

WHY ARE BEU MEMBERS GOING TO TOWN MEETING ON NOVEMBER 19, 6:15 - 7:15 PM? *FOR FAIR PAY!!*

Brookline Town Meeting voted in May for a fair wage for educators, with respect for bargaining to come.

On November 19, we will thank the members of Town Meeting for valuing Brookline's educators.

Most Town Meeting members do not know that we are working without new contracts.

On November 19 we will explain that our contracts expired in August with educators waiting for the School Committee to respond to what we submitted. We are still waiting.

The School Committee's refusal to collectively bargain compensation that is close to what Town Meeting members voted for insults both Town Meeting members and educators.

On November 19 we will affirm our self-respect as educators and the mutual respect of educators and Town Meeting members.

The School Committee's bill for educators' work is past due.

On November 19 we stand up for the message that Town Meeting and educators have long affirmed: **you cannot put students first if you put educators last. School Committee: pay your bills!**

EDUCATORS CALL ON SCHOOL COMMITTEE TO PAY ITS BILLS

COLUMN SUBMISSION FOR THE BROOKLINE TAB

Brookline Public Schools are growing and thriving. Our community should feel proud about that.

But the Brookline School Committee, which is tasked with overseeing the school system, is not paying the bills to sustain and nurture our district's success. This is shameful.

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In May, Town Meeting approved a School Department budget that factored in cost-of-living wage adjustments for educators, setting aside money for 2 percent salary increases and additional funds for paraprofessionals, among the lowest paid municipal employees who are invaluable to our students and schools.

When bargaining began soon after for a new contract, the BEU was shocked by the School Committee's proposals that did not even meet the salary parameters anticipated by Town Meeting.

Negotiations have been stalled since July, and educators are growing concerned.

The committee insulted educators with substandard cost-of-living adjustments. Then, by using inaccurate claims that the only way to boost the pay for paraprofessionals is to suppress the wages for other educators, the committee attempted to splinter the BEU's unity. The BEU has been sounding the alarm for years that the low pay for paraprofessionals undermines the district's ability to best support all students. And now to attempt to pit teachers and paraprofessionals against each other displays a troubling willingness on the committee's part to disrupt the environment in our schools.

Brookline deserves better from its elected

leaders.

Brookline Public Schools are an asset; our schools attract families to our community, and they attract excellent educators.

The content and tone of bargaining thus far raises concerns about our continued ability to attract the best possible educators and to develop the programs and support services our students deserve.

The School Committee has not responded to us since July when they said they would, nor even after we gave an additional proposal in September.

There is absolutely no reason to pretend that the district is mired in poor finances. State aid for schools is up and going up, and the town's finances are assigned the highest possible credit rating. The only question really is how to prioritize spending.

The School Committee needs to return to the bargaining table. It needs to at the very minimum carry out the expectations of Town Meeting members, though the BEU urges the members of the School Committee to behave like leaders and fight for a budget that supports our students and educators.

Eric Schiff, BEU Negotiations Chair

Jessica Wender-Shubow, BEU President



WORK-RELATED INJURIES AND SICK TIME

What happens if I get hurt at work? Will I have to use my sick days while I recover?

The answer depends on what contract you work under. Those in Units A and B do not have Workers Compensation and so we have negotiated an alternative. Those in the Paraprofessional Unit are eligible for Workers Compensation. Nurses have both protections. If you get hurt while working, the first thing to do is submit an accident report. This is used for all employees.

If you are a Paraprofessional, you should file for workers compensation using the accident report. It pays about 60% of your salary after 5 days of absence. If you are out more than 20 days, workers compensation will reach back and also pay the first 5 days. You can use your sick times to make up any differences. Workers Compensation also pays all medical expenses related to your injury. You

can apply for Workman's Compensation through the Department of Industrial Accidents' website.

If you work under the Unit A or B contract, you submit the accident report and any supporting medical documents to the Superintendent. The Sick Leave Bank Committee will then make a determination that your injury (or work related illness, e.g. chicken pox or fifth disease) was work related. This determination is then presented to the Superintendent who will ultimately make a final determination whether your absence from work will be paid without use of sick time. The Superintendent will also determine whether you are to be reimbursed for medical expenses not covered by health insurance (excluding co-payments and deductibles) up to a maximum of \$250 per teacher per year, and more if there are funds left over from a \$5,500 pool at the end of the year.

