

## BEU TEAMS MOVING FORWARD AS SCHOOL YEAR CLOSES

### NEGOTIATIONS UPDATE

The Core Speaking Representatives of your Negotiations Team have been hard at work fine-tuning proposals, processing data gathered from the District, and trying to find common ground with the School Committee in order to begin negotiations. Last week, we offered a compromise position to jump-start our negotiations in response to some ideas that have been floated in letters and discussions. The major aspects of that offer included:

- Bargaining immediately for one-year wages-only agreements for the 2019-2020 work year.
- Working over the summer to address some of the concerns members have brought forth that we have not yet been able to bring to the negotiations table.
- Starting successor negotiations in September for full three-year agreements (2020-2023) by finding a series of 30 negotiations dates in the fall, starting with an attempt to come to agreement over ground rules.
- Explaining clearly the role and purpose of our Silent Bargaining Representatives on our Negotiations Team and offering to limit such representatives to 30 in the room (unless there is mutual agreement to increase the number), with any overflow seated in a separate room with close-circuit TV.

By the way, earlier this month, the Commonwealth Employment Relations Board (CERB - the body within the Department of Labor Relations that hears appeals) ruled in a similar "expanded bargaining unit" situation in Belmont. In that case, the CERB ruled that a Union may designate bargaining unit members as its team and determine their role. The CERB also ruled that the presence and role of Silent Bargaining Representatives must be communicated to the Employer. (In the Belmont case, the CERB determined that the union did not give proper notice; we have taken steps to ensure the same factual issue is not present here.)

### BARGAINING INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP TEAMS (ILTs)

After the district agreed to bargain this idea in April, the BEU brought a team of about 20 BEU educators to the table. In the two bargaining sessions, the BEU negotiators have begun to lay out positions. Here are the main principles that the BEU has presented thus far:

- Issues to be addressed should be determined by the staff and faculty through open-ended deliberation before any committee is formed. The choice of issue should be explicit and specific.
- Minority views and reports should be presented alongside majority positions.
- The form of any committee ("task force") and its timeline should fit the task at hand.

- Goals of a committee should be fit to the time scheduled to achieve them. Not only committee meeting time, but consult time with the rest of the faculty and staff should be scheduled at the outset and not overlap with time needed to meet other work expectations.
- No committee shall have independent authority over staff time or goals.
- A committee's plans, report, and recommendations should be presented to the BEU Reps Council at regular intervals so that the Union can determine if there may be an impact on working conditions that can be bargained.

The BEU bargaining team will do its best to reconvene over the summer. Let us know if you'd like to be involved.

### GRIEVANCE TEAM WORK

The grievance team has been busy working with members to defend compensation and conditions of work which cannot be unilaterally changed by management. Here's a sample of current issues:

- Winning agreement for work cell phones to be supplied.
- Investigating increases in section assignments for teachers of elementary "specials."
- Achieving an agreement to have stipend paid for additional AP science labs.

# MTA ANNUAL MEETING 2019

## THOUGHTS FROM BEU DELEGATES

The *MTA Annual Meeting of Delegates* was held May 3-4 at the Hynes Convention Center in Boston. BEU Delegates attended and share their thoughts about the experience.

### **Janice McKeown:**

This was my 4th time attending the MTA Annual Meeting. Each year I learn something new and I am always inspired by the passion of the educators who speak and present. It is hard to put the experience into a few words, but the annual meeting allows each attendee the opportunity to take part in the democratic process behind the important issues and decisions being made on behalf of ALL public school educators and students in Massachusetts. It's big! I enjoy hearing the different perspectives — some people really love to debate!

### **Alisa Conner:**

At my first MTA Annual Meeting, I got to see democracy in action. What did that look like? Let's be real; it wasn't always full of excitement or efficiency (even though the camaraderie among the Brookline peeps was awesome, and there was some fun chanting). Robert's Rules and points of order and seconding motions and all that require patience, fortitude, lots of snacks, some deep breathing, and TIME.

But the process matters. The decisions we voted on matter, for the ways the MTA will operate in the future, i.e. the ways we work with each other, in community, in this structure; and the ways we work together in our local communities, in our state, in the nation. Democracy in action can be slow, laborious, messy, even frustrating. It requires adherence to a clear structure for conversation so that all voices can be heard in a way that's fair. But in the end, the very fact I got to participate—and vote! — in this deliciously messy and laborious process—that's inspiration enough for me. Yay democracy!

