

2021 BTU Election Procedures/Candidates' Guide

Who is being elected?

This process is for the nomination and election of Boston Teachers Union (BTU) Local 66 President, Vice-President, Secretary-Treasurer, Field Representatives (Elementary, Secondary, Paraprofessional/Substitute), Political Director, Executive Board, RTC Offices, Paraprofessional Council and Delegate to any Affiliated Body. The election will be conducted in accordance with the BTU Local 66 Bylaws and the AFT constitution.

2. How do I get on the ballot? *(New -- Covid-19 temporary measures)*

To run for office in the BTU election, candidates must collect a certain number of valid nomination signatures from BTU and/or RTC members in good standing. The number varies: for example, for President and other full time offices you must collect 100 nomination signatures; for Executive Board, 50; and for Delegate, and Para Council, 25. In the past, this has been done by collecting signatures on a paper form and submitting them to the Election Committee at the March membership meeting.

Due to the Covid-19 Pandemic, the BTU and the Election Committee have created a process for the electronic collection of nominations.

The BTU's tech team has created a system where members can nominate candidates by securely signing in to the [BTU member portal](#).

As a candidate, how can I reach out to my friends and colleagues to get nominations?

Candidates who wish to run for office can contact their colleagues by email, phone, or any other means to ask for a digital nomination “signature.” This will be akin to asking someone to sign their nomination papers as in past elections.

Do I have to “declare” as a candidate first?

No. When a candidate receives their first nomination for an office, an email will be generated to that candidate to inform them of the nomination. It will ask the candidate to accept or decline the nomination. An “accept” response will serve as notice that the candidate intends to run if qualified for the ballot.

If I accept my first nomination, will that mean everyone will know I intend to run?

No. Your acceptance will not be made public until all nominations are verified by the Election Committee, the candidate qualifies, and the draft ballot is released.

How does a member give their electronic “signature” to nominate a candidate?

The candidate will be able to provide a direct link in their email or text that will bring the “signer” to the member portal, where they will sign in using their BPS employee number, email, or BTU-provided Retirement Number and their password. (Of course, a member may also access the portal directly without a link from the candidate.)

For those who are not familiar with the member portal, there is a “forgot password” link and a registration link to help them get access.

After signing in, members will be taken directly to the nomination form. They will fill in the first and last name of the candidate they wish to nominate for a given position. After the system locates the name of the candidate, the nominator clicks “submit” to confirm.

What if two people have the same name?

If the system locates multiple members with the same name, the nominator will be shown school and/or departmental affiliation so they can choose the right person.

Will I be able to see a record of who I have nominated for each office?

Yes. That information will appear each time you log in.

Will the candidate know who has nominated them, and how many nominations they have?

Yes. Once submitted, the nomination “attaches” to the candidate. The candidate will then be able to log in to the portal to view all the nominations they have received.

Does the system preserve confidentiality?

Yes. Each nomination will only be able to be viewed by two people: the nominator, and the nominated candidate.

How many candidates can I nominate for each office?

As in the past, the system will not allow a member to nominate more candidates for an office than there are positions -- for example, no more than 1 nomination for president, no more than 12 nominations for Executive

Board. However, the system will allow a CANDIDATE to exceed the number of nomination signatures needed to qualify for the ballot.

What happens if I decline my first nomination?

If the nominated candidate declines the first nomination for an office, the system will reset so that it will no longer accept nominations for that candidate for that office. This information will be stored as a record of the declination. (This is important so that members do not use up their chance to sign for someone not intending to run for that office.)

Can I still use the old paper nomination forms?

The committee encourages all candidates to use electronic nominations where possible for the safety of all members. However, for those who do not have access to technology or are otherwise unable to use this process, the option to collect nomination signatures on paper forms will be available. Candidates may also choose to use a combination of paper and electronic signatures.

Where can I get the paper nomination forms?

