

Grievance Update

Mary Anne Durand

In September, the BFT filed a grievance on behalf of four Assistant Department Chairpersons (ADCs) at the Marshall Middle School when they were scheduled to be in their classrooms for the twice weekly Activity Period. This is in direct violation of the contract, which states that for ADCs, non-teaching time will be devoted to departmental work.

The grievance was denied at Level 1 (building principal) and at Level 2 (Superintendent). The Level 2 grievance was heard by the School Committee in executive session on October 27th.

Our MFT Field Rep, Dianne Healy, represented the BFT. The School Committee rejected the grievance on November 3rd. We are now headed for arbitration; no hearing date has been scheduled.

(cont'd from p. 1 - Haynes)

work, Haynes continued, "These four vital campaigns received invaluable support from union members who participated in a tremendous grassroots effort, both in Massachusetts and in New Hampshire. My deepest gratitude goes out to all our union leaders and members who made time out of their daily schedule to participate in phone banks, labor walks, and reached out to union members to get out the vote. The Labor Movement has demonstrated once again the electoral power of union families, and sent a strong message that now is the time to put the needs of working families first."

Federation News

Billerica Federation Of Teachers #1677

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Proud To Be Union

"The labor movement was the principal force that transformed misery and despair into hope and progress. Out of its bold struggles, economic and social reform gave birth to unemployment insurance, old age pensions, government relief for the destitute, and above all, new wage levels that meant not mere survival but a tolerable life. The captains of industry did not lead this transformation."

Martin Luther King, Jr.

Calendar

Retirement Seminar..... Tuesday, Dec. 2
Co-pay Deadline..... Saturday, Jan. 10
Town Trivia Night.....Friday, Feb. 6

Who's my building rep?

B.M.H.S.....Shirley Granfield
.....Sandi Lanteigne
Proj. Support/BEAM.....Linda Kemski
Marshall Middle.... Jean Goldsmith
..... Tom Severo
Locke Middle.....Dick Donnelly
.....David Lucia
Ditson..... Charlene Mullen
.....Denise Roach
Dutile.....Danielle Sullivan
Hajjar..... Brenda Mogé
..... Barbara Shea
Kennedy.....Julie Dougrey
.....Jeanne Stanley
Parker..... Carey Ann Castine
Vining.....Ilona Sewell
Paraprofessionals.....Linda Alpers
Nurses.....Gail Sprangers

Federation News



A Union of Professionals

American Federation of Teachers – Massachusetts
AFL-CIO

Billerica Federation of Teachers #1677

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November 2008

Mass. AFL-CIO President Haynes Lauds Election '08 Victories

Paul Gaudet

"Voters across the country have issued a resounding vote in favor of turning this country around and ending the economic policies that have so devastated our country." said Massachusetts AFL-CIO President Robert Haynes in his recent post-election remarks. He added, "The Labor Movement looks forward to working with the Obama-Biden Administration to create real change for working families."

Haynes congratulated Senator John Kerry on his re-election to the U.S. Senate, and cited the senator's tireless efforts on behalf of working families for over two decades.

"And in New Hampshire, I am pleased to congratulate former New Hampshire Governor Jeanne Shaheen on her election to the U.S. Senate. This is a real victory for the people of New Hampshire who will now have a pro-working family Senator in office replacing Senator John Sununu who has time and time again voted along with President Bush and against working families. On behalf of the 10,000 union members who work in Massachusetts and live in New Hampshire, I am grateful that New Hampshire will now have Jeanne Shaheen as their U.S. Senator.

Haynes celebrated the resounding

defeat of Question 1" by voters who recognized it was just too dangerous." He expressed hope that this victory will allow "working families to be lifted up" as the Commonwealth keeps its financial health strong.

Thanking union members for their hard
(cont'd on p. 4 - Haynes)

Are you retiring in the next 10 years?

Retirement Seminar

Tues., Dec. 2 BMHS Lecture Hall
3:30 – 5:30 pm
[more at www.marieardito.com]

Mark Your Calendar

Member meetings
at 3:15 pm

(First 15 minutes for COPE agenda;
Regular business at 3:30 pm)

location: BMHS lecture hall

Tues.Nov. 25th
Tues..... Jan. 13th
Tues..... Mar. 10th
Tues..... Apr. 14th

[nominations for elections]

Tues..... May 12th
[elections 2:00 – 4:00 pm]

Tues..... Jun. 9th
[installation of officers]

Executive Board Meetings

Tues..... Dec. 9th
Tues.....Feb. 10th

President's Message..... Don DeFeo

Settlement Agreement for Health Insurance Deductibles

The Settlement Agreement concerning the increase in the deductibles of our health care plan between the Town of Billerica and the BFT was ratified by our members on Wednesday, Nov. 12, 2008. This letter will help clarify the steps you must take to be reimbursed for the increases for the 2006-2007 and 2007-2008 school years.

