Throughout the past school year, BTU members have stepped up in incredible ways to support their students. You have delivered supplies, helped families navigate shortages of food and shelter, taught students simultaneously at great cost to time with your own families and work-life balance. You have learned new platforms on a moment’s notice, changed your practice to meet changes in the public health conditions, and advocated for appropriate facilities and services in our aging school buildings.

In the midst of it all, and unnoticed by many, there were big changes afoot in terms of federal policy, and they can be summarized in five letters: ESSER. ESSER provides a much-needed infusion of federal funds to K-12 schools across the US, including $430 million for the Boston Public Schools. This presents a chance to support our students and our schools as we emerge from the pandemic, but is also a once-in-a-generation opportunity to address some of the issues that have long plagued our schools, and to begin to redress some historic inequities in society. Below are some thoughts on the best use of these funds, using feedback gleaned from discussions with members, BTU surveys and forums with educators, families and community members.

First of all, we believe in supporting Black, Indigenous, Latino, AAPI families and communities of color with additional school investments to address historic inequities. Communities most impacted by the pandemic must be given priority in allocating resources.

A second basic principle is that educator voice is critical to making change work, and we encourage collaborative and transparent processes at the school and district level for students, families and communities to partner with educators and administrators to plan for the next school year.

Our educators are deeply committed to their schools and their students, and if we have heard anything from our members this school year, it is that people are worked to the bone. Relying on the same number of people and asking them to do significantly more work is not an option.

There should be no prohibition against adding personnel. While there are legitimate concerns about not creating unsustainable staffing levels that drop off a cliff when funding ends, we believe that we can and should add staff where it is needed. If we combine this with a strong program evaluation component, it will allow us to determine after a couple of years what is working well, and we can continue new positions that are effective with the additional state funding from the Student Opportunity Act.

We have long known that our school buildings and facilities are inadequate to meet the needs of our students today. Some of the funding should go to address the urgent and long standing facilities issues, including but not limited to retrofitting our buildings with high-quality HVAC systems to allow for better ventilation, and appropriate temperature control to allow our students to learn effectively.

Coming out of the pandemic, we have an opportunity to rethink some of how we do school. We should invest in educator-led professional development and curriculum creation, along with consulting with students and their families so our pedagogy and curriculum meets student and family needs in the current context.

Finally, we know that the pandemic has created a crisis of mental health issues for our students and their families. Now is the time to invest in more mental health and social emotional support for our students. Additionally, it is time to expand the Hub Community School model in more schools.

We have a great opportunity here — let’s make the most of it, and be sure that educator, family and student voices are a part of deciding how funds are expended. The resources need to get to our schools and our students immediately, because the needs are great, but so is our willingness and ability to do great things.
On May 24th, my father went to his eternal rest. It’s never easy nor is it ever the right time or place to lose a parent. I do count myself fortunate to have had 50 years of his time in my life.

My father was my biggest supporter when I ran for union office, only I did not know it at the time. When I first ran for Executive Board, I stood outside the BTU Hall (remember those days?), talked to people, held a makeshift sign, and generally just tried to follow what was going on around me. To be honest, I got quite the sunburn on my forehead and ears.

When the polls had closed, someone told me that the results would be a while and that I should get some fluids in me. Upon hearing that news, my father insisted that the family go out to eat. Having stood out in the sun all day, I agreed. We had a nice meal, talked about the day a bit, but mostly enjoyed each other’s company.

We were not gone all that long but upon our return most of the candidates had gone home as the results had already been announced. In a race where the top 12 are elected, I finished 13th.

Eddie Welch, then the BTU Secretary-Treasurer, approached me and in his unique baritone said, “Kid, you did great for a first timer, don’t be too disappointed.” I wasn’t, well, maybe a little bit.

My father said to me, “Well, you gave it a shot.” He didn’t say anything else to me on the topic. But years later I learned that he talked to everyone about it. And I do mean everyone.

Over the years my father joined me at the polls as often as he could. Honestly it seemed that he chatted with other people more than he did with me. Again, it was not until years later that I learned he was “working the room” on my behalf.

When dad reached his late 70s it was hard for him to walk. If he could not make an election, he’d call me the night before to remind me that “Tomorrow is your vote.” Afterward I’d either swing by my parents house on my way home or I’d call him from home. He’d ask me was so-and-so there, or did I see this person or that person. Most were fellow BTU candidates but some were names of teachers that I didn’t know. He knew them either from being at the polls all those years or from a family connection to Ireland. I began to wonder if dad had missed his calling for politics.

As is the Irish tradition, dad’s wake was a celebration of his life. So many teachers, students, and BTU officers came to the wake that my brother remarked, “I’ve met so many of the BTU Executive Board that I feel like I’m a member.” My brother’s remark perfectly encapsulated how my dad felt about our union family.

This election I did not stand outside the polls. It just wasn’t the same. I did come to the union hall at closing time to wait for the election results. That night I was thinking about my first election a lot. Sure I had lost, but that loss was nothing compared to the absence of my biggest supporter.

Please forgive me for any melancholy. My father had a good 85 years. I got to spend plenty of time with him during the pandemic and especially on the weekend when he passed. He worked hard to earn a living, and he lived for dancing.

This summer, I shall have a pleasant reminder about my father’s dancing. My parents met at a dance hall in Roxbury. I’ll be driving past that spot every day as I teach summer school at the O’Bryant. Life really does come full circle.
Know Your Rights Caren Carew
Is Summer School Treated Like the Regular School Year Contractually?

N o, it is not. Summer school is not governed by the collective bargaining agreement in the same way the standard school year is. Some time ago the BTU took the issue of summer school salary not being retirement worthy to court to demand that this earned income be retirement worthy. Unfortunately, the court ruled against the case. 

The BTU/BPS contract requires, "The School Department shall determine the summer program curriculum, all aspects of operation and administration of the program, including employment in the program, salary. In a term contract for employment. Employee participation in the summer program shall be voluntary. Selection of employees shall be as determined by the [school] Department."

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

T he City of Boston provides a ‘free and confidential’ program for its employees and their immediate families called the Employees Assistance Program (EAP). This service is there to help said individuals with challenges they may be dealing with, including substance abuse issues, job loss, depression, grief, being stressed out, and the like. To speak with an EAP clinician call 617-635-2200, Monday-Friday, 7:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. If in crisis mode, call 617-635-4570 to page an EAP clinician who is on call. EAP will continue to work with affected individuals as long as necessary.

