

# Begunto Newsletter December 2014

If you didn't go to the info meeting, here is what you missed.

## **MGT wants changes.**

Conditions across the board are facing adjustments from MGT.

MGT says recruitment is difficult in Berlitz. They say it is a number of factors including the Fukushima accident. They didn't seem to mention that in the past 5 years income tax and social taxes have gone up. PM Abe has asked companies to increase wages to offset the upcoming corporate tax cut. Combine that with the stagnant starting base pay Berlitz has offered for about 20 years, it is easy to see why recruitment is not easy.



MGT said "we are negotiating with the union." That is news to us. The first collective bargaining (cb) is for December 8, 2014. We have submitted protest letters from the Osaka union and Tokyo union that MGT started the whole process without any contact with the union back in October. The lawyers basically stymied the December 8 cb.

In the info meeting MGT said that many teachers resigning mention that communication between staff and teachers is a big reason why teachers leave. If that was the reason, why not just give each teacher a method or two a week to do extra work?

MGT wants to take per lesson Rest Day work rates away from Per Lesson teachers. Contract teachers will still have their contract days and set rest day, but MGT wants to apply a 7 day straight work week to qualify for the 7th day rest day rate. If you are unfamiliar with this, teachers who work on their rest day (one designated day a week) will receive 135% of the regular work rate for lessons and travels.

Instructors especially those who work on the weekend, especially Sunday might not be so motivated to continue working if they lose the 135% rest day bonus. A number of instructors have already told MGT they will change their availability if this new rule goes into effect.

One thing to remember is the 200 yen across the board pl increase is only applicable **if you get the lessons to teach**, and MGT doesn't guarantee any pl lessons. If the new 50/60+ contract takes away all the available per lessons- the 200 yen increase means moot. (MGT won't be increasing travel pay by 200 yen, but they want to use the break time for travel - a 12.5% increase in time usage). The question rises: why would we need to communicate with staff on a travel?) Keep the travel at 40 minutes or pay us an additional 200 yen.

MGT says they increased the pl rates across the board by 200 yen to reflect the work in break and the holiday allowance - which they want to remove. (Why didn't they just give us an across the board salary increase with a couple of methods thrown in to do "communication with staff?")

The commutation calculations will be going to realtime reimburse as you go. The 17,000 yen allowance for pl teachers will disappear and instructors will be paid their travel cost- how this works with a tiki or not if you aren't guaranteed lessons wasn't mentioned.

We asked MGT if all these changes were cost cutting measures. They said no.

Instead MGT says they want to give us yet another salary tier to "help simplify the salary system." We currently have 3 full time, 3 PT20, 2 MG 30, MG35 and 40/40 and PL so adding this makes a happy dozen. 25 years ago Berlitz only had 4.

Take a look at the new contract comparison to the current 40/40 instructor contract.

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The 40/40 will be replaced with a 50/60+ contract.

Contract Type	Starting Salary	Starting base rate/ contract per unit pay	Misc.
35/40 offered from 1998	250,000 yen	1729 (from official salary chart)	eligible for extra earnings (additional vacation pay)
40/40 offered from 2005	264,000yen	1513 (from official salary chart)	eligible for completion bonus
announced 50/60+ contract offered from March 2015	275,000	1375 (estimated)	includes shakai hoken, 3 personal days 3 sick days No CTLS

The good points: **the union has demanded sick days for all employees since 2005.** MGT offering 3 sick days is a step in the right direction. But this is only for the new 50/60 teachers. They will also get 3 personal days. Neither of these can be carried over to the next year.

Those going on the new 50/602 availability contract will get an 11,000 yen increase a month but they will have to teach about 40 extra lessons a month for that 11,000 yen.

## **Some things won't change (but will)**

The 45 minutes MGT says will be the new lesson will be 3+40+2.

MGT says they want to maintain the 176 count. 11 units is the threshold for overtime so it will be harder to reach 176 if the overtime threshold is lowered. MGT also doesn't prorate Shakai Hoken for people who have a holiday that falls in their per lesson paid time - where they do not make any money on that day unless they actually work on that holiday. 22 days at 8 lessons a day equals 176. 176 - 8 units (for each holiday) for pl teachers.

In a nutshell, keeping the 176 number means teachers will have to teach an additional 14 hours 40 minutes to qualify for Shakai Hoken in their qualification month= about 2 or 3 extra days of work a month.

The threshold to maintain enrollment in shakai hoken to its current percentage is 67%. The threshold to maintain enrollment in shakai hoken is 176 40-minute units per month which is 67% of a full time 40 hour per week employee. Once the breaks become paid, 67% of a full time 40 hour per week employee is 156 45-minute units per month.

If you are unhappy with the changes that MGT wants to make, let them know.

You can contact HQ.

You can join the union and add your voice to the others joining because this is an important change that MGT wants to do unilaterally.

## **Demands**

We are demanding that MGT **pay us 12.5% more across the board** for using the breaks as paid time- that includes travel pay too. 5 minutes is 12.5% of a 40 minute lesson.

We are also demanding that MGT let teachers choose if they want to have the **17,000 commutation or pay as you go scheme.**

Also on the demand list is the **continuation of extra earnings allowance** and the **continuation of the rest day rate for per lesson teachers** as it currently stands- giving pl teachers a designated rest day.