When you submit these reimbursements to the Town Treasurer's Office, be sure to separate Fiscal Year 2006-2007 (August 1, 2006 to June 30, 2007) from Fiscal Year 2007-2008 (July 1, 2007 to June 30, 2008).

In each year, your deductibles must have exceeded the \$240 baseline for family plan members and the \$120 baseline for single plan members.

These were the dollar values that were agreed upon by the Town's lawyer and our AFT-MA lawyer.

All co-pay receipts must be turned in by January 10, 2009.

Before continuing, I have to thank Linda McLaughlin, a Math teacher at BMHS for doing the ground work with Blue Cross Blue Shield.

Members with Harvard Pilgrim:

Go to:

www.harvardpilgrim.org

and click on "Log In" and follow the prompts. You will receive your temporary password and PIN number by mail.

Call 1-888-333-4742 to request a printout of all your claims for the 2-year period. It may take two days to receive this printout.

When you have the printout, you can actually see all of the co-pays, and this makes the next step easier. Add them up with your Harvard Pilgrim prescription co-pays for each year, and see at this point if you exceed the \$240 or \$120 baselines.

You may also go to your pharmacy and ask for a printout of your medications and co-pays from August 1, 2006 to June 30, 2008. You may have to have family members that are covered under your family plan do this individually because of privacy laws.

Members with Blue Cross:

Go to:

www.bluecrossma.com

and click on Member Self Service.

Register for a password, follow the prompts, and check off that you want a PIN number sent to you. It will take two days for you to get it. Then, when you have the PIN number, do the following:

Call 1-866-822-0570 to request a printout of all your claims for the 2-year period. It may take two days to receive this printout.

Members with BCBS did not have a raise in the prescription co-pays; they were already at the \$10 level.

You may also contact all of your health care providers and hospital emergency rooms individually, and ask for a printout of visits and co-pays. Any member with family members over 18 years of age must have them do this individually, again because of privacy laws.

When you have the printout, you can actually see all of the co-pays and this makes the next step easier. With BCBS, add up your Office Visit co-pays (going to physical therapy counts, too) and your

Emergency Room co-pays for each year and see at this point if you exceed the \$240 or \$120 base lines.

The Treasurer's Office is requesting that you highlight all the co-pays on all claim printouts and submit them by fiscal year with the Reimbursement Form. Make a copy of everything to keep for your records. Then use the Reimbursement Form and fill in the date of the Office Visit or Emergency Room visit and the \$10 co-pay in the OLD co-pay box. Add these up and fill in the rest of the form *except* the "Less Premium Rate Savings" line.

You and all family plan members must do this, but you may be surprised at the amount of reimbursements that you will be entitled to.

To recap, for the August 1, 2006 to June 30, 2007 period you will send in:

1. Highlighted co-pays on the BCBS or Harvard claim form with a Reimbursement Form that reflects any co-pays over the baseline.
2. The Harvard prescription co-pay claim form with a Reimbursement Form that reflects any co-pays over the baseline.

Repeat this for the July 1, 2007 to June 30, 2008 fiscal year.

This letter, a copy of the Settlement Agreement, the memorandum from Cook & Co. [the auditors for the Town of Billerica] and the Reimbursement Form have been sent out to you through e-mail. Retirees for the last two years will receive these documents through postal mail.

Thank you,
Don DeFeo

AFL-CIO Launches E.F.C.A. Campaign

(from AFL-CIO website)

America's working people are struggling to make ends meet these days and our middle class is disappearing. The best opportunity working people have to get ahead economically is by uniting to bargain with their employers for better wages and benefits. Recent research has shown that some 60 million U.S. workers would join a union if they could.

But the current system for forming unions and bargaining is broken. Every day, corporations deny workers the freedom to decide for themselves whether to form unions to bargain for a better life. They routinely intimidate, harass, coerce and even fire workers who try to form unions and bargain for economic well-being.

The Employee Free Choice Act (H.R. 800, S. 1041), supported by a bipartisan coalition in Congress, would level the playing field for workers and employers and help rebuild America's middle class. It would restore workers' freedom to choose a union by:

- Establishing stronger penalties for violation of employee rights when workers seek to form a union and during first-contract negotiations.
- Providing mediation and arbitration for first-contract disputes.
- Allowing employees to form unions by signing cards authorizing union representation.

Support the campaign. Sign up at:

www.aflcio.org.

Click on EFCA "learn more".

Keep In Touch

If you've not yet done so, please send your home email address to the BFT Database:

bfteditor@comcast.net

You'll receive union updates, especially as we go through contract negotiations this year.