

Contract



Director of Labor Relations and Legal Services

BURNT HILLS - BALLSTON LAKE CENTRAL
SCHOOL DISTRICT

2025-2030

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	IDENTIFICATION OF PARTIES
ARTICLE I	RESPONSIBILITIES
ARTICLE II	WORK YEAR AND LEAVE TIME
ARTICLE III	SALARY AND BENEFIT PROVISIONS
ARTICLE IV	LEAVES OF NECESSITY
ARTICLE V	HEALTH INSURANCE
ARTICLE VI	GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE
ARTICLE VII	RIGHTS OF THE DIRECTOR
ARTICLE VIII	RETIREMENT INCREMENT
ARTICLE IX	DURATION OF TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT
ARTICLE X	LEGALITY OF THE AGREEMENT
ARTICLE XI	TOTALITY OF THE AGREEMENT

IDENTIFICATION OF PARTIES

THIS AGREEMENT, made this ____ day of July 2025, by and between **THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF THE BURNT HILLS-BALLSTON LAKE CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT** (hereafter “Board”), and **MICHAEL G. NICKSON**, Director of Labor Relations and Legal Services (hereafter “Nickson”).

On June 26, 2017, and upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, Nickson was appointed to the position of Director of Human Resources. On July 1, 2024, Nickson was reassigned to become the Director of Labor Relations and Legal Services.

ARTICLE I - RESPONSIBILITIES

Section 1 Responsibilities of the Director of Labor Relations and Legal Services

The Director of Human Resources for Labor Relations and Legal Services covered by this agreement shall manage the District’s labor relations with its bargaining units, including contract administration, disciplinary matters and negotiations. The Director shall also oversee the legal services of the district, including compliance with Workers Compensation, NYS Education Law, and other state and federal statutes. The Director shall also regularly consult with the attorneys representing the District. The Director shall oversee the District Benefit plans as the District Trustee to CASHIC. Direct supervision is exercised over subordinate staff. Does related work as directed by the Superintendent of Schools.

Section 2 Amendments to Responsibilities

Any changes to the job description referenced herein will be discussed with Nickson and the Superintendent of Schools prior to implementation.

ARTICLE II - WORK YEAR AND LEAVE TIME

Section 1 Work Year

The work year for Nickson shall be 245 days per school year.

Section 2 Sick Leave

Effective July 1, 2025, Nickson shall be vested with 120 sick days. Each year thereafter, Nickson shall be granted twenty (20) sick days every July 1st. Sick leave shall be utilized for personal sick leave, illness in the family, and death in the family, with unlimited accumulation. Nickson may use up to five (5) days of their sick leave for each death in the family, not to exceed a total of twenty (20) days of their sick leave in any single year.

The immediate family shall include:

- A. Husband, wife, children, and related members of the employee's immediate household.
- B. Father, mother.
- C. Sister, brother, sister-in-law, brother-in-law.
- D. Grandfather, grandmother, including in-laws.
- E. Father-in-law, mother-in-law.
- F. A person with whom the employee lived for a period of time as part of the household and to whom the employee looked as a parent-in-fact.
- G. Aunt, uncle, step-father, step-mother, son-in-law, daughter-in-law.
- H. Niece and nephew

Section 3 Personal Business Leave

Effective July 1, 2025, Nickson shall be granted three (3) days of personal business leave. Each year thereafter, Nickson shall be granted three (3) days of personal leave on July 1st. Personal business leave may be used for personal business which cannot be transacted during times other than the employee's work hours. Absence from Nickson's school assignment to work in another compensated situation is not an acceptable use of personal business days. If an employee does not use personal leave during the employment year, the unused personal leave remaining shall be added to the employee's sick leave accumulation.

Section 4 Vacation Leave

Effective July 1, 2025, Nickson shall be vested with thirty-five (35) days of vacation leave. Each year thereafter, Nickson shall be granted twenty-five (25) days of vacation leave on July 1st. Use of vacation leave must be pre-approved by the Superintendent of Schools.

Nickson shall be permitted to carry over a maximum of fifteen (15) unused vacation days from one school year to the next. Any carried-over vacation days in excess of ten (10) must be used within the first six months of the succeeding school year. In the event Nickson terminates employment with the District for any reason (i.e. retirement, resignation, involuntary termination, etc.) Nickson shall accrue two (2) vacation days per month from July 1 of a given fiscal year to the day of termination (in addition to specified carry-over allocation). If Nickson completes a full year of employment in a terminating year, their full vacation entitlement shall be earned.

