

The Bridgeline

Bridgeport Education
Association

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Editor, Tiffany Ladson-Lang

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President's Message

During my 6 year tenure as BEA President, I have had to negotiate a contract every year. It is an exhausting process that is very time consuming. I am pleased that this year we were able to negotiate a three year contract. This contract assures that teachers move up a step every year. It also insures that there will be time for new initiatives and programs that will advance the welfare of Bridgeport teachers.

The response to the new contract has been very positive. Some of you have expressed concerns, however, regarding Out of Network health insurance. To answer those questions, there is an article below with answers to the most frequently asked questions and additional information about a website that will address further concerns.

Best wishes for a happy and healthy holiday and New Year.

Mary-Beth Lang

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Mary-Beth Lang

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Insurance-Out of Network

This memo is to confirm that City of Bridgeport and Board of Education members who reside outside of the CT, NY and NJ Health Net Service area have access to First Health, one of the largest national networks.

To view how comprehensive the network of hospitals and providers are in key retirement states like Florida, North Carolina, Arizona..., members can view directly from the Health Net website, www.healthnet.com. On the first page of our website, you'll see "Search our Doctor Network". From there you'll see on the left hand side, "Out of State/National Network". This will bring you to the national list of providers offered through our arrangement with First Health.

As always, members who reside in the tri-state service area, but are traveling outside of the service area and have a true emergency situation -- will have their services covered as in network.

Lori Craig

Personal Days

When requesting a personal day for medical reasons, please use "medical appointment" as the reason, and there will be no further requests for more information.

Medco Drug Prescriptions

Preferred Prescriptions is a formulary list of medications that may be covered under your prescription drug plan. This list was reviewed by an independent group of practicing doctors and pharmacists and it contains medications made by most pharmaceutical manufacturers. It includes medications for many covered conditions.

In our plan, one pays the lowest co-payment for generic drugs, a higher co-payment for preferred brand name drugs, and the highest co-payment for non-preferred brand-name drugs. Your doctor may be able to help you save money by prescribing generic or preferred brand name drugs if appropriate.

To check your medication and which category it falls under (generic, preferred brand name, or non-preferred brand name) visit the "Benefits Highlights" section of the Medco website at www.medco.com and click on the **View Your Preferred Drug List** link.

Discounted Group Long-Term Care Insurance

Long-term care can become necessary anytime during your life. This new voluntary benefit can help you and your loved ones manage, emotionally and financially, the challenges associated with home care or a nursing home stay. Long-Term Planning Associates will provide Long-Term Care Planning Workshops to explain this offering beginning in February. Call Laurie Gaugler at 203-331-1818, x146 or email bea@ltplan.com for more information. Please provide your name, email address, phone number and school location, so we can schedule workshops to meet your needs. Contact Kathy Flaherty at kflaherty@bridgeportedu.net or 416-0055 for more information.

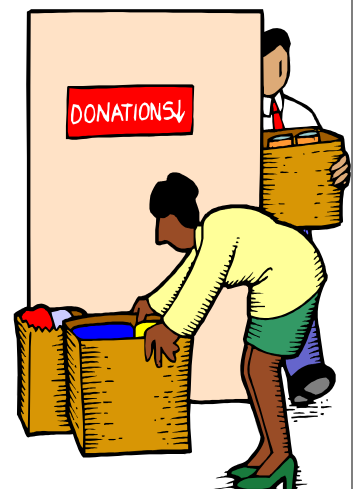
Salary Advancement

Salary Advancement paperwork is due in the Human Resources Office by February 1st. Submit the paperwork even if you are not sure that your course work will be completed by next year. Official transcripts must be turned in as soon as possible thereafter to receive advance.



Bridgeport Teams Up with DonorsChoose.org!

Bridgeport has teamed up with DonorsChoose.org in an effort to provide teachers with an opportunity to seek out materials they may need through the use of posting a project proposal. Individuals can then visit the site and read about the creative projects and then choose to donate money towards the project. Teachers were introduced to this opportunity at the start of the school year and offered a challenge: Each school that posted at least eight proposals by October 15th received a \$1,000 gift certificate. Bridgeport teachers rose to the occasion and 24 schools met the challenge! One proposal titled "Second Grade Scientists at Home", would provide students with a take home kit that included magnifiers, goggles, measuring tools, plastic test tubes, and thermometers and all the ingredients for an at home science lab. Continue to submit proposals all year long for funding of your creative ideas..



RETIREMENT NEWS

BEA held a retirement workshop in late November. Robyn Kaplan-Cho, CEA Program Development Specialist spoke for over 2 hours relaying information needed to make informed retirement decisions.

Please note:

If a teacher chooses not to participate in the Retired Insurance Program when they first retire (because a spouse has insurance), they can return to the Bridgeport insurance program later if needed. The teacher will lose the life insurance benefits if they did not enroll in it at the time of retirement. State law only covers health insurances. The teacher can re-enroll as needed and would pay the percent based on the time they were hired. If teachers want the life insurance, they should continue to pay for it even though they are not taking the health insurance.

Be sure to watch for another BEA retirement workshop that address health insurance in the spring.

Best Portfolio Videos

This year, the State Department of Education will offer the option for BEST portfolio videos to be submitted in a digital format. Guidelines for this process will be released soon.

Check your CT BEST messages and/or these web sites, for more information:

CEA web site: <http://www.cea.org/profdev/best/index.cfm>

SDE web site:

<http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2607&Q=319186&sdePNavCtr-l#45440>

WELCOME

Welcome to our International Visiting Scholars. These certified teachers are filling a need that Bridgeport has for Math and Science openings. The Connecticut State Department of Education created this program of inviting overseas teachers to urban settings. Our International Visiting Scholars work in various middle and high schools.



**Bridgeport Education
Association**

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

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Tiffany Ladson-Lang,
Public Relations Chair

Carmella Lorusso,
Associate Editor

FYI

- Foss Kits- Be sure to save the boxes in which the Foss science kits are packed. If teachers have no space in their classrooms, ask the administrator where they should be stored.
- Teachers are not required to hand in minutes from Department, Grade Level, Leadership, or Data Team meetings.
- Current BOE forms are available through Public Folders in email.
- Teachers are not required to sign in or out of meetings

District Calendar

The school calendar is created by District Administration and voted on by the BOE. It is not a mandatory subject of bargaining. There has been discussion about the elimination of February break. At this time, there is no definite answer. BEA has expressed to the Superintendent the concerns of the teachers on this issue.

Negotiations Update

Please note that information regarding the Negotiations settlement is available online at the BEA website. For Association News, please visit www.beaunion.org.

Thurs., Jan. 10, 2008 Superintendent/Teachers' Roundtable City Hall, Rm 305 @ 3:30

Mon., Jan. 28, 2008 County Council Testo's Restaurant, 3:30

Mon., Jan. 28, 2008 Election Packets Due to BEA

Tues., Jan. 29, 2008 Delegates' Meeting Central High, 3:30