President’s Report  Jessica J. Tang

Yes to Vision and Stability, No to Receivership

Some time in February, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) will have released the first draft of the Boston Public School’s District Review. BPS has ten days to review it and make any factual corrections. Shortly after, it will be available to the public.

Although the review is conducted regularly every twenty years or so, we hear that it may have significant implications for our district this time around. The report will shine a light on needed attention on instruction and academic practices. For our district this time around, there is time and stability to implement and realize the exciting vision outlined by our current leader, Dr. Brenda Cassellius. We need strong, stable leadership, consistent funding, and a strong focus on instructional practices where we support educators and cater to the needs of our students. With stability and consistency, our graduation rates will also improve. There is much more that our schools need, and our union is a large part of the solution.

Over the last seven years, Boston has seen five superintendents — each with their own agenda, campaigns, and priorities. After a stable stretch with Carol Johnson, she was followed by interim superintendent John McDonough as an interim, who was then followed by Tommy Chang, before being replaced by Laura Perille as another interim. Now, after another thorough search, we have Dr. Brenda Cassellius.

What we need now, more than ever, is time and stability to implement and realize the exciting vision outlined by Dr. Cassellius. We need strong, stable investment in our schools over the next three years and the Student Opportunity Act (SOA) was passed last year. In a few years, the district should be receiving significantly more funding from the state, thanks to SOA. The chronic shortfalls in funding stemming from Commonwealth charter school expansion over the last two decades can account for many of our schools’ challenges, which will be offset by these incoming funds.

Yes to Vision and Stability, No to Receivership

BTU Supports Black Lives Matter at School
Can You Define Support?

Oh, I get by with a little help from my friends. —The Beatles

Support is a nebulous word. You could ask about 25 teachers what support means to them and get about 27 different answers depending on the day, the hour, and situation. One of those words you can’t quite articulate, but you know exactly what it is when you see it. It is possible to see the exact model of support you want or need from afar, like across a hallway or across the city and still not be able to share the same vision with your colleague or teammate or even a family member. Simple as a conversation over a cup of tea could ask about 25 teachers what support means to them and get about 27 different answers depending on the day, the hour, and situation. One of those words you can’t quite articulate, but you know exactly what it is when you see it. It is possible to see the exact model of support you want or need from afar, like across a hallway or across the city and still not be able to share the same vision with your colleague or teammate or even a family member. Simple as a conversation over a cup of tea or as complicated as a behavior plan for a student in crisis, support may come in the shape of a bandaid for a lesson plan that needs tweaking or a tourniquet for a student in crisis, support may come in the shape of a bandaid for a lesson plan that needs tweaking or a tourniquet for a classroom out of control. We say it in our language often, mostly when we feel we need a hand up, it in no way suggests you are unable to get up. People are much more willing to help when you ask directly instead of huffing, sighing, or wearing a weary pouty face around the teacher’s room. Asking is an essential part of the support process. In my early days, I’d plan, craft, create, implement, assess all the lessons with few scavenged materials to adapt for multiple learning levels as if I were the Teacher Formerly Known as Prince. Instead of feeling capable, I felt the opposite. I found the support I needed when a veteran teacher invited me into her classroom after school just for a conversation. That one welcoming act turned into an unofficial after school mentoring program that made a huge difference in my teaching practice. I was able to ask questions and gain insight to all the things I wondered and worried about alone. Slowly, I began to feel like a part of the school community. Most importantly, through asking questions and asking for advice, I received the support I needed to help me stay in the profession.

