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*Great Students Start
With Great Teachers!*

Teacher

The Award-Winning Newspaper of the Boston Teachers Union, AFT Local 66, AFL-CIO

President's Corner
by **Richard Stutman**

Poverty Gap Increases Making the Elimination of the Achievement Gap More Elusive



Richard Stutman
BTU President

Using the simple example of having computer access at home, a very well respected colleague and friend once described to me the economic hardships her students faced.

Take the computer, she said. Many of my students don't have one at home. But those who do have one often have routine, everyday issues confronting them when they need to use it.

Even if we assume the home computer is working, there are always computer or internet issues that crop up from, time to time. A middle class family generally has the wherewithal to remedy those issues; a family living in poverty may not.

Let's say that all is working as it should – and that's a stretch – and the child needs to print out a work assignment. The middle class family will have a printer that works. A low income family make not. And even when the printer is working, there may or not be ink. Or there may not be paper. How many families living in poverty are going to be able to run to Staples at 8:00 PM to get a fresh cartridge or paper?

And what if there are internet troubles and something is not working right? How easy is it to get Comcast to make a service call? And what if there's not enough in the family budget to pay for the call?

And even if all is working well, there may be only working computer in the household that must be shared, not like in a middle class household where each child probably has his or her own. And so on and so forth. A child living in poverty confronts a lot of significant problems every day, only one of which involves computer access.

I thought of the above conversation the other day as I read through a most recent report from the Brookings Institute that showed Boston to have the 3rd greatest gap between high income and low income wage earners among the 50 largest US cities in 2013. Boston had been in 4th place the year before, in 2012. Boston's highest wage earners (those in the top 5%) earn more than 15 times what those in the bottom 20% earn. The income disparity found in our largest cities¹ has been increasing and generally exceeds the

national income averages. (*Brookings Report, 3/17, by Berube and Holmes*)

Of course, the working computer is just but one anecdotal example of the difficulties a lower income family faces. There's quality access to health care and dental care, housing needs, good food and nutrition, adequate clothing and warm outerwear, adequate child care, convenient and less time-consuming transportations and so on -- each of which is income dependent .

The ability to meet each of the above daily needs have two related strands: They are income dependent and they directly affect in one way or another the ability to come to school prepared and ready to learn.

What's more, history shows us that both the growing income gap and the widening achievement gap have marched hand in hand for decades.

Author **Sean Reardon** posed the following in his oft-cited work, "Whither Opportunity? Rising Inequality and the Uncertain Life Chances of Low-Income Children": As the income gap between high- and low-income families has widened, has the achievement gap between children in high- and low-income families also widened?

The answer, in brief, is yes. The achieve-

ment gap between children from high- and low-income families is roughly 30 to 40 percent larger among children born in 2001 than among those born twenty-five years earlier. In fact, it appears that the income achievement gap has been growing for at least fifty years, though the data are less certain for cohorts of children born before 1970.²

On the one hand, the growing achievement gap is created by the added resources wealthy parents have to spend on their children. On the other hand, the lack of resources children in poverty have inhibits their ability to come to school ready and able to learn.

Richard Rothstein, former Education writer in the *New York Times* in a piece that appeared here (<http://www.latimes.com/la-op-dustup28nov28-story.html#page=1>) pointed out a few examples of how these indicators correlate with the ability to achieve.

"Add to asthma the many other health differences between disadvantaged and middle-class children. Low-income children have more lead poisoning (they live in poorly maintained homes with peeling paint) and iron deficiency anemia; both of those lower IQ. The U.S. surgeon general reports that one-third of low-income children have untreated dental cavities; they're more likely to be distracted in class by toothaches. Low-income children have twice the rate of vision difficulties as middle-class children. You can't read well if you can't see well. All contribute to achievement gaps...

"Consider other economic factors such as housing. Because urban rents have risen more rapidly than wages of working parents, low-income families move more than middle-class families. Some Los Angeles schools serving disadvantaged children have 100% mobility (twice as many children pass through the school annually as the school's capacity). These schools are frequently disrupted by reorganizing classes; teachers have less time to learn students' individual strengths and weaknesses. Teachers must repeat lessons for newcomers who've missed school while their

¹ See: The Color of Wealth in Boston at http://www.bostonfed.org/commddev/color-of-wealth/index.htm?wt.source=corpcomm_CoW_pr

² See an excellent piece in the New York Times, following up on Reardon here: http://www.nytimes.com/2012/02/10/education/education-gap-grows-between-rich-and-poor-studies-show.html?_r=1

BTU Election Information

Important Dates for Preliminary May 6th Election - For Paraprofessional/Substitute Teacher Field Representative Only:

April 1st - BTU will mail out Absentee Ballot Request form and reply envelope to each member.

April 20th - Deadline for receipt of absentee ballot request at the office of AAA, the New York firm overseeing the election. Once request is received, AAA will mail absentee ballot.

May 5th - Members must have their ballots filled out and back to AAA office no later than May 5th.

May 6th - In-person voting at the BTU for those who did not receive an absentee ballot.

Final June 3rd Election - For All Positions:

Editor's Note - As of this printing date, the editors have not been able to obtain the information members need to request absentee ballots for final election. All members will receive a form in the mail to request a ballot. Please call the union office at **617-288-2000** for information about the deadline concerning mailing those requests to AAA and the deadline for mailing absentee ballots.

Candidates for offices other than delegate may submit a 300-word statement and a picture by April 17th for publication in the May issue.

