Revenue Needs to Be Raised to Pay for Systemic Improvements in the Boston Public Schools

Richard Stutman
BTU President

Good afternoon. What a wonderful gathering here to discuss social justice, economic justice, and tax equity—all that benefit the common good!

My name is Richard Stutman and I am the proud president of an 10,000 member organization whose members work in our public schools day in and day out. We educate all children, we don’t cherry pick our community leaders concerning the ongoing crisis in funding of one sort or another. Two weeks ago we ran out of bottled water at the O’Bryan High School and other schools. Our pipes are bad, so city schools have to use bottled water. And to get the water delivered, we have to pay the bills. So for a few weeks, students and staff had to bring their own bottled water — in this, the wealthiest country on earth. This winter we had many a day when kids were shivering— not necessarily because our schools ran out of oil, but because our heating systems are so old and decrepit, they’re totally unreliable. Those are the day-to-day issues that spring up in a system, which -- the estimate is -- needs $1 billion on infrastructure improvements to get our facilities up to today’s standard. That’s about 1/7th the cost of the proposed Olympic costs.

This is but part of what we need.

Our schools’ programmatic budgets operate on a shoestring. It is quite common for a school to lose 10%-20% of its staff in a yearly cycle. Because resource margins are so thin, programmatic decisions — like whether to offer both Spanish and Music — has to be reassessed yearly. It is virtually impossible to embark on any type of long-range planning for schools that face yearly budgetary ebbs and flows of 5 to 10%. The yearly uncertainty places schools in an unenviable position of making curriculum decisions that often have a one-year life span. Our schools’ finances are built on a house of cards.

School finances depend on city finances, which are hard to predict; they’re limited by tax base, and dependent on state finances, which are in turn similarly hard to predict.

State finances are built on the vagaries of tax collections and whether during this cycle we need to borrow from Peter to pay Paul. The state sets aside resources to pay for schools — but the resources are unpredictable, and dependent on how much will be left over if there’s a snowy winter or a sudden T crisis. This year, state local aid may stay the same, but the kindergarten budget may decline.

The point is that any of these services is or is not more valuable than any other — they are all valuable, and none ought to be sacrificed or placed before another. The problem is, with the current tax structure there’s an systemic inability to fund all programs, and we’re always robbing Peter to pay Paul.

The reason for that is the tax structure is inadequate and regressive, the wealthy 1% or 2% prevail at the expense of the 98%.

We need reform at the federal level so we can move towards an economy that serves our needs, not the needs of the wealthy. So, our families can afford decent shelter, proper nutrition, and solid medical care — all needed to get all children to school ready, willing and able to learn. That’s step #1 to close the achievement gap. We need to close the shelter, nutrition and medical care gaps. Urban America also needs a federal program to pay for infrastructure improvements to move our schools into the 21st century.

We need tax reform at the state level so our communities and schools can count on a reliable and steady stream of funding for our schools in order that good decisions and long-range planning can take place.

Finally, we need reform at the city level so our city can raise the revenue it needs and move away from the regressive and limited property tax, which accounts for the bulk of city revenues.

We look forward to the day when our social and tax policies begin to treat our students as well as government policy currently favors the 1%. Thank you.
Know Your Rights  

What is the Small Necessities Leave Act For and Who is Eligible to Take It?

Under State law, eligible employees may be entitled to tenured or professional teacher status upon completion of a specified period of employment as a temporary or relief teacher. Tenure status is earned upon completion of seven years of service as a temporary or relief teacher. Professional teacher status is earned upon completion of five years of service as a temporary or relief teacher after which the employee may be employed as a tenured or professional teacher.

The Circular highlights general principles of the contract this issue is addressed in Article VII, Section A, 18 which states; “The school committee agrees to provide a lockable file cabinet in each school and location serviced by itinerants (e.g. school psychologists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, speech and language pathologists) for secure storage of student records.”

Do “permanent” BPS teachers have tenure or professional teaching status? What’s the difference – particularly with respect to dismissal?

Ordinarily, a “permanent” BPS teacher in the state of Massachusetts is one who has served in the principal’s school for three previous consecutive school years. Public school teachers in the state of Massachusetts have tenure upon completion of seven years of service as a temporary or relief teacher, or upon completion of five years of service as a temporary or relief teacher after which the employee may be employed as a tenured or professional teacher.

For the purpose of this section, a teacher, school librarian, school adjustment counselor or an assistant, a counselor or school psychologist who has served in the public schools of a school district for the three previous consecutive school years shall be considered a teacher and shall be entitled to professional teacher status as provided in section forty-two. The superintendent of said district, upon the recommendation of the principal, may award such status to any teacher who has served in the principal’s school for at least one year or to a teacher who has obtained such status in any other public school district in the Commonwealth. A teacher without professional teacher status shall be notified in writing on or before June fifteenth whether such person will be employed for the following school year. Unless such notice is given as herein provided, a teacher without such status shall be deemed to be appointed for the following school year.


The First Amendment forbids religious activity that’s sponsored by the government, it protects religious activity initiated by private individuals that is non-disruptive, including student prayer before meals or during non-instructional time. Such non-disruptive religious activity may also include speakers at student assemblies, extracurricular events or graduation ceremonies who are selected on the basis of genuine neutral, evenhanded criteria, who retain control over the content of their expression. Under such circumstances, school officials may make neutral disclaimers that is the speech is the speaker’s and not of the school. School officials may not compel students to participate in prayer or other religious activities. “Amen!”

Do itinerants get a place to secure files in schools they service?

By comparison, the words ‘just cause’ have a somewhat different meaning in the context this issue is addressed in Article VII, Section A, 18 which states; “The school committee agrees to provide a lockable file cabinet in each school and location serviced by itinerants (e.g. school psychologists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, speech and language pathologists) for secure storage of student records.”

Please be aware that the business is about to close for the summer and is not taking any new orders.

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BTU Goes to the Polls! Final Election
Send in your mail-in ballot by Tuesday, June 2, 2015
or vote at BTU Hall on Wednesday, June 3, 2015.

