



What is the BTU?

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Contractual Benefit Package for ALL Teachers

pages 14 & 15

BOSTON TEACHERS UNION, LOCAL 66, AFT

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Boston Union Teacher

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



President's Corner by Richard Stutman

Welcome Back!

Welcome back. We hope you've all had a restful and enjoyable summer, although for many of you, both study and summer school took precedence over vacation. In any event, we hope all start the new year reenergized and, hopefully, with some reserve. The beginning of school is exciting and full of hope for all, student and staff alike. May this year be no exception.

Today, each school will have set aside a 30-minute block of time to go over some of the material in the current edition of the *Boston Union Teacher*. We negotiated this block of time 12 years ago because we felt it important that your building representative have time set aside at the start of each school year to disseminate certain information and reintroduce (and in some cases, introduce) the union to our membership.

Much of the information we have provided in the newspaper explains our benefit package, our negotiated teaching and learning conditions, and how to take full advantage of both. Those of you who are new or relatively new to the BTU should find the information quite useful as you begin your career. The rest will find bits and pieces that interest you. We encourage each of you to review this newspaper at your leisure. We cannot overstate the need for all staff, and in particular new staff, to understand our basics and benefits. For new staff in particular, some items – such as taking advantage of the flexible spending plan or understanding class size limits – are time sensitive, so you may want to read up on these sooner rather than later. Of course, there's a lot of information to digest and you will not digest it all today, but please keep this guide handy as a reference. We have accumulated our rights and benefits over many years, and we will continue to work hard – with your help - to maintain them.

As the school year begins, we wish Superintendent **Tommy Chang** and his team the best in the spirit of cooperation. Dr. Chang takes over the reins in our school system in a difficult time for our schools, as the move to privatize public education continues to grow as does our competition – all while our school budget shrinks. Charter operators, testing companies, and 'ed reform' consultants see urban America's schools as fertile areas for growth. Boston is no exception.

Superintendent Chang faces a daunting task, not unlike one that faces all other urban superintendents: how to manage a large school system with diverse needs and limited resources. We look forward to working with him, as equal partners, as we tackle the system's problems together. While there will be some predictable friction between

the BTU and School Department as we work through some tough issues, both parties will maintain a cordial working relationship as we keep our eye on the prize. At the end of the day, we are not on different 'sides' – rather we each have one goal in mind: We want to improve our schools.

We are now entering our last full year under our collective bargaining agreement. It seems like only yesterday we completed negotiations on the 2010-2016 agreement. In the next few months, the beginning of the new collective bargaining process will take shape.

We will recruit from our membership a collective bargaining committee that will

In addition to our staff on board last year this time, we have hired two organizers, **Jonathan Rodriques** and **Shanika Houlder**. Each works as an organizer – Jonathan works generally with outside community partners, and Shanika works generally with our membership and building representatives.

In addition to our relatively new hires, we have **Patrick Connolly**, BTU Executive Vice President, who takes care of our grievance and legal department. **Charles Johnson**, our BTU Secretary-Treasurer, is the keeper of the records. We also have three field representatives – **Josefina Lascano**, **Caren Carew**, and **Michael McLaughlin**

“ The BTU's job is to keep you informed, respond to your needs, listen to you, and protect your interests while we work to improve our schools. It is a job we do well and a job we continually try to improve. The 'we' are 'you'; we never lose sight of that. ”

coordinate and vet the package of negotiating items that we will present to the membership for approval in January. We will then begin negotiations with a team of our members who will seek to negotiate a contract that is good for our schools, our students and our members. We seek nothing more, and we expect nothing less.

The BTU's job is to keep you informed, respond to your needs, listen to you, and protect your interests while we work to improve our schools. It is a job we do well and a job we continually try to improve. The 'we' are 'you'; we never lose sight of that. We are a democratic organization, and we pride ourselves on having an open decision-making process. We meet once per month, on the second Wednesday at Bayside Mall (see www.btu.org). We hope to see you at an upcoming meeting. We also send out weekly email bulletins, a monthly newspaper, and periodic mailings. To sign up for our email listserv, if you haven't already, please log onto www.btu.org and see the beige box upper left. The email list is used exclusively for our weekly e-bulletin, and your address will be kept private and confidential. You will receive the monthly newspaper, the *Boston Union Teacher*, as well as periodic mailing upon receipt of your membership application form, which can be obtained from your BTU building representative. Our nine full-time staff maintain office hours every day, and our office is open from 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. every day excluding legal holidays.

– who spend much of their time visiting our schools and working with our members to resolve issues, whether they be of a payroll or personnel nature, or something else. Each of the field representatives has different responsibilities: Josefina represents paraprofessionals and substitute teachers throughout the system; Caren has responsibility for professionals in secondary schools; and Michael has responsibility for professionals in elementary schools. Professionals who work in K-8 schools and the various departments 'belong' to either Caren or Michael. See an accompanying list that provides a breakdown. **Angela Cristiani** works as our political organizer, and is our political liaison with Beacon Hill and City Hall. **Jessica Tang**, who heads our organizing department, and **Paul Tritter**, who is our director of Professional Learning, round out the office staff. You will get to know each of them over the coming year.

Lastly, the BTU does much more than negotiate and enforce your contract. We sponsor a host of activities, professional as well as social, to help bring people together. We also hold community and district meetings with our members on an ongoing basis, as well as new educator sessions that reach out to our new and valued employees. The best way to keep updated as to these events and others is to join our email listserv at www.btu.org.

We also sponsor a homework helper program in each of the city's 25 libraries. The BTU provides a teacher to help any child



Richard Stutman
BTU President

with his or her homework each evening that any of the city's libraries is open. We initiated the program nine years ago, and today are proud to be co-sponsors of this terrific activity along with the mayor's office and the school department. For more information, please contact Parent and Community Liaison **Brenda Chaney** at bchaney863@aol.com.

A couple of bookkeeping items:

If you are a new member, please fill out a membership application card, which you can obtain from your building representative. A membership application card will also be mailed to all new members. Please complete it and give it to your building rep., who will return it to us. To disseminate information quickly, we rely heavily on our email listserv, which currently has 11,000+ people signed up. The list is used exclusively for our weekly e-bulletin, and your address will be kept private and confidential.

On occasion we may need to call you, particularly in an election season, or when anything else that is time sensitive arises. We know everybody dislikes robocalls, and we may have to make one or two – but only when absolutely necessary. Our ability to influence public policy – whether through the electoral process or by sending emails or phone calls to our elected legislators – is key to improving our schools. To be able to fully capitalize on the strength of our 10,000+ membership we need to be able to reach you. So we ask that you keep us informed as to your current email address and telephone number. Your building representative can alert us to any changes you wish to make.

The email listserv, along with our monthly newspaper, the *Boston Union Teacher*, are the primary sources of information that comes out of the BTU office. We use both to keep you informed about a variety of topics. To receive the newspaper, as well as other periodic mailing, you need to fill out a membership card, as described above. The *Boston Union Teacher* welcomes contributors from all members, and articles can be submitted to our BTU co-editors, **Michael Maguire** at mmaguire@btu.org or **Colum Whyte** at cwhyte@btu.org.

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What is the Boston Teachers Union?: Who, What, When, Where...

By Richard Stutman
BTU President

The Boston Teachers Union is the exclusive collective bargaining agent for the school system's 7,000 teachers, other non-administrative, professional employees, paraprofessionals, and substitute teachers. We also represent 3,000+ retirees.

What are the BTU's primary responsibilities?

- Negotiate and enforce the contract
- Provide the best education we can for the system's 60,000 students
- Work with the school community to ensure our schools are as good as they can be
- Represent the membership in all matters related to their professional work
- Answer job-related questions and assist in any job-related matter, i.e., help our members navigate through the Bolling Building bureaucracy
- Promote public education
- Promote the growth and well-being of our profession
- Work politically through COPE to elect pro-public education, pro-union candidates
 - COPE or the Committee on Political Education is by federal and state law a separate entity within the

BTU devoted to supporting candidates who support public education and who otherwise favor our positions on a variety of work-related issues.

The BTU is affiliated with:

- American Federation of Teachers (AFT)
- Massachusetts AFL-CIO
- AFT Massachusetts (formerly called the Massachusetts Federation of Teachers)
- Greater Boston Labor Council (GBLC)

How to get in contact with the BTU

- Visit office at 180 Mt. Vernon St., Dorchester, MA 02125
 - School Year Business Hours, 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., all workdays, except legal holidays
 - Summer Business Hours, 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m., all workdays, except legal holidays
- Call 617-288-2000
- Log onto www.btu.org
- Email staff and officers; for an index, please see <http://www.btu.org/contact-us>

How to join the BTU's 11,000-member listserv

- Go to <http://www.btu.org>, upper left (beige) is sign-up box.

The listserv is used only for the dissemination of the weekly BTU e-Bulletin. The list is not used for any other purpose including, business, political or personal. The list is fully protected and will not be used for ANY other purpose.

What is the leadership structure of the BTU?

All policy is set by the membership at its regularly scheduled monthly membership meetings on the 2nd Wednesday* of each month at 4:15 p.m. (refreshments and

social) at union headquarters. The actual meeting starts at 4:30 p.m. All members are welcome to attend. (Subject to change *with notice* because of scheduling problems.)

The BTU's policy board is its **Executive Board**, served by 12 members elected at large every two years. Executive Board members are listed below.

Serving as a direct link between the union office and the membership are elected BTU Building Representatives from every building and program in the city. BTU Building Rep.'s are elected each year to service the members at each school site and act as the liaisons between the union office and our membership in our schools. We are also in the 2nd year of a program that uses Building Rep Regional Leaders as liaisons between our building representatives and the BTU office.