Once, I asked my children for some support in the kitchen. I was preparing for our huge Labor Day cookout to celebrate my mother’s birthday. Besides the regular grilled foods my husband had covered, I had about three different dishes going on at once: a measuring cup full of marinade for the prepared portobello mushrooms, a slow cooker full of baked beans in the pantry, cupcakes in the oven and a sink full of dishes. What I wanted was my boys to load and unload the dishwasher, clean out the sink, and leave like their pants were on fire so I could continue to prepare. What I got was three cupcakes eaten as soon as they came out of the oven, a taste tester I didn’t ask for like the magical mice in the Cinderella story that were able to tidy up the house in seconds, however, my blanket statement, “I need some help here,” did not clearly communicate the specific type of help to my hungry workers. Had I been more detailed or more clear, perhaps I wouldn’t have felt so frustrated and annoyed as I did that afternoon, though, I’m sure they would have eaten just as much either way. Another thing I’ve learned over the years is how asking for help is not weakness. Just because you need a hand up, it in no way suggests you are unable to get up. People are much more willing to help when you ask directly instead of huffing, sighing, or wearing a weary pouty face around the teacher’s room. Asking is an essential part of the support process. In my early days, I’d plan, craft, create, implement, assess all the lessons with few scavenged materials to adapt for multiple learning levels as if I were the Teacher Formerly Known as Prince. Instead of feeling capable, I felt the opposite. I found the support I needed when a veteran teacher invited me into her classroom after school just for a conversation. That one welcoming act turned into an unofficial after school mentoring program that made a huge difference in my teaching practice. I was able to ask questions and gain insight to all the things I wondered and worried about alone. Slowly, I began to feel like a part of the school community. Most importantly, through asking questions and asking for advice, I received the support I needed to help me stay in the profession.
What is the Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) Program?

The new contract, the PAR Program, is detailed in the following manner:

Permanence: Teachers who have received an overall rating of Needs Improvement or Unsatisfactory will be assigned a Consulting Teacher (CT). [Permanence is discussed further below and is not intended to help teachers in need, and support the CT and the teacher deem necessary.]

The Peer Assistance Program is designed and intended to help teachers in need, and the Peer Assistance Program will be separate from the performance evaluation of teachers.

What is the Peer Assistance Program for Teachers With a Less Than Proficient Rating?

The new contract language details the permanent teachers and provisional teachers in their third year who have received an overall rating of Needs Improvement or Unsatisfactory and been placed on a Directed Growth or Improvement plan will be assigned a Consulting Teacher (CT). After their initial meeting with the CT, they may opt into the Peer Assistance (PA) Program. The teacher will work with the CT, may opt into the Peer Assistance (PA) Program. The teacher will work with the CT, may opt into the Peer Assistance (PA) Program.

The plan, the CT will visit the teacher regularly and provide support, which may consist of observing, modeling, coaching, or any other support the CT and the teacher deem necessary. The principal/headmaster may continue observing and providing support as a secondary evaluator.

At least two other three-way meetings must occur over the course of the plan (at least one month between each), and after each, the CT and school-based evaluator will issue a brief update (if there is a discrepancy between school-based evaluator and CT), or if both agree that the teacher is making adequate progress to each the ESP [Educator Support Program] Panel. The final three-way meeting must occur at least one month before the scheduled end of the plan.

At the end of the plan, the CT will issue a summative evaluation with an overall rating. The ESP Panel will convene within one month to review the evidence provided by the CT, the principal/headmaster, and the teacher and make a recommendation to the Superintendent whether to place the teacher on a Self-Directed Growth Plan, an Improvement Plan or Directed Growth Plan (in the case of a teacher who began the program during the summer, the PAR program may continue, or to dismiss or non-renew the teacher.)

Endorsement:

School Board Policy.

SEI Endorsement License by July 31 will be excessed. "Eligibility into the PAR Program" [The](in the case of a teacher who began the program during the summer, the PAR program may continue, or to dismiss or non-renew the teacher.)

Table: Requirement Points

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<th>Requirement Points</th>
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| 1550 in expenses incurred to obtain the required licensure. If they demonstrate in writing a process designated by the Office of Human Capital by January 15 that they are making continuous progress toward meeting the requirements for their license, in which the additional time is required, individuals shall not be excessed and shall be granted a one-time exception. "Continuous progress" shall be demonstrated by meeting progression points based on the table below. At least two of the points must have been earned within the previous 12 months, and the approval of the one-time exception is subject to the discretion of the Chief Human Capital Officer or their designee for those with fewer than six points. The District may, if necessary, require the District’s PAR program if their plan length designated in writing within one calendar month of issuance. For educators who receive their rating in May or June, the new plan length will be designated on or before the last day of school.

