

Appendix 1

DOCUMENT FOR UNION MEMBERS ONLY, NOT TO BE POSTED

General Information and Common Concerns regarding [Right to Strike Legislation](#)

For inspiration: [No More "Normal"](#) "Return to normal? Normal was awful. It's time to be bold."

[Brookline Educators Union President Jessica Wender-Shubow / 2022 Labor Notes, At 25:00](#)

[How Brookline Won](#)

[Why Strikes Matter](#)

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Primary Considerations	
Are strikers arrested?	No, Massachusetts learned a long time ago that arresting educators was not a good public relations look. The penalty for strikes is typically a monetary one leveled against the union, not individual educators.
Does a striker risk their job?	In Massachusetts, public sector employee strikes are unlawful. Accordingly, educator strikes do carry risk. However, there is power, and protection, in the unity of large numbers of people. In the last three years (Brookline, Andover, Sharon, Dedham), not one person lost their job, and return to work protections were negotiated. We all come back to work, or we all don't.
What if a teacher doesn't have professional status?	Any return to work would include a negotiated non-retaliation clause. If the district is threatening anyone's job, we won't end the strike. An injury to one is an injury to all.
What is the legal process surrounding a strike?	The district files a petition with the state labor board to stop the strike. The Labor Board will ask the courts to issue an order for the strikers to stop and go back to work. Strikers would be unlikely to follow such an order until their demands were met. The Labor Board would then need to file an injunction in the courts to halt the strike, the courts (in order to enforce the injunction) would levy a fine against the union (and possibly union leaders) in order to apply pressure to the union to end the strike. Short answer: the courts seek financial penalties against the local, not individual members.
Will a striker lose their teaching license?	In 100 years of unlawful educator strikes in Mass it has never happened (including nurses and related service providers)
Is there some sort of negative consequence to participating in a strike for a para who is currently applying for teaching positions?	If we are unified as a membership, the odds are very small that any individual will ever be singled out in the future. If there were ever a case of this happening, we organize and fight.
What about Special Educators and other personnel who have time-sensitive paperwork that must be completed by law?	Consider a snow day - timelines are paused when there is no school due to a snow day; this is no different. The Union needs to hear if any member is being unduly burdened upon a return to work. The 30 and 45 timelines are SCHOOL days, so the timeline is pushed out however many days we are not in school. There should be no "lost time" and therefore, no extra burden placed on educators.

PAY, BENEFITS, LOST DAYS, etc.

<p>Do they lose pay?</p>	<p>1) MTA CRISIS SUPPORT If your pay were docked, for full members who help with organizing, the MTA has a crisis support fund that will reimburse up to one-half of the net pay to a maximum of \$5000 that is available per application. ("Net pay" is the paycheck amount after federal and state taxes and other contributions have been deducted.)</p> <p>Negotiations over loss of pay (or not) are also part of the process. <i>Not penalizing participants can be made a condition of coming back to work.</i></p> <p>IMPORTANT: you need to be a dues-paying union member who contributed to organizing activity to get funds from the strike fund. The Strike Fund is not like a paycheck. Applications would be processed after final terms of any loss of pay were in place .</p> <p>The Fund request for financial assistance can only be made for "permanent loss" in wages, after the eligible member has exhausted all formal and legal remedies available to them to recover lost wages.</p> <p>Long-term substitute teachers, while not part of the union, will be considered when the terms of any resolution to a strike are being negotiated.</p>
<p>Do strikers have to make up the lost days at the end of the year?</p>	<p>Yes, most likely, though the way in which we do it is generally a topic of conversation in 'return to work' discussions.</p>
<p>Would an educator enter an absence in their school system or notify our school in any way?</p>	<p>No.</p>
<p>How would missed days affect retirement?</p>	<p>If someone went out on strike and suffered loss of pay due to it, i.e. days were not made up, then, yes, it would affect their three year average</p>
<p>How would engaging in a strike affect health coverage?</p>	<p>Health insurance is paid at least a month in advance (and over the course of the year to cover the entire summer). Our bargaining rights around health care benefits are governed by a law called Section 19 which covers all employees in town, not just the schools. The School Committee cannot interfere with the benefits of any active employee. The contract on health insurance is negotiated by all of the town and school unions via a Public Employee Committee.</p>
<p>What would it cost for a non-member to join now?</p>	<p>Dues are roughly \$40 a pay period for Teachers and \$20 a pay period for ESPs.</p>

WHAT WILL HAPPEN DURING THE STRIKE?