### **Bob Miller:**

Not being a presidential election year, this seemed a bit slower than other years. Having said this, I always enjoy being able to participate in the democracy that is the MTA Annual Meeting. It is exciting to witness and participate in decisions that affect our profession. It is also a great opportunity to get to know colleagues you might never otherwise talk with. If you haven't attended, think about being a delegate next year.

### **Eric Schiff:**

I agree with Bob's sentiment entirely. This was my first time attending even though I have been very active in the BEU for years. It was fascinating to at-

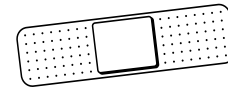
tend caucus meetings early and see how strategy discussed in that meeting translated into floor strategy when certain amendments came up for votes. There is a lot of procedural stuff that can get annoying, but makes for good opportunities to talk to colleagues, folks from other locals seated nearby, and even to go for a walk around the hall to see what's going on.

### **Dave Knott:**

This was my first Annual MTA Meeting, and out of the sometimes contentious floor debates emerged two competing visions of what our union can and should be. According to one vision, each local branch should restrict its attention to the most immediate and narrow concerns: contract negotiations, grievances, and other actions that directly benefit the local membership. The second vision recognizes these important activities, but sees the union as a powerful vehicle for broader political and social change, recognizing the connections between traditional labor issues and the struggles for racial, economic, environmental and immigrant justice. This vision honors the union's historical role as a source of political education and as a potent instrument in fights against entrenched inequality. I was proud that the BEU stood for this vision at the meeting.



## OUR HEALTHCARE



Beginning July 1st we will have to meet the new yearly deductibles for health care and prescription drugs. We will need to meet these amounts for health care services before our insurance pays for covered health care costs: \$500 for Individual Plan / \$1,000 for Family Plan deductibles.

There is a separate prescription drug deductible: \$100 Individual / \$200 Family.

Our current Healthcare Agreement will expire June 30, 2020. We, the Public Employees Committee (PEC), are currently exploring ideas for a new agreement. We stand firm on retaining our premium split of 83% Town and 17% PEC members. The PEC is also a watchdog for violations against our agreement. Please let us know if you have concerns or want to give suggestions to your PEC representatives, Jessica Wender-Shubow and Sheila Leach.

If you are a Flexible Spending member, please use your Benny Card wisely. Always remember that we have a Healthcare Reimbursement Agreement (HRA) that can pay a portion of certain copays (E.R. visits, hospitalization for an inpatient and/or outpatient procedures and Hi-Tech Imaging after third visit). If you use your Benny Card for these procedures, you will not be reimbursed by HRA funds. Also the HRA funds are NOT exhausted yet. If you and your covered dependents were already reimbursed for a total of four copays, you may submit proof of additional copays. Priority is given to the claims for reimbursement that are received first by the Town's HRA Administrator, 2nd floor Town Hall.

Enjoy your summer vacation and take care.

2sheilaleach@gmail.com

*-Sheila Leach, PEC Rep*



## CONTRACT CORNER

Dear BEU Grievance Team,

I've taken a bunch of graduate credit courses and I think I'm ready to change lanes, but the process seems confusing. Where should I start?

Sincerely,  
Time for a Change

Dear Time,

Congratulations! Our contract allows for Unit A and Unit B members to move up on the payscale to a higher "lane" after earning a Master's degree, 30 additional graduate credits after that Master's, 45 additional credits, and for earning a doctorate. (For paras: if you're on a pay scale that includes a Bachelor's Degree lane, you'll need to follow the process below too.) Here are some key points to keep in mind for everyone:

You need to seek pre-approval from Town Hall for all credits (Go to the Brookline Professional Development website at <https://app.smartedu.net/brookline/pd/>, click on "About BrooklinePD," and you'll find the Graduate School Pre-Approval form on the right). Reasonable courses

should not be denied approval.

As you finish each course, be sure to request and hang on to an official transcript from the credit-issuing institution.

You need to notify central administration of your intention to change lanes by January 15 in order to get the pay increase the following September. An email to Andrew Bott and Betsy Fitzpatrick will suffice. Then you need to send along all your official transcripts. When you're ready to send in all your transcripts, look for the Lane Change application form on the Brookline PD website.

NOTE: Be sure to communicate your intent to change lanes by January 15 even if you plan to finish your final credits in the spring and summer! You can send those transcripts along when you get them. And if you don't manage to finish those credits, it's okay. There's no penalty for applying for a lane change if you don't make it. And you shouldn't be denied a lane change unreasonably.