"If the plan length is not decided within these parameters, a Directed Growth Plan will have a default length of six calendar months beginning July 31 and ending August 31."
BIM
BLACK LIVES MATTER AT SCHOOL

Photos by Adrianne Jordan

Adrianne Jordan

HISTORY TRE

Mae Jemison

Black Art Matters
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Family Project
Parents helped their child do research on Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and made a representation of Dr. King’s life using a poster, paper bag puppet, or a collage. The presentation included words and pictures of both Dr. King’s accomplishments and events that occurred in his life. Parents and students did an amazing job!

The month of March is named for the Roman god of war, Mars. Now that Evacuation Day is no longer a county holiday, March can be a long battle in the classroom. For March is the only month in our school year without a holiday break.

To our friends in the "dreaded private sector" such a lament may seem laughable. But when you work with children, the time between February break and April break can be decades long. Were it not for Good Friday, the stretch between weeklong breaks would be 30 school days. An eternity.

Since Good Friday is in April this year, that leaves March a month full of school days (assuming no snow days). Most people will celebrate St. Patrick’s Day in some way. For my students we rename our classroom Maguireland and everyone is Maguirish for the day.

It’s cute but it will obscure the old holiday.

So I make a point to explain to my students the origin of the holiday, especially the stories – dare I say mythology – involving James Michael Curley. The Rascal King may have given legal cover to an old Irish holy day but there is no denying that March 17th played a pivotal role in the Colonies’ independence.

What follows is a reprinting of the 2013 story John Glynn wrote for this newspaper. Happy Evacuation Day to one and all.

Evacuation Day: Birth of a Nation
by John Glynn

On March 17, 1776, a people of action, character, and resolve from New England would see those same qualities in a southern planter from Virginia, and would adopt him as their own.

History books record George Washington’s action on Dorchester Heights as a military victory. To me, the sailing of British ships from Boston was the cutting of the umbilical cord of a premature nation to its Mother Country. The "preamic" nation looked up for help and saw the reassuring gaze of a leader whom they would place, “First in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen.”

That March day turned a bunch of uppity colonists into neighborhood militia. They discovered that they could be more than just local rebels upset about taxes.

A man from a southern colony – a place more foreign to them than England – had arrived in Cambridge the previous July in hopes of forming a standing Army.

However, their regional differences were acute and their mutual dislike was both immediate and intense. Only Washington’s commitment to Honor kept him at his post.

Necessity forced them to work together.

Washington could have a very bad temper and did not suffer fools gladly. He had a “Type A” personality and expected tough tasks to be completed.

He must have wondered how troops who had to be given a reason to practice marching in nice weather could be expected to do near impossible tasks in freezing weather.

Yet these New Englanders, who resisted the routine, responded to the impossible. They were ingenious in solving problems when they had to do so on their own.

Their ability to complete the fortification of Dorchester Heights amazed even the British general who quipped, “these people have done in three days what we could not do in three months.”

The bond between the people and George Washington was more than just in spoken syllables and pious platitudes. He never asked soldiers or statesmen to do anything that he would not be willing to do. He led from the front and put his life and political fortune on the line whenever necessary.

(John Glynn is now a retired teacher.)
fession. While I still run a One Woman Show taking on most of the heavy lifting myself, I find that it is much easier to run an idea by a colleague, post a concern on a teacher social media page, or simply ask questions. People are so willing to help out when you ask.

But like the unhelpful teenage cook-out helper scenario, it is important that you flush out exactly the kind of support you are looking for before you start asking around. If your message is unclear to your audience, what you receive back will feel more like punishment than help.