The Ballot

President
1. Richard Stutman ... O’Bryant/BTU
2. Patric J. Connolly ... Madison Park/BTU

Executive Vice-President
3. Richard F. Stutman ... O’Bryant/BTU

Secretary-Treasurer
4. Barry C. Resnick ... Boston HS

Political Director
5. Albert J. Grisanti ... BTU Office

Paraprofessional/Substitute Field Representative
6. Mark H. McCullough ... BTU Office
7. Sherr Neuman ... Murphy K-8

Elementary Field Representative
8. Michael M. Clancy ... BTU Office

Secondary Field Representative
9. Garret Virchick ... M.K. King School

Executive Board
10. COLUM WHITE ... Lee K-8
11. Brenda Chaney ... O’Bryant HS/BTU
12. CAESANDA SAMUEL ... Young Achievers K-8
13. Garret Virchick ... Madison HS
14. Laura Lee Johnson ... Unified Student Services
15. LAURA LEE JOHNSON ... Unified Student Services
16. ALICE M. YONG ... Higginson-LEWIS K-8
17. Paul R. Tritter ... BTU Office
18. Michael J. Maguire ... Boston Latin Academy
19. Gilberto Rivera Jr ... Edison K-8
20. James (Timo) Philip ... Retired
21. Robert P. Carter ... Summer ES
22. Mary Ann Urban ... Retired
23. Cheryl L. Kelly, RN ... Edwards MS
24. Nicole Mullon ... Boston Arts Academy
25. Christine Butts ... Mario Umana Academy
26. CONCETTA CAMPERA ... Charlestown HS
27. aryta Faulkner ... Carley K-8
28. Cynthia Ferr ... Excel K-8
29. Lynette Harrell ... Mildred Ave. K-8
30. Collins Hunt ... Murphy K-8
31. Debra Irby ... Malher ES
32. Josephina Liscano ... Edison K-WB/Office
33. Donna Lasch ... Mathatun HS
34. Marie Conille ... Mildred Ave. K-8
35. Sherry Pedone ... Retired
36. Lynette Harrell ... Mildred Ave. K-8
37. Collen Hunt ... Murphy K-8
38. Debra Irby ... Malher ES
39. Josephina Liscano ... Edison K-WB/Office
40. Donna Lasch ... Mathatun HS
41. Irma Ortega ... Hernandez K-8
42. Caesandra Samuel ... Young Achievers K-8
43. Sheila Irwin ... Goudon ES

Delegates to All Affiliated Bodies
44. Donna Adam ... West Roxbury Academy
45. Mahtuma Es ... West Roxbury Academy
46. Patricia Armstrong ... Summer ES
47. Christine Arnold ... Summer ES
48. Rodyn “Roy” Avant ... Retired
49. Sandra Raiger-Selah ... Retired
50. Erik Ber ... Philbrick HS
51. Denise Berkley ... Higginson-LEWIS K-8
52. Anne Broder ... Retired
53. Marta Brooks ... Summer ES
54. Debra Brown ... Summer ES
55. Christine Buttiglieri ... Mario Umana Academy
56. Cornelia “Connie” Callahan ... Retired
57. Garret Virchick ... West Roxbury Academy
58. Robert P. Carter ... Summer ES
59. Brenda Chaney ... O’Bryant HS
60. Christine Choukas ... McKay K-8
61. Marie Conille ... Mildred Ave. K-8
62. Parick Conolly ... Madison Park/BTU Office
63. Michael Gray ... Career & Technical Education
64. Nicole Mullon ... Boston Arts Academy
65. Marjie Crosby ... SPED OT
66. Allison Doherty ... Urban Science Academy
67. Edward J. Doherty ... AF Massachusetts
68. David J. Donovan ... Retired
69. Elizabeth Deman ... BKU Pilot
70. John Elliott ... Madison Park/PHS
71. Jenn Fitzgerald ... Retired
72. James Frank ... Retired
73. Mary Gaughan ... Retired
74. Rama Good ... Boston Latin Academy
75. Heather German ... Blackstone Innovation School
76. Thomas J. Gossell ... Boston Latin Academy
77. Valerie Games ... Retired
78. Keith Gayette ... Dorchester Academy
79. Lynette Harrell ... Mildred Ave. K-8
80. Tom Hocker ... Boston Latin Academy
81. Debra Irby ... Retired
82. Marilyn Fournier ... Retired
83. Ryan Jacc ... Blackstone Innovation School
84. Charles R. Johnson ... BTU Office
85. Laura Lee Johnson ... Unified Student Services
86. Adrianne Jordan ... Haley Pilot School
87. Cheryl L. Kelly, RN ... Edwards MS
88. Karen Kilmain-Patriquin ... Sumner ES
89. Ross Kochman ... Henderson K-8
90. A. Vanesa Laboque ... McKinnon Academy
91. Joselena Liscano ... BTU Office
92. Sylvaine Lestrade ... Toter ES
93. Michael J. Maguire ... Boston Latin Academy
94. Marilyn Fournier ... Retired
95. Gary Morrow ... Retired
96. Michael M. Clancy ... BTU Pilot
97. Michael McLaughlin ... BTU Pilot
98. Emily McNeil ... Philbrick ES
99. Tricia Melanson ... Madison Park TVHS
100. Leonard Murtha ... Retired
101. Marilyn Flynn Monahan ... Snowden Int HS
102. Melissa W. Mignugar ... Madison Park TVHS
103. Nicole Mullon ... Boston Arts Academy
104. Sherr Neuman ... Murphy K-8
105. Carol Pacheco ... Retired
106. Sherry Pedone ... Mildred Ave. K-8
107. Seth Peterson ... Snowden Int HS
108. James (Timo) Philip ... Retired
109. Kristen W. Pitts ... Retired
110. Declan Power ... Counseling & Intervention Ctr.
111. Gilberto Rivera ... Retired
112. Caesandra Samuel ... Young Achievers K-8
113. hilese Santos-Rodriguez ... Boston Latin Academy
114. John Simonti ... Retired
115. Linda Simonti ... Retired
116. Jessica Tang ... Young Achievers Pilot K-8
117. Regina Temple ... West Roxbury Academy
118. Paul Tonney ... Retired
119. Paul R. Tritter ... BTU Office
120. Garret Virchick ... Brighton HS
121. Brenda Webster ... Retired
122. Colum White ... Lee K-8
123. Karen Wood-Hocker ... Holmes ES
124. Alice M. Yong ... Higginson-LEWIS K-8

Candidate Statements

President

Richard F. Stutman ... O’Bryant/BTU

Thank you once again for the privilege to serve as your president. I appreciate the responsibility you have placed on me and I’ll continue to work hard to secure your trust and confidence.

