



# The Bridgeline

Bridgeport Education Association

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## Officers

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Treasurer

Tiffany Ladson-Lang

Recording Secretary

## Correction

In the December article about the Beard Award, Luz Malave's name was misspelled. We would like to apologize for the error. Congratulations again Luz!

## President's Message

It is unfortunate that the BEA has had to negotiate every year in the recent past. Negotiating is both expensive and time consuming as we always move to arbitration. It is also disheartening because the Board of Education lacks the resources that would allow us to make progress in the many areas we address each year. Next year, we will be negotiating the full contract. I invite every full member to come to the first Personnel Policies Committee Meeting held on Monday, February 26 at 3:30 in the BEA Conference Room to express issues that are important to them. The Negotiation Team is chosen from this committee.

## CEA NEWS

- Legal services for agency fee payer members will change as of March 1, 2007. Agency fee payer members were sent a letter explaining the changes. Watch for the CEA February Advisor for more details.
- Check the CEA website for updates on legislative issues. Your help is needed to move State House and Senate bills forward.
- CEA is looking for past letters written to legislators for legislative session on pension or other issues. If you have a copy, please forward them to Kathy Frega at

## IRS Educator Expenses

Last year Congress extended the "educator expenses" deduction that can be claimed on the 2006 individual income tax return, but the Internal Revenue Service 1040 form was printed before the bill was approved. As a result, there is not specific line item in the Adjusted Gross Income section as there was on the 2005 form, where 3.5 million tax filers claimed the deduction.

The IRS, in a December 22nd news bulletin, said that educators must file Form 1040 (not form 1040A) to take advantage of the deduction up to \$250 for out-of-pocket expenses incurred in 2006. The deduction needs to be entered on line 23, "Archer MSA Deduction". The letter "E" must be marked on the dotted line to the left of that line entry, according to the IRS.

The Archer MSA line item is designed for employees of small businesses, and self-employed persons in their deduction of medical expenses. If the taxpayer has a claim for both an MSA deduction and the educator deduction, the letter "B" should be written on line 23.

Go to [www.irs.gov/newsroom](http://www.irs.gov/newsroom) to read the December 22nd article.

**NCUEA Fall Conference  
by Gary Peluchette, Vice-President**

The Fall conference for the National Council of Urban Education Associations was held November 29-December 2 in Las Vegas. Attending the meeting was Mary-Beth Lang, Gary Peluchette, and Ann Langley. During the three day seminar delegates attended workshops on a variety of topics. Particular to our needs in Bridgeport was a seminar on Bargaining and Campaigning . The main focus was how local associations should start campaigning about the needs of teachers in the district before teams sit down at negotiations. Improving salaries and working conditions was at the top of the list for districts across the nation.

The main focus of discussion in sessions that were grouped by geographic locations was, of course, ESEA (No Child Left Behind). As you know, NCLB comes up for reauthorization in Congress this year. NEA and NCUEA officers were hopeful that newly elected House and Senate members would be supportive of making much needed changes to the ESEA. There is currently some discussion about delaying the reauthorization until 2008. Delegates were very vocal about how the NEA needs to be ready to effectively lobby for changes to No Child Left Behind.

**CEA's Human and Civil  
Rights Award**

Members are encouraged to nominate a colleague who is making a difference. Forms for these awards may be found online at [www.cea.org](http://www.cea.org), and must be returned by March 1, 2007.

**DCF**

Referrals to the Department of Children and Families have been on the rise over the past month. Please remember when speaking to students to keep your hands in your pockets. Seek the assistance of your administrator if the student fails to follow the rules. Do not use physical force as a means of discipline. If you are called into a meeting by either an administrator or a DCF investigator regarding allegations, you should stop the meeting and immediately contact the CEA UniServ Field Rep– Jennifer Silves, 203-378-2101.