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BTU Health & Welfare Fund Proposes New Building on Current BTU Site

By Patrick J. Connolly
Executive Vice President

On January 15, 2015, the Boston Teachers Union Health and Welfare Fund presented a proposal to the Boston Redevelopment Authority to demolish the existing structure at 180 Mount Vernon Street and to replace it with a new structure at the same site. The BTUHWF has occupied the existing building since the 1960's, first as a tenant and later as the owner. The building was not originally designed as office space, but was designed for commercial and retail use. Over the years, the building has deteriorated and is no longer an efficient or economical facility. The proposal is to replace the current structure with a LEED qualifying, low maintenance building. This will ensure that the building can continue to meet the needs of the BTUHWF, BTU and its members.

The current building houses the Health and Welfare Fund offices, the BTU offices, the Tremont Credit Union and the Vision Center.

The building also has conference rooms and halls for both BTU meetings and functions. These facilities are, however, lacking in condition, amenities, and the technology that are required for an up-to-date meeting space. The building also has some maintenance issues that would require substantial expenditures to upgrade. The new structure would house these offices and functions and give the flexibility to meet future needs.

At the Redevelopment Authority meeting of March 12, 2015, the board of the BRA approved the proposal of the BTUHWF. The proposal would replace the current structure of approximately 32,500 gross square feet with a building of approximately 52,000 gross square feet. The footprint of the new structure would be somewhat smaller than the current building. The current one level building would be replaced with a three level building which would include multiple conference rooms and meeting rooms and function halls. The height of the building would be about

50 feet for the office section of the building. There will also be improvements in landscaping and consideration for future developments that may occur in the area.

Because of its location near Dorchester Bay there are Wetlands and Environmental Impact issues that need to be addressed. The building itself will be about four feet above the current grade of the property. This is to address the need to deal with accommodations for predicted sea level rise in the next 50 years. A community meeting has been held and more will be scheduled with the various agencies that regulate or impact upon development at this site. Consideration is also being given to the improvements that can be implemented to align with the Columbia Point Master Plan and the Boston Harbor-Walk Program.

The BTUHWF owns the building and the parking area immediately in front of the building. This accounts for about 2.7 acres on the Bayside site. The University of Mas-

sachusetts Boston is the owner of the former Bayside Exposition Center. Discussions with UMB regarding their development plans center on about a seven (7) year plan to include surface parking on their site after demolition of the Expo Center. Little is known about long term plans for their development of the parcel.

At this stage, the development team is proceeding with the permitting process required for this project. This process will probably not be completed until the end of 2015. Construction could possibly start in July 2016. Traffic studies, utilities locations, environmental issues, and other outstanding issues have to be resolved along the way. During this period the BTUHWF and the BTU will continue with their functions at 180 Mount Vernon Street. There may be modifications to the design and development of this project, but this is the starting point for the development of a new building. If you have questions, comments, or suggestions please contact me at pconnolly@btu.org.

Commentary

by Michael J. Maguire

The Only Way Out is Through

Charter school proponents are overjoyed at the election of **Charlie Baker**, the recent appointment of **James Peyser** as Secretary of Education, and the selection of **Tommy Chang** as the next superintendent of the Boston Public Schools. The calls for "lifting the cap" have already begun. But instead of fighting this uphill battle, let us join forces with the charter school proponents. Let us urge for the replication of successful charter school practices.

Over twenty years ago charter schools were established to be experimental laboratories for new educational approaches. If successful, the experimental approaches were to be applied to the whole district or state. If unsuccessful, the charter was to be revoked and the school closed.

So here we are in our third decade of charter schools. Very few have been closed, therefore the vast majority must be successful. Let us replicate these successes statewide.

Most proponents of charter schools say that a longer school day is the key component to their success. If that's the case, then the state should require that all schools extend their day. In Boston we are beginning this process. Admittedly, not all parents want a longer day for their children. After all, Boston Latin School, widely accepted as the top public school in the state ironically has one of the shortest school days in the state. So perhaps there is something to be said about "less is more."

Of course to prove that the longer school day is the answer, the state would be duty bound to examine the data. The state surely would compare several charter schools which have a longer school day with several traditional public schools which have a shorter school day. Needless to say, these schools should have similar student bodies so that the only variable being tested is the length of the school day.

Oh wait. Charter schools do not have the same student populations as traditional schools? How is this possible? Charter schools are public schools, aren't they? How can a public charter school not enroll the same types of student as traditional public schools?

OK, then; we shall first have to ensure that charter schools enroll and retain the same percentages of special education students and the same numbers of non-fluent English speakers as regular public schools do. Then we can

compare and watch for successful approaches in education.

What? Charter schools don't want these harder to educate students? This does not seem fair. How can such schools be deemed "successful" when they fail to educate all students?

Instead of arguing about how many charter schools are enough, let us point out that 22 years is more than enough time to experiment on children. In short, let's call their bluff. Let's say "You are right, charter schools are great. Now how can we produce that same success in all schools?" When the charter school leaders stammer, dodge and evade; we shall know that it is time pull the plug on a generation of student segregation.

The tenacious charter school crowd won't go quietly into the night. Like cagy lawyers who cannot pound the facts, they shall pound the table. "But parents want more charter schools!" they shall proclaim. "There is a waiting list a mile long that proves it."

Again, we should call their bluff. We should say "Before we add more charter schools, we should ensure that existing charter schools fill their empty seats with students from the wait lists." When the charter school leaders stammer, dodge and evade; we shall know that it is time end the myth of lengthy lists.