When can a teacher collect Unemployment Compensation?

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

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

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

Is There Any Life Insurance Through the BPS for Teachers?

The BTU/BPS labor management agreement details, “The employer (City of Boston) contribution to the life insurance portion of the group insurance plan ($5,000 policy) shall be 50% with a provision for teachers to purchase more life insurance at a low rate” If you are interested in looking into this option, contact the City of Boston’s Group Health Insurance Office at 617-635-4570, located on the 8th floor of Boston City Hall. What’s the Substitute Class Coverage Policy When I’m Out?

T he BTU Collective Bargaining Agreement [contract] outlines: “It is the policy of the [School] Committee that substitutes shall be hired to cover classes of regularly assigned teachers when they are absent.”

In the event that the Committee after a good faith effort is unable to hire a substitute for a classroom teacher who regularly works with a paraprofessional, the principal may be requested to substitute only in those classes in which he or she normally works. (3) The paraprofessional is paid $6.00 per hour in addition to his or her regular salary.” This is not a list of either or. All three conditions must be met in order for a paraprofessional to be utilized as a substitute in their own class only. If these conditions have been met, the Para should check with the school secretary and administrator in charge of coverage to make sure the additional pay has been authorized by the BPS Payroll Department for their substitute work.

The contract continues, “The [School] Department will make a good faith effort to hire a substitute when a regularly assigned nurse is absent for more than one day. In every case, a substitute will be provided whenever a nurse is absent for three or more days.” “When a qualified Vocational Education substitute is not available the shop is to be closed.” “When a qualified Industrial Arts or Home Economics teacher is not available, the shop is to be closed.”

C aren Carew
BTU Secondary Field Representative

A Revisiting of Health Insurance – When Do New Teachers Sign Up, When Can We Change Our Plans, What Happens If Someone Gets Laid Off and Rehired or Is Returning From an Unpaid Leave of Absence…?

C ity 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 617-635-4570. New hires have 60 calendar days from the time they are hired in order to sign up for health insurance. If you are a provisional or permanent teacher who was laid off and then is recalled/rehired, you also must contact the Group Insurance Office within 60 days of being rehired from layoff in order to reenroll. Some people have assumed that because they have their job back, the insurance is just automatically reinstated – this is not the case. These deadlines are hard and fast.

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 continued on page 8
### BTU Officers

**President**
1. Jessica Tang (BTU Office/Young Achievers K-8) .... 2,491
   - Write-in .............................................. 33
   - Ilene Carver ........................................... 1
   - Richard Stutman .................................... 1
   - [Blank] ................................................. 486
   - [Invalid] .............................................. 5

**Executive Vice President**
2. Erik Berg (Philbrick Elementary School) ........ 2,343
   - Write-in .............................................. 23
   - Tom Gosnell .......................................... 1
   - [Blank] ................................................. 597
   - [Invalid] .............................................. 5

**Secretary-Treasurer**
4. Michael W. McLaughlin (Murphy/BTU Office) .... 1,544
3. Karen Cross (Richard J. Murphy School) ........ 1,032
   - Write-in .............................................. 3
   - Lea Serena ............................................ 1
   - [Blank] ................................................. 381
   - [Invalid] .............................................. 8

**Political Director**
5. Johnny R. McInnis (BTU School) ................. 2,303
   - Write-in .............................................. 6
   - [Blank] ................................................. 658
   - [Invalid] .............................................. 2

**Elementary Field Representative**
6. Lea Serena (Math) .................................... 579
7. Colum A. Whyte (Lee K-8) ......................... 534
   - Write-in .............................................. 2
   - [Blank] ................................................. 190
   - [Invalid] .............................................. 0

**Secondary Field Representative**
8. Caren Carew (King/BTU) ............................ 862
9. David Sims (Educator Supports Program) ...... 297
   - Write-in .............................................. 3
   - [Blank] ................................................. 141
   - [Invalid] .............................................. 5

**Paraprofessional/Substitute/ABA Field Representative**
10. Colleen Hart (Murphy) .............................. 322
   - Write-in .............................................. 2
   - [Blank] ................................................. 31
   - [Invalid] .............................................. 1

---

### Executive Board

25. Brenda Chaney (Retired) ......................... 1,473
26. Alice M. Yong (Retired) ......................... 1,346
12. James (Tim) Philip (Retired) .................. 1,331
24. Michael Maguire (Boston Latin Academy) 1,313
16. Caitlin Gaffney (Tobin K-8 School) ........ 1,338
13. Nicole Mullen (Boston Arts Academy) ...... 1,070
23. Casandra Samuel (Carley K-8) ............... 1,054
14. Cheryl L. Kelly, RN (Edwards Middle School) 1,051
19. Allison Doherty (Fenway High School) ..... 1,002
41. Vanessa LaRocque (Joseph Lee School) .... 933
17. Christine Choukas (Donald McKay K-8) ... 707
27. Tarquinia Queena Townsend (Irvng Middle) 682
11. Savannah Lodge-Scharff (Madison Park Tech) 632
18. Shailee Carter (Up Academy Boston) ....... 819
20. Nora Paul-Schultz (John D. O'Bryan School) 859
21. Donovan Lubarsch (Lee K-8) .................. 932
42. Robert P. Carroll (Retired) .................... 925
15. Rosalinda Mindere (Boston Day and Evening) 864
29. Matthew Tallent (Listed in order of voting results – cut-offs for representation at affiliated bodies will be determined at a later date based on these results)
33. Colleen Hart (Murphy) ......................... 249
32. Casandra Samuel (Carley K-8 Library Para) 171
28. Debra Brown (Kenney, Paraprofessional) 135
27. Vanessa LaRocque (Joseph Lee School) .... 108
35. Carla M. Johnson (F. A. Shaw Elementary) 98
30. Awilda Concepcion (Blackstone Elementary) 89
38. Sharon O'Dwyer (Condon K-8) .............. 89
29. Christina Buttiglieri (Retired) .................. 85
34. Cynthia Perris (Harry K-8) .................... 79
41. Sheila Yetman (Condon K-8) ................... 78
34. Debra Irby (Math/_tolerance Elementary) ... 61
40. Matthew Talient (Carley K-8) ............... 61
39. Donovan Lubarsch (Lee K-8) .................. 55
36. Todd Kerr (Coverage Paraprofessional) ... 55
32. Colleen Hart (Murphy) ......................... 55
42. Robert P. Carroll (Retired) .................... 55
15. Erik Berg (Philbrick Elementary School) ... 55
47. Alice M. Yong (Retired) ......................... 55
75. James (Tim) Philip (Retired) ................. 55
91. Michael Maguire (Boston Latin Academy) 55
84. Johnny McInnis (BTU) .......................... 55
106. Thomas Gonzell (Retired) .................... 55
56. Mary Ann Urban (Retired) .................... 55
111. Betsy Drinan (BTU) .............................. 55
89. Marilyn Marion (BTU) ......................... 55
70. Matthew Tallent (Listed in order of voting results – cut-offs for representation at affiliated bodies will be determined at a later date based on these results)
62. Jessica Tang (BTU Office/Young Achievers K-8) 1,601
127. Caren Carew (King/BTU) ..................... 1,196
82. Michael W. McLaughlin (Murphy/BTU Office) 1,162
112. Ed Doherty (Retired) .......................... 1,156
124. Brenda Chaney (Retired) ..................... 1,110
135. Erik Berg (Philbrick Elementary School) .. 1,087
47. Alice M. Yong (Retired) ......................... 1,087
75. James (Tim) Philip (Retired) ................. 1,087
91. Michael Maguire (Boston Latin Academy) 1,087
84. Johnny McInnis (BTU) ......................... 1,087
106. Thomas Gonzell (Retired) .................... 1,087
56. Mary Ann Urban (Retired) .................... 1,087
111. Betsy Drinan (BTU) .............................. 1,087
89. Marilyn Marion (BTU) ......................... 1,087
70. Matthew Tallent (Listed in order of voting results – cut-offs for representation at affiliated bodies will be determined at a later date based on these results)