Sometimes, people become so eager to help you, support resembles a tidal wave that threatens to take you further out to sea instead of bringing you safely to shore. Get out your notepad or scribble on your whiteboard if it helps you to visualize all that you are struggling with. Then, list out the problem, the players, the ideal outcomes (no, you can’t send that student to the Lunar Space Station), the outcomes you could live with, and possible resources until you have the beginnings of a plan. Now, with a clearer vision and some freed up head space, you can begin asking for what you need. No one expects you to have a fully developed plan or else you wouldn’t be asking for support from others. With a barebones skeleton or at least a clearer vision, you will be able to articulate to others what you are looking for.

And what if you feel that it is unsafe to ask for support in your school? In my coaching work I met a few people who felt like asking for help was admitting defeat; that a simple ask became an unexpected attack. In these situations, an impartial person from Educator Supports can become a resource. Coaches can offer a consultancy visit or an informal observation when you are asking yourself, “Is it me?” in the middle of the night. This service is available to all Boston teachers regardless of your current evaluation rating. When you need more people in your corner to build you up and set you straight, the team is available to provide intensive coaching support and in some cases evaluation. Check out bostonps.org for more information.

We all know how isolating teaching work can be. We know the larger, more daunting issues will always be there and while we work on envisioning a plan to ask for additional support, let’s work on some small ways we can lift each other in our school communities. Support can be as simple as holding on to that student sent to your buddy room for a couple extra minutes to let that sending teacher take a breath. Support can be as easy as opening the doors between classrooms and sharing a laugh about anything at all. Support can mean listening. When you’ve been talking in your own head for so long, having another set of ears around that understands some of the same struggles you are going through can feel like a lifeline. As the days get longer, the testing weeks stretch into months, and rock, paper, scissors battles fail to subvert the recogsest arguments, we can all get by with a little help from our friends.

The Peer-to-Peer column is written by Anne Slater (aslater@bostonpublicschools.org) and Lauren Clarke-Mason (lclarke- mason@bostonpublicschools.org). If you have a topic you’d like us to explore, please email us. To find out more about Educator Supports including Peer Assistance and Consulting Teachers, visit bit.ly/whats-working/peer-mentors or bostonps.org.

Call for Submissions!

Are you a writer? Would you like to see your work published in the BTU paper? We are accepting submissions from all BTU members including current and retired teachers. Short story, novel excerpts, essays and poems will all be considered. Email your submission to Anne Slater @ aslater@ bostonpublicschools.org.

CALLING ALL INTERNATIONAL TRAVELERS!

Join Maritza and Dana on an international adventure!
All BTU members, families and friends are invited! See you at the airport!
REGISTER NOW! FOR 2020 & 2021 • All prices per person, double occupancy

EGYPT
April 16-26, 2020
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April 17-23, 2020
$2,999

FINLAND
April 17-26, 2020
$2,999

DENMARK
April 17-26, 2020
$2,999

CUBA
April 18-26, 2020
$3,500

SOUTH AFRICA
July 15-28, 2020
$3,500

MOORCCE
July 23 - August 1, 2020
$3,200

GHANA
August 14-24, 2020
$3,099

GREECE
October 14-25, 2020
$3,099

BRAZIL
April 16-25, 2021
$2,999

VIETNAM
April 16-25, 2021
$3,500

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Commentary  Paul Tenney

50 Years a BTU Member: The Retirement Years

Raders of this piece (an earlier edition) will recall that I bragged that I was 50 years a BTU member.

I was one for 33 years as an active teacher. What follows is an account of 17 years as a member of the Retired Teachers Chapter.

The latter body is a standing committee of the Boston Teachers Union and an autonomous entity which deals with the retired teacher issues and is, of course, a member of the Boston Teachers Union, Local 66 AFL-CIO.

I retired effective on July 1, 2001. I wanted to remain a union member so the best and only way to do that was to join the Retired Teachers Chapter. Many pensioners who choose to retire from the Boston Teachers Union very wisely assume that they are automatically enrolled in the RTC and therefore eligible for benefits. Not so fellow alumni. You must join RTC to do so.

I was still interested in union business, history and political involvement so it was a natural transition for me. I slowly began to see myself as a member of a new and yes, powerful demographic – retired professionals and teachers.