Accrued vacation days will be paid out at the per diem rate of 1/225. Should Nickson terminate employment with Burnt Hills-Ballston Lake CSD and have used more vacation days than the set accrual rate of two (2) days per month (with the exception of any days carried over from a previous year) in a new fiscal year Nickson shall be required to pay back the unearned income in one of two ways: (1) At the employee's per diem rate, or (2) through the equivalent dollar amount deducted from their accumulated sick time payout of \$80.00 per day.

As of June 30 of each year, unused vacation days that are not carried forward into the next fiscal year, will become sick days.

ARTICLE III - SALARY AND BENEFIT PROVISIONS

Section 1 Salary

Nickson's salary will be \$119,241 for the 2025-2026 school year. Nickson's salary will be \$123,176 for the 2026-2027 school year. Nickson's salary shall be \$127,241 for the 2027-2028 school year. Nickson's salary shall be \$131,440 for the 2028-2029 school year. Nickson's salary shall be \$135,778 for the 2029-2030 school year.

Section 2 Flexible Benefits Plan

The District offers a flexible benefits plan as permitted by Section 125 of the Internal Revenue Code. The plan will permit salary deductions for Nickson share of health insurance costs and for dependent care prior to taking deductions for FICA, State and Federal income tax. This plan requires a minimum annual dependent care contribution of \$1,000.00.

Section 3 Indemnification

The District shall provide indemnification to Nickson in accordance with Sections 3811 and 3023 of the New York State Education Law. This indemnification applies while Nickson is performing his duties within the scope of his employment. Pursuant to Section 3811 of the Education Law, Nickson must notify the Board, in writing, of the commencement of any proceeding against him within five (5) calendar days after service of process. Under Section 3023 of the Education Law, Nickson must deliver a copy of a Summons and Complaint, demand or notice to the Board within ten (10) calendar days of the date the document is served on him. Delivery to the Board shall be to the Clerk or Deputy Clerk of the Board.

Section 4 Professional Organization Dues

The District will directly pay for two professional organizations of Nickson's choice. Annual payment will not exceed the sum of \$800.00.

Section 5 Coursework Reimbursement

Nickson is entitled to reimbursement, for coursework approved by the Superintendent of Schools. Such reimbursement will be limited to the current S.U.N.Y. Albany graduate (non-MBA) program rate. Reimbursement shall be paid upon the successful completion of the course as verified through semester grade reports. In the event Nickson should separate from service with Burnt Hills-Ballston Lake Central School District earlier than three (3) years after receiving reimbursement from the district he shall be required to pay the district an amount equal to the amount of such reimbursement.

Section 6 Life Insurance

The District agrees to either purchase or reimburse Nickson for a life insurance policy, with the amount of such reimbursement to be no greater than \$1,000.00 per year. Nickson shall submit documentation of such life insurance policy to the District in order to receive such reimbursement.

Section 7 Long Term Disability Insurance

The District agrees to provide Nickson with the group a long term disability insurance from Sun Life and Health Insurance Company or a different plan with equivalent or better benefits.

Section 8 Non-elective 403(b) Payment

On or within 14 days before June 30th of each year covered by this contract, the Board shall make a non-elective tax-deferred annuity payment to the Director of Human Resources for Labor Relations and Legal Services' tax-deferred annuity account in the amount of \$2,500.

ARTICLE IV - LEAVES OF NECESSITY

Section 1 Workers' Compensation

In any Workers' Compensation case there will be no loss of flex days to Nickson, and the Board will pay the difference between the Workers' Compensation payment and Nickson' salary for a time period of up to 12 calendar months.

If Nickson is approved for a Workers' Compensation award, he will be permitted to participate in the health, dental, and prescription drug insurance program of the District (75/25 family, two-person and 90/10 individual) for up to a maximum of 12 months from the beginning date of the award. If Nickson continues on Workers' Compensation beyond twelve (12) months, the District health insurance premium will be shared by Nickson on a 50/50 basis during the remaining time of the Workers' Compensation award.

Section 2 Leaves for Legal Business

A. Temporary leave with full pay will be granted to Nickson if attendance is required at School District related PERB hearings, court hearings, legislative hearings and other non-compensated legal proceedings, providing such requirement is not the result of a violation of Section 210 of the Civil Service Law.

B. In the event Nickson is summoned for jury duty and a request by Nickson to be excused from such jury duty is denied, the District will pay Nickson' daily salary during the term of the jury duty service.