BTU Executive Board

Erik R. Berg	Sheryl Pedone	Mary Ann Urban
Brenda Chaney	James "Timo" Philip	Garret Virchick
Cheryl L. Kelly	Casandra Samuel	Colum Whyte
Michael J. Maguire	Paul Tritter	Alice Yong

The BTU Officers and Staff

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Michael McLaughlin, Elementary Field Rep.....	mmclaughlin@btu.org
Josefina Lascano, Paraprofessional-Substitute Teacher Field Rep.....	jlascano@btu.org
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Jonathan Rodrigues.....	jrodrigues@btu.org

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Marimar Escoto.....	mescoto@btu.org
Pat O'Donnell.....	podonnell@btu.org
Jeannie Turner.....	jturner@btu.org
Adrienne Washington.....	awashington@btu.org

Welcome to the New Co-Editor of the *Boston Union Teacher*

Starting with this edition, **Colum Whyte** of the Joseph Lee School is the *Boston Union Teacher's* newest co-editor. Colum teaches ELA and History/Social Studies to Grade 5-6 Advanced Work Classes.

Colum was raised in Dorchester, is a BLS graduate, and resides in Boston with his wife and newborn son. He has been teaching in the BPS since 2004. Colum is active within the BTU. He has been a building representative since 2007 and won Building Rep of the Year in 2014. He participates in state and national conferences, blogs regularly, and is Chair of the BTU Speakers Series. This past election Colum joined the BTU Executive Board.

Please join me in welcoming Colum to the *Boston Union Teacher*.

—Michael J. Maguire, Co-editor

Executive Vice President's Corner by Patrick J. Connolly

Another New Year

As the 2015 – 2016 school year begins BTU members prepare to welcome a new group of students into our care. Teachers, paraprofessionals, parents and students enter the year with differing hopes, expectations, and concerns. We are asked not only to help them learn, but to assist them with any of multiple social and emotional issues they may be dealing with. A teacher's or paraprofessional's role is no longer limited to educational issues. Our success cannot be measured solely by a score on a standardized test. Additionally, there are the expectations of principals and headmasters and others who evaluate us in relation to our performance in meeting these goals.

Most educators in the BPS will begin this process by completing their self assessment. They will then write their goals, which should reflect school-wide and district-wide goals. These will be approved or revised by school administrators and the evaluation process will begin. For some educators, however, the administrators and evaluators will write the goals. In either case members should communicate with their evaluator so there is an understanding about what the goals are and how progress

is to be measured. It is far better to clear up any misunderstandings in September than months later in the evaluation process.

This is particularly important for educators who are on a plan that has a duration of less than a year. A Formative Assessment may be approaching quickly and educators need to be prepared. The BTU will offer two Saturday workshops in September to assist new and veteran educators in dealing with the EDFs. The dates are 9/19 and 9/26 from 8:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m. The 19th is geared for educators new to Boston and the 26th is geared for veteran educators. More info will follow in the E-Bulletin.

As the summer break draws to a close many veteran educators are just being informed of their assignment for SY 15-16. School closings and entrance into Turn-around status contributed to many veteran teachers competing for a small number of positions. This issue is still being addressed in the ongoing arbitration regarding the use of Open Postings to fill more positions than in the past. This issue will not be resolved for the beginning of this school year, but resolution should come during this school year. Educators who are assigned to a new posi-

tion or as a co-teacher should notify their Field representative of their status. These educators should identify their evaluators early on and communicate with them to clarify goals, expectations and procedures.

The role and expectations of a co-teacher needs to be explained and clarified at both the district and school level. Likewise, there needs to be a discussion around who the evaluator is and what supports the district and the school will provide to the co-teacher. The experience of co-teachers in SY 14-15 with the professional growth specialists assigned to evaluate them provided very mixed results and many concerns.

Wider issues such as the demand for more charter school seats and schools will put increased pressure on public schools districts and teachers. Demands for more testing in the form of district determined measures will only add to the pressure on current educators. Assignment issues for both teachers and paraprofessionals have increased in the past year. Issues such as a demand for dual certification in some positions have also increased. There is also a DESE requirement for an SEI endorsement to renew a state license after July 2016.



Patrick J. Connolly
BTU Executive Vice President

Some BTU members were improperly excessed when the BPS tried to implement this for July, 2015. The BTU was able to return them to their positions. Maintaining a valid license is a prerequisite for teaching in Massachusetts and be aware of when you need to renew your license.

As the BPS begins its first year under the leadership of **Dr. Tommy Chang**, there are issues that will confront the BTU. A new leadership and administrative personnel and the BTU need to develop a solid working relationship. There will inevitably be some areas where agreement may be difficult to achieve. Hopefully these issues can be resolved in a timely manner. For all members, students, and parents I hope we can achieve the goals we set and that as individuals and as a school district we have a solid, productive school year. If I can be of assistance in any manner please contact me at pconnolly@btu.org.

Why is filing a class size grievance important and how it is done?



Caren Carew
BTU Secondary
Field Representative

Data shows that the lower the class sizes the better when it comes to meeting student's needs. As soon as class size maxima have been exceeded in your class, file the information immediately with the BTU directly on the btu.org website. Refer to the grade and type of class you teach (elementary, middle, high, regular ed., SPED, PE, SEI, etc.) in the BTU/BPS (burgundy) contract book on pages 24, 25, 27 to determine the appropriate number for your respective class. You should file a class size grievance once the number of children reporting to your class is in excess of the contractual maxima - it can't just be the number on your class list, the students must have physically attended school at least once and then not have been officially discharged.

Only in special cases are additional students able to remain in the class thus exceeding the maxima as negotiated. The contract states; "In elementary schools where there is only **one regular education class in a grade level**, the School Department may exceed the class size maxima by one or two students. For one student over the class size maxima the teacher will receive \$1,500 and for two students \$3,000." The contract continues; "In secondary schools where there is a **singular regular education course offering**, the School Department may exceed the class size maxima by one or two students. For one student in excess, the teacher will receive \$300 per class and for two students, \$600 per class." For example, in a secondary school if there is only one physics class offered, this portion of the contract could kick in. This cannot be employed where and when it suits the administration except within the narrow parameters outlined above. Under no circumstances can this passage of the contract be implemented with **special education** classes. As it states in the collective bargaining agreement; "Class size for program prototypes 502.2, 502.3, and 502.4 shall conform with Regulations published by the State Department of Education." It is illegal to increase SPED class sizes. There is an arbitration award that the BTU obtained which states that even if these narrow parameters exist, the teacher thus affected has a right to decline said stipend and instead may insist on the **standard class size being enforced**.

Filing the class size grievance puts pressure on the BPS to deal with the issue as quickly as possible or compensate the teacher for this contract violation. Money is a motivator for them to solve the problem. The teacher only gets credit from the day they file the grievance until the day it is resolved if it exceeds 15 school days. Let's focus on children with the smallest class size possible. We fought for it - let's maintain it.

Welcome Back...

continued from page 1

Again, we hope you have a good year. The BTU is deeply committed to fulfilling its mission to represent our interests, to improve our schools, and to raise the standards of our profession. We will accomplish these worthy goals by working together. Best regards and please let us know how we can help you. The BTU is your organization and your union. We welcome your involvement, and hope you take advantage of what we have to offer.

As always, your school BTU building representative or the BTU office (www.btu.org or 617-288-2000) can provide further assistance and detail.

Must elections be held for BTU Building Reps and/or School Site Council Members if the # of candidates running is equal to/less than that allocated?

Yes, according to the BTU by-laws, elections must be held. Running elections allows for write in candidates promoting increased participation and capacity building within our union. Many times in buildings with long-time BTU Reps, people assume it's pointless to run even if interested because it is unlikely they'd win. Even if that likelihood is the case, getting their name out there allows for increased interest in the positions on the ballot, as well as for future elections, committees, etc. It is in the membership's best interest to have more people being mentored to familiarize themselves with a variety of roles for teacher leadership in schools and within the BTU. Without active participation, rights and benefits we have long fought for will steadily erode. We cannot sit back and rely on someone else to stand up in our stead. We all must do our collective part in order to remain strong. We can only be divided and conquered or isolated and bullied if we don't support each other. If each one of us decides to take on a small piece of what needs to be done, there'd be a more empowered membership, stronger communities in our schools, and a better educational environment for our kids. While it is sometimes difficult to stand up for what we know is right, it is far more difficult in the long run not to have done so.

Health Insurance - when do new teachers sign up, when can we change our plans, what if someone gets rehired or returns from an unpaid leave...?

City of Boston Employees join health plans by contacting the **Health Benefits and Insurance Division (Group Insurance)** located on the 8th floor of Boston City Hall, telephone 617-635-4570. New hires have 60 calendar days from the time they are hired in order to sign up for health insurance. Provisional or permanent teachers, who were laid off and then recalled/rehired, must contact Group Insurance within 60 days of being rehired from lay off in order to reenroll. Some people assume that because they have their job back, the insurance is automatically reinstated - this is not the case. *These deadlines are hard and fast.* **Open enrollment** is the window of time when you can change your type of health insurance plan, or sign up for the first time if you've missed another deadline. This period is held annually for 5 weeks in April and the first week of May. Those wanting to partake in open reenrollment must contact Group Health Insurance at City Hall. If a teacher takes a **leave of absence** and decides to let their insurance

lapse during their leave, they must sign up to reinstate their health insurance during the spring open-enrollment period prior to their return in the fall. They will have to pay premiums out of pocket beginning on July 1 - September 1 after which time deductions will be taken from their paychecks. Their insurance will take effect July 1 as a result. During the year if a teacher gets **married/divorced, has a baby**, or the spouse who carried the health insurance for the BPS teacher loses their job, then the BPS teacher has 30 calendar days to notify and submit proof to Group Insurance of this event in order to qualify for the change to be made in their health insurance coverage.