---

### RTC Officers

**RTC Chair**
42. Marilyn Marion (Retired) ..................... 1,128
   - Ed Doherty .......................................... 1
   - [Blank] ................................................. 107
   - [Invalid] ............................................... 5

**RTC Vice-Chair**
43. Roslyn "Roc" Avant (Retired) ............... 1,099
   - Write-in .............................................. 1
   - [Blank] ................................................. 14
   - [Invalid] ............................................... 0

**RTC Treasurer**
44. Anne Broder (Retired) ......................... 1,080
   - Write-in .............................................. 1
   - [Blank] ................................................. 148
   - [Invalid] ............................................... 0

**RTC Secretary**
45. Joan Devlin (Retired) ......................... 1,092
   - Write-in .............................................. 1
   - [Blank] ................................................. 148
   - [Invalid] ............................................... 0

---

### Delegates

(Listed in order of voting results– cut offs for representation at affiliated bodies will be determined at a later date based on these results)
62. Jessica Tang (BTU Office/Young Achievers K-8) 1,601
127. Caren Carew (King/BTU) ..................... 1,196
82. Michael W. McLaughlin (Murphy/BTU Office) 1,162
112. Ed Doherty (Retired) .......................... 1,156
124. Brenda Chaney (Retired) ..................... 1,110
135. Erik Berg (Philbrick Elementary School) .. 1,087
47. Alice M. Yong (Retired) ......................... 1,087
75. James (Tim) Philip (Retired) ................. 1,087
91. Michael Maguire (Boston Latin Academy) 1,087
84. Johnny McInnis (BTU) ......................... 1,087
106. Thomas Gonzell (Retired) .................... 1,087
56. Mary Ann Urban (Retired) .................... 1,087
111. Betsy Drinan (BTU) .............................. 1,087
89. Marilyn Marion (BTU) ......................... 1,087
70. Matthew Tallent (Listed in order of voting results – cut-offs for representation at affiliated bodies will be determined at a later date based on these results)
Delegates
continued from page 4

80. Nicole Mullen (Boston Arts Academy) ........................................... 569
81. Karen Cross (Richard J. Murphy School) ........................................ 555
82. Paul Tenney (Retired) .................................................................... 543
83. Maritza Aguilar (OT Retired) ......................................................... 533
84. Irene Carver (BTU Organizer) ......................................................... 523
85. Vanessa Laborcos (Joseph Lee School) ............................................ 492
86. José Valenzuela (Boston Latin Academy) ........................................ 483
87. Kristen Pinto (Retired) .................................................................... 477
88. Nora Paul-Schults (John D. O’Bryant School) ................................. 475
89. Shakeeda Barthe (Up Academy Boston) ............................................ 469
90. Anzie Boder (Retired) ..................................................................... 463
91. Natalia Cuadra-Saez (Snowden) ...................................................... 456
92. Darren Wells (Iewing Middle) ......................................................... 454
93. Rosalinda Mendoza (Boston Day and Evening) ............................... 438
94. Karen Wood (Boston Latin Academy) ............................................. 446
95. Sherry Pedone (Retired, Mildred Avenue) ....................................... 422
96. Denise Barkley (Retired) ................................................................. 421
97. Marice Crosby (OT Retired) ............................................................. 413
98. Aleta Khan (Blackstone Elementary) .............................................. 408
99. Quatisha Clarke (Grew Elementary) .............................................. 267
100. Paul Christian (O’Bryant) ............................................................... 266
101. Michelle Chung (Gild Elementary) ................................................ 256
102. Russell Weiss-Irwin (S. Greenwood K-8) ...................................... 247
103. Timothy Maher (Lyndon K-8) ........................................................ 244
104. Silvia Lestrade (Trotter K-8) .......................................................... 244
105. Maria Brooks (Mather Elementary) .............................................. 242
106. Adrienne Jordan (Charles Summer) .............................................. 231
107. Katrina McClain (English High School) ........................................ 227
108. Gina Dorst (Kenney Elementary) ................................................... 225
109. Christine Arnold (Sumner Elementary) ........................................ 225
110. Mikeya Zetley (Donald McKay) .................................................... 223
111. Nina Leesin-Joseph (Fenway High School) .................................... 199
112. Heather King (Orchard Garden K-8) .............................................. 216
113. Todd Kerr (Coverage Paraprofessional) ........................................ 203
114. Ryan McGoey (East Boston High School) ..................................... 192
115. Elaine Maccall (Murphy) ............................................................... 196
116. Molly McKay Bryson (Suezd Boston) ............................................ 191
117. Danielle West (Carly K-8) ............................................................. 187
118. Maria Johnson-Faldaux (Roosevelt K-8 Lower) ............................. 183
119. Samantha Weintraub (Sumner Elementary) ................................... 183
120. Bernadette Thornton-Giles (Consulting Teacher) ......................... 178
121. Cynthia Ferris (Perry K-8) ............................................................. 159
122. Steven Bussman (Deaver STEM Academy) ................................. 158
123. Matthew Tullant (Carly K-8) ......................................................... 157
124. Karen Kilmain-Patrakin (Sumner) ............................................... 147

