Preparing For A School Year Like No Other!

Typically, each fall, we begin the new school year with much anticipation, hope and expectation. We eagerly prepare our classrooms and look forward to meeting new students and a fresh start. 2020, however, has brought unprecedented challenges and the usual excitement that a new school year brings has been filled with strife and anxiety of the unknown from fears stemming from a pandemic that we haven’t seen since the 1918 flu outbreak.

We have been working nonstop since schools closed in March to advocate and best prepare for what we knew was coming — a fall restart and school year like no other. Since March we have been working on a memorandum of agreement (MOU) for last spring and shortly after began advocating to BPS for preparations for the fall. Unfortunately, the district did not begin conversations with us about a fall restart in earnest until mid to late July. This left a short window of time for BPS to prepare and plan for the fall.

First, we advocated for a Reopening Task Force, with multiple subcommittees that would share ideas and solutions ranging from academics to social emotional wellness, technology to facilities. The task force was almost cancelled, before BPS finally released its “hopscotch” plan, with no input into any drafts or task force input. It would take much advocacy, activism, and action, to bring us where we are today in late August.

An action team, led by BTU nurses quickly planned a “sit-In” at City Hall on July 28. Over a hundred members and allies joined the nurses as they demanded a “seat at the table,” based on Shirley Chisholm’s famous quote: “if you don’t have a seat at the table, bring a fold- ing chair.” School bus drivers and nurses from the Massachusetts Nurses Association joined us as did parents, students and BTU endorsed candidates Robbie Goldsten—a medical doctor—and Brandey Fluker-Oakley, a former teacher herself.

BTU members continued our advocacy by testifying at school committee hearings and city council hearings, and by making phone calls, writing emails and showing concerns about the district’s reopening plans. BTU educators also wrote letters to the editor, submitted editorials and were regularly connected to media outlets looking to hear our perspectives. We asked our members to speak up and speak out in a unified voice, and we continued to do so through a week of action culminating in a car caravan and rally ending at City Hall with hundreds of members, filling the parking lot of Madison Park and circling the BPS headquarters before heading to circle City Hall.

We joined hundreds of educators from across the state the next week for another car caravan—this time circling the State House as hundreds more educators joined us in a socially distant “chain” to show our solidarity amongst MTA, AFT-MA and BTU educators. Our message was simple: we are all fighting for a safe, healthy and equitable restart, we are all in this together.

Meanwhile, our collective bargaining committee (CBC) was hard at work putting together its own proposal, calling for a remote start and a phased in approach to a school restart. Our negotiating team was meeting regularly and working with our 70 CBC members to also create proposals for a school restart timeline, safe building facilities expectations, and alternative work options proposal. Negotiations continue and there is still much work to be done, but on August 21, we were able to join the mayor and superintendent at a press conference to finally announce a remote start to the new school year. It wasn’t everything we wanted, but it was an overdue decision and major concession achieved.

It is only through our collective action, the demonstration of our unity, strength and purpose that we have been able to make progress since the “hopscotch” plan was revealed. Since then, we were able to win a delay in the start of the school year so that educators had time to get professional development and training in safety and health protocols. We won the remote smart and increased investment in facilities upgrades. We also were able to win voluntary in-person PED, instead of everyone being forced to report to empty school buildings with no safety assurances for the first week of school.

We will need to continue to show our unity, strength and collective power in the coming weeks, because while we are winning short term battles, there are many more still to come. We are continuing to advocate and fight for alternative work options, voluntary in-person teaching, safe and healthy working conditions, remote professional development and teaching, as well as much more. It will take all of us fighting together, advocate and speaking up in order to achieve our goals — for our students, our educators and our community.

The good news is, that despite the obstacles, challenges and unprecedented difficulties that we are up against this year, we have the most brilliant, hardworking and committed educators in the Commonwealth and we have each other, as members of the Boston Teachers Union. As Assata Shakur said, “It is our duty to win. We must love each other and support each other. We have nothing to lose but our chains.” We must stand united as we confront the challenges ahead.

While this year may be unlike any other, we must fight, we must win, and we must be free to do what we know is best, lift our voices and fight for what is right. We can do this, because our students and families are counting on us, and we are in this together and we are better together. Our solidarity in action and purpose is what makes us a strong union. And while the school year is just beginning, I am already BTU proud of all of the incredible BTU educators and member-leaders who led us in the fights over the summer and will continue to lead us into the fall.

Jessica J. Tang
BTU President
The Boston Teachers Union is the exclusive collective bargaining agent for the school system’s 7,000 teachers, other non-administrative, professional employees, paraprofessionals, and substitute teachers. We also represent 3,500+ retirees.

What is the Leadership Structure of the BTU?

All policy is set by the membership at its regularly scheduled monthly membership meetings on the second Wednesday of each month at 4:00 pm (refreshments and social) at union headquarters. The actual meeting starts at 4:30 pm. All members are welcome to attend. (Subject to change with notice because of scheduling problems.)

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

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

Big Idea: DO NOT Sign a “Resolution Form” For Your Class Size Grievance Without Discussing It With the Union Office!

I filed a class size grievance and the district asked for a resolution form.

There are two arbitration decisions on this issue. The calculations are different for elementary and secondary teachers, but in every case, teachers are owed significantly more than $1,500 per student, and may be many thousands of dollars.

What is happening with that grievance?

A All class size grievances filed from 2015-2018 were the subject of an arbitration in which the BTU prevailed. We are currently in the process of determining the correct compensation for those who filed a grievance in those school years. Grievances from 2018-2020 are the subject of ongoing litigation.
Health Insurance – When Do New Teachers Sign Up, When Can We Change Our Plans, What If Someone Gets Rehired or Returns From an Unpaid Leave?

“How Is It Done?”

Caren Carew

City of Boston Employees join health plans by contacting the Health Benefits and Insurance Division (Group Insurance) located on the 8th floor of Boston City Hall, telephone 633-4570. New hires have 30 calendar days from the time they are hired in order to sign up for health insurance. If an employee is a permanent or temporary teacher, who were laid off and then recalled/rehired, must contact Group Insurance within 30 days of being rehired. If an employee is not rehired, they will be enrolled to obtain insurance if needed.

“Open enrollment is the window of time when you can change your type of health insurance plan, or sign up for the first time if you’ve missed another deadline. This period is held annually for two weeks in the spring (April/May).

Some people assume that because they have their job, the insurance is automatically reinstated – this is not often the case. They don’t have to work and just...”

“...decides to let their insurance lapse and decides to let their insurance lapse after the time which deductions will be taken from their paychecks. Their insurance will take effect July 1 as a result of these deadlines are hard to meet and must be taken into consideration. If that is not the case, the faculty must still have a month’s advance notice of the coverage.

What is Filing a Class Size Grievance and How Do We Do It?

Data shows that the lower the class size the better it comes to meeting student’s needs. As soon as class size maxima have been exceeded in your school, the information must be communicated with the BTU directly on the bn.org website. Refer to the grade and type of class you teach (elementary, middle, high, regular, special, SPED, preschool, etc.) in the BTU/BPS (blue or burgundy version) contract book on pages 24, 25, 27 to determine the specific class. You should file a class size grievance once the number of children reporting to your class is in excess of the contractual maxima – it can’t just be the number on your class list, students must have physically attended school at least once and then not have been officially discharged.

Only in special cases are additional students able to remain in the class thus exceeding the information required by contract to make a class size grievance.

In elementary schools where there is only one regular education class in a grade level, the School Department may exceed the class maxima by one or two students. For one student over the class size maxima the teacher will receive $1,500 and for two students $3,000. The contract contains a similar provision for secondary schools where there is a singular regular education course offering, the School Department may exceed the class maxima by one or two students. For one student over the class size maxima the teacher will receive $300 per class and for two students $600 per class. For example, in a secondary school if there is only one physics class offered, this portion of the contract could kick in. This cannot be used if the class is divided and when it suits the administration except within the narrow parameters outlined above. Under no circumstances can this passage of the contract be challenged in the courts.

Who Determines When Parent Open-Houses are Held?

