BEEP*

I'm excited by the election campaign of Merrie and Max to continue in the MTA's progressive movement towards saving public education and promoting social justice. In 2014, delegates to the MTA Annual Meeting elected Barbara Madeloni to be our president. She ran on a progressive program of fighting for democracy in our union and in the spirit of encouraging educators everywhere to stand up for what we know is right for schools and beyond. I'm thrilled that I got a chance to be a Massachusetts teacher and a member of the MTA under Barbara's leadership. We owe her a huge debt of gratitude. As we await the latest election results (there is a 4-year term limit), I hope that my fellow delegates here see fit to keep us on the track that has served us so

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BROOKLINE ALLIANCE WINS!

Alliance for Brookline Schools' winning candidates, Jennifer Monopoli and David Arenas Pearlman, took their seats on the School Committee two days after being elected on May 8. Incumbent Barbara Scotto took the other of the three available seats with Alliance candidate, Jim Swaim coming in fourth, just 3 dozen or so votes behind.

The election of the 2 Alliance candidates and placement of the third ahead of the two other non-incumbents demonstrates that the Alliance's

call for more rigorous and transparent debate over the direction of our schools, concerns over standardization and testing and loss of autonomy for teachers are winning arguments. Furthermore, voters rejected caustic anti-union attacks on Facebook and in the Brookline TAB. Hopefully, those will be gone for good in Brookline.

Brookline voters clearly support the Alliance's respect for the collective voice of educators, including the ongoing struggle for fair pay and fair scheduling for paraprofessionals.

CELEBRATE WITH YOUR COLLEAGUES!

BEU RETIREMENT TEA

MONDAY, JUNE 4

3:00-5:30PM

TEMPLE EMETH

PUTTERHAM CIRCLE

(PARK ON PUDDINGSTONE RD)

MUSIC & REFRESHMENTS

When final, list of retirees to be celebrated will be posted at

Brookline.massteacher.org

EVALUATIONS AND PACKING



Dear BEU Grievance Team,

As we get towards the end of the school year I'm concerned about my evaluation. My supervisor hasn't done her observations and she hasn't asked me for evidence. Should I just let that slide? Does the evaluation even matter?

Also, as a teacher at Devo, I know I'll have to pack and unpack my materials to be moved into the new building. Can I get some extra money for all the extra time it will take me to pack and unpack my materials?

-Puzzled at Devo

Dear Puzzled,

In the educator evaluation agreement, there are very specific timelines listed to complete each part of the process. These timelines are important for both the educator and the supervisor. For the supervisor to complete their part of the process, it's important that the previous parts are completed - supervisors have been given a very challenging case load for completing evaluations! But timelines also protect you as an educator. If your supervisor repeatedly misses deadlines on completing their parts of the process, then the evaluation can be grieved.

There are some evaluators who are repeatedly missing deadlines and not completing their part of the process in a timely manner. So, if you end up with an evaluation that is not Proficient, and within the process your supervisor missed deadlines, you should immediately contact a grievance rep to investigate.

Regardless of whether your supervisor follows the timelines, it's really important that you complete your parts of the evaluation. Don't wait for the supervisor to ask you to complete your goals, upload evidence, etc. You never want to be in a position where your lack of completion interferes with your own evaluation.

Remember, your evaluation can affect your employment, so it's really important that you are vigilant about the process. Case law in Massachusetts protects teachers from being let go because of improper evaluations - even for pre-PTS teachers. According to a decision called the "Hull decision", if a pre-PTS teacher is let go because their evaluation was done improperly, they are entitled to be rehired. In fact, the BEU has been able to successfully keep pre-PTS teachers from being non-renewed because of an improperly completed evaluation.

We have many new administrators in Brookline who may not be well versed in the details of our evaluation agreement. Therefore, it is really up to you to keep on top of your own evaluation process and to be vigilant

about checking that your supervisor follows the contract.

With regard to packing and moving, the Unit A contract has a provision for the educator to meet with their supervisor to discuss how much time the educator needs and how much extra compensation will be therefore be paid.

