President’s Corner by Richard Stutman

W e have been through a controversial stretch with our election process and much has gone back and forth about the process. While the winners have been announced and the recount completed, there remains an unfinished feeling to the last few month’s activity. Some members are pleased with the results, some not so. Many undoubtably aren’t sure how they feel. As the dust settles and as our feelings become clearer, the election results, as well as the process, will continue to be analyzed from all angles. In the meantime, the membership has asked that the BTU leadership prepare two reports, described below. One is completed below, and one is to follow. Both will be done as directed. Both motions passed unanimously, and there was no voiced opposition to either.

The first motion was to get a report from AAA, which conducted the election, in answer to the below questions:

Q: Why were the originally advertised deadlines and timelines not adhered to?
A: If this question refers to the request ballot form deadline, there is no error on our part. The lists are the administrator’s life line for the process and it is imperative that they are updated and correct. Use of the lists is the only way to ensure that Retirees were provided all ballots that they were entitled to.

Q: Why did some members not receive a request for a mail-in ballot?
A: The AAA can only provide speculation on this matter. Every member themselves and documented. The only exceptions were members being fulfilled from multiple ballot requests assigned to them may be sent in. No election in the Boston Teachers Union (hereafter “AAA”) has ever had a ballot that was not mailed or received by the recipient. The AAA is at liberty to make suggestions on procedures, but not to create them.

Q: What recommendations does the AAA have to ensure a timely and improved election process in the next election?
A: The AAA takes their directives from the Election Chair and followed the deadlines that were provided. The AAA is at liberty to make suggestions on procedures, but not to create them.

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### BTU Election Results

(continued from page 1)

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<tr>
<th>Delegate to All Affiliated Bodies</th>
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<td>Donna Adame, West Roxbury Academy</td>
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<td>Maritza Arroyo, Lynn SPED/SPOT</td>
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<td>Patricia Armstrong, Retired</td>
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<td>Christine Arnold, Summer ES</td>
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<td>Roslyn “Roz” Auer, Retired</td>
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<td>Sandra Baler-Segal, Retired</td>
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<td>David Brown, Career Services</td>
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<td>Christine Buttiglieri, Mario Umana Academy</td>
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<td>Cornelia “Connie” Callahan, Retired</td>
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<td>Robert P. Carroll, Summer ES</td>
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<td>Brenda Charney, O’Bryant HS</td>
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<td>Marie Comille, Mildred Ave. K-8</td>
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<td>Patrick Conolly, Madison Park TVHS/BTU Office</td>
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<td>Michael Crain, Career and Technical Education</td>
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<td>Angela Cristina, Psychological Services/BTU Office</td>
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<td>Marjie Crosby, SPED OT</td>
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<td>Edward J. Doherty, AFT Massachusetts</td>
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<td>David J. Donovan, Retired</td>
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<td>Elizabeth Drinan, BTU KS Pilot</td>
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<td>John Enright, Madison Park TVHS</td>
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<td>Cheryl L. Kelly, R.N. Edwards MS</td>
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<td>Nicholas Munguma, Madison Park TVHS</td>
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<td>James (Timo) Philip, Retired</td>
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<td>Kristen W. Pinto, Retired</td>
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<td>Declan Power, Counseling &amp; Intervention Ctr.</td>
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<td>Kevin Edel, Blackstone Innovation School</td>
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<td>Casandra Samuel, Young Achievers Pilot K-8</td>
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### BTU Members Attend New Superintendent Dr. Tommy Chang’s Listen and Learn Event

by Jessica Tang

_On Tuesday, May 28th, over eighty BTU members attended a Listen and Learn event with Dr. Tommy Chang, BPS Superintendent-in-waiting. The BTU hosted the event with the help of the three BTU members who were selected to be a part of his transition team. Lee Franty, Erik Berg, and Neema Avasthi. During the event, representatives from five of the BTU’s Organizing Committees (Inclusion, ELL’s, Less Testing More Learning, New Educators, and Restorative Justice) and the Professional Learning Advisory Committee presented “bright spots” challenges and solutions. Members of the audience also had an opportunity to ask questions and share thoughts._

_BPS Superintendent-in-waiting Dr. Tommy Chang answers questions at the Listen and Learn Event._

_motion 2: The BTU president shall conduct a complete operational review of the 2015 election process and submit a written report to the membership at the September 2015 membership meeting. The review and report shall include at minimum: Findings on what mistakes – internal and or external – led to members not receiving mail-in ballots in a timely manner or at all._

