



# BCEA NEWSLETTER

## Contract Spotlight

### Section 4. Critical Family Illness Leave – Subsection 1

When the absence of a permanent full-time or permanent part-time employee regularly working at least 20 hours per week is caused by critical illness in his/her or the spouse's immediate family, leave of absence without loss of salary or utilization of sick leave will be granted for not to exceed 3 total working days per occurrence; the particular number of days allowed subject to approval by the Superintendent of Schools, dependent upon circumstances surrounding the illness.

“Critical illness” means illness which the attending physician considers sufficiently serious to require the employee's presence, and shall include attendance at the birth of a child or grandchild. For example, if your spouse or any immediate family are admitted to the hospital, you can take up to 3 days of critical family leave and not use your sick/vacation time.

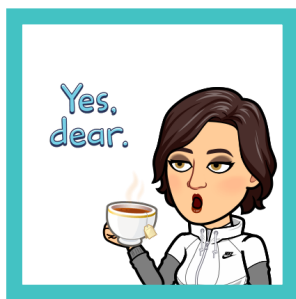


## ESP of the Quarter

BY MEGAN SIMONS

Burke started out in 1996, hired on as a subcontractor to install ethernet accessory carts, etc.- before Burke, there was only dial-up internet! He was then hired on as a permanent SD2 employee in 2000. Today, he is the HelpDesk ticket guru. He is the dispatcher for the HelpDesk and tries to take as many tickets as possible remotely, from his office on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor at the Lincoln Center. I asked him what his busiest day looks like and he said they received 350 help desk tickets in one day, the first week of school! Right now, there are 721 open tickets. Burke helps reset passwords, student passwords/gmail logins, assists our techretary, Lindsey, with phone passwords, helps





## Tessa's Take

Whether you are corralling kids, answering phones/front door/ smiling at the parent in front of you, or staring into a seemingly endless abyss of help desk tickets we all need a break sometimes. Thankfully our BCEA contract spells out what breaks you qualify for both paid and unpaid. If you would like to read all about it pull out your handy dandy contract and flip to page 6. For the rest of us here are the spark notes:

- Employees who regularly work at least 4 hours per day qualify for a 1 duty-free paid 15 min break.
- Employees who regularly work at least 6 1/2 hours per day qualify for 1 duty-free paid break and an unpaid 30 min duty-free meal break.
- Employees who regularly work at least 7 hours per day qualify for 2 duty-free paid breaks and an unpaid 30 min duty-free meal break.

Keep in mind you can't stack breaks to leave early and break times need to be mutually agreed upon between you and your supervisor. That being said, enjoy the fruits of your union and take a break.

with employee online issues, etc. He has remotely accessed my pc to help clear it of viruses as well as help with other issues and given valuable tech advice. When I was trying to schedule a time to come and present Burke with his \$25 Amazon gift card and interview him for this article, it was evident I made the right choice. Burke does not leave for lunch because that is his busiest time, of course that makes sense that a lot of staff (namely teachers) need his tech assistance during their lunch hours. His favorite part of the job is talking to people on the phone and helping them understand that they're not tech stupid and that it's his job to help in an ever-evolving tech world. A perfect day for him is solving all the tickets and every problem that comes across his desk. He says, 'We're here for the kids...to keep the education process moving.'

He comes from a long line of educators- his mother taught at Orchard in the 60's and retired from Miles Ave. elementary and his dad was both principal at Lewis & Clark and Riverside Middle School in the 80's. Burke is also married to the love of his life, Ellen, whom is also a retired teacher. In his spare time, he is a photographer and has an upcoming wedding he is shooting in a couple weeks. He also loves UAV's (unmanned aerial vehicles), radio controlled cars and aircraft. He is a fly fisherman and is proud to say he ties his own flies. He has two grandkids in Oregon, Helen and Bruce, ages 5 and 3. He aspires to travel to the island of Dominica, four-wheel through Zion National Park and visit the north rim-Grand Canyon.

We thank Burke for being an outstanding ESP and congratulate him in being chosen ESP of the Quarter with a \$25 gift card to Amazon.