In our discussions with charter school supporters, let us not be lulled by seemingly satisfactory statistics. Finally the *Globe* and *Herald* writers are admitting that charter schools do not enroll high numbers of SpEd and ELL students. However, they do like to point out that though the numbers are low, they are rather close to statewide averages. The key term here is "statewide."

Charter schools are not opening statewide, they are opening in urban districts. These urban districts have SpEd and ELL populations many times higher than the state average. When I ask charter school supporters to name one charter school in Boston with the same numbers of SpEd and ELL students as any regular Boston public school, they stammer, dodge and evade.

Moreover, there is a wide range of students who are classified as SpEd, from students whose IEPs simply call for extra time to finish exams to severely emotionally and physically challenged students who need a dedicated one-to-one paraprofessional. When some-

one boasts that a particular charter school has a good SpEd record, ask for the above mentioned breakdown. When that person stammers, dodges and evades; we shall know that there is nothing special about separating students by ability groupings.

In all seriousness we should not dismiss all ideas that come from charter schools. If a charter school has a good idea that can be copied far and wide, we should all adopt that good idea.

That's not happening now. Instead we are witnessing the rise of chains of charter schools. The charter school cheerleaders, some of whom are now in positions of high authority, are stating "we have a good educational formula; give us more schools." Again,

Poverty Gap Increases Making the Elimination of the Achievement Gap More Elusive...

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home lives were disrupted. Of course, good teachers can get higher achievement from transient students than inadequate teachers could. But can good teachers get the same average achievement from transient as from stable students? Of course not.

"Statistical analyses attribute about 15% of the black-white achievement gap to differences in residential mobility and 25% to differences to a few health factors. Other socioeconomic inequalities and differences in school quality also contribute..."

So as we think about and aspire to closing the achievement gap, let's also be mindful that we have an obligation to point out that there's also a health care gap, a housing gap, a dental care gap, an asthma gap, a toothache gap, nutrition gap, and so on – and just as we owe it to our students to continue to work as hard and as smart as we can to provide the best education, we also owe it to our students to point out to all who will listen that each of these latter gaps harm every student's ability to come to school prepared to work well. Further we have an obligation as educators to point each of these out to policy makers each and every time we speak about our students' needs. We ought not to be defensive about this, we ought not to use it as an excuse. We have an obligation we welcome to provide the best education we can. On the other hand, we have

if that is the case, the 1993 Education Reform Act requires that successes be absorbed into the whole system. We should demand that our legislators follow the original charter school plan. When they stammer, dodge and evade; we shall know that it is time pull the plug on a generation of empty innovation.

a similar obligation to remind policy makers that our students and their families need help that goes well beyond our capabilities. Here are two telling passages from a recent study of poverty in Boston:

"Non-white households have only a fraction of the net worth attributed to white households. While white households have a median wealth of \$247,500, Dominicans and U.S. blacks have a median wealth of close to zero. Of all nonwhite groups for which estimates could be made, Caribbean black households have the highest median wealth with \$12,000, which is only 5 percent of the wealth attributed to white households in the Boston Metropolitan Statistical Area..."

"There exist key differences in liquid assets, which may be thought of as representing buffers to income and expenditure shocks. The typical white household in Boston is more likely than nonwhite households to own every type of liquid asset. For example, close to half of Puerto Ricans and a quarter of U.S. blacks are unbanked (that is, they do not have bank accounts) compared with only 7 percent of whites. For every dollar, the typical white household has in liquid assets (excluding cash), U.S. blacks have 2 cents, Caribbean blacks 14 cents, and Puerto Ricans and Dominicans less than 1 cent..."



Michael J. Maguire
Boston Union Teacher
Co-Editor

What Do I Do If I'm Injured On the Job?

Even if you feel as if your injury is relatively minor, one never knows if there may be complications later, so please immediately fill out *City of Boston – Worker's Compensation Services – Report of Occupational Injury or Accident* found in *Superintendent's Circular HRS-PP7, Workers' Compensation Procedures*. You can download it from the BPS website or get a copy from your school secretary or nurse. All work-related injuries must be reported as soon as possible, preferably within a day of the accident. The Workers' Compensation Service is on the 6th floor, room 613 in Boston City Hall. To contact a Case manager there call 617-635-3193.

If your injury requires emergency services you should go to the nearest emergency care facility, make sure someone completes the accident form mentioned above for you or contacts the Workers' Compensation Department within 24 hours. Do not assume this has been done, follow-up on it when able. The written reports can be hand delivered or mailed to the address listed above or faxed to 617-635-3119. If some of the info asked for on the form is unknown to the person filling it out for you, it should be left blank and the form should still be sent in to Workers' Comp. A supervisor's signature is required on this form only to inform them that the injury occurred and does not mean that they either agree with the contents of said form or that they witnessed the accident. Always keep copies of everything for your own records.

Your first follow-up appointment after the emergency care must be with one of the City's preferred provider medical vendors. The list of these sites is in *Superintendent's Circular HRS-PP7*. You will be contacted by a Workers' Comp. representative as a follow-up to the report you filed, to explain the process, and to make sure you are getting the necessary medical treatment. If you are not contacted, call the number listed above to insure they are in receipt of your accident report. Always make sure you write down the date, time, to whom you spoke and what they said. Failure to do so lessens the efficacy of follow through later should a dispute arise. This is also the case when dealing with BPS Office of Human Capital. If your accident is not an emergency, your first scheduled appointment must be with one of their preferred providers as listed in the circular HRS-PP7. If you do not do so, you may then be charged for the service. Please see the circular for more specifics about Workers' Comp. If you have been out of work and have been approved for Workers' Comp. benefits, and then are able to return to work, you must obtain a medical clearance from your doctor releasing you. You will then receive a return to work release card from Workers' Comp. Even if your injury isn't serious, it's always better to be safe than sorry to document the injury – fill out and submit the form.