### Election Follow-Up…

(continued from page 1)

world allows you to request ballots on behalf of other people, or worse, send in a cast ballot on their behalf. Ballots are sent with pre-paid envelopes to ensure that the process is seamless and does not cost the member anything to vote. If you vote in a polling election, controls need to be put into place to verify the member’s identity such as the member being required to show a picture ID. Mail ballots must also have these same controls to the furthest extent possible. This eliminates spending money on postage unnecessarily and time and cost spent on labor. Have a dialogue with members so that the process is completely open, preferably via email. (Reminding them to vote either by mail or at the polls, that they can call to request a ballot to a complete and a completely secure environment. (i.e. Press 1 or 2 out PINs and would have the opportunity to vote on a web-site or on the phone through touch voting, (i.e. Press 1 or 2 for this candidate, Press 2 for this candidate, etc.) This would eliminate the need for first class postage and give members access to voting 24/7. The duplicate online form would then become a place for members to request PINs that may not have been received. Or, to take this a step forward, the last 4 digits of the social security can be used. (Arrangements are made to avoid 2 people having the same last 4 digits). This way, when the voter has entered in their PIN, they only see/hear the ballot that they are supposed to vote on per the lists provided. This also provides controls where we can see when a member voted and the results would be available five minutes after the closing of the polls. This also would cut your bill by at least half, which preserves the union’s funds.

Thank you.

**Motion 2: The BTU president shall conduct a complete operational review of the 2015 election process and submit a written report to the membership at the September 2015 membership meeting. The review and report shall include at minimum: Findings on what mistakes – internal and or external – led to members not receiving mail-in ballots in a timely manner or at all.**

*Proposed corrective steps that will help avert a repeat of this year’s failures in future elections.*

- A generic timeline for future elections in the form “X weeks out from election day” that includes all operational aspects of the election process.

- A review of the decision making process of the Election Committee that describes how all members are included in that process.

Regarding motion #2, which was directed to the president…

I will prepare a full and comprehensive report sometime this summer that answers the questions asked. I will also provide the membership with a series of possible recommendations to change the process. I anticipate that much of what I will suggest will require extensive debate and more than a few by-law changes. Those changes, if any, will be decided by the BTU membership. In making recommendations that will allow for greater transparency and clarity, I will lay out a number of options that I think will improve the process. The report will be completed by the opening of the school year.

Please have a healthy and productive summer.
The Superintendent’s Circular: School Counselor (@) 21st Century PSE Details in 31 pages what these procedures are. The Circular states, “It is the responsibility of each school administrative head to update, review, with authority within their school. Their School Contingency Plan no later than September 21 each school year.” The circular begins, “Emergency situations can happen anywhere and at any time. Teachers and school administrators and staff routinely manage crisis and a well thought out plan will ensure guidance in a major emergency.” If this has not occurred at your school, I strongly suggest you seek out your school’s plan and review it immediately along with this circular in total. I will touch on some elements of the circular, but encourage you to review it in its entirety. There are three tiers defining incident responses. These situations will be categorized by the designated Site Incident Control Manager (SICM). All incidents or behavior categorized as Tier I – III will require action and will be determined based on the safety of students, staff, and facilities. Tier I presents conditions of potential danger to students, staff and property beyond the school’s ability to control which would require an immediate evacuation: 1) Bomb threat, bomb threat, bomb threat; 2) alcohol, drug, bomb threat, kidnapping, hazardous materi- als, violent behavior, school bus accidents, fire & the like. Tier II presents potential danger to students, staff and property for a stand by response planning model, gathering information and notice of potential proper actions [such as; facilitating information to school personnel, panicked students, parents, media]. Students and employees with special needs may require assistance. Persons assigned to students & staff will remain with their assignments throughout the duration of the incident. They will maintain the evacuation status as long as determined by the Emergency Responders and the SICM that conditions are safe to resume normal activi- ties, the SICM will inform staff that it is safe to reenter the building. Please review entire circular in that it goes into great detail concerning what I have excerpted as well as additional components discussed within the context of school safety procedures. What are school safety contingencies procedures?...
O n June 1, at about 1:45 p.m., history was made in a conference room on the 3rd floor of the Campbell Resource Center building in Dorchester. At this moment, Bos-
ton’s PAR Panel voted for the first time to determine a final evaluation rating for a BPS teacher. What is PAR exactly? PAR stands for “Peer Assistance and Review.” It’s a program that’s new to Boston (and new to Massachusetts) but has been around in other school districts across the country for more than 30 years. PAR started in Toledo, Ohio as an innovative partnership between the school district and the teachers union. PAR was developed as a way to give veteran teachers a voice in the evaluation process and to let struggling teachers have a choice in how they are evaluated and supported. In 2014, BPS and the Boston Teachers Union approved a plan to pilot PAR in our district. The vote on June 1 was the culmination of the year-long pilot program. There are many different models of PAR programs across the country. In Boston, PAR is a service that is available for veteran teach-
ers (at least 2 or more years of service) who are not yet rated “Proficient” on the state’s Educator Development and Feedback Sys-
tem (EDFS) rubric. Typically, these teachers are identified by principals or other evaluators in their school with a rating of “Needs Improvement” or “Unsatisfactory” on their annual evaluation. Once a teacher is rated as underperforming, they can opt to join the PAR program and work with a consulting teacher. The consulting teacher is a new role in the district. This year, Mark Lonergan, a former math teacher at Boston Arts Academy, was the one and only consulting teacher for the district. A consulting teacher’s job is to work with PAR teachers to help them improve their practice. This involves peer coaching and mentoring and can include observing lessons and giving feedback, co-planning or co-teaching, and collaborating to provide any other supports that may be necessary. A key difference between this role and other coach-
ing jobs is that the consulting teacher also becomes the primary evaluator for the PAR teachers. This means that the PAR teachers agree to be coached AND evaluated by a peer.

