



The Bridgeline

**Bridgeport Education
Association**

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Editor, Tiffany Ladson-Lang

Associate Editor, Carmella Lorusso

President's Message

For the third time in the six years that I have been BEA President, the BOE budget is such that they are again asking teachers for givebacks. The situation is frustrating on so many levels.

First, we just finished negotiating a couple of months ago. We fought hard to make gains and compromised on issues important to the BOE. It is unfair to now ask for the teachers to solve the budget crisis.

Secondly, Mayor Finch promised to pass though all the State ECS monies. Under last year's change in legislation, cities have the right to hold out a portion of ECS monies for tax relief. Last year this amount was equal to 20% of the new ECS funds. So while Mayor Finch is saying that he is willing to pass all the ECS money through to the BOE, the City Council is saying that taxes are too high, and they will hold \$2 to \$3 million out for tax relief.

Third, the Mayor's budget has Bridgeport's children bearing the brunt of the cuts. The BOE received \$1 million more than last year, but is still \$5.5 million short from what is needed to fully fund the budget. The School-Based Health Centers, school nurses, public libraries, and educators all have a direct impact on child welfare. They are the focus of the majority of cuts. At the same time, the Mayor's proposed budget projects \$17 million in new revenues with increases to other City departments.

Finally, the State legislators continue to claim that the City has not made a big enough financial commitment to the schools and so they cannot give the Bridgeport BOE money comparable to Hartford and New Haven. At the same time, the State Legislators continue to pass unfunded mandates like the In-school Suspension legislation.

What amazes me is that Bridgeport students continue to outscore Hartford and New Haven on CMT and CAPT. Clearly, the teachers are practically the last resource left in the BOE, deserve great recognition.

Gary and I are meeting with both State and City officials to address the many concerns that teachers have about this new fiscal crisis.

This will be my last President's Message. It has been my pleasure to serve as your President for the last six years. I want to thank the many people who worked with me. Best wishes to Gary Peluchette and his new team.

Mary-Beth Lang

Officers

Mary-Beth Lang

President

Gary Peluchette

Vice-President

Maria Nocerino

Secondary Vice-President

Victoria White

Elementary Vice-President

Herminio Planas

Treasurer

Tiffany Ladson-Lang

Recording Secretary

RETIRING?

Let the BEA know. We want to honor you at the BEA's Annual Retirement Social. Please call Denise Edmundson or Julie at the BEA office and sign up for the affair. Invite your friends and family for one of the most important events in your educational experience. Dinner is free for the retiree.

Superintendent Teachers' Roundtable

The Superintendent's Roundtable met on March 11 with the following schools attending: Hallen, Maplewood Annex, Read, High Horizons, Garfield, Blackham, Multicultural Magnet, Park City Magnet, Beardsley, Bassick, Batalla, Waltersville, and Winthrop.

Many questions were raised about the closing of old schools, the opening of the new schools, and the movement of teachers because of redistricting. The superintendent assured teachers that no jobs were being cut, and Human Resources was working to make the transition as smooth as possible for teachers who would be relocating to new schools for the next school year. Teachers felt a great deal of discomfort with the fact that some need to interview for positions in different schools.

Other teachers brought up that the CMT schedule was taking its toll on students with an exhausting student schedule, combined with the move to Daylight Savings Time that left students tired for testing on the first Monday.

Many teachers felt that the elimination of grade 8 trips to Holiday Hill was unfair to students, and that our children need to have something enjoyable to look forward to at the end of their 8th grade year. Dr. Ramos said that he would revisit that decision.

Another concern was that behavior standards were not consistent throughout the district, and that student behavior was deteriorating with a lack of consequences for poor conduct.

There were also reports of a lack of science and social studies materials along with a decline in facilities because of a shortage of custodial staff.

The next roundtable is scheduled for May 13.

Job Postings

Please read job postings carefully. Some teachers are contacting Human Resources to apply for jobs when the posting indicates that department heads, principals, or supervisors should be contacted.

Three Minutes to Advocate

- Contact your State Legislator and let them know that you support proposed BEST changes. (Substitute Bill 5871).
- Contact your State Legislator and speak to your concerns about the In-School Suspension proposal (Substitute Bill 5826).