Do I Get Time Off to Go to Court?

The contract states; *"The Boston School Department will provide release time without loss of pay for court appearances on school business, including cases involving job-related teacher assaults."*

If you are being brought to court by or are bringing a student to court, you get release time. If you have jury duty, you must give a copy of the jury duty letter to your school's secretary. Once you have successfully completed the jury duty service, give a copy of the certificate/letter you receive from the court indicating same. You will then have that time properly coded by the school secretary so it will not be deducted from your sick/personal days. Make sure you carefully scrutinize your pay stub to determine if that has occurred.

If you are subpoenaed to court by someone non-related to school business, or if you are appearing at court for an appeal of a moving violation, and the like, that is not covered under court leave and will be deducted from your sick/personal days.

What Approach Should the SSC Take Toward Decision Making?

It is expected that the SSC will function by consensus or general agreement of its members. Members of the SSC are expected to operate as a single decision making team. Their task is to work together to fashion effective solutions to the school's educational challenges. SSC have parent, BTU staff, student, and associate members to guarantee that decisions reflect the viewpoints of everyone in the school community. Reaching consensus does not mean that all members must agree with decisions unanimously. Consensus is a way of working together where some members may disagree with a final decision, but yet agree to support it. Consensus occurs when most, if not all, members agree on the matter to be decided.

Consensus won't necessarily result in endless discussions and no decisions, particularly if the following guidelines are followed: Prioritize the importance of the issue at hand. Normally, the more important the issue, the more time members should be willing to devote to reaching consensus decision. Routine matters should be given much less valuable time and energy than fundamental issues. Provide opportunities for all views to be expressed. Members with differing views should have the opportunity to make sure other members have understood their views before ending the discussion. Although others may still not be persuaded, everyone must have a chance to state their views and to have others listen. The strength of feeling about an issue must be gauged. How strongly members feel should guide how much time should be devoted to an issue as well.

SSC meetings are not competitive, win-or-lose events. Making decisions solely on the basis of majority votes runs the unacceptable risk of dividing the Council. School improvement is defiantly a matter of teamwork, trust, and shared commitment on the part of everyone in the school community. This team approach doesn't prohibit voting in every case. Occasionally, periodic 'straw polls' may be a good idea to identify the common ground on the way to reaching consensus decisions. Voting can save valuable time reaching decisions on routine matters. Under the terms of the BTU Contract, decisions must be formalized by a majority of the SSC. The Principal must vote with the majority of the SSC and they may not delegate their vote. Here, the purpose of voting is to validate and to make official consensus decisions. Formal voting should be the last step in the decision-making process. If the vote results in a simple majority but does not reveal consensus on the issue debated, it should be viewed as a signal that the best option has not yet been developed and proposed. Unless all members are willing to support a majority decision, more discussion is needed. Votes which split parents and

BTU members are of particular concern and a clear indication that consensus hasn't been achieved. In such cases, the decision should be set aside and the issue should be revisited.

The Principal may veto a majority decision of a SSC. The Principal must vote with the majority for a decision to be adopted and carried out. In the event of a veto, the Principal is required to give their reasons in writing and in person at a following meeting for any vote that is in opposition to a majority of the Council. Successful School Based Management demands cooperation, trust, and mutual regard of every one!

Do Performing Arts Teachers Get Compensated for Putting on Productions?

An item we negotiated in the contract does provide for compensation if it meets the following parameters. *"Effective September 1, 2005, performing arts teachers, including theater, music, dance, drama, and choral group teachers, who conduct regular after school rehearsals and practice culminating in final productions and/or festivals shall be compensated for such after school time with a stipend of \$1,600.00 per year."* This money comes from each individual school's budget. Please discuss this with your administration and document rehearsals, etc. in order to qualify for the stipend.

As a SPED Teacher or Related Service Provider, What Do You Do If You Think a SPED Student Has Been Placed in the Wrong Setting?

In order to appeal a SPED placement the contract clearly states that the following must occur. *"When a teacher has concerns about the placement of a student, that*



Caren Carew
BTU Secondary
Field Representative

teacher shall make a request to the Principal or Headmaster to reconvene the team to reconsider the placement in accordance with the regulations. The evaluation team shall respond to the appeal within two weeks. If, upon reconsideration, the team finds the placement inappropriate, it shall present an IEP which contains an appropriate placement to the parent."

Since we, as teachers and related service providers, are charged with appropriately identifying and addressing the needs of our students, it is incumbent upon us to advocate for the appropriate placement for said child to achieve their potential. We are all sensitive to budget constraints and in some cases a rush to utilize inclusion, often without adequate planning, contractually mandated votes of effected staff, and alternatives for those students for whom the inclusion model of service delivery is inappropriate. We are the ones in the classrooms; working with the students day to day and we are also the ones whose voice should be heard when it comes to placement recommendations.

Many parents rely on our expertise to determine the correct course of action for their kids. Reaching out to and involving them proactively will help to establish ongoing communication and forge a formidable child-based alliance. Let's keep in mind why we entered education, and hold fast to our passion to do what is right for each and every child in our charge! They are depending on us to do no less.



Remember to Vote in the BTU Preliminary Election by May 6th and the Final Election by June 3rd!