The state and national unions have departments which have room for retirees. These have become more and more influential through the years – especially at election time. As of this writing, the Boston Chapter has approximately 3,000 members, many of whom are politically active. Add to them the 7,000 or so of the active BTU members and you have a formidable political entity in Massachusetts.

What are the issues which most affect today’s retirees? They are the safety and security of Social Security, pensions and health care. We have committees within our Executive Board that act as very effective lobbyists at the local level (e.g. City Hall).

We work hand in glove with state and national lobbyists for retirees. All of our committee members work as volunteers – truly a labor of love. I am pleased to chat with retirees from the Boston Teachers Union and the folks at UMass/Boston who house our historical records. The latter will be online soon and all people can access them for any purpose including historical essays, monographs, and books about labor union history.

I enjoy the work and the fact that my colleagues have redacted me to the posts of delegate to the state and national conventions of the American Federation of Teachers AFL-CIO, as well as the state convention of the AFL-CIO. My interest in labor’s history and present affairs is still keen. I look forward to exciting and informative work for the Boston Teachers Union.

News You Can Use from the Retired Teachers Chapter

BTU Retired Teachers Chapter Scholarships

Each year, the Retired Teachers Chapter of the Boston Teachers Union awards three scholarships to deserving high school seniors who are children, grandchildren, nieces or nephews of Retired Teachers Association members. These awards are earmarked for a student who chooses to attend a vocational school or equivalent institution. Applications for these scholarships can be picked up at our table at the BTU offices at 180 Mount Vernon Street, Building 1, Boston, MA 02125 or they can be downloaded from the BTU website (https://btu.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/RTC-Scholarship.pdf). The deadline to apply is April 1, 2020. Envelope must be postmarked by that date.

Medicare Part B Reimbursement for Retirees

The City of Boston provides a refund of one-half of the Medicare Part B premium paid by retirees, spouses, and surviving spouses. To be eligible for a refund, you must have been enrolled in a qualified Medicare Supplement plan in 2019 through the City of Boston. If you paid the Standard Part B premium of $135.50 per month in the calendar year 2019, you do not need to submit proof of what you paid in 2019 for Medicare Part B. Because the City of Boston will automatically process your refund.

However, if you paid more than $135.50 per month in the calendar year 2019 for the Medicare Part B premium due to the Income Related Monthly Adjustment Amount (IRMAA), you must submit proof of payment no later than April 30, 2020. Please contact the Health Benefits and Insurance Department at 617-635-4570 to obtain the Medicare Part B Refund Request Form if you have not already received it.

If the Medicare Part B premium is deducted from your Social Security check, please provide a copy of form SSA-1099 or submit Social Security Form SSA-2458 documenting Part B premium payments. If you pay Social Security directly through IRMAA, (Income Related Monthly Adjustment Amount) please provide copies of the Medicare billing statements along with copies of bank or credit card statements reflecting proof of payment. If you have questions call the Health Benefits and Insurance Department at 617-635-4570 with questions.

Fighting For a Change in COLA

The Legislative Committee of the RTC continues to fight for COLA increases in our pension. We are inviting City Councillors, State Representative and Senators to our legislative committee meetings to share our proposals and support for state legislation with them and as then to support our positions. Several City Councillors attended the first committee meeting of the year at the BTU and heard our proposal to the city on how to restructure the COLA base as well as support legislation to raise the base from the current base of $14,000.

On Monday, January 27, 2020, the RTC Legislative Committee met with the following City Councillors: Julia Mejia, Aminna Essauhi George, Liz Bredoun, Jonathan Spence, Councilor Kenzie Bok’s representative. In addition, Neil Doherty from the Mayor’s office attended our meeting.

The focus of the meeting was the need to raise the COLA base. These representatives listened, asked questions, and left with a promise to work on our concerns.

We thank them for taking time out of their busy day to attend and participate in the Legislative Committee’s meeting.

Spring Business Meeting

This year’s Spring Business Meeting will be held Thursday, March 26, 2020 at Florian Hall in Dorchester. Doors open at 10:30 am and the meeting starts promptly at 11:00 am. In addition to reports from the RTC committees, you can get information about the 75th Anniversary of the BTU. The Celebration will be held at the Westin Hotel in Copley Square.