“The BTU contract states, ‘teachers will be available to attend two evening parent-teacher meetings during the school year. Such meetings shall be planned by the building administration in cooperation with the faculty senate and the parent council with one month’s advance notice.’ Such meetings shall not be scheduled to last over two hours and adequate security will be provided by the School Department.’”

Each school is strongly encouraged to have an active faculty senate. However, if that is not the case, the faculty must still have a month advance notice of the meetings.

Do I Have to Accept an Intern or Student Teacher?

“No, the contract clearly states, ‘Any teacher requesting an intern or a student teacher shall have at least one month’s advance notice, and may refuse.’”

If a teacher does become a cooperating teacher, the contract outlines the following: “Each cooperating teacher shall be given two days of leave with pay; without loss of benefits. Such days shall be taken as mutually agreed upon by the teacher and the administrative head during the last two weeks of the student-teacher training period. In cases of conflict, seniority shall prevail in the selection of days.”

This could be easily interpreted to be given by having the student teacher cover for the days so that it is a no cost item for the BPS. If a cooperating teacher does not arrange for the coverage while the student teacher is still in the classroom, the cooperating teacher loses the benefit. It is up to- it lose-it scenario.

“Do BTU Building Representatives Get Any Time During the School Day to Get Some of Their Union Work Done?”

“The contract states, ‘The Union Build-”

The deadline for submitting articles for the next issue of the Boston Union Teacher is September 15. Letters to the Editor should be sent to letters@btu.org and in good taste. All articles must be typewritten and include the author’s name and in good taste. Letters to the Editor should be sent to letters@btu.org and in good taste.

BOSTON UNION TEACHER

September, 2020

3
Empowerment Through School Site Council Shared Decision Making

By Careen Careen, BTU Secondary Field Representative

L’etude can continue to be out front in the area of education reform initiatives at each one of our schools through shared decision making as a part of our School Site Councils.

We are at a crucial juncture in public education where history will individually and collectively measure us by our willingness to stand in opposition to or to retreat to the shadows and be led by the wayside. When we are part of shared decision making we are part of the solution. Many initiatives that a school community wishes to implement in order to affect change at their school can be modified or ‘waived’ through our collective bargaining agreement. Much of what people seek to accomplish when providing a safe and nurturing environment or in district charter school can largely be achieved through the SCC waiver process. Let’s be clear, the active pursuit of these concerns now facing us, rather than allowing by tacit agreement educational reforms be done to us can do much to put into effect.

Shared decision making utilizing the School Site Council model works better with increased BTU members active involvement in the process as time is now in our favor to believe, to stand up, be counted, and to become involved.

Becoming an active member of the council of our school is hard. It is harder still not to act and to suffer the consequences of our voices, expertise, and concerns not being heard by the principal and administra- tion. Our everyday work requires us to focus on children – let’s make sure the decisions made through the School Site Councils are done just so through our active BTU involvement.

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

In each school, first there is an election to choose Building Representatives run each school’s governance. Once Building Reps are in place, they run elections prior to October 15th for BTU members to serve on the School Site Council. Shared Decision-Making Team. The BTU Building Representatives also run an election to select Faculty Senate members to the SSC. The SSC represents to these positions and the elected representatives, be they to the BTU, SSC, or Faculty Senate need to be supported by faculty that elected them in the first place, support their colleagues. We are all connected.

Cooperation of the SSC, as established in the contract between the Boston School Committee and the BTU, is to manage all matters that relate to the operation of the school including fiscal matters; operation setting; development of a QISP; design & scheduling of instructional program & curriculum; budgeting and fund raising; alignment with school’s academic goals; purchasing and disposition of discretionary funds; space utilization; hiring of new staff and 2nd and 3rd year provision- ary funds; space utilization; hiring of curriculum; budgeting and fund rais- ing; scheduling of instructional program & curriculum; budgeting and fund rais- ing; scheduling of instructional program.

The BTU Building Representatives also hold elections to choose Building Representatives also to serve on the School Site Council – new staff and 2nd and 3rd year provision-

The BTU Collective Bargaining Agreement, (CA) for the 2017-2018 School Year have 9-16 for specific information pertaining to School Site Councils.

It is expected that SCC will function by consensus or general agreement of its members. Consensus does not require that there be unanimous agreement but rather that everyone has the opportunity to comment on, understand, and can live with and is willing to implement the decision. Building Representatives run elections to choose Building Representatives run the process that School Site Councils use to make decisions and then share them with the community prior to each meeting date.

In BPS the SSC is an elected group of parents, teachers/BTU members, and the principal – it is only an advisory tool enabling the SSC to effectively make a decision in the interest of keeping the school community fully informed.

There is a joint Union/Management Steering Committee co-chaired by the BTU President and the BPS Superintendent to monitor SSC concerns such as “to deal with Councils that do not operate in compliance with the terms of the collective bargaining agreement or where Councils are frequently unable to reach decisions by consensus, or where the principal repeatedly exercises a veto over the votes of a majority of council mem- bers.” The contract explains that any SSC member may file a complaint with the Steering Committee concerning the operation of their SSC and that such complaints “...should not be serious breaches of the established guidelines for the implementation of SBM/SDM [School Based Manage- ment/Shared Decision Making] and that there has been a good faith effort at the school level to resolve these problems prior to filing the complaint.”

The BPS/BTU Joint Steering Commit- tee is composed of representatives from the BTU or the OE for further information. It’s time to step up and be a part of the solution! Each member of the school community is part of the team that either decides to be a part of the process or stay on the bench. All of us are accountable for our collective and individual par- ticipation, large and small, in the govern- ance and decisions made in our schools affecting our classrooms, our kids, and ourselves.

We deserve to be heard and respected. The first step is to believe our voice can make a difference. We believe it.

The ball is now in your court. Are you going to use it or lose it? Are we all dependent upon each other. We are all connected. Let’s support one another and our kids. We can make it better. Believe in BTU!”

It is with profound sadness that we write to inform you all that our former Vice President, Patrick Connolly passed away on Friday, July 17, 2020, unexpectedly of a stroke. He was surrounded by close family.

Patrick was a revered special education teacher who we all had the pleasure of working with for many years. He loved working with kids, and spent his career as an educator making long-lasting connections with his students, inspiring many lives, contributing to his union, and giving back to the community.

A private ceremony was held with his family. A celebration of life will be held at a later date.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made in Patrick’s name to the Special Olympics of Massachusetts.

Our thoughts are with Patrick’s family, friends, former colleagues and the countless students who he made an impact on throughout many years of teaching and public service through the Boston Public Schools and beyond. He will be sorely missed, but his impact and legacy will continue to live on.

In Remembrance – Patrick Connolly

Patrick Connolly

was a revered special education teacher who we all had the pleasure of working with for many years. He loved working with kids, and spent his career as an educator making long-lasting connections with his students, inspiring many lives, contributing to his union, and giving back to the community.

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Update on Retirement+/Teacher Accelerated Retirement Plan

There aren’t many topics that cause more of an uproar than the Retirement+/Teacher Accelerated Retirement Plan (TARP). TARP is an enhanced retirement option that was offered to teachers, school nurses, related service providers, etc. in Boston and throughout the state back in 2001.

To take advantage of TARP eligible members had to elect into the option by submitting the election form to the Boston Retirement System (then called State-Boston Retirement System) between the dates of January 1, 2001 and June 30, 2001.

The cost associated with TARP is 11% for the duration of participation in the program. The additive 2% on regular earnings over $30,000 ended as part of the cost. Members who opted into R+/TARP no longer see 7+2%, 8+2% or 9+2% as a deduction rate on their direct deposit receipts. They now see a retirement deduction rate of 11%. You must have a minimum of 5 years of enhanced contributions to gain the enhanced benefit in retirement. Members hired on/after July 1, 2001 are automatically enrolled in TARP and contribute 11%. Those who elected into TARP must perform 30 years of service with 20 of those years as a public school teacher in Massachusetts.

