



The Bridgeline

Bridgeport Education
Association

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President's Message

By this time Bridgeport teachers should all be aware of the CT Accountability Act and Mark McQuillan's, the new State Commissioner of Education, interpretation of that law. As Dr. Ramos has communicated at a variety of venues, Commissioner McQuillan has held \$2 million dollars of Bridgeport's ECS funding until an improvement plan is accepted. At that point the money will not be completely returned, rather some of that money will be used to pay for the Cambridge group to visit and evaluate Bridgeport's "failing" schools.

I have spoken to Dr. Ramos about the BEA's long standing position that was first articulated when visiting teams of administrators were referred to as "hit squads". The most recent version has been learning walks. I reiterated to Dr. Ramos the process agreed to by the administration. It included a building delegate's participation in the walk and a commitment to using the information from the learning walks to assess a school's strengths and weaknesses in an effort to determine the appropriate PD to improve teaching and learning. Bridgeport teachers have a State approved evaluation plan. Any information collected through learning walks is not to appear on a teacher's evaluation. The administrator must visit the class and make his/her own observations.

Dr. Ramos expressed his concerns about the Cambridge visits because we (Bridgeport) do not own the process. These visits are mandated by Commissioner McQuillan. Please keep the BEA informed of visits by Cambridge which should begin in November.

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Subfinder

In early October, I was notified that 315 teachers had not registered with *Subfinder*. Any teacher who has not yet registered must do so **immediately**.

If you do not have your code, contact Kristen Reilly at 576-7305 or kreilly@bridgeportedu.net. She will mail your code to you. After **November 15**, 2007, you will be required to go to the Human Resources Office to get your code. Act now, if you are absent and do not report your absence through *Subfinder*, the absence can be classified as an undocumented absence and thereby subject to a disciplinary action.

BEA is working with administration to find solutions to the many problems that were brought up at the BEA Delegates' and BEA Executive Board meetings. Some of the problems have already been addressed with changes to the software and hardware. If you have a particular problem with *Subfinder*, please contact the BEA office and be sure to report the **error code**. New teachers will be sent their code approximately 5 days after signing their contract.

**Superintendent/Teachers' Roundtable
by Gary Peluchette**

The Superintendent/Teachers' Roundtable was held on October 15th at City Hall. The Superintendent would like to see all schools represented.

The main topic of discussion was substitutes and the problems associated with the Subfinder system. Dr. Ramos agreed that the system has glitches, but felt that things were improving. Teachers still voiced concerns over the fact that they could not log into the system, and subsequently substitutes were not sent to their schools. Teachers added that even when they logged into Subfinder a substitute was often not sent to cover their classroom. Dr. Ramos further stated that administration is in the process of developing a cadre of elementary substitutes that would be assigned to a cluster of schools. They would service specific schools and would alleviate the problem of substitutes choosing not to work in certain buildings.

Prep periods for grades PreK- 6 were another topic of discussion. Dr. Ramos said that administration was working with the BEA to search for a solution to this problem and was confident that it could be resolved.

Many teachers voiced their displeasure with being denied personal days, and felt their professionalism was being questioned. Dr. Ramos said he would have a conversation with assistant superintendents about this issue. He felt that one resolution would be to have these days approved by the building principal instead of an assistant superintendent. Teachers felt that these days should be truly personal and not subject to denial.

The amount of testing coming at one time is something that needs to be addressed, with on-line assessment, DRA and report card conferences all coinciding. Breakfast in the classroom was also discussed with teachers feeling that having students eat in the classroom rather than a cafeteria would cut into instructional time. Dr. Ramos said that this was not motivated by a funding issue, but by a need to have children start the day without being hungry.

BEST

Teachers preparing BEST portfolios watch for the next BEA New Teacher Social. BEA will supply you with the materials needed. (clips, video tape, etc.)

CEA spoke to the Legislative Committee responsible for changes to the BEST program. Kathie Sochacki, Bridgeport BEST Facilitator, spoke on Bridgeport's unique issues. CEA is lobbying for more effective, consistent mentor support, assessment options for beginning teachers, an appeal process for failing portfolios, scoring of "proficient" or "not proficient", and elementary and English teachers submitting only one area.

There is still time for you to submit written comments and suggestions to PCR (Program Review and Investigation Committee) at PRI@cga.ct.gov. Please send a copy to linetteb@cea.org. More information about CEA's efforts on this issue can be found on the CEA website.

NEA Director, Kathleen Flaherty

Would you like your pay based upon student performance on test scores? There is a draft of No Child Left Behind in the house that is proposing this exact issue. This is only one of the issues that we, the NEA Directors, opposed and lobbied against in Washington D. C. recently. Other issues that we spoke to Congress about were class size and measurement of student learning by multiple factors. NEA was also looking for support for the "Social Security Fairness Act." As these issues continue to develop, we will be looking for your support to move our agenda forward.

At the NEA Director's meeting the implementation report was given addressing the new business items that were voted upon at the NEA/RA. There were also two speakers, Paul Orfalea, founder of Kinko's, and Linda Peristein, author of *Tested*. They support public education and oppose standardized testing. Our Connecticut NEA Director, Maureen Honan, was elected to the Member Benefits Committee.

Clarity

- If special education teachers need additional training in the use of Clarity, please have your principal contact Ginger Stehle, Director of Planning & Placement, in writing. Ms. Stehle will arrange for Bob Loughlin to go to your school during the day or on a Wednesday afternoon to give the training.
- If the current technology is not available to you, contact your principal, Ginger Stehle, and Bob Loughlin in writing.

BEA continues to meet with Ginger Stehle to address issues surrounding the use of Clarity. If you have questions, please contact Gail Iassogna, BEA SEPPS Chair at 416-0055 or giassogna@bridgeportedu.net.

**Bridgeport Education
Association**

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We're on the web!
www.beaunion.org

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Please remember that there are new regulations concerning 403b plans. Be sure that you meet with your financial planner to make sure that your contract is in compliance with the new regulations.

Please Note

- Be sure to track your sick time and personal days that are listed on your check. Subfinder has made some errors. Please contact BEA immediately if you find discrepancies.
 - You may not teach out of your certification unless permission is granted from the State Department of Education. If you are currently teaching outside of your certification, contact the BEA office immediately.
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BEA Elections

Elections for BEA officers will be held on Tuesday, March 4, 2008 with a snow date of Thursday, March 6, 2008. The offices of **President, First Vice President, Elementary Vice President, Secondary Vice President, Secretary, and Delegate-at-Large (4)** are open. Anyone interested in running for office must come to the BEA office to obtain a petition and election information.

Calendar of Events

November 19th Retirement Workshop Aquaculture, 3:15 Registration

December 6th, Minority Affairs Committee Social Vazzy's 19th Hole, 3:30

January, 10, 2008 Superintendent/Teachers' Roundtable Central High F105, 3:30