The next two years, not unlike the last two and the two before them, will present great challenges. In years past, I have taken the same tack. Times are tough and they will get tougher. That statement has unfortunately been true for decades. What is important is that we understand that the same old, same old will not be enough for us to survive. We have to work smarter.

We face many challenges: increased testing, the implementation of hastily-conceived inclusion model, the haphazardness of district PD. These are all issues of concern – not to mention the growth of charter schools, the state takeover of some of our schools and the threatened takeover of even more. Beyond the above, we have contract negotiations coming up next year, and while they’ll prove a difficult – though surmountable – challenge, we need to gear up.

So we can do it. We’ll be ready. I ask for your support and ask for your vote on June 3, 2015.

Executive Vice-President

Jessica Tang ... Young Achievers Pilot K-8

I believe in our union. I believe it should have the strength to advocate for a strong, member-driven contract and be a leader in the fight for quality public education. I believe we need a cohesive strategy to build power to meet these objectives. We can only build this power by acting together in a way that is:

1. Responsive to the needs of ALL members – both active and retired
2. Proactive in creating and influencing policies
3. Collaborative with students, parents, and community

Many of our members are facing overwhelming and unsustainable teaching and learning conditions that include harmful top-down mandates that are hurting our students and schools. We need to empower and mobilize our members so that we are collectively seen as a strong, well-respected force fighting for quality public education. With increasing income inequality and the continued racial and economic injustices of our society, there is no room for us to just sit back and let things happen. Our union needs to adapt and modernize to face new challenges and increasing erosion of our hard-fought rights and benefits.

For the last decade I have served as an educator, as the President of the BTU, as a Building Representative at the Gavin Middle School and Young Achievers Pilot School, as an elected member of the Executive Board, and currently as the founding Director of Organizing. Throughout this time I have seen the strengths, limitations and possibilities for our union. I am running for VP because I believe democracy is healthy for our union and will make us stronger.

Please visit my website and Facebook page and come to read more about who I am, why I am running, what I hope to accomplish. I know our union can be a leader for progressive change. We can do this by building power for ourselves, our students, our community – and with your vote!

Patrick J. Connolly ... Madison Park TVHS

I am proud and honored to have served you as the BTU Executive Vice President for the past nine years. These have been years of change and challenge. Continued economic and political pressures are still being applied to educators and all public service employees. Some issues such as the charter school over planning and development periods and administrative assignments and bus duty remain as points of contention. New initiatives such as the structure and content of Extended Learning Time and the requirement of obtaining the SEU Endorsement are among the emerging new issues facing the membership.

School closings and consolidation, along with the continued prospect of state takeover of BPS schools, pose problems for faculty and staff in those impacted schools. The experience of educators placed in “suitable professional capacity” positions has been far from exemplary. The BTU needs to support these members and work to ensure they have a fair and equal opportunity to achieve another position. The experience, knowledge, and wisdom of these educators should not be casually discarded.

Legislation or actions that would reduce or restrict our hard won contractual rights and benefits need to be opposed. Sometimes that may mean taking cases to arbitration. Other times it may mean appearing before the Labor Board. Seeking to preserve our Collective Bargaining Agreement is a fundamental duty of our union. We must oppose proposals that would allow our members’ work to be removed from our bargaining unit.

I will be here to support teachers, nurses, paraprofessionals, and substitute teachers. I value the contributions our retired members have made to the City of Boston and the BTU. I will work diligently to protect your rights and benefits. I ask for your support and ask for your vote on June 3, 2015.

Secretary-Treasurer

Charles R. Johnson ... Madison Park TVHS

Charles R. Johnson want to thank you for the endorsement of the office of Secretary-Treasurer. I seek your support and your vote for re-election. I will continue to work vigilantly to keep the union financially healthy in this time of attack on organized labor.

The changes in our economy will influence our finances for the next few years and we will require adjustments to continue to serve the entire membership. We will make changes as needed and will continue to adapt to our financial situation. I will work diligently to provide first-class services to our membership. I will support you and your vote committed to serve our union.

On June 3, 2015, please vote to re-elect Charles R. Johnson.

BOSTON UNION TEACHER | May, 2015 3
Political Director

Angela Cristiani
Psychological ScreenRIT

It is an honor to serve as your Political Director. I ask for your vote for re-election.

All BTU members are political change agents. Collectively, we have stepped up political action influencing legislation and solidified relationships with our elected officials. I will work with you to continue to expand these opportunities.

Our successes are both electoral and legislative. Many BTU endorsed candidates have been elected. We picked up four State Representative seats where the previous administration successfully captured key education votes within the last legislature. Legislatively, The Reduction of Gun Violence Bill (No. 4376) made national news when passed, including it being the first of its kind with behavioral health conditions in schools. Alongside Raise Us Mass; the signatures were collected and legislation passed increasing the state’s minimum wage and earned sick time for all Massachusetts citizens. And yes, we kept the cap on charter schools. Ongoing work to increase the retiree COLA base with a watchful eye on healthcare and pensions remain. Make no mistake, legislative attacks are increasing. Continued presence in the community, keeping a close eye on the work the legislators are doing will make all the difference.

I ask for your re-election to continue this work to represent our powerful union. I find no greater satisfaction than to stand with you, fighting for you. I hope you will choose to serve with me another term.

Elementary Field Representative

Michael W. McLaughlin
RIT 063

Serving as your Elementary Field Representative is a responsibility I take seriously. Your interests and opinions as union members must be effectively voiced in the years ahead. I am confident that I am well positioned to ensure that progressive ideas and issues which matter most to you will also matter to the new BPS administration.

As a group, we’ve recently secured advances in wages, health benefits for active and retired teachers, and created new protections for our members. Though I am pleased to have contributed to these improvements and work to ensure they are protected, I, like many of you, have a new dawn. The challenge that lies ahead is essential to us. I’m fully prepared to carry this message when negotiating the new contract. I’m also aware that the past administration was indifferent to our legitimate concerns regarding class size and length of day. It’s my hope that the new administration will rise to the challenge but be made to understand that our interests in these essential educational matters are in the best interests of our students.

The task of engineering this necessary change in administrative outlook can only be accomplished and maintained through a strong, unified membership. I am committed by membership over the years. On your behalf I’ve fought to protect hard-won contractual rights and enforced them, even in the face of legal challenges. We have come a long way, but there’s still work to be done.