Section 3 Family Care Leave

A. A leave of absence for family care will be granted up to a total of two (2) school years. Requests for leave should indicate that the termination of the leave period will occur at either the reporting period closest to the middle of the school year or at the end of the school year. The Board may consider a subsequent request made by Nickson to return to employment prior to the originally approved termination date, provided there is a vacancy for which the professional is qualified.

B. Request for such leave should be made at least 60 days before the date that the requested leave is to begin. The Board may allow, under emergency circumstances, a shorter notice period.

C. A family care leave will be subject to all provisions of the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993, as amended.

Section 4 Notice of Return from Leave

A scheduled leave return to occur at the beginning of the school year must be communicated to the Superintendent, in writing, by April 1 preceding the July return date. A scheduled return at the beginning of the school year second semester must include notification to the Personnel Office, in writing, by November 15 preceding the return date regarding the intention to return.

Section 5 Leaves of Absence

Unpaid leave for up to two (2) years may be granted in compliance with Board policy. A written request by Nickson is required at least four (4) months prior to the beginning of such leave.

ARTICLE V - HEALTH INSURANCE

A. The School District will provide the following health insurance coverage during the life of this agreement:

- i. Hospitalization, doctor and major medical insurance better than or equal to the BlueShield 815 PPO plan in effect during the 2018-2019 school year.
- ii. Dental insurance coverage including x-ray, preventative, restorative, prosthetic, and orthodontic services better than or equal to the attached Guardian-2 PPO.

The School District's contribution toward Nickson' premium for both hospitalization and dental coverages will be:

Single membership - 90%

Family or two-person membership - 75%

Retired membership - 75% of individual, 2 person or family premium

Nickson shall have completed eight (8) years of service to the District to be eligible for the health insurance retirement benefit and must be eligible to retire from the district in accordance with the regulations of the New York State and Local Retirement System.

B. Nickson shall have the option to buy out of health insurance coverage as long as he and/or his family continue to obtain health insurance coverage elsewhere. The buyout conditions will be as follows:

- i. For opting out of the family or individual health insurance plans of the District, the District agrees to share the premium savings on the portion of the insurance plan that the District would otherwise be obligated to pay, in an amount equal to 35% of the District's share of the family premium of the health insurance plan known as Blue Shield 815 Plan. This payment will be made to Nickson during the month of June for each of the two (2) years of this Agreement.
- ii. Nickson may rejoin the District health insurance program, with no waiting period, and with no policy exclusion based on pre-existing conditions, in the event any of the following shall occur:
 1. Death of Nickson's spouse.
 2. Divorce from Nickson's spouse (if she is providing the family health insurance).
 3. Loss of Nickson's spouse's coverage for any other reason.

In the event that Nickson elects to rejoin the program at any other time, he will be limited to rejoining the District's plan during the window periods as determined by the Plan Administrator.

- iii. Nothing in this provision shall preclude Nickson from rejoining the District's health insurance program and continuing such health insurance benefits into retirement in the same manner as if Nickson had maintained active status in the District health insurance plan for the period in which he elected to opt out of coverage.

ARTICLE VI - GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

A. Purpose:

It is the desired objective of the parties to encourage the prompt and informal resolution of employee complaints as they arise, and to provide recourse to orderly procedure for the satisfaction of grievances.

B. Definitions:

1. A "grievance" shall mean any claim by a member of the negotiating unit of a violation, misinterpretation or inequitable application of the terms of this agreement, or any policy or administrative regulation of the Board.

"Policy" or "administrative regulation" means those Board-adopted policies or regulations that appear in the Board Policy Book.

2. "Days" shall mean school days as designated on the current school calendar.

C. Procedure:

Level 1

A grievance will first be discussed with the Superintendent with the objective of resolving the matter informally, at which time the aggrieved person may:

1. Discuss the grievance personally, or
2. Request an Assistant Superintendent to accompany her/him, or,
3. If the grievance is not resolved informally, the grievant shall present a written statement of grievance and the relief desired to the Superintendent.

Failure to present a written statement of grievance within thirty (30) days after the occurrence of the claimed grievable event, shall result in a waiver of all rights involved.

Within ten (10) days of the presentation day of the written statement of grievance the Superintendent shall make a decision and communicate the decision and reasons therefore in writing to the employee presenting the grievance.

Only grievances which involve the interpretation of, or application of, or compliance with, specific provisions of this agreement may be pursued beyond Level 1 of this grievance procedure.

