

ATTENTION!

75th Anniversary of the Boston Teachers Union Celebration Party

postponed until

October 16, 2021



BOSTON TEACHERS UNION, LOCAL 66, AFT

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President's Report Jessica J. Tang

BTU Proud: We Are Stronger Together!

On the last two days of June, over 200 members participated in the now fifth annual Summer Organizing Institute to wrap up a school year unlike any other. The theme of the conference was BTU: Stronger Together. The first institute began in 2015, as we were preparing for what was then, the fight of our lives — defeating Question 2 — the charter ballot question that would have led to unfettered Commonwealth charter growth and the decimation of public schools.

That summer, our members worked tirelessly as we organized to defeat the ballot question that fall, despite overwhelming odds and deep pockets out spending us. The victory was only short lived as AFT-endorsed candidate **Hillary Clinton** was defeated by President **Donald Trump**. Over the next couple of months, our members quickly mobilized for actions in support of our Latinx immigrant students and families with our “Everyone is Welcome Here Campaign,” which quickly expanded over the next year to include so many other groups that were targeted in hate speech and rhetoric. That next year, we would also begin our first Black Lives Matter at Schools Week of Action.

Meanwhile, from 2016-2017 we were also feverishly launching our “BTU ALL-IN” campaign in anticipation of the Janus Supreme Court decision that summer and organizing our first Commonwealth charter school union drive. BTU Unafraid Educators were mobilizing around data sharing and the role of ICE in the deportation of a BPS student when superintendent **Tommy Chang** abruptly resigned. As we mobilized for the Working People's Day of Action, our district once again began a new superintendent search while interim superintendent **Laura Perille** was named for the 2018-2019 school year.

Fast forward to this past summer, we were welcoming yet another new superintendent, **Dr. Brenda Cassellius** from Minnesota, and looking forward to what we hoped would be the beginning of a longer stretch of stability in the district. We settled a contract win including a nurse in every school, more behavioral health staff and big raises and wins for our paraprofessionals, amongst many other wins. After transitioning our No On 2 campaign to the Fund Our Future campaign, we also won the hard-fought Student Opportunities Act in the State House.

Earlier this year as we awaited the

MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's response to the BPS district review, we were concerned, but hopeful that we would successfully fight off state takeover. And then the Covid-19 crisis hit. Close to home and our world and school year would irrevocably take a turn that no one was prepared for. On the same day the DESE MOU with the district became public, Mayor **Martin Walsh** announced that schools would be closed, and we entered a new reality of remote crisis learning.

In 2017, the new officers and staff launched our first listening tour — visiting all of our schools with the mission of building **POWER** and ensuring all of our members could and would feel #BTUProud of being a part of the BTU. This goal is still relevant as we continue to grow stronger in all areas:

Professional Growth and Expertise
Organizing with our students and families

Workers rights and labor solidarity
Equity, inclusion and social justice

Respect for our profession and union

We also laid out strategic priorities including: 1) Enforcing and negotiating strong contracts at our school sites and beyond 2) Strengthening our political program and power 3) Continuing to increase engagement internally and externally.

While those priorities are still relevant, the context has changed dramatically. Despite all of the challenges, turbulence and threats over the last several years, we have continued to grow stronger—our membership continues to grow as does our activism and influence. In many ways we have outgrown both our physical space and current structures as we run out places to meet (when we still could!) and in the number of active faculty senate and committees. However, we still have much room to grow.

This summer, at the Summer Organizing Institute and in the coming months, we are taking a moment to regroup. Our greatest challenge yet, is planning for a fall reopening during a global pandemic, where there are unprecedented unknowns and factors beyond our knowledge and control. We will have to be flexible and nimble as we confront this crisis, while we also confront the crisis of racial inequity that has come to a head not just through the disproportionate impacts of the virus, but also in housing, food security and police brutality.

Our union is a reflection of society — we are a family, but just as biological families don't always see eye to eye, we, too, all have different experiences, perspectives and views. So how do we confront the challenges and crisis of our times and move forward as a union family?

While our differences on the surface may appear to cause rifts in ideology as we debate on opposite sides of resolutions or motions, our differences also give us opportunities to learn and grow together. Let us embrace that. As Frederick Douglas wrote, “There is not progress without struggle.” If we are not struggling, we are not learning and growing. Although it will feel uncomfortable at times, awkward or bring out emotions, we all need to be ready to struggle with each other to grow and learn because ultimately, we will all be better for it.

This needed struggle happens through one on one conversations — the building blocks of organizing. Through dialogue and debate, through listening and questioning our own assumptions. Reading, researching and exploring perspectives that are new and unfamiliar. Through this struggle, we stretch ourselves and create more inclusive spaces. That is the goal of democracy and a democratic union — we may not always all agree, but



Jessica J. Tang
BTU President

at the end of the day, we come together as a family because we have so much to learn from each other because of our differences.

Over the last five years, we have overcome Question 2, the Janus decision and four different superintendents and multiple transitions. We have won historic campaigns, pulled together to face adversity at our work sites and beyond. Over the last few months, our union family has demonstrated commitment, resilience, compassion, empathy and selflessness in the face of unprecedented adversity. There is much to be #BTUProud about. This summer, as we continue to confront this dual challenge of the Covid-19 crisis and a reckoning for racial justice, we must center ourselves in what we stand for, who we are as a union and get ready to struggle together, because at the end of the day, we are all in this together, and most certainly, stronger together.



The BTU has endorsed the following candidates for the Tuesday, September 1, 2020 Primary:

Congressional Non-Incumbent:

Robbie Goldstein, 8th Congressional District

Senate Incumbents:

Senator Julian Cyr, Cape & Islands

Senator Patricia Jehlen, 2nd Middlesex

Senator Mike Brady, Plymouth and Bristol

Senator Marc Pacheco, 1st Plymouth & Bristol

Senator Patrick O'Connor,

Plymouth and Norfolk

Senator Nick Collins, 1st Suffolk

House Incumbents:

State Representative Thomas Stanley,

9th Middlesex

State Representative Christine Barber,

34th Middlesex

State Representative Tommy Vitolo,

15th Norfolk

State Representative Liz Miranda, 5th Suffolk

State Representative Jon Santiago, 9th Suffolk

State Representative Nika Elugardo,

15th Suffolk

Non-Incumbents for

State Representative:

Erika Uyterhoeven, 27th Middlesex

Brandy Fluker-Oakley, 12th Suffolk

Rob Consalvo, 14th Suffolk

Joe Gravellese, 16th Suffolk

Jordan Meehan, 17th Suffolk

Contact **Johnny McInnis**

at jmcinnis@btu.org

Your help is needed!

For more information on how you can help our endorsed candidates campaigning in your legislative district get elected.

BTU Advocacy during COVID-19

Higher Education

Signed on letter to United States Congress to “Cancel all Student debt to stimulate the Economy”: https://actionnetwork.org/petitions/congress-cancel-all-student-debt-to-stimulate-the-economy?clear_id=true

This letter was sent to Massachusetts State Senators and State Representatives to “Demand Full Funding to Protect Students and Workers from the Coronavirus Crisis.” - <http://phenomonline.org/coronavirus/>

Nurses

Latest COVID-19 MNA Letter to Gov. Baker Sounds Alarm on Dangerous Decisions Being Made about Protective Equipment and Service Closures While Hospitals Layoff and Cancel Nurses Despite Extra Funding

The MNA is advocating for a consistent approach to COVID-19 utilizing the expertise of frontline nurses and healthcare workers

Providing safe and consistent personal protective equipment (PPE), including one-time use N95 masks, to every frontline healthcare worker

Not placing healthcare workers in the position of being test cases for largely unvetted and unproven mask re-use and decontamination procedures

Halting dangerous and inexcusable closures of intensive care units and other essential services

Ensuring there are no staff layoffs or cancellations when redeployments can bolster surge capacity and hospitals are receiving more than \$800 million in additional state and federal funding

**The highly contagious nature of COVID-19, the severe sickness it causes and the lack of any vaccine or therapy have created a perfect storm in our healthcare facilities. This has been compounded by a shortage of personal protective equipment (PPE) and changes to PPE usage protocols based on supply rather than science. In the midst of this, some healthcare facilities have publicly stated that they plan to default to the assumption that employees who test positive for COVID-19 must have contracted the virus in the community rather than in the healthcare facility and therefore, the employer does not consider their illness occupational.*

There is legislation before the Joint Committee on Public Safety and Homeland Security (Senate Bill 2602/Housing Bill 4611) that attempts to address this by presuming occupational acquisition of the virus, however it needs to be expanded to include all workers in healthcare facilities. This legislation must be expanded to include these workers and fast-tracked through the legislature. The people on the frontlines are working for us- we need to take care of them. Please act now to pass legislation that:

Includes clear language that there is a presumption that among these workers, COVID-19 is acquired at work or through work-related situations - such as the crowded shuttle buses (aka. occupational acquisition)

Includes all workers in health care facilities (from nurses to the folks cleaning the hospital rooms)

Includes both public and private health care workers.

