Welcome to a new school year!

For those who are new to the Boston Teachers Union, welcome. It was great to meet so many new educators through the New Teacher Institute and advocates that enables us to advocate, fight, and win.

For those who are returning this year, we want to honor and acknowledge how hard the last few years have been for everyone. Every time we thought it would get easier or better, it seems that there was another challenge thrown in our direction. Yet, you all persevered and kept going. Thank you all for keeping the ship afloat against such challenging odds.

As we return this fall, it seems that we are at an important crossroads. Last year was challenging not just because of pandemic recovery, but because of other major events as well: the search and transition of a new superintendent, new school board members, the transition between new mayors, the threats from DESE regarding receivership, and all the while we were negotiating, organizing, and advocating for a new contract.

There were a lot of silver linings throughout this time, however. First of all, despite the DESE report, the untold story is that despite all of the instability, disruption and unforeseen challenges, educators and school staff, school leaders, central office staff, students and families pulled together. Incredible work was done to keep this district going, despite all of the challenges and situations we found ourselves in that were out of our control.

It was also inspiring to see how we all came together against the threat of DESE receivership. BTU educators, parents, students, community members, city councilors, Mayor Wu and so many others came together and united under the belief that we are best positioned to realize the changes we need. The challenges weren’t new to us, and many of the solutions were already in the works. The ideas were there and they were ours to implement together in a collaborative, democratic way, not through a top-down, bureaucratic power grab.

Standing together in this fight helped us once again how at the end of the day we have so much more in common than not and there are key learnings from those fights. Through our joint advocacy, we saw how we are all incentivized to work together. We were reminded, as Congresswoman Ayanna Pressley often says, that “those closest to the pain, have to be closest to the power.” We also were reminded that when we fight and win, we also create better conditions. DESE will likely think twice before recommending another receivership or state takeover scheme.

The key learnings were a key part of our ability to settle a contract in July which members will take a vote to ratify or not on September 8, 4:30 pm at the BTU Hall.

We won a number of policies that represent the respect our educators deserve and will hopefully continue to shield us from the more drastic nationwide teacher shortage as we continue to attract and retain our teaching force. This includes a base raise, paid parental leave for everyone for the first time ever, a commitment to end student homelessness in five years, sustaining the increases of school counselors, social workers and school psychologists, and many other wins that were amongst our priorities.

Perhaps the most important part of the agreement, definitely the lengthiest, is the part dealing with special education and inclusion. The agreement does not prescribe specific models or class sizes or ratios because we realize that every classroom and school is different in regards to the individual needs, composition, and staffing. Instead, it relies on authentic collaboration at the school level to create plans for special education and inclusion that meet the unique needs of each school community and classroom.

What the agreement does prescribe is collaboration and the voices of BTU members at the table. The backbone of the agreement, step by step of the way. We believe that if we work together and are intentional about including educator voices we can solve the longstanding challenges to ensure our students get the services they are entitled to, and the inclusive learning environments all of our students, those with disabilities and those without, deserve.

We know that the existing model of requiring educators to get multiple licenses has not worked and will not work. For years, our members have seen it happen over and over... when you get the new license, your students lose support. We are still not ahead or many believe that DESE actually should assist and support. DESE needs to think bigger – and not limit ourselves to what can be done just within manufactured parameters, but think our students, those with disabilities and educators actually need to fulfill a vision of a fully inclusive district. There is a commitment to create a new joint BTU-DESE position to support school level teams in the work and to provide guidance as we create what should exist in schools. There are guardrails along the way to ensure what happened with the Schedule A shortages and planning, does not happen with inclusion planning.

We believe this new agreement paves the way for each school to create models that don’t rely on this failed strategy of focusing on licenses and compliance, and which does include sufficient additional staffing to meet the needs of students with sustainable workloads for educators. Our voices can and must be heard to maximize the opportunities in this agreement. We are empowered at every level to inform the plan, create, and implement them. And we should not hold back.

Undoubtedly, this school year, just like others, will present challenges. Whether foreseeable, or unforeseeable – such as the MBTA orange line fiasco – we will need to continue to lean on each other.

When times get tough, patience runs thin, we have to resist the urge to point fingers and lay blame, and remember that we are a family. Sometimes we fight, but we need to come together when facing collective challenges. We have to try not to be defensive or vindictive, give each other some grace and patience, and lead with love and humility. All of us have something to learn and something to give.

And when we make mistakes, it’s okay to admit it, because modeling that we are not perfect is also part of creating a culture where we have the room to grow and be better.

Again, we are at a crossroads. We have an opportunity to rise from this storm and create something better. We must do it together, and that does not mean it will always be easy or we will all agree all the time. As Frederick Douglass shared: “If there is no struggle there is no progress. Those who profess to favor freedom and yet deprecate agitation are men who want crops without plowing up the ground; they want rain without thunder and lightning. They want the ocean without the awful roar of its many waters.”

We all benefit from embracing the struggle, as counterintuitive as that may feel, and see struggle as a sign of needed change because when we struggle together, when we have accountability coupled with support–internally and externally, when we have disagreements but can listen enough to understand each other better, we can find better solutions and a better way to be.

We have already shown that we can do this as a union, focus on our shared interests, find our common ground, struggle through adversity and find the solutions we need, together, to create the schools our students deserve.