As an itinerate teacher, do I get a desk?

Yes. The contract language mandates, "All teachers shall have an exclusive working desk in one of the rooms that they use." If you are a teacher who must travel between rooms, in at least one of the rooms you teach in, you must be provided with a desk that is yours alone in good repair for your exclusive use. If this is not the case, please grieve it immediately.

What are the primary responsibilities of the BTU and with which groups are we affiliated?

The BTU is the exclusive collective bargaining agent for the BPS's approximately 7,000 active teachers, other non-administrative/management related service providers, paraprofessionals and substitute teachers. The Union also represents over 3,000 retired BTU members. The BTU promotes public school education, its importance in a democracy and the continued improvement of its quality as well as

the growth and quality of our profession. The Boston Teachers Union negotiates and enforces the BTU/BPS collective bargaining agreement [CBA/contract]. The Union assists in providing the best education we are able for the approximate 60,000 students in the BPS while working with the greater school community to help insure the same. The BTU represents our membership in issues related to their professional work, including answering job related questions and assisting in job-related matters. The Union works politically through the Committee on Political Education [COPE] to assist in electing pro-public education, pro-labor, pro-kid, pro-social justice candidates. Due to federal and state law, COPE is a separate entity within the BTU devoted to supporting candidates and initiatives that are pro-public education and pro-labor generally through a specific process set out in our bylaws.

The organizations with which the BTU is affiliated and pays dues to are: the American Federation of Teachers [AFT] - our national federation- as well as with the Massachusetts AFT [formerly the MFT] which is our state federation; the national and state AFL-CIO; and the Greater Boston Labor Council [GBLC] - a group of state federations or 'state feds' of various labor unions within the greater Boston area that form an alliance primarily related to political and social justice issues. We are all connected working for working people, their families, community, and our collective futures!

Attend the first BTU Membership Meeting of the Year!
Wednesday, September 9, 2015
4:30 PM at BTU Hall.



Boston Union Teacher

Published by the Boston Teachers Union, AFT Local 66, AFT MA, AFL-CIO

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Angela Cristiani
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Michael McLaughlin

EDITORIAL NOTE:
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 September 17th. All copy should be e-mailed to mmaguire@btu.org and cwhyte@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
Tremont Credit Union.....	781-843-5626

Who is My BTU Field Representative?

Elementary Field Rep. Michael McLaughlin's Assigned Schools/Programs

SCHOOLS

Adams Elementary
 Alighieri Montessori School
 Baldwin ELC
 Bates Elementary
 Beethoven Elementary
 Blackstone Elementary
 Bradley Elementary
 Channing Elementary
 Chittick Elementary [ELT]
 Clap Elementary
 Condon Elementary
 Conley Elementary
 Curley K-8 [Elementary]
 Dever Elementary
 Dudley St. Neighborhood School
 East Boston EEC
 Eliot K-8
 Ellis Elementary
 Ellison/Parks EES
 Everett Elementary
 Gardner Pilot Academy
 Greenwood, E Leadership Acad
 Greenwood, S K-8
 Grew Elementary

Guild Elementary [ELT]
 Hale Elementary
 Haley Pilot
 Harvard/Kent Elementary [ELT]
 Haynes EEC
 Henderson Inclusion [Elem]
 Hennigan Elementary
 Hernandez K-8
 Higginson Elementary
 Holmes Elementary
 Hurley K-8
 Jackson/Mann K-8 [ELT]
 Kennedy, JF Elementary
 Kennedy, PJ Elementary
 Kenny Elementary
 Kilmer K-8
 Lee Academy Pilot
 Lee Elementary K-8 [ELT]
 Lyndon K-8
 Lyon K-8
 Manning Elementary [ELT]
 Mason Elementary
 Mather Elementary [ELT]
 Mattahunt Elementary

McKay Elementary
 McKinley Elementary
 Mendell Elementary
 Mozart Elementary
 Murphy Elementary
 O'Donnell Elementary
 Otis Elementary [ELT]
 Perkins Elementary [ELT]
 Perry K-8
 Philbrick Elementary
 Quincy Elementary
 Roosevelt K-8
 Russell Elementary
 P. A. Shaw Elementary [ELT]
 Sumner Elementary
 Taylor Elementary
 Trotter Elementary
 Tynan Elementary
 UP Academy Dorchester
 UP Academy Holland
 Warren/Prescott K-8 [ELT]
 West Zone ELC
 Winship Elementary
 Winthrop Elementary
 Young Achievers K-8

PROGRAMS/GROUPS

Adaptive Phys. Ed.
 Behavior Specialist
 Business Service
 * Worker's Comp Job Class
 Carter Development Center [Elementary]
 Cohort 3 [Elementary]
 COSESS
 * Audiologist
 * SpEd Support Services Coordinator

Counseling Service
 * Pupil Adjustment Counselor [1]
 * School Psychologist [1]
 * School Psychologist [2]
 Enrollment Services
 * Assignment Transfer Specialist
 * Operations Assignment Coordinator
 Hearing/Appeal/Attendance
 * Supervisor Of Attendance

Health and Wellness
 Human Resource Team
 Implementation
 Occupational Therapist
 Physical Therapist
 Teaching & Learning [Elementary]
 Transportation
 * Transportation Officer
 Unified Student Services
 Vision

Secondary Field Rep. Caren Carew's Assigned Schools/Programs

SCHOOLS

Another Course To College
 Boston Adult Technical HS
 Boston Arts Academy
 Boston Comm Leadership Ac
 Boston Evening Academy
 Boston Green Academy
 Boston International HS
 Boston Latin Academy
 Boston Latin School
 BTU Pilot
 Brighton High
 Burke High
 Charlestown High
 Community Academy
 Community Academy Science & Health
 Curley K-8 [Middle]
 Dearborn Middle
 Dorchester Academy
 East Boston High
 Edison K-8
 Edwards Middle

English High
 Excel High
 Fenway High
 Frederick Pilot Middle
 Greater Egleston High
 Henderson Inclusion [Secondary]
 Higginson/Lewis K-8 [ELT]
 Horace Mann School for the Deaf
 Irving Middle [ELT]
 Kennedy, EM Health Academy
 King K-8
 Lyon Pilot High 9-12
 Madison Park High
 MPH\Crafts Academy
 MPH\Freshman Academy
 MPH\Health Academy
 McCormack Middle [ELT]
 McKinley Middle
 McKinley Prep
 McKinley South End Academy
 McKinley, William School [K -12]

Middle School Academy
 Mildred Avenue K-8
 Mission Hill K-8
 Muniz, Margurita Academy
 New Mission Pilot
 Newcomers Academy
 O'Bryant School
 Ohrenberger Elementary
 Orchard Gardens K-8 Pilot
 Ostiguy High
 Quincy Upper School
 Rogers Middle
 Roland Hayes Div of Music
 Snowden International Hi
 Tech Boston Academy
 Timilty Middle
 Tobin K-8 [ELT]
 Umana Academy [ELT]
 UP "Unlocking Potential" Acad
 West Roxbury Academy
 WREC: Urban Science Academy

PROGRAMS/GROUPS

Adult Education
 Alternative Education
 Alternative Education HS
 Carter Development Center - Secondary
 Career & Technical Ed
 *Comm Connections Facilitator
 Cohort 3 [Secondary]
 Comprehensive Health Ed Coordinator [BTU]
 Coordinator [BTU] non academic

Counseling & Intern Ct K -12
 English Language Learners
 Health Service
 Info & Instr Technology
 Institute for Professional Development
 Job Placement Specialist
 Junior Specialist [BTU]
 Literacy Dept.
 Newcomer Assess & Counseling

Nurses
 Professional Development
 Research Assess & Eval
 * Evaluation Specialist
 School Development Officer
 Social Worker/Coordinator
 Speech & Language [SLP's]
 Teaching & Learning [Secondary]

Paraprofessional/Substitute Field Rep. Josefina Lascano's Assigned Programs

Paraprofessional
 Community Field Coordinator
 Cluster Substitute
 COTA Para
 Health Para
 Library Paraprofessional
 One to One Para
 Security Para
 SPED Coverage Paraprofessional
 Surround Care Paraprofessional
 Adult Ed - Sub Teacher
 Substitute Teacher
 Substitute Nurse
 Sub Teacher - Retiree
 Sub Nurse - Retiree

For the following - The BTU Field Rep. is determined by the school you are assigned to:

Clinical Coordinator
 * Specialist [BTU]
 * Specialist [BTU] non academic
 Guidance Advisor [1]
 Guidance Counselor [1]
 Lead Sign Language Interpreter
 Librarian
 Registrar
 Rehabilitation Counselor
 ROTC Instructor
 School Disciplinary Officer
 Student Development Counselor [1]
 [SDC's]
 Student Services Coordinator [SSC's]
 Swimming Instructor

Faculty Senates – A Union Membership Responsibility

by Michael W. McLaughlin
BTU Elementary Field Rep.

Faculty Senates first appeared in our 1971-'72 contract, twenty-five years after the establishment of the BTU. In the 1973-'74 contract a second paragraph was added that remains in our present contract. Another addition was made in the 1978-'80 contract, Faculty Senate was included under Article I: Union Recognition, Jurisdiction and Responsibilities. A section titled Faculty Senate Guidelines was added in an additional appendix-like section on page 98. Today Faculty Senate is listed in our contract under Article II, Developing and Maintaining Effective Working Relation-

ships. The guidelines can be found in the appendix.

