



# The Bridgeline

**Bridgeport Education  
Association**

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## President's Message

Recently, several BEA leaders (with the Administrators' Union BCAS) met with BROAD representatives to talk about Bridgeport Public Schools. During the discussion, several challenges came to light including lack of substitutes, low salaries compared to surrounding towns, unhealthy facilities, large class sizes and lack of resource personnel. One of the BROAD representatives asked, "With the many challenges that Bridgeport faces, how do you explain the success Bridgeport has shown in closing the achievement gap; especially in comparison to similar urbans with more resources." The first response was that one of the only resources left in Bridgeport is the teachers; teachers who commit to Bridgeport students, teachers who invest not only time and energy, but also their own money, and teachers who see every child as one who can learn. You are those teachers!! Have a healthy and happy summer.

Mary-Beth Lang

## **Officers**

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## **Survey Results**

The Personnel Policies Committee would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who went online to complete the Negotiations Survey and share some of the results with all of you. Most of the results are not extremely surprising, however, the data will help the team focus on proposals that will best represent the members of the bargaining unit.

As we reviewed the survey, teachers (with 58.13%) listed salary as their number one priority. The second priority was Health Benefits (with 39.76%). Tied for third was Benefits (e.g. sick leave, personal leave, etc., with 34.64%) and Working Conditions (with 30.42%).

In looking at how members feel regarding many of the conditions and expectations facing them on a daily basis there was a common feeling that the Bridgeport Board of Education needs to attract and retain the best teachers. To accomplish this 84.16% of the respondents would like to see more equality with the working conditions of surrounding districts. Another 61.88% would like to see more competitive salaries being offered by Bridgeport. Overall, 89.44%, members have found that their health coverage is reliable and meets their family's needs.

Members who took the survey were split as to whether or not their class size/case load promoted

effective teaching. However an overwhelming number of respondents, 65.98%, have their daily routine interrupted by the addition of extra students on a regular basis. Furthermore, 71% of the respondents felt that the site based decision making has created inequities regarding materials, resources, and working conditions throughout the district.

As the Negotiations Team and Personnel Policies Committee continue to meet and prepare for negotiations we will use this data with other information to create the best possible plan for our upcoming negotiations. We encourage each of you to come to the Personnel Policies Committee meetings and get involved and continue to have your voice heard.

## 3rd Wednesdays

The BEA has filed an Unfair Labor Practice on the unilateral change in working conditions regarding the 3rd Wednesday (grade level/department meeting Wednesday). We have met with the Labor Department Hearing Officer, but were unable to come to a resolution with the Board of Education. We are currently awaiting a report from the Labor Department and a formal hearing date. The BEA continues to challenge this change in working conditions.

### **PAC**

The BEA is creating a Political Action Committee for this fall's municipal elections. Volunteers are welcome to participate. If you are interested, please leave a message for Rob Traber or Cheryl Bochet at the BEA office (416-0055).



### **SEPPS by Gail Iassogna**

At this time, I.E.P.'s can still be handwritten. Be sure that all areas of the handwritten I.E.P.'s are addressed and the original I.E.P is sent to the Office of Youth Development at 948 Main Street. Also, articulation forms are not mandatory. These forms are suggested.

### **Salary Agreements**

If you have questions or concerns regarding any information on your salary agreement, forward them in writing to JoAnn Nelson, Payroll/Benefits Office, City Hall, Bridgeport, CT 06604, Room 315 or through the email at [jnelson@bridgeportedu.net](mailto:jnelson@bridgeportedu.net).

The office of Human Resources reviews transcripts and lane advancement paperwork in August. This procedure happens in August because that is when colleges forward transcripts to the BOE. You are asked to sign a salary agreement that reflects your advancement on step but may not reflect your lane changes. It is, therefore, important to confirm your salary when you receive your first paycheck in September. If there is a discrepancy, contact the BEA immediately.





### Volunteering for 6<sup>th</sup> Class

Prior to the beginning of the 07-08 school year, we want to create a list of high school teachers who are willing to teach a 6<sup>th</sup> class if necessary. High School teachers who are willing to volunteer to teach a 6<sup>th</sup> class if needed, should submit a letter stating their interest to their principals.

### Clarity

BEA has written a letter to the Superintendent demanding to bargain the impact the use of the computer program, Clarity, has on writing IEPs. Discussions are ongoing. At this time the format (longhand or Clarity) will be the choice of the teacher. The State is requiring all districts to have certain information about special education students and programs accessible. Bridgeport has chosen Clarity to provide that information.

### Superintendent's/Teachers' Roundtable by Gary Peluchette, Vice-President

The Superintendent's Roundtable was held on May 31<sup>st</sup> at City Hall. Representatives from Edison, Central, Park City Magnet, Hallen, Blackham, Read, Winthrop, Waltersville and McKinley schools attended.

The Superintendent announced that BROAD's \$125,000 in scholarships were awarded to 14 Bridgeport students.

Many issues that seem to plague our district were discussed. At the top was unprofessional treatment and bullying of teachers by some administrators. Dr. Ramos said he was very concerned that teachers felt that this treatment continues to occur in our schools.

There was discussion about zero tolerance as it applies to student behavior and breaches of the student code of discipline. The discussion revolved around what constitutes a weapon, and why teachers and students need to feel safe within their schools.

The issue of personal days resurfaced when a teacher felt that personal days for completion of BEST portfolios should be allowed. Some teachers were denied personal days when requested for compilation of BEST portfolios. It was brought up that in neighboring districts new teachers completing their BEST portfolios are given release time for portfolio preparation.

The shortage of subs continues, and Dr. Ramos hoped the implementation of Sub-Finder, and automated sub request service, will address this problem next year.

The suggestion of ungraded classes as a method to reach CMT and CAPT goals was also discussed. A variation on the Harding at Night model where students work on a computer-based system was suggested by Dr. Ramos. Of course everyone was in agreement on smaller classes as the road to greater achievement in Bridgeport

**Bridgeport Education  
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**We're on the web!**  
[www.beaunion.org](http://www.beaunion.org)

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**Medco Changes**

As of July 15th, anyone who is on a maintenance prescription must order that medication through Medco's mail order plan. Chris Mitchell will be sending out a letter from Medco concerning this mandate. The Payroll Department will be available this summer to answer any questions.

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**Dates to Remember**

Thurs., June 21, 2007 Last Day of School!!

Fri., June 29, 2007-Tues., July 5, 2007      NEA/RA-Philadelphia, PA

Mon., August 6-8, 2007      Summer Leadership Conference      Foxwoods Casino