As we enter a new school year, there will undoubtedly be challenges, but we will work through them together and we will continue to collectively organize, build power, advocate, fight and win.

President’s Report
Jessica Tang
BTU President

Welcome Back! New Aspirations for a New School Year!

We have already shown that we can do this as a union, focus on our shared interests, find our common ground, struggle through adversity and find the solutions we need, together, to create the schools our students deserve.

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What Are the BTU’s Primary Responsibilities?

- Negotiate and enforce the contract
- Provide the best education we can for the system’s 60,000 students
- Work with the school community to insure our schools are as good as they can be
- Represent the membership in all matters related to their professional work
- Answer job-related questions and assist in any job-related matter, i.e., help our members navigate through the Bolling Building bureaucracy
- Promote public education
- Promote the growth and well-being of our profession
- Work politically through COPE to elect pro-public education, pro-union candidates
- COPE or the Committee on Political Education is by federal and state law a separate entity within the BTU devoted to supporting candidates who support public education and who otherwise favor our positions on a variety of work-related issues.

The BTU is Affiliated With:

- American Federation of Teachers (AFT)
- AFL-CIO, Massachusetts AFL-CIO
- AFT-Massachusetts (formerly called the Massachusetts Federation of Teachers)
- Greater Boston Labor Council (GBLC)

The conflict of interest policy of the Directors of the BTU forbids using the listserv for any purpose other than BTU business. The BTU listserv is used only for the dissemination of the weekly BTU e-Bulletin. The list is not used for any other purpose including, business, political or personal. The list is fully protected and will not be used for ANY other purpose.

How to Get in Contact With the BTU

- Visit office at 180 Mount Vernon Street, Dorchester, MA 02125
- Business Hours, 8 am-5 pm, all workdays, except legal holidays – School Year
- Business Hours, 8 am-4 pm, all workdays, except legal holidays – Summer
- Call 617-288-2000
- Log onto btu.org
- Email staff and officers; for an index, please see btu.org/about/contact-us/

How to Join the BTU’s 15,000-Member Listserv

Go to btu.org, upper right is sign-up box.

The BTU Officers and Staff

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- Erik R. Berg, Vice-President.................. btu.org/eblog
- Michael W. McLaughlin, Secretary-Treasurer............................ mml@aolbtu.org
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The Boston Teachers Union – Who, What, When, Where...

What Are the Class Size Limits?

In general, the class size limits are as follows:

- Grades K-1: 22
- Grades 2-5: 25
- Grades 6-8: 28
- Grades 9-12: 31

In inclusion classes, there can be no more than 20 students at any grade level, with no more than 6 inclusion students.

In Bilingual, ESL, and SEI classes, there can be no more than 20 students at any grade level, or 25 if a paraprofessional is provided (though only 22 with a para in grades K1 and K2).

In elementary schools where there is only one regular education class in a grade level, the above maxima may be exceeded by one or two students. Similarly, in secondary schools where there is a singular regular education course offering, the maxima may be exceeded by one or two students.

The BTU Executive Board

Robert P. Carroll
Brenda B. Chaney
Allison T. Doherty
Caillt Gaffney

Cheryl L. Kelly
A. Vanessa LaRocque
Michael J. Maguire
Rosalinda Midence

Nicolette Mullen
James “Timo” Philip
Cassandra Samuel
Alice M. Tong

Executive Vice President’s Report

Erik R. Berg

Class Size FAQ

It’s critical to file a class size grievance via the BTU website as soon as the violation occurs!

Will these limits be changing in the new contract?

If the proposed tentative agreement is ratified by the BTU membership and approved by the school in committee, there will be some changes in the future. But for the 2022-23 school year, the above limits should remain in place.

Are these strict limits?

BTU members, and the students we serve, have among the strongest class size language in the state. While we might want the actual limits to be lower, the limits themselves are firm. The most important sentence in our contract around class size is this: “Ultimately, the classroom teacher may insist that the class size maximum be enforced.” (p. 25) This right was reinforced by a settlement agreement reached in 2004 between the BTU and the BPS, and each year members insist on enforcement, which results in students being moved or staff being added.

When the Boston Public Schools assigns more students to a class than are allowed under our contract, they do a disservice to those students. It is our job to ensure that our kids get the differentiation and personalized attention that they deserve. We can do this by insisting that our class size limits are enforced.

What should I do if my class size is over the limit?

First, file a grievance immediately. Do not wait. You can do this from the BTU website. At the same time, please download and print the form at the same web address and record your class size each day throughout the year. We will need this at the end of the year to process your grievance and ensure proper payment if compensation is required.

Second, you should insist that the class size issue is addressed. This could involve moving a student or students to a different class or section, opening a new class, or adding a teacher. The district may offer a paraprofessional or other educational solution to you, and you should engage in a good faith discussion about it. But under no circumstances should you agree to anything without the knowledge and advice of your field rep, and you should stick to “insist that the class size maximum be enforced.” This follows our contract, and ensures that our students get the education they deserve.

My principal gave me a form to waive the grievance and accept some other solution. Should I sign it?

Do not sign any form without consulting with your building representative, field representative, or continued on page 14.
known your rights

Caren Carew
Health Insurance – when do new teachers sign up, who can view our plans, what if someone gets rehired or returns from an unpaid leave?

