We hope you are having a good summer and getting some rest, doing something new, and getting recharged, as we all gear up for an exciting and challenging year.

Our contract cycle ends a year from now, and it is our goal to negotiate a new collective bargaining agreement prior to the current one’s expiration. We know that Superintendent Tommy Chang (see in-depth interview in Commonwealth Magazine at [http://commonwealthmagazine.org/education/chang-takes-charge/]) feels similarly.

As per our bylaws we will announce the formation of a new Collective Bargaining Committee (CBC), as well as a new negotiating team for approval at the September Membership meeting.

Nominations for the 40- to 50-member CBC will begin immediately, and will be announced shortly via the e-bulletin. The CBC will meet during the fall as a team and in subcommittees to gather and vet collective bargaining proposals, and then distill the proposals into a workable format. We will gather negotiating items and proposals and will place them into the following broad categories:
1. Compensation and Benefits
2. Teaching and learning conditions/School climate
3. Professional Learning
4. Staff Assignment Issues
5. Para Issues (specialized)
6. Substitute teacher issues (specialized)
7. Group Issues, e.g., from Faculty Senates, union committees, Itinerant providers (OT, PT and so on)

All items and proposals submitted will be slotted into one of the above categories, and subgroups of the CBC working in each of the above categories will meet throughout the fall to vet all proposals and work on final language to be submitted.

All members of the BTU and all representative bodies (e.g., Nurses, Faculty Senate, Testing Committee, and so on) will be encouraged to submit items for discussion and review. A process for submission will shortly be announced via the e-bulletin.

We welcome all ideas and proposals, and all will be considered for inclusion in our bargaining proposals. The final package submitted to the school department will be a targeted package of membership and school priority proposals, vetted by the CBC and its subcommittees and designed to enhance our professional lives and improve our schools for our members and our students.

As part of our process the Negotiating Team will also hold a series of meetings with interested parent, community, and student groups to solicit their ideas for improving our schools and explain our priorities.

Again, all members interested in signing up for the CBC are encouraged to apply via the e-bulletin. Similarly, all members and groups who wish to submit items for consideration in the collective bargaining package, are also encouraged to submit their ideas electronically. Details of each process will be forthcoming.

Thank you.

Proposed Collective Bargaining Activity | Timeline
--- | ---
Applications open for Collective Bargaining Team (CBC) Membership | August 1 - September 7
Submission of ideas and proposals for Collective Bargaining Package | August 1 - October 15
CBC and Negotiating Committee appointed | September 9
CBC meets for the first time | September 16, 4:30 pm
Draft of package ready for distribution to CBC | October 15
CBC subcommittees meet to review subgroup items | October - November
CBC subcommittees hold open meetings for interested membership | November
CBC meets with parents, community, student groups | November
CBC meets to finalize package | December
Package goes to membership for approval | January 13
Negotiating process begins | January 14
Thank You, Garret Virchick, For Your Service as Co-Editor of the Boston Union Teacher

Commentary by Michael J. Maguire
Rethinking High School

Dear Editor:

As it stands now, many K-8 schools change their student populations drastically in grade 7. Many former 6th graders enroll in the exam schools thus causing vacancies in their sending schools. Those vacancies are often filled by students with special needs who struggle with the English language or students over 21 who were in shockingly high numbers, especially prior to high stakes testing. Worse yet, most charter schools do not educate students who are admitted by the lottery with moderate to severe special needs. And those students who are admitted by the lottery (a barrier in and of itself) leave the charters in shockingly high numbers, especially prior to high stakes testing. Worse yet, most charters do not fill these vacated seats from their much-hyped waiting list.

So, before we add more schools to our two-tiered educational system, let us examine the successes and failures of the existing charter schools. For if 22 years is not enough time to judge our grand experiment, then the process itself is a failure and ought to be scrapped outright.

Sincerely,
Michael J. Maguire
Boston Teachers Union

The BTU welcomes letters to the editor from all members. The content of all letters represents the individual member’s opinion. All letters are subject to editing and to review.

What Are You Afraid Of?

I am a proud retiree in the Boston Teachers Union. For the past eight years I had been the only retiree on the board. Three years ago I was joined by another retiree, James “Timo” Phillip. We are two votes and two voices on a board of 19 people. There are also two other people at the meetings – our Director of Organizing and our PD person who works with the school department and the union. They had a voice, but no vote.

What Are You Afraid Of?

During the election it was rumored that some people were told not to vote for retirees. Why? Because we are old? Because we remember the past and can help plan for the future? Because we know how to follow procedures that may help avoid unintended consequences? Because we lobby and attend meetings while you are teaching? Because we fight for COLA’s and health care for retirees.

What Are You Afraid Of?