Boston BTU Union Teacher

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The opinions expressed in the *Boston Union Teacher* do not necessarily represent the views of the Boston Teachers Union, or those of its members.

WHEN WRITING:

All correspondence to the *Boston Union Teacher* must be typewritten and include the author's name and school or department if not school-based.

All articles must be appropriate to the publication, and in good taste.

Letters to the Editor should be sent to letters@btu.org.

DEADLINE:

The deadline for submitting articles for the next issue of the *Boston Union Teacher* is April 17th.

All copy should be e-mailed to gvirchick@btu.org and mmaguire@btu.org. This deadline will be strictly adhered to.

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BTU Phone Numbers

Office	617-288-2000
Health & Welfare	617-288-0500
AFT Massachusetts	617-423-3342
Function Office	617-288-3322
Lounge Office.....	617-288-3322
Vision Center.....	617-288-5540
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180 Mount Vernon Street | Boston, MA 02125
617-288-2000 | Fax 617-288-0024 | www.btu.org

North Dorchester/ South Boston Meet and Greet at Seapoint



Photos by
Jessica Tang



THE NEW EDUCATOR Underground

The New Educator Committee hosted The New Educator Underground event series for early educators on Friday, March 13th.

SAVE THE DATE--The next event will be May 15th from 4-7pm, location TBD! To get involved in the New Educator Committee contact Jessica at jtang@btu.org



Photos by
Jessica Tang



Beyond MCAS and PARCC: Alternative Assessments That Work

Photos by
**Jessica Tang &
Paul Tritter**



**Boston Teachers Union
Budget
Fiscal Year 2014-2015**

Expenditures	2014	2015
Advertising	50,000	225,000
Arbitration	76,500	76,500
Asbestos [School Environmental Inspections]	8,500	8,500
Audit	32,000	32,000
Communications [Non-Telephone]	3,000	3,000
Computer	85,000	105,000
Conferences, Conventions & Meetings	450,000	500,000
Donations	50,000	65,000
Elections	0	25,000
President	4,800 [400 per month]	
3,000 [250 per month]	7,800	7,800
Exec. Vice-President	4,800 [400 per month]	
2,700 [225 per month]	7,500	7,500
Secretary-Treasurer	4,800 [400 per month]	
2,400 [200 per month]	7,200	7,200
Elem. Field Rep.	4,800 [400 per month]	4,800
Para Field Rep.	4,800 [400 per month]	4,800
Sec. Field Rep.	4,800 [400 per month]	4,800
Political Director	4,800 [400 per month]	4,800
Dir. of Organizing	4,800 [400 per month]	4,800
Committees	12,000	15,000
Insurance		
Group Health [BTU elected and clerical staff]	270,000	284,000
Liability & Accident [\$.40 per member per month]	34,500	34,500
Health & Welfare [BTU elected and clerical staff]	18,500	23,200
General [Workmen's Comp., Tenant's Ins., etc.]	14,000	16,000
RTC Health and Welfare Fund Eye Benefits	40,000	40,000
Legal		
Finnerty [Assaults]	18,000	18,000
Dwyer & Duddy [General Counsel]	850,000	850,000
Transcriptions, etc.	45,000	45,000
Mailing/Machine Room		
[equipment, supplies for equipment, paper, & repairs]	60,000	60,000
Micellaneous	2,000	2,000
Office Supplies and Expenses	85,000	85,000
Per Capita		
AFT [\$18.23 per teacher per month;		
\$9.12 per para and substitute per month]	1,317,205	1,353,694
AFT-Mass. [\$22.50 per member per month for first		
500 members; \$11.25 for each member per month]	1,029,780	1,050,500
AFL-CIO [\$.93 per member per month]	78,000	79,920
GBLC [\$.30 per member per month]	17,500	21,000
Working Massachusetts	5,000	5,000
Mass Alliance		12,000
Jobs with Justice		3,000
Postage	58,000	75,000
Printing		
Contract Books	0	0
Newspaper	55,000	60,000
Office	25,000	30,000
Rent		
Halls [\$250 each]	31,000	40,000
Office		
[\$9,117.02 per month plus \$15 each Conference Room		
set-up]	108,000	111,404
Retirement [10% of base salaries - elected and clerical		
staff plus pension administration cost]	130,000	140,000
Salary		
President [Highest salary of Group I Teacher x 1.5]	156,463	160,930
Exec. Vice-Pres. [95% of Pres.'s salary]	148,640	152,883
Sec.-Treas. [90% of Pres.'s salary]	140,817	144,837
Elem. Field Rep. [85% of Pres.'s salary]	132,993	136,790
Para Field Rep. [85% of Pres.'s salary]	132,993	136,790
Sec. Field Rep. [85% of Pres.'s salary]	132,933	136,790
Political Director [85% of Pres.'s salary]	132,933	136,790
Director of Organizing [85% of Pres.'s salary]	132,933	136,790
Organizer		120,000
Director of Professional Learning		
[Union Pays 50% of Salary]	50,000	50,000
Secretarial Staff		
Secretary	68,359	70,408
Secretary	62,359	63,856
Secretary	62,359	63,856
Secretary	62,359	63,856
Communications Coordinator [Mail Room]	62,359	63,856
Editors [1/7 of Field Rep. salary each]	37,770	38,848
Community Field Rep [1/3 of Field Rep Salary]	44,287	45,551
Negotiating Team [hourly rate]	5,000	5,000
Building Reps. [\$500 stipend for signed attendance at		
75% of all B. Rep and Member Mtgs.]	125,000	125,000
Telephone Bank Workers	2,500	2,500
Overtime [clerical staff]	2,000	3,000
Retired Teachers Chapter Coor. [10% of Field Rep.]	13,299	13,679
RTC Assistant Coordinator [75% of Coor.'s salary]	9,974	10,259
Homework Helpers	50,000	50,000
Scholarships	70,000	70,000
Subscriptions	4,000	8,200
Taxes		
Social Security	102,670	115,003
Unemployment	10,500	11,000
Telephone	27,000	30,000
Total Expenditures	7,087,485	7,707,191
Income		
Dues		
Teachers [22 P/R chk. Cycle: \$50.27 per chk.]	5,881,720	6,388,606
Paras [21 P/R chk. Cycle: \$28.43 per chk.]		
[26 P/R chk. Cycle: \$22.96 per chk.]	848,325	950,165
Substitutes [21 P/R chk. Cycle: \$22.96 per chk.]	170,000	170,000
Retired Teachers Chapter [\$60 per year]	168,000	175,020
AFT	17,640	21,600
Interest	1,800	1,800
Total Income	7,087,485	7,707,191