Denise Barkley .............................. 421
Mary Gaughan ........................................ 6
Stephane Wing ....................................... 2
Tanquina Townsend ........................ 1
B. Varitas (OIT) ................................. 1
Caren Carew ........................................ 1
 Christopher Donnelly ....................... 1
Cynthia Grant Carter ......................... 1
Daniel Lauria ....................................... 1
Donna Robbins (McCormick) .......... 1
Jean DeRoin ....................................... 1
Jean Duane ....................................... 1
Joanne Mc Coy-Lawrence ................ 1
Jo Shrahi ........................................... 1
Linda Thornsper ................................ 1
Lecinda Mills ................................... 1
Nizza Arashii (McCormick) .............. 1
Nisa Harrison .................................... 1
Paul Tenney ...................................... 1
Richard Shuman ................................ 1
 Ross Kochman ................................ 1
Sheila Yetman .................................. 1
Stephen Garnay ............................... 1
Steve Soto ....................................... 1
Thu Hoang Mai .................................. 1
Toni Robinson .................................. 1
Tyrone Francis .................................. 1
Valere Gumer ................................. 1
[Blank] ........................................... 0

BOSTON UNION TEACHER | June-July, 2021 | 5

Election Photos by CasSandra Samuel
We are extremely dismayed and angry that the editor of the Boston Teachers Union newspaper could have allowed an article by Edith Bazile, 30% plus space of the most recent publication to evaluate the purpose of the McKinley Schools, which exist expressly to serve the Special Ed department. We agree with her statement that the purpose of McKinley Schools is to educate students who failed both academically and emotionally in the Regular Ed school system.

Ms. Bazile begins her ramble with a brief mention of chattel slavery and young Black men such as Tamin Rice. She refers to a child named Justin as an example of the general discriminatory practices of public schools. She states that McKinley Schools are disproportionately populated with Black students primarily because they are erroneously viewed as more aggressive, more dangerous, and emotionally and behaviorally impaired. Later she elides the history of racism in public schools with the purpose of the McKinley Schools, literally stating that a placement in the McKinley School is tantamount to a prison sentence. “Once they go in, they don’t get out, which makes a McKinley placement a sentence, not a service for Black students.”

This shockingly dramatic statement is bewildering in that nearly 50% of the current staff at (MSEA) are persons of color, as is the current principal. The previous Head of School for the past several years (through June, 2020) was an African American woman.

It is very important to note that students enrolled in the McKinley Schools are NOT chosen by the McKinley Program. These students are referred to the Special Department by individual teachers in local school settings. Some teachers are assigned to more intensive and smaller classes called Lab Chambers located within neighborhood schools. It is not easy to become a student at the McKinley Schools because the student-teacher ratio is so small, and because the students have to pay the cost to educate students is much greater. The racial population of the McKinley Schools is decided by others. As Ms. Bazile was the director of professional development for Special Ed teachers for 10 years within the Boston Public Schools, she surely knows many of those people making referrals! If there is a disproportionate population of Black students at the McKinley Schools, those referrals must be traced back to all the local schools and Lab Chambers making those referrals. McKinley Schools cannot be solely responsible for the "inscrutability of Black boys?"

It is not known what McKinley School has ever visited a McKinley School. Our staff has been working on site since last October. We have to wonder from where the intense vitriol and racial accusations come. Her selected DESE statistics cannot be trusted without a comparison to other schools and similar programs of the McKinley Schools. She elides the history of racism in public schools with the McKinley Schools, literarily stating that a placement in the McKinley School is "a sentence, not a service for Black students."

Before addressing that, I want to address points of unity with Ms. Bazile. First, while I didn’t know the story in the opening about the letter that was sent to President McKinley by Black Bostonians asking him to speak out against lynching and his nonresponse, the story demonstrates — as we have known — that McKinley is no hero. The idea of changing the name of the school is a good one (and it has been under discussion at the school before this article). Second, we agree that the continuing existence of "inadequate facilities and crumbling infrastructure" at the McKinley Schools is outrageous. Superintendent Brenda Cassellius reportedly cried in her car after her first visit to McKinley South End Academy, but nothing has changed yet with conditions at our sites.

Third, yes, "the racialized targeting of Black males is not new, and it begins early in schooling where Black students are more harshly disciplined, suspended, restrained, expelled, overpoliced, arrested, and more frequently sent to DYS detention facilities" is accurate. But where do the McKinleys fit into this? Do we teach our students, disproportionately Black as Ms. Bazile wrote, that their black faces are "a curse" and that each student’s “struggle to change his [or her] condition is hopeless”?

No. I could write a book about this (actually I did, recently self-publishing To Change the World: Reflections of a Teacher — see the piece about it elsewhere in this paper), but for this article let me list seven of the many pieces of counter evidence that could be cited:

First, there are about 100 large framed color photos of our students (12x18, 16x20, and 20x30) on the walls of our hallways. Capturing a wide diversity of student achievements, these beautiful photos communicate our purpose at the McKinleys: that our students are witnessed and cherished.

Second, each spring Carolyn Burrell puts on My Inspiration, an amazing event where every student presents an essay they’ve written about who has inspired them in their lives, usually a family or staff member. Most of the students have never stood on a stage and addressed a large crowd before, but with the support they are given by their classmates and teachers, these students bring tears to the eyes of those in attendance and let us all know how, with inspiration, they are moving forward in their lives.

Third, in the SEA middle school there is also an Oratory Contest each June. Students choose poems, practice, and present before their peers and a group of outside judges. Four students receive small cash prizes and all who participate are given medals to wear around their necks. The competition is spirited, and the event is another one that prompts students to perform at levels they had not previously reached.