As a participant in TARP you can essentially accelerate your retirement date by approximately 3 years, depending on your years of service and age. For example, in the current system of Superannuation, at age 63 with 31 years of service one could retire with 66.2% of his/her 3 year average salary. Under the enhanced system of TARP at age 63 with 31 years of service one would retire with 80% of his/her 3 year average salary (see retirement percent chart below). The R+ Committee was formed in the spring of 2018. The goal of the committee still is to reopen the availability of R+/TARP to those hired on July 1, 2001. The reason being poor communication and confusion from supporting agencies at the time of the election, among others. Additionally, they and others believe they were misled by the way their retirement deduction was shown on their direct deposit receipts. The “+” as seen in the 7+2% or 8+2% and 9+2% led some to believe they were members of the R+ group. Another belief was that the deduction of 9+2% meant R+ because R+ is 11% and 9+2=11.

The R+ Committee hosted 2 meetings at the BTU. The meetings were advertised in the BTU e-Bulletin for several weeks. The committee has met several times and developed a plan to change the current law and allow members into TARP/ R+ either at the state house or through a home rule petition.

The “Retirement percentage” chart
For members with effective membership dates before April 2, 2012
A comparison of the percentage of salary average allowed under the regular and RetirementPlus formulas, by service and age

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

- **Regular** formula: You must EITHER have 20 or more years of creditable service at any age, OR be age 55 with 10 or more years of creditable service.

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

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### EFFECTIVE APRIL 2010

* Two notes on “years of service”:
  1. “RetirementPlus % increase,” only whole years of service will be counted (the amount is not rounded up). For example, if you have 32.9 years of creditable service, your “RetirementPlus % increase” is based on 32 years of creditable service, or 16%.
  2. Percentage of allowable salary average, your full years and full months of creditable service will be counted.

For example, Jane Educator is a teacher on a 10-month contract, and is retiring mid-year, on March 10. At that time, she will have 32 years, 6 months and 10 days of creditable service—or 32.65/49 years of creditable service. The amount of creditable service that will be used to calculate Jane's allowable percentage of salary average is 32.6 years. (Because the first decimal place represents full months, and the last three decimal places represent only partial months, the last three decimal places will not be included in Jane's final benefit calculation.)
Update on Retirement+/ Teacher Accelerated Retirement Plan? ...

(continued from page 5)

home rule petition (HRP) strategy. The R+ Committee met prior to school closing due to the COVID-10 Pandemic and worked out the details for the HRP Additionally, and crucial to its success the R+ Committee was able to convince Boston City Councilor, Annissa Essabbi George, to take the lead for us in the Boston City Council on the HRP. Additionally, we contacted City Councilor Frank Baker. We are asking Councilor Baker to support our efforts and work with City Councilor Annissa Essabbi George.

We understand our HRP is more than just a political issue that may live or die with city council and mayoral support. Our HRP, as any HRP is, is a business and cents issue too. Knowing this, I made a motion at the BTU Executive Board meeting of July 21, 2020. The motion was for the BTU Executive Board to approve an allocation of up to $7,000.00 to fund an actuarial study conducted by Segal and Associates to determine if re-opening the R+ HRP option to the school community would create an added cost to the City of Boston or to the unfunded liability of the Boston Retirement Board. The motion passed. This is important to know because its most likely the two questions that will be asked. We need to know the answers and we need to own it. Please email the BTU Executive Board Members and thank them for the support.

We believe the timing is getting better for our HRP to be presented. We hope that we will have even more actionable news to share with you before the temperatures begin to dip below 70 degrees.

This could positively impact you if you were hired prior to July 1, 2021 and opted NOT to go into TARP. You could be included if the HRP is successful. If you would like to be on our R+ email list send me an email using your non-BPS email address to annisaelectric@btu.org.

Be sure to check your direct deposit receipts to make sure the correct amount is being deducted. If there’s a mistake, you should report it immediately. Boston Retirement System (BRS) policy adopted in 2011 allows BRS to collect errors in deduction rates. The deduction rates are entered by the Boston Public Schools OHC Dept. upon your hire. You have seen many mistakes over the years. Contact BRS, Room 816 at City Hall, 617-635-4056. You may have to leave a message as many of the BRS staff are still working remotely. Members can also contact me directly for information and help with retirement procedures or with questions emailing to annisaelectric@btu.org.

A simple equation is used to determine your retirement allowance. Your age factor (hired pre-2012)

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For members of Group 4:

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The table below includes all the members who are between the ages of 60-79 who are appointed in Group 2, 3, and 4. It includes members who are eligible to retire in the next year which is 60 or 70.

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STAY SAFE!

**BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOL FAMILIES!**

You must pre-register in advance for a time slot to come by.
Pre-Register and Sign Up to Volunteer

Sept. 24, 2:00-6:00 pm
Sept. 25, 2:00-6:00 pm
Sept. 26, 12:00-3:00 pm

ALL ATTENDEES MUST WEAR MASKS AND GLOVES

The fair will be scaled down this year without the usual activities, food and resource fair due to COVID-19.

Phone: 617-222-5600
Email: info@bths.org

**MASSACHUSETTS GROUP 1 RETIREMENT PERCENTAGE CHART**

For Members-In-Service Hired ON OR AFTER APRIL 2, 2012

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STAY SAFE!
**Politics In Education**

**Johnny McInnis**

**Why is Political Action Important for Our Union?**

**COPE** is the BTU’s Committee on Political Education. This program supports political action for the Boston Teachers Union. The COPE committee members are appointed by the BTU President for a two year term. The BTU uses COPE to endorse candidates in state, local, and national elections.

The political action program makes decisions to endorse candidates. The program follows a process for endorsing candidates after completing a questionaire, interviewing, and setting policies that affect our students and schools. These decisions can have an impact on our collective bargaining ability to negotiate issues such as salary, class size, transfer provisions, school building improvements, and many other factors that impact our students and schools. Elected leaders can have a huge impact on our ability to do our job well and support our students!

The Union’s Committee on Political Education (COPE) has five major purposes as described in the BTU bylaws:

- To support and strengthen the citizens and the government to excellence in public education at all levels.
- To promote and strive for the improvement of the public schools by encouraging and stimulating educators to take a more active part.
- To encourage educators to know and understand the nature and actions of their government and the important political issues, as they pertain to public education.
- To assist educators in organizing themselves for more effective political action, and in carrying out their civic responsibilities.
- To engage in any suitable activities to achieve the purposes stated above.

The process used by the Union to endorse candidates:

The COPE committee meets when needed to make decisions on whether or not to make a recommendation to endorse a political candidate running for office. First candidates are provided a questionnaire with a series of questions pertaining to issues that would support our members before being asked to come before the committee for an interview. Decisions are made via candidate voting records by incumbent candidates, responses to COPE questionnaires, and in person interviews. Decisions can also be made based on support for or against bills presented for upcoming legislation or City Council Motions. That legislation could include COLA for retirees, support for English Language Learners, funding for education, educator licensure, MGAS moratorium, and other interests on education. The committee then votes by a 2/3 decision to recommend to the Executive Board. The Executive Board votes on the recommendations from COPE by a 2/3 decision before sending it to a vote by the members for a 2/3 decision at the membership meeting. If the membership endorses the candidate, the candidate will be backed by our Union throughout their campaign.

Why are members asked to pay into COPE?

Bases on state and federal laws there are restrictions on what Union dues are used for. A member can voluntarily decide how much is deducted for COPE. For example, members can contribute through payroll deduction by a suggested minimum of $2.00 for Teachers and $7.50 for Paraprofessionals on their COPE card which is attached to their membership card. COPE reports political actions to members at membership meetings. As required by law there is a yearly audit to confirm that funds were documented for appropriate use.

Members help is always needed after endorsing a candidate. Please contact us to join our BEAT (BTU Electoral Action Team). This group volunteers with candidates during their election campaign, organizes support on legislative bills, and other political actions as needed. Volunteering can also include canvassing door to door, standing out with signs at an event, or phone banking on behalf of a candidate. Contact me if you would like to join our BEAT or if you would like to come to support a particular candidate we endorsed.

**Contact.** Political Director, Johnny McInnis by email jonmclinnis@btu.org or Political Organizer, Roberto Jimenez by email rjimenez@btu.org. BTU office 617-288-2000.