City of Boston Employees join health plans by contacting the Benefits and Insurance Division (Group Insurance) on the 8th floor of the Boston City Hall, telephone 617-635-4570. New hires have 30 calendar days from the time they are hired in order to sign up for health insurance. Permanent or permanent teachers, who were laid off and then recalled/rehired, must contact Group Insurance Division within 30 calendar days of being rehired from lay off in order to re-enroll 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 back, the insurance will automatically be reinstated – this is not often the case. These deadlines are hard and fast. Those wanting to partake in open enrollment must contact Group Health Insurance Division, Caren Carew.

If a teacher takes a leave of absence and decides to let their insurance lapse during their leave, they must sign up to reinstate their health insurance immediately during the spring open-enrollment period prior to their return in the fall. They will have to pay premiums out of pocket beginning on July 1st through September 1st, after which time deductions will be taken from their paychecks. Their insurance will remain effective as if they had never left.

During the year if a teacher gets married/divorced, has a baby, or the spouse who carried the health insurance for the BPS teacher loses their job, through a loss of coverage, the BPS teacher has 30 calendar days to notify and submit proof to Group Insurance of this event in order to qualify for the change to be made in their health insurance coverage.

Must elections be held for BTU Building Reps and/or School Site Council Members if the # of candidates running is equal to/less than that allocated?

Yes, according to the BTU by-laws, elections must be held. Running elections allows for write-in candidates promoting increased participation and capacity building within our union. Many times in buildings with long time BTU reps, people assume #s do not have to be run, even if interested, because it is unlikely they’d win. Even if that likelihood is the case, getting that name out there allows for increased interest in the positions on the ballot as well as for future elections, committees, etc. It is in the membership’s best interest to have more people being mentored to familiarize themselves with a variety of roles for teacher leadership in schools and within the BTU. Without active participation, rights and benefits we have long fought for will steadily erode. We cannot sit back and rely on someone else to stand up for us. We must do all our collective part in order to remain strong. We can only be divided and conquered or isolated and bullied if we fail to support each other. If each one of us decides to take on a small piece of what needs to be done, there’d be a more empowered membership, stronger committee in our schools, and a better educational environment for our kids. While it is sometimes difficult to stand up for what we know is right, it is far more difficult in the long run not to have done so.

What is filling a class size grievance important and how is it done?

Data shows that the lower the class sizes the better when it comes to meeting student needs. As a school class size maxima have been exceeded in your case, file the information immediately with the BTU directly on the btu.org website. There is only one regular education class in a grade level, the School Department may exceed the class size 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 continues; “In secondary schools where there is a shortage of regular education course offerings, the School Department may exceed the class size 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 employed where and when it suits the administration, but within the narrow parameters outlined above. Under no circumstances can this passage of the contract be implemented with special education classes. As it states in the collective bargaining agreement; “Class size for program prototypes 502.2, 502.3, and 502.4 shall conform with regulations published by the State Department of Education.” It is illegal to increase SPED class sizes. There is an arbitration award that the BTU obtained which states that even if these narrow parameters exist, the teacher thus affected has a right to decline said stipend and instead insist on the standard class size being enforced.

Filling the class size grievance puts pressure on the BPS to deal with the issue as quickly as possible or compensate the teacher for this contract violation. Money is a motivator for them to solve the problem. The teacher only gets credit from the day the file the grievance until the day it is resolved if it exceeds 15 school days. Let’s focus on children with the smallest class size possible. We fought for it – let’s maintain it.

What are the primary responsibilities of the BTU and with which groups are we affiliated?

The BTU is the exclusive collective bargaining agent for approximately 7,000 active teachers, other non-administrative/management related service providers, paraprofessionals and substitute teachers. There is also a retired teachers chapter of over 3,000 retired teachers. The BTU promotes public school education, its importance in a democracy, and the continued improvement of its quality as well as the growth and quality of our profession.

The Boston Teachers Union negotiates and enforces the BTU/BPS collective bargaining agreement (the CBA) on behalf of the Union. The Union assists in providing the best education we are able for the approximate 57,000 students in the BPS while working with the greater school community to help insure the same.

The BTU represents our membership in issues related to their professional work, including answering job-related questions and assisting in job-related matters.

The Union works politically through the Committee on Political Education (COPE) to electing pro-public education, pro-labor, pro-kid, pro-social justice candidates. Due to federal and state law, COPE is a separate entity within the BTU devoted to supporting candidates and initiatives that are pro-public education and pro-labor generally through a specific process set out in our bylaws.

The organizations with which the BTU is affiliated and pays dues to are: the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) – a group of state federations or ‘state feds’ of various labor unions within the national and state AFL-CIO; and the American Federation of Teachers – Massachusetts (AFTMA) – which is our state federation; the national and state AFL-CIO; and the Greater Boston Labor Council (GBLC) – a group of state federations or ‘state feds’ of various labor unions within the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) – a group of state federations or ‘state feds’ of various labor unions within the national and state AFL-CIO.

As an itinerant teacher, do I get a desk?

Yes. The contract language mandates, “All teachers shall have an exclusive working desk in one of the rooms that they use.” If you are a teacher who must travel between rooms, in at least one of the rooms you teach in, you must be provided with a desk that is yours alone in good repair for your exclusive use. If this is not the case, please gripe it immediately.