Our union leaders had it right in 1978. Faculty Senate is a responsibility. These days it may be the only safe place a faculty member has to express concerns about educational policy without getting the hairy eyeball from administrators. Considering the climate in some schools, you would be taking your life into your own hands if you were to publicly express a contrary opinion during an ILT meeting, SSC meeting or a CCL pre/post conference. Faculty senates help to maintain an effective working relationship with the principal about educational policy without fear of being

singled out for retribution. Faculty senates are democracy in action. It's a forum for the healthy exchange of ideas. Many schools hold their monthly FS meeting on the Thursday or Friday following the Union's general membership meeting. In this way, teachers get the most up to date information from their elected building rep.

The school day goes by much like a hundred yard dash. Frequently the race gets longer as ILT, SSC, CCL, Professional Development and extended day activities are tacked on. We need to make time for the faculty senate. The first step is to elect

a chair. Next, set the dates and let the entire faculty know. Be sure to give your principal a copy so that other committee meetings don't conflict with other school related meetings. We need to do this for ourselves and for our profession. Try to make the meetings more appealing with coffee or other refreshments. Rotating the location or combining them with a monthly morning coffee hour can also increase attendance. Whatever format your faculty decides, remember it's a union member's responsibility. Become an active member of the faculty senate.

Class Size Maxima 2015-2016

Regular Education

Kindergarten – Grade 2	22
Grades 3 - 5	25
Grades 6 - 8	28
Grades 9 - 12	31
Grade Combinations (Elementary).....	22
Industrial Classes	20

In elementary schools where there is only one regular education class in a grade level, the School Department may exceed the Class Size Maxima by one or two students. For one student over the Class Size Maxima, the teacher will receive \$1,500, and for two students \$3,000.

In secondary schools where there is a singular regular education course offering, the School Department may exceed the Class Size Maxima by one or two students. For one student over the Class Size Maxima, the teacher will receive \$300, and for two students \$600.

Special Education

Resource Room	10
With One Para.....	12
With Two Paras.....	16
Early Childhood	6
With One Para.....	9
Substantially Separate	8
With One Para.....	12

Some very specialized classes, e.g., Lab Cluster, may have a smaller class size.

Bilingual, ESL, and Sheltered Immersion

ANY Grade.....	20
With One Para.....	25

Teachers should immediately report class size violations to the Executive Vice President Patrick Connolly.

Please Note: As of 9/1/13, class size in our 48 Level 3 schools and all of our Turnaround (or Level 4) schools plus so-called 'undesignated' schools (King, Higginson Lewis, Mildred Ave., Tech Boston) shall additionally be reduced by two students in grades 6 and by one student in grade 9.

School Environment

by Michael W. McLaughlin
BTU Elementary Field Rep.

Is your school showing signs of disrepair? Do your allergy and flu like symptoms disappear during July and August? Are there visible signs of rodent infestation in your school? Are the ceiling tiles in your classroom water stained? Does your asthma worsen during work hours? Is your classroom cluttered?

If you can answer yes to any one of these questions, your school may have indoor environmental problems. If you suspect your school has environmental problems, you can take steps to improve it. As a first step your faculty senate should approach your principal about forming an environmental committee. It's important to include as many of the stakeholders as possible. Administrators, custodians, teachers, cafeteria manager, after school director and community schools coordinators are among some of those. One of the first actions the committee should undertake is reviewing the Integrated Pest Management Plan (IPM). Your principal or IPM coordinator should have it on file. If your school does not have one, it should be the first order of business for no other reason than it's the law in Massachusetts. We are one of the few states requiring IPM.

Public concern about the quality of indoor environments associated with schools is high, particularly in relation to exposure to pesticides, chemicals (cleaning and others), allergens, pests and rodents. Exposure can trigger asthma in many individuals. Asthma is the leading chronic illness of children in the US

and a leading cause of school absenteeism. It is not hard to understand why IPM is critical in schools and why it must be taken seriously.

In addition to sitting on an environmental committee, teachers can help in other ways. Remove clutter from your classroom. Don't store or stack materials on the floor or along the walls of your classroom. Clean out your closet once a year (when in doubt...throw it out). If you haven't used something in five years but want to hold on to it, take it home. Remove household cleaners from your classroom too. Many contain toxic bleach based chemicals that are harmful.

As part of an initiative to create healthy environments for students and for those who work in schools, the Healthy Schools Task Force was formed. The Boston Public Schools, the Boston Health Commission, MassCosh, the Boston Urban Asthma Coalition, parent activists and the BTU along with others have been working together on Boston Public School's Citywide IPM Committee. This has all come about as an initiative of the STEPS program. Your school may be a STEPS School. The STEPS IPM Committee meets on a monthly basis. The committee has accomplished quite a lot. For more information about IPM go to the State website: www.mass.gov/agr/ipm. Also worth reading are the Superintendent's Circulars FMT-11, Integrated Pest Management and FMT-12, Green Cleaners. The BTU can assist teachers in improving the indoor environment of their schools. Contact me at mmclaughlin@btu.org or call 617-288-2000.

– Faculty Senates –

Faculty Senates may be formed in each school building and shall meet once every month after the close of the normal school day with the Principal or Headmaster concerned. Faculty Senates will be recognized by the administration of that school as having an advisory voice in the operation of that school and having an advisory voice in the formation of educational policy.

Faculty Senates representing Music Teachers, Guidance Counselors, Nurses, School Psychologists, Evaluation Team Leaders, Kindergarten teachers, Bilingual teachers, and Pupil Adjustment Counselors shall meet once every month after the close of the normal school day with the director or administrator concerned.

These Faculty Senates will be recognized by the administrator of the department as having an advisory voice in the formation of educational policy.

Faculty Senate Chairpersons will meet twice each year on the elementary, middle, and high school levels during days of regularly scheduled in-service meetings.

Faculty Senate Guidelines

Purpose

The Faculty Senate shall:

- 1) Plan and run in-service meetings, in cooperation with the administration and in accordance with the contract;
- 2) Elected by the teaching staff, it represents that staff in matters concerning school policy;
- 3) Present the administration with faculty positions on building procedures and educational policy;
- 4) Cooperate with the building rep. in all contract matters and Union policy.

Membership

- 1) Only those eligible to vote shall be eligible for membership (see below);
- 2) The Faculty Senate will be composed of a minimum of five members, except in buildings where the number of teachers is less. In schools where the faculty numbers more than 50, membership should be on a 1 to 10 ratio. Members are generally elected at large, but in certain schools may be elected by departments, areas, pods, etc.
- 3) All Building Reps. are automatically members of the Faculty Senate, but should be elected as Building Reps. separately.

Eligibility for Voting

- 1) All teaching personnel assigned to the building except short term subs;
- 2) Nurses, permanent librarians, guidance personnel.
- 3) No one above Group II.

Elections

- 1) Held by the first week of October;
- 2) Outgoing Faculty Senate appoints election committee; if no Faculty Senate, then BTU Building Representative appoints election committee. Submit names in writing. In a case where not enough names are submitted, the BTU Building Representative should run a primary, entering the name of every eligible person in the building.
- 3) Separate ballots for BTU Building Representative and Faculty Senate Union members only vote for BTU Building Representative.
- 4) Ballots should be checked, one per voter.

Meetings

- 1) Faculty Senate elects own chairperson;
- 2) Faculty Senate should meet at least biweekly;
- 3) The administrative head must meet with the Faculty Senate at least monthly; present the administrative head with written positions of the faculty and demand a response.
- 4) Meet with entire faculty at least monthly; Faculty should submit items for agenda; Faculty Senate Chairperson determines agenda;
- 5) Faculty Senate elects own secretary;
- 6) In Service Meetings
 - a) Faculty and administration submit items for agenda
 - b) Chairperson and administrative head determine time allotments
 - c) Each (in b) chairs his section of meeting.

Communications

The Faculty Senate should;

- 1) Keep accurate attendance and minutes of all meetings.
- 2) Supply each member of the faculty with a written report once each month.
- 3) Present the faculty with the responses of the administrative head. If the faculty is dissatisfied with the response of the administrative head, it may be appealed to the Community District Superintendent.

By-Laws

Each Faculty Senate should formulate its own bylaws following these guidelines and in compliance with the contract and union membership policy.

How Long (Days, Hours, PD) is the School Year in Traditional Schools?

...and how is the 2015-2016 time broken down and compensated?

By Richard Stutman, BTU President

(Please review the below to understand the length of your school year, the conditions under which you must receive additional compensation for additional work, and so on. (As always, call the union office if you have any questions.)

Traditional Schools

School Year, 18 Hours, Extra Time, etc.

The school year is divided up into a few components:

Component A: The first few days of the school year are broken down as follows for this year (2015-2016) only:

Day 1, Wednesday, September 2 – Paras and teachers can either report on 9/2 and work 6 hours in room preparation **OR** they can work these same 6 hours over a period of time from August 15 through September 2. Those who choose to do this work from 8/15 through 9/2 need only submit to the administrator a statement of when (days/times) the 6 hours were completed.

Thursday, September 3 – Staff get 30 minutes for union introductory information, and administration gets rest of the day (5:30) for PD.

Friday, September 4 – No school for either students or teachers.

Tuesday, September 8 – First day of school for all, but kindergarten students.

Thursday, September 10 – First day of school for kindergarten students.

There are 180 school days when class is in session.

January 4, 2016 – All day Professional Day – Staff can vote to convert these six hours to ordinary PD; or staff can vote to hold an all-day PD at their site; or staff can vote to participate in all-day event co-sponsored by the BTU and the school department. (Specialty staffs throughout the city have one day set aside for PD, and that day is January 4 by default, though subject to change.)