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**BTU AND AFT-Massachusetts Endorsed Candidates**

**BTU ENDORSED CANDIDATES**

**US Congress:**
- Robbie Goldberg, 8th Congressional District
- Julia Salazar, 13th Congressional District
- Ayanna Pressley, 7th Congressional District
- Lori Trahan, 3rd Congressional District
- Richard Neal, 1st Congressional District

**US Senate:**
- William Keating, MA 9th Congressional District
- sen. John F. Kerry, MA 6th Congressional District
- sen. Elizabeth Warren, MA 6th Congressional District
- sen. Edward Markey, MA 7th Congressional District

**US House of Representatives:**
- Massachusetts House of Representatives
  - State Representative Nika Elugardo, 15th Suffolk
  - State Representative Jon Santiago, 9th Suffolk
  - State Representative Liz Miranda, 5th Suffolk
  - State Representative Christine Barber, 34th Middlesex
  - State Representative Thomas Stanley, 9th Middlesex
- Massachusetts State Senate Incumbents:
  - Sen. Anna DiMasi, 3rd Suffolk
  - Sen. Gilberta林，3rd Novaffl
  - Sen. Vernon Scalise, 11th Essex
  - Sen. Linda Canfield Kennedy, 8th Berkshire

**AFT-MASSACHUSETTS ENDORSED CANDIDATES**

**MA House of Representatives Incumbents:**
- State Representative Thomas Vitale, 15th Norfolk
- State Representative Adam Smolinski, 14th Suffolk
- State Representative Thomas Moore, 9th Middlesex
- State Representative Chris Sorensen, 16th Middlesex
- State Representative John Keenan, 17th Middlesex
- State Representative Michael DiSanto, 17th Middlesex
- State Representative Roland Doppelt, 19th Norfolk
- State Representative David Ellis, 21st Berkshire

**Non-Incumbents for MA House of Representatives:**
- Erika Newhouse, 25th Berkshire
- Brandon F. Beals, 26th Berkshire
- Jordan M. Murtland, 27th Berkshire
- Jake Gravelle, 16th Suffolk

**AFT MASSACHUSETTS ENDORSED CANDIDATES**

**US President/Vis President:**
- Joseph Biden/Kamala Harris (November Election)

**US Senate:**
- Ed Markey, Massachusetts

**US HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:**
- Representative Michael Kiedaisch, 4th Suffolk
- Representative Michael Connolly, 12th Suffolk
- Representative Niki Tsongas, 10th Middlesex
- Representative Stephanie MA 8th District
- Representative John Keenan, 17th Middlesex
- Representative Michael F. Curley, 18th Middlesex
- Representative Liz Malia, 11th Suffolk

**MA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ENDORSEMENTS:**
- Representative Kay Khan, 11th Middlesex
- Representative Kathy LaNatra, 12th Middlesex
- Representative Tackey Chan, 2nd Norfolk
- Representative Michael Connolly, 26th Middlesex
- Representative Elect Carol Doherty, 3rd Norfolk
- Representative Paul Donato, 35th Middlesex
- Representative Nika Elugardo, 15th Suffolk
- Representative James Hawkins, 2nd Bristol
- Representative Natalie Higgins, 4th Worcester
- Representative Jack Lent, 1st Hampden
- Representative Liz Malia, 11th Suffolk
- Representative Joan Meschino, 3rd Plymouth
- Representative Aaron Michlewitz, 3rd Suffolk
- Representative Elise DiSanto, 35th Middlesex
- Representative Rady Mom, 18th Middlesex
- Representative James Murphy, 4th Norfolk
- Representative Tram Nguyen, 18th Essex
- Representative Maria Robinson, 6th Middlesex
- Representative David Rogers, 4th Middlesex
- Representative Jon Santiago, 9th Suffolk
- Representative Elect Danilo Sena, 37th Middlesex
- Representative Thomas Stanley, 9th Middlesex
- Representative Paul Tucker, 7th Essex
- Representative Steven Udall, 3rd Middlesex
- Representative Andres Vargas, 3rd Essex
- Representative Thomas Vitolo, 15th Norfolk

**Non-Incumbents for State Senate:**
- Representative John Cronin, 11th Worcester and Middlesex

**Non-Incumbents for MA House of Representatives:**
- Representative Michael Kiedaisch, 4th Suffolk
- Representative Niki Tsongas, 10th Middlesex
- Representative Stephanie MA 8th District
- Representative John Keenan, 17th Middlesex
- Representative Michael F. Curley, 18th Middlesex
- Representative Jack Lent, 1st Hampden

**2020 Statewide Ballot Measures:**
- Ranked Choice Voting Initiative, Vote "YES" on Question 2.

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**BOSTON UNION TEACHER**

September, 2020
A II BPS teachers (*) are eligible to take advantage of a range of contractual benefits and provisions that have resulted from years of collective bargaining between the School Committee and the Boston Teachers Union. A summary of many of the more important benefits and provisions follows. Where mentioned, the BTU office can forward more detailed information. The BTU Field Reps., Careen Carew and Michael McLaughlin can provide more information. Or please feel free to call or email members@btu.org. All need to note that each school has BTU Building Representatives, elected at each school, who can provide more detailed information. Further, we now have BTU Regional Leaders, just one more way we are trying to meet your needs by bringing better service.

(*) includes nurses, psychologists, SLPs, OTs, PTs, etc., and all other covered professional members in our bargaining unit. There is another article in this newspaper that relates to paraprofessionals.

Copies of the BTU Contract are available through BTU Building Representatives or by calling the BTU office. The contract is also available online. For more detailed information on any of the below, please call the BTU office. All references to the newspaper that relates to paraprofessionals.

If you need a booklet, please call the BTU office. References to the school department’s webpage are accurate as of mid-August, though they will change as the department updates its yearly circular offerings. A complete listing of department circulars can be found at http://www.bostonpublicschools.org/domain/1884 as of mid-summer, 2017. All web pages referred to as of early August 2017 but all locations may have changed when newsletter appears in print. The postings are yearly staples and are easy to track down. If you have any questions, please call the union office.

Incidentally, all of the below applies generally to all teachers, etc. However, some schools are in state receivership (Holland and Dever) and certain ‘benefits’—like the right to file a grievance—may not apply. Similarly, we have dozens of other schools (Innovations, Pilots, Horace Mann in-district charters, Turnarounds) whose members are subject to an election-to-work agreement (EWA) that in some cases trumps the Collective Bargaining Agreement. Given that there are 40+ schools with some autonomy, it is impossible to give a complete listing here of what benefit does or does not apply. However, we are working on getting all of these agreements on the new BTU website under “Contracts.” It is reasonably safe to assume that all financial benefits—salary, career awards, leaves, maternity leave, retirement savings’ plans, flexible spending plans, health insurance, tuition reimbursement, and so on—are available. The only exception here is that the schools in receivership have developed some of their own rules and should you work there, you are advised to call the BTU office and speak to Michael. Please remember that the links on the BPS webpage below are subject to change (but they won’t go far!).

All references to the BTU contract refer to the burgundy contract booklet, which goes from 9/1/2010 through 8/31/2016, and continues until a successor agreement is reached and ratified. Booklets can be obtained through your BTU School Building Rep., or by calling the office at 617-288-2000. You may also access the online information here: http://btu.org/conbro/highlights/2016-2017/view-download/. All page references refer to pages in the booklet.

**SAraly & Benefits**

**Salary Step Placement**
Up to 3 years’ credit for both inside and outside the system, (90 total) if service meets certain criteria.

**Salary Lane Placement**
B+, 15, Masters, M.S., 30, 45, 60, 75, Doctorate.

**Salary Lane: In-Service Credits**
Limit of in-service credits is increased to 30.

**Health Insurance**
3 different plans, PPO, 2 HMOs.

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<tr>
<th>Benefit</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Eligibility</th>
<th>Application Process</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dental</td>
<td>Includes Dental, Eye Care, and Legal</td>
<td>Apply at BTU H&amp;W office or at 288-0500. Call BTU H&amp;W @ 617-288-0500 or see H&amp;W Dental</td>
<td>Benefit effective retro to start of prov.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life Insurance</td>
<td>City sponsors standard $5,000 term, first $5,000 of term coverage comes at no cost. No eligibility requirement.</td>
<td>See the National Board (NBPTS) website at <a href="http://www.nbpts.org/">http://www.nbpts.org/</a> for eligibility rules, subject areas in all job categories, though categories are expanding regularly.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Disability insurance</td>
<td>The NBPTS nongroup disability does not grant certification in all subject areas and in all job categories, though categories are expanding regularly.</td>
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**Health & Welfare**
Includes Dental, Eye Care, and Legal benefit. City pays plan premium, but some benefits may be delayed.

