

Bridgeline

Bridgeport Education Association

Editor, Lisa Balzano

Volume 7 Issue 1 September/October 2015

Associate Editor, Mark Improta

Inside this Edition

TEAM Information	2
Community	2
Health Insurance	3
Dates to Remember	4
Officers	4
Membership	4

President's Message

For those of you who I don't know, my name is Rob Traber. I am a 5th grade teacher from Blackham School, currently serving as the President of the Bridgeport Education Association (the teachers' union). I live here in Bridgeport and I'm proud to say that my daughter attended Bridgeport Public Schools from Kindergarten through 12th grade.

However, I know that we were among the lucky few. We had applied for a slot in Multi-Cultural Magnet. We were "wait-listed". We had a good K-6 elementary school, but we knew we faced a tough choice for middle school. Fortunately for us, a position came open at High Horizons Magnet towards the end of my daughter's Kindergarten year.

In the 90's, about 7-9% of our students had the opportunity to attend our Magnet Schools. For the rest of the students, the quality of their education depended on where they lived. As a result of a court case, we had a selective magnet school system that depended on a lottery. Some lucky ones received an excellent education, but, **all of our children** deserve an excellent public education that will provide them an opportunity to succeed!

Now, here we are over two decades later, and we still have a two-tier system. Oh, we have added more selective schools (magnet, charter, and inter-district magnet). However, the vast majority of our students (over 80%) continue to be ignored by our local, state, and federal leaders.

This year we saw another clear example of this double standard. Superintendent Rabinowitz made a modest proposal to improve the educational opportunity for all of our students. Twelve million dollars would have covered our fixed increases of \$7 million and added \$5 million in improved educational services for all. She certainly

didn't seek the \$60 million more that New Haven gets, or the \$90 million more that Hartford gets, or the \$45 million that the State Educational Cost Sharing formula says that Bridgeport should get.

Thankfully, our Bridgeport Legislators under the leadership of Senator Marilyn Moore and Representative Jack Hennessey were able to get enough additional money (\$3.5 million) from the State to cover our fixed costs. Sadly, the money for improvements, another \$3.5 million, was given to a new charter school. So, instead of improving the educational opportunities for 22,000 public school students, we spent it on a new charter school for just over 200 students! On top of this, more money was taken away from Bridgeport Public Schools when the final "implementer" bill was passed.

This is so wrong! All of our students deserve an opportunity for the best education. Fortunately, in our democracy, there is power in our numbers, **if you get involved**. Welcome back and please join us in our continuing effort to right this terrible injustice. Let's make sure that all children in Bridgeport get the best education, for their sake and for our profession.

So please, **get involved in your union**. There are many ways to help. We have committees on Special Ed, Social (events), Communication, Insurance, Legislation, Minority and Community Action, New Teachers, Elections, and Professional Development & Evaluation. Call the BEA. The more our members participate, the stronger we will be.

Robert Traber,
President



...get
involved in
your union.

TEACHER EDUCATION AND MENTORING PROGRAM

Teachers holding an Initial Educator certification, Interim Initial certification, or a 90 day certificate must participate in TEAM. Participation in TEAM is a State Department of Education certification requirement. Successful completion of TEAM allows teachers to advance to a provisional certification.

Teachers required to complete TEAM are entered onto the TEAM dashboard by the SDE and the district is then notified. Building administrators assign trained, certified mentors to beginning teachers through TEAM. There is a form that needs to be signed so that the mentor/mentee pairing is official. Most teachers participating in TEAM must complete a 5 module program.

Please log onto www.CTTEAM.org for accurate information about the TEAM certification program.

Ann Langley is the District Facilitator for TEAM

COMMUNITY ACTION

Dear Members,

The community action committee is in the process of organizing forums to keep our members well informed. Our goal is "To improve communication and build relationships to keep members informed on important issues within the BEA and the community." We have formed an alliance with E.MAC (Ethnic Minority Affairs Commission) and together we plan on hosting workshops for our members and for the community. It is in our best interest to increase member engagement by strengthening the ten minute meetings. Please feel free to join us at our next meeting, date TBD. If you have questions or comments please know that you can contact me.