Allow these workers to access full workers comp benefits

Housing

Freeze Rent and Mortgage Payments!

This petition would just continue to put pressure on state and city leadership to do the right thing, and help communicate that teachers are on the side of justice and safety.

FYI the MA legislature did pass H4647 An Act Providing for a Moratorium on Evictions and Foreclosures During COVID-19 Emergency.

An immediate freeze on all rent and mortgage payments! People of color, women, families, and working people are disproportionately burdened with rent payments during this crisis. We need a reprieve in the form of freezing rents and mortgage payments until this crisis is over!

Housing Guarantee

Ban evictions and foreclosures during the COVID-19 crisis and recovery period

Cancel rent and mortgage payments for all those unable to pay during the crisis

Guarantee that in the aftermath of the crisis renters and homeowners will not face eviction, foreclosure, or pressure to repay impossible levels of housing debt from the crisis

Provide comprehensive support to people who are unhoused or living in overcrowded conditions, including safe isolation for the sick and relocation of people in crowded shelters

#EvictionMoratorium Victory!

#EvictionMoratorium was signed into law in Massachusetts, helping families across our state keep their homes! Congratulations to our partners who pushed this bill to passage. Here's what the bill does:

Stops landlords from sending Notices To Quit

Stops courts from hearing eviction cases or entering judgments

Stops sheriffs from enforcing executions for possession

Stops late fees + negative reporting for COVID-19-impacted tenants

Moratorium on residential foreclosures

Moratorium on evictions of small businesses

Letter to Congress on behalf of Tenants:

Letter to Congressional leaders to include \$111.5 Billion in emergency rental and homelessness assistance in the next COVID Relief package.

During early May, Congress will start to decide on the next major CARES/Stimulus bill and this letter asks that it include a \$100 billion Emergency Rental Assistance Program. This passed in the House version of the first CARES/Stimulus bill but the Republican controlled Senate and President wouldn't agree to it.

BTU Phone Numbers

Office.....617-288-2000

Health & Welfare617-288-0500

AFT Massachusetts.....617-423-3342

Function Office617-288-3322

Lounge Office.....617-288-3322

Vision Center.....617-288-5540

Tremont Credit Union.....781-843-5626

Coalitions

Massachusetts COVID-19 Response Alliance

What kind of Massachusetts do we want to see as we respond to the crisis and, eventually, create a “new normal”? The Massachusetts COVID-19 Response Alliance believes that our immediate and longer-term responses to the crisis must:

- Prioritize working families
- Advance racial justice
- Deepen democracy
- Invest in the public good
- Put people and communities before big corporations

The People's Bail Out

Five Principles for Just COVID-19 Relief and Stimulus

1. Health is the top priority, for all people, with no exceptions.
2. Provide economic relief directly to the people.
3. Rescue workers and communities, not corporate executives.
4. Make a down payment on a regenerative economy, while preventing future crises.
5. Protect our democratic process while protecting each other.

Raise Up Massachusetts

Emergency Paid Sick Time legislation would provide ten additional work-days (80 hours) of job-protected paid sick time for immediate use during the COVID-19 outbreak. This Emergency Paid Sick Time would be available to employees not covered by the federal Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA)'s paid sick time Provisions including workers at companies with more than 500 employees, and many employees of health care and residential facilities.

Lift Our Kids Out of Deep Poverty

H4622 An Act to Provide Short Term Relief of Families in Deep Poverty. This bill will provide immediate supplemental month's worth of benefits to 30,000 families receiving TAFDC (Transitional Assistance to Families with Dependent Children) with 19,000 seniors and individuals with disabilities receiving EAEDC (Emergency Assistance to Elderly, Disabled, and Children) cash assistance which has been referred to Ways & Means. This is a short term relief bill. We are signed on with this coalition which was previously approved to Lift Our Kids Out of Deep Poverty.

Statewide Paraprofessional / PSRP Conference

by Colleen Hart, BTU Paraprofessional Field Rep.

The 2000 Statewide Paraprofessional/PSRP conference was held virtually on June 11, 2020. We were joined by paras from Lawrence, Peabody, Lynn, Boston, Amesbury, Chelsea, Springfield, Billerica, Salem, Lowell and New Bedford.

It was a great evening of collaboration and learning amongst the paraprofessionals. The evening started with **Beth Kontos, Jessica Tang and Colleen Hart** welcoming everyone and explaining how the zoom session would work.

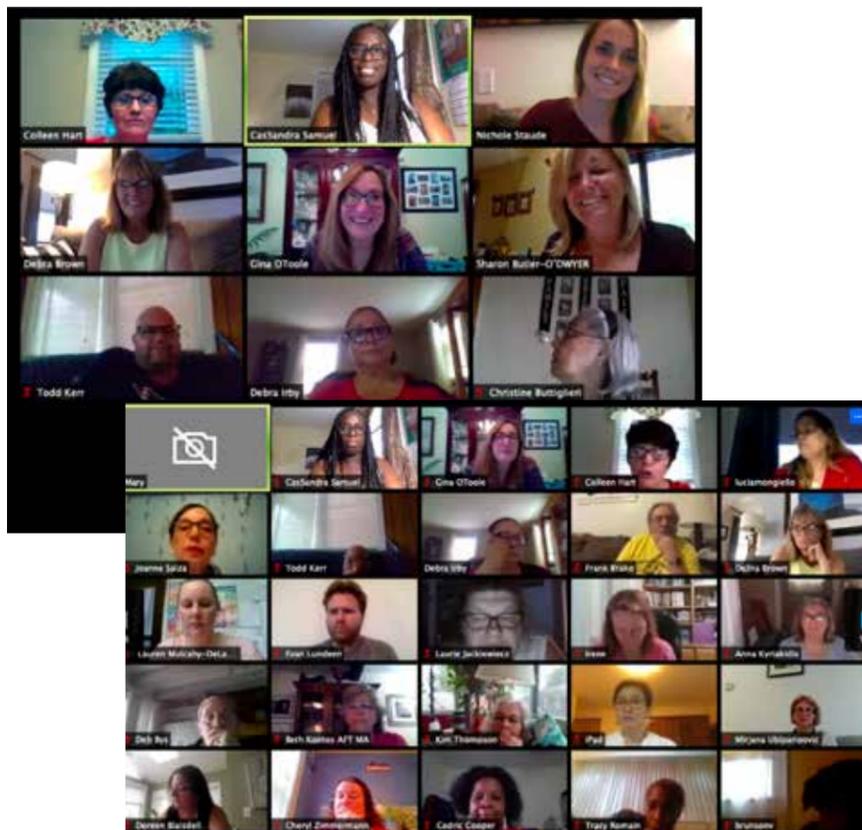
The first session was presented by the AFT National Benefits team. After the session the group was split into two break out rooms. One of which was *Survival Tips for PSRPs* which **Lauren Samet** and

her team from AFT National presented.

In the second room was **Ben Weilerstein** from Mass COSH accompanied by **Gina O'Toole** from AFT-MA and **Debra Irby** from the BTU to present *A Session on Safe and Healthy Workplace*.

When these sessions were completed the rooms switched so that all participants received both PD opportunities. We came back to the main room to watch powerpoint on paras work around the state though the year and to socialize.

We at BTU, were happy to at least be able to have this chance to hold the conference in some way. We can not wait to be able to hold this conference again in person and to see all of our colleagues. I would like to thank AFT-MA and Para Council for helping with planning and making this conference successful.



When Can a Teacher Collect Unemployment Compensation?



Caren Carew
BTU Secondary
Field Representative

A teacher is eligible for Unemployment Compensation when they have been laid off or have not been rehired by the school system. If a teacher has been issued a letter of termination and has not been rehired as of the effective date of said termination, then they are eligible for Unemployment benefits.