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 administrator in cooperation with the faculty senate and the parent council with one month advance notice. Such meetings shall be scheduled to exceed two hours each. 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 requested to accept a trainee teacher must give at least one weeks advance notice, and may refuse.” If a teacher does become a cooperating teacher, the contract outlines the follow.
The Boston Teachers Union hosted a reception for new educators on August 17, 2022.
The Boston Teachers Union endorses candidates for numerous elected offices including Boston City Council (december elections), Massachusetts Legislative offices (every two years) and Mayoral races (every four years). Candidates for all offices can either be current BTU members or those currently hold office and are seeking reelection, or a new candidate who is challenging an incumbent for an open seat. Members often ask about the process the BTU uses to endorse these candidates. This year due to data collection for the Census there was a realignment of some voting districts. Here are the different steps during the process:

During the election cycle, candidates will reach out to the Boston Teachers Union to request an endorsement. If there is a need for a shared decision-making body to reside within the district, the BTU will respond by sending a questionnaire for responses referencing issues that are important to our members. Once the candidate returns a completed questionnaire, the BTU COPE Committee (Comprehensive Organizing Policy Evaluation) will review the answers and decide if the candidate should be invited to the next step in the process, an endorsement interview. If the candidate meets the qualifications, COPE will next take a vote on whether the candidate should be recommended to the E-Board. A ⅓ vote is required for this recommendation to be made. Next, the E-Board receives the recommendation and votes whether to endorse the candidate or not. A majority vote is required. Lastly, a vote is held at the BTU monthly membership meeting during which members have the chance to ask questions then approve or oppose a candidate. A ⅔ vote is also required at this step, but once approved by the membership, the endorsement officially receives the BTU endorsement.

Once the candidate receives the BTU endorsement, The Political Director contacts the candidate to discuss their campaign. The BTU holds member-to-member phone banks on behalf of the candidate, which encourages members to get involved with the campaigns. A stipend is provided to members who participate in phone banking which are interested in assisting are encouraged to contact the Political Director. Members can also commit to door knocking, handing out flyers, or participating with other needs of the campaign.

The BEAT (BTU Electoral Action Team) is the group of BTU members used to engage other members in the election process. It is ideal to have at least five members volunteer from each school on this team. These members will have an opportunity to participate with information on how the BTU interacts with candidates both during and after elections (even after a candidate is elected, it is still important to monitor their voting). They are trained to do a ⅓ vote (at least five members voting). When participating with any political action, members are requested to do so only outside of the campaign. If you are interested in joining or participating with the BEAT or supporting any of our endorsed candidates, please contact the BTU Political Team.

The September Primary is an opportunity to Get Out To Vote! There were many ways to vote: mail-in voting, in-person voting, and voting on social media using the #BTUVote hashtag. Whether you voted or not, the true work begins. If you choose to vote by mail, an application can be found on the Secretary of State website, 2022 Vote by Mail Application. Once received, BTU members are encouraged to return it as soon as possible. If your ballot is not received prior to election day it will not be counted. Early voting occurred at designated locations to support BTU members within your city within your municipal district. #BTUVotes began to encourage BTU members to vote in every election. Primary elections are very important when multiple candidates of the same party are campaigning for the same elected position.

In the November General Election, if you choose to vote, please check to make sure your mailing address is correct and upload your photo to support the importance of voting.

If you would like more information or to participate in anything mentioned in this article, please contact Political Director, Johnny McNlins at jmclnins@btu.org or Political Organizer, Roberto Jimenez at rjimenez@btu.org.

Build Power through Shared Decision-Making in School Site Councils

By Careen Carew, BTU Secondary Field Representative

Stand up, speak out - building our collective agency and power through being part of our School Site Council space! Let’s continue to be out front in the area of school reform initiatives at each one of our schools and become an active stakeholder serving as a part of our School Site Councils.

Being an active part of shared decision-making enables us to be part of the solution. These initiatives that the school community wishes to implement in order to effect change at our school can be shared and supported by our collective bargaining agreement. Much of what people seek to accomplish when proposing to become pilot, innovation or incorporating experimental programs will be achieved through the SSC waiver process. Let’s become more part of the active solution of these concerns now facing us, rather than allowing, by tacit agreement, educational reforms be done to us not with us.

Shared decision-making utilizing the School Site Council model works better with increased BTU members active involvement. The time is now for all of us to get involved in our School Site Council space! Let’s continue to become involved along with parent and community partners to reclaim our schools and our collective future!

Becoming an active member of the community is hard. It is harder still to not act and to suffer the consequences of our voices, expertise, and concerns not being heard and included in the mix. Our everyday work requires us to focus on children – let’s make sure the decisions made with regard to the School Site Council (SSC) do just that through our active BTU involvement.

While 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 defines SSC as a shared decision-making body with actual authority and responsibility for their schools. School Based Management/Shared Decision-Making (SBM/SDM) is the process through which the BTU and the school community work together 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 year in May/June. Once BTU Building Reps are in place, they run elections prior to October 15th for BTU members to serve on the School Site Council (SSC) for all staff. The BTU and the School does run an election to select Faculty Senate members. The faculty elects representatives to those positions and the elected member(s) are tasked with nominating an SSC representative to Faculty Senate or Faculty Senate need to be supported by the faculty that elected them as they in turn, support our colleagues. We are all connected.

