



BTA UPDATE: September 2024

We are into September! As we travel through the year, I will try to send an update when there are matters that become pressing that may need your attention. As always, your building reps are there for you whenever you need help or have a question. Not sure who your reps are? Head to our BTA website: barnstable.massteacher.org. In fact, pin/bookmark this site because it is where you will find A LOT of information.

Here are a few important contractual updates from bargaining and things to remember:

The workday:

LEU members work a 7-hour day. The day should begin at least 5 minutes before students are allowed in your workspace. There are 2 meetings per month (for up to an hour, right after the work day) and up to 4 other meetings (afternoon/evening) per year. Your attendance at these 4 meetings cannot be longer than 2 hours--the schedule for meetings should already be published. If there are changes to the schedule that require changing a meeting to a new date, there should be 2-weeks' notice for the new date. ***refer to Article 6/new MOA.**

LEU members must have 1 prep period per day. Prep periods are consecutive minutes. Total number of prep periods per week depends on your building/level (6 per week at 50 min each or 5 per week at 60 min each at K-5, 6 per week at BIS, and 10 per cycle teach 4/12 per cycle teach 5 at BHS). ***refer to Article 6/new MOA.**

The number of duties need to be assigned equitably across the LEU in each building (BHS depends on teach 4 or 5). There are some job roles exempt from duty assignments and student drop-off and pick-up are no longer considered duties. ***refer to article 6/new MOA.**

Paras and AAs must have a 15-min paid, on-call break in the morning and another in the afternoon. They should have a 30-min lunch--on-call/paid for AAs, on-call/paid or unpaid depending on job role for Paras. As a reminder: on-call means that you can leave your workspace and eat/be on site, but could be called on when unexpected issues arise. You cannot leave the site, but you also shouldn't be called out of your lunch/break on a consistent basis. It is the responsibility of the Para to inform their principal if they are not receiving breaks or lunch and should do so as quickly as possible so the principal can remedy the situation immediately. We recommend a follow-up email once you have alerted them. AAs work an 8-hour day. The Para work day hours are dependent on job role. ***refer to Article 16 AAs**
***refer to Article 6 Paras**

Paychecks

As we know from what has occurred so far this year, it is always our responsibility to check our paychecks. Make sure the amounts are correct and if you have questions or see an error, please email *payroll mailbox* (it comes up on our school email) and cc me (Brooke Styche). In case you were not aware: if there is a paycheck error that goes unreported and funds are owed to you, by law you will only receive up to 2-3 years in owed funds (depending on the circumstances), even if the discrepancy has been going on longer than that. The law states that paychecks are a shared responsibility between the employer and the employee, so we need to do our part to verify they are correct!

If you need to see your payscale, please go to our BTA website. All payscales are there under Contracts! If you need to see our union dues to verify your check, please look under Resources. If you want to access the district's payroll calendar, that is under Employment on the BPS site.

Benefits:

Personal Days: All Units

Personal Days before or after long weekends and vacations need to be approved by the Superintendent (Licensed Employees and Paras only--Para, this is new). Also, unused personal days convert to sick days at the end of the school year for all BTA members. ***Article 24 B LEU, 14 B Para/New MOA, 12 C AA**

LEU Salary Lane Advancement

To advance your salary lane, all schools should have a paper form that needs to be filled out (with transcripts attached) and sent to Shamim Morris/Kristen Harmon by Oct 1 or Feb 1. The lane move will be reviewed and if accepted processed in the 1-2 paychecks following Oct 1 or Feb 1.

*New language: if you intend to move lanes next school year (25-26) you will need to submit your intention to move by Dec 1 of this school year. This is just an intention--you will still need to submit your paperwork by Oct 1 or Feb 1 of 25-26 and follow the process outlined above. Communication from the Superintendent about how to submit this intention by Dec 1 will be forthcoming. We believe it will be a google form, so be on the lookout for that. ***Article 25, A/New MOA**

Longevity Buyout and Sick Day Buyback: Licensed Employees

As a reminder, if you would like to start your longevity buyout in June 2026, (this is NOT an intent to retire, but many people do access this benefit in conjunction with retirement plans), you must inform the Superintendent in writing of your desire to do so by THIS November 1, 2024. In doing so, you will not receive your typical longevity payment in November 2025, and will receive the first of three installments of the buyout in June 2026 (or the lump sum if you are retiring). ***refer to Article 33 in the contract**

Sick day buy-back IS an intent to retire. Once you submit your request for sick day buy-back in writing, to the Superintendent, that is a binding declaration of your retirement and can only be rescinded with Superintendent approval. If you plan to retire in June 2025, you must put in for

sick day buy-back by November 1, 2024 If you are retiring DURING the 2025-26 school year--not at the end--you must put in for it by December 1, 2024. If you are retiring in June 2026, you do not need to do anything in this school year; submit it next school year by November 1, 2025. **As a reminder, we have newer language about the thresholds for how many days you need to qualify. See Article 24 in the contract.**

***Sample Longevity Buyout and Sick Leave Buyback request letters are on our website under "Resources."**

Course Reimbursement: Licensed Employees

Always good to remember the process for course reimbursement! We created this example a couple of years ago and hopefully it helped. So, here it is again! The most important pieces of information are:

- it is your responsibility to make sure that you have a documented approval from the Assistant Superintendent's office before you begin the course.
- it is your responsibility to make sure you are submitting for graduate level courses that will result in letter grades on your transcript.
- all course reimbursement requests should be submitted through Droplet: the workflow is built into the form for signatures and notifications. The link to Droplet can be found under the Staff Links on the District webpage.

As an example - my course starts Jan. 23, 2025.

Per the contractual language, it is recommended I get my approval 30 days before the course starts.

Track 1: I'm going to take it no matter what, so I register when registration opens, Dec. 10, 2024. And then I submit my request through Droplet.

Track 2: I will only take the course if I am reimbursed, so I submit my request through Droplet in late November.

In both cases: I will be able to track the progress of my form under the My Submissions tab in Droplet. I will receive an email notification from Droplet when my course has been approved by the Assistant Superintendent's office.

Track 2: As I was only going to take the course if reimbursed, I NOW register for the course since I have received confirmation that it will be reimbursed.

In both cases: I start my course on Jan. 23. I finish my course in April. Once completed and I receive a transcript with my letter grade, I upload my proof of payment and transcript into Droplet. I will receive an email confirmation once my documents have been reviewed and reimbursement has been approved. I should expect to receive my reimbursement check in approximately 4 weeks - mailed to my home address.

Weingarten Rights: All Units

Always good to remember that your Weingarten Rights guarantee you the right to union representation during an investigatory interview by an employer. If the interview/meeting could IN ANY WAY lead to you being disciplined or terminated, or affect your working conditions, you should respectfully request that a union rep or officer be present at the meeting.

Once the request is made, the employer has three options:

- grant the request and reschedule with a union rep present/get a union rep into the meeting asap but allow the rep and member some moments to talk before continuing;
- deny the request and end the meeting;
- ask the employee if they would like to continue without representation or if they would like to end the meeting.

If the employer denies the request and just continues asking questions, you do not have to answer and the employer has committed an unfair labor practice. Please alert your building rep immediately!

That's probably enough info for now...I don't mean to overwhelm, but hopefully you have what you need! And, yes, the new contracts--we are merging all of the new language for our three units and hope to have printed booklets and searchable PDFs to everyone by the end of the month!

If I have missed anything and you have questions, please see a building rep. And please try to attend your monthly 10-min BTA building meetings to keep up-to-date with everything going on.

Enjoy the rest of September!

Best,
Brooke Styche
BTA President