When a terminated teacher is paid over the summer months due to being on a 26 paycheck schedule, they are still able to collect Unemployment. These 'summer payments' are based on a percentage of their pay that has been deducted from each paycheck throughout the school year added together to provide said teacher with 'stretch' payments over the summer based on work already done between September and June of that academic year.

If a provisional teacher has been granted a letter of Reasonable Assurance (RA), they are **NOT** eligible to collect Unemployment because they have been reasonably assured of a job in the upcoming academic year. If a provisional teacher has not been granted an RA, and has received a termination letter from the BPS, they **ARE** eligible to collect Unemployment Compensation.

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

To obtain more information, call the Massachusetts Division of Employment via the web www.detma.org/workers/howtofile.htm or by phone TeleClaims services at 1-877-626-6800 or 617-626-6800. Hours are Monday - Thursday 8:30 - 6:30; Friday 8:00 - 4:30.

What does COBRA mean?

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

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

Is Summer School Treated Like the Regular School Year Contractually?

No, it is not. Summer school is not governed by the collective bargaining agreement in the same way the standard school year is. Some time ago the BTU took the issue of summer school salary not being retirement worthy to court to demand that this earned income be retirement worthy. Unfortunately, the court ruled against the case. The BTU/BPS contract reports, "The School Department shall determine the summer program curriculum, all aspects of operation and administration of the program, including employment in the program, salary, hours, and conditions of employment. Employee participation in the summer program shall be voluntary. Selection of employees shall be as determined by the [school] Department."

What is the Severance Pay Policy in the BPS for Teachers?

The BTU Contract details, "Persons who retire, resign, or die after ten (10) years of teaching in the BPS shall be paid at the ratio of 40% of accumulated, unused sick days, without limitation. Payment shall be based on the annual rate of pay of the person at the time of death, retirement or resignation. In the event of death, payment shall be made to the estate." ... "severance shall be paid in two installments. One half of the payment shall be made on or before December 31st of the year of retirement, and the other half shall be paid on or before December 31st of the year after retirement." If a person has taught less than ten full years in the BPS, they lose their accumulated sick days if they leave the system.

Where Does a City of Boston Employee Turn When Things Seem Unbearable?

The City of Boston provides a 'free and confidential' program for its employees and their immediate families called the **Employees Assistance Program (EAP)**. This service is there to help said individuals with challenges they may be dealing with including substance abuse issues, job loss, depression, grief, being stressed out, and the like.

To speak with an EAP clinician call 617-635-2200, Monday - Friday, 7:00 - 5:00. If in crisis mode, call 617-635-4500 to page an EAP clinician who is on call. EAP will continue to work with affected individuals as long as necessary.

If I Move, Get a New Phone or Email Address & Update it on the HUB does BPS Automatically Notify the BTU?

No. You must contact the BTU directly to update changes of address, phone numbers, and email addresses. The BTU does not have access to the updates you file with the BPS.

What is the 'Contractual Hourly Rate' for Teachers?

The current contractual hourly rate for teachers is currently \$50.73. During the standard school day, individual teachers are paid at their own rate (pro rata) based on the amount of years teaching (step level) and the amount of educational degrees obtained and graduate credit earned (salary lanes) applied for, approved, and on file at BPS Office of Human Capital.

Do Teachers Receive PDP's for the 18+ Beyond the Instructional School Day PD Hours and Full Day(s) of BPS Professional Development?

Yes, the BTU contract reads, "Teachers will receive a PDP certificate at the end of the school year for all time spent in professional development activities. Teachers may combine PDP activities year-to-year to comply with state requirements." These PDP's, if earned, must be awarded to each eligible teacher. No written or other documentable product need be submitted in order to obtain them. Since the BPS/your school is the provider of this professional development, it meets the recertification regulations of aligning 'with school and/or district improve-

ment goals' as well as your supervisor's approval.

Within the 5-year recertification cycle, teachers are able to bunch PDP's having the same broad topic together to meet the Mass. Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's threshold of earning a minimum of 10 PDP's in a topic to qualify for submission. Teachers earn one PDP per clock hour for professional development activities. In order to be able to claim PDP's in a specific content area or topic if they are awarded with a general certificate, keep a copy of the agenda/description of the professional development session/workshop completed in order to then be able to align them with other PDP's within the same topic, earned within the 5-year recertification cycle. RETELLS/SEI training, Readers and Writers Workshop or literacy across the curriculum PDP's can be applied to content area requirements if the writing/literacy application is being used in the context of a specific content class forth and collect your certificates!

What is the Online Tool, Share My Lesson by teachers, for teachers?

The American Federation of Teachers (AFT) the BTU's national organization which we are members of, has developed an online teacher resource platform found at www.sharemylesson.com. Share My Lesson pledges that AFT members can download and share user-generated resources free of charge for ever. They are committed to protecting the privacy of their member's personal data and promise never to sell or share it with any third party.

Share My Lesson states that it, "is a place where educators can come together to create and share their very best teaching resources. Developed by teachers for teachers, this free platform gives access to high-quality teaching resources and provides an online community where teachers can collaborate with, encourage and inspire each other. It has a significant resource bank for Common Core State Standards, covering all aspects of the standards, from advice and guides to help with dedicated resources that sup-

port the standards. It was developed by the AFT and TES Connect, the largest network of teachers in the world."

Share My Lesson provides free resources where thousands of educators connect inspire and share. Some featured content on the site are: Reading Across America: celebrate and nurture a love of reading with guided reading groups; Character Analysis: students participate in the process of inventing a multidimensional character. There are more than 259,960 total teaching resources available on a wide range of subjects and levels.

What Does 'Buying Back' Time for Retirement Mean?

Buying back time for retirement creditable service applies to people who were laid off or resigned from BPS and took money out of their retirement account to live on while laid off and now have to pay it back or must work the extra years in order to have it credited towards their retirement. It also applies to people who worked eligible jobs, subbed, and the like who may need to pay into the retirement system to have that time/money credited towards their retirement. You cannot pay for time not worked in this manner in order to accelerate your eligibility for retirement (alas)!

In order to determine what credible service time towards retirement you currently have and how much time you may be eligible to buy back, you must make a written request to the Boston Retirement Office, Room 816 in Boston City Hall. Get a time/date stamped copy of your request when you submit it for your records. You then will need to work out an individualized payment plan with the Retirement Office once your case has been reviewed and the amount of time and its corresponding dollar amount has been arrived at.

Boston Union Teacher

EVERYONE IS WELCOME HERE!

¡TODOS SON BIENVENIDOS AQUÍ!

EVERYONE IS WELCOME HERE!

**Boston Teachers Union,
AFT Local 66, AFL-CIO**

The *Boston Union Teacher* is published eleven times a year September - July, inclusive.

EDITORIAL NOTE:

The opinions expressed in the *Boston Union Teacher* do not necessarily represent the views of the Boston Teachers Union, or those of its members.

WHEN WRITING:

All correspondence to the *Boston Union Teacher* must be typewritten and include the author's name and school or department if not school-based.

All articles must be appropriate to the publication, and in good taste.

Letters to the Editor should be sent to letters@btu.org

DEADLINE:

The deadline for submitting articles for the next issue of the *Boston Union Teacher* is May 20th.

All copy should be e-mailed to mmaguire@btu.org and gvirchick@btu.org

This deadline will be strictly adhered to.

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The Definition of a Writer

The Big Bang is inside of us.
I like the shape words take
in passing lanes of sound waves.

—From “Go” by Richard Martin

Last month the BTU paper listed a save the date for an event in October 2020, but I read it as the date of the paper. I thought to myself, wow, time really has sped up. I mean I know the summer goes by in a flash, but why can't I remember what has happened these past months. Time is different. Teaching is different, yet the school year has come to its strange end. In this, our final column of the 2019-20

school year we celebrate writing sent in by BTU members. This edition has been part of a series of features about writers and writing. We called for submissions and writers crept out of the shadows to share their work.

Definition of a Writer

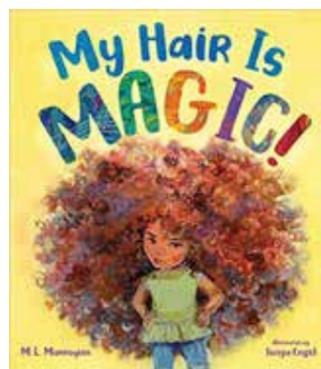
By Lauren Clarke-Mason

I spend a lot of time wondering, as my therapist will attest, what it means to be a writer. I participate in the writing process: write, reread, delete, start again. I drink lots of hot beverages hunched over a laptop, participate in self loathing when things don't go the way I want them to. I've been to writers groups and practice my signature so it will look nice for my first book signing event. I worry most about the definition of what a writer is. Although I sit and write things, does it matter if those things have not had an audience, have never been outside of my own computer hard drive, never published? Does this disqualify me as a writer?