This is of particular concern for those at the Devotion School who will be moving into a new building soon, but anyone in the district who is asked to move rooms or buildings is entitled to meet with their supervisor and be compensated, or to explore with BEU officers whether the officers should be involved. Because of the complexity of the Devo process, the BEU has negotiated directly with the district to come up with a plan that allows individual teachers to get up to 18 hours of workshop pay, or more, if they document the need. The Building Reps have worked hard on helping to craft the agreement.

You are entitled to compensation for packing before the move and unpacking of materials after the move. Anyone may choose to opt out of the packing process, for any reason, in which case the packing/unpacking work will then be arranged by the supervisor. Details about packing can be found in the Unit A contract on page 13.

You can find a copy of the Unit A contract and the Evaluation Agreement - including time lines - at <https://brookline.massteacher.org/local-contracts/>. As always, don't hesitate to contact a grievance representative if you have any questions or concerns related to your contract.

Sincerely,

The BEU Grievance Team

If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to call the BEU at beu-mta@hotmail.com, 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)

Jen Hanaghan (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

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well and keeps us on the same train as our fight-back sisters and brothers in Arizona, West Virginia, Kentucky, Oklahoma and beyond. **-Jody Curran, Driscoll**

I think that this convention is really interesting to listen to. I'm glad that I get to be here for this opportunity. It really is a privilege to be an MTA delegate, and I also think that it has been very advantageous to attend one of the preconvention meetings in order to get a better understanding of the issues that Massachusetts educators are facing on a national level and a state level. I feel like I'm still learning about our union, and how it functions, but being here allows me to become a more informed educator, and it helps me make important connections from educational policies all of the way to our classrooms and the academic & social outcomes of the students we teach. Our outcomes determine the direction we want our society to aim towards. **-Jason A. Murray**

It's an honor to be here as eyes and ears for my colleagues, and to take action on behalf of stronger organization among our members. I am particularly inspired by Boston City Councilor Lydia Edwards, recipient of the 2018 Friend of Labor award. She's the first in her family to go to college, law school, and to be elected to public office, and she credited her public school teachers with helping her to believe in herself and her skills and move outside what she thought possible for her future. Hurray for inspiring teachers!

-Susan Balogh, Baker

This is my first time serving as an MTA delegate, and it's been exciting to feel the energy and passion at the convention. The work of educators in West Virginia, Oklahoma, and Arizona has been brought up again and again, and there's really a sense that we are one part of a national community of teachers working for justice and dignity. Our MTA president, Barbara Madeloni, was my high

school English teacher and a major reason why I wanted to teach English myself. I've felt inspired seeing her preside over the convention, advocating for progressive agendas to serve ALL of our students. **-Amy Kane, Devo**

This is my first year at an MTA delegate. It has been an interesting experience to observe the process and energizing to be around so many dedicated, engaged educators. It is clear that there is a divide among members around the path they hope the union takes going forward, but also clear that, overall, there is displeasure with many of the current education policies in our country. Hopefully we can come together to fight the harmful national policies that are negatively affecting our students. **-Jen Jordan, Devo**

It's been my pleasure to serve as a delegate to the MTA annual meeting for the third time. I keep returning because I want to make sure Brookline is represented and realizes all of our potential voting power in this important aspect of our union business. I also continue to be hugely inspired by the direction of the MTA as a social justice organization, focused on equity, and the uplifting and support of underrepresented members of all stakeholders in public education in Massachusetts. **-Julie Boss, District-wide**

This is my second year at MTA delegate as a Para I feel amazing and empowered it's exciting to be voting and making changes. In fact, I'm already looking forward to next year! **-Roylene Hunte, Pierce**

My first year as a delegate to the MTA annual meeting was four years ago when Barbara Madeloni was first elected as MTA president. That was an exciting turning point for our state organization. Since that time we have worked hard to defend the educational professions we are engaged in. We have overcome obstacles regarding charter schools, educator evaluation, and most importantly

proved that educators in Massachusetts must be considered and listened to as a political force. At a time when unions and workers are increasingly losing power, the MTA is showing the country a different way. It has been a privilege to usher Barbara Madeloni in and be involved in efforts to continue the work she has started by voting for her replacement. **-Bob Miller, BEU Vice-President**

This was the first year I participated as a delegate in the MTA convention. It was incredibly energizing. I could feel in the room the hope and momentum of the recent teacher strikes around the country, and the determination of our members to improve public education and build union power in the commonwealth.