**Provisions**
- **Salary Lane Placement**
  - Up to 3 years’ credit for both inside and outside the system, (90 total) if service meets certain criteria.
  - B+, 15, Masters, M.S., 30, 45, 60, 75, Doctorate.
- **Salary Lane: In-Service Credits**
  - Limit of in-service credits is increased to 30.
- **Health Insurance**
  - 3 different plans, PPO, 2 HMOs.
- **Salary Item: Tuition Reimbursement**
  - All permanent teachers on ‘steps’; 1/2 for the lifetime (get $1,000/y in Prov, get $500). Pairs with three or more years of service are covered with some restrictions.
- **Salary Item: NBPTS Teachers**
  - Members certified under the standards of the NBPTS now get a 4% raise. Members also get reimbursed for the cost of application fees upon successful attainment of certification.
- **Performing Arts Teachers**
  - Performing Arts, theater, music, drama, and dance, and choral groups. Parents can get $1,000 per dependent.
- **Flexible Spending Program—Dependent Care**
  - Use up to $5,000 in pre-tax dollars for dependent care; excellent tax benefit. This is an IRS-approved program that is quite beneficial when used properly.
- **Flexible Spending Program—Medical**
  - Use up to $2,550 here (cap per the year) in pre-tax dollars to cover out-of-pocket medical expenses; excellent tax benefit.
- **Flexible Spending Program—Transportation and Parking**
  - As with the above programs, though subject to different dollar limitations. This program allows you to use pre-tax dollars to be spent on mass transit and parking activities. Properly used, but caution is advised.
- **Life Insurance**
  - City sponsors standard $5,000 term, first $5,000 of term coverage comes at no cost. No eligibility requirement. | See the Massachusetts Teacher Retirement Board website at http://www.mTRS/Mass Teacher Retirement Board. |
- **Disability Coverage**
  - Public Pension Law grants limited disability coverage for teachers.”

**HOW IT TAKES EFFECT?**
- **You must apply with app. and documentation.** Not necessarily, unless a prior year’s report is 90% or less. Call the BTU office at 617-288-2000 or ask at a field representative.

**HOW TO LEARN MORE?**
- **See the BTU office at 617-288-2000 or see http://www.btuhwf.org**
- **See procedure found here. Go to: http://www.bostonpublicschools.org/page/295**
- **See the National Board (NBPTS) website at http://www.nbpts.org/ for eligibility rules, subject areas in all job categories, though categories are expanding regularly.**
- **See the Massachusetts Teacher Retirement Board website at http://www.mTRS/Mass Teacher Retirement Board.**

**WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR?**
- **Term Life Insurance**
  - City sponsors standard $5,000 term, first $5,000 of term coverage comes at no cost. No eligibility requirement. | See the National Board (NBPTS) website at http://www.nbpts.org/ for eligibility rules, subject areas in all job categories, though categories are expanding regularly. |
- **No eligibility requirement.**
- **See http://www.cpa125.com/ or same as above.**

**FIRM.**

**September, 2020**
MAJOR (BUT NON-INCLUSIVE) LIST OF CONTRACTUAL WORKING CONDITIONS

Salaries & Benefits (continued)

BENEFIT

Debt Forgiveness

The AFT now has a resource for those who need to learn the landscape of and understand federal programs that help many student loan borrowers lower their monthly payments and, in some cases, even have their debt forgiven.

Frequently Asked Questions

How many people have a right to have the BTU proceed with a grievance on your behalf should the Contract support your claim?

Do most contractual disputes are resolved informally. However, in the event an issue cannot be resolved, you may need to consult the BTU office.

WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR?

Class Size Maxima; Caseloads

Enforces class size maxima and caseloads. Important benefit.

Caseloads; have 'accumulated' days in your bank; Bear in mind that the birth is scheduled for complicated when the birth is scheduled for the summer months. Again, please contact the BTU office.

Sick Days

Grants paid if leave is 3 days or longer.

How many people have a right to have the BTU proceed with a grievance on your behalf should the Contract support your claim?

Do most contractual disputes are resolved informally. However, in the event an issue cannot be resolved, you may need to consult the BTU office.

Personal Leave

Grants paid per personal reasons with one day's notice.

May need to consult the BTU office.

Professional Leave

Grants limited paid leave to attend educational conferences.

Contact the BTU office at 617-288-2000 or email ncallhan@btu.org

Bereavement Leave

Grants paid under limited circumstances.


Religious Holy Days

Grants paid under limited circumstances.


Maternity Leave

Grants paid as well as unpaid leave if absence continues to pay its share of health coverage.


Sick Days

1/2 salary, 1/2 position Two people share one job; each gets 1/2 salary

See here: Start early in the year if looking for a Job-Sharing

Duty-Free Lunch

and teacher-directed planning time.

time is not PD time – it’s a combination of P&D or as 7-minute daily sessions added on to the grades. In addition, teachers receive a weekly and may be incorporated into CPT time in middle ELT Schools

two more blocks of time – see right hand box. of time that is P&D time for elementary teachers

Development Time

Grants paid as well as unpaid leave. Medically limited to number of sick days accrued.

Contact contract, p. 117

Leaves for Adoption

Grants paid as well as unpaid leave.

Limited to 40-45 days per school year if you have ‘accumulated’ days in your bank; used to be 30 days.

Contact, p. 117

Leaves for Family Illness

Grants paid leave for family member’s illness

Limited to 30 days per school year if accumulated, though more can be granted. (With a note from family member’s doctor; those who need more than 30 such days may need a note from a doctor; contact the BTU office.◜

Planning and Development Time

Grants staff unassigned time when one is not given a programmed duty or responsibility. P&D periods are ‘teacher-directed’, i.e., teacher alone decides what he/she does during that period.

Middle and High Teachers – 5 full-length periods 48-minute periods per week.

Elementary Teachers get four 48-minute P&D periods per week, plus one CPT period that is administratively directed.

N.B. Specialists and Itinerant Specialists get administratively directed. unless it is made up. Call the BTU office.

Schedules AEU Schools

In addition to the above, all teachers receive two more blocks of time – see right hand box.

Duty-Free Lunch

Grants daily duty-free time to all for lunch, in addition to daily P&D time.

Middle and High Teachers – no less than 20 minutes per day. Elementary Teachers – no less than 40.


Job-Sharing

1/2 salary, 1/2 position

Two people share one job; each gets 1/2 salary and full benefits.

See here: Start early in the year if looking for a partner; this is most difficult if many as ‘good matches’ are hard to find.

Peer Assistance Program

Experienced teachers in need of assistance can volunteer for a peer assistant.

Peer assistant can provide assistance to one who needs help.

Call BTU office at 617-288-2000 or email Mike McLaughlin at mclaughlinbtu.org

Accepting a student-teacher

If you accept a student-teacher, you receive two days’ leave with pay.


Mileage

Traveling between two or more schools on a given day as part of your duties, you are entitled to a mileage payment.


Public Pension

Participation is mandatory under state law; vested employees obtain a personal retirement.

Find out more information at the benefit's website at https://www.bpsboston.org/benefits/

Retirement, Tax-Deferred Savings Plans

http://www.bpsboston.org/benefits/

WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR?

WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR?

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WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR?
Teachers As Advocates: One Teacher Voice, the Need for Social/Emotional Support For Families

Hello all,

Thank you Dr. Caselius and everyone else who helped to facilitate today’s very important community meeting. I appreciate your effort to make the important decision of how well it will reopen our Boston Public Schools in the fall as decisions about how and when we will re-open are made. I was inspired to listen to your presentation regarding potential plans for reopening our schools in the fall, to see how well attended this meeting was, and to witness how many parents and teachers were able to express their ideas and concerns.