To oversee the process and to support the work of the consulting teacher, the district also created a PAR Panel. This is a group made up of four teachers appointed by the BTU, four principals appointed by the Super-
intendent and one joint-appointee. Since October, this group has met monthly to over-
see the implementation of the new program and supervise the work of the consulting teacher. This group also had the final authority to determine ratings for PAR teachers. During the deliberation meeting on June 1, teach-
ers, principals and the consulting teacher all came to give statements and evidence about teacher performance and teacher progress. The panel reviewed the statements, discussed Mr. Lonergan’s recommendations and then voted on an evaluation rating for each of the PAR teachers.

PAR teachers gave many different reasons for enrolling in PAR. Some signed up know-
ing that they would benefit from the coaching and frequent feedback, others signed up to bring a fresh perspective and a new set of eyes to their evaluation process. Several teachers came to PAR because they had enjoyed col-
laborating with an instructional coach or peer assistant in the past and liked the fact that PAR allows their cohort to also become their primary evaluator.

One elementary teacher sought out PAR to get a second opinion and to get additional feedback about her practice. “I was really concerned at the start of the year as to how we would build this together, but was quite impressed by what we produced at the end,” said Ms. Elliott. One of the benefits of other PAR districts describe is that it can help to improve the relationship between labor and management. Ms. Elliott felt that this was definitely true of the 9-mem-
ber PAR panel. “I don’t think I have ever worked with a more productive, thoughtful, professional committee in my 18 year career. It impressed me how well everyone took time to listen and assumed best intentions.” Of course, it wasn’t entirely smooth sailing for the program. BPS teacher and PAR Panel co-chair Lee Franty said that the enrollment process needs to be streamlined and other members said that the program needs to do a better job of reaching out to the teachers who might be interested in the program. Lonergan also said that he struggled to juggle the dual role of coach and evaluator. “This year, the role of evaluator was so new and challenging to me that I felt like it took most of my focus. Next year, I hope to spend much more time and energy thinking about how to be a better coach.”

Still, the benefits of PAR are clear to teachers and principals alike. “The coaching support piece is HUGE,” said BPS principal Pat Tutwiler. “Teachers are afforded an opportunity to work closely with a coach in a way that administration typically cannot.” On average, the PAR teachers had 7.6 hours a week of in-class observations during their evalua-
tion cycle (compared to 2.8 hours during their previous evaluations). According to Franty, a consulting teacher can “truly and fairly assess your growth because he/she is there with you as a partner, working to make your practice stronger.”

Data from other PAR districts shows that programs that support teachers and allow them to improve can actually save money for the district in the long run. “This allows BPS to improve the practice of teachers already in the workforce, rather than the more expensive cycle of firing and finding new people,” said Elliott. In addition to helping struggling teachers, PAR is meant to provide growth opportuni-
ties for expert teachers across the district. Lonergan said, “PAR has given me the gift of perspective. I’ve had a chance to look deeply at other teachers’ practice, spend time in other schools, see how the union and the district office work. I’ve become more impressed with the quality of work across the city and more convinced that one of our biggest chal-
 lenges is how to help more of us lift our heads out of our individual trenches and begin to see how all of the pieces can work together.”