Re: Governor Baker & Charter Schools

The following letter was sent to the Boston Globe, but not printed.

Dear Editor:

Before we add more charter schools we should take a long, hard look at our existing ones. (Baker backs bid to add charter schools in Mass., July 16, 2015). More than twenty years have passed since Massachusetts began experimenting with charter schools. The goal in 1993 was laudable: to find innovative ways to improve public education. Successes found in these charter schools were to be replicated district or state-wide. Schools without educational success were supposed to be closed.

Fast forward to 2015. Our noble beginnings have been forgotten. Charter schools are closed for financial not educational irregularities. So-called successful charter schools overwhelmingly do not educate students who struggle with the English language or students with moderate to severe special needs. And those students who are admitted by the lottery (a barrier in and of itself) leave the charters in shockingly high numbers, especially prior to high stakes testing. Worse yet, most charters do not fill these vacated seats from their much-hyped waiting list.

So, before we add more schools to our two-tiered educational system, let us examine the successes and failures of the existing charter schools. For if 22 years is not enough time to judge our grand experiment, then the process itself is a failure and ought to be scrapped outright.

Sincerely,
Michael J. Maguire
Boston Teachers Union

Positive force for change in the Boston Public schools, as a firewall against harmful educational reforms, and as an advocate for social justice. He and the newspaper have been honored with AFT Journalism Awards in 2006, 2007, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012 and 2014. These awards have included Best Editorial, Best News Story, Best Photo, the Excellence Award, Best Publication, and Best Feature Story.

Though no longer an editor, Garret will continue to write for the Boston Union Teacher from time to time. In September, Cobly Whyte of the Lee-K 8 will join Michael Maguire as co-editor.
Do Teachers Receive PDP’s for the 18+ Beyond the Instructional School Day PD Hours and Full Day(s) of BPS Professional Development?

By Caren Carew

Caren Carew
BTU Secondary Field Representative

Over the summer based on work already done between September and June of that academic year.

If a provisional teacher has been granted an RA, and has received a termination letter from the BPS, they ARE eligible to collect Unemployment Compensation.

If a teacher has been terminated due to just cause and has done so via a settlement agreement, draws up with the BPS Labor Relations Department, then they must refer to the terms of said settlement in relation to filing for Unemployment Compensation when applicable.

To obtain more information, call the Massachusetts Division of Employment via the web www.compass.state.massachusetts, or by phone TeleClaims services at 1-877-626-6800 or 617-626-6800. Hours are Monday-Thursday 8:30 a.m.-6:30 p.m.; Friday 8:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

What does COBRA mean?

COBRA stands for the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1985. It is the law that requires employers who offer group health insurance plans to give their employees the opportunity to stay on their group health insurance plan if they are no longer employed by the employer and the former employee isn’t eligible for health insurance coverage through a spouse’s insurance.

If a teacher is terminated from the BPS/ City of Boston, they will be mailed information about COBRA benefits. For further inquiries concerning COBRA continuation of coverage, get in touch with the Health Benefits and Insurance Office, Room 807, City Hall. They will call 617-635-4570.

The deadline for submitting articles for the fall issue is September 15th. All articles must be appropriate to the publication, and in good taste. All articles must be appropriate to the publication, and in good taste. All articles must be appropriate to the publication, and in good taste.

President
RICHARD E. STUTMAN

Vice President
PATRICK J. CONNOLLY

Secretary-Treasurer
CHARLES R. JOHNSON

Editorial Board
MICHAEL E. DAVIE
GARRET VRIECHICK

Editor
Caren Carew
Angela Cristiani
Josefina Lascamo
Michael McLaughlin

The Boston Union Teacher is published eleven times a year September - July, inclusive.
BTU Honors the 2015 Building Reps of the Year

The Middle School/K-8 BTU Building Representative of the Year 2015 Award Recipients are the dynamic duo of the Tobin K-8 School, Caitlin Gaffney and Mary Alice Sandy. The Tobin K-8 in Mission Hill, has had many challenges the last few years including being on the precipice of level 4 status, an administratively heavily labored for Innovation School conversion which the staff did not vote to embrace and the ensuing fallout and pressure on staff by the former principal.

The BTU Rep team of Gaffney and Sandy ably worked with their BTU colleagues and school administration to ride the rapids of the intense scrutiny doled out to some teachers juxtaposed with rampant favoritism lavished on others. Always collaborative and cooperative, their style is polite persistence – serving them well in their role as BTU Reps. Were this demeanor employed by others – including administration – many of the miscommunications and disagreements faced on a day to day basis in schools would be greatly diminished.