Component E: 18 hours of professional development*

*The building administrator may establish the professional development schedule provided that the meeting schedule be provided to the staff no later than the end of school for the preceding year, none of the time be scheduled over the summer unless there is a waiver vote under CBA, and provided that no professional development time be scheduled on the 2nd Wed. of month, and must be at least two hours in length.

Teachers will receive a PDP certificate at the end of the school year for all time spent in professional development activities. Teachers may combine PDP activities year-to-year to comply with state requirements.

For all of the above the professional development content belongs exclusively to the building administrator and **participants get PDP-certificates for their attendance for all of the PD time required.**

In ELT or Schedule A schools chosen to participate in 2015-2016, the above is modified to the extent that administration does not have unilateral jurisdiction over the scheduling of the 18 hours—rather the scheduling must have the approval of a majority of the faculty by vote. The faculty vote is by secret ballot.

Common Questions

What if you are absent on a day when a portion of the 18 hours are scheduled?

If you are on legitimate leave (bereavement, sick, personal, etc.) and you miss a day when there is scheduled a 2-hour-or-less professional development meeting, you do **not** have to make up the time.

If you are on legitimate leave (bereavement, sick, personal, etc.) and you miss a day when there is scheduled a meeting that is longer than 2 hours, you **do** have to make up the time. The scheduling of the make-up of the time is a mutual agreed-upon endeavor.

If you are in school and have to leave during the day of a scheduled PD meeting of any duration, you owe the time.

How long is the length of the school day?

Teachers in elementary schools have to be present in school for 6:30 each day. Teachers in secondary schools work 6:40 per day. We all know most teachers work well beyond those hours in all schools, not to mention daily time spent at home and on weekends. We are referring here specifically to on-the-clock, 'bell-to-bell', mandated hours.

What if your administrator schedules a 40-hour math (etc.) workshop?

Anything over either the 24 hours (with the conversion) or the 18 hours (without) as mentioned above is voluntary, no matter how worthy and valuable.

ELT (or Schedule A) Schools

50 plus schools now fall under the ELT/Schedule A umbrella. These schools will be phased in beginning this year, and each school will have a school day extension of 40 minutes per day, 180 days per year. The rest of the school's schedule will follow that of traditional schools, except that teachers shall receive an additional 40-minute period each week of teacher-directed collaborative time along with a 35-minute period of P&D time per week. The 35-minute P&D block can be divided up into 7-minute segments daily, added to a person's already-existing P&D time, subject to a decision of the School

Site Council. Teachers will receive \$4,464 this year for their school day extension and paras will get paid at their hourly rate. The compensation is subject to the yearly COLA.

Pilot Schools & Innovation* Schools

Pilot Schools (and Innovation Schools), which tend to follow the Pilot model) create their own schedules subject to the below:*

Pilot school teachers and paraprofessionals can be required to work additional time, either in hours or days. But there is compensation for some of those additional hours. Here's a short description of what constitutes extra time in a pilot school, how to calculate it, and how the additional compensation will look.

Additional Hours: Here's an explanation of how to calculate additional hours in a pilot school: To understand this, we first have to look at the traditional school schedule. The school day is defined as 6:30 for elementary teachers and 6:40 for secondary teachers. If you are given a 30-minute break in the middle of the day for lunch, or time-off for whatever, that time counts as part of the school day.

The length of the traditional school year is 180 school days as defined above. There are 2 additional non-student days: the Tuesday and the day after the Winter/December break. Plus a 'lost' day, which was the typical Day 2 in previous years; this day is now turned into an equivalent of 6 hours. These three non-student days, however, are 6-hour days for a total of 18 hours. In addition to the '180' plus the '3', there are 18 additional hours of professional development time and 4 hours of parental contact time. This is a total of 1,210 hours for elementary teachers and 1,240 hours for secondary teachers. There are **no** other days or hours **required**, whether during the school year, in the summer, or whenever. All time required **above and beyond** what is defined in this paragraph is considered **additional** time and would contribute to the limits, which, if exceeded, require compensation. If you have any questions on this calculation, please call the BTU office at 617-288-2000.

All hours beyond the normal school day/year in excess of 95 will be compensated, so it is important to confirm the actual numbers of hours required. The first 50 hours in excess of 95 will be compensated by the city; all hours beyond those will be compensated by the individual school.

The compensation for time above and beyond the hours detailed above will be at the contractual hourly rate and will be retirement-worthy.

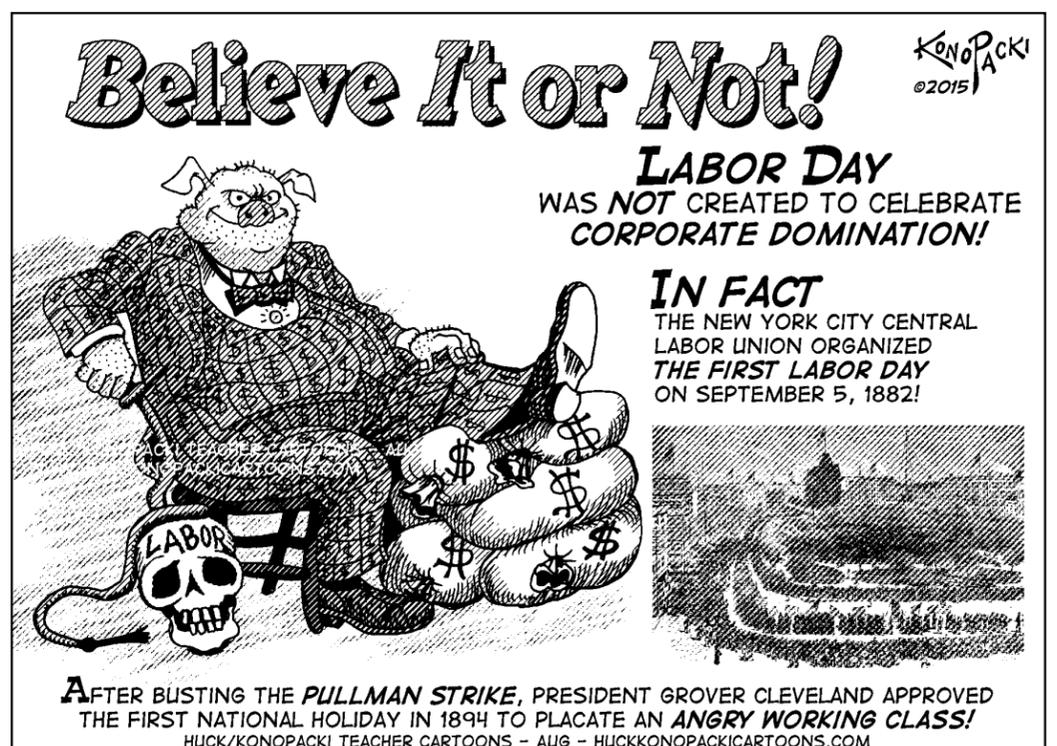
* Innovation school teachers have to consult their own *Election to Work* Agreement for certain individual schedule characteristics. By and large, Innovation Schools have schedules that parallel the pilot school model, which is pretty uniform except for the actual calculation of hours that can vary by pilot school. Anyone with a question, please call the appropriate field representative at the BTU office, either Caren or Michael.

Turnaround Schools

For the 2015-2016 school year, in addition to any of the above found under the Traditional School schedule, all teachers (nurses, etc.) in Turnaround will work an additional (compared to traditional schools) 190 hours of overtime, broken down as follows: 100 hours of PD, and 90 hours (30 minutes per school day for 180 hours for instruction). The 190 hours will be compensated at \$4,100, will be annualized (paid over 26 paychecks) and will be retirement worthy. The above was determined and imposed by a state-sanctioned process mandated under the so-called Educational Reform Law--it was not negotiated. To learn more about the schedule at a Turnaround School, please see here (<http://www.btu.org/contract-highlights/turnaround-schools>) and scroll to bottom and/or consult either Caren or Michael.

Any questions on any of the above, please call the BTU office at 617-288-2000.

All other types of schools (Project Promise, Horace Mann Charters, hybrids such as Boston English, and state takeovers Holland and Dever have their unique schedules governed under different sets of rules. Still other schools, such as the McCormack, Umana, Irving, and the Edwards follow language outlined in the BTU Contract, Appendix G. For questions, please contact either Caren, Michael or Josefina, at the BTU.



What's the Deal With Political Action?

It's a given that at the heart of collective bargaining for teachers are all the people and the children with whom we work. What's not as obvious, however, is that in order to support teachers, paraprofessionals, nurses, related service providers, substitute teachers, and retirees; it's political action that is essential to ensure policies, decisions, and issues directly affecting public education are portrayed in a positive light as well as reflect and include the educators' voices.

Why is political action a must for us?

It's very simple: our elected officials make key decisions that impact educators, education, our students, and, in turn, their families. In addition to voting to fund our contract, it is our elected officials who vote on legislation that impacts pensions, health care, professional status, and policy directly linked to public education and our students.

Somewhere along the way, being a member of a union, being a public school educator and, particularly, the issue of collective bargaining and all that it encompasses has become negative in all too many circles. Education is at the heart of conversations in homes, not to mention on TV, radio, the Internet and, yes, with our elected officials.

"Privatization," "Increasing the Cap on Charter Schools," "High Stakes Testing," "PARCC," "Evaluation Reform," "Revenue," and *much more* is front and center for active BTU members. For our retirees, an increase in the COLA base is also front and center.

"Education reform" is still a buzzword. And, of course, the people who talk "education reform" are "progressive."