Someone shared with me a rejection letter from a query Alice Walker wrote when trying to get her novel “The Color Purple” published. I immediately felt hopeful. If this quintessential author had difficulty getting that amazing, life changing book to the marketplace and she didn't quit, then obviously, I have no reason to stop now. This rejection letter is my screensaver now just in case I have reason to doubt my purpose.

Interview with Maria Marroquin, author of “My Hair is Magic”, a picture book for early readers. Due in stores October, 2020

Inspiration is around us everyday and some of the best stories come from this inspiration. Maria Marroquin, an interventionist teacher at the Dudley Street Neighborhood Charter School, found the inspiration to write her first picture book, “My Hair is Magic” through her children. Her youngest daughter had a halo of curly hair that grew fun and free like the softest of pillows, but often her daughter would get strange looks and as her mom, criticism. Pressure from well intentioned friends and some family members to comb, braid or reign in her daughter's hair became a point of contention that eventually became a touchpoint of strength and agency through daily empowering messages with her child. “It started as an affirmation. We'd make



a mantra of saying empowering words together every night to describe her hair,” Ms. Marroquin explains. This process of building self love to counter the negative attention she received about her daughter's beautiful multiethnic hair developed into a children's book written in verse to provide a teaching moment and source of strength and pride for others who also may face criticism about how their hair grows naturally from their head.

From the synopsis on Amazon: This little girl knows her hair is great just as it is. When people ask, “Why is your hair so BIG?” she answers, “Why isn't yours?”

Developing her picture book was a part inspiration and part perspiration. Teaching the writing process to students during the day as a Reading Recovery teacher helped Marroquin to gain perspective and build discipline as she crafted her verses in her free time. She would often have friends, relatives and her own children listen and offer feedback on her work. “You worry sometimes if their comments are subjective,” but after several rounds of sending query letters to publishing houses, a process that took over a year, she connected with Page Street Kids Publishing, distributed by Macmillan. With the support of Page Street she acquired an editor, connected with an illustrator Tonya Engel, and her book will arrive in stores and Amazon in October, 2020.

For her next project, Marroquin continues to look for inspiration. Some may have a regular writing time or a class but she waits for that lightning bolt of spark that will get her back to her notebooks of verse. “I have to feel it,” she explains, before she commits to a new project. Here's to the inspiration around us that allows us to create something that not only affirms but builds self love in all of the children in our lives.

—By Lauren Clarke-Mason

These poems were sent in by BPS teachers! Congratulations writers! Keep Writing!

Black & Brown Girls: An Introduction by Shirley Jones-Luke

We Black & Brown girls bruise our legs,
purple spots
as we shriek and yell - we embrace
life like a bunch of flowers - petals
on a breeze - blowing wishes into the air

Black & Brown girls lay in fields - rubbing
the grass with our feet - counting clouds
as we think about yesterday, today &
tomorrow, not worrying about clocks

Black & Brown girls love soccer &
reading -
throw curve balls & knuckle balls, hit
the bookstores in search of heroines
that look like us

Black & Brown girls babysit
their younger siblings, help with the
cleaning, learn from fathers
how to change a tire

Black & Brown girls visit
their grandparents, bake
cookies & listen to stories
about a different time

Black & Brown girls build
snow forts & snowmen,
search the universe
for signs of themselves

Shirley Jones-Luke is a sixth grade English Language Arts teacher at the McCormack Middle School. Shirley is a poet and a writer. She lives in the Dorchester neighborhood of Boston. Shirley writes poetry and essays that center around culture, family, and society. Shirley finds time to write in the early hours of the morning when her family is still sleeping. She also writes in the late evenings after everyone has gone to bed. Shirley feels that writing is an important part of every content area. Students should be writing across the curriculum.

Students need to learn that their words give them power and the more they write the more they're heard in the world!

March 16th by Kara Stafford

The building loomed, a brick monstrosity
only thirty feet away
from my parked car. The outer world muffled, hushed
by tinted windows and the early hour of the day.

I didn't want to go in to school,
each step was slow and forced.
The tense, tight, twinge within my chest
matched my grimace.
(Or my Game Face, just coerced?)

“Exhale,” I almost said aloud
to keep my breathing going, calm.
Would this be...
where I caught the virus?
That door handle--contact with my palm?

Kara Stafford is a Chemistry/Environmental Science teacher at BLA and soccer coach.

“I used to write all the time and journal all the time but since I had a baby I haven't had time to have feelings. I have always written in journals and poems, sometimes something will happen like a song or being out in nature. That happened when I saw the call for submissions. I had this angst and had to get it out. My baby fell asleep for a solid hour and I had time to write. When I write by hand it's all over the paper and it is sketchy, all over the page. When I type I sometimes write parts of sentences as they come to me and then put them together later. I really feel like when it comes to making sense of things in both science and writing that making sense is the same. One thing I used with my 11th and 12th grade Chemistry students was the *Sketchnote Handbook* by Mike Rohde (Amazon \$22). I used this to teach students how to make thinking visible.”

“The most important thing is to throw your ideas out there and then later on move them around. Find the words that are the most efficient and don't be afraid to use different syntax.”

In closing by Anne Slater:

This spring, I have been hosting a livestream series on the writer's notebook. Each week both teachers and students have logged on and joined in to talk about the writer's notebook. I picked up my notebook again and tried to write a little every day. It hurt my hand so much. But when my pen started moving, ideas began to surface. We gathered, trapped in our screen boxes to talk about our memories and our stories.

In this strange time of isolation we are forced to slow down. It was different, and it felt good. Recently I found an old diary of mine from when I was twelve. It's a big lined diary called *The Days of My Life*.

3/17/77 - Today I got my ears pierced! They look great. It hurt a lot but most of the pain is fear.

11/21/77 - I've missed a lot of things lately but forgot to write. Things are bad and good. I was asked out twice by a boy but I couldn't go. Dad yells at me all the time. Wish I could get easy answers to all questions. Im in 6th grade and almost twelve.

2/12/78 - Today I got my period. I didn't feel anything. I hope no one finds out.

That's it. I stopped there. The rest is blank. I remember my mother's face when I told her. How she looked alarmed and sort of sad. And what she said. “It's too soon.” She is gone now and I can't tell her about the diary. I showed it to my daughter who is now twelve. How I wish I wrote more. Looking at all of those blank pages made me think of all I might have remembered and how those times shaped everything that came after.

Maybe today, because everything is different, time is different. We have the chance to look within and open a creative channel. Pick up a pen and jot down anything. Draw a sketch, tape in a headline, a flower petal, a snake skin, a facemask. Don't worry about showing it to anyone, turn off your internal editor, pry open your writer's lens and see what happens!

You Are Amazing!

By Joan Devlin, RTC Secretary

To all Active BTU Teachers and Paraprofessionals:

Members of the Retired Teacher Chapter expresses their awe and thanks to every teacher and paraprofessional who created lessons, made telephone calls, zoomed, typed, googled, explored every social media platform for creative ideas and the whereabouts of missing students. You managed to create new instruction techniques and explored new technologies to help students continue to learn despite this pandemic and the stay at home orders that kept schools closed, businesses shuttered, and burdened parents that work in essential jobs unable to stay home and monitor student progress.

You did all of this on a moment's notice with little help in finding resources that you would need to do this work. None of us know what we would do if we found ourselves in your circumstances. We thank each of you for all that you did. And we are thankful that it was not us!

Here Are Just a Few Words from Members Who Wrote Us Expressing their Thanks and Admiration

To my fellow educators:

Thank you for keeping active at your posts, even if your centers of operation are now your homes. You are to be commended for attending to the needs of your students and supplying them with the all vital instructions and resources needed to continue their education. In the days, weeks, and months to come, I'm sure they'll be grateful for the concern, attention, and dedicated efforts you are presenting to them at this time. The lessons they are learning are certain to last more than a lifetime. At the same time, I wish all of you well and that you will be kept safe from this coronavirus that is currently controlling our lives. As I believe firmly in the power of prayer, I'll keep all of you in mine. Please add me to yours.

