

BTU Members Ratify New Three-Year Contract!



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President's Report Jessica Tang

People, Power and Policy

When we fight, we win, and over the last school year we fought hard as union and with our community allies for two big wins: eluding state receivership and winning a contract with many historic wins.

As always, there is more work to be done: We will need to continue to keep an eye on conversations at the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education to ensure that our win was not just short-term but continues in perpetuity. And instead of pouring energy into fighting back against terrible top-down decisions, we need a board that proactively implements what we actually need, and we need new state legislation that would fix the law that made such a threat even possible.

For our contract wins to be felt in our schools, we will need a strong contract education, implementation and enforcement plan. Winning contract language takes a herculean effort, but equally important is ensuring that our

members are familiar with all of the new contract provisions that now exist and to also then ensure that the language we have is implemented with fidelity and with the spirit in which it was intended. There are also always many more proposals that we may not have won in this agreement, but that we will need to continue to advocate for. That can still happen even before our next contract round, and we will be back at the bargaining table for the next round in just another year, too.

Our organizing campaigns – whether fighting state intervention or winning a contract depends on building power through our greatest resource: our union members, our parents, our students, our families, our community stakeholders... in other words, our **people**. It is through growing our activism that we are then able to build the **power** that is needed to fight and win. And not only can we defeat what we know will hurt our students and schools, we can fight **FOR** the **policies** we need to create the schools

our students deserve.

That is why this October's fall leadership conference is focused on **People, Power and Policy**. We will be sharing creating plans to continue to build power, sharing plans on how to implement and enforce our new contract gains, and forming plans to be on the offensive to create the policies that we actually need. We have the opportunity through new contract language to create new classroom level policy, particularly around special education inclusion over the next few years. Again, we will have to lean on our greatest resource – our people power – to ensure that what we envision for inclusion is enacted.

When it comes to COVID, there is hope that this year will be better than the last few and that we are out of the worst impacts of the pandemic. In addition to fighting back receivership, and negotiating a master contract, we won many safety agreements during the pandemic that became a model for



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many other cities. Winning a new master contract that not only addresses wages, historic paid parental leave, class sizes and so many other “bread and butter issues” but also “common good” issues such as addressing student homelessness, social emotional health, and racial inequities, also lays the groundwork for a much better school year.

Now it will be up to us, we the **people**, to continue to build the **power** we need to continue to win more of the **policies** that we believe in.



Politicians and union members gathered together at the Park Plaza Hotel the morning of Labor Day for a breakfast kickoff of the Massachusetts primary election, held the next day. The official theme of the event was Solidarity Forever but the unofficial theme was “Boston Is A Union City.” See more on page 12.