**Charles R. Johnson
Secretary-Treasurer
Boston Teachers Union
Local 66, AFTMA, AFT**



The BTU Organizing Team with AFT Executive Vice President Mary Catheryn Ricker (second from left) at the AFL-CIO sponsored National Immigration Implementation Training. As one of their many projects, the team will be supporting BTU members, students, and staff with the implementation of this important work in May.

Welcome to the Newest BTU Organizing Staff Members

**By Jessica Tang,
Director of Organizing**

At the end of last year, the BTU membership voted overwhelmingly to create two new organizing positions at the Boston Teachers Union – One jointly supported by the AFT to support internal organizing and another BTU position focused on external organizing.

After an extensive search with over 50 highly qualified applicants from across the country and numerous interviews, the hiring committee, composed of both staff and Executive Board members, unanimously invited two of those applicants to join the BTU staff: **Shanika Houlder** and **Jonathan Rodrigues**.

The two bring years of organizing experience and unique skill-sets that will be great assets to the organizing work of the union. Shanika will be the primary point person for many of the internal organizing initiatives including the support of several member-driven organizing committees, support of Building Representatives, school-based faculty concerns, and First Books campaign, as well as parent initiatives such as the Parent Advisory Committee.

Jonathan will be the primary point person for community organizing initiatives including the Boston Education Justice Alliance work, Community Advisory Board, Fight for \$15 campaign, budget organizing, and new Schools Our Communities Deserve campaign. In addition to the community-based work, he will also be supporting a few of the internal organizing committees that are working in partnership with community members as well.

Both will work with the Director of Organizing, staff and members of the union to advance the long-term goal of creating and maintaining quality education for all students by building internal organizational power and community power. The local work they support will complement new statewide initiatives to empower educators, students, parents and community members as advocates for quality public schools. We are thrilled to have them on board!

Meet Shanika:

Hello BTU members! My name is **Shanika Houlder** and I am delighted to be working alongside all of you in your organizing efforts. I come from an organizing family with deep roots in social justice. I have been an early educator for more than twelve years, which led me to my last position as an Organizer for Massachusetts Early Childhood Educators Union.



Shanika Houlder

My many years of working in inner city child-care centers, and the experience that I gained from watching my mother on the picket lines of the social justice movement, brought me to a crossroads; where it was clear that I could not sit by and watch the job that I loved continue to be underfunded and under-supported. These findings led me to the beginning of my journey with MECEU, where I had the privilege of working as an organizer with educators, directors and business owners in over 500 of the most under resourced centers in MA. I worked with members to advocate for changes in early Education that would lead to the quality of education that the children of MA deserves. I worked with MECEU for just under two years, and we gained many successes like increased funding and better access for the families that really need it. I have also worked with SEIU 1199 as a Political organizer and member-to-member organizer prior to my work with MECEU.

As a proud parent of three Boston Public School students, I am invested in assisting educators in building their strength and voice through solidarity, to ensure that all children in MA are advocated for and given the opportunity of having the best public education possible. Massachusetts has always lead the nation when it comes to things like technology workforce and health-care, and I have no doubt that we can also set the standards for issues surrounding public school education and advocating for our children. As a parent and as an organizer, I would like to see schools stray from its apparent direction of testing prep sites and return to its original existence of a student centered learning facility where the teacher is the number one resource. I look forward to meeting and working alongside you all in the near future as we aim for similar goals.

Meet Jonathan:

Hi BTU members! My name is **Jonathan Rodrigues**, and I couldn't be more honored and excited to start with the BTU this month! A few things about me: I'm originally from Somerville- before it was cool- but spent about half my life in South Florida. I'm a first-generation Brazilian-American who has always been very close to my community and the issues that most affected them, namely immigration, education and healthcare.

It was during my time in Chicago, while attending college, that I really learned the transformative power of organizing. I immersed myself in the immigrant rights



Jonathan Rodrigues

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Candidate Statements for Paraprofessional/ Substitute Teacher Field Representative

Christopher Breen

Greetings,
My name is **Christopher Breen**. I was born and raised in Charlestown as well as educated in the BPS, attending both the Harvard Kent School and Boston Latin Academy. I have my Bachelor's Degree from UMASS-Boston and I am a candidate for a Master's Degree from Cambridge College. I am also the Building Rep for the Eliot K-8 School. I want to be the Paraprofessional/Substitute Field Representative because I know the dedication and sacrifice it takes to occupy these positions. I have been a Paraprofessional for the last eight years and was raised by a parent, who is also a Para in the BPS. Because of this, I know the level of sacrifice and hard work that comes with our job. I know what it's like to get up early and walk to work in the snow and rain. I know what it's like to leave work when the bell rings, only to immediately head out for a late shift at a part time job or attend night classes, getting home in time for a few hours rest. I also know what it's like to see your parent make those same sacrifices for you. I want to be your Feld Rep because I want to represent a group of people who are truly self-less and understand these sacrifices, a group that puts their children and students ahead of themselves. Para's and Substitutes are these types of people and they deserve a Representative who is honored to fight for them. In these times of extended school days, Paraprofessionals and Substitutes are being asked to do more, they need someone who is completely accessible at any hour and who will work tirelessly to protect their rights. I only ask for the chance to be that person.