Printed forms will be available in the lobby of the BTU starting on the day of the January membership meeting (January 13.) You may also download and print them from the BTU website. (Please note that they are legal size.)

There are detailed directions on the back side of the nomination forms. Please make sure that they are filled out completely and accurately, or there is a risk of some signatures being disqualified. It is often suggested to obtain twice the number of signatures needed just to be safe.

How do I submit my paper nomination forms?

Completed paper nomination forms **must be mailed** to the BTU (addressed ATTN: Election Committee c/o Denice Dwyer, Boston Teachers Union, 180 Mount Vernon Street, Boston MA 02125.) They will need to be received in the BTU office by the date of the March membership meeting (March 10, 2012.) Please note that candidates **will not be able to drop off forms in person at the BTU office.** Those who mail paper forms will receive an email receipt.

Signatures from any paper nomination forms submitted to the committee before the deadline will be entered into the system and will appear as part of the total nominations for a candidate. When paper ballot signatures are merged with electronic signatures, any duplicates will be invalidated.

When will the nominations be validated by the Election Committee?

The validation process will take place March 11-17. Election Committee members will be provided with multiple password protected laptops to be used to verify signatures. Verification includes legibility of member's name (if signed on a paper form) and confirmation that they are on the current BTU or RTC membership list.

Who updates the membership lists?

The membership list is maintained by BTU and RTC staff. If you have any questions or concerns about your membership status, please contact the BTU office or the RTC.

How will I be notified if I am on the ballot?

Upon completion of the validation process everyone who received nominations (or submitted paper nomination forms) will be notified by email

as to whether their name has been validated to appear on the ballot.

When validation is completed, a list of validated candidates will be sent to the membership by E-Bulletin and will be available on the website.

How is ballot order determined?

Candidates for all positions except delegate will be invited to pull numbers (via zoom in 2021) to determine the order in which they will appear on the ballot for both the primary and the final elections. If a candidate or designated proxy does not come for the drawing their number will be picked by a member of the election committee. Delegate order is alphabetical (reverse order for each election.)

Will I have a chance to review the ballot before it is printed?

Draft ballots will be circulated to candidates to allow for timely comments/corrections before publication of ballots. Final ballots will be published in the e-bulletin and the BTU website for all members to view.

How can I find out more, or get my questions answered?

During this election cycle an informational “Candidate Orientation” meeting will be held on Zoom on January 19th at 5 PM. Please look for registration information in the preceding ebulletin. Former BTU President Richard Stutman will moderate, and representatives from the Election Committee will also be on hand to help answer questions.

Where/how can I distribute campaign literature?

Candidates have the option of mailing literature using printed labels and/or electronically through a union approved mailing service. All costs associated with the mailing or distribution of campaign literature are the

responsibility of the candidate. Candidates should contact the BTU office to purchase printed labels or to arrange for the mailing list to be sent to the printer electronically.

How do I get my candidate statement in the BTU newspaper?

All candidates (except delegates) can submit a photograph and statement to be published in the Boston Teachers Union newspaper by email BEFORE Thursday, March 14th. Statements are limited to 350 words for candidates for full time office and 250 words for Executive Board and Para Council.

It is the responsibility of the candidate to put at the top of their statement their name and office for which they are running (counted in word limit). We expect the wording of a candidate's statement will be printed exactly as received. Candidate statements shall be presented in alphabetical order by last name for each position. If a candidate statement is not received the candidate name and office will be listed with the words "No statement provided."

All submissions should be addressed to **both** gvirchick@btu.org and mmaguire@btu.org.

Will there be a candidate night this year?

Members will be invited to a zoom candidate forum on Thursday, April 15. Candidates for all offices except delegate will be invited to address the audience with a brief statement. Participating candidates will speak in the ballot order selected.

Are there any legal limitations on how I can campaign?