I ask to serve you in this capacity and represent our collective interests. I’d be honored to do so again. I believe my experience and understanding of the issues have prepared me to successfully represent you as the Elementary Field Representative. Thank you for your consideration. I humbly ask for your vote.

Paraprofessional/ Substitute Field Representative

The top two candidates from the May Primary Election will run in the Finals.

Christopher Breen
RIT 064

My name is Christopher Breen. I was born and raised in Charlestown as well as educated in the BPS, attending the Harvard Kent School and Boston Latin Academy. I have a Bachelor’s Degree from UMass-Boston and I am a candidate for a Master’s Degree from Cambridge College. I am also the Building Representative for the Ekl-Tech school. I want to be the Paraprofessional/ Substitute Field Representative because I know the dedication and sacrifice it takes to occupy the positions I have held for the past two years. I also know that for the past eight years and was raised by a parent, who is also a Para in the BPS. Because of this, I know the level of sacrifice and hard work that comes with our job. I know that much more is required of us in terms of time and energy. I know what it’s like to leave work when the bell rings, only to immediately head out for a late shift at a part time job or attend night classes to maintain our certifications to see that your parent make the same sacrifices for you. I want to be your Field Rep because I want to represent a group of people who are truly self-less and understand these sacrifices, a group that puts their children and students ahead of themselves. Para’s and Substitutes are those types of people and they deserve a Representative who is honored to fight for them. In these times of extended school days, Paraprofessionals and Substitutes are asked to take on roles who is completely accessible at any hour and who will work tirelessly to protect their rights. I only ask for the chance to be that person. Thank You.

Josephina Lascano
RIT 065

My name is Josephina Lascano and I am seeking re-election for the position of Paraprofessional/Substitute Teacher Field Representative. Thank you for allowing me to serve as your representative these past two years. I am seeking re-election to continue serving all of the paraprofessionals and substitutes of the Boston Public Schools.

It’s very important to have continuity and I want to be the one to represent you, to stand up for our rights and to fight for all that we have achieved. I am very passionate about the quality of education that we deliver to our children.

I ask for your vote on June 3rd. As a member of the Paraprofessional/ Substitute Field Representative, I am committed to your success! Thank you for your consideration and vote.

Paraprofessional/ Substitute Field Representative

Caren M. Carew
RIT 066

In these challenging times, you can count on my experienced proactive leadership and tenacity to get things done as a representative of our membership. Having developed a wealth of first-hand, in-depth knowledge I work with and for you, listening to your concerns, expeditiously addressing them - fighting for the people.

Like you, I love our kids and want them to reach their potential as a SPED-educator teaching five subjects daily in under-resourced schools for over 20 years. I appreciate the necessity of supporting great teaching and I do so by speaking up on your behalf while effectively dealing with administrators, prosecuting grievances, advocating for at-risk students, providing extraordinary attention at hearings, negotiating with management, promptly responding to your emails/calls, addressing changes in work conditions, providing SCC trainings, activating/organizing new members, resolving conflicts, providing support concerning performance issues, maintaining BTU contact list, and problem-solving by thinking outside of the box.

Working together for social/economic justice side-by-side with parents and other labor unions, we work to strengthen our Young Teachers’ Advisory Committee and our Teacher Leadership. In these challenging times, you can count on my proactive leadership and tenacity to get things done as a representative of our membership.

I am fighting for you. I am ready to work for you. I am ready to listen to you. I am ready to move us forward. Please consider me as your Paraprofessional/ Substitute Field Representative. Thank you for your consideration and support.

Executive Board

Column Whyte
RIT 067

I’m Column Whyte and I’m running for Executive Board. I teach History at the Joseph Lee K-8 in Dorchester. I am a member of the BTU and attended Boston Latin School, UMass Boston, and Simmons College. Since 2007 I’ve been a Building Representative and was an Elementary Build- ing Representative of the year award recipient last June. The Red Sox Blue also recognized me as a “Most Valuable Educator” in September. I am a committed Unionist and advocate for BTU. I firmly believe that we should be tackling the epidemiological gaps that our students face instead of tackling teachers. We are not going to FIERE our way to a better education system overnight. I do believe that only meaningful engagement of our essential teachers are best poised to fight for our students.

I’m running for executive board because I know, as a son of Boston, I can use my networking and social relationships to move us forward. I am also someone that knows the intent of labor rights but will also fight to retain our labor rights at our many schools. I will fight for parity and FS for ALL of our members.

Indeed teachers interests and student interests are naturally aligned. Market-based reforms have tried to pit teachers against each other. All bodies we must take back our collective bargaining power. I will work with our allies to make sure we are all treated equally.

I will also stand up for our retirees. The COLA base should be raised and the annual increase should be automatic, enough is enough. Strong and bold work is to be done. Please consider Column Whyte for BTU Executive Board and Delegate to all Affiliated Bodies.

Paraprofessional/ Substitute Field Representative

Donna Lashus
RIT 068

My name is Donna Lashus, I am a candidate for the Paraprofessional Substitute Field Representative. I have a unique vision and commitment of the Boston Public Schools. I am a grandparent, an employee, and a BTU member. I have over 20 years of educating children.

My vast experience ranges from:

- Member of the BTU including both Committee
- Member of the combined BTU Committee of ELL and Inclusion
- Paraprofessional Council
- BTU Professional Development
- CPC Community Partnership Committee
- CPF "Community Partnership Fund"
- Teacher and supporting Pre K to 2 high school students in Reg. Ed., Title 1, SEI, Special Edu-
- Teacher with the Boston Latin School, UMass Boston, and Simmons College.

Since 2007 I’ve been a Building Representative and was an Elementary Build-

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I’m running for executive board because I know, as a son of Boston, I can use my networking and social relationships to move us forward. I am also someone that knows the intent of labor rights but will also fight to retain our labor rights at our many schools. I will fight for parity and FS for ALL of our members.

Indeed teachers interests and student interests are naturally aligned. Market-based reforms have tried to pit teachers against each other. All bodies we must take back our collective bargaining power. I will work with our allies to make sure we are all treated equally.