Compact Schools

A collaboration of The CEA, AFT, Connecticut Department of Education, and the University Of Connecticut School Of Education has brought forward a new initiative for urban education. For the 2008-2009 school year eight schools in urban areas of Connecticut will have the opportunity to reshape their schools. Teachers and administrators will work collaboratively to choose curriculum, design their school day, and in general to put the decisions of education into the hands of educators. Support services will be provided by UCONN Neag School of Education.

In order to become a Compact School, 90% of the teaching staff must agree, via a secret vote, to take on the five year commitment to be part of this program. Two schools, Barnum and Longfellow, are proceeding to the application phase of becoming a Compact School. The staffs at these schools have voted to be part of the Compact Schools if accepted into the program. The BEA will act in the capacity of insuring that the contract is adhered to, or that Memorandums of Understanding will be established for areas that operate outside of our collective bargaining agreement.

Minority Affairs Commission

On December 6, 2007, the Bridgeport Education Association hosted a Minority Affairs Commission (MAC) Social. The event was held at Vazzy's Nineteenth Hole at Fairchild Wheeler . Music was provided by James Turner and Charles Council, both Bridgeport teachers. Charles Council, sang a solo from his latest CD entitled **Mr. Council's, Awakening of a Sleeping Giant**. He performed **When You're Gone**. Committee members, BEA members, Mr. Henry Kelly, Deputy Superintendent of Teaching and Learning and William Rice, principal from McKinley School attended.

The BEA and the Minority Affairs Commission (MAC) also took the opportunity to recognize Marilyn Council, a long time teacher in the City of Bridgeport. Recently, Marilyn was recognized by the NAACP for her work. Marilyn has been teaching in Bridgeport for the past twenty years. Presently, she teaches third grade in the Dual Language Program at Cesar A. Batalla School. She is also participating in an interdistrict cooperative grant that is sponsored by the Connecticut State Department of Education, Exploring Our Oneness through Diversity in Bridgeport and Westport. Marilyn loves what she does, enjoys her colleagues, and is an advocate for the Bridgeport Mission statement and that is "for all students to graduate college ready and prepared to succeed in life!"

Teacher Assaults

- If a teacher is assaulted and has to miss work, Workers' Compensation pays the full amount with no loss of sick time.
- Any time a teacher is assaulted, a police report should be filed and it is up to the teacher whether or not to press charges. This should be done immediately and the building principal should assist in contacting the police. If a principal does not call the police, the teacher should make the call.
- If the principal hinders the ability of the teacher to file the necessary paperwork with the police the teacher should contact the BEA to file a grievance. Be sure to inform the BEA of any teacher assault.
- The contract also requires that teachers be supported in the discipline of students. When a student is disciplined and the teacher feels that the action is not appropriate for the infraction, the teacher should contact the BEA. A grievance can be filed. This does not pertain to expulsions.

**Bridgeport Education
Association**

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We're on the web!
beaunion.org

Bridgeline Editors

Tiffany Ladson-Lang,
Public Relations Chair

Carmella Lorusso,
Associate Editor

Message From the Editor

As your elected Elementary Vice-President, this is the last Bridgeline in which I will be Senior Editor and Public Relations Chair. I would like to welcome Wendy Milson from Winthrop School who will be replacing me. I have enjoyed bringing you the Bridgeline and I know Wendy will as well. Thank you all for your support and happy reading.

BEA Election Results

* denotes an uncontested office

President

Gary Peluchette 773
Marie Petitti 247

Vice President

Victoria White *

Elementary VP

Tiffany Ladson-Lang *

Secondary VP

Maria Nocerino *

Secretary

Kathleen Flaherty *

Delegate At Large (top 4 elected)

Woodrow Fitzgerald 605

Mark Improta 545

Patrice Lundgren 628

Usha Menon 530

Delphina Pinto 664

NEA/RA (Top 9 plus President Elect)

Sharon Balkcom 402

Jerry Coleman 375

Kathleen Flaherty 529

Mark Improta 448

Mary-Beth Lang 809

Tiffany Ladson-Lang 603

Carmella Lorusso 392

Usha Menon 480

Gary Peluchette 744

Marie Petitti 506

Delphina Pinto 596

Victoria White 487

STATE TEACHER RETIREMENT BOARD

The Teachers' Retirement Board moved to a new location. They have been open for business at the new location since Monday, April 7th, 2008.

The new address is:

STRB

765 Asylum Avenue
Hartford, CT 06105