Next year, the pilot program will expand to include two consulting teachers. Lauren Clarke-Mason, a 45th grade teacher at the Hemingway School will join Mr. Lonergan. The PAR Panel has said that the goal of the program is to strengthen student learning and teacher performance across the district while also creating an evaluation model that feels fair, transparent and humane to all stakehold-
ers. PAR Panelist and BPS Principal Marie Mullen said, “In order to provide high quality support to teachers in need, it is crucial for the district to continue having PAR.”
Boston Students Excel in Annual “Math Rocks” Competition – It All Adds Up!
BTU Teachers Celebrate the End of the Year!

Photos by Michael J. Maguire
Less Testing, More Learning – Because Black Lives Matter!

By Garret Virchick, Editor, Boston Union Teacher

Two seemingly separate events happened this month. The Massachusetts Education Justice Alliance, of which the Boston Teachers Union is a part, call for a week of action, highlighted the growing demand on the part of teachers, parents and students for less testing and more learning. The following week a white southern racist calmly sat for an hour in a bible study inside Emmanuel AME Church in Charleston, South Carolina and then slaughtered nine African-Americans.

In America one thing is clear. To understand the politics of the moment it is crucial that one looks through the prism of race and racial justice to figure out what is really going on. The history is long. There are many connections to be made. The racism that began with boatload after boatload of African slaves to sold to rich plantation owners brought wealth to the few and misery to the many. But After the end of the Civil War there was a brief moment of hope for the formerly enslaved African-Americans in the south. The period of Reconstruction that ended after 10 short years in 1876 was a time of political freedom and promise for the future.

But the presidential election of 1876 gave us the sellout of Reconstruction. As payback for electoral votes President Rutherford B. Hayes pulled the occupying armies of the North out of the Southern states and ushered in the era of Jim Crow, enforced by the terror of the Ku Klux Klan and white racism. Over the next 100 years wave after wave of former slaves and their descendants left their historic homeland in what has been called the Great Migration. They came to the cities in search of jobs. In Boston at the start of the migration the Black population was around 12,000. In 1900 the census list the Black population at almost 150,000 or 25% of the population.

In Chicago the Black population rose from 40,000 prior to the migration to over 1 million – almost one-third of the population. This mirrored other northern urban centers.

Most of these families that came in search of freedom and opportunity sent their children to public schools. And invariably all of these cities resorted to various forms of segregation in public education. Morgan v. Hennigan was the class action lawsuit that resulted in the Federal takeover of the Boston Public Schools in 1974, 20 years after the Supreme Court struck down separate but equal policies in Brown v. Board of Education.

The charter school privatization movement will use these test scores to their advantage. And they will cynically claim that opening the charter cap is the new civil rights movement of our time, while at the same time they push rebellious Black boys from their rolls. So I ask the charter school proponents – Do Black Lives Really Matter?

The labeling of Black children as underperforming is a symbolic. Perhaps it is not as blatant as the confederate flags that adorn the license plate on Dylan Roof’s car. But both are symbols that are used to dehumanize and disempower. And both are tools of racism.

As teachers we have the responsibility to help our students make connections. As a teacher’s union we have an equal responsibility to stand up and name the injustices perpetuated on our students and their families. The Less Testing, More Learning movement and the Massachusetts Educational Justice Alliance do this. Both speak truth to power. If there is to be a labor movement in this country that can truly speak for all labor this is a step in the right direction.

Garret Virchick
Boston Union Teacher
Co-Editor

The rallying cry in the South was states’ rights. In Boston it was neighborhood schools. The results were not dissimilar. In 1972 60% of the population in the public schools was white. Post desegregation and white flight from the schools means today the white population in the public schools is a scar 15%. It seems no coincidence that every decade since has seen budget cut after budget cut. So I ask the power broken in Boston – Do Black Lives Matter?

This current era of testing, instead of providing the necessary resources to schools that teach Black children, has taught us one thing. It is easier to label Black children as inadequate, and their teachers and schools as underperforming, than to solve the issues of poverty and racism that plague this country.

The charter school privatization movement will use these test scores to their advantage. And they will cynically claim that opening the charter cap is the new civil rights movement of our time, while at the same time they push rebellious Black boys from their rolls.