The role 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: priority and objective setting; development of a QISP; teacher evaluation; and scheduling of instructional program and curriculum; budgeting and fund raising aligned with school’s academic goals; use and management of discretionary funds; space utilization; hiring of new staff and 2nd and 3rd year provisional staff; staff assignment including tracking of teachers, parent/teacher relations and functions; solicitation and use of outside professionals; and even dress codes; any other matter relating to the operation of the school; on high school level review of student handbook.

School Site Council members are elected to bring forth and vote representing their constituency, not only themselves. In order to be able to do this effectively, they can often gain knowledge of the overall staff’s perspective through Faculty Senate meetings, as well as cluster/academy/unit/pod/SCL/ PLC meetings. Anyone from the school community can participate in these meetings. Only those who are elected SSC members may cast a vote, but up until the vote, all parties are encouraged to participate fully. Please refer to the BTU Collective Bargaining Agreement. - The Contract 2016-2018 (blue) pages 9-16 for specific information pertaining to School Site Councils.

It is expected that SSC will function by consensus or general agreement of its members. Consensus is defined as there being unanimous agreement but rather insures each group member has an opportunity to comment on, understand, and can live with the decision. The purpose of this procedure is to implement the building. Building consensus involves everyone having the opportunity to be heard. Members of the SSC are expected to operate as a single decision-making team to work together to fashion effective solutions to the schools educational challenges.

Monthly SSC meetings must be held and are subject to the Massachusetts Open Meeting Law requiring all meetings to be posted to the BTU site. Any member of the school community – not held behind closed doors. Shared decision making requires give and take. Decisions made by the SSC must be reached by consensus whenever possible. A quorum must be present at the SSC meeting in order to take a vote or make a decision. A quorum includes the principal, 2 teachers and 2 parents for an SSC of 9 – 12 members. For an SSC with more than 13 members, the school principal, 3 parents and 3 teachers. If a quorum is not present, no decisions may be made.

Shared decision-making is a process in which all members of the education community at the school level collaborate, identify in challenging, defining goals, formulating policy, implementing programs, and learn from experience.

In the RPS the SSC is an elected group of parents, teachers/BTU members, and students at the high school level, including the principal – that has the authority to make many of the decisions about the school. There can also be Associate members as well as the general public who are non-voting that can participate fully in SSC meetings. Elections for new BTU members to the SSC should be held by each school’s BTU Reps for openings on the SSC prior to the Council’s first meeting which contractually must be held no later than October 31st. The parent members to represent on the SSC are elected by the elected parents on each school’s parent council.

Minutes of the meetings must be made available within five school days following said meetings. If this does not occur, members in the school community – not held behind closed doors. Shared decision making requires give and take. Decisions made by the SSC must be reached by consensus whenever possible. A quorum must be present at the SSC meeting in order to take a vote or make a decision. A quorum includes the principal, 2 teachers and 2 parents for an SSC of 9 – 12 members. For an SSC with more than 13 members, the school principal, 3 parents and 3 teachers. If a quorum is not present, no decisions may be made.

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In the RPS the SSC is an elected group of parents, teachers/BTU members, and students at the high school level, including the principal – that has the authority to make many of the decisions about the school. There can also be Associate members as well as the general public who are non-voting that can participate fully in SSC meetings. Elections for new BTU members to the SSC should be held by each school’s BTU Reps for openings on the SSC prior to the Council’s first meeting which contractually must be held no later than October 31st. The parent members to represent on the SSC are elected by the elected parents on each school’s parent council.

Minutes of the meetings must be made available within five school days following said meetings. If this does not occur, members in the school community – not held behind closed doors. Shared decision making requires give and take. Decisions made by the SSC must be reached by consensus whenever possible. A quorum must be present at the SSC meeting in order to take a vote or make a decision. A quorum includes the principal, 2 teachers and 2 parents for an SSC of 9 – 12 members. For an SSC with more than 13 members, the school principal, 3 parents and 3 teachers. If a quorum is not present, no decisions may be made.

Shared decision-making is a process in which all members of the education community at the school level collaborate, identify in challenging, defining goals, formulating policy, implementing programs, and learn from experience.
Salary and Benefits

**Salary Step Placement**
- Up to 3 years’ credit for both inside and outside the system. If it totalizes service criteria.

**Salary Lane Placement**
- B15, Master, M.S., 30, 45, 65, 75, Doctorate

**Salary In-Service Credits**
- Length of in-service credits increased 30.

**Health Insurance**
- 3 different plans, PPO, 2 MAD.
- You must apply to 60 days of date of hire. Deadline is 9/1/04. New dependents must be added within 30 days.

**Health and Welfare**
- Includes Dental, Eye Care, and Legal services. City pays plan premium, but some benefits have small co-pays.
- Pay at BTU Health Center or call 617-288-5050.

**Salary Item: Tuition Reimbursement**
- All permanent teachers on steps 1-9. 9/1/04, and is paid as per the BTU contract; P. 47

**Salary Item: NBPTS Teachers**
- Members certified under the standards of the NBPTS now get a salary differential. See: http://www.nbpts.org

**Performing Arts Teachers**
- No eligibility requirement. See the National Board (NBPTS) website at http://www.nbpts.org

**Flexible Spending Program – Dependent Care**
- Up to $5,000 pre-tax dollars for dependent care, excellent tax benefit. Must fill appropriate program in order to be beneficial.