Fifth, the Scholars Brigade, led by Michael Scott, creatively combines cooperative games, Black history, and martial arts. Students in the Brigade develop their discipline, expand their knowledge and understanding, and deepen their pride. According to the Brigade website, their activities are "aimed at broadening their perspectives surrounding opportunity, and deepening their understanding of the obstacles that they will overcome to achieve their dreams." The Brigade put on a spectacular birthday celebration for Mel King in our gym a few years ago.

Sixth, the high school ELA students of Warren Pemster and Chris Busch have gone on over 130 field trips over the past eleven years to play at the Huntington (75+) and the ICA (55+), thereby increasing their cultural capital. Some of these same students compete in the annual August Wilson Monologue Contest, presenting passages — from the playwright who chronicled decades of African American life in his ten-volume Century Cycle —
unfortunately amplifies a recent one-sided article in the Boston Globe that, like Ms. Bazile’s article, completely ignores the thousands of students and families’ positive experiences at McKinley. The article is not only unfair but also leaves many critical parents and students as if positive voices do not exist.

I must admit that there have been some unhappy students and parents. Our school, like all others, has not been an unqualified success for everyone. We are not tears. We are not the only students who are crying, because BPS and other misguided staff and BPS parents describe the McKinleys as prisons. It is not true. It is not true. We are not the only group that is missing from the conversation when these families were in need of help long before they arrived at McKinley. We are not the only group who dry those tears and hold their hands because BPS has told them there is no other choice.

But, the staff who work tirelessly to promote an article – from someone who offered no insight to her legacy as a former SPED Administrator and more importantly, to the ongoing systemic racism in BPS or Special Education department to prevent the overrepresentation of Black and Brown boys in Special Education.

As a dues-paying member of the BTU, a proud staff member of all the McKinley schools, I am infuriated that you would publish something that would continue to target the symbol of the problem and not the problem itself. And to be clear, as publishing M. Rosell’s response to the article, at the very end of the paper, does not balance it out.

In a pandemic year, when it is incredibly difficult to show up for our students and ourselves – this feels like the ultimate form of disrespect from the union whose mission is to protect all its members.

McKinley Schools’ Purpose: A Student’s Perspective

By Abraharn Lennson

My name is Abraharn Lennson and I have been a student at McKinley Middle for a year and a half. During my time here, a second home and family was built. As I walked into the doors of McKinley, I was welcomed with warm smiles and hugs. In school, each day, I’m not only learning academics, but so many important lessons. Further, I have learned to accept change and love myself. I also learned that one single person in the world can change a world. The amazing teachers at McKinley taught me to follow in the footsteps of great leaders and become a leader myself.

When I came to McKinley, everything changed. The right place, the right people, the right therapy and academics. I am ready to move on from McKinley with so much confidence. One of the skills I have learned is S.E.I. (Social-Emotional Learning). We participated in a program called the Restorative Justice Circles. In this program, we are able to talk about anything that is on our minds – whether it was on our minds and it would not leave the circle. Although I do not like talking about myself or what is on my mind, I have learned so much more and I’ll take what I have learned from the circle to my new school.

Not only did I learn to teach me so much, but the books I had read with my amazing teachers did as well. I could relate my life to some of the amazing stories. For example, A Long Walk To Water by Linda Sue Park and Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom by August Wilson. As a Black woman, you can understand – more than most – the overrepresentation of Black and Brown boys in Special Education. Especially in our district – and definitely at the McKinley Schools. I would like to remind us all – the McKinleys are not perfect. We are not perfect. We are not perfect. We are not perfect. We are not perfect. We are not perfect. We are not perfect. We are not perfect.

In the BTU Newspaper’s editorial, I write about the process that led to the article’s publication and print how and why this article was appropriate to lead the paper in a new editorial direction. I appeal to the editors to help the McKinley community understand why we were betrayed by the very union that we respected and supported. I also appeal to the editors to consider the editorial policies that will be guiding the paper in the future so that all schools will know to whom they are accountable and in what circumstances. I believe we are owed nothing less.

McKinley Schools Are Once Again Disrespected

By Victoria Downes, Ph.D.

My name is Victoria Downes, I am a school psychologist that serves ALL four McKinley schools. I approach the most recent article in the BTU paper, a reprint of the original article Edith Bazile had written for the Boston Parents paper. I am appalled, dismayed, and quite frankly disturbed by this article. I also appeal to the BTU Newspaper editors to consider the editorial policies that will be guiding the paper in the future so that all schools will know to whom they are accountable and in what circumstances.

As a Black woman, I understand – more than most – the overrepresentation of Black and Brown boys in Special Education. Especially in our district – and definitely at the McKinley Schools. I would like to remind us all – the McKinleys are not perfect. We are not perfect. We are not perfect. We are not perfect. We are not perfect. We are not perfect. We are not perfect. We are not perfect. We are not perfect.

In the BTU Newspaper’s editorial, I write about the process that led to the article’s publication and print how and why this article was appropriate to lead the paper in a new editorial direction. I appeal to the editors to help the McKinley community understand why we were betrayed by the very union that we respected and supported. I also appeal to the editors to consider the editorial policies that will be guiding the paper in the future so that all schools will know to whom they are accountable and in what circumstances. I believe we are owed nothing less.

McKinley Schools Are Once Again Disrespected

By Victoria Downes, Ph.D.

My name is Victoria Downes, I am a school psychologist that serves ALL four McKinley schools. I approach the most recent article in the BTU paper, a reprint of the original article Edith Bazile had written for the Boston Parents paper. I am appalled, dismayed, and quite frankly disturbed by this article. I also appeal to the BTU Newspaper editors to consider the editorial policies that will be guiding the paper in the future so that all schools will know to whom they are accountable and in what circumstances.

As a Black woman, I understand – more than most – the overrepresentation of Black and Brown boys in Special Education. Especially in our district – and definitely at the McKinley Schools. I would like to remind us all – the McKinleys are not perfect. We are not perfect. We are not perfect. We are not perfect. We are not perfect. We are not perfect. We are not perfect. We are not perfect. We are not perfect.

In the BTU Newspaper’s editorial, I write about the process that led to the article’s publication and print how and why this article was appropriate to lead the paper in a new editorial direction. I appeal to the editors to help the McKinley community understand why we were betrayed by the very union that we respected and supported. I also appeal to the editors to consider the editorial policies that will be guiding the paper in the future so that all schools will know to whom they are accountable and in what circumstances. I believe we are owed nothing less.