Boston Education Justice Alliance’s “Schools Our Communities Deserve” Campaign Launch at Madison Park High School

Photos by Jessica Tang
Retired Teachers Chapter Spring 2015 Meeting

By David Dingledy, RTC Member

On Thursday, April 30, the BTU Retired Teachers Chapter held its annual spring meeting with over 100 in attendance. Chairman David Donovan opened the meeting and introduced the agenda.

The first item was a slide show of the proposed new BTU building presented by Vice President Patrick Connolly who answered many questions about the project from interested retirees.

Next, Michael McLaughlin, Elementary School Representative and member of the Boston Retirement Board, spoke on his efforts to increase the COLA base. He assured us that he was not daunted by the uphill battle he faced in his efforts to deal with the retirement board and other higher-up political powers.

The business meeting concluded with Chairman Donovan’s commendations to Patrick Connolly and Michael McLaughlin for their respect and support of the retired teachers.

After the business meeting, Chairman Donovan introduced Tamy-Fee Meneide, who invited the guest speaker Marilyn Marion, who invited the guest speaker Tamy-Fee Meneide. Tamy-Fee is a clinical research coordinator for the Anti-Amyloid Treatment in Asymptomatic Alzheimer’s Study (The “A4 Study” for short) being conducted by Harvard Medical School in collaboration with Massachusetts General Hospital and Brigham and Women’s Hospital.

Under the heading “The Human Brain: Aging, Memory, and Myths” Ms. Meneide addressed the sensitive subject of Alzheimer’s disease and its latest research discoveries. Using Power-point visuals and questions targeted at audience participation she led us through the stages of memory changes during the aging process.

Next, she provided a concise explanation of how the memory functions through the sequence of attention, encoding, storage, and retrieval of information assimilated by the mind.

Lastly, the facts and myths of dementia and Alzheimer’s Disease were contrasted along with practical advice for keeping the memory alive and well while aging gracefully. Ms. Meneide concluded with an invitation to participate in the “A4 Study” to further the research efforts at bringing a cure to Alzheimer’s disease. Participants must be aged 65-85, be willing to team up with a partner, and have special medical exams along with monthly infusions of the experimental Alzheimer’s disease (AD) vaccine for a 3-year period. For more information, Ms. Meneide may be contacted at 617-643-0143 or emailed at meneide@partners.org.

This special presentation, along with a break at mid-point for a free lunch, rounded off the retirees’ spring meeting quite nicely. Tamy-Fee Meneide gave us all some lessons on aging that were lively and involving, and guaranteed to keep everyone wide-awake and enlightened.

Rollins Griffith Memorial Scholarships Announced

For the twelfth year, the Rollins Griffith Teacher Center of Boston’s Board of Directors awarded three $1,500.00 scholarships to outstanding graduates of the Boston Public Schools.

This year’s recipients are all graduates of Boston Arts Academy: Michael Gregory Rosario Noboa will attend Massachusetts College of Art & Design, Olivia Link, has been accepted to Boston University on a full scholarship, and Perla Mabel Ledesma will join the freshman class at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts.

The scholarship dinner was held on Tuesday, June 2, 2015, at the Common Market in Quincy. Ms. Monika Aldarondo, Creative Director, Visual Arts Faculty and Senior Project Coordinator of Boston Arts Academy took her valuable time to join the festivities.

Great mutual respect and admiration was obvious between this beloved educator and her students. Guests were encouraged by the remarks of Mr. Rollins Griffith, a 2014 scholar- ship recipient and graduate of Boston Latin. Daniel shared his experiences as a freshman at Berklee College of Music and encouraged Michael, Olivia and Perla to always follow their dreams to ensure both success and happiness in their lives. It was truly refreshing to spend an evening with these intelligent, gifted and passionate young adults and their families. They inspire us and renew our hope for the future.

These awards are not honor of the memory of Rollins Griffith, Boston’s first African-American district superintendent. Rollins was an accomplished musician, a music teacher, and a principal prior to being named an assistant superintendent. Under his leadership, the Teacher Center was created in 1980. Rollins was an educator, artist and visionary who also found practical solutions to problems. With John D. O’Bryant, Rollins established the Black Educators Alliance of Massachusetts (BEAM).

Over the past 35 years, the Teacher Center has offered degree-granting and licensure programs, workshops, multicultural conferences and mini-grants. Currently, in addition to these scholarships, the Teacher Center is crafting a proposal to support literacy professional development for Kindergarten through Grade 2 teachers.