– Dave Dingley

A retired high school English teacher (schools: Boston Tech, Dorchester High, and Madison Park TVHS)

Many thanks to all active teachers!
– Sandi Serkess

We retired teachers know full well that teaching is very hard no matter what the circumstances. But you folks have been delivered a task beyond and above what we have in the past had to endure. Coronavirus. This disease has upset the whole wide world, and although it affects all of us, you have had and will have to carry a heavy load. So let me thank you for all of us. You will remain true to your profession no matter what the burden. I know without a doubt that you will deliver to our students the very best education despite the difficulties of doing so. Thank you for that from me and from our whole society.

– Barbara John,
Retired Teacher

Working online with students is way more demanding than working in person. There are certain things that one misses when online – subtle body language cues that the student is ready to check out - bad online connections - difficulty hearing each other when there is crackling - the reciprocal nature of turn taking is lessened - it is harder to reward students with games that they can control - not having a trained adult partner on the other end. I'm finally hearing from teachers/practitioners who are expert at working online that goals have to be modified because there are some things you just cannot do. So, kudos to teachers for whom working online is mandatory, who feel the pressure of trying to achieve what they've achieved in the classroom when they had the student right in front of them and feeling as if they're supposed to be perfect in this new world of online learning. This is an evolving situation and everyone is learning as they go. I am sure the stress is huge. What I am sure of is that Boston has some incredibly dedicated, talented teachers. Shout out to you all.

Thanks,
Nancy Williams, SLP

Learning to Zoom

Meetings of the Executive Board moved to Zoom during the shutdown of the BTU offices. It didn't happen smoothly at first, but by May we became proficient. Motions were made seconded, discussed and passed.

We approved the recommendations of the scholarship and awarded three scholarships to the relatives of members of the RTC. The winners are: **Anne Gallivan**, Holliston High School; RTC member **Stephen Gallivan: Gabriel Gomez**, Boston Latin Academy; RTC members **Giuseppe and Janet Guarino: Autumn Johnson**, Brookline High School; RTC member Crystal Haynes. Congratulations to these three excellent recipients of the BTURTC scholarships.

While there has been no change in benefits to report, Delta Dental will provide a discount of one month's premium that will be divided among the plan members among the plan members. **Roz Avant**, RTC Vice Chair and the person in charge of our Delta Dental plan, is working on the calculations and we will have more information in the RTC bulletin.

Membership continues to grow and we currently have over 3200 members. If you are a teacher or paraprofessional that retired from the Boston Public Schools you are invited to join the Retired Teacher Chapter of the BTU. Membership in the RTC is not automatic. You fill out a membership form that you can get from the BTU office when it reopens. You can also get the form on-line at <http://btu.org/retirees>. In addition to the membership form, this section of the BTU website also provides information on the benefits of membership in the RTC. Dues are \$5 for teacher retirees and \$2.50 for Paraprofessional retirees per month deducted from your pension check.

We have lost many colleagues this year. We send sympathy cards to the families of deceased members and honor their memory by continuing to fight to better the lives of all of our retirees.

Most activities for the upcoming fall season are suspended. Travel opportunities are postponed until further notice. Hopefully we can resume trips in the spring.

While there will not be a fall luncheon this year; nor a Jazz Brunch in December, the Social Committee is making plans for the Spring Luncheon in May. We also plan to have a virtual business meeting in September. This meeting agenda and the instructions on how to participate in the meeting will be sent via the RTC e-bulletin in August. If you have not signed up with us for the RTC bulletins, please send Marilyn or Roz your personal email so that you will receive the latest information. We never give your personal email to anyone but us!

The Legislative Committee continued to pursue an increase in the annual COLA as well as the COLA base. Committee members attended virtual meetings of the Boston Retirement Board. The Board voted not to raise the COLA base from the current base of \$14,000 to \$15,000. However, the board did vote a 3% annual increase to the current base.

We hope that you are doing well, following the CDC guideline and keeping safe. Keep in touch with your colleagues and friends. Reach out to family members and to us. Let us know how you are faring in these difficult times. Stay safe and be well.

You can continue to call the RTC office and leave messages for Marilyn and Roz or email them at mmarion@btu.org and ravant@btu.org.

– Joan Devlin, RTC Secretary

The COLA – What's Happening?

By Sandra M. Carle and Lawrence J. Connolly, Legislative Co-Chairs

As you probably know, we have been meeting with City and Retirement Board officials for the past few years in an attempt to improve the COLA for retirees. From 1997 to 2012 there had been absolutely no increase in the COLA base for any public retiree in Massachusetts. The Mayor and his Chief Financial Officer wanted us to “think outside the box” but the only proposals were coming from the RTC Legislative Committee. Finally, in a meeting with city and retirement officials there was an agreement that the Boston Retirement Board would fund an actuarial study of our proposal.

We found that to be somewhat promising as it was a departure from their position the pension systems must achieve full funding first (scheduled for 2025) and they were putting their money up for the actuarial study. As of this article the study has not yet been completed.

Considerable credit for keeping the City's feet to the fire goes to the Legisla-

tive Committee Secretary, Janey Frank. She is tenacious and regularly peppers officials including the Mayor with her “..just a friendly reminder, but...” e-mails to keep everyone on task.

Those of us who worked in the last half of the twentieth century received a pension that bears no resemblance to more recent retirees. Since the pension is based on years past alary, if your salary was low, your pension was low. Salaries in the sixties, seventies, eighties, and ninetens were poor as the City was poor and could not afford to properly compensate its employees. Thankfully for today's employees the city's financial position is much better and salaries are much improved and therefore so are recent pensions. Boston in the last half of the twentieth century was nearly bankrupt with the flight of industry and residents as well as busing, the Tregor Tax decision and Proposition 2½ depleting the city treasury.

To correct the shortcomings of the pension system we made two proposals. The first would try to compensate for the poor pensions of those who retired in the

last half of the twentieth century and the early years of the twentieth-first by making a midterm adjustment to their pension grant after 15 years of retirement. Regardless of what option you chose, the amount of adjustment would be based on what you would have received had you chosen Option A.

- If your Option A grant at retirement was \$59,999.99 or less, your grant would increase by 20% going forward. Accumulated COLA's would be added to it.
 - If your Option A grant would be \$60,000.00 to \$69,999.99 the increase would be 15% plus accumulated COLA's.
 - If your Option A grant would be \$70,000.00 to \$79,999.99 the increase would be 10% plus accumulated COLA's.
 - If your Option A grant would be \$80,000.00 to \$89,999.99 the increase would be 5% plus accumulated COLA's.
 - No increase would be given for \$90,000.00 and above.
- The second proposal would benefit

all retirees regardless of pension amount. Its purpose is to make sure all pensions make a reasonable adjustment for inflation so we don't go for another fifteen years again with no increase in the COLA base. It would increase the COLA base by \$1,000 every two years for the next ten years. At that point the COLA would be examined with a thought to annual increase of \$1,000 in the base to keep pace with inflation.

Again, we stress this is a work in progress and has many hurdles to jump at city and state levels. We do believe it has traction as one of the largest retirees lobbying group in the state is now also talking about an enhanced pension benefit after a number of years in retirement as part of their legislative agenda. As the saying goes, imitation is the greatest form of flattery! We have also received support in our meetings with city councilors, legislators, the president of Massachusetts AFL-CIO, the president of AFTMA, and the BTU leadership.

Stay tuned as we'll need your concerted support going forward. We cannot do this alone!

BTU Secretary-Treasurer's Report Betsy Drinan

Dear Union Member,

The CPA firm of Joseph B. Cohan and Associates has examined the balance sheet of the Boston Teachers Union and the related statement of revenues, expenses, and fund balances for the fiscal year ending August 31, 2019. The audit was conducted in accordance with the auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America. Those standards require that the auditors plan and perform the audits to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free of material misstatements. The audit gives a financial position of the Boston Teachers Union at August 31, 2019, the changes in its net assets and its cash flows for the year. This statement is reprinted below to explain in detail your Union's financial status.

Respectfully submitted,
Betsy Drinan
Secretary-Treasurer, Boston Teachers Union

Independent Auditor's Report

We have audited the accompanying financial statements of Boston Teachers Union (the Union) (a nonprofit organization), which comprise the statements of financial position as of August 31, 2019 and 2018, and the related statements of activities and cash flows for the years then ended, and the related notes to the financial statements.