McKinley Schools Are Once Again Disrespected

By Victoria Downes, Ph.D.

My name is Victoria Downes, I am a school psychologist that serves ALL four McKinley schools. I approach the most recent article in the BTU paper, a reprint of the original article Edith Bazile had written for the Boston Parents paper. I am appalled, dismayed, and quite frankly disturbed by this article. I also appeal to the BTU Newspaper editors to consider the editorial policies that will be guiding the paper in the future so that all schools will know to whom they are accountable and in what circumstances.

As a Black woman, I understand – more than most – the overrepresentation of Black and Brown boys in Special Education. Especially in our district – and definitely at the McKinley Schools. I would like to remind us all – the McKinleys are not perfect. We are not perfect. We are not perfect. We are not perfect. We are not perfect. We are not perfect. We are not perfect. We are not perfect. We are not perfect.

In the BTU Newspaper’s editorial, I write about the process that led to the article’s publication and print how and why this article was appropriate to lead the paper in a new editorial direction. I appeal to the editors to help the McKinley community understand why we were betrayed by the very union that we respected and supported. I also appeal to the editors to consider the editorial policies that will be guiding the paper in the future so that all schools will know to whom they are accountable and in what circumstances.

As a Black woman, I understand – more than most – the overrepresentation of Black and Brown boys in Special Education. Especially in our district – and definitely at the McKinley Schools. I would like to remind us all – the McKinleys are not perfect. We are not perfect.
"The education for mind and body was also linked to education for the spirit. Therefore, in the African tradition, it is the role of the teacher to appeal to the intellect, the humanity, and the spirituality in [their] student." —Lisa Delpit

Things have really been happening for Lovely Hoffman-Wine, music teacher at the Edison K-8 school! Not only did she publish an article in, The Massachusetts Music Educators Journal only did she publish an article in, but actress Viola Davis commented on Instagram about Lovely’s video, My Black is Beautiful (369,237 views on youtube) and Ms. Wine was featured in the March-April edition of this paper!

In the 2017 video that Ms. Wine wrote, (check it out on youtube or Vimeo), Wine sings about empowering young girls of color to embrace their beauty and shows middle school girls supporting each other in a classroom setting. I met up with Lovely to find out more.

Anne: You had a brush with fame this month. Tell me about that:

Lovely Hoffman-Wine: The work has received a lot of attention. Viola Davis (whose picture is on one of the magazines featured in the video) said that someone sent the video to her. If you know anything about Viola Davis, she is always talking about being a dark skinned black woman. Viola has talked about the issue of colorism and about embracing her skin color. She connected with the video because of that.

Colorism is discrimination based on complexion or skin hue. It usually occurs when people with people of the same ethnic group and is based on Eurocentric beauty standards. That’s why the song, My Black is Beautiful emphasizes, “look at her hair, her skin, her nose.” That’s why I wrote the video. I would see my students saying negative comments to each other about their skin color. I wanted to address that. It’s important to connect students to their cultural roots. I wanted them to learn that we all come from Africa. It’s an integral aspect of teaching for me is always asking, ‘how do we connect to the cultural roots of the students that I teach?’

For me, when attending school and college, I was never taught about my roots or where I came from. I didn’t reflect on those things in any of my classes. One of the first things that changed the way I thought was Carter G. Woodson’s, The Miseducation of the Negro. In that book he talks about our responsibility to pay it forward, to give back to our community. I studied a lot. This led me to teaching. Earlier in my career, I taught history at a charter school where we focused on developing an African Centered Curriculum. I, along with other teachers, organized trips to Ghana, Senegal and Uganda for students and community members. Many Black people have never gone back to Africa. Malcolm X said, “You can’t hate the roots of the tree without hating the tree.” We went to Ghana and saw the holding cells where enslaved Africans were held. We visited The Door of No Return in Senegal. That resonated with me and with the students.

My interest is ethnomusicology. Understanding the world through music history: I believe in holistic education—everything is connected. That’s something I bring to BPS. I allow students to explore their identity through music and music history. I think that is the model that works. If you have a topic you’d like us to explore, please email us.

Identity, confidence, self esteem go hand in hand.

I think that the arts provide a way for students to express themselves. We need to elevate the arts and teachers need to be supported. Specifically, the curriculum needs to be more reflective of the students. I think that the curriculum needs to be based on what is happening in the real world.

People may have a limited understanding of urban children who are so called at-risk. In private schools they teach kids how to learn, not what to learn. I think that is the model that works. If real learning is happening in the classroom, the kids will get the Standards.

Comment from Lovely:

This is work that I have been doing for many years. People are sharing that message. I hope that it is sustainable. This is the most rewarding and impactful part of being an educator. It is my hope that I can continue to teach students to aspire to be their greatest selves.

Check out Lovely’s new release to celebrate Juneteenth!

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TjennP9oveo

Lovely wrote the song, directed and edited the video along the Black Heritage Trail in Boston. These sites were instrumental in the Abolitionist Movement.

(Lovely Hoffman-Wine is an award-winning musical theatre performer, singer, songwriter, and music educator. In 2017, Lovely released her song, “My Black is Beautiful,” a song about self-love, self-acceptance, and pride, which went viral and reached #45 on the Adult Contemporary Radio Charts. Lovely has been featured on CNN, BET, The Boston Globe, and Essence magazine. With over 15 years in the classroom, Lovely’s focus is culturally significant music and character development. Her songs, including “A Kwanzaa Song” and “Black Lives Matter,” have been used in classrooms across the country. To learn more about Lovely and her work, visit www.LovelyHoffman.com.)

The Peer-to-Peer column is written by Anne Slater (aslater@bostonpublicschools.org) and Lauren Clarke-Mason (lclarke-mason@bostonpublicschools.org). If you have a topic you’d like to explore, please email us.

Identity, confidence, self esteem go hand in hand.

I think that the arts provide a way for students to express themselves. We need to elevate the arts and teachers need to be supported. Specifically, the curriculum needs to be more reflective of the students. I think that the curriculum needs to be based on what is happening in the real world.

People may have a limited understanding of urban children who are so called at-risk. In private schools they teach kids how to learn, not what to learn. I think that is the model that works. If real learning is happening in the classroom, the kids will get the Standards.