If you would like more information about the Teacher Center and/or are interested in joining our Board, please email Maureen T. Jelloe at mjelloe@tuu.com. We are actively recruiting current classrooms teachers to serve on the Board. Your experiences and input are incredibly important in order for the Teacher Center to continue to thrive in the coming years!
**RTC Executive Board Minutes**

**April 6, 2015**

The full luncheon will take place on October 26 at the Marriott in Quincy.

**Tranx**: The Towns-at-a-GLance has been sent out with three flyers for the following spring trips: SS Lobster Roll cruise ship on Tuesday, May 26; PawSox vs. Toledo, box seats with barbeque on June 14 and Lantana's in Randolph. Canyon trip - Arizona & Utah - September 17-25 is a go.

**Report Accepted.**

**Legislative**: The Committee went to City Hall in support of increasing the COLA Base and they were not successful. The Committee wants to express their gratitude to Michael McLaughlin, Retirement Board member, for his efforts in support of raising the COLA base. Report Accepted.

**Data Processing**: The Committee continues to monitor the City Hall entries, making sure it aligns with entries of the RTC. Paul Tenney announced that he will be taking a leave of absence due to illness. Raymond Lee will be taking his place. The Board welcomed Raymond Lee. Report Accepted.

**Membership**: We have a little over 3,100 members. Report Accepted.

**New Business**: Since the RTC board has not met for a couple months, the members are curious about their absence in the BUT. We will make sure that continue to be present in the Union's newspaper.

**New Business**: Ad hoc committee met for the selection of who will receive the award at the spring luncheon for the person or persons that were dedicated to and support of the RTC. Meeting adjourned at 12:15 p.m. Respectfully submitted, Marilyn F. Marion Secretary, RTC

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**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 eye glasses coverage.

If you wish to continue your connection to the union, you can join the Retired Teachers Chapter [RTC]. The dues must 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 the COBRA coverage through HealthyBenefits.com. Log on to the website for more information on COBRA call 1-617-288-0500. 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 on our website. FILL IN THE COUPON AND RETURN TO THE RTC TO RECEIVE A PACKET OF 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.]

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**Retired Teachers Phil Fasano, and Janey Frank were presented Certificates of Appreciation by Marilyn Marion, Secretary, BTU/RTC on behalf of the Retired Teachers.**

**Scenes from the RTC Spring Meeting**

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**MINUTES**

**Members Present**: Anne Broder; Marie Broderick; Mary Cahalane; Anne Marie Addacato; Sandy Carle; Donna Cooley-Hilton; Larry Connolly; Martha Cotton; David Donovan; Chairman; Marilyn Marion; Secretary; Linda McNamara; Mary Jo Murphy; Katharine Kennedy; Paul Tenney; and Walter Wood.

**Excused**: Leonard Marigliano, Vice Chairman.

Meeting was opened by the Chairman at 10:15 a.m.

**Officers**

**Secretary's Report**: Minutes were read and accepted with changes noted.

**Treasurer's Report**: The Treasurer's report was read and accepted.

**Chairman's Report**: The March meeting was cancelled because a quorum was not met.

**The Chairman stated that he called City Hall to get an updated list of members' deaths and was not successful. He will continue to pursue this matter. He also stated that the business meeting is scheduled for Thursday, April 30, at 11 a.m. The letter to the membership announcing the business meeting will be sent out this week. Report Accepted.**

**Committees**

**Benefits**: No changes or updates have taken place. Report Accepted.

**Remembrance**: No official list has been available for the Remembrance Chair. As a result, she cannot give an official report or send out condolence notices. Report Accepted.

**Scholarship**: There have been three applicants thus far. Report Accepted.

**Social**: The Committee is preparing for the spring luncheon which will take place on Tuesday, June 9. The fall business meeting will take place on September 30 at Florian Hall.

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**T**he Cost of Living of Living Adjustment (COLA) base issue was front and center at the March Board meeting of the Boston Retirement System (BRS). The COLA base is part of the equation for which yearly increases are paid to current retirees. Yearly an adjustment is made to retirees' income benefits in order to counteract the effects of inflation. Each year the city finance department appears before the Board and reports on the financial indicators considered by the City and the Board. If a majority of these indicators are on the positive side of the ledger the City and Board endorses a 3% increase on the COLA base which is $13,000. The issue discussed and voted on at the March BRS Board meeting was to increase the base from $13,000 to $14,000. Under the pension reform act signed by former Governor Pat- rick, the COLA base can be increased up to $16,000. Unfortunately, we were unsuccessful and the motion was defeated 3-2.