I will also stand up for our retirees. The COLA base should be raised and the annual increase should be automatic, enough is enough. Strong and bold work is to be done. Please consider Column Whyte for BTU Executive Board and Delegate to all Affiliated Bodies.
T

by Michael J. Maguire

The theme of this year’s statewide para-
professional conference was “Paras are Informed and Essential.” Boston Teachers Union Paraprofessional and Substit-
tute Field Representative Josefina Lascano began her opening remarks by acknowledg-
ing the diverse jobs that paraprofessionals perform every day. When these tasks are performed well, the paras contribute to the overall success of the classroom.

Boston Teachers Union president Richard Stutman stated, “we could not run our schools without you.” BTO vice president Patrick Connolly thanked the paras for “helping me and helping the students” when he worked for 12 years as a special education teacher at Madison Park High school.

Boston Public School superintendent John McDonough continued the theme of the conference by praising the paras for their work. “You are confident in your own suc-

cess. You create the space for teaching and learning to occur.”

American Federation of Teachers Massa-
chusetts president Thomas Connell declared that paras are an essential part of Boston’s success. Boston ranks first in urban district of comparable size, due in large part to how well the paras assist the classroom teachers.

“Paras in urban areas often have greater stu-
dent needs. We need your help most of all,” he said. Mr. Connell pledged that he would fight for the state level for continued Title I funding.

After the opening remarks, the nearly 100 paras attending the conference split into three groups. The groups rotated through three break-out sessions, each focusing on different parts of a para’s job. The topics were chosen in response to the comments left on the exit tickets from last year’s conference.

Paras in the Inclusion Setting

Stephanie Fitzpatrick, an occupational therapist at the Jackson-Mann K-8, gave a humorous workshop on the importance of the para in an inclusion classroom. She stressed quickly and accurately assessing the individual needs of each student. The keys to a successful inclusion setting include verbal prompts, proximity, wait time, modeling, encouragement/praise, and redirection.

Unfortunately consultation time with other teachers is often misused. A quick chat in the hall is not a consultation, it merely a check-in. A consultation time is a formal, professional process to help the student achieve. Consultation time is not an expert coming in with a magic wand who is there to fix problems or to vent. Consultation time is when the adults in the student’s school day come together to craft a plan for the student to succeed.

Consultation time is for reframing, under-
standing and accessing knowledge and expe-

riences so that the para can help the teacher in the classroom. This model is designed to help the student cope, adapt, and succeed in the regular classroom setting.

First the teacher and para formulate expec-
tations. Then plan strategies for achieving mini goals such as working on one worksheet at a time instead of giving an anxious student nine worksheets at once.

Autism and ABA

Seth Bartholomew, Assistant Director Office of Special Education and Stu-
dent Services, led a workshop on autism. In today’s world, the diagnosis of autism is a spectrum with three levels support. Terms like Asperger’s is leaving the jargon and being replaced with levels.

Today, 1 in 68 is autistic. In 2000 it was 1 in 166. Today autism is the fastest growing developmental disability. It’s in all races/ethnicities but is five times more likely to occur in boys than girls. Certainly more reporting and awareness is contributing to the increased prevalence of autism, but the simple answer to the cause of autism is still not known.

For us educators, the why is not as impor-
tant to what we do. Our job is to help kids grow and make progress. (Mr. Bartholomew spent a few minutes explaining that vaccines don’t cause autism, but explained that genet-
ics is the leading factor in today’s studies.)

Mr. Bartholomow talked about helping autistic students with safety skills, social skills, transitions, and routines. To help the child, we are encouraged to look at what spe-
cifically about a transition might be difficult for the student. Is it ending one favored task, the chaos of the leaving one situation for the next, or is it the dislike of the next task?

Mr. Bartholomew spend time on helping paras understand how the world looks and feels for the autistic student so that they can be better prepared to help them succeed in the class.

A good general strategy is to limit verbal instructions. Giving a child a four-step pro-

cess can be overwhelming; so instead give the instructions one step at a time.

Staying calm is crucial. It is often bet-
ter to ignore a seemingly rude or disruptive behavior than to draw attention to it and risk escalation.

Dos and Don’ts: Don’t statements are confrontational. “Don’t speak loudly or yell” is harsh and puts a student on the defensive whereas “Do keep a neutral tone” is encour-
aging and specifically gets at the heart of the matter.

ABA (applied behavior analysis) is the scientific analysis of the relationship between behavior and the environment (response to stimuli). ABA works because it is systematic, data based, and simple. “When you praise good behavior, you are likely to see more good behavior,” concluded Mr. Bartholomow.

Students with Trauma

Colleen Labbe, a K-2 teacher at the Lee Academy Pilot School in Dorchester, and Anita Santos, a kindergarten teacher at the Hernandez, gave a workshop on how to help students who live with trauma in their daily lives.

What is trauma? Trauma is not an event, but a response to a stressful experience where one’s ability to cope is overwhelmed. Chronic trauma impacts brain development. Devel-

opment of higher order functions is delayed when the child is more occupied with surviv-
ing today’s stress.

Every day events can be (unintentional and unexpected) triggers for our students. Sights, sounds, smells, touches, shame, anxie-
ty, change of structure and/or anticipation can cause stress.

The impact can be detrimental to their schoolwork. Paying attention in class, or follow-
ing instructions can become difficult. The key is to create an environment for learn-

ing. The goal is to have the student feel safe. Predictability helps and flexibility is needed.

When the student is feeling overwhelmed and is not ready to learn, having a space away from the regular class activities can be helpful. Instead of it being a punishment like a time-

out spot, it’s more of an empowering experi-
ence because the student opts to move from the stressful environment to a “safe space.”

After the three workshops lunch was served and conversations began. To help all unwind from the seriousness of the morning’s activities, Evan Norttnap, a comic magician entertained the crowd for nearly an hour.

Once again, a survey was given to the paras asking them what they liked and what they want to experience at next year’s state-

wide conference.
Scenes from the 29th Statewide Paraprofessional Conference

Photos by Michael J. Maguire
The situation in Baltimore must be addressed on many levels, including in our public schools, AFT President Randi Weingarten and Secretary-Treasurer Lorretta Johnson (a Baltimore native) say. “We are anguished by what’s happening in Baltimore, the city where Lorretta grew up, where she raised her family, where she worked in the schools and where our national union proudly represents more than 18,000 educators and other public employees,” Weingarten and Johnson said in an April 28 joint statement.

