

**SOUTHERN WESTCHESTER
BOCES
TEACHERS ASSOCIATION**

Eileen McGarvey, President
PO Box 566
White Plains, NY 10603
www.bocesta.net



March 28, 2022,

Dear Fellow BTA Member,

On January 31, 2022, the BTA held a Zoom meeting in conjunction with the director of HR. The purpose of the meeting was to address members' questions regarding how seniority is calculated, specific fields or terms on the seniority lists, how certain time measurements are calculated, etc.

Pages 2-3 of this letter contain a summary of the meeting. It was written jointly by interim Vice President Mairead Schuelein and me to offer an explanation and discussion of important terms members should be familiar with regarding seniority. Please note, the information is intended as a best effort to help members more thoroughly understand details surrounding seniority. As such, it should be used only as a guide. Members are encouraged to contact HR directly with any individual questions.

The BTA urges all members to retain and store in a safe place important documents that pertain to your employment generally. This would include, for example, your appointment letter, your tenure letter, any notification of a Reduction in Force (RIF) that may have affected you, and *any* information that pertains to unpaid leaves or unpaid days. Initial appointments and notices of tenure, along with other personnel matters, are available electronically on the SW BOCES website from October 24, 2018 forward. Choose the Board of Education tab; underneath that choose Board Docs, and then Board Docs (public access). If you need assistance navigating to Board Docs, please contact your representative.

Thank you,

Eileen

Seniority List Zoom Recap

What is seniority?

Seniority is a ranking in a job title/position based on the number of paid worked days in a school year. For 10 month employees, one year is equivalent to 200 days. Wincap is the system that equates one school year to 200 days for the purpose of seniority; Teachers' Retirement System (TRS) and Employees' Retirement System (ERS) use school calendar years and days to determine service credit.

What is longevity?

Longevity is a milestone. It is used in contracts to indicate a milestone at which someone achieves additional pay or benefits. As long as you work at least half a year, your longevity will increase by one year. If you have reached a longevity milestone, it will be listed on your pay stub. Longevity is particularly important to members in Tiers 3 or 4 of TRS or ERS, because for members in those tiers, the requirement to contribute towards a pension in retirement stops at the end of 10 years of longevity. For Tier 3 and 4 members, ten years of longevity is defined as ten years from the date of membership or 10 years of service credit, whichever comes first. Please note the number of years of longevity you may have could be different from the number of seniority years, because they are measured differently.

What does the phrase "years of service" mean?

Years of service means the number of years worked at one organization, such as SW BOCES. It is used when determining eligibility for contractual items, such as retiree health insurance.

What is service credit?

Service credit is the amount of time spent working for any public organization. It is determined by the TRS and ERS, not by SWBOCES. Service credit determines pension eligibility and is one component of determining the value of your pension itself. For example, a member may have worked at another public school district for 3 years and then worked at SWBOCES for 17 years. This member has 20 years of service credit. Your pension is determined, in part, by your number of years of service credit. Your benefits upon retirement (e.g. contribution towards healthcare) is determined by your collective bargaining agreement (contract) at the time of retirement and your years of service at SW BOCES.

How is seniority calculated?

Seniority is calculated in years and days. To obtain one year of seniority you must work 200 days (remember - Wincap is the system that equates 200 days to one year of seniority at SW BOCES). The 200 days must be paid working days - any unpaid days do not count towards seniority. Additionally, the following work situations do not increase seniority: working as a sub, per diem work, working as a leave replacement and working in the summer.

Do FMLA and maternity leave count towards seniority?

FMLA and maternity leave count if they are paid days. If it is unpaid time, it does not count towards seniority. FMLA allows you to take an unpaid, job-protected leave of absence for up to 12 weeks for personal and family medical reasons, such as taking care of a newborn child or recovering from a medical procedure. When

taking FMLA, you first utilize your sick time (paid days) before taking unpaid days. Utilizing your sick days during FMLA maintains your place on the seniority days; the unpaid days of FMLA do not count towards seniority but allow you to maintain your benefits at SWBOCES.

What happens to my position on the seniority list if I change positions at BOCES from an aide to a TA, or from a TA to a teacher?

If you change from an aide to a TA, you restart your seniority on the TA list. If you were an aide with 8 years of experience and you become a TA, your seniority on the TA list will now become zero years. If a TA becomes a teacher, you will also move to the bottom of the teacher's seniority list.

If two people are hired for the same position on the same date, how is seniority determined?

If two people are hired on the same day for the same position, seniority is determined by their order on the board agenda on which they were hired. Their order on the board agenda on which they were hired is determined by when a complete application, including fingerprinting, is received by Human Resources.

What is the difference between the seniority list and the preferred eligibility list?

The seniority list determines who is RIFd. The preferred eligibility list (PEL) is the order of callback to the position when there is a RIF.

Whom should I contact if I have a question about my placement on the list or my seniority years/days?

If you have a specific question, contact the Director of Human Resources, who is presently Suzanne Doherty. Please make sure to be able to offer the facts as you know them and indicate where you believe the discrepancy may be. Please make sure to review the board docs to gather relevant information about your hire date. Board docs are available on the SWBOCES website from October 2018 forward. The BTA office has paper copies of most of the board docs going back to 2012, and we are in the process of attempting to secure records going back even further.