I want to thank our good friends at the BFD Local 718 and fellow board member Michael O'Reilly for his support through- out this drive. Additionally, we owe a debt of thanks to the leadership of the legislative committee of the Retired Teachers Chapter of the Boston Teachers Union for their efforts and persistence. Below are the minutes from the meeting specifically related to the COLA base.

Mr. Sweeney spoke on behalf of the City, providing a brief history of the proposed increase in the COLA base, the City of Bos- ton's role, and, finally, their recommendation not to increase the COLA base at this time. Mr. Sweeney recounted how he first spoke on this matter at the Board Meeting in May 2014. Boston Retirement Board Administra- tive Session of March 18, 2015. At that time, the City was unable to consider any base increase primarily because the City’s FY15 recommended budget had already been filed. However, the City agreed to consider a base increase, in a timely manner, during the FY16 budget process, once the Boston Retirement Board’s 2014 actual valuation had been completed by Segal Associates, and adopted by the Board. This valuation, as of 01-01-2014, puts the current unfunded liability at 70.2%.

Mr. Sweeney noted that the planned clo- sure of schools, anticipated reduction in local aid, a previously called $15 million in increases in appropriations paid to the City by the Boston Retirement System were all cited as reasons not to increase the COLA base. At the board's behest, Segal Associates had pro- vided an estimate on the impact an increase in the COLA base would have on the System's unfunded liability. Increasing the COLA base to $14,000 would increase the City's unfund- ed liabilities by an additional $24,558,195.

Mr. Sweeney stated that the City remains committed to fully funding the retirement system by 2025. In order to meet the 2025 funding schedule requirements, the City is required to double pension contributions start- ing in 2015 at roughly $417 million a year.

Mr. Sweeney further noted that the City's 2014 investment rate of return was in the 4.8% range while it assumes a return of 7.75%.

During a recent bond sale, both Moody and Standard & Poor's stated that, respectively, the biggest potential risk to the City's Bond rat- ings lays with the Pension and OPEB unfunded liability. The impact of all these financial com- ponents, combined with the nationwide trend of a myriad of changes in other retirement sys- tems, including not only pauses on COLA base increases, but, in some instances, pauses on any prospective COLA increases, have led the City to recommend that there be no increase in the COLA base for FY16.

Lawrence Connolly of the Boston Retired Teachers Chapter, as well as several of the retirees in attendance, spoke of their disappointment in and frustration with the City's recommendation.

Additionally, Mr. Greene noted that time constraints surrounding the City's FY16 Budget would dictate that a vote take place immediately.

Motion made, and seconded, to increase the COLA base from $13,000 to $14,000. Motion failed (3-2) (Messrs. McLaughlin and O'Reilly voted in favor).

**- Michael McLaughlin**

Trustee, Boston Retirement Board,

**BTU Elementary Field Representative**
OUR AUDIT WAS CONDUCTED FOR THE PURPOSE OF FORMING AN OPINION ON THESE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS.

MANAGEMENT’S RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of these financial statements in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America; this includes the design, implementation, and maintenance of internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of financial statements that are free of material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

AUDITOR’S RESPONSIBILITY

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audits. We conducted our audits in accordance with the auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America; this includes the design, implementation, and maintenance of internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of financial statements that are free of material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

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The financial statements are presented in conformity with the financial accounting and reporting requirements prescribed by the IRS. The financial statements include amounts of assets and liabilities and disclosure of contingent liabilities that have resulted from following the accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

INVESTMENT RETURN

INCOME AND EXPENSES

The Union’s policy is to capitalize tangible personal property with a useful life in excess of one year and to expense furniture, fixtures, and equipment as they are depreciated. The carrying amounts of investments are reviewed periodically at the end of each reporting period to determine whether the fair value of the investments is impaired. If the fair value of an investment is below cost and management determines that this decline is other than temporary, the excess of cost over fair value is written off as an unrealized loss.

INCOME TAXES

The provision for income taxes is based on income taxes payable for the current year and on deferred income taxes. The deferred income taxes reflect the effects of temporary differences between the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities for financial statement purposes and the amounts for income tax purposes.

EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES

The Union records contributions received as unrestricted and uses them in support of its activities. The provision for income taxes is based on income taxes payable for the current year and on deferred income taxes. The deferred income taxes reflect the effects of temporary differences between the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities for financial statement purposes and the amounts for income tax purposes.

Note 10: The Union has presented its financial statements in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles for nonprofit organizations. The Union is subject to examination by the IRS for the years ended August 31, 2014 and 2013. The IRS has not made any determinations regarding the Union’s tax position in a future examination.