Thousands of people have spent the last week peacefully protesting and demanding answers and justice for Freddie Gray, as his family asked. We join the calls for answers. We understand the frustration that mounts with each incident where an unarmed black or Latino man loses his future, and with the hopelessness that stems from poverty and joblessness. We condemn the violence that took place last night in the streets of Baltimore.”

As a national union, we are working with our affiliates and the communities in which we live and work to address these challenges. After the events in Ferguson, Mo., we launched a Task Force on Racial Justice to address these very difficult issues, find solutions and be part of the path forward.

But none of this is enough. This is a crisis that must be addressed on many levels, including in our public schools. As night fell April 27, Baltimore’s City Council gathered and passed a resolution to increase funding for the city’s community schools. This is the kind of solution Baltimore needs to expand. Community schools are one of the smartest investments a city can make. They provide a strong curriculum with interventions like healthcare, social services, after-school programs and other resources to mitigate the effects of poverty. Baltimore’s community schools also use restorative disciplinary practices, which have been shown to dramatically reduce the number of suspensions and create positive school environments. The City Council’s unanimous vote is a step in the right direction for Baltimore’s kids, families and community.”

First, a recent case in New Jersey showed that Pearson played a role in a chain of events that included monitoring student social media accounts. More than 30,000 people have signed a petition demanding that Pearson end this practice. We ask that Pearson listen to these parents and community members: Stop spying on our kids, and immediately release any contract language and processes related to test security for full public review.

Second, the obsession with testing today isn’t informing teaching and learning – it’s undermining them. We ask that Pearson cease all lobbying and campaign contributions to politicians that are driving this obsession.

Third, children across the world should have access to free high-quality education. We ask that Pearson stop charging the poorest people in the world up to 30 percent of their income to send just one of their children to school.

Pearson, which holds itself out as a pro-education company, is at the same time associated in the United States with gag orders, spying and high-stakes testing, and outside the United States with so-called low-fee schools. How do you square that?

Because of those stakes, parents are taking matters into their own hands – not letting a company get between them and their kids. Christine McGoey, a parent who has children in New Jersey’s public schools, spoke at a press conference following the shareholder meeting, saying, “Testing is becoming the centerpiece of American education, and parents are not happy about it.”

The AFT, the United Kingdom’s National Union of Teachers and other organizations also sent a letter to Pearson laying out their concerns. In addition, teachers, parents and activists from Australia to South Africa to the United States supported the petition and other actions in London through a social media campaign using the hashtag #TellPearson.

AFT UK Unions Join to Hold Pearson Accountable

AFT President Randi Weingarten, joined by other union leaders, parents and education advocates from the United States and the United Kingdom, demanded April 24 that Pearson measure the social, emotional and academic impact of its education practices in the United States, the United Kingdom and developing nations.

Attending Pearson’s annual shareholder meeting, Weingarten challenged Pearson to match its actions to its leadership’s rhetoric about being a socially responsible company: “While I recognize Pearson has a duty to its shareholders to be profitable, my question centers on another obligation: to conduct business in a way that befits the world’s largest education company—that is, in the words of its president, John Fallon, where every product must be measured by its ‘social impact.’”

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AFT press release, April 29, 2015

AFT press release, April 27, 2015

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Hello fellow AFT members and Casandra Samuel, I am a Professional at the Young Achievers Pilot School. I am a candidate for the Executive Board and Delegate to all Affiliated Bodies. As a Professional with over 18 years of experience in education, I have worked with all types of students, including those who have absent voices and absent needs. I believe that every voice is important and that we need to listen to the voices of our students and professionals.

As a Professional, I am committed to advocating for a voice a day in education. I believe that we need to stand with our students who need us most. I am determined more than ever to work for the new contract and help others to be involved with the union and the voice that we represent.

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**Executive Board**

Cheryl L. Kelly, R.N., Edwards MS
Hello, my name is Cheryl Kelly, Edwards School Nurse. For many many years I’ve been a Building Rep, Executive Board member, Faculty Nurse Service member, COOP committee member, Delegate, and Trustee -Pe-Pad Legal Services. I am asking for your vote to reelect to Executive Board and Delegate. I feel that there needs to be nurse representation on the board. So many policy decisions within the BTU are made mainly by teaching staff but directly and indirectly affect nurses, most recently the vote to extend the school day. The way the day is structured will change for many of us, especially since a good number of us share schools. It helps to listen from another’s perspective.

Nicole Mulleri
Boston Arts Academy
I respectfully ask for your vote for the position of Executive Board and Delegate to all Affiliated Bodies of the Boston Teachers Union. I firmly believe that by working together, our union can be a strong voice that advocates for public education and always strives to support and energize educators, students, and our communities. I feel that listening and advocating for the issues and policies that directly affect our members should be at the forefront of everything that we do at the BTU.

Christine Choukas
McKay K-8 School
My name is Christine Choukas, I am a candidate for Our Union’s Executive Board. This is my 19th year teaching in Boston, I teach 3rd Grade at Dr. G. W. McClary, McKay K-8 School in East Boston. I am a building representative in my current school for 6 years. Prior to that I taught at Drabkin Middle School, in Roxbury for 12 years, where I was also building representative for 10 years. For many years I have been an active member of our union and am very much interested in our members learning more about our policies and the decision making of our union as well as being part of that process. I am a loyal member, a strong leader that cares deeply about the progress of our union, and would love to be part of this proud union’s executive board. I would appreciate a vote for Executive Board on June 3, 2015.

Erik Berg
Piaget MS
I am running for re-election to the Executive Board because I believe that teachers must have a voice in our profession, and that our union is the most effective and democratic way for us to express ourselves. There are many competing voices in education policy, and policy and political leaders are often unwilling to listen to those of us who work with students each and every day. Through our union, we can make our case for better, more equitable schools for all kids and a better, more sustainable workplace for teachers. I want to continue to push for the Boston Teachers Union to be a widely respected, sought after voice on issues that affect our schools, whether they relate to curriculum, leadership roles for teachers, a school schedule that works for everyone, or an improved teacher evaluation system.

Johnny McNinis
BTU 6-8 Pilot
My name is Johnny McNinis. I am campaigning for the positions of BTU Executive Board and Delegate to all Affiliated Bodies. For the past 6 years I have had the opportunity to be a Delegate representing the BTU at AFT-Massachusetts Conference and AFT National Conventions. Being able to stand with our Union to rally for public education across this country in places like Detroit, Los Angeles, and Boston shows how strong our Union is.