### Grievance Team Members:

|                               |                                   |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Deb Allen (Devotion, retired) | Noah Gronland-Jacob (BHS)         |
| Alisa Conner (BHS)            | Cathy Heller (BHS)                |
| Jody Curran (Driscoll)        | Kathy Hitchcock (BHS)             |
| Hillary Golden (Lincoln)      | Anna MacIver (Runkle)             |
| Mark Goldner (Heath)          | David Weinstein (Pierce, retired) |
| Rich Gorman (BHS)             | Jessica Wender-Shubow             |

# FINANCE FOR EDUCATORS

## MUCH ADO ABOUT FINANCES



Time in the Market, Not Timing the Market: June Article

I'll only state the obvious when I submit that the month of May has been a tumultuous time for both the Dow Industrial Average (DOW) and Democracy. Over the course of the past month, an understandably skittish market lost approximately 6.5% in a large part due to an escalating trade war with China – with no end in sight – and our president's temper tantrum tariff threat against Mexico. Add to this the 9-minute testimony by Mueller in which he not only rebutted Bill Barr's exoneration, but explicitly declined to exonerate Trump and possibly established grounds for impeaching the president.

While I firmly believe that forecasting is difficult [forecasting = foretelling the future...], I'll go out on a limb and suggest that investors should brace themselves for potentially volatile times ahead in the market. At the same time, I would also advise investors to "stay the course" and maintain their current, long term investment strategy. If you're invested in a Fidelity or a Vanguard 403b retirement savings plan, you shouldn't worry about this week's, this month's or even this year's stock market returns. Your focus should be on maintaining the temperament of a successful, long term investor. This requires discipline and the commitment to stay rational, stay in the market, and ignore the day-to-day external market upheaval – like tariff threats and the specter of impeachment.

The rewards for a disciplined, long term investor are extremely compelling: a 10% average return between the years of 1926 – 2014. In fact, if you began teaching in 1983, contributed \$100.00 per pay check to your 403b, a total of \$2100.00 per year over 36 years, you would retire in 2019 after 36 years of investing in the market with a sum of \$691,000.00!

### 691,000 Reasons to Enroll in a 403b

While I can't guarantee that you will retire with \$691,000 in your 403b, teachers regularly share encouraging investing stories with me. They consistently report that they don't miss, or even think about, their monthly \$100.00 payroll deduction, and they are pleasantly surprised to see that they've amassed \$40, \$50 or \$60k in their retirement account. I strongly encourage you to enroll in your 403b and begin by contributing \$100.00 per pay check that you won't miss! I've pasted the link to the updated, easy-to-follow 403b enrollment guidelines for Brookline educators. And don't forget to submit a MidAmerica Salary Reduction Form where you indicate the payroll deduction from each of your 21 yearly paychecks. See this link for enrolling in a 403b:

<https://brookline.massteacher.org/2019/06/08/town-403b-handout/>

### Student Loans

If you're embarrassed about your mounting student debt, if you're overwhelmed with your monthly payments, or if you're simply confused – as is the case with so many borrowers — the BEU and, yours truly, would like to extend a student loan lifeline. I'll be conducting student loan workshops beginning in September of 2019 and regularly posting informational articles about best strategies for repaying your student loans.

*-Robert Miller, Devotion (Retired)*

### **The Members' Work**

The BEU does not act alone. It stands in solidarity with a broad movement for educational, social and racial justice. That means bravely opening up healthy debate like Brookline kindergarten teachers have. and respecting difference within the workforce, student body, school community, and society at large. Get involved this summer in the social justice labor movement! Join the movement to *Fund Our Future!* Consider attending the *MTA Summer Conference*, August 4-7! Learn about the *UCORE conference* (July 29-31) at *Labor Notes!*

*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. While the current right-wing U.S. Supreme Court has recently supported efforts to weaken unions by eliminating fair-share fees, all educators in our district benefit from the contractual protections, bargaining power, and unity of the BEU. So colleagues look to one another to keep the union strong by becoming a member and participating in the work of the union.*

### **THE BROOKLINE EDUCATOR**

*Published monthly by the Brookline Educators Union, affiliated with the Massachusetts Teachers Association and the National Education Association. Send letters, comments, inquiries, and articles to:*

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*BEU members discuss issues and find additional news at the website:*

*brookline.massteacher.org.*

*All members are encouraged to join using a personal email address.*

*Colleen Muldoon, Communications Chair*

*Jessica Wender-Shubow, President*