Level 2

If the aggrieved employee is not satisfied with the decision arrived at under Level 1, and the alleged grievance claims a violation, misinterpretation or inequitable application of the terms of this agreement, he/she may within twenty (20) days file with the Superintendent an appeal in writing, on forms supplied by the district, requesting his/her grievance be submitted to the Board of Education. Such request shall include, among other things, specification of what section of this agreement has been violated, a statement of why the determination on Level 1 was unsatisfactory, and the relief that the grieving party desires.

The Superintendent of Schools shall within ten (10) days after receipt of the appeal arrange for a hearing of the grievance by the members of the Board of Education. The President of the Board of Education, or a designee, will act as the hearing officer. The members of the Board shall meet with the employee, the Superintendent of Schools, and any other parties directly involved in the grievance in question. All hearings held shall be in closed sessions. Such hearing shall be an attempt to resolve the grievance. Within ten (10) days after such a hearing the President of the Board of Education, or a designee, shall make a decision in writing regarding the grievance and set forth the reason for such a conclusion. A copy of such decision shall be given to the employee and the Superintendent of Schools. The decision shall be final and binding on all the parties.

Level 3

If the grievance is unresolved at Level 2 within thirty (30) calendar days, Nickson may exercise the option to request binding arbitration by filing a demand with the Public Employees Relations Board (PERB) in accordance with such Board's rules and procedures. The cost of such arbitration shall be shared equally between the Board of Education and Nickson. The arbiter's decision shall be confined

solely to the language and terms of this agreement. The decision of the arbiter within the scope of his authority shall be final and binding upon all parties.

ARTICLE VII – RIGHTS OF THE DIRECTOR

During the life of this Agreement, the Director shall have just cause protection.

The Director shall meet monthly with the Superintendent, the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, the Assistant Superintendent for Support Services and the Director of Human Resources to discuss the district's labor relations, personnel and legal matters.

The terms and conditions as set forth in this Agreement will continue beyond the termination date as set forth in Article IX - Duration. In the event the parties have not entered into a successor Agreement, the salary provisions as set forth in Article III will be continued until such time as a successor Agreement is signed by the parties.

ARTICLE VIII - RETIREMENT INCREMENT

Upon completion of ten years of service to the Burnt Hills-Ballston Lake Central School District, Nickson shall be entitled to receive a retirement increment of \$12,500. This payment shall be made at the time of retirement. To receive this increment and benefit, Nickson must submit a resignation for retirement purposes, in writing, to the Superintendent of Schools by January 1 in the year Nickson intends to retire. In addition, this written resignation must be received at least six (6) months prior to the effective date of retirement, which must occur by no later than June 30 of the retirement year. Any other arrangement must be mutually agreed upon between Nickson and the Superintendent. The termination increment will be deposited into a 403b account for the retiring administrator within 60 days following the date of retirement.

In addition to the retirement increment above, Nickson shall be entitled to payment for accrued but unused sick leave upon retirement, with the exception of \$2,400 in unused sick and personal days which was previously compensated for in Nickson's 2019-2021 contract with the district. Each accrued but unused day of sick leave shall be valued at \$80 per day. Payment for accrued but unused sick leave shall be deposited into Nickson 403b account as a non-elective employer contribution within 60 days following the date of retirement.

ARTICLE IX - DURATION

This contract shall be in effect for the period July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2030. Negotiations for a successor contract shall commence no later than February 1, 2030. Upon a request by either party for a meeting to open negotiations, a mutually acceptable date shall be set not more than 15 days following such a request.

ARTICLE X - LEGALITY OF THE AGREEMENT

In the event any portion or portions of this Agreement shall be found to be unlawful, only those portions so found shall be null and void and the remainder of the contract shall remain in full force and effect.

ARTICLE XI - TOTALITY OF THE AGREEMENT

This document constitutes the entire agreement between the parties regarding the terms and conditions of employment of Michael G. Nickson with the Burnt Hills-Ballston Lake Central School District.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties hereto have executed this Agreement on the day and date first above written.

BURNT HILLS-BALLSTON LAKE CENTRAL SCHOOLS

BY: _____
Patrick M. McGrath Jr., Superintendent of Schools

Director of Human Resources for Labor Relations and Legal Services

BY: _____
Michael G. Nickson, Director of Labor Relations and Legal Services

WITNESS:

BURNT HILLS-BALLSTON LAKE CENTRAL SCHOOLS
BOARD OF EDUCATION

BY: _____
Lakshmi Nagarajan, Board President