Sherry Pedone
Millerd K-8
My name is Sherry Pedone, I am a music teacher at Mildred Ave K-8. There are two reasons that I am running for the Executive Board of the BTU and Delegate. The first reason is to bring attention the state of the arts in our schools. While it seems that we are seeing more attention paid to the arts, arts instruction is not reaching all of our children. Schools are still using outside resources to give arts access to our students. What we need are trained music and art teachers who can create a tempo performance without a licensed arts teacher in the class. Incredibly, we have certified elementary teachers being excused through so “dual” rather than reaching a birthday past 40. Yet, the majority of our students will not get music in high school as many high schools do not offer music. We need sequential learning in the arts in the BPS. Arts education by grade sequence, must be taught by certified teachers and must be the backbone of every school and a day.

**Paraprofessional Council**

Donna Adame
West Roxbury Academy

Debra Brown
Sumner K-8

Sharon Butler-O’Dwyer
Condon K-8

Christine Buttagliari
Milo Arts Academy

Connie (Concetta) Campea
Oaklawn K-8

Arleta Faulkner
Copley K-8

Cynthia Ferris
Irving HS

Lynette Harrell
Mildred K-8

Lisa Lashus
Mildred K-8

Colleen Hart
wurp by K-8

Debra Irby
Mather K-8

Joselina Lascano
Johnson K-8

Donna Lashus
Mildred K-8

My name is Donna Lashus, I am a candidate for the position of Paraprofessional Council. I am asking for your vote. I have a unique vision of the Boston Public Schools. I have been a paraprofessional and served in the capacity as:• Member of the BTU Inclusion Committee• Member of the committee for BTU committee of ELL and Inclusion• Paraprofessional Council• BTU Building Representative• CFC working with families• Teaching and supporting pre-K to 6th grade students in Reg. Ed., Title 1, SEI• Special Education, Early Childhood, Reading and Math Intervention• I am committed to raising issues and concerns that impact the lives and work of our members and the children we serve. One voice speaks for many and it is important that the sole voice raises to the top to be heard. In times of serious economic problems in our country and the move to change the face of public education it is even more important for educators to be united. I have a long history of being a community activist who advocates for the rights and services we need on the local, state, and national level. I will do my best to ensure that the voice of all members of the union is heard. I am asking for your valuable vote.

Irma Ortega
Beavers K-8

Casandra Samuel
Young Adlens K-8

As a reflected candidate for Paraprofessional Council, I will continue to bring my experience as an educator as an experience to represent you with honesty, integrity and the energy to help me work for you in the coming years.

My experience with the Boston Public Schools started as a student, then becoming a parent of a Boston Latin Academy Alumna and an employee of the Boston Public Schools. Over the past 15 years I have been a Paraprofessional and served in the capacity as:• Lab in grades 3-5• CFC working with families• Paraprofessional Council• Building Representative• CFC working with families• Teaching and supporting pre-K to 6th grade students in Reg. Ed., Title 1, SEI, Special Education, Early Childhood, Reading and Math Intervention• I am committed to raising issues and concerns that impact the lives and work of our members and the children we serve. One voice speaks for many and it is important that the sole voice raises to the top to be heard. In times of serious economic problems in our country and the move to change the face of public education it is even more important for educators to be united. I have a long history of being a community activist who advocates for the rights and services we need on the local, state, and national level. I will do my best to ensure that the voice of all members of the union is heard. I am asking for your valuable vote.
Mayor Walsh Rejects Any Increase in COLA Base

By Sandra M. Carle & Lawrence J. Connolly, Reporters

On March 18, 2015, we, along with a small delegation of RTC members, attended the Retirement Board meeting. There had been some indications the City was sympathetic to a COLA increase, but at the meeting, that was completely obliterated. We learned that for the past several years, neighboring cities and towns, will not approve a COLA base increase for the foreseeable future. We even tried to get the Walsh Administration to negotiate the City’s retirement base with the Retirement Board, but failed.

At the meeting, the Mayor of Boston, Thomas Menino, stated that he had turned down the Menino Administration in 2012 but were unable to match the small $1,000 increase given by the neighboring cities and towns, will not approve a COLA increase. Mayor Walsh stated that the City would not increase in the COLA base. Unlike retirees in countless cities and towns around Boston and across the state who have seen their COLA base increased to $15,000, 16,000 and even $18,000 since the passage of Chapter 188 of the Acts of 2010, Boston retirees have only seen the one increase from $12,000 to $13,000 in 2012, which was given by the Menino Administration. Even the City of Lowell went to a $16,000 base in 2014, and it does not have the tens of billions of dollars of new construction coming on to the tax rolls that Boston has – with no end in sight.

We will all want the city to continue to thrive and do well. We are a world-class city and a world-class city takes care of those who have spent thirty or forty years policing its streets, putting out its fires, teaching its children, ministering to its sick and infirm, and fulfilling their commitment to our city.

With over 2,200 Boston retirees receiving less than $1,000 per month and 5,900 receiving less than $2,000 per month, it is disgusting to learn that our city cannot support a modest increase in the COLA base. To maintain the COLA base at a level set in 1999, with the exception of a small tweak in 2012, is harmful to those who have served the city well. Inflation has slowly but surely eaten away at our retirees’ pensions, especially those who are most vulnerable. Here is a great opportunity to correct the course. We ask that the city step up and help those who have dedicated their lives to the city.

Sincerely,
Sandra M. Carle, Lawrence J. Connolly, Legislative Co-Chair Boston Teachers Union Retired Teachers Chapter

RTC Executive Board Minutes January 5, 2015


Excused: Linda McNamee.

The meeting opened by the chairman at 10:20 AM.

Secretary’s Report: The report was read and accepted with changes noted.

Treasurer’s Report: The treasurer’s report was read and accepted.

Meeting was suspended at 10:26 AM to hear from Charles Johnson, Treasurer-Secretary.

Charles addressed the Board regarding the projected deficit and stated that there will be no change in cost for the health plans for retired teachers. However, non-Medicare plans will change as of July, 2015, and Medicare carve-out plans will not change until 2017. Questions regarding the plans were presented and answered.

The meeting reconvened at 11:09 AM.