Their former school administrator then became the Network Superintendent overseeing the Tobin School, bringing with it a new level of scrutiny in the building and towards some of the staff. Questionable school audits and reports were generated causing major morale issues throughout the school and triangulation of the current principal, the former one, and staff members. Mary Alice and Caitlin presented constructive options for addressing the concerns raised at the school. One such strategy was to initiate a meeting between Superintendent Brounough, the Union President, and key BTU members to identify the issues, discuss options, and to create an action plan to address same.

Mary Alice’s and Caitlin’s professional integrity as educators, on-going involvement in union sponsored and other professional development options, proactive approach to problem solving and building a professional culture – all have combined to afford the Tobin community a very nuanced and skilled team of BTU Representatives. Their effectiveness representing colleagues in school meetings, dealing with grievances, organizing for and participation in union activities have set them apart and has resulted in building a more inclusive, professional, and activist Union!

- Careen Carew, Secondary Field Representative

The BTU High School Building Representative of the Year 2015 is Brenda Chaney from the John D. O’Byrant School of Mathematics & Science. Brenda has been a Union activist for decades, carrying water on the building level as a BTU Rep at the Dearborn Middle School, the King Middle School – where she and I worked together as a BTU Rep team, and now at the O’Byrant. She has been involved on the Local level, serving on numerous committees including, but not limited to, being elected to several terms on the BTU Executive Board, and as Delegate to all affiliated bodies. She serves as a member both on the BTU and the State AFT-MA Committee on Political Education (COPE) committees. Brenda has been elected for many terms to proudly represent the BTU on the AFT-MA’s Executive Board as well as appointed nationally on AFT committees.

For over a decade, she has done a marvelous job as the BTU Community Outreach Liaison where she participates and plans events/meetings with parent/community organizations and individuals as well as coordinates the highly successful BTU Homework Helper Program conducted in the neighborhood branches of the Boston Public Library.

Brenda has worked in challenging environments and has been presented with numerous frustrations as a BTU Rep over the years. Her fabulous smile and collaborative demeanor have served her well as a mediator between her peers, a negotiator with administrators, a partner working in the children’s best interest with parental and community groups, as well as an effective and much respected educator of the students of Boston. While Brenda is retiring from teaching in the BPS this school year, she’ll never be a retiring personality in that she will continue to be a leader in the BTU as an elected Executive Board member and beyond!

- Careen Carew, Secondary Field Representative

Congratulations to the 2015 Elementary Building Representatives of the Year, Marta Johnson Faldasz and Jennifer Hayes. Marta is an Early Childhood teacher at the Roosevelt K-8 Lower Campus in Hyde Park. Marta has been diligent in organizing her building and getting the message out to our members at the Roosevelt lower campus. Unfortunately, as in many buildings this brings on unnecessary and unwarranted scrutiny from others at the building. Nonetheless, Marta has been unswerving and for these reasons has received the recognition of being a union leader and a recipient of the silver bowl.

Jennifer Hayes is also an Early Childhood teacher. Jennifer currently works at the Winspin School in Brighton. Jennifer, just like her Winspin colleagues, has had a challenging year. To address the challenges, Jennifer was instrumental in revitalizing the Winspin Faculty Senate. With Jeni’s leadership the faculty actively engaged in addressing the issues and reigned the status quo. As a result the Winspin has been able to restore a healthy learning culture. Congratulations to Marta and Jennifer the 2015 Building Reps of the Year.

- Michael McLaughlin, Elementary Field Representative

BECAUSE OF PRIOR COMMITMENTS, NEITHER MARTA NOR JENNIFER WERE ABLE TO ATTEND THE BUILDING REPS OF THE YEAR AWARDS CEREMONY. THE BTU CONGRATULATES ALL OF THIS YEAR’S BUILDING REPS AND THE BUILDING REPS OF THE YEAR!

SAVE THE DATES!

Annual BTU Building Reps Conference
October 23-25, 2015
BY MICHAEL J. MAGUIRE

THE 2015 TEACH (Together Educating America’s Children) conference was held in Washington, D.C. July 12-15, 2015. If you did not join us this summer, please consider joining us for the next TEACH conference in 2017. (It is held in the same city and same time period every other year.)

This is one conference that lives up to its name. TEACH is not union leaders in love with the sound of their own voices. TEACH has far more workshops than the mere handful of large audience lectures. The workshops are held all throughout the day, on topics ranging from how to improve classroom practice to how to build a better union local. But TEACH is more than just topics, it’s about the importance of teamwork.

This is for *Together*. The TEACH conference brings together more than just teachers. Leading figures in government, business, and community come together to discuss education. Some workshops are small enough that everyone’s voice is heard and others are large enough to include a wide variety of viewpoints.

This is for *Educating*. Make no mistake; this conference is about improving education. Various workshops highlighted the rise and important of community schools. Other workshops focused on the good, the bad and the political of standardized tests. No matter you area of interest, TEACH has a place for you to express/explore it.