Thank You.



Josefina Lascano

My name is Josefina Lascano and I am seeking re-election for the position of **Paraprofessional/Substitute Teacher Field Representative**.

Thank you for allowing me to serve as your representative these past two years. I am seeking re-election to continue serving all of the paraprofessionals and substitutes of the Boston Public Schools.

It's very important to have continuity and I want to be the one to represent you, to protect your rights and to get the recognition and respect you deserve for the daily work you do in our schools.

This is a job that I take very seriously because I believe in our **UNION** and our members deserve to be well represented and I will continue protecting and supporting them to the best of my ability.

My experience with the **Boston Teachers Union** over the years:

- Building Representative
- Negotiating Team
- Paraprofessional Council
- Trustee for the Paraprofessional Health and Welfare Fund
- Collective Bargaining Committee
- Delegate to All Affiliated Bodies
- Delegate to Local and National Conventions
- Election Committee

Many of the accomplishments I have received:

- AFTMA Distinguish Service Award
- Paraprofessional of the Year
- AFT Everyday Unsung Hero
- Foster Mother of the Year
- Para Mentor Program Graduate
- AFT ER&D MSBSS Strand Trainer

Proud mother of a Boston Public School teacher.

Speaks Spanish fluently.

Thank you in advance for the opportunity to continue serving you!

Your **VOTE** counts. Tu **Voto** cuenta!

Primary is on May 6th. Ask for a mail in ballot or come to the BTU hall to vote in person from 9:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.



Donna Lashus

My name is **Donna Lashus**, I am a candidate for the Paraprofessional/Substitute Field Representative. I have a unique vision and commitment of the Boston Public Schools as graduate, a parent, a grandparent, an employee, and a BTU member. I have over 20 years of educating children. My vast experience ranges from:

- Member of the BTU Inclusion Committee
- Member of the combined BTU committee of ELL and Inclusion
- Paraprofessional Council
- BTU Building Representative
- CFC working with families
- Teaching and supporting Pre K-to High school students in Reg. Ed., Title I, SEI, Special Education, Early Childhood, Reading and Math Intervention
- A Library Paraprofessional

I am committed to raising issues and concerns that impact the lives and work of our members and the children we serve. One voice speaks for many and it is important that voice rise to the top to be heard in a democracy. In times of serious economic problems in our country and the move to change the face of public education it is even more important for educators to be united. I have a long history of being a community activist who advocates for the rights and services we need on the local, state, and national level. I will do my best to ensure that the voice of all members of the union is heard. **I am asking for your valuable vote.**



Inclusion Committee Sets Agenda: Teacher Input Needed

The BTU inclusion committee was formed last year in April in response to an announcement that 20 plus new inclusion K2 classrooms would be opening in Sept 2014. The decision to open these classrooms was made at the district level with no input from the receiving school communities (i.e. parents, teachers). But we know that as educators who work directly with the students, we have valuable experience, ideas and commitment. We wanted our voices heard.

The goal of this committee is to support the expansion of inclusion and to advocate for the resources needed to make inclusion work well

We have met with parents who are members of the SpedPac, with Eileen Nash, Deputy Superintendent of Special Education, and Hilary Shay, a teacher whose role is to help implement inclusion in the new classrooms. The School Committee had commissioned an Inclusion Task Force, which we attended initially as observers. We met with Dr. Henderson, head of the task force and other task force members. This fall we made recommendations, some which were included in the Task

Force Report. Most recently we participated in a meeting with the new mayor's information gathering consultant with city councilor Tito Jackson. Our message during all these meetings was that inclusion can be successful if it is well supported. On December 10th, we testified before the School Committee and made the following recommendations for items we feel are essential to the success of existing and new inclusion programs:

- Inclusion programs be developed, expanded, and assessed with the involvement of each school community, including parents, staff and where appropriate students. This can be done through a subcommittee of the School Site Council or other school-based committee.
- At an IEP meeting where a determination is being made about placement, information in writing be available to parents and all team members about what placement options are available and what supports like staffing and counseling exist in each program.
- Trained interpreters be available at

meetings and documents translated into the parent's native language.

- All staff including specialists, itinerants and paraprofessionals be included in common planning time.
- Paraprofessionals be provided continuing education and training during the school day.
- Knowledgeable and competent substitute paraprofessionals be provided when a paraprofessional is absent or out of the classroom. Students in a classroom that is designed with paraprofessional support should have that support consistently.
- Weighted student formula funding be clearly designated and spent on the students it is identified for, with input from parents, teachers, and administrators.
- Principals and special education coordinators be given the training needed to maximize the procurement of weighted student formula money, and that the formula be evaluated to be sure it is providing adequate funding.
- Teachers taking courses for additional certifications be given support, including financial.
- Supports like timely training, assistance from inclusion specialists and additional time be provided to teachers who have added responsibilities like testing and report writing for their inclusion students.
- Students be provided with adequate staff in their classrooms. Even a teacher with triple licensure is still only one person who may not be able to give all students the attention and specialized instruction they need to be successful.
- Parents be provided timely and up to date information about all the inclusive options for their child, especially for

students entering a transition year. Information should be available at the Family Resource Centers, on the BPS website and at the schools.