If you have any concerns, questions or have been unfairly denied the benefits outlined here, please contact a member of the grievance team right away.

Grievance Team Members:

Deb Allen (Devotion, retired)
Alisa Conner (BHS)
Jody Curran (Driscoll)
Hillary Golden (Lincoln)
Mark Goldner (Heath)
Rich Gorman (BHS)
Noah Gronland-Jacob (BHS)
Jen Hanaghan (BHS)
Cathy Heller (BHS)
Kathy Hitchcock (BHS)
Melissa London (Pierce)
Anna MacIver (Runkle)
Pamela Penwarden (Baker)
Jill Sifantus (BHS, Retired)
David Weinstein (Pierce, retired)
Sue Zobel (Lincoln)
Jessica Wender-Shubow

BEU CALENDAR

Licensure for ESPs

November 13, 3:30 - 5:30pm
Coolidge Corner Library Meeting Room

403b Workshop

November 13, 3:10pm
Lincoln School

Reps Council Meeting

November 18, 3:15 - 4:45pm
BHS

BEU at Town Meeting

November 19, 6:15pm
BHS

Grievance Team Meeting

November 25, 3:15-5pm
BHS

Did you know...

We are working without a contract.

On November 12st, we will have worked 72 days with no contract

The School Committee budgeted a 2% cost of living increase for all employees, plus an additional \$149k for paraprofessionals (1.5%) for this year.

The Town Meeting voted to approve the school budget.

In their last proposal (in July), the School Committee only offered an average of \$700.00 to each salary step for Units A & B, which is less than a 1% increase.

The School Committee said that they had not budgeted even 2% for raises this year. They then acknowledged that they actually did (and Town Meeting agreed), but the SC still won't propose what they budgeted.

After Town Meeting voted for a budget to pay all educators fairly, the SC insisted on cutting the teacher increase and making us pay for the \$1.25/hr increase needed to attract and retain paras. That's not necessary and it's not fair.

FINANCE FOR EDUCATORS



Much ado about Successful Investing

"If you can keep your head when all about you are losing theirs....."
-Rudyard Kipling

It would be naïve to ignore that we're most likely on borrowed time in this record 10 year bull market. It would be equally naïve to overlook the existential threat to our democracy from impeachment from the man "destitute of all decency," the slowing U.S. economy, the ongoing trade war with China, the fear of a tumultuous Brexit and the threat of a world-wide recession. In short, and while this is clearly an unsettling geopolitical and financial period, successful investors need to maintain a disciplined, long-term investment approach.

In 2009, a mere 10 years ago, the world experienced the worst economic shock since the Great Depression. The housing market imploded, the collapse of banking giants Lehman and Bear Stearns triggered a financial panic reminiscent of the Great Depression and the stock market hit a low of 6,469.95, a loss of 54% from its 2007 high. It was also precarious time for world-wide financial markets and a time when investors struggled to keep their heads and not panic.

The principle "lesson learned" from the 2007-2009 Financial Crisis is not to panic during the next market downturn but to keep your investment "head when all about you are losing theirs..." If you had managed to maintain your composure during that crisis and ignored the market volatility, you would have been richly rewarded over the past 10 years. Since the March lows of 2009, the market has delivered a 10-year annualized return of 17.8%.

Much Ado about Patient Investing with Your 403b

The legendary investor Warren Buffet wrote that "The stock market is designed to transfer money from the active to the patient." Over the course of this year, I'll be conducting a number of 403b enrollment workshops for PSB educators willing to patiently invest in a low-cost mutual fund from either Fidelity or Vanguard. The enrollment process is prompt and painless, requires you bring a laptop to the meeting and typically can be completed in less than 45 minutes.

Upcoming 403b Enrollment Workshops:

- Wednesday, November 13 at Lincoln School beginning at 3:10
- Wednesday, February 5 at CCS beginning at 3:10
- Wednesday, April 1 at BHS

-Robert Miller, Devotion (Retired)

The President's Work

On Nov. 6, dozens of Brookline community members gathered as guests of the *Alliance for Brookline Schools* to discuss what we want from a superintendent. MTA president Merrie Najimy, BHS teacher Graciela Mohamedi and education scholar Jack Schneider got the discussion going. Watch the inspiring event in three parts here:

<https://tinyurl.com/Nov6ForumPart1of3>

<https://tinyurl.com/Nov6ForumPart2of3>

<https://tinyurl.com/Nov6ForumPart3of3>

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

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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