Management's Responsibility for the Financial Statements

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

Auditor's Responsibility

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audits. We conducted our audits in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audits to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgment, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the entity's preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control. Accordingly, we express no such opinion. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial statements.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

Opinion

In our opinion, the financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of Boston Teachers Union as of August 31, 2019 and 2018, and the changes in its net assets and its cash flows for the years then ended in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

Other Matter

Our audit was conducted for the purpose of forming an opinion on the financial statements as a whole. The schedules of expenses on pages 11 and 12 are presented for purposes of additional analysis and are not a required part of the financial statements. Such information is the responsibility of management and was derived from and relates directly to the underlying accounting and other records used to prepare the financial statements. The information has been subjected to the auditing procedures applied in the audit of the financial statements and certain additional procedures, including comparing and reconciling such information directly to the underlying accounting and other records used to prepare the financial statements or to the financial statements themselves, and other additional procedures in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America. In our opinion, the information is fairly stated in all material respects in relation to the financial statements as a whole.

— Joseph B. Cohan & Associates,
Norwood, Massachusetts, May 14, 2020

BOSTON TEACHERS UNION STATEMENTS OF FINANCIAL POSITION AUGUST 31, 2019 AND 2018		
	2019	2018
ASSETS		
CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash	\$ 6,758,308	\$ 5,532,051
Investments (Notes 2, 3 and 4)	5,283,262	5,086,675
Accounts Receivable	307,430	311,115
Prepaid Expenses	14,178	19,256
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	12,363,178	10,949,097
PROPERTY AND EQUIPMENT (NOTE 1)		
Furniture, Fixtures & Equipment	705,720	705,720
Leasehold Improvements	300,470	300,470
	1,006,190	1,006,190
Less - Accumulated Depreciation and Amortization	892,925	856,944
	113,265	149,246
TOTAL ASSETS	\$ 12,476,443	\$ 11,098,343
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Accounts Payable	\$ 569,863	\$ 401,210
Legal Settlement Payable (Notes 10 and 12)	—	70,699
	589,863	401,210
TOTAL NET ASSETS (Note 1)	11,889,696	10,626,434
Unrestricted	11,889,696	10,626,434
Temporarily Restricted	16,884	—
TOTAL NET ASSETS	\$ 11,906,580	\$ 10,626,434
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	\$ 12,476,443	\$ 11,098,343

BOSTON TEACHERS UNION STATEMENTS OF ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEARS ENDED AUGUST 31, 2019 AND 2018		
	2019	2018
UNRESTRICTED NET ASSETS		
SUPPORT		
Union Dues	\$ 9,002,721	\$ 8,998,675
Interest	5,659	4,934
Dividend Income (Note 2)	104,966	145,029
Long Term Capital Gain Distribution	130,248	—
Unrealized (Loss) on Investments (Note 2)	(38,626)	(37,180)
Donation (Note 9)	—	5,000
AFT Salary Assistance Program	21,600	21,600
	9,226,568	9,138,058
EXPENSES (Schedule I)	7,963,306	8,348,929
INCREASE IN UNRESTRICTED NET ASSETS	789,129	789,129
TEMPORARILY RESTRICTED NET ASSETS		
SUPPORT		
AFT National Board Certification Grant (Note 11)	\$ 20,865	\$ —
EXPENSES	3,981	—
AFT National Board Certification Stipends (Note 11)	3,981	—
INCREASE IN TEMPORARILY RESTRICTED NET ASSETS	16,884	—
NET ASSETS AT BEGINNING OF YEAR	10,626,434	9,837,305
NET ASSETS AT END OF YEAR	\$ 11,906,580	\$ 10,626,434

BOSTON TEACHERS UNION STATEMENTS OF CASH FLOWS FOR THE YEARS ENDED AUGUST 31, 2019 AND 2018		
	2019	2018
CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES		
Increase in Net Assets	\$ 1,280,146	\$ 789,129
Adjustments to Reconcile Increase in Net Assets to Net Cash Provided by Operating Activities		
Depreciation	35,982	42,796
Unrealized Loss on Investments	38,626	37,180
Increase (Decrease) In Accounts Receivable	3,685	(270,128)
Prepaid Expenses	(11,806)	59,565
(Increase) Decrease In Accounts Payable	168,653	(312,903)
AFT National Board Certification Grant	16,884	—
Legal Settlement Payable	(70,699)	70,699
NET CASH FLOWS PROVIDED BY OPERATING ACTIVITIES	1,461,471	416,338
CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES		
Acquisition of Investments	(235,314)	(145,029)
Acquisition of Property and Equipment	—	(9,124)
NET CASH FLOWS USED BY INVESTING ACTIVITIES	(235,214)	(154,153)
NET INCREASE IN CASH	1,226,257	262,185
CASH, BEGINNING	5,532,051	5,269,866
CASH, ENDING	\$ 6,758,308	\$ 5,532,051

SCHEDULE I BOSTON TEACHERS UNION STATEMENTS OF EXPENSES FOR THE YEARS ENDED AUGUST 31, 2019 AND 2018		
	2019	2018
Advertising	5,119	22,971
Arbitration Fees	61,080	64,424
Audit	36,510	35,505
Communications	87,669	77,051
Computer	76,313	124,189
Conferences, Conventions and Meetings	387,497	380,136
Depreciation	35,982	42,796
Donations	72,677	82,380
Election	32,370	—
Expense Reimbursements		
President	5,427	6,179
Executive Vice-President	5,684	5,606
Secretary/Treasurer	4,852	4,996
Field Representatives & Director of Organization	28,800	31,550
Political Analyst	4,800	4,800
Committees and Others	6,174	5,409
Insurance		
Group Health	276,405	283,443
Teachers' Liability	34,306	36,073
General	17,793	18,340
Retired Teachers' Benefits	45,261	42,281
Legal		
General Union Issues	831,930	674,649
Settlements	—	80,699
Teacher Assault Cases	5,700	1,550
Transcripts and Other Costs	47,100	49,615
Mailing and Machine Room	51,369	57,385
Office	44,569	41,048
Payroll Service	27,272	22,468
Payroll Taxes	148,315	191,543
Per Capita Payments		
American Federation of Teachers	1,424,888	1,476,839
AFT Massachusetts	1,297,991	1,350,765
State Labor Council AFL-CIO	88,598	90,374
Greater Boston Labor Council	24,260	21,460
Postage and Delivery	64,210	52,891
Printing and Bulletins	108,956	108,752
Professional Fees	3,561	11,790
Rent		
Conference Rooms and Meeting Hall	23,793	23,070
Office	118,019	114,203
Retirement Plan Contribution	158,325	181,024
Salaries		
President	173,523	285,119
Executive Vice President	164,847	206,314
Secretary/Treasurer	156,171	187,427
Director of Organization	65,268	147,442
Director of Professional Learning	76,571	57,386
Field Representative - Elementary	147,495	156,325
Field Representative - Secondary	152,161	151,659
Field Representative - Paraprofessionals	147,495	166,904
Political Analyst	147,495	171,959
Community Liaison Representative	12,000	27,022
Retired Teachers Coordinator	14,749	15,007
Assistant Retired Teachers Coordinator	11,062	11,264
Facilitators	29,228	52,483
Building Representatives	134,800	133,500
Negotiations	49,435	6,459
Editor	29,799	40,237
Office	389,007	379,522
Organizers	189,822	156,095
Member Professional Development	438	—
Professional Learning	—	5,000
Resumé Consultation	135	—
Homework Helpers	63,104	56,405
Teacher Inquiry Project	362	1,600
Telephone Workers	1,780	5,887
Scholarships	66,000	57,000
Staff Tuition Reimbursement	1,000	—
Subscriptions	3,405	3,815
Telephone	42,279	48,844
	\$ 7,963,306	\$ 8,348,929

**BOSTON TEACHERS UNION
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AUGUST 31, 2019 AND 2018**

**1. Summary of Significant Accounting Policies
Organization and Nature of Activities**

Boston Teachers Union (the Union) is a nonprofit labor union organized, funded and managed by current and retired school teachers and paraprofessionals working in the Boston area. Support is primarily derived from union member dues.

Method Of Accounting

The financial statements of Boston Teachers Union have been prepared on the accrual method of accounting.

Financial Statement Preparation

The Union has presented its financial statements in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles for nonprofit organizations. Under this guidance, the Union is required to report information regarding financial position and activities according to three classes of net assets: unrestricted net assets, temporarily restricted net assets, and permanently restricted net assets. In addition, the Union is required to present a statement of cash flows.