Note 11: In accordance with the provisions of ASC 740, the Union was required to evaluate, at the beginning of fiscal year 2014, its documentation of the tax position for each of the major tax jurisdictions in which the Union is subject to examination. The Union compared the tax positions of the significant tax positions against the criteria established by the IRS and determined that it has one significant tax position: the Union’s ability to deduct contributions.

The Union’s ability to deduct contributions is based on the deduction limits of the Internal Revenue Code. According to the IRS, the Union is required to disclose the most recent tax return and the most recent audit report. The IRS has not made any determinations regarding the Union’s tax position in a future examination.

Note 12: The Union’s policy is to capitalize tangible personal property with a useful life in excess of one year and to expense furniture, fixtures, and equipment as they are depreciated. The carrying amounts of investments are reviewed periodically at the end of each reporting period to determine whether the fair value of the investments is impaired. If the fair value of an investment is below cost and management determines that this decline is other than temporary, the excess of cost over fair value is written off as an unrealized loss.

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In the past the Boston Public Schools labeled the school nurses collectively as “Health Services” and the school nurse leader as the “Assistant Director of Health Services.” Nursing is a defined and recognized profession, whose scope is both broad and deep. “Health Services” is ambiguous. Presently school committees has the authority to assign any labels to the job they choose to label as “School Nurses,” and to the school nurse leader as the “Executive Director.”

—Patrick Conway, RN, CPEN, CEN Family Nurse Practitioner/School Nurse
The Pauline Agassiz Shaw is a new school in an old building, reopened just this year with six K0-K2 classes. This seems very appropriate since the school is named after a woman responsible for funding the first kindergarten classes in Boston! Located just off Morton Street in Dorchester, the Shaw will become a K-5 school over the next several years.

I was invited to visit by K2 teacher, Alicia Carroll, whose students work on interdisciplinary science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics (STEAM) units throughout the year. They created tree house designs that were displayed at City Hall this spring – check out www.KinderSteam.com to learn more about their latest Biomimicry project. For those of you (like me) who are new to this term, biomimicry is a science that studies nature’s models and then uses them to help solve human problems. In their classroom “Lab” center students don white lab coats and goggles to investigate ocean life, and a big tray of seashells invites exploration: one student held a conch shell to her ear and told me she could hear the ocean!

In Lily Fontas’ K2 class, students were singing and acting out a “take-away” song to understand the process of subtraction: students were “muffins” at a bakeshop and other students took turns buying one at a time. Tom Carco’s K0/K1 children were learning about and making different shapes on geoboards – even a rhombus!

In several classes children were working on literacy activities: listening to stories on tape, looking at books, playing teacher-made games, and practicing forming letters. Onúída Casado’s K2 students worked in pairs and small groups at a variety of stations, while Amanda Sweeney was writing down stories to go with the pictures her K1 students had drawn.

In Art with Liana Farmer, another class of K1 children was using blue, green and white colors to make the planet earth as seen from space – first as a painting and then with clay. More artwork covered the hallway walls, including “high quality” construction vehicles made from cut-out paper shapes.

The school’s principles were also prominently displayed: “Respect, Excellence, Perseverance – Every Student, Every Classroom, Everyday.” It was great to see all of this evident in the hands-on activities with which these young children were so enthusiastically engaged; I sincerely hope this school-wide focus on active, inquiry-based, interdisciplinary learning can remain strong as they move up the grades.

Here’s wishing you a summer of relaxation and whatever else your heart desires; please be in touch if you’d like me to visit your school next year!

We were buying muffins and singing a take away song. We’ve learned how to count all the way to 100! We are learning how to add and take away, too! Ms. Fontas’ K2 class

I was playing the Word Work game with Charrod. I was reading a word so I could go forward when it was my turn. I’m learning new words and how to spell them. I’m also learning my numbers and how much they add up to, like 3 + 4 = 7.

I was painting the earth. I learned that the earth is white, green and blue when you look at it from space. The white is clouds.

I was listening to Ms. Vanclief read a story in the library. I like the story and I like sitting close to see the pictures.

I was helping Kyara make a shape with a rubber band on the geoboard. We are learning how to make shapes like a triangle and a rhombus.

I made a picture of throwing snowballs at transformers and Ms. Sweeney was writing down my story. My friend Kingston was watching and listening. This year I’ve learned lots of new letters and how to write my name.

[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.]