The Election Committee expects all candidates to adhere to federal union election law which prohibits the use of any union or employer funds to

promote the candidacy of any person. This prohibition applies to cash, facilities, equipment, office supplies, copying, email and mailing lists. This means incumbent union officers campaigning for re-election, and BTU staff, may not campaign on time paid for by the union. Federal law also requires that candidates be treated equally regarding the opportunity to campaign. This means incumbents cannot use BTU sponsored meetings or events to campaign unless all candidates are allowed the same privileges.

The prohibition against cash and the use of union facilities, equipment, office supplies, copying and email applies equally to employer funds, facilities, equipment, office supplies, copying and email furnished by an employer. This means candidates cannot campaign during paid work time or use department facilities, equipment or email to campaign.

Federal law also requires that members be allowed to support the candidates of their choice, without being subject to penalty, discipline or reprisals of any kind.

Can I inspect the BTU membership list?

Each candidate may inspect (not copy) the BTU membership list once within 30 days prior to the election. No candidate is entitled to receive a copy of the list. The membership list will be available for inspection at the BTU office between 8am and 5pm Mon-Fri. Any candidate wishing to inspect the list should contact the Secretary-Treasurer at the BTU office at 617-288-2000 to make an appointment.

Can I observe in-person voting or vote counting?

Candidates or their designees may observe during in person voting and during counting of ballots.

Election Committee Information

Open Meetings

Committee meetings are open to BTU/RTC observers. A period of 15 minutes will be allowed at the beginning of each meeting for questions.

In this cycle, the committee meets via zoom at 5 PM on the first Wednesday of every month. Members who wish to attend may email Denice Dwyer at ddwyer@btu.org to obtain the zoom link.

RTC Designee

The RTC will designate a liaison to the election committee to be present at each meeting. RTC members can become a member of the election committee following the same procedure as active members.

Communication with Membership

Election-related information (i.e. by-laws, meeting minutes) will be published on the BTU web portal that is available to members only. Minutes will be approved within 72 hours following the election committee meeting, after electronic review/corrections by election committee members. When possible, documents will be made public on the website (i.e timelines and general resources for candidates.)

Vendor

The election committee develops an RFP for vendors, specifying the BTU's specific and unique requirements. The committee obtains bids from vendors, holds interviews, checks references, and selects a vendor in a time frame established in the bylaws. This process began in June 2020.

Election Procedures

A secret ballot election is required for all union officer elections; therefore ballots should be completed individually by the member receiving the ballot without interference or request to complete in a group setting.

Members may vote in person or with a mail-in ballot. All members will receive a mailing including mail-in ballot with instructions for return. Ballots will be sent out according to members' status (active or RTC member), and based on the Field Rep. that is assigned to their school, program or job title. Timelines for return of ballots will be determined with the selected vendor.

In person voting will be held at the BTU hall from 8am to 6pm on May 5 (primary, if needed) and June 1 (final). **All Covid-19 protocols will be followed.** Members will be asked to present a valid picture ID. After the vendor determines they are eligible to vote, a ballot will be given based on the Field Rep that is assigned to their school, program or job title. All members will be required to use voting booths. Booths and chairs will be available to members who prefer to sit. Only those waiting to vote or representatives of the vendor, election committee, or people staffing trouble tables will be permitted in the polling area. Campaign literature will not be allowed in the room. Personal notes will be allowed at the voting booths.

Counting of Ballots

A procedure will be developed with vendor that allows ballots to be counted in a safe manner and with results tabulated on the day/evening of in person voting (i.e. counting may be done while in person voting is occurring; no results or numbers can be released until total count is completed).

Announcement of results

Results will be announced once counting is completed in person at the union hall. Results will be posted that night in a special E Bulletin, at the BTU office and on the web page for all offices except Delegates. Delegate announcements will be made the following day. All results will be printed in the next edition of the BTU newspaper.

Contact the Election Committee

The election committee can be contacted at electioncommittee@btu.org. For voting concerns or urgent questions, please contact ombudsperson Kimvy Nguyen at 617-396-7969.