Contributions and Grants

Contributions received are recorded as unrestricted, temporarily restricted, or permanently restricted support depending on the existence and/or nature of any donor restrictions. For the fiscal year ended August 31, 2019, the Union received a National Board Certification grant from the American Federation of Teachers in the amount of \$20,865 to provide professional facilitator training and support to the Union. Expenses related to this grant incurred in the fiscal year ended August 31, 2019 totaled \$3,981, resulting in temporarily restricted net assets of \$16,884. For the fiscal year ended August 31, 2018, the Union did not receive any contributions with donor-imposed restrictions that would result in temporarily or permanently restricted net assets.

Property and Equipment and Depreciation

The Union's policy is to capitalize tangible personal property with an estimated life of three or more years. Property and equipment are recorded at cost. Depreciation is provided on the straight-line method over the estimated useful lives of the assets.

Income Tax

The Union is a nonprofit organization that is exempt from both federal and state income taxes under Section 501(c) (5) of the Internal Revenue Code.

Accounting standards provide detailed guidance for the financial statement recognition, measurement and disclosure of uncertain tax positions recognized in an organization's financial statements. Under these accounting standards, the Union is required to recognize the financial statement impact of a tax position when it is more likely than not that the position will not be sustained upon examination. Management has evaluated its significant tax positions against the criteria established by these accounting standards and believes there are no such tax positions requiring accounting recognition.

The Union's Form 990, Return of Organization Exempt from Income Tax, for the years ending August 31, 2017, 2018 and 2019 are subject to examination by the IRS, generally for three years after they were filed.

Use of Estimates

The preparation of financial statements in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amounts of assets and liabilities and disclosure of contingent assets and liabilities at the date of the financial statements and the reported amounts of revenues and expenses during the reporting period. Actual results could differ from those estimates.

2. Investments

The Union held \$5,283,262 and \$5,086,675 at August 31, 2019 and 2018, respectively, in mutual funds invested in bonds that are obligations of the U.S. government, its agencies and instrumentalities, and are backed by the full faith and credit of the United States and have short to long term maturities through Putnam Investments. The fair market value of the investments at August 31, 2019 and 2018 was \$5,283,262 and 5,086,675, respectively. The following schedule summarizes the investment return and their classification in the statement of activities for the years ended August 31, 2019 and 2018:

	2019	2018
Dividend Income	\$ 145,029	\$ 145,029
Long Term Capital Gain Distribution	130,248	-
Net Unrealized Loss	<u>(38,626)</u>	<u>(37,180)</u>
TOTAL INVESTMENT RETURN	\$ 196,588	\$ 107,849

3. Fair Value Measurements

Accounting standards define fair value as the price that the Union would receive upon selling an investment in a timely transaction to an independent buyer in the principal or most advantageous market of the investment and provides a framework for measuring fair value. That framework provides a fair value hierarchy that prioritizes the inputs to valuation techniques used to measure fair value. The hierarchy gives the highest priority to unadjusted quoted prices in active markets for identical assets or liabilities (level 1 measurements) and the lowest priority to unobservable inputs (level 3 measurements). Inputs may be observable or unobservable. Observable inputs are inputs that reflect the assumptions market participants would use in pricing the asset or liability developed based on market data obtained from sources independent of the reporting entity. Unobservable inputs are inputs that reflect the reporting entity's own assumptions about the assumptions market participants would use in pricing the assets or liability developed based on the best information available in the circumstances.

The three levels of the fair value hierarchy are described below:

Basis of Fair Value Measurement:

- Level 1 Unadjusted quoted market prices in active markets for identical assets or liabilities at the reporting date.
- Level 2 Observable inputs other than Level 1 unadjusted quoted market prices, such as quoted market prices for similar assets or liabilities in active markets, quoted prices for identical or similar assets or liabilities that are not active, and inputs other than quoted prices that are observable or corroborated by observable market data.
- Level 3 Unobservable inputs that are supported by little or no market activity.

A financial instrument's level within the fair value hierarchy is based on the lowest level of any input that is significant to the fair value measurement.

Following is a description of the valuation methodologies used for assets measured at fair value. There have been no changes in the methodologies used at August 31, 2018 and 2017.

Putnam Mortgage Securities - A: Valued based on yields currently available on comparable securities of issuers with similar credit ratings.

Putnam Dynamic Asset Conservative Fund - A: Valued based on yields currently available on comparable securities of issuers with similar credit ratings.

The following tables present by level, within the fair value hierarchy, the Union's investment assets at fair value, as of August 31, 2019 and 2016. Investment assets are classified in their entirety based upon the lowest level of input that is significant to the fair value measurement.

Assets at Fair Value as of August 31, 2019

Description	Fair Value	Quoted Prices in Active Market for Identical Assets (Level 1)
Dynamic Asset Allocation Conservative Fund - A	\$ 5,283,262	\$ 5,283,262

Assets at Fair Value as of August 31, 2018

Description	Fair Value	Quoted Prices in Active Market for Identical Assets (Level 1)
Dynamic Asset Allocation Conservative Fund - A	\$ 5,086,675	\$ 5,086,675

4. Risks and Uncertainties

The Union invests in various investment securities. Investment securities are exposed to various risks such as interest rate, market, and credit risks. Due to the level of risk associated with certain investment securities, it is at least reasonably possible that changes in the values of investment securities will occur in the near term and that such changes could materially affect the amounts reported in the statement of financial position.

5. Transactions with Related Entities

The Union rents office and conference room space from a related entity, B.T.U.H.W.F. Building Corp. on a tenant-at-will basis under the terms of a lease which ended September 1, 2005. The yearly base rent is adjusted annually on September 1st to correspond to the change in the "Consumer Price Index for all Urban Consumers for Boston, MA, All Items" during the twelve-month period which ended in the previous July. B.T.U.H.W.F. Building Corporation is responsible for all utilities, including water and sewer, and repairs to the rented space. Payments to B.T.U.H.W.F. Building Corporation totaled \$118,019 and \$114,173, respectively, for the years ended August 31, 2019 and 2018.

In addition, the Boston Teachers Union pays \$15 per day for conference room set-up fees to B.T.U.H.W.F. Building Corp under an agreement which ended June 30, 2007. As of February 11, 2019, the agreement has not been modified and continues under the initial terms. Fees paid under this agreement for the fiscal year ended August 31, 2019 and 2018 totaled \$30.

6. Retired Teachers' Benefits

Effective July 31, 1987, dues paid to the Union by retired teachers and retired paraprofessionals for two consecutive years qualify them to participate in eye care benefits. Eyeglasses will be provided not more frequently than once in any 24-month period. Full details of benefits and limitations are described in "Guidelines for Retirees Eyeglass Benefit."

7. Retirement Plan Contribution

The employees of the Union participate in a defined contribution retirement plan. The Union's contributions are equal to 10% of the annual salary of participating employees plus administration fees. The Union's contributions to the plan totaled \$158,325 and \$181,024 respectively, for the years ended August 31, 2019 and 2018.

8. Advertising

Advertising costs are charged to expense when incurred. Advertising expense was \$5,119 and \$22,971 for the years ended August 31, 2019 and 2018, respectively.

9. Donation

In June 2018, the Union received a \$5,000.00 donation from a member to support the Union's 2019 summer organizer internship.

10. Legal Reimbursements/Settlements

The Union settled legal cases with two former Union members who charged the Union with breaching its duty of fair representation at the Massachusetts Department of Labor Relations ("DLR"). The Union denied these allegations and vigorously contested them. One case was settled in mediation in May 2018 for \$10,000. The other case was settled in March 2018, after several years of legal proceedings, with the DLR issuing a charge of prohibited practice against the Union, awarding the former Union member back pay and benefits in an amount estimated to be \$70,699. During the fiscal year ended August 31, 2019, the Union received insurance reimbursements of \$61,900 for these two cases.

During the year ended August 31, 2019, the Union received \$16,500 in legal fee reimbursements from the City of Boston from cases the Union brought against the City in representation of Union members.

11. AFT National Board Certification Grant

In July 2019, the Union received a National Certification grant from the American Federation of Teachers in the amount of \$20,865 to provide professional facilitator training and support to the Union. Expenses related to the grant incurred in the fiscal year ended August 31, 2019 totaled \$3,981.

12. Evaluation of Subsequent Events

The Union has evaluated subsequent events through May 14, 2020, the date which the financial statements were available to be issued. On March 17, 2020, the Governor of Massachusetts closed all public schools in Massachusetts as a result of the outbreak of the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19). Union members are working remotely to teach students, and as of the date of the Independent Auditor's Report, the Union has not experienced, and does not anticipate any near-term financial impact as a result of COVID-19.