**FACILITIES ISSUES**

With the arrival of cold weather also come facility issues. If you are having problems in your building, here is the most effective way to get problems solved:

1. If there is a major problem, such as no heat or water in your building, please call the BEA office immediately or CEA at 203-378-2101.
2. If you have less serious problems, report it to your building administrator. The principal then reports the problem to the maintenance department. The principal is then given a work order number for that particular problem.
3. If the problem is not solved in a reasonable amount of time, get the work order number from the principal, then call the BEA Grievance office at 416-0055. To follow through to the Maintenance Office, the BEA needs the work order number, the problem, and the room number where the problem exists. Having all this information makes it much easier and faster to get the



## NORTHEAST REGIONAL CONFERENCE

BY Carmella Lorusso

The NEA Northeast Regional Leadership Conference was held in Boston, MA the weekend of January 19 -21. Bridgeport was well represented by five delegates. They included Delphina Pinto, Kathy Flaherty, Linda Prokop, Sherran Davis, and Carmella Lorusso.

The weekend was kicked off with a rousing speech by NEA President Reg Weaver. In his speech, he referred to the reauthorization of NCLB and all of the work that the NEA has done in creating a plan that can fix the problems created by this act. Reg called us to action. His message was strong: we can no longer stay quiet. We have to be involved in order to make positive change. Reg reminded us that the Act labels everyone as the same, and it is up to us to make our voices heard for change. Our lobbyists are working hard to have the Act improved, and each of us should contact our legislators to make our voices heard.

We also attended workshops on various topics including bullying, gangs in schools, and NEA's international efforts. The afternoon keynote speaker was Lily Eskleson, NEA Secretary/Treasurer. She was the most motivating speaker. She spoke about some ideas that suggested teachers should be paid by the outcome of their students test scores. She stated, "Pay by test scores is waiting for corruption to happen." She quoted the results of a study that ETS, the huge testing company, completed. Their findings are as follows:

***The determination of high test scores is based on five key factors. They are the number of days a child is absent, the number of hours kids watch TV, the number of pages students read at home, the quality and quantity of reading materials in the home, and the number of parents in the home.***

Lily closed her remarks by stating that professional pay improves our odds of retaining teachers. She echoed Reg's remarks when she stated, "Now is the time for us to stand up for ourselves and our future."

### CEA Representative Assembly

Candidates (28 available)

Mary-Beth Lang attends as President

Sharon Balkcom	Ron Benner
Sherran Davis	Kathy Flaherty
Tiffany Ladson-Lang	Ann Langley
Carmella Lorusso	Patrice Lundgren
Maria Nocerino	Gary Peluchette
Marie Petitti	Delphina Pinto
Herminio 'Tito' Planas	Mary Psarras

### NEA Representative Assembly

Candidates (9 available)

Mary-Beth Lang attends as President

Sharon Balkcom	Ron Benner
Sherran Davis	Mark Improta
Tiffany Ladson-Lang	Carmella Lorusso
Patrice Lundgren	Maria Nocerino
Gary Peluchette	Marie Petitti
Delphina Pinto	Victoria White
Herminio 'Tito' Planas	

**Bridgeport Education  
Association**

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

## **COMPUTERS**

If a technician works on the computers in your classroom and there is a problem after they leave (icons missing on your Novell screen, printer no longer works, etc.) it may be because the technician didn't 'reconnect' to the main frame. This is a common problem; it is not because you have an 'old' computer, or 'there's nothing we can do'. Please notify your principal, SYSOP, or email the help desk.

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## **EVALUATIONS**

As Spring approaches, evaluations and observations are completed by administrators. When you get an observation or evaluation, you have 24 hours to read and sign it. If you disagree, check the box that says "I disagree". You then have several options:

1. You may write a rebuttal and attach it to the observation or evaluation.
2. Contact Sharon Pivrotto, the Evaluation/Staff Mediator.
3. If you are still not satisfied with your observation or evaluation after doing the above, please call the BEA Grievance Office.

## **BEA ELECTIONS 2007 CANDIDATE STATEMENTS**

### **SECRETARY**

#### **Kathy Flaherty**

"As an elementary teacher in Bridgeport, I have been proud to serve you as Building Delegate, Disability Chairperson, Read Across America Chairperson, and Delegate-At-Large. I'm an advocate for teachers and represent you as NEA Director Alternate. Please vote for me as BEA secretary. Thank you for your support."

#### **Tiffany Ladson-Lang**

"Dear Membership,  
It would be an honor and a privilege to represent you as BEA Secretary. With your support and my leadership experience, we can continue to move the Association forward. I appreciate all the support you have given me and I hope you continue to do so. Thank you."

### **TREASURER**

Herminio 'Tito' Planas  
Uncontested– No statement