Breaking news? Certainly not. The BTU is clearly much more than a one issue organization. We support equity for all students, maximum learning opportunities for all children, and teaching the whole child inclusive of English language learners, special education students, and gifted students.

You, as public school teachers, welcome all students who enter your classroom and embrace the unique learning style of each student. Boston has many great teachers, great classrooms with strong curricula, high standards, and, yes, without question, we have great students. Strong schools are the foundations for strong communities.

Political Action greatly helps us influence these many conversations.

Why and how does the BTU make endorsements?

The BTU's Committee On Political Education (COPE), whose members are nominated by the BTU President and subsequently approved by the Executive Board and the Membership recommend candidates who advocate for public education and who will vote to support all those issues that we hold dear meet regularly and make initial recommendations for endorsement. COPE Committee endorsements are based upon a candidate questionnaire, interview, and a candidate's voting record. It should be noted that non-incumbents can receive, and have received, endorsements per BTU contract. A 2/3 vote by the COPE Committee is required in order to send a recommendation to the Executive Board, who, by a 2/3 vote, sends the COPE recommendation for endorsement to the BTU membership. If the recommended candidate for endorsement receives a 2/3 vote at the membership meeting, the recommended candidate is endorsed.

Federal and state laws restrict the use of your union dues for political action. Conse-

quently, members are asked to voluntarily contribute monies. The recommended contribution is \$2.00 per pay period for teachers and \$0.50 per pay period for paraprofessionals. A record of COPE monies will be made available to the membership following a final election and is reviewed by an independent auditor who reviews the Union's books annually. Please review the "Question and Answers on COPE" fact sheet available at the BTU Office and in your BTU contract as each serves as the detailed source for this article.

Political Action is effective and only works with your involvement!

How can you be involved?

There are many ways ... through the electoral process and/or the legislative process. A bit of background: to meet with the changing needs of the membership, public education, our profession, and the students with whom we all work, the BTU has moved toward, and continues to increase member-to-member mobilization by actively engaging in the electoral process and though legislative advocacy. There are many opportunities for you to participate!

• VOTE!

• If you are *not* registered to vote, *register to vote!* You can now register to vote online at <https://www.sec.state.ma.us/ovr/>. And *VOTE!*

• Get involved in this year's municipal election! The preliminary municipal election in Boston is scheduled for Tuesday, September 8th. The final election is scheduled for Tuesday, November 3rd. ~ Volunteer opportunities are endless!

For the September 8th preliminary election, the BTU has endorsed **Charles Yancey** for City Council in District 4 and **Tito Jackson** for City Council in District 7. Councilor Yancey and Councilor Jackson were endorsed at the May 13, 2015 membership meeting as were **Michael Flaherty**, City Council At Large; **Stephen Murphy**, City Council At-Large; **Ayanna Pressley**, City Council At-Large; **Michelle Wu**, City Council At-Large; **Annisssa Essaibi George** (BTU member), City Council At-Large; **Bill Linehan**, City Council District 2; **Frank Baker**, City Council District 3; **Matt O'Malley**, City Council District 6; **Josh Zakim**, City Council District 8; and **Mark Ciommo**, City Council District 9 who are on the November ballot. Stay tuned for several additional endorsements to be rolled out this fall, based upon the COPE endorsement process, for the November election.

• Volunteer on a campaign for one of our endorsed candidates or join in with other BTU members as we engage in a grassroots member to member campaign! The volunteer opportunities are endless! Each endorsed candidate will welcome you and work with your schedule so your volunteer activities match your interests!

• Submit your name and email for the Campaign Activist Network and stay in the loop for regular campaign activity and legislative updates!

• Join the conversation at a BTU education roundtable discussion! It's Real Teachers, Real Talk! The BTU continues to come to your neighborhood so that BTU members can meet to talk politics. What do candidates and elected officials need to know about teachers, retirees, our schools, and public education? "Real Teachers, Real Talk" is designed for BTU members to engage in a conversation about hot political issues that impact public education so we can unite around a strategy and take action. Elected officials and candidates are invited

to join BTU members for the "conversation" part of the meeting. Many elected officials have joined the "Real Teachers, Real Talk" education roundtable discussion with BTU members who are their constituents and the list continues to grow. Keep your eye out for upcoming dates, times, and locations!

• Join the Rapid Response Team! Media monitoring and rapid response is common in all political campaigns. Candidates say public education is "top priority." The translation is simple, public education and public education policy is political. Messaging is a key component in every political campaign. The goal is proactive preparation and response, when needed. The BTU Rapid Response Team is grassroots based and changes the conversation. Strategy, outreach, and response. All synonymous. All political. Whether you like to write letters to the editor, calling in to radio/talk shows, commenting online for a specific newspaper article/blog, or using social media (i.e. Twitter, Facebook, etc.) your voice and help allows for proactive communication that is open, honest, and authentic. As a member of the Rapid Response Team, your information (i.e. email, online handles, etc) is kept confidential consistent with BTU policy.

• Host a House Party! What better way to get to know our elected officials and for them to get know us by hosting a house party for our elected officials? If you can supply the location, we will do the rest! We will coordinate a mutually agreeable time for you and the elected official, invite the guests, and provide the refreshments. We'll do most of the work and you will feel like just like one of the guests! This is a great opportunity to help BTU members establish a better relationship with those who make the laws in the Commonwealth!

• Be proactive! Volunteer for one of our elected officials' off-election season! Working off-election season for an elected official who supported public education and collective bargaining rights, for example, is a great way to say "Thank you!" This is an opportunity to build a relationship with our elected officials when neither party is asking something of the other. This year, your State Senator and State Representative are the elected officials who are not up for re-election. It's a win-win!

• Support legislation that is pro-public school educators, pro-public school children, and benefits our current and future retirees! Our students' best advocates and our future retirees are you!

• Collect signatures to get the Fair Share Amendment on the ballot!

• Attend or submit testimony for a hearing! If you are not able to attend a hearing, call your elected officials! A great opportunity to have your voice heard on the issue of the Charter School cap, and related charter school legislation this legislative session, for example, will be this Fall leading up to and/or at an October 13th hearing that is scheduled at the State House on the Charter School legislation. (Keep your eyes out for information specific to two noted ballot petitions, as well. Your voice can, and will, make a difference! One is entitled "An Act to Allow Fair Access to Public Charter Schools" and the other is called "Law to Ending Common Core Education Standards." Both are petitions are currently being reviewed. More information to come).

What legislation has the BTU endorsed?

BTU legislation endorsed this legislative session follows the same procedure



Angela Cristiani
BTU Political Director

previously outlined for BTU candidate endorsement by the COPE committee. Endorsed bills include, to date, H475 An Act Relative to School Transportation Parity, H1771 An Act Addressing Workplace Bullying, Mobbing, and Harassment, without regard to protected class status, H549 An Act to Increase Voter Education and Registration in Public Schools, S294 An Act providing time to develop better measures of and assistance for student learning, S311/H418, An Act relative to Massachusetts high school diplomas, H3395 An Act to clarify parental rights in the administration of standardized tests, S1024/H1773 An Act to Establish A Living Wage of Big Box Retail Stores and Fast Food Chains, S1008 An Act establishing a family and medical leave and temporary disability leave insurance program, and the Fair Share Amendment to the Constitution of the Commonwealth to Provide Resources for Education and Transportation through an additional tax on incomes (not assets) in excess of One Million Dollars.

Integrated within the BTU political program, voted on by the BTU membership at the May 13, 2015 meeting, is the legislative priorities adopted by "Raise Up Massachusetts" and is reflected among the bills in this article. As you may recall, the BTU asked you to sign petitions in 2013 to increase the minimum wage and guarantee earned sick time for all Massachusetts workers. Both were passed by the legislature and signed into law by the Governor. The Fair Share Amendment referred to in the previous paragraph will follow the same procedure executed in 2013 on behalf of increasing the minimum wage and securing earned sick time. The Fair Share Amendment is a constitutional amendment. It is a ballot initiative and would come before voters in 2018. If voted on by the Commonwealth in 2018, there would be increased revenue for public education and transportation infrastructure. The initial step is collect signatures. We will be engaging BTU members to sign the initiative petition and then ask for colleagues, family, friends, and neighbors to also sign on. A total of 64,750 signatures are needed statewide. More information will be forthcoming.

In addition to the currently endorsed bills, bills specific to the COLA and another that applies to School Nurses have been recommended for membership vote. They are scheduled to come before membership at the September BTU membership meeting. Several other bills are currently in the process of review with potential recommendation for endorsement.

The BTU supports the legislative agendas of our state and national affiliates... American Federation of Teachers, American Federation of Massachusetts, AFL-CIO/MA AFL-CIO, and the Greater Boston Labor Council (via Communities Labor United). You can find the links to the aforementioned affiliates via the BTU website at www.btu.org under *Legislation & Politics* then go to *Current Legislative Highlights*.

The BTU has been instrumental in helping pass proactive legislation that helps education, children, all of our members, as well as working families. As already noted, BTU members helped secure an increase in

continued from page 8

Be a Part of *Real* Ed Reform Through Your School Site Council

by Caren Carew
BTU Secondary Field Rep.

How can we be a part of the societal change we sought when we became public school urban educators – through being a part of the solution as an educated and active member of our School Site Council! Don't we all want to make a difference in the life of a child, in the quality of their community, in improving their world? *We are all connected and it is through these connections we gain our strength and measure our impact.* Times are challenging for urban public schools and we need to be a part of a larger school community in order to affect change on the path to achieving excellence for all of our students. The School Site Councils (SSC) in the BPS are about the best opportunity for teachers, parents, students, administrators, and the entire extended school community to have both voice and vote in making decisions and having input into major components of our schools operations and direction. SSC is an organic, grass roots body that works utilizing an inclusive, consensus model of reaching school based decisions for the good of the children and their education.