As per a legal representation letter dated May 14, 2020, in response to the independent auditor's inquiry as to whether there were any pending or threatened litigation, claims and assessments against the Union, the Union's legal counsel indicated that the plaintiff in one of the legal cases referenced in Note 10 above has declined the \$70,699 settlement awarded by the Massachusetts Department of Labor Relations ("DLR"), but negotiated the Union's check in February, 2019. The plaintiff filed an untimely notice of appeal on February, 28, 2019, and the DLR dismissed that appeal on March 28, 2019. From that ruling, the plaintiff files an appeal and the case has been docketed in the Appeals Court.

The case has been fully briefed and taken under advisement. As of the date of the Independent Auditor's Report, the Union is awaiting the decision of the Appeals Court, which will address only the issue of whether the Commonwealth Employment Relations Board ("CERB") committed legal error in dismissing the plaintiffs appeal for untimeliness. The Union's legal counsel does not expect the Appeals Court to rule in favor of the plaintiff as the courts lack the authority to enlarge statutory deadlines.

The same plaintiff filed two additional suits against the Union in the Norfolk Suffolk Superior Court; one on December 17, 2018, and the other on July 27, 2019, both reprising essentially the same claims as litigated against the Union in the DLR action. The first suit was dismissed on August 5, 2019. The second suit has never been served on the Union as required by law and the Union's legal counsel expects to be able to move to dismiss this claim, once the Massachusetts courts, now closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, reopen. The Union's legal counsel does not believe it increases the Union's liability beyond the original judgment.

BTU Building Reps of the Year

On behalf of the BTU, I would like to thank all of our elected Building Reps. We appreciate all that you do on behalf of our members. We realize the challenges that come with the position and are grateful for your commitment to representing your union for the members at your work site. So many of our Building Reps are deserving of the Building Rep of the Year award. However, each year we recognize two top deserving BReps for each level of education, Secondary, Elementary and Paraprofessional. Congratulations to all!

Secondary Education

K-8/Middle School is ELA/SPED teacher, Jacqueline Sedgewick of the Ohrenberger School has been an ELA and Special Education teacher in the BPS for almost 20 years and a BTU Representative at the Ohrenberger for 10 years. A former member of the BTU Collective Bargaining Committee, she has also been a SSC and ILT member, co-chair of the faculty senate, has spearheaded the school's COPE drive and has been the ELA Teacher Leader for 8 years there. Jackie has organized numerous school walk-ins, has attended Investigatory Meetings with colleagues, has been the teacher representative on the grade 6 roll-out committee at the Ohrenberger and on the school's inclusion expansion negotiations as well. She diligently has worked at further communication and feedback within the school, providing staff check-ins and updates as to what's happening at BTU membership meetings helping to build a strong positive BTU membership voice within the building.

A serious-minded educator, she is very organized, inclusive and a no-nonsense individual with very high standards for herself and those around her. She works towards promoting a positive alliance with BTU members, parents and the Community Center concerning on-going issues to address a constructive school community, culture and learning environment. She listens to teachers' concerns, questions, and feedback to develop a collective, solutions orientated collaboration of ideas along with her other BTU Rep colleagues and with the BTU as a whole. Focusing on how to make the Ohrenberger's working conditions better, especially during the COVID19 remote-learning service delivery, she solicited further understanding on improved communication and the MOU to make sure the teachers were on-board and that their concerns and some of their proposed solutions were communicated to the Union as a whole.

Facilities Management Vocational teacher, Perino Watson of Madison Park Technical Vocational High School. He been a BTU Building Representative for over 13 years and has worked in the vocational industry for over 25 years in carpentry, painting and property management. He serves on the MPTVH SSC personnel subcommittee, has been a New Teacher Developer/mentor teacher at Madison for new vocational instructors, has organized and facilitated numerous BTU stand-outs and walk-ins, has been a member of the Instructional Coaching Committee and faculty senate.

Madison Park High has gone through many iterations over the last decade or so. Perino has been working there when it was a traditional vocational high school, an Innovation school, and now a Turn Around School, all with their own version of the contract/Election to Work Agreement or Turn Around Agreement as the staff's working conditions. He's been a part of innumerable focus groups, an Intervention Team, worked with DESE groups and NEASC committees among others in attempts to improve teaching and learning and the vocational focus of MPTVHS. Never daunted, always positive with a pragmatic approach, Perino perseveres.

Strong in his field and as a teacher, Perino endeavors to assist in facilitating the maximum level of understanding between people in any environment he is a part of – whether that be between students, fellow BTU members and/or with administration. A strong individual who walks in his own power, Perino understatedly is able to effectively listen, synthesize, and strategize around wide-ranging issues and situations resulting in very collaborative outcomes through a mediation-type approach. He takes pride in the Career Champion Network where he and a cohort of his peers worked on developing career exploration & skills development, living skills development, Social/Emotional Learning, and other skills required for postsecondary success utilizing standards aligning with CTE standards used in vocational programs statewide. It is a Green Technology based program making MPTVHS a more environmentally conscious school as well. It's all about the kids with Mr. Watson – the teachers' working conditions are the student's learning conditions which is never more true in the vocational/academic milieu of the home of the Cardinals, Madison Park High.

– By **Caren Carew, BTU Secondary Education Field Representative**

Elementary Education

Laura Delgado-Clemons (Condon K8), an ESL teacher, has been a BRep for several years. Laura was a persistent advocate for the rights of all the educators at the Condon K8 this year. Several issues related to educators' working conditions were questioned by the faculty during the year. Laura was proactive in contacting us at the union to advocate for Condon BTU members. Working with the BTU, grievances were filed on behalf of the impacted educators. Laura stayed the course and participated in all the stages of the grievance process. If it were not for her diligence and willingness the grievances would not have been successful. As part of the grievance process, Laura effectively organized the Condon staff around the issues that were negatively impacting educators' working conditions. Thank you Laura and congratulations.

Torena Webb (Winthrop E.S.), a Grade 2 teacher has been a BTU BRep for several years. Torena has been a tireless advocate for the Winthrop School community this past year. She led a major organizing effort focused on the social and emotional wellbeing of the Winthrop School community. As part of that effort, Torena was instrumental in bringing BPS decision makers to the table alongside of Winthrop educators. The efforts were focused on changing an unhealthy culture at the Winthrop that was impacting educators working conditions and student achievement. Thank you Torena and congratulations!

– By **Michael McLaughlin, BTU Elementary Education Field Representative**

Paraprofessional

Tatiana Hollins has been a para since 2017 and building rep since 2018.

She is always there to assist her colleagues with any issue that arises.

One of the things I notice most about her is the way she always follows up for her colleagues to make sure that their issues have been answered or if they need assistance. Tatiana, once being a student of BPS, understands the schools in every way.

She is truly supportive for her school and school community.

Thank you for your commitment and hard work.

Bianca Pierre had been a para for five years and building rep and member organizer for the last two years.

The school she was assigned to this past year when though many changes for upcoming school year, Bianca ensured her colleagues were well informed and knew their rights before the changes occur.

Even though she herself was also facing the same changes to her position.

She advocates for many different committees. She stands up for things she believes in.

Thank you for your commitment and hard work.

– By **Colleen Hart, BTU Paraprofessional/Substitute Teacher Field Representative**

BTU Celebrate! Building Reps of the Year

Laura Delgado-Clemons
Torena Webb
Bianca Pierre
Tatiana Hollins
Perino Watson
Jacquelyne Sedgewick



BTU Black Caucus recognizes

Adrienne Washington
for her long-standing support



BTU Dual Language Committee recognizes

Danissa López,
for her commitment to strengthening dual language programs



BTU Black Lives Matter at School Planning team recognizes

Joel Richards
for outstanding leadership!



BTU Haitian Educators Committee recognizes

Bianca Pierre & Josette Teneus
for consistency and commitment throughout the year



BTU Educators for Social Justice recognizes

Molly McKay Bryson & Jukurious Davis "JD"
for centering students and moving the work forward



BTU Celebrate! Organizers of the Year

Katina McClain
Lena Papagiannis + Nora Paul-Schultz (aka Lenora)



BTU Ethnic Studies Now! Committee recognizes

Amrita Dani
for visionary community-building



BTU Inclusion Done Right recognizes

Ernsie Noel
for her ability to showcase what Inclusion Done Right looks like