**Flexible Spending Program – Medical**
- Up to $2,250 (with this we pay in policy) more to cover deductibles and co-insurance. Must fill appropriate program to be beneficial.

**Flexible Spending Program – Transportation and Parking**
- As with the above programs, though city pays certain dollar limitations, this program allows the use of pre-tax dollars for certain transportation benefits. See the BTU website for more information.

**Life Insurance**
- City sponsors standard $5,000 term life insurance to all city employees and city vendor sells additional coverage. See: http://www.bostonschools.org/page/1995

**Disability Coverage**
- Public Pension Law grants limited coverage for short-term disability, none for long-term disability.

**Debt Forgiveness**
- The AFT now has a resource for those who want to learn about the federal student loan forgiveness programs.

**Salary & Benefits**

### Benefit

**How it takes effect?**
- You must apply with an application and documentation. Not necessarily retroactive, so no day to day in effect.
- Apply at BTU Health Center or call 617-288-5050.

**How to learn more?**
- See the BTU contract, p. 103-102.

**What to look out for?**
- Maintain date-stamped records of all transmissions to the Bolling Building. It is suggested that these documents be hand delivered as the change may expire.

### Inside or Prior Boston School includes substitute teaching time under certain conditions.

### Outside service does not.

### AFT is a non-profit organization.

### Please be sure to complete your application.

### Current status of the new BTU contract under “Contracts.” It is reasonably safe to assume that all financial benefits – salary, career awards, lanes, maternity leave, retirement savings plans, flexible spending plans, health insurance, tuition reimbursement, and so on – apply to all.

### The NBPTS re-certifies every five years, so you may have long forgotten about these programs.

### Beware of insurance salespeople 'popping in' to the teachers' room to sell you insurance. Salespeople in the teachers' room are not licensed to sell insurance in Massachusetts.

### The NBPTS re-certifies every five years, so you may have long forgotten about these programs.

### Beware of insurance salespeople ‘popping in’ to the teachers’ room to sell you insurance. Salespeople in the teachers’ room are not licensed to sell insurance in Massachusetts.
What if you prioritized your well-being this year?

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

Don’t just survive. Thrive.

What
Educators Thriving, a research-based personal development program to help educators achieve well-being

Who
This program is open to all BTU members, including paraprofessionals, related services providers, ABAs, and nurses.

When & Where
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 and all assignments can earn 3 Academic Leader Credits

Apply. Applications are due by Monday, Sept. 26th. Apply here: https://tinyurl.com/22-23BTUApplication

Want to learn more? Watch this overview video or come by Natalia Cuadra-Saez, BTU Organizer

What are the BTU Organizing Committees?

From fundraising hundreds of thousands of dollars in scholarship funds for undocumented students to winning a full-time Ethnic Studies coach position to involving hundreds of educators and students in the Black Lives Matter at School week of action, our BTU organizing committees do incredible work! These committees bring BTU members and community members together to advance union priorities and win tangible improvements in our schools and our communities.

What makes an organizing committee effective and strong enough to accomplish its goals? It starts with recruiting a core group of members and leaders who can meet regularly to advance the work of the committee. Our strongest committees take the time for core members and leaders to get to know each other. Once a core group has been identified and brought together, the next step is to get clear on the committee’s mission, vision, and goals for the year. These become the guiding light for the committee’s work that help it move throughout the year with intention and purpose.

From there committees start to meet on a regular basis—many meet monthly and most elect co-chairs to set agendas and facilitate meetings. BTU staff organizers are available to assist in developing committee organizing strategies like base-building (growing your base of committee members and allies), power-mapping (a visual tool for mapping out who has power and who can influence them), and campaign planning.

Whether you’re a seasoned organizer or brand new to organizing, joining a BTU organizing committee can be a great way to meet like-minded people, gain a sense of community, and develop leadership skills. Are you passionate about one of the committee issues below? Want to get involved? Email Natalia at ncuadrasaez@btu.org to get plugged in.

List of active organizing committees:

Unafraid Educators
Educators working to build sanctuary schools from the ground up where immigrant and undocumented students feel supported. Their work includes an annual Unafraid Educators Week of Action as well as a scholarship fund for undocumented students in BPS.

Black Lives Matter at School
Planning committee for the annual Black Lives Matter Week of Action in February.

Haitian Educators
Haitian educators and allies working to support the needs of Haitian educators, students, and parents in our schools.

Ethnic Studies Now!
The goal of this committee is to build a popular movement of people to advocate for the funding, staffing and professional training needed to develop, implement, and sustain ethnic studies in all BPS schools. It also serves to recruit and support educators to teach Ethnic Studies through providing professional development and building solidarity.

New Educators
Arranges social events and connects early-career educators with each other and with resources to help them survive and thrive through their first few years in BPS. As a union committee it also strives to identify and develop potential leaders by introducing new members to union structures and opportunities for involvement.

Housing Justice Committee
We are organizing the BPS community and partnering with City Life/Vida Urbana to pursue safe and stable housing by empowering families and providing access to resources, training, education, political advocacy, and networking.