Because we ran out of time today, I didn’t have a chance to ask my question, but perhaps it was for the better because it forced me to think deeply about what I have to say and to better organize my thoughts.

I am a BPS English as a Second Language teacher who works exclusively with English language learners in grade 6 to 8, and their families. With much effort and hours dedicated to two essential goals, by the end of the third week of remote teaching and learning, I had been able to A) acquire the basics of how to do online instruction, and B) to connect with, and count on, 100% of my students and their families. Obviously, like most of us BPS teachers, I spent many more weeks, until the end, refining and fine-tuning my teaching, my approach, my techniques(s) and my priorities. In fact, throughout the summer, I am still learning new tricks and familiarizing myself with materials I can use in the fall in order to meet the demands of my soon to come new and uncertain job description. This fall, I have hopes to be an even more effective teacher than I was in the past, but I won’t be nearly as prepared as I did out.

In my experience, however, what made transitioning to remote learning most challenging and time consuming doesn’t get talked about nearly enough. Between March 17 and June 22 of this year, I and many teachers like me, spent hundreds of hours connecting, communicating with, training, consulting, and supporting, not only our students, but the parents of our students, all of whom to different degrees are English language learners, themselves.

Indeed, after those excruciatingly difficult first few weeks, I found myself throughout the spring, still dedicating hundreds of hours to learning about how to effectively connect with my students so that I could teach them online as best as I could, as I SIMULTANEOUSLY offered support, not only to them, but to their families, as well. Among other concerns, parents and students had questions and needs regarding access to technology (computers & the Internet), ser-vices available to them, financial support, food, and housing. One might have anticipated that. But what was surprising by summer’s end was the level of emotional sup-port I ended up offering to a number of my students and parents and who expressed being on the verge of falling apart.

Thus, as you figure out what our fall model will look like, I ask that you factor in the following concerns:

1) The new challenges of our profession are many, and they require us teach-ers spending a colossal amount of hours retraining on a new way of teaching we were not even familiar with only 6 months ago.
2) It takes teachers a huge amount of time and effort (especially to bilingual teachers) supporting our families behind the scenes, especially those families who are new to this country and who don’t speak much English, if at all.
3) A large percentage of our families have special needs and concerns they often don’t know who to share with or to run by, other than their students’ class-room teachers or the few teachers available to them who speak their language. Needless to say that more qualified bilingual personnel are needed in our school district.
4) Even though the City of Boston did a decent job teaching out to families to offer them material goods, such as food and computers, not nearly enough was done to offer our students and their families (or our teachers, for that matter!) services to address their new socio-emotional needs. In addition to the time they experience for having lost their jobs and having to be home with their chil-dren all day long, some of them spoke of their reluctance to telling anyone if any of their children had caught the Coronavirus for fear of being discriminated against or stigmatized.
5) More time and effort have to go into training teachers. New hires will have to be trained on the rudiments of teaching remotely, and even those of us who already have months of experience teaching online will have to be trained on how to improve our craft and on what the new or additional expectations will be.
6) It is imperative to come up with the necessary resources to facilitate com-municating with and training our families on the new BPS ways and how they can support their students. This important sharing of information must be done in the families’ native languages, so that each individual teacher doesn’t have to utilize so much of their class time and/or so much of their time supporting their students and their families. I can testify that this past spring, I had nearly zero free time because of having to dedicate so much of my time to dealing with all of this.
7) Given the new demands of our job, scheduling CANNOT look as if we were teaching in person; more time needs to be built into our schedules for student and family support and communication.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter and I surely hope you will be true to your word of taking into consideration whatever feedback we give you after today’s meeting was over. Parents, teachers and students are anxiously awaiting your final decision. Some parents I have spoken to worry that after dedicating so much time and effort to learning how to do online teaching, they’ll have to learn and adapt to yet another model in the fall. For this reason, the sooner we start giving shape to whatever model you decide to embrace, and sharing the details of the plan with the school community, the better.

I wish you much luck and wisdom in arriving at the important decisions that will affect so many lives.

Sincerely,
Asta Sepuhveda ESL teacher, Hermosan K-8 School

By Michael W. McLaughlin, BUT Elementary Field Representative

You as a union have negotiated numerous contractual benefits over the years. In order to receive the salary ben-eft increase due to academic advance-ment you must submit a completed PS-03 along with OFFICIAL TRANSCRIPTS. The transcripts must include a passing grade and/or a degree conferred date. Electron-ic Transcripts can be sent directly from the institution to email@publicschoolso.org. Only submit credits/ degrees when applying for the salary lane advance-ment. Do not submit single or multiple credits below the threshold for lane advancement. If approved, you should see a change in your salary within 3-4 pay periods following the submission. Denied applicants will receive an email to their BPS email address from OHC providing the reason for the denial (summer months take longer).

Salary lane advancements will be pro-cessed retroactively to September 1, if all the correct documentation is received by OHC by the close of business on Septem-ber 30. Otherwise, the change will be effec-tive on the first day of the month following complete submission of all documentation during the school year. Submissions after May 31 will be effective for the start of the following school year. Boston Public Schools reserves the right to approve salary lane advancements for only those courses that are related to the field of education. Pre-Approval can be requested.

Accredited College or University

Courses must be granted by an accred-ited college or university listed on the Accredited Institutions of Post-Secondary Education registry and deemed acceptable by the American Council on Education. Courses must award GRADUATE CREDIT.

Courses are evaluated by the semester hour only. Courses taken by the quarter hour are ineligible, it was recently was converted to the metric specified by the respective institution. If not specified, BPS will use a .75 to 1.0 credit conversion factor.

Courses must clearly relate to the field of education in the BPS.

Academic Ladder Credit (ACL) can also be used for academic lane advance-ment. ACL’s are equal to in-service credits with no cap on the amount earned. Each ACL course has a target competency and a range of options for demonstrated com-pe-tency through artifacts or reflections. ACL’s require 12 hours of seat time per credit hour award and will not be awarded until the educator submits a final product demonstrating successful implementation of a specific instructional practice. Submit the actual ACL completion certificate when applying for a salary lane advance-ment.

In-service credits can also be granted for courses previously offered by BPS. Submit the actual in-service completion certificate.

Continuing Education Units (CEU’s), also known as contact hours are accepted at the rate of 15 contact hours for 1 gradu-ate credit, not to exceed 30 graduate cred-its. This applies to nurses and most related service providers.

Professional Development Points (PDP’s) are not eligible for salary lane advancement. PDP’s are commonly used for license recertification.


It is important to note that in some cases BPS will make slight salary adjust-ments when credits are submitted after the school year starts. It is advisable to submit advanced credits just prior to the beginning of the school year or at the end of the school year to be effective the following year to avoid a negative salary adjustment.

And our world is in turmoil.

Come learn concrete strategies to help you avoid the five personal pitfalls of the educator experience.

Don’t just survive. Thrive.

A research-based professional development program to help educators achieve well-being

What
Who
Where & When
Questions
Our program is built with teachers in mind. That said, it is open to all BTU members.
The program will be fully online. Participants will engage in synchronous learning experiences alongside a small group of fellow educators.
Those who complete the program can earn 3 graduate credits from Teachers College of San Joaquin for a price of $300!

Applying. Applications are due by Sunday, September 20
Watch a video preview of the program here: https://bit.ly/2/ResilienceVideo
Email Lindsay@EducationThriving.org
As we celebrate one hundred years of Women’s Suffrage, and get ready for one of the most important presidential elections in U.S. history, let’s remember a deep connection Boston teachers have to the Women’s Movement. Two of the very first leaders in Suffrage movement were two Boston teachers (1830s).

Let's Put Social Back Into Media

By Michael J. Maguire, Boston Union Teacher Co-Editor

Being involved in educational matters can take many forms. Attending union meetings and school committee meetings are important, as those are the places where decisions are made and ratified. After all, democracy is not a spectator sport.

There are other meaningful ways to engage policy makers. Social media is an important tool in our modern method of communication. Regardless of which platform(s) you favor, there is a way to stay informed, be involved, and to promote policies to benefit our students.