- Newcomers need identification for special education needs as well as language needs.

As the year has progressed new experiences have led to more recommendations.

- Individual teachers in classes all over the city are responsible for developing differentiated materials for what can be a wide range of students. The math and ELA departments, with the guidance of an inclusion specialist, could create and share materials (i.e. adapted worksheet connected to a specific lesson) for teachers to use. The special education department could help to develop ways for teachers to share materials and strategies with each other.
- Some of the students who have had the most difficulty in inclusion classrooms have mental health, behavior and sensory challenges. There are schools that have made excellent use of space designed to provide sensory-based therapy and breaks. Equipment like therapy balls, weighted blankets, rocking chair, and music can be valuable in helping a student calm and gain self-control. Spaces like these are needed in all settings as are social skills groups and on site counseling services.

The inclusion committee is made up of teachers, paraprofessionals, itinerants, nurses and parents. We come from schools with a variety of inclusion programs – from long standing full inclusion, to brand new single classrooms. We would love to hear from other BTU members - please join us at our next meeting (look for date in the BTU bulletin) or send comments, c/o BTU news.

Welcome to the Newest BTU Organizing Staff Members...

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movement there, helping to successfully push my university to support undocumented students and launching a 24/7-immigrant help hotline. I was also proud of the many legislative victories working with the Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights, among them the IL DREAM Act. We had a saying, "organizing works- if it hasn't yet, organize more". Subsequently, I've worked turning out immigrant communities in the 2012 elections in Florida as well as raising grassroots pressure for immigration reform in

rural Illinois.

Thankfully, life brought me back to Boston in 2013 where I've been organizing youth with Sociedad Latina, a youth-development nonprofit in Mission Hill. During that time our campaigns focused in highlighting the inequities in the BPS budget and ELL education. I'm excited to join the BTU and hope to enhance its work organizing diverse populations of parents and teachers to fight for the schools we all deserve. Let's organize until we win it!

WE'RE LEARNING HERE

A project by Amika Kemmler Ernst, Ed.D.



Condon Elementary School

With very little notice and just a week before giving PARCC tests, administrators and teachers at the Condon welcomed me to their school. Just off Broadway in South Boston, the Condon serves approximately 800 students in grades K1-5.

Monique Bynoe, a K1 Inclusion teacher, says she loves the supportive staff and the diversity of the families at her school. She was hosting "Pajama Day" in her classroom and invited me to visit during yoga class with **Robin Strickman**. I followed the sound of music in the front hall and found **Rene Martin** leading a class of K1 students as they practiced a "Ring Around the Rosie" dance. In **Peggy McLaughlin's** K2 class, children were reading independently and then animatedly sharing their books with assigned partners.

The Condon has two classes for severely handicapped students and I admired their teachers' patient encouragement of basic skills, such as eating or greeting a visitor, while **Kevin Lavallee** used a rubber snake to introduce the letter S to two of his students!

Kendra Engel's fourth graders were learning about animal defenses and reacted with gasps of amazement when she held up a 12" ruler to show how long one millipede was! Third grade students in **Manijeh Khalil's** class have selected achievement goals, which are posted outside their classroom with ideas for how they might be reached by the end of the school year.

Large illustrated signs explicitly described behavior for common areas according to the four "Condon Style" expectations: be respectful, be responsible, be safe, and be kind. The staff clearly models those school-wide norms – retired teacher **Connie Leone**, who now serves the school community as a much-appreciated substitute, commented that there was a "wonderful spirit" at the Condon.



This was during math. Ms. Capasso was helping me with adding and subtracting fractions. We've also learned how to convert decimals into fractions and fractions into decimals. Now we're doing word problems and how to make improper fractions into mixed numbers.

Sidney Ubiera, Grade 5



Ms. Engel was reading a book called Venom to the class. We are learning about animal defenses. We learned that millipedes can curl up into a tight ball and have a tough exoskeleton. We've also learned that centipedes and millipedes are not insects, and that they have 20-100 segments!

Jerry O'Neil, Tianna Lutan, & Mia Klian, Grade 4



This is in art class and I'm building a house of clear plastic pieces. This year we've also learned how to make portraits.

Kimberly Mejia, Grade 3



This was dance class with Ms. Martin. We were practicing a dance for "Ring Around the Rosie" where we all fall down. We're learning how to do dance moves all together.

Shayene Noel & Dmiya Louis, K1



Ms. O'Leary was watching me write the letter S. I am learning how to write upper and lower case letters. I already know the whole alphabet!

Juan Franco, K1



We were reading Clifford and talking about it with our teacher, Ms. McLaughlin. We're learning to read and write and listen.

Abobakar Hassan & Khami Fernandez, K2

(Amika Kemmler Ernst is a recently retired BPS New Teacher Developer with extensive experience as a classroom teacher, curriculum developer, and graphic artist.

Her "We're Learning Here" Project features images of everyday learning in our public schools, along with the words of the students pictured.)

Amika

Amika Kemmler Ernst, Ed. D.
Amika45@comcast.net

I was pointing to each word and Ms. Collins was helping me. I am learning to read little books. I like to read every night with my sister.

Holly Mborja, K2