*If you would like to nominate someone for being an outstanding ESP, please contact any board member or email Megan @ [simonsm@billingssschools.org](mailto:simonsm@billingssschools.org)!*

How do you fix a broken  
pumpkin?

With a pumpkin patch!

# Meet your Board Members

## **Megan Simons- Your new BCEA President**

I work in the Facilities dept. as a secretary. I have been a SD2 employee and union member since December 2014, so this December marks five years. I served as the BCEA treasurer from March 2015 until this last spring 2019. I decided to take on this new role, feeling equipped to do so with the support of fellow, existing members, exiting members and members expressing interest in being part of the board. I feel like all support staff needs to realize the importance of their jobs and that the schools could not efficiently run without their expertise and assistance to fellow staff, students and administration. I have been a part of negotiating our current contract and am working to build relationships with union members and administration for the best possible outcomes. My heart is in my work and role as your union president. I hope to accomplish things together, with active membership and mutual goals. We are bound by our contract and as things arise, I am taking heed to ensure our contract language upholds and am always looking for ways to improve the process. This is a learning curve, as each person and situation that I will come across will be different, but I am up to the challenge and not afraid to ask for help or lean on my team of colleagues- whether that be at the local, state or national level. I am excited to meet people along the way and encourage everyone to acquaint themselves with our contract (available online: [bceabillings.org](http://bceabillings.org) or under Labor information tab on SD2's website, quick links) and reach out to me with any questions or concerns. I am happy to represent you all and will do so in a prudent and professional manner. Wishing everyone a great school year!

## **Jennifer Leligdowicz- Your new BCEA Vice President**

Welcome My Fellow BCEA Members! I am a Secretary III at Facilities Services for three years. I have been with the District since 2016 and prior as a Summer Temporary Secretary at Facilities. I have been an Area Director for Lincoln, Facilities, and Warehouse the past two years and currently, I am your Vice President. One of my favorite things of being part of the union is helping others and being involved. While growing up in a family of union workers, my parents and grandparents have taught me to work hard and never give up on your beliefs. I feel we should not be afraid to be ourselves and have an open mind to what matters to everyone. As being your Vice President, I would share my work ethics with others and help our members be part of BCEA. While I went to NEA Leadership Summit this past year, I realized how Billings School District 2 has more opportunities than surrounding states. One of the sessions talked about making our voice count and making ourselves thrive for our students and schools. I would like to be your voice and stand with you!

## **Linda Leligdowicz- Veteran BCEA Secretary:**

Greetings fellow BCEA members. I am a Secretary at Facilities Services. I am also your BCEA Secretary. I have been associated with the BCEA union for the last 10 years. I started by going to the Rep Assembly for the former MEA-MFT. The next year, the secretary whom I replaced told me that being on the Board as Area Director for Lincoln, Facilities, and Warehouse was part of my job. If it would not have been for the Rep Assembly that opened my eyes on how important Unions are, I would have told her forget it – no way. Therefore, I have stayed on the Board as Area Director, Director at Large and for the last few years as Secretary. Being able to go to National convention throughout the 10 years I have realized how lucky we have it because of our local union and how we have to keep working from losing that. My goal for being on your Board of Directors is to make sure we have proper job training, to make it better for our students and for our own safety. We need to let everyone know that classified personnel are just as important in the education of our students. I have three daughters and my husband (who is a retired school district custodian) and I know that everyone who works with our children in any way, to face the future in a productive way needs to be respected for what they do. We plan to teach our grandchildren the

same. I challenge YOU to check out your union by coming to our ESP dinner and General Meeting OR even becoming a Building Rep for your building see how important your Union is to us.

**Tessa Olson- newly appointed Treasurer**

Hello All! I am your support payroll accountant and BCEA Treasurer. When I am not scouring over blue timesheets and payroll, I spend my time with my two beautiful babies; please do not tell my 8 yr old I referred to her as such (she hates when I call her that). We enjoy exploring the great outdoors, painting, and traveling. I bring 6 years of financial management, budgeting, and reporting experience to the BCEA board. I pride myself on accuracy and hope to be able to continue to enforce strong internal controls to our union's finances. The union means a lot to me and I look forward to working in solidarity with you to ensure fair wages, training, and workplace health/safety.

