

February 1, 2010

BEAlert

The official publication of the Birmingham Education Association
17500 W. Eleven Mi. Rd., Suite 100, Lathrup Village, MI 48076 Ph: 248-559-4770 Fax: 248-559-4758
email: beapresidentmartin@gmail.com / Samberg@mea.org

BEA Executive Board

Maureen Martin,
President

Scott Craig,
Vice President

Jay Smith, Treasurer
& Membership

Robyn Tarnow,
Secretary

Lynne Robertson,
MEA Delegate

Ann Gracy,
NEA Delegate

At-Large Delegates:

Scott Warrow
Laura Sheckell
Norman Hurns, Jr.
Dawn Murua
Dominick Perrone
Amy Denys
Amy Burns
Ann Cole
Bernie Simms

Executive Director
Stephen Amberg
Samberg@mea.org

BARGAINING - Why it Matters

Bargaining is a multi-faceted process combining your concerns, economics, politics, and political action to determine your employment relationship with the school district. It is an ever-changing process that brings together disparate interests and results in a collective bargaining agreement. That agreement determines your pay; the health insurance you'll have – whether you'll pay for it and how much; the hours you'll work; calendar; the number of students you'll teach; the number of classes you'll be responsible for; whether you'll be paid when you become ill or have a baby; whether you'll have a job or lose it because of a reduction in the teaching staff. All these things and many more are determined through the bargaining process – your colleagues sitting across from representatives of the Board of Education determining the environment in which you work as an employee of the Birmingham Public Schools.

As you enter the bargaining process, and remember it is you that is paid the salary and uses the health insurance bargained for you, your Bargaining Team believed that you should know the basics of bargaining.

How it Works

Every contract covers a set number of school years. Your current contract expires June 30, 2010. The parties (BEA & Board of Education) can agree to extend it beyond that date while they bargain. If they do not agree to extend it, the law permits the "mandatory terms", for example wages and health insurance to be continued until the parties reach a new agreement or impasse. If impasse is reached (a period where meaningful negotiations are no longer occurring) the employer may impose its last, best and final offer that may change the mandatory terms previously negotiated.

2010 BEA Bargaining Team

Maureen Martin, *President & Chief Spokesperson*
Beverly Elementary, LRC

Scott Craig, *Vice President*
Seaholm, Flex program

Jay Smith, *Treasurer*
Greenfield & Pembroke
Vocal Music

Robyn Tarnow,
Secretary
Pierce Elementary
2nd grade

Amy Denys,
At-Large Delegate
Greenfield Elementary,
Kindergarten

Ann Gracy,
NEA Delegate
Berkshire, 8th grade math

Scott Warrow,
At-Large Delegate
Groves, Social Studies

Stephen Amberg, *Executive Director & Chief Negotiator*

Step One - Survey the Membership

The Association files a demand to bargain. We have. The Association submits its survey to the membership asking for input – what issues do you believe we should bring to the bargaining table. We have. Please note there is still time to submit your survey to us. Simply email your concerns, issues and priorities to beapresidentmartin@gmail.com

Step Two - The Team

Your President selects a team. She has. The team is comprised of seven of your colleagues, at least one from each level (elementary, middle and high school).

The team then reviews the surveys to determine the concerns of the members and determines which issues will be brought to the table. Once the issues are selected, language is drafted incorporating the modifications sought in the contract.

During this preparation period, the team seeks information from the district and the resources made available to it by the MEA. Included will be a financial analysis of the district performed by MEA research to determine the true financial circumstances of the district.

Step Three - At the Bargaining Table

The BEA bargaining team operates democratically. The Executive Director is a member of the team and the Chief Negotiator, however, he does not have a vote in determining what issues will be brought to the table; the language that will frame the position to be taken; or whether a tentative agreement on any proposal is acceptable. That right rests with your seven colleagues.

The process begins with the parties exchanging proposals. Each party reviews the issues contained in their proposals. An issue is then mutually selected for bargaining by the parties.

Step Three - At the Bargaining Table (cont.)

Each issue is vigorously discussed. While the Chief Negotiator leads the discussion for the team, each member participates and may very well lead the discussion where their expertise is required. Proposals will be exchanged back and forth and any particular issue may take hours, several days or longer of bargaining.

The BEA team operates by consensus and will continue with an issue until each of your seven colleagues has accepted a proposal as a tentative agreement (“TA”). When all issues have been addressed or withdrawn, the TAs will be submitted to the entire BEA membership for ratification.

If the parties are unable to resolve issues, they may request the services of a State appointed mediator. The mediator works with the parties to resolve outstanding issues and facilitates the bargaining process.

If mediation is unsuccessful, the parties may request fact-finding. Fact-finding is a quasi-judicial proceeding. A fact-finder is appointed by the State to conduct a hearing to establish the financial circumstances of the district and the appropriateness of the parties’ position on each outstanding issue.

Once the fact-finder has issued his/her report the parties may adopt it or reject it. If rejected by either party, the parties must continue the bargaining process for an additional sixty (60) days. If agreement has not been met, the district may then impose its last, best offer which establishes the terms and conditions of employment until an agreement is reached through continued bargaining.

How You Can Help

Every year we announce that the upcoming bargaining will be difficult. Regrettably, this year will not be different. Thus, we must again call on you to assist your colleagues at the table. Your assistance includes:

1. Maintain your high level of teaching – Our motto “Together For Their Future” reflects the reason we are educators. The education of our students is always our paramount concern.
2. Participate in the activities of the joint Crisis Committee. The committee is comprised of staff from all three bargaining units – teachers, secretaries and paraprofessionals, and every building will have members on the committee. Participation shows the Board and community that we are united and our unity shows strength at each of the three bargaining tables.

Crisis Committee

Jim Peters, Chair
Quarton Elementary
4th Grade

P.R. Committee

Susan Warrow,
Chair, Groves,
English Department

IMPORTANT DATES

Board of Education
7:00 pm
February 2
March 2 & 16
April 20
May 4 & 18
June 1 & 15

BEA Representative
Assembly Meetings
(Open to all members)
4:30 pm

February 10
March 24
May 19

BEA Office:
248-559-4770

President's Cell:
248-321-4863

beapresidentmartin@
gmail.com

Samberg@mea.org

We're on the Web!

See us at:

www.mea.org

or

[www.](http://www.iammea.org/birminghamea/)

iammea.org/birminghamea/

Get Involved - NOW

You will be called upon to attend Board meetings, demonstrate and work to establish community support. This may require attending evening meetings, activities before and after school and on the weekends.

We appreciate the burden such participation causes for you and your family. But that's why you should participate – to protect your family, preserve your workplace and advocate for your students.

How to Stay Informed & Advocate for Students

1. Attend PTSA meetings. While many meetings have been moved into the school day this should not deter you from representing the "T" in PTSA. Parents welcome and value teacher input so be sure to remind your building supervisor that you need to attend PTSA meetings and arrange for class coverage while doing so.

2. The Board of Education Trustees are scheduling "dialogue" sessions with the public an hour before official board meetings. These informal, un-televised meetings start at 6pm on meeting nights. Be there to provide professional input on budget decisions. Members who are also Birmingham residents are strongly encouraged to attend these meetings. As voters and parents your voices need to be heard. Check the district website for correct times as they are subject to change.

3. Electronic communications should be done on home computers via home email - to home email. Workplace communications belong to the workplace - they are subject to FOIA (Freedom of Information Act) and district monitoring. District email is being monitored. Members should not be discouraged from communicating with each other but are reminded to adhere to the district policy on Acceptable Use of Technology in the Workplace.