Ask any retiree how many scam calls they receive and they will share that the number of fraudulent phone calls increase every year. In addition, on-line scams are becoming more sophisticated. A representative of the AARP Massachusetts chapter will share their information on what seniors can do to protect themselves from these scammers.

Spring Luncheon

Join us May 14, 2020 at the Venezia Restaurant in Dorchester for the RTC’s annual Spring Luncheon. Enjoy getting together with colleagues and sharing good food and stories! The social committee will be sending more information about ticket prices and table seating as the date advances.

Happy Anniversary BTU!

Come celebrate the BTU’s 75th anniversary of its founding. A dinner will be held at the Westin Hotel in Copley Square. Tickets will soon be available and you can become an Ambassador and create a table of ten friends, spouses, and colleagues to celebrate with you. Read more about the plans for the dinner and how you can obtain tickets and become an ambassador by going to the BTU website and clicking on the 75th Anniversary. It is a great time to gather and share stories from our union activist days. Remember the strikes? Rallies at City Hall Plaza. Marching around the School building at 15 Beacon Street and then 26 Court Street? Come share the memories and celebrate with other union activists.

Like Our Page

The RTC has a great Facebook page and if you are a Facebook member please visit us and give us a thumbs up. Follow the page to keep up with RTC events and information.

EyeExams

Remember that the eyeexam benefit starts two years from your date of application to join the RTC. Once eligible, you can get glasses every two years. You must bring your own prescription. Check with the eye care office to make an appointment. Retired teachers can make appointments during the week from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm. You may not make appointments during school vacations or during the summer.

Hear USA

RTC members can get discounts on hearing aids through Hear USA. You can call for an appointment with one of their approved audiologists and, if needed, get substantial discounts on prescribed hearing aids. You can call Hear USA at 800-442-8231. Tell them that you are a member of the Retired Teacher Chapter of the Boston Teachers Union.

Studies show that hearing loss contributes to the isolation and loneliness that seniors experience. Take advantage of these discounts on hearing tests and aids.

Planning on Retiring?

Congratulations on reaching retirement. Call the RTC office at the 617-635-2000 any Tuesday or Wednesday to get an application to join the Retired Teachers Chapter. You do not automatically become a member of the Retired Teacher Chapter. You must sign up for membership. All benefits offered by the RTC are based on your membership in the BTU/RTC. Dues are five dollars per month and are deducted from your retirement check.
Boston Green Academy is a Horace Mann In-District Charter School founded in 2011. It has a school-wide commitment to preparing students for leadership in “green” careers, and has recently been named a Green Ribbon School by the U.S. Department of Education. It is located in Brighton in the former Taft building at the corner of Warren Avenue and Cambridge Street, and now serves 500 students in grades 6-12. I was invited to visit by Eileen Shakespeare, an officially retired teacher who works part-time at BGA to support new staff members.

In Mia Lefkowitz’s high school ESL class, students are exploring “essential places” in Boston and working on creating a City Guide, while ESL teacher Alexandra Ilbarra Carbona helps seventh graders learn parts of speech as they use pictures and words to create sentences in English.

Outside Matthew Johnston’s Spanish classroom is a big display of student-created posters about Taino culture, and Ms. Murray’s seventh grade Humanities students are learning about Haiti. A focus on multicultural literature is evident in Daphnee Rameau’s high school ELA class, which is reading Flight, by Sherman Alexie, while Erica Phifer’s middle school students are reading Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass. All students are also given time in ELA classes for reading books of their own choice from varied and full classroom libraries.

Art teacher Jen Turpin is from the Eliot School, which partners with BGA to provide rich experiences for students, and I see examples on display throughout the building. In the gym, Shantell Jeter’s seventh graders are practicing eye-hand coordination by seeing how high and for how long they can keep a ball in the air with one hand.