Comment from Lovely:

This is work that I have been doing for many years. People are sharing that message. I hope that it is sustainable. This is the most rewarding and impactful part of being an educator. It is my hope that I can continue to teach students to aspire to be their greatest selves.

Check out Lovely’s new release to celebrate Juneteenth!

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TjennP9oveo

Lovely wrote the song, directed and edited the video along the Black Heritage Trail in Boston. These sites were instrumental in the Abolitionist Movement.

(Lovely Hoffman-Wine is an award-winning musical theatre performer, singer, songwriter, and music educator. In 2017, Lovely released her song, “My Black is Beautiful,” a song about self-love, self-acceptance, and pride, which went viral and reached #45 on the Adult Contemporary Radio Charts. Lovely has been featured on CNN, BET, The Boston Globe, and Essence magazine. With over 15 years in the classroom, Lovely’s focus is culturally significant music and character development. Her songs, including “A Kwanzaa Song” and “Black Lives Matter,” have been used in classrooms across the country. To learn more about Lovely and her work, visit www.LovelyHoffman.com.)

The Peer-to-Peer column is written by Anne Slater (aslater@bostonpublicschools.org) and Lauren Clarke-Mason (lclarke-mason@bostonpublicschools.org). If you have a topic you’d like to explore, please email us.
To Change the World: Reflections of a Teacher

By David Russell

What do you do after the end of school to process the day’s events, to unwind?

There are many possibilities: Listening to music, talking with someone, exercising, taking a nap, etc.

Or maybe there is no time to process or unwind — just on to the next tasks. Cooking, childcare, classes, second jobs, etc.

One thing that I did intermittently on my train ride home after school was to write. This fall, after retirement, I placed a tall stack of the notebooks I’d filled over my decades of teaching next to a chair in my living room, and I began to read and write. Initially this was just for myself.

What it was like to be a beginning teacher? What did I learn about being a white teacher among black and brown students? What sense did I make of the possibilities and limitations of the job? How did I grow in my understanding and appreciation of my students? How did my teaching skills evolve? What impact did I have?

Along the way I’d written a number of formal pieces: essays, presentations, rewriting song lyrics for colleagues’ retirements, poems, and more.

What I ended up doing was compiling a volume of 30 such pieces from over my career and adding contextualization and commentary to them.

Some students I’ve kept in touch with, and four of them contributed words to my book. In the book are also photos of them from back in middle school and today as adults.

There are 16 QR codes that can be scanned to bring you to related material.

I’ve self-published the resultant book, To Change the World: Reflections of a Teacher.

If you are interested in obtaining a copy, or learning more about it, email me at russell.woodman@gmail.com and I will mail one to you. The cost is $13 including shipping, and you can use Venmo, Cashapp, or a check.

This process was meaningful and of use to me, and I hope that the product may be meaningful and of use to some of you as well.

A friend of mine said recently, when I told him about this project, "Everyone should write their memoirs. If not for publishing, just for themselves.” I encourage everyone to try to find the time, if only here and there and intermittently, to record your reflections. I’m glad that I did. Our memories fade, but our journeys are worthy of contemplation.

On the back cover are these words from Jeff, a former student: “Know that you guys saved lives maybe hundreds if you think about the kids that you gave another chance or maybe thousands if you think about the lives we may have effected since.”

I expect Jeff’s words apply to everyone who is reading this.

I’d love to some day read what you write!

(David Russell, a longtime BTU building representative, retired in September 2021 after 34 years of teaching, 32 of them at McKinley South End Academy.)

Teacher Leadership Fund Growing Great Results at the Greenwood

By Michael Maguire

WBUR’s Max Larkin featured the Greenwood Elementary School’s garden on its May 17, 2021 Edify segment. (wbur.fm/3vWl79y) "The Gardening Education Project at the Greenwood was funded by the Teacher Leadership Fund," notes Paul Titter, Director of Professional Learning. "The educators had the idea, wrote the grant, and are executing the project. One of many examples of the impact of this collaborative effort (between the BTU and BPS)."

Here are some excerpts from the 5 minute radio piece:

Crystal Alcala brings her second-graders out into the garden at least twice a week, where they unearth and identify bugs, dig up weeds and talk in an energetic mix of English and Spanish — the Greenwood is a dual-language school — about deforestation, overfishing and healthy soil.

It’s been a nice addition for all the school’s students, Alcala says: “Just taking a deep breath — that has been a blessing as well. We’ll spread out and do a little ‘mask break’ ... and you can see it in their faces, the relief.”

This fall, after retirement, I placed a tall stack of the notebooks I’d filled over my decades of teaching next to a chair in my living room, and I began to read. My train ride home after school was to write.

Along the way I’d written a number of formal pieces: essays, presentations, rewriting song lyrics for colleagues’ retirements, poems, and more.

What I ended up doing was compiling a volume of 30 such pieces from over my career and adding contextualization and commentary to them.

Some students I’ve kept in touch with, and four of them contributed words to my book. In the book are also photos of them from back in middle school and today as adults.

There are 16 QR codes that can be scanned to bring you to related material.

I’ve self-published the resultant book, To Change the World: Reflections of a Teacher.

If you are interested in obtaining a copy, or learning more about it, email me at russell.woodman@gmail.com and I will mail one to you. The cost is $13 including shipping, and you can use Venmo, Cashapp, or a check.

This process was meaningful and of use to me, and I hope that the product may be meaningful and of use to some of you as well.

A friend of mine said recently, when I told him about this project, “Everyone should write their memoirs. If not for publishing, just for themselves.” I encourage everyone to try to find the time, if only here and there and intermittently, to record your reflections. I’m glad that I did. Our memories fade, but our journeys are worthy of contemplation.

On the back cover are these words from Jeff, a former student: “Know that you guys saved lives maybe hundreds if you think about the kids that you gave another chance or maybe thousands if you think about the lives we may have effected since.”

I expect Jeff’s words apply to everyone who is reading this.

I’d love to some day read what you write!

(David Russell, a longtime BTU building representative, retired in September 2021 after 34 years of teaching, 32 of them at McKinley South End Academy.)

“Kids can grow up, learning how to plant, how to survive, learning how to eat properly,” Quest said. “This is a life skill that, once you learn it, it never goes away. Never goes away. So we’re just planting the seed — so to speak.”