As a teacher of Colonial American history, it was fascinating to trace the lineage of democratic participation from town meetings throughout New England in the lead up to the Revolutionary War directly to how our union used parliamentary procedures to give voice to individual members as we debated the issues before us. How invigorating! **-Jesse Kirdahy, Driscoll**

On Thursday I told my students that I wouldn't be in class on Friday because I was going to represent teachers' and students' rights at the MTA conference, and instead of being met with the typical excitement over having a substitute, I was met with applause. I look forward to going back on Monday and telling them about the heavy debate and vote over the MTA's support of the Fair Share Amendment. I can't wait to tell my students that their teachers' union is fighting for their schools to be fully-funded by asking everyone to contribute their fair share. I am proud to be a part of a union that is looking forward, not backward, and fighting to fully fund public education. I've enjoyed my second year as an MTA delegate! **-Julia Kumpf, BHS**

FINANCE FOR EDUCATORS

MUCH ADO ABOUT ESTATE PLANNING

Why should I care about posterity?

What's posterity ever done for me? -Groucho Marx



Let's consider some of the unintended consequences for failing to name a beneficiary. Warren Hillman died in 2008 at age 66, and the will clearly affirmed that "everything" should go to his wife Jackie, including his \$125,000 insurance policy. Not so fast! Warren was previously married, divorced in 1998, but neglected to update the beneficiary designation on the insurance policy from his ex-wife to his new wife. When the ex-wife was awarded the insurance policy, Jackie, his new wife, successfully sued and was awarded the \$125,000 dollar insurance policy. This decision, however, was overturned in the United States Supreme Court that ruled in favor of the ex-wife citing that pension plans must honor beneficiary designations.

Designating a beneficiary(s): The takeaway from this cautionary tale of Hillman vs. Mareta is that the beneficiary designation takes precedence over your seemingly air-tight will. In short, there is a steep price to pay for this all too common – but easily remedied – estate-planning faux pas. You should periodically review and update your beneficiary designations to reflect changes in your life.

One other key point to consider is that fifty percent of all families are blended. While you may have created an estate plan for your first marriage and children, what about wife or husband #2? What about your stepson/stepdaughter, a son/daughter from your new marriage. Without the proper beneficiary designation, your passing could jeopardize your loved one's financial well-being, not to mention leaving them with a nightmarish legal legacy.

• **Coordinate Your Will with the Beneficiary Designations** – The case of Hillman vs. Mareta should be a clarion call to verify that all beneficiary designations are perfectly synchronized with your will. If you want your money and belongings distributed to your heirs according to your wishes, your will and beneficiary designations need to state the exact same thing.

• **Brookline 403b** – I've observed too many teachers who leave the "beneficiary designation" section blank during an enrollment session, promising to complete it "later." It's time to select both a primary and secondary beneficiary!

• **Roth IRA** – By designating a primary and secondary beneficiary, the beneficiary not only avoids probate but the money in the account continues to grow tax-free.

• **Life Insurance, Annuities & Bank Accounts** – Update your beneficiary designations. Bank and investment accounts that include beneficiary designations automatically transfer the assets to the beneficiary or the joint owner. The alternative is an unpleasant trip to probate court.

The bottom line, with all due respect to Groucho, is that posterity does matter; it's your legacy and they're your loved ones.

-Robert Miller, Devotion (retired)

The President's Work

Meet to discuss literacy scores, meet to discuss MCAS scores, attend IEP meetings and have consults, leave the classroom for trainings and get together to discuss School Improvement Plans. Compile data and submit forms. Then, when you get home, start your lesson planning and grading for which there has been no time at school. The district is double and triple booking the same minutes, including minutes to give students extra attention. Now, PSB wants to add Restorative Justice programming and Instructional Leadership Teams to share with the principal responsibility for directing what instruction will look like. At what time of day will these happen? What's gonna give? Those questions need to be answered.

~~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; Jess Wender-Shubow, President