



Negotiation Highlights* of The New Collective Bargaining Agreement Between the BEA and the Bridgeport BOE

Negotiations Process FAQ

What steps did the BEA and BOE go through in order to reach this agreement?

The BEA began meeting with the BOE team in July. In August we mutually exchanged proposals and then continued to meet throughout the month of September. We then entered into a lengthy mediation session. We began binding arbitration on October 15th. Prior to the full arbitration hearing, we were able to come to agreement on all of the issues and entered into a stipulated agreement.

What is a stipulated agreement and why didn't I get a chance to vote on it?

Under the Teacher Negotiation Act (TNA), if a contract is not settled by a certain date, the parties must begin the process of binding arbitration. The TNA does, however, permit the parties to continue bargaining during this process. If an agreement is reached prior to the first scheduled arbitration hearing, then the parties are required to ratify the agreement—that is, give each and every teacher an opportunity to vote the new contract up or down. If an agreement is reached after the first hearing, the TNA requires that the agreement be issued by the arbitration panel—and does not permit voting by the general membership. When an agreement is reached in this manner, it is called a stipulated agreement. Such was the case with us.

Why did the BEA agree to "stipulate" the contract?

A town's ability to pay is the priority factor to be considered by arbitrators when settling contract disputes. Your negotiating team felt that the economic factors in Bridgeport were such that this settlement was likely to be better than anything attainable by rolling the dice in arbitration. We also were able to successfully reach agreement on a number of language issues that would have been difficult to achieve in arbitration.

How long will this agreement be in place?

The duration of this agreement will be three years and will cover begin July 1, 2008 and be in place through June 30, 2011.

Class Size

In the third year of the agreement (2010-2011), class sizes will be decreased as follows:

Grades 2-12 – 29 students

Grades K-1 – 24 students

This is the first time that the board has been willing to make any changes in class size that correspond to the community conversations that have taken place.

Personal Days

Building Principals will now approve personal days. All other parts of this benefit remain in place.

Prep Periods for PreK – Grade 6

All teachers teaching PreK – 6th grade will be scheduled for five prep periods per week.

PreK teachers that teach an AM class and PM class will have their prep time between classes along with a "duty-free" lunch period.

A committee with representatives from both the BEA and the BOE will look for ways (at no cost) to guarantee this time.

Professional Activity Periods

Teachers will be given control of one agenda for the professional activity periods per month. This process will take place through the use of a committee of teachers who will be selected by their peers in each building creating agendas that are tied to Appendix J.

In order to assist each school's staff in putting these teams together and beginning this process, the BEA will hold informational meetings in the spring.

BEST Mentors and Portfolios

Teachers working on their BEST Portfolio will have one professional development day to assist in completing the portfolio.

In order to clearly set forth what is expected of teachers who mentor, a joint committee of the BOE and BEA will develop a job description for mentors and a universal form to be used for accountability of support provided for the BEST teacher.



Accountability Law

The Legislature passed new legislation at the end of the session that gives the State Department of Education (SDE) more powers over the Local School Districts which can impact the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA). In order to protect the CBA to the greatest extent possible we entered into a side letter that outlines the process and requirements necessary in order for implementation to take place regarding changes directed by the SDE.

This side letter also protects salaries, insurance, and RIF language of the contract.

Salary

Total increases to the salary account will be**:

- Year 1 – 3.87%
- Year 2 – 3.9%
- Year 3 – 3.9%

This agreement includes increment (step movement for all teachers on steps 1 – 12) in all years of the contract, smoothing of schedule to reduce the number of bubbles teachers move through on their way to max, and a additional money on all steps of the schedule with a focus on max (over the three years there will be a \$5000 increase to sixth year max).

In year 1 of the agreement, step 1 will be eliminated. All new hires will be hired at step 2. This change does not have an adverse affect on the earning power of teachers currently in the system. It does increase the starting salary which the district is hopeful will encourage teachers to look to Bridgeport as a future job site.

**See attachment for actual salary schedules.

Adult Education rate of pay will be increased to \$37.50 per hour for certificated staff.

A big thank you to the members of the Negotiations Team for their many hours of work in order to secure this contract.

They are:

- Mary-Beth Lang, BEA President
- Gary Peluchette, Winthrop School, Co-Chair
- Maria Nocerino, Harding High School, Co-Chair
- Carmella Lorusso, Read School
- Kathie Sochacki, District BEST Facilitator
- Ann Langley, Hallen School
- Katie Boland, Harding High School
- Tiffany Ladson-Lang, Park City Magnet School
- Victoria White, Waltersville School
- Woody Fitzgerald, Bassick High School
- Sara Batalla, Cesar Batalla School
- Jennifer Silves, CEA UniServ Representative

Health Insurance

The primary plan will continue to be a Point of Service Plan with the following changes to the benefit plan design.

Office visits (OV) (includes specialists)

Current - \$15, Year 1 & 2 - \$20, Year 3 - \$25

Hospital Inpatient

Current - \$200, New - \$250

Hospital Outpatient

Current – same as OV, Year 1 & 2 - \$50, Year 3 - \$75

Emergency Room

Current - \$75, New - \$100

Prescription – increase in max from \$1000 to \$2000

Current – 5/15/30, Year 1 & 2 – 5/20/35, Year 3 – 10/25/40

Out of Network

Current - \$0 deductible, New - \$2000/4000 deductible

New – 80/20 co-insurance

New - \$4000/8000 max out of pocket

The Premium Cost share rates will be as follows:

- Current – 10%
- Year 1 – 11%
- Year 2 – 12.5%
- Year 3 – 14%

Voluntary HDHP w/ HAS

Teachers will have the voluntary annual option of enrolling in a High Deductible Health Plan (HDHP) with a Health Savings Account (HSA)

The HDHP will require the employee to pay a \$2000/\$4000 deductible before insurance kicks in at 100%

Prescriptions are included in this. This means that until the deductible is met the full cost of the prescription would be paid by the member. After that time, the insurance would kick in at 100%.

Preventative Care is fully covered and does not require meeting the deductible.

Board will pay 50% of the deductible in equal payments over the course of the year into the HSA.

Retiree Health Insurance

Retirees younger than 65 years of age:

- Those teachers employed on or before September 1st, 2008 will be eligible to continue on the district plan at retirement by paying 60% of the premium. The district will contribute the other 40%
- Those teachers employed after September 1st will be eligible to continue on the district plan at retirement by paying 70% of the premium.

Retirees older than 65 years of age:

- Non-Medicare eligible will have the option of continuing health insurance as described for younger than 65 years of age.
- Individuals eligible for Medicare will have the state supplemental option available to them; the district will no longer offer a supplemental plan.

*These highlights represent the substantive changes that were agreed to in negotiations.