While all schools in Massachusetts are mandated to have School Site Councils composed of parents, teachers, and the principal – these are only an advisory body to the principal in communities other than Boston. In contrast, in the Boston Public Schools the SCC is a shared decision making body with actual authority and responsibility for their schools. School Based Management/Shared Decision Making (SBM/SDM) is the process that School Site Councils use to engage the school community in the planning and implementation of school improvement efforts.

The role of the SSC, as established in the Contract between the Boston School Committee and the Boston Teachers Union, is to manage matters that relate to the operation of the school, including: priority and objective setting; development of a Quality School Plan; design and scheduling of instructional programs and curriculum; budgeting and fund raising aligned with the school's academic goals; purchasing and disbursement of discretionary funds; space utilization; hiring of BTU staff; staffing assignments including teaching and non-teaching duties; parent-teacher relations and functions; solicitation and use of outside professionals and social service resources; setting reasonable dress codes; as well as any other matter relating to the operation of the school; and on high school level-review of the student handbook.

In the spirit of authentic school reform – done *with* us not *to* us – the SSC also can adopt waiver proposals [of certain BTU contract provisions, district policies, curriculum, etc.] which must then be brought to a

vote and approved by a specified threshold of BTU staff followed by approval of the SSC Steering Committee. These waivers can include decisions which are contrary to the contract rules, regulations and policies of the School Committee and the Superintendent. There are very specific items that may and may not be waived and there is a standard process in which things that are able to be waived may be waived. Please refer to the official BPS/BTU SSC Manual and the BTU/BPS contract for more info on these details. The SSC has a definitive role with respect to the school's budget process. SSCs must also observe all federal and state laws, regulations and court orders.

Shared decision-making is a process in which all members of the education community at the school level collaborate in identifying challenges, defining goals, formulating policy, implementing programs, and then learn from experience. In BPS the SSC is an elected group of parents, teachers, and students at the high school level, including the principal – that has the authority to make most of the decisions about the school. There can also be non-voting associate members to the SSC. The general public who are non-voting can also participate fully in SSC meetings. Elections for new BTU members to the SSC should be held by each schools' BTU Reps for openings on the SSC prior to the Council's first meeting which contractually must be held no later than October 31st. The parent representative members on the SSC are elected by each schools' parent council. The BPS Office of Engagement can be a terrific resource in assisting with this aspect of the process.

The operational procedures of each SSC are determined by the bylaws which must be crafted and adopted at each school. The SSC is chaired by the principal and another elected member of the SSC chosen by the entire SSC to be co-chair. The Education Reform Act specifically mandates that School Site Councils are subject to the Massachusetts Open Meeting Law. As a result, the SSC is not allowed to go into Executive Session. All sessions and processes are open, participatory and transparent. A quorum must be present to validly conduct SSC business or to hold a Council meeting.

Well planned, well attended SSC meetings are at the heart of successful School Based Management/Shared Decision Making. Regular meetings of the SSC must occur at least monthly and be convened at times mutually agreed upon by the school based administrator, as well as the parents, teachers and students on the high school level elected members. This established monthly schedule has to be publicized for the school year in advance in order to in fact be, shared and inclusive of the entire school community. The SSC sets the agenda for

meetings and items can be submitted by any SSC member. The School Administrator and the other Co-Chair must solicit agenda items from other SSC members as well as from the greater school community prior to each meeting date. Minutes of each SSC meeting must be distributed within five school days of the meeting according to BTU/BPS contract and in the interest of keeping the school community fully informed.

Consensus or general agreement of its members is the decision making technique that SSC functions by. Consensus does not require that there be unanimous agreement but rather makes sure each group member has an opportunity to comment on, understands, can live with and is willing to implement the decision at hand. Building consensus involves everyone having the opportunity to be heard. Members of the SSC are expected to operate as a single

decision-making team working together to fashion effective solutions to the school's educational and operational challenges. The SSC is not a group of spokespersons, narrowly representing interests of themselves, the group that elected them or of any sub-group.

The BPS/BTU Joint Steering Committee through the BTU and BPS Office of Engagement (OE) coordinates training for SSC members. Please contact either **Caren Carew** at the BTU ccarew@btu.org or the OE for further information. It's time to step up and be a more active part of the positive change and future we envisioned! We entered urban public school education to be a part of the solution – there is no better time to start than the present and no better person to step up to do so than YOU! We are all connected – let's be a part of *real* educational reform.

Which Side Are You On?

A Commentary by Colum Whyte,
Co-editor, *Boston Union Teacher*

During the American Revolution the Enlightenment author Thomas Paine wrote about the “sunshine patriot and the summer soldier” in his incendiary pamphlet series *Common Sense*. Indeed, as union members, Paine's fiery words “these are the times that try men's souls” ring truer than ever. The upcoming Supreme Court of the United States (SCOTUS) litigation, *Friedrichs v. California Teachers Association* is proof positive. The ruling will reverberate throughout every American classroom and public sector policy boiler room for generations to come.

In 1977 SCOTUS ruled on a similar case: *Abood v. Detroit Board of Education*. The majority opinion, or *obiter dicta*, of the ruling, which highlighted precedents from SCOTUS litigation concerning the private sector, essentially upheld so-called “agency fees” given to non-union members represented by public sector collective bargaining units. A key argument about “free loaders” not having to pay for unions, but enjoying the fruits of their labor, won the day and the union shop model remained legal. However, the agency fee must be germane to the costs of collective bargaining, and not political policy. Ostensibly, the BTU's COPE (Committee on Political Education) is funded outside of “dues” in order to satisfy the ruling of *Abood*.

For the past 38 years *Abood* has been the gold standard precedent for the operations of public sector unions, most significantly teachers unions. The upcoming SCOTUS litigation seeks to dismantle public sector union shops, like the Boston Teachers Union. This crippling blow is not about “free speech,” it's union busting – plain and simple.

On April 29th 2013, the far right funded legal advocacy group Citizens for Individual Rights (CIR) officially began production of their union busting legal drama. They “legally” represent ten California teachers and the Christian Educators Association International. However, they are cogs on the “Right to Work” ideological machine, which seeks to undermine what's left of unions in the United States. Teachers Unions are the bull's eye that they, led by the billionaire Koch brothers, shadowy American Exchange Legislative Committee (ALEC), and The Business Roundtable (BRT), are firing at.

Remarkably, CIR actually filed motions advocating state courts to side with the union. This maneuver easily and expeditiously rocketed *Friedrichs* to the top of the U.S.'s judicial food chain via appeal. An added benefit was that the state judiciary did not write *dicta* about their decision. The rationale behind the court's ruling could be used against CIR when their appeal finally arrived at SCOTUS.

On January 26, 2015 CIR filed a petition for a *writ of certiorari*, or cert petition. During the following months nine *brief amicus curiae* were filed on behalf of the petitioners. An *amicus curiae* (friend of the court) is akin to judicial lobbying. Among the briefs was one filed by the National Right to Work Legal Defense Fund.

On June 30th, 2015 SCOTUS decided to hear the case. This was a major setback to the union cause, but no surprise given the majority “opinions”, or *dicta*, during SCOTUS cases *Harris v. Quinn* (2014) and *Knox v. SEIU* (2012), -most notably by Justice Samuel Alito.

According to the litigants' cert petition *Friedrichs v. California Teachers Association* is designed to have SCOTUS rule on two questions:

“1. Whether *Abood v. Detroit Bd. of Ed.*, 431 U.S. 209 (1977), should be overruled and public-sector “agency shop” arrangements invalidated under the First Amendment.

2. Whether it violates the First Amendment to require that public employees affirmatively object to subsidizing nonchargeable speech by public-sector unions, rather than requiring that employees affirmatively consent to subsidizing such speech.”¹

The case is scheduled to begin in the fall, with a ruling by June 30, 2016. If *Abood* is overturned in its entirety teachers unions across the country will be decimated. Firstly, many people will jump at the chance to pocket union dues, regardless of their beliefs. These so called “free loaders” will be afforded the same protections as dues paying members guaranteed under the collective bargaining agreement. Secondly, teacher unions will be given the daunting and expensive task to sign up teachers yearly in order to pay their dues. If teachers don't sign up, they don't have to pay. This policy would be both a fiscal and resource drain on unions. How are we expected to operate under these conditions? The answer, we are not.

Teachers and our livelihoods will not be suffering alone. Union states, such as #1 ranking Massachusetts, historically top state education rankings. Right to Work states have historically been among the lowest performing states academically. Students lose.

So, the question I pose to you all, the membership, is – which side are on? Will you be a sunshine or summer union member, or will you stand up against those who wish to colonize us? As a historian and a union activist I do not take for granted the lives lost for our right to unionize. I know that **nothing** was given to us. I know that we must continue to advocate for the schools that our students deserve. I'm ready to fight, are you?

What's the Deal With Political Action?...

continued from page 7

the state's minimum wage and earned sick time for all Massachusetts workers in 2014. In August 2014, the “safe and supportive schools” language integrated within the groundbreaking Gun Violence Prevention Bill where Boston was ahead of the law as an early adopter of the Comprehensive Behavioral Health Model was passed and signed into law. In 2012, An Act to provide access to hearing aids for children across the Commonwealth was passed.

Political round-ups, to include election updates and analysis regarding pertinent bills, key votes, and more, will be reported out to the membership on an ongoing basis.