Sincerely,

Your C.A. Chair, Michele King-Vasquez mkingvasquez@bridgeportedu.net



**Check
cea.org
for
information
on member
benefits such
as discounts
on insurance,
travel, and
more.**

Education
is not
preparation
for life;
education
is life itself.
~John



HEALTH INSURANCE

Ana Batista, Disability and Health Insurance Chairperson

Most commonly asked questions for the months of September and October

Question: Does our insurance have a vision rider?

Answer: There isn't a vision rider. The vision exam is covered by CIGNA. The refraction is not.

Question: How many chiropractic visits are allowed?

Answer: You are covered for 30 visits under Chiropractic care.

Question: What is the amount of funds a member can put in each calendar year before they are penalized?

Answer: The Maximum annual contribution for individual is \$3,350 and \$6,650. (This includes the BOE contribution of \$1,000 for individual; \$2,000 for employee plus one or more.) Over 55, you're allowed \$1,000 catch up making it \$4,350 (single) and \$7,650 (Family) ***This does not include the district's contribution.***

Question: When are we receiving our contribution from the BOE?

Answer: The dates for the BOE deposit of the HSA portion of the deductible are: September 4, 2015, November 25, 2015, March 4, 2016, and May 27, 2016.

New HAS cards will be received by October 24, 2015. It is addressed from CIGNA HSA BANK, P.O. BOX 939, SHEBOYGAN, WI 53081. Please activate your cards.

Premium Cost Share 2015/2016

Effective July 1, 2015, unless indicated otherwise, the Premium Cost Share deduction for health insurance will be as follows:

Bridgeport Education Association (BEA)
Deductions taken between September and June-18%

Deduction Schedule	Employee Only	Employee + 1	Employee + 2 or more
21 (HDHP)	69.60	162.87	199.74
21 (OAP)	133.66	337.45	435.62

Bridgeport Education Association

DATES TO REMEMBER

Wednesday, November 11, 2015: Veteran's Day, NO SCHOOL

Wednesday and Thursday, November 18 and 19, 2015: Report Card Conferences,
ONE SESSION DAY

Wednesday, November 25, 2015: ONE SESSION DAY

Thursday and Friday, November 26 and 27, 2015: Thanksgiving Recess, NO SCHOOL

MEMBERSHIP

Dues for the 2015-2016 school year are \$46.90 per pay for 20 pay checks. These dues include membership in the BEA, CEA, and NEA.

Please see your building delegate if you are not a full member. Agency fees will start in January, 2016 for all those who are not a full member.

Being a member does have it's benefits. As a full member you are entitled to:

- 1.) Grievance assistance
- 2.) Contract administration
- 3.) Statutory terminations*
- 4.) Non-Renewals
- 5.) DCF investigations*
- 6.) Worker's compensation*
- 7.) Advice on certification
- 8.) Advice on retirement
- 9.) Unemployment*

*Legal representation provided by CEA Member Legal Services

Any questions please call or email Delphina Pinto, Membership Chair, at the BEA office (203-416-0055). Email: delphinapinto@hotmail.com

Officers

Robert Traber
President

Jason Poppa
Vice-President

Jeff Morrissey
Secondary Vice-President

Cheryl Bochet
Elementary Vice-President

Gary DeBrizzi
Treasurer

Jennifer Kelemen
Secretary



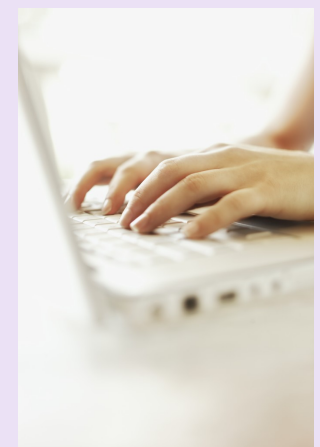
Julie Kaffen
Administrative Assistant

3543 Main Street
Bridgeport, CT 06606

Phone: 203-416-0055

Fax: 203-416-0066

1 PM to 5 PM



www.beaunion.org