Before we move on, allow me to gently remind everyone that you can catch more flies with honey than with vinegar. Too often social media posts become rants of frustration. While venting is a normal and necessary part of life, venting or ranting is far more impactful to the paper than the online versions are alive and well. Boston policy makers read these newspapers and they read the comment sections too. If you have the time please post a comment, drawn from your personal experience, in these blogs. If time is short or you don’t quite know what to say, simply “like” the existing blog posts that speak to you.

Letters to the Editor

If the spirit really moves you, taking a few minutes to write a letter to the newspaper will have a profound impact. Social media is nice for sharing news, but a letter to the newspaper tells the editor that you read, think, and care. A letter is far more impactful to the paper than a blog comment. Not all letters will be published, but if the paper receives many letters on the same topic it will print one or two to them. So even if your letter is not chosen, know that you helped get someone else’s letter in print.

My advice in writing a letter to the editor is to pick one topic and make one solid point supported by evidence. Don’t repeat every word in a story or editorial, letters are supposed to be short and to the point. Think one paragraph, not an essay.

Other Media

By now you get the idea. If I have omitted your preferred method of social media, I offer my apologies. The same general rules apply: be positive, focused and informed. But please don’t be shy. Your opinion matters and your advocacy is important.

Boston Union Teacher

The Boston Union Teacher is the award-winning newspaper of the Boston Teachers Union. Special thanks are due the Editorial Board and the members who submit articles and photographs.

The editors are committed to maintaining the quality of our publication and with your help it will remain one of the best teacher union periodicals in the country. As members you will get each edition emailed to your house. You can also read the paper online at https://btu.org/member-resources/boston-union-teacher-newspaper/

The Boston Union Teacher strives to keep our membership informed of important issues facing our members, their families, and the greater community concerned about issues facing the Boston Public Schools. It is our goal to promote active participation in our union and the labor movement as a whole.

Our union is a diverse union. We have members just starting their professional life and members who have been serving the families and students of Boston for over 40 years. Our members come from all races and nationalities, reflecting the diversity of the students we teach. It is important that all these voices are heard on the pages of the Boston Union Teacher.

There are many ways you can contribute to the Boston Union Teacher. Sharing best practices, commenting on educational issues affecting our community, addressing issues important to the labor movement, reviewing books or popular culture, photo essays or artwork, or writing a letter to the editor are just some of the ways you can add to the quality of our publication.

Submissions...
Looking for more information about these webinars, please visit https://www.nbct.org/ announcements. To learn more about every aspect of becoming an NBCT.

How Can You Contact Us?

You can contact the NBCT LT by emailing nationally certified and seek professional learning facilitators to run online cohorts both at the school level and regionally throughout Boston. Cohorts of teachers pursuing certification will be facilitated by Nation al Board Certified Teacher Leaders.

Supporting Families During the Pandemic

As educators, we already knew the importance of housing to student well-being and the community in ongoing communication and food delivery; a system that has continued to support families throughout the pandemic.

As a union, we must acknowledge that there can be no education justice without housing justice and racial justice. We encourage our members to follow CLUV on Facebook or subscribe to their Action Alerts to continue fighting for other housing protections. A recent article in the CLUV report shows that 78% of tenants are currently enrolled in the rental assistance program and that many of those who have applied have not heard back. As a union, we believe that every tenant deserves to have their rent protected. We encourage our members to follow CLUV on Facebook or subscribe to their Action Alerts to continue fighting for other housing protections.

For more information, please visit our website at bit.ly/2019wcbull or by clicking the link below. For more information, please visit our website at bit.ly/2019wcbull or by clicking the link below.
Dear Paraprofessional:
Welcome to the Boston Public Schools. This memo has been written to acquaint you with some of the major benefits and rights that all members of the para bargaining unit enjoy.

Salary Step Placement
If you have college credits, you must submit a transcript (official) to the Office of Human Capital in order to receive your correct pay rate. All transcripts must be filed with the Office of Human Capital directly.

Sick and Personal Days
Commencing with the first year of service (following a ninety-day probationary period) and annually thereafter, each September, fifteen (15) days of sick leave shall be granted to each paraprofessional in actual service on or before October 1st of that year. Two (2) personal days are also granted each year. Unused sick and personal days accumulate year to year. You may use personal day(s) for any reason with notice to the building administrator. You must give a reason for requesting a personal day, and you may take the day(s) anytime you wish. (There are a few minor contractual restrictions regarding the use of personal leave. Consult your building representative for a full explanation.)

A 10-minute break and 30-minute lunch is part of the paraprofessional workday. Also, days are given for bereavement. For a complete list, please consult the contract.

You will automatically receive union mail if you complete and return an application for union membership. Call the BTU Office at 617-268-2000 for an application, or request one from your building representative.

Health and Welfare Benefits
Paraprofessionals are eligible to partake in benefits provided by the union’s Health and Welfare Fund. Major benefits include a dental insurance plan and an eye care center. For enrollment in the plan, call the Health and Welfare Office (located at Union headquarters) at 617-268-5883. Ask for a brochure which gives a detailed explanation of all benefits.

Health Insurance
Health insurance is provided through the City’s Group Insurance Office at 617-635-4570. Call that number for more information, or visit at Boston City Hall, Room 807. You have only 60 calendar days from your first day of service to register.

Joining the BTU
All of the above benefits have come as a result of collective bargaining between the BTU and the Boston School Committee. As exclusive bargaining agent, the BTU negotiates the contract, enforces the contract, and promotes the general welfare of the membership.

As a member of the BTU, you’ll also belong to the American Federation of Teachers-Massachusetts (AFT-MA), the Massachusetts AFL-CIO, and the American Federation of Teachers in Washington D.C. (AFT). You will begin to receive monthly mailings from the BTU, AFT-MA and the AFT. To sign up for AFT benefits, go to the www.btu.org to receive an individual contract to either office and fill out an application. For more information, call 781-843-5626.

A weekly bulletin from the BTU is posted in your school with pertinent information for all. Look for it posted in the building, or, you can read it online at www.btu.org. You can also have it emailed to you automatically by signing up for it on our website.

Credit Union
Paraprofessionals are also eligible to join the Tremont Credit Union, with offices located at BTU headquarters and at the Braintree Executive Park, 150 Grossman Drive, Braintree, MA 02184. Through the Credit Union you may authorize payroll deductions for savings and checking, arrange for a loan, and take care of many other banking needs. To join, bring $30.00 and a pay stub or a copy of your individual contract to either office and fill out an application. For more information, call 781-843-5626.

Union Operations
Our membership meetings are held the second Wednesday of each month at 4:30 PM at the Union headquarters in Dorchester. Each school has Union Building Representatives, elected to serve the staff in the building in dealings with the administration. The building representative is also the first line of communications between the building staff and the Union office. Many questions can be easily and quickly answered at the building level by asking the building representative.

The Union employs seven full-time officers and staff to serve the membership. Office hours are 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM. The office is open all weekdays including school vacations, but is closed on state, local and national holidays, the day after Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve and Good Friday. The office number is 617-268-2000.

The Boston Teachers Union provides a variety of services; we encourage you to take advantage of them. If you have any questions, please feel free to call me or email me at champ@btu.org.

Dear ABA Specialist:
Welcome to the Boston Teachers Union. This memo has been written to acquaint you with some of the major benefits and rights that all members of the ABA bargaining unit enjoy.

Salary Step Placement
ABA Specialists shall advance one pay step per year. The minimum ABA pay scales shall increase by the same percentage as the other BTU bargaining units for the period commencing September 1, 2018 and the effective date(s) of those percentage increases shall be the same as the effective dates applied to those other BTU bargaining units.

Sick and Personal Days
Commencing with the first year of service (following a sixty-day probationary period) and annually thereafter, each September, fifteen (15) days of sick leave shall be granted to each ABA Specialist in actual service on or before October 1st of that year. Sick leave not used in the year of service for which it was granted shall be cumulative for subse-quent years. ABA specialists who have completed their probationary period will be allowed personal leave for personal needs not otherwise provided for, not more than four days per year without loss of pay. All personal days not used in the year for which they are granted shall be added to employees’ sick leave entitlement for use in subsequent years.