<p>What is the timeline for our vote/action?</p>	<p>The vote will happen on Friday, October 14 to authorize an open ended strike beginning Monday, October 17 (should the district fail to bargain a fair settlement with the Union before the 17th).</p>
<p>What happens on strike day(s)?</p>	<p>Members report to their typical or assigned worksites as they would on a normal day, this time we do not enter the buildings. Before strikes</p>

	<p>happen, unions have every hour scheduled for member participation. Members participate together as if it were a contractual workday. Together, they are consistent and visibly unified in their values, message, project, and determination not to give up.</p>
<p>What is expected of members to do during a strike?</p>	<p>Strikers support the union and the action full time by walking picket lines, attending rallies, community canvassing, and supporting the strike in other ways (communications, planning, and any creative activity members might come up with.). Each building captain will have a structured schedule for each day out on the line.</p>
<p>What will we do to support families who are needing support or who need child care?</p>	<p>We cannot assume responsibility for children. However, in the past, unions have worked with community members to organize services for members, and many community members are willing and able to staff childcare, people's schools, etc.</p>
<p>What if MCAS is scheduled on days during a strike?</p>	<p>This is a matter for the District to handle. Imagine if there were a hurricane - same thing, the District has to make a plan.</p>
<p>What about children with special needs?</p>	<p>This is a matter for the District to handle. Imagine if there were a hurricane, except this is one of the district's own making - same thing, the District has to make a plan</p>
<p>What will the Union agree to at the table?</p>	<p>The School Committee refuses to address working conditions categorically and wants to be able to change them at will. We need agreements on working conditions to settle this contract in addition to fair compensation increases.</p>
<p>Did Dedham, Andover, or Brookline educators lose any pay when they had a strike?</p>	<p>No. Part of their Return to Work agreement was to make up any loss in learning time and thus make up any loss of pay.</p>
<p>How can we be assured that if the strike goes on for a while that the membership will be listened to and surveyed for feedback? How long do we anticipate?</p>	<p>The CAT has been working hard to ensure that robust communication structures are in place in the event of an action. How long the action will last will depend on the school committee's willingness or unwillingness to address working conditions.</p>
<p>What if we are supposed to be out on Monday? Family member important doctor appointment? Do we show up for strike later in the morning?</p>	<p>Yes, please come when you can! It is critically important to keep the commitment of members, in large numbers visible. Building and picket captains will be keeping attendance for each building. If you are not on the line we will be reaching out to make sure everything is okay.</p>
<p>Can we arrange shared childcare for members who need to bring children to the strike?</p>	
<p>COMMUNITY RELATIONS & COMMUNICATIONS</p>	
<p>What do strikers say to parents/families? Students?</p>	<p>We, the members of the union, understand that this will place a pressure on parents and students, but we're taking this step because we want the schools to offer the very best to the students. With the conditions and pay that the district is currently proposing, we will continue to lose qualified and experienced educators.</p>

	While you should not use teaching time to discuss the actions, it is fine to be truthful with students. Consider developmentally appropriate messages.
How are communities communicated with?	Through the press, union social media, and on the streets.
How much detail can I give?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By the evening of Friday 10/14, the plans will be public and our press team will be active. • Avoid discussing what is happening at the table; designated press spokespeople will handle that. Please direct questions to the union president and/or designee. • Simply talk about your experience as an educator in the district, how much you care about your students, quality education, and being respected as a professional and union member. • Thoughtful posting on social media, please. Incorporating campaign talking points, graphics, etc. as much as possible will help keep our collective message clear and consistent. Posts provide an opening for disinformation at worst, and inconsistent messaging from us.
During a strike, what things are in place to support those children who rely on school for safety and necessities like food?	It's like a snow day. If the school district chooses to arrange something, they can do that without the labor of school employees and those exercising solidarity with their collective action.
How does a striking union communicate with families who have few resources in meeting childcare needs, and cannot afford to miss work?	It's like a snow day. Meanwhile, the short-term disruption is minimal in comparison to the larger, and long-term problems in the district that hurt students and families every day. <i>We are striking <u>for</u> our students and families, too.</i>
STRATEGY & TIMING	
In the past, when did unions typically vote on the action?	Strong unions have an ongoing internal communication structure that enables them to find out if a super majority supports going out on strike <i>before</i> they call any vote. If that readiness of the membership has been tallied in a decentralized way, an open vote (non-secret) is then held <u>very close to the time</u> of the strike. Otherwise, the district will have time to use anti-worker law to get an injunction.
In the past, when did strikes typically start?	<p>Dedham voted on a Thursday night and went out on Friday morning. That left the weekend available for negotiations. A deal was reached before another strike day was needed. Unions have to be prepared to stay out indefinitely, otherwise, management just stalls until the designated end.</p> <p>Brookline voted on a Thursday, intending initially to go out on Friday, but the district (knowing the vote was imminent) made a counteroffer and requested an additional bargaining date over the weekend. Due to that, the vote was held on Thursday by the general membership to grant the bargaining team authorization to call the strike on Sunday if no agreement was reached over the weekend. No agreement was reached, and the BEU went out that Monday prepared for an open ended strike. Agreement was reached in the early hours of Tuesday morning,</p>

	<p>members returned to work on Tuesday.</p> <p>We are voting on Friday October 14th. The thinking being that this gives the bargaining teams time to reach a settlement prior to the strike ever starting. We would like to avert a strike if possible and hope the district has the same good faith approach to this crisis.</p>
<i>CROSSING THE PICKET LINE...</i>	
<p>What are the consequences for people who cross a picket line?</p>	<p>Members who cross the line are not eligible to utilize MTA's crisis support funds.</p> <p>There are also moral consequences affecting one's conscience. As in any nonviolent direct action, there is dialogue between picketers and people who approach the line (figuratively or literally). Picketers can invite people to join and promote solidarity as a means to bring about the swiftest resolution and the achievement of secure and long lasting improvements for students and educators alike.</p>