Please check the BTU weekly E-Bulletin for updates regarding the upcoming election and legislative efforts that affect all our members and the students in our classrooms.

The BTU adheres to the laws and regulations as set forth by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the Secretary of State's Office specific to political activity.

Interested in the political process? Interested in helping one of our endorsed candidates? Interested in legislation? Interested in helping collect signatures for the Fair Share Constitutional Amendment this fall? Call me the BTU office at 617-288-2000 or contact me at acristiani@btu.org to get involved!

What's good for teachers is good for students and their families. It's important that we, as educators, are part of the conversation. Our voice at the table is essential. Our collective voice can, and does, make a difference. Getting involved in political action is everyone's responsibility!

¹ <http://sblog.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Friedrichs-v-California-Teachers-Association-Cert-Petition.pdf>

Retirement Information

By Michael W. McLaughlin,
Trustee, Boston Retirement Board

Retirement is governed by Chapter 32 of the Massachusetts General Laws. Your contribution depends upon the date you were hired.

HIRE DATE

Prior to Jan. 1, 1975.....5% deducted
Jan. 1, 19757% deducted
Jan. 1, 19848% deducted
July 1, 1996.....9% deducted
1/1/79-7/30/01.....add 1 2% deducted for earnings over \$30,000
July 1, 2001 and thereafter... 11% deducted

Members should check their pay stubs to make sure the correct amount is being taken. If there's an error, it should be reported immediately by contacting the Boston Retirement System in Room 816 at City Hall. Their number is 617-635-4305. Members can also contact me directly for information and help with retirement procedures and policy.

A simple equation is used to determine your retirement allowance. Your age factor (50 =1.0, 51=1.1, etc.) is multiplied by the number of years of creditable service. This yields a percentage. Next, average your three highest salaried years and then multiple the percent by that average. The maximum percent is 80%. This amount would be your estimated yearly retirement benefit. Dividing that amount by 12 gives you a good idea of your monthly benefit. These figures are of course all before taxes numbers.

Retirement paperwork and navigating the bureaucracy at the BRB can be a daunting experience. It's prudent to go into the retirement board 3-5 years before you're planning to retire to get a good faith estimate or counter estimate. Call and make an appointment with one of the customer service representatives. It's also a good idea for members who have additional service from a public employer outside of the school department (City of Boston) to inquire if their service could be added to the BRS service. It is best to do this well in advance of retiring.

As a trustee of the Boston Retirement Board I want to extend a welcome to our newest members starting out this year in the BPS. Please do not hesitate to call or stop by the BTU office with your retirement questions. Additionally, I am available to accompany you when you go to the Retirement Board in Room 816 at City Hall. I

The "Retirement percentage" chart

For members with effective membership dates before April 2, 2012

A comparison of the percentage of salary average allowed under the regular and RetirementPlus formulas, by service and age

To be eligible for regular retirement (also known as *superannuation* retirement) under either the "regular" formula, or, if you are participating in RetirementPlus, the enhanced RetirementPlus benefit, you must meet the corresponding eligibility requirements:

- **Regular" formula:** You must **EITHER** have 20 or more years of creditable service at any age, **OR** be age 55 with 10 or more years of creditable service.
- **RetirementPlus formula:** You must have 30 or more years of creditable service, at least 20 years of which are membership service with the MTRS or the Boston Retirement System as a teacher; there is no minimum age requirement. If you **elect**ed to participate in RetirementPlus, but then do not meet either the 20-year "teaching" or the 30-year total service requirement by your date of retirement, you will receive a retirement benefit calculated under the regular formula and a refund of your RetirementPlus contributions, plus regular interest.

		AGE AT RETIREMENT																			
RETIREMENTPLUS % INCREASE		46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65+
YEARS OF SERVICE *	25 — Regular	15.0	17.5	20.0	22.5	25.0	27.5	30.0	32.5	35.0	37.5	40.0	42.5	45.0	47.5	50.0	52.5	55.0	57.5	60.0	62.5
	26 — Regular	15.6	18.2	20.8	23.4	26.0	28.6	31.2	33.8	36.4	39.0	41.6	44.2	46.8	49.4	52.0	54.6	57.2	59.8	62.4	65.0
	27 — Regular	18.9	21.6	24.3	27.0	29.7	32.4	35.1	37.8	40.5	43.2	45.9	48.6	51.3	54.0	56.7	59.4	62.1	64.8	67.5	70.2
	28 — Regular	22.4	25.2	28.0	30.8	33.6	36.4	39.2	42.0	44.8	47.6	50.4	53.2	56.0	58.8	61.6	64.4	67.2	70.0	72.8	75.6
	29 — Regular	26.1	29.0	31.9	34.8	37.7	40.6	43.5	46.4	49.3	52.2	55.1	58.0	60.9	63.8	66.7	69.6	72.5	75.4	78.3	81.2
	30 12% Regular	30.0	33.0	36.0	39.0	42.0	45.0	48.0	51.0	54.0	57.0	60.0	63.0	66.0	69.0	72.0	75.0	78.0	80.0	80.0	80.0
	R+	42.0	45.0	48.0	51.0	54.0	57.0	60.0	63.0	66.0	69.0	72.0	75.0	78.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0
	31 14% Regular	34.1	37.2	40.3	43.4	46.5	49.6	52.7	55.8	58.9	62.0	65.1	68.2	71.3	74.4	77.5	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0
	R+	48.1	51.2	54.3	57.4	60.5	63.6	66.7	69.8	72.9	76.0	79.1	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0
	32 16% Regular	38.4	41.6	44.8	48.0	51.2	54.4	57.6	60.8	64.0	67.2	70.4	73.6	76.8	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0
	R+	54.4	57.6	60.8	64.0	67.2	70.4	73.6	76.8	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0
	33 18% Regular	42.9	46.2	49.5	52.8	56.1	59.4	62.7	66.0	69.3	72.6	75.9	79.2	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0
	R+	60.9	64.2	67.5	70.8	74.1	77.4	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0
	34 20% Regular	47.6	51.0	54.4	57.8	61.2	64.6	68.0	71.4	74.8	78.2	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0
	R+	67.6	71.0	74.4	77.8	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0
	35 22% Regular	52.5	56.0	59.5	63.0	66.5	70.0	73.5	77.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0
	R+	74.5	78.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0
	36 24% Regular	57.6	61.2	64.8	68.4	72.0	75.6	79.2	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0
	R+	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0
	37 26% Regular	62.9	66.6	70.3	74.0	77.7	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0
R+	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	
38 28% Regular	68.4	72.2	76.0	79.8	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	
R+	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	
39 30% Regular	74.1	78.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	
R+	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	
40 32% Regular	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	
R+	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	

RetirementPlus vs. regular formula

- NO DIFFERENCE
- MAXIMUM DIFFERENCE: Member receives full amount of RetirementPlus % increase
- LESSER DIFFERENCE: Member receives only that amount of RetirementPlus % increase needed to reach 80% salary maximum

Effective April 2010

- * Two notes on "years of service": For the purposes of determining your:
- 1) "RetirementPlus % increase," only **whole** years of creditable service will be counted (the amount is not rounded up). For example, if you have 32.9 years of creditable service, your "RetirementPlus % increase" is based on 32 years of creditable service, or 16%.
 - 2) **Percentage of allowable salary average, your full years and full months** of creditable service will be counted. For example, Jane Educator is a teacher on a 10-month contract, and is retiring mid-year, on March 10. At that time, she will have 32 years, 6 months and 10 days of creditable service—or 32.6549 years of creditable service. The amount of creditable service that will be used to calculate Jane's allowable percentage of salary average is 32.6 years. (Because the first decimal place represents full months, and the last three decimal places represent only partial months, the last three decimal places will not be included in Jane's final benefit calculation.)

will be hosting two retirement seminars during the school year. The dates will be announced in the e-Bulletin.

Peer Assistance Program

By Michael W. McLaughlin, BTU Elementary Field Rep

In 2007, your union in collaboration with the BPS created a new system of support to enhance the teaching performance of permanent teachers. The goal of the Peer Assistant Program is to improve the teaching performance of permanent teachers who have received an overall performance evaluation rating of *Needs improvement* or *Unsatisfactory*. Under the current performance evaluation system these teachers would be on a *Directed Growth* or *Improvement Plan*.

Currently, the four Peer Assistants (PA) provide support for permanent teachers who are experiencing difficulties in the classroom. In cooperation with the principal, the PA works with the participating teacher to identify areas that need improvement. It is then that the PA develops specific performance goals and offers support while monitoring the progress of the teacher. The PA works to improve the planning, classroom management and instructional strategies of the participating teacher. Peer assistants may conference, model, co-teach and observe as part of the support provided to the classroom teacher. Each of the four PAs work with up to twelve permanent teachers at all levels in all district schools. The PA's establish and maintain a trusting, confidential, non-evaluative, and professional relationship with the participating teachers. Additionally, the PA's co-develop a plan to improve performance and strengthen teaching goals. As part of their daily routines, PA's can provide regular, on-site support for the permanent teacher. The PA's work year is 183 days + 18 hours + 2.5 additional hours per week during the school year. Compensation is the base BTU salary plus 5%. Compensation is retirement worthy.

The Peer Assistance program is unlike any other teacher assistance program in that it helps only permanent teachers. During its tenure, the PA program has helped hundreds of teachers and at the same time has strengthened our union. The Peer Assistance Program is an example of how the BTU and the BPS can work together to improve the teaching profession and the education of the children in the City of Boston. More information about the availability of this program can be obtained on the BTU website or by contacting me at the BTU. To apply for a Peer Assistant log on to MyLearningPlan.com and submit a request by completing the form. All requests are kept confidential.