This is for *America*. One of the coolest things about TEACH is that it is held in our nation’s capital. Take some time to visit the Smithsonian, the White House, Congress, the various monuments and memorials. While the TEACH conference was in session debating the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. I took my children to see the Senate in action. We saw Senator Franken (D-MN) and Senator Markey (D-MA) speak on the Senate floor.

This is for *Children*. As mentioned above, I brought my children to TEACH. Others BTU members brought their children too. Honestly, what better place to bring children than to a conference full of teachers?

To learn more about what went on, go to #TEACH15. And I look forward to seeing you at #TEACH17.
BTU-RTC Spring Retirees Luncheon a Huge Success

Photos by
Jessica Tang
Khan and Holland’s Work Highlighted at AFT TEACH Conference

By Jessica Tang and Paul Tritter

What happens when a group of like-minded Boston Public Schools educators meet once per month to discuss educational issues they are passionate about? They become teacher leaders who learn how to take active leadership roles in their schools, unions, and communities. For the past eight months, several teachers in Boston Public Schools have met as a cohort. Each meeting allowed fellows to connect with policy makers, learn deeply about policy, and connect their learning to action research projects in their schools and classrooms.

The Boston Teachers Union is one of over a dozen locals across the nation that is participating in the American Federation of Teachers Teacher Leaders Program. Our parent organization has been supporting this program for three years, and the Boston Teachers Union changed the way that they measured participation in last year’s cohort.

During the biennial TEACH conference, AFT president Randi Weingarten highlighted the work of a handful of the fellows, including BTU members Afra Khan and Lily Holland. The fellows were invited to attend as special guests at the conference. Khan and Holland noticed that when the district changed the way that they measured poverty by moving from free and reduced lunch application to “direct certification” poverty, there was a 68 percent overnight drop in the number of COA/BRA applications available at the BTU Hall. Their projects are listed below.

All members can apply for the new cohort this fall! Please see the side bar with more information about the program and how to apply.

Next Steps for Students in Danger of Retention: A Study on Motivating Brown and Black Boys
Edverette Brewster, Teacher, Lili G. Frederick Pilot Middle School

College and Career Readiness for English Language Learners: What Really Works
Melissa Wonder, Teacher, Jeremiah E. Burke High School

Ready or Not for Testing: Advocating for English Language Learners
Gina Desir, Teacher, Mattahunt Elementary School; Sylvaine Lestrade, Teacher, William Monroe Trotter Innovation School

Executive summaries of their projects are available at the BTU Hall. Their projects are listed below.

How can I advocate for my students and my profession?

Learn about this and more in the:

Apply Today for the BTU/AFT Teacher Leader Fellows Program

How can I advocate for my students and my profession?
What is education policy?
How does it affect me, my students and my school?

INFORMATION FOR NEW RETIREES

When you retire, you are no longer a member of the Union because you no longer pay dues. And, you are no longer a member of the Health and Welfare Fund, which means you no longer have dental coverage and eyeglass coverage. If you wish to continue your connection to the union, you can join the Retired Teachers Chapter (RTC). The dues will be taken from your retirement check each month ($5 for teachers, $2.50 for paras).

The RTC offers a dental insurance benefit to its members for a fee each month. Our Dental Plan covers members only and their spouse. You can also avail yourself of COBRA coverage through Health and Welfare for 18 months after retiring. For info on COBRA call 1-877-288-0500. After two years membership you are entitled to a eyeglasses with a prescription from your personal eye doctor. You can pick up an application at the BTU office or call and have one sent to your home address.

INFORMATION ON THE RTC, hopefully, after reading the info, you will fill in the blue card and return it to us.

[Martha Cotton is RTC Membership Chairperson]

Complete the information below and we will send you the application form.

- Name ________________
- Address ____________________________
- City/Town/State/Zip ____________________
- Email ____________________________
- Telephone ____________________________
- Circle your previous positions: Teacher Paraprofessional
- Send this form to: BTU RTC, 180 Mount Vernon Street, Dorchester, MA 02125

BOSTON UNION TEACHER | July-August, 2015 7
On Saturday, June 13, 2015, the BTU held its 45th annual scholarship banquet at which we awarded close to $70,000 in $1,000 scholarships to wonderful and deserving dependents of BTU members as well as grand-dependents of RTC members. In addition, we award scholarships to our wonderful and deserving graduating seniors in the BPS. Thanks go to our BTU and RTC scholarship committees, which spend hundreds of hours vetting our awardees. Great credit belongs to Denise Henderson, Marcia Fitzpatrick and Susan Lambert for working at the brunch. Thanks, too, go to our Building Reps who choose the graduating seniors for our BPS awards. Congratulations go to all.

Photos by Michael J. Maguire