**Lindsey Principe- Lindsey served on the board in the past and we are glad to have her return with her valuable tech advice and knowledge. She is your Director-At-Large:**

I am the secretary for Technology at the Lincoln Center. I also do the phones and websites for SD2. I have been with the district for almost 5 years. I joined the BCEA board because I am passionate about helping people and I support our union's belief that we are better together. We are fortunate to be in setting where our union cares so much about us. When I am not at work, I enjoy reading, traveling, and spending time with my 9-year-old daughter. I look forward to serving the board for another successful year!

**Cindy Herman - newly appointed Lincoln Center, Facilities, Warehouse Area Director:**

I work at the Lincoln Center as an Accountant IV for the school district. I have been employed with Billings Public Schools for 4 ½ years. I accepted this position when asked to do it because I believe if you are part of an organization you should be a working participant. If you are at the Lincoln Center stop by and say hi I would love to meet you, I am in room 207. My desk is easy to find it's the one with the dog pictures all over it.

**Monica Stevens-Diaz- High School Area Director, newly appointed this year**

Monica is an IPP at Senior High and has worked the last two summers in the Facilities office as a temporary summer help- she is now part of the Facilities family! Born and raised in Puerto Rico. Aquatic Entomologist recently relocated from Florida. "I believe unions create change. And that is a beautiful thing."

**Deb Martens- Veteran Area Director for First Student, Middle Schools and ECI**

Deb is a special needs bus assistant and has served on the board for years now. She lives at home with her husband, a retired railroad worker- no stranger to unions! She brings a unique perspective and works hands-on with the students to ensure their health and safety while being transported to and from school; she helped negotiate our last union contract.

October 29, 2019

**MFPE BILLINGS REGIONAL MEETING**  
6:00 pm at Billings Education Association



## **Q: When should I start planning for my retirement?**

### **A: RIGHT NOW!**

**No matter where you are in your career** — just starting out, mid-career, or nearing retirement — you need to understand your retirement system plan, benefits, and options. **The earlier you begin, the better!** Here's a perfect place to start:

### **2019 MFPE Pre-retirement Workshops**

- MFPE members and spouses are invited, including those in the Montana Public Employees' Retirement System (**PERS, MPERA & other MPERA plans**) and Teachers' Retirement System (**TRS**).
- Get easy-to-digest information on your public retirement plan. Learn about the status of your guaranteed annual benefit adjustment (GABA).
- Representatives from TRS and MPERA will give overviews of your retirement benefits and procedures and answer your questions.
- MFPE staff will facilitate the workshops and provide a brief introduction to the MFPE Retired program and NEA and AFT+ Plus Member Benefits programs.
- 1 OPI Renewal Unit available.
- **Questions?** E-mail Diane Fladmo of MFPE: [dfladmo@mfpe.org](mailto:dfladmo@mfpe.org)

**Workshop schedule** - All sessions take place 4:30 – 6:30 P.M. except Belgrade location, see MFPE Educator Conference for times and location.

- **September 11**     **Helena**, Helena Middle School, Auditorium, 1025 N. Rodney
- **September 25**     **Anaconda**, Fred Moody Intermediate, Auditorium, 219 E. 3rd
- **October 2**         **Columbia Falls**, TBA
- **October 3**         **Missoula**, Sentinel High School, Margaret Johnson Theatre, 901 South Ave. W.
- **October 9**         **Hardin**, Hardin Middle School, Auditorium, 611 W. 5th St.
- **October 10**        **Billings**, Lincoln Center Auditorium, 415 N. 30th St.
- **October 17-18**     **Belgrade**, MFPE Educator Conference, register at [mfpe.org/edconference/](http://mfpe.org/edconference/)



#### **Great online resources:**

MPERA website: <http://mpera.mt.gov/index.shtml>  
 TRS website: [www.trs.mt.gov](http://www.trs.mt.gov)