Environmental sustainability is an important topic in science classes, given BGA’s curriculum focus. Seniors in Erica Wilson’s physics class are hosting small groups of middle school students, proudly showing and talking about the passive houses they had designed. In Chris Donnelly’s Environmental Science class, 11th grade students work on an experiment to measure how much water soaks into the ground and how much it takes.

Secondary teachers often feel pressure to “cover” curriculum material with “time on task” rather than attend to social emotional issues. Tra Neal Holloman-Rodgers, however, begins her math class by asking each student to share three words describing how they’re feeling that day. In the hallway a large bulletin board gives examples of ways to “Be Kind to Your Whole Self” and another celebrates individual students nominated by a staff member for acts of leadership and service.

What does YOUR school do that supports the creation of a safe and welcoming learning environment for all? Please invite me to visit!

I was working on an assignment in science class. We are studying genetics and learning about dominant and recessive genes, and that our genes come from both parents. Juleici Febo, Grade 11

We were getting help from Ms. Murray on some Humanities coursework. We’re learning about the history of Haiti and what they had to go through during colonial times. We’ve learned that the people of Haiti were the first black nation to gain independence from slavery.

Declan Hall & Michelle Huynh, Grade 11

My temperature calculator was misfunctioning and Ms. Wilson was checking it out. This is in physics class and we’ve been designing passive houses to remain cozy without a furnace. I was testing my house to see how warm it can get in the daytime, and how comfortable it can remain at night. I’ve learned it takes a lot of insulation for the house to stay warm!

José Chavez, Grade 12

We’re Learning Here! (Amika Kemmler Ernst is a 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.)

This is in our Environmental Science class with Mr. Donnelly. We were doing an experiment to measure how much water soaks into the ground and how much time it takes. We’ve learned that in cities concrete surfaces cause runoff, so the water cannot be absorbed by the soil. This is a problem because it creates floods and can pollute our oceans.

Donté White-Barboza, Grade 11

I was building sentences with nouns, verbs and adjectives. This is in ESL class where I am learning how to read, write, speak and listen better in English.

Guilherme Oliveira, Grade 8

Ms. Wu is helping me with some math problems. I’m learning how to solve algebra problems by graphing, substitution, and elimination.

Madison Gustave, Grade 11

This is from Ms. Murray’s physics class. She had us test our houses to see how warm they get in the daytime, and how comfortable it can remain at night. I’ve learned it takes a lot of insulation for the house to stay warm!

Amika Kemmler Ernst, Ed. D.
Amika45@gmail.com

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Andrew Gonzalez & Hope Williams, Grade 7

I am working with my coach, Mr. Seaforth, on designing a new play for our basketball game. I’ve learned where and how quickly we need to screen, or block, an opposing player on the court.

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Andrew Gonzalez & Hope Williams, Grade 7

I am working with my coach, Mr. Seaforth, on designing a new play for our basketball game. I’ve learned where and how quickly we need to screen, or block, an opposing player on the court.

Donté White-Barboza, Grade 11

We’re Learning Here! (Amika Kemmler Ernst is a 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.)

This is in our Environmental Science class with Mr. Donnelly. We were doing an experiment to measure how much water soaks into the ground and how much time it takes. We’ve learned that in cities concrete surfaces cause runoff, so the water cannot be absorbed by the soil. This is a problem because it creates floods and can pollute our oceans.

Donté White-Barboza, Grade 11

I was building sentences with nouns, verbs and adjectives. This is in ESL class where I am learning how to read, write, speak and listen better in English.

Guilherme Oliveira, Grade 8

Ms. Wu is helping me with some math problems. I’m learning how to solve algebra problems by graphing, substitution, and elimination.

Madison Gustave, Grade 11

This is from Ms. Murray’s physics class. She had us test our houses to see how warm they get in the daytime, and how comfortable it can remain at night. I’ve learned it takes a lot of insulation for the house to stay warm!

Amika Kemmler Ernst, Ed. D.
Amika45@gmail.com

What does YOUR school do that supports the creation of a safe and welcoming learning environment for all? Please invite me to visit!

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