Chairman: The Chairman stated that the death list from City Hall will be sent to us soon. The chairman announced that he is still receiving calls regarding Delta Dental. Report Accepted.

Vice Chairman: The Vice Chairman stated that there have been very few applicants for Delta Dental. Report Accepted.

Benefits: No changes have been noted. Report Accepted.

Remembrance: No report.

Scholarship: The following motion was made by the Scholarship chairs to establish a date for the scholarship applications: The due date for scholarship applications (BTU-RTC) and all supporting documents will be April 1. The motion was unanimously accepted. Report Accepted.

Social: The chair noted that the membership meeting will be held on April 30, and that the spring luncheon will be June 9. However, the venue for the fall luncheon is of concern since the caterer for the BTU hall stated that she could not accept any reservations because of changes to the building that may be taking place in the fall. The Social chairs will be looking for another venue to hold the fall luncheon and the fall business meeting. Report Accepted.

Travel: 2014 was a successful travel year. Co-Chairs, Pauline Kennedy and Mary Cahalane, will be going to Yankee Bus Lines sometime in January to plan for this season. So far, the following three trips are planned for this trip year with more to follow: Bayview Country with Collette – September 17-25

Branson Missouri with Yankee – October 25-November 2

Mt. Washington Resort – December 7-8

The co-chairs thank retirees and their friends who have supported them. Report Accepted.

Legislative: Many retirees answered the call to attend a meeting on COLA at City Hall on December 16. The Committee chairs thank all who were able to attend and to those who testified. Report Accepted.

Data Processing: Paul Tenney and Raymond Lee have worked out duties assigned to the Data Processing Committee. Report Accepted.

Membership: We are still maintaining 3,000 plus members. Report Accepted.

New Business: The Chairman is seeking answers regarding the mini-pension.

Boston Home Center to Sponsor Info Session for BTU Members and Family

The Boston Home Center helps Boston residents purchase, improve, and keep their homes. BHC offers training and financial help to first-time homeowners, guidance and support for homeowners for home improvement and counseling to help families avoid foreclosure. Come to this informative session at the BTU. Contact Michael McLaughlin for more info at michael.mclaughlin@btu.org.

Boston Teachers' Union

For BTU members and their families

Tuesday, May 26, 2015 - 5:30 PM
Boston Teachers Union Hall
180 Mt. Vernon Street
Dorchester 02124

Learn about Boston programs to help you obtain, retain or maintain your home!
Please join us!
For more information, visit or call:
www.bostonhomescenter.com 617-935-HOME (4663)
The William Monroe Trotter Innovation School serves 400+ students, K-6, with plans for expanding to 8th grade over the next couple of years. Built in 1969, its unusual design consists of five interconnected two-story buildings stretched along Humboldt Avenue in Roxbury. Classrooms in each hexagon-shaped pod surround a sunken central area, where grade level gatherings and small group instruction take place.

The first thing I noticed was a bulletin board outside the office listing grade-level “Journeys of Learning” — with second-semester themes such as The Power of Puppets (K2), The Rainforest (Gr.2), and The Civil Rights Movement & Desegregation in Boston (Gr.5). I was delighted to learn that teacher-developed interdisciplinary units are an integral part of instruction at the Trotter!

Michael Allocco, one of only two Family and Community Outreach Coordinators left in BPS, was my guide through the school. Joanne Douglas’s third grade classroom was packed with Calla Freeman’s kindergarteners, reading aloud with their third grade buddies. Classes throughout the school seemed to focus primarily on literacy during the morning and, of course, PARCC testing. It’s become nearly impossible to visit a school these days without some kind of standardized test interrupting teaching and learning.

Retired teacher Mary Smoyer, who volunteers regularly at the Trotter, proudly showed off the drawings Lisa Caldas’ K2 students had made of the daffodils beginning to bloom in the outdoor classroom area. Kindergarteners had planted 200 bulbs last fall, as part of their Tools unit, with help from Big and Little Sisters program volunteers.

Art teacher David Kegan had his fifth grade students working on small squares that would be put together to create a portrait of Rosa Parks. In one second grade class every student had bright yellow earphones, which several students used to cut down on the distractions around them as they worked.

The Trotter has a unique partnership with Boston University instructors and their students, who use three rooms in one of the pods for their classes. Under the supervision of BU Professor and Director of City Lab Don DeRosa and BPS science teacher Brenda Richardson, college students were leading a lesson and working with small groups of third graders as they examined water evaporation data they’d collected around the school. What a wonderful opportunity for all involved!

Alma Wright, an award-winning teacher who has been at the school since it opened 45 years ago, says: “I like the resilience and perseverance of the students at the Trotter.” Students are always the #1 reason teachers stay committed to our public schools despite all the challenges. “We’re Learning Here!” celebrates the work you do every day and gives voice to your students — please invite me to visit your school!

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We were doing a puzzle with words and pictures during independent reading time. This year we’re reading more challenging chapter books. We’re learning to sound out difficult words and to figure out their meanings by what makes sense in the text.

Ezekiel Gayensen & Juelze Campbell, Grade 4

I was reading Batman with Frances. We’re learning about letters and animals this year. I am working on what mice think about — like a house of their own, lots of food, and wanting to be tough like other animals!

Samari Josiah, K1

I was trying to spell words using the letters in APRIL SHOWERS. I’m learning a lot of new and interesting stuff this year. I’m learning to write poems, “how to” do or make something, and how to convince people.

Quinn Bowles, Grade 1

This was Social Studies class and we were learning about busing in Boston, when schools were desegregated. I learned that some White people threw rocks at buses because Black kids were coming to a school in their neighborhood.

Lee’el Jones, Grade 5

We were testing water in science class with one of the BU students. We were finding out how much water had evaporated from different places and we learned that more evaporated from the stairwell, where it was really, really hot. We’ve also learned that water vapor is in the air all around us.

Isabel Rivera & Nythea Howard, Grade 3

We were listening and watching our teacher, who was showing us a new number game. We are learning how to measure with different objects like cubes and straws and crayons. We’re also learning to put things in shortest to longest order.

Ms. Irizarry’s 1st Graders

Amika Kemmler Ernst is a recently retired BPS New Teacher Developer with extensive experience as a classroom teacher, curriculum developer, and graphic artist. Her “We’re Learning Here!” Project features images of everyday learning in our public schools, along with the words of the students pictured.

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