Inclusion Done Right
Fighting for fully supported and funded inclusion classrooms and for the services our students deserve.

Climate Justice
Advocates in solidarity with local climate justice movements. To get involved with any of these committees email Natalia at ncuadrasaez@btu.org.
**Retirement Information**

By Michael W. McLaughlin, BTO Secretary-Treasurer / Boston Retirement Board

Retirement is governed by Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 32. Your contribution rate depends upon the date you were hired.

**HIRE DATE**
- Prior to Jan. 1, 1975: ..........5% deducted
- Jan. 1, 1975-1984: ..........7% deducted
- Jan. 1, 1984- July 1, 1996: .......8% deducted
- July 1, 1996-.................9% deducted

If hired between 1/1/79 – 7/30/81...an additional 2% is deducted for earnings over $30,000.

July 1, 2001 and thereafter.......11% deducted

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**MASSACHUSETTS GROUP 1 RETIREMENT PERCENTAGE CHART**

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age at Retirement</th>
<th>For Members-In-Service Hired ON OR AFTER APRIL 2, 2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percentage of Average Annual Rate of Regular Compensation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>R+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>45.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>56.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>66.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70</td>
<td>74.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**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 decide to participate in RetirementPlus, but then do not meet either the 20-year "teaching" or the 10-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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**Notes**

- **Age at Retirement**: The “Age at Retirement” chart shows how much of your salary will be used in the calculation. For MSERS Members hired ON OR AFTER APRIL 1, 2012, the average is based on your highest five year salary average. The minimum pension is 80% of the salary average.

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**RetirementPlus vs. regular formula**

- **No Difference**: Member receives full amount of RetirementPlus % increase.
- **Lesser Difference**: Member receives only that amount of RetirementPlus % increase needed to reach 80% salary maximum.

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**Effective April 2010**

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**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 rate calculation. The deduction rates are entered by the Boston Public Schools OHC Dept. upon your hiring.**

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

- 50-1.0 54-1.4 58-1.8 62-2.2
- 51-1.0 55-1.5 59-1.9 63-2.3
- 52-1.0 56-1.6 60-2.0 64-2.4
- 53-1.3 57-1.7 61-2.1 65-2.8 (max)

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*Two notes on “years of service”: For the purposes of determining your:
1) RetirementPlus % increase; only whole years of creditable service will be counted (the amount is not rounded up);
2) Percentage of allowable salary average, your years and full months of creditable service will be counted.

For example, if you have 32.6 years of creditable service, your RetirementPlus % increase is based on 32 years of creditable service, or 10%.
Welcome Paraprofessionals/CFCs

Dear Paraprofessional:

Welcome to the Boston Teacher Union. This memo has been written to acquaint you with some of the major benefits as part of the paraprofessional unit. You will automatically receive union mail once you complete and return an application for union membership. To receive an application, visit www.btu.org/memberinfo, call the BTU Office at 617-288-2000 or request one from your building representative. A bulletin is also sent from the BTU with pertinent information for each week. You can sign up to begin to receive these bulletins at www.btu.org/bulletin.

Sick Leave

You have only 60 calendar days from your first day of service to register! 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 paraprofessional in actual service on or before October 1st. Twelve (12) 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 do not need to give a reason for requesting a personal day, and you may take the day(s) anytime you wish. (There are a few minor restrictions regarding the use of personal leave; please consult your building representative for a full explanation.)

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

Health and Welfare Benefits

Paraprofessionals are eligible to take part in benefits provided by the union’s Health and Welfare Fund. Major benefits include a dental insurance plan and an eye care benefit. For more details and to enroll, call the Health and Welfare Office (located at Union headquarters) at 617-288-0500.

Health Insurance

Health insurance is provided through the City’s Group Insurance Office. They can be reached at 617-635-4570 or in person at Boston City Hall, Room 807. You have only 60 calendar days from your first day of service to register!

Joining the BTU

Joining is simple. Nearly 7,000 others makes us a stronger union, and better able to help each of us. We encourage you to join! As an exclusive bargaining agent, the BTU negotiates the contract, enforces the contract, and promotes the general welfare of the membership. All of the above benefits have come as a result of collective bargaining between the BTU and the Boston School Committee. Consult your building representative for a copy of the contract.

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

Credit Union

Paraprofessionals are also eligible to join the Tremont Credit Union, with offices located at the BTU building and at other locations. 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 paystub or a copy of your individual contract to either office and fill out an application. For more information, call 781-843-5626.

Union Operation

Our membership meetings are typically held the 2nd Wednesday of each month at 4:30 PM. Please keep an eye on the bulletin for more information and details. 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 AM to 5 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 phone number is 617-288-2000.

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 or email me at chrise@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 ABA pay scales shall increase by the same percentage increases as the other BTU bargaining units and the effective date of those percentage increases shall be the same as the effective dates applied in 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 accumulated for use in subsequent 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 the employee’s sick leave entitlement for use in subsequent years.

The work day for all ABA Specialists shall be seven and one half hours, inclusive of lunch. ABA Specialists 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 the presence of the students. The supervisors of ABA Specialists will review and approve ABA Specialists’ work day schedules prior to September 1st of each year.

Health and Welfare Benefits

ABA Specialists are eligible to take part 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 617-288-0500. 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 Boston City Hall, Room 807. You have only 60 calendar days from your first day of service to register!