The work day for all ABA Specialists shall be seventeen and one-half hours, inclusive of lunch. ABA Specialists shall have a paid duty free lunch of at least thirty (30) minutes and not less than sixty (60) minutes of self-directed time per day without presence of students. The supervisors of ABA Specialists shall review and approve ABA Specialists’ work day schedules prior to September 1st of each year.

Health and Welfare Benefits
ABA Specialists are eligible to partake in benefits provided by the union’s Health and Welfare Fund. Major benefits include a dental insurance plan and an eye care center. For enrollment in the plan, call the Health and Welfare Office (located at Union headquarters) at 617-268-5883. Ask for a brochure which gives a detailed explanation of all benefits.

Health Insurance
Health insurance is provided through the City’s Group Insurance Office at 617-635-4570. Call that number for more information, or visit at Boston City Hall, Room 807. You have only 60 calendar days from your first day of service to register.

Joining the BTU
If you have college credits, you must submit a transcript (official) to the Office of Human Capital in order to receive your correct pay rate. All transcripts must be filed with the Office of Human Capital directly.

A Primer of Rights and Benefits
For Paraprofessionals

For ABA Specialists

Colleen M. Hart
BTU Paraprofessional/ Substitute/ABA Field Representative

A Primer of Rights and Benefits
For Paraprofessionals For ABA Specialists

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Welcome to the Boston Teachers Union. This memo has been written to acquaint you with some of the major benefits and rights that all members of the ABA bargaining unit enjoy.

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ABA Specialists are also eligible to join the Tremont Credit Union, with offices located at BTU headquarters and at the Braintree Executive Park, 150 Grossman Drive, Braintree, MA 02184. Through the Credit Union you may authorize payroll deductions for savings and checking, arrange for a loan, and take care of many other banking needs. To join, bring $30.00 and a pay stub or a copy of your individual contract to either office and fill out an application. For more information, call 781-843-5626.

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### SALARY & BENEFITS

#### Salary Step Placement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>First three years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>After three years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>After six years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>After nine years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>After twelve years.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Salary Line Placement

- Basic Rate and then Rates with 30, 60, or 90 in Service and/or College credits and Bachelor’s degree plus Bachelor’s +15

#### Career Awards

- After completion of 6 years of service and increase every 5 years.

#### Substituting for a Teacher

- Pay is $10.00 in addition to regular pay for substituting in his/her regular classroom.

#### Health Insurance

- 6 different plans, MBO and out of network individual and family plans.

#### Medicare

- Anyone entering public employment after 3/31/86 must pay Medicare tax and is eligible to age 65 provided he/she has 10 year service.

#### BTU Health and Welfare Fund

- Includes Dental, Eye Care and Legal benefits. City pays plan premium, but some benefits have co-pays. Terrific benefit!

#### Sick Days

- Employees pay 1.45% of gross wages. Deductions are mandatory and continue with employment.

#### Personal Leave

- Same as Dependent Care.

#### Leave for Adoption

- Paid as well as unpaid leave. Leave for family members’ illness.

#### Leave for Family Illness

- Paid leave for family members’ illness. Limited to 30 days per school year.

#### Duty-Free Lunch & Break

- Duty-free time.

#### Dependent Care Program

- Use pre-tax dollars for dependent care.

#### Flexible Spending Program

- Use pre-tax dollars for out-of-pocket medical expenses.

#### Life Insurance

- City sponsors plan.

#### Retirement, Tax-Deferred Savings Plans

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefit</th>
<th>Participation</th>
<th>Details</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public Pension</td>
<td>Participation is mandatory under state law; vested employees obtain a pension at retirement.</td>
<td>See contract, page 141.</td>
<td>See contract, page 141.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation in a 403(b) or a Tax-Sheltered Annuity (TSA) Plan</td>
<td>Participation is voluntary. 40 plus vendors to choose from. The number of vendors is likely to change.</td>
<td>Pre-tax salary contributions grow tax-deferred until withdrawn.</td>
<td>See contract, page 141.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### MISCELLANEOUS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefit</th>
<th>How It Takes Effect?</th>
<th>How to Learn More?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Job-Sharing</td>
<td>1/2 salary, 1/2 position.</td>
<td>Full benefits.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuition Reimbursement</td>
<td>$500 per year/$1,000 per year.</td>
<td>For up to 3 or more years of service, $500 tuition reimbursement. 5 years, $1,000 tuition reimbursement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paraprofessional/Teacher Preparation Grant Program</td>
<td>Legislative benefit, not contractual.</td>
<td>State provides financial assistance for a passport to a teacher by obtaining B.S. degree at Mass. College. Some restrictions apply.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### ADDITIONAL CONTRACTUAL CHANGES FOR 2010-2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Increase Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010-2011</td>
<td>Effective 9/1/11 a 2% raise.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011-2012</td>
<td>Effective 9/1/11 a 2% raise.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012-2013</td>
<td>Effective 9/1/11 a 2% raise.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013-2014</td>
<td>Effective 9/1/11 a 2% raise.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014-2015</td>
<td>Effective 9/1/11 a 3% raise.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015-2016</td>
<td>Effective 9/1/11 a 3% raise.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016-2017</td>
<td>Effective 9/1/11 a 3% raise.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017-2018</td>
<td>Effective 9/1/11 a 3% raise.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018-2019</td>
<td>Effective 9/1/11 a 3% raise.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019-2020</td>
<td>Effective 9/1/11 a 3% raise.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### GRIEVANCE RIGHTS

As a covered member you have a right to an interpretation of any provision of the collective bargaining agreement. In the event of an uncertainty or dispute regarding any provision of the Contract cited above (or any other provision, for that matter), it is in your best interest to call the BTU or speak with a building representative. Most contractual disputes are resolved informally. However, in the event an issue cannot be resolved, you have the right to have the BTU proceed with a grievance on your behalf should the Contract support your claim.
Dear Substitute Teacher:

Welcome to the Boston Teachers Union. This memo has been written to acquaint you with some of the benefits and rights that all members of the Substitutes bargaining unit enjoy.

Health Insurance
Substitute teachers and nurses who work a minimum of three days per week are eligible for health insurance, and this should be obtained within the first 60 days of employment by calling Group Insurance at City Hall 617-635-4570. Cluster-Building substitutes are also eligible for BTU Health & Welfare benefits, including dental insurance, eye care and legal services, and should call 617-288-0500 to sign up.

You are a member of the Boston Teachers Union with full voice and vote at all membership meetings.

As exclusive bargaining agent, the BTU negotiates the contract, enforces the contract and promotes the general welfare of the membership.

As a member of the BTU, you’ll also belong to the American Federation of Teachers, Massachusetts (AFTMA), the Massachusetts AFL-CIO, and the American Federation of Teachers in Washington, D.C. (AFT). You will begin to receive monthly mailing from the AFT, AFTMA and the AFT. To sign up for AFT benefits go to: https://www.aft.org/union-membership.

Joining with nearly 7,000 others make us a stronger union, better able to help each of us. (Consult your building representative for a copy of the contract.)

A weekly bulletin from the BTU is posted in your school with pertinent information for all. Look for it posted in the building, or, you can read it on-line at http://www.btu.org. You can also have it emailed to you automatically by signing up for information for all. Look for it posted in the building, or, you can read it on-line at http://www.btu.org. You can also have it emailed to you automatically by signing up for http://www.btu.org.

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The Boston Teachers Union provides a variety of services; we encourage you to take advantage of them. If you have any questions, please feel free to call me or email me at chart@btu.org.

— Colleen M. Hart
Paraprofessional/Substitute/ABA Field Representative
18 Hours of Professional Development - Long term and cluster substitutes will be required to attend the eighteen hours of professional development required of teachers. This time is scheduled beyond the school day and long term and cluster substitutes will be paid for this time.

Application for Teaching Positions - Those substitute teachers who are certified, recommended as a result of central interview, have a letter of recommendation from a Boston Public Schools administrator, and who apply for teaching positions, will be guaranteed up to four interviews. For the central interview, complete a Boston Public Schools interview, have a letter of recommendation from a Boston Public Schools administrator, and who apply for teaching positions, will be guaranteed up to four interviews.