(This segment aired on May 17, 2021.)
Dear Union Member,

The CPA firm of Joseph B. Cohan and Associates has examined the balance sheet of the Boston Teachers Union and the related statements of revenues, expenses, and fund balances for the fiscal years ending August 31, 2020. The audit was conducted in accordance with the auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America. Those standards require that the auditors plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free of material misstatements. The audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. The procedures selected depend on the auditors' judgment, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error. In making audit risk assessments, the auditors consider internal control relevant to the entity's preparation of the financial statements. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial statements.

We have audited the accompanying financial statements of Boston Teachers Union (the Union) (a non-profit organization), which comprise the statements of financial position as of August 31, 2020 and 2019, and the related statements of activities and cash flows for the years then ended, and the related notes to the financial statements.

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

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

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. The procedures selected depend on the auditors' judgment, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error. In making audit risk assessments, the auditors consider internal control relevant to the entity's preparation of the financial statements. And, in performing the audit, the auditors evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial statements.

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

In our opinion, the financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of Boston Teachers Union as of August 31, 2020 and 2019, and the changes in its net assets and its cash flows for the years then ended in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

Other Matter

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

Respectfully submitted,

Betsy Drinan
Secretary-Treasurer, Boston Teachers Union

Independent Auditor's Report

We have audited the accompanying financial statements of Boston Teachers Union (the Union) (a non-profit organization), which comprise the statements of financial position as of August 31, 2020 and 2019, and the related statements of activities and cash flows for the years then ended, and the related notes to the financial statements.

Management's Responsibility for the Financial Statements

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

Auditor's Responsibility

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

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

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

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

Contributions and Grants
Contributions and grants received are recorded as unrestricted, temporarily restricted, or permanently restricted support depending on the existence and/or nature of any donor restrictions. During the fiscal year ended August 31, 2019, the Union received a National Board Certification grant from the American Federation of Teachers in the amount of $20,865 to provide professional facilitator training and support to the Union. Expenses related to this grant incurred in the fiscal year ended August 31, 2019 totaled $3,981, resulting in temporarily restricted net assets of $16,884 at August 31, 2019. Expenses related to the federal money market fund incurred in the fiscal year ended August 31, 2020 totaled $9,654, resulting in temporarily restricted net assets of $7,230 at August 31, 2020. For the fiscal year ended August 31, 2020, the Union did not receive any contributions with donor imposed restrictions that would result in temporarily or permanently restricted net assets.

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

Income Tax
The Union is a nonprofit organization that is exempt from both federal and state income taxes under Section 501(c)(5) of the Internal Revenue Code. Accounting standards provide detailed guidance for the financial statement recognition, measurement and disclosure of uncertain tax positions recognized in an organization’s financial statements. Under these accounting standards, the Union is required to recognize the financial statement impact of a tax position when it is more likely than not that the position will not be sustained upon examination. Management has evaluated its significant tax positions against the criteria established by these accounting standards and believes there are no such tax positions requiring accounting recognition.

The Union’s Form 990, Return of Organization Exempt from Income Tax, for the years ending August 31, 2018, 2019 and 2020 are subject to examination by the IRS, generally for three years after they were filed.

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

2. Investments
The Union held $7,731,582 and $5,283,262 at August 31, 2020 and 2019, respectively, in mutual funds invested in equities and bonds that have short to long term maturities and in money market funds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Fair Value (Level 1)</th>
<th>Quoted Prices in Active Market for Identical Assets (Level 1)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dynamic Asset Allocation Conservative Fund – A</td>
<td>$ 5,283,262</td>
<td>$ 5,283,262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government Money Market Fund – A</td>
<td>$ 2,010,745</td>
<td>$ 2,010,745</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dynamic Asset Allocation Conservative Fund – A</td>
<td>$ 7,391,582</td>
<td>$ 7,391,582</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

5. Transactions with Related Entities
The Union rents office and conference room space from a related entity, B.T.U.H.W.F. Building Corp. on a tenant-at-will basis under the terms of a lease which expired September 1, 2005. The yearly base rent is adjusted annually on September 1st to correspond to the change in the “Consumer Price Index for all Urban Consumers for Boston, MA, All Items” during the twelve-month period which ended in the previous July. B.T.U.H.W.F. Building Corporation is responsible for all utilities, including water and sewer, and repairs to the rented space. Payments to B.T.U.H.W.F. Building Corporation totaled $120,393 and $118,019, respectively, for the years ended August 31, 2020 and 2019.

In addition, the Boston Teachers Union pays $15 per day for conference room set-up fees to B.T.U.H.W.F. Building Corp under an agreement which ended June 30, 2007. As of February 11, 2019, the agreement has not been modified and continues under the initial terms. Fees paid under this agreement were $0 and $30, respectively, for the fiscal years ended August 31, 2020 and 2019.

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

7. Retirement Plan Contribution
The employees of the Union participate in a defined contribution retirement plan. The Union’s contributions are equal to 10% of the annual salary of participating employees plus administration fees. The Union’s contributions to the plan totaled $171,647 and $158,325, respectively, for the years ended August 31, 2020 and 2019.

8. Advertising
Advertising costs are charged to expense when incurred. Advertising expense was $3,200 and $5,119 for the years ended August 31, 2020 and 2019, respectively.

9. AFT National Board Certification Grant
In July 2019, the Union received a National Board Certification grant from the American Federation of Teachers in the amount of $20,865 to provide professional facilitator training and support to the Union. Expenses related to this grant incurred in the fiscal year ended August 31, 2019 totaled $3,981. Expenses related to this grant incurred in the fiscal year ended August 31, 2020 totaled $9,654.

10. Legal General Union Issues
For the fiscal years ended August 31, 2020 and 2019, the Union received $356,653 and $149,909, respectively, in defense fund grants from AFT and AFT Massachusetts to help defray legal costs incurred in defense of BTU members. General Union issue legal fees incurred in the fiscal years ended August 31, 2020 and 2019, totaled $628,357 and $1,090,839, respectively. In addition, during the fiscal year ended August 31, 2019, the Union received insurance reimbursements of $61,900 in connection with a legal settlement.

11. Evaluation of Subsequent Events
The Union has evaluated subsequent events through June 3, 2021, the date which the financial statements were available to be issued.
BTU Celebrates with an End of the Year Party

Photos by CasSandra Samuel