Joining the BTU

As an 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 AFL-CIO, and the American Federation of Teachers in Washington D.C. (AFT). You will begin to receive monthly mailings from the BTU, AFTMA and the AFT. To sign up for AFT benefits go to: http://www.aft.org/member-benefits/

Joining with nearly 7,000 others makes 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 www.btu.org. You can also have it emailed to you automatically by signing up for it on our website.

Credit Union

ABA Specialists are also eligible to join the Tremont Credit Union, with offices located at the BTU building and at other locations. 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 paystub 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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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 chrise@btu.org.
## SALARY & BENEFITS

### Salary Step Placement
- Step 1 (first three years)
- Step 2 (after three years)
- Step 3 (after six years)
- Step 4 (after nine years)
- Step 5 (after twelve years)

### Salary Lane Placement
- Basic Rate and then Rates with 30, or 60, or 90 or In Service and/or College credits and Bachelor's degree plus Bachelor’s + 15.

### Career Awards
- After completion of 9 years of service and increase every 5 years.
- Provide Payroll with PS-03 form via the HUB to receive salary increase.

### Substituting for a Teacher
- Pay is $13.00 in addition to regular pay for substituting in his/her regular classroom.
- The new rate is pending the ratification of the contract.

### Health Insurance
- 6 different plans, HMO and out-of-network individual and family plans.
- You must apply within 60 days of the date of hire. Deadline is firm. New dependents must be added within 30 days.
- Call Group Insurance office at 617-635-4570 or see contract pg. 142 or http://www.cityofboston.gov key word: Health Benefit

### Medicare
- Anyone enrolling in public employment after 3/31/86 must pay.
- Medicare tax and is eligible @ age 65 provided the employee has 10 years’ service.
- Employees pay 1.45% of gross wages. Deductions are mandatory and continue with employment.
- http://www.medicare.gov

### BTU Health and Welfare Fund
- Includes Dental, Eye Care and Legal benefit. City pays plan premium, but some benefits have co-pays. Terrific benefit!
- For more info, call CPA Inc. @ 1-800-544-2340 or http://www.medicare.gov

### Sick Days
- Grants paid leave when Ill, up to time accumulated.
- 15 days granted per year; unused days accumulate and have cash value at separation after 10 years of service.
- See contract, page 146, or see building rep at school, or call BTU 617-288-2000.

### Personal Leave
- Grants paid leave for personal reasons.
- 2 days per year; unused days accumulate. Also, graduation days allowed.
- See contract pg. 146. Graduation days for members of immediate family including niece or nephew.

### Severance Leave
- Grants paid leave under limited circumstances.
- Depends on family relationship.
- See contract, page 145.

### Religious Holy Days
- Grants paid leave under limited circumstances.
- Depends on holiday specifics.
- See contract, page 146, 117

### Maternity Leave
- Paid as well as unpaid leave.
- The City of Boston paid Family leave policy offers 12 weeks of paid leave. Pending the ratification vote of the new contract.
- See contract, page 146, 117

### Leave for Adoption
- Paid as well as unpaid leave.
- Limited to 40 days per school year if you have accumulated days in your bank. (used to be 30 days)
- See contract, page 146, 115

### Leave for Family Illness
- Paid leave for family members' illness.
- Limited to 30 days per school year if accumulated, through more can be granted.
- See contract, page 146

### Duty Free Lunch & Break
- 30 minutes for lunch plus a 10 minute break per day.
- Duty free time.
- See contract, page 139

### Dependent Care Program
- Use pre-tax dollars for dependent care.
- Apply at BTU H&W office at 617-288-5883 at start of employment.
- See contract, page 145, or see building rep at school, or call BTU 617-288-2000.

### Flexible Spending Program
- Use pre-tax dollars for out-of-pocket medical expenses.
- Same as dependent care above, but additional eligibility requirement of one year’s service.
- Same as Dependent Care.

### Life Insurance
- City-sponsored plan.
- First $5,000 of term coverage comes with purchase of health insurance. 1/3 of premium for first $5,000 coverage paid by the city, not paid by employees.
- Call 617-635-4570 for more info. You are advised to shop around to private vendors for best cost before purchasing additional insurance beyond the standard $5,000.

## RETIREMENT, TAX-DEFERRED SAVINGS PLANS

### Public Pension
- Participation is mandatory under state law; vested employees obtain a pension at retirement.
- See contract, page 141.

### Participation in a 403B or a Tax-Sheltered Annuity (TSA) plan
- Participation is voluntary. 40 plus vendors to choose from.
- The number of vendors is likely to change.
- For more info, call CPA Inc. @ 1-800-544-2340 or Group Insurance at 617-635-4370.

### Job-Sharing
- 1/5 salary, 1/5 position.
- Full benefits.
- See contract page 135.

### Tuition Reimbursement
- $300 per year/$1,000 per year.
- For paras with 3 or more years of service $500 tuition reimbursement. 5 years, $1000 tuition reimbursement.
- See contract page 144. (Total $5,000 expenditure not to exceed $20,000 with new contract)

### Paraprofessional/Teacher Preparation Grant Program
- Legislative benefit, not contractual.
- State provides financial assistance for a para to become a teacher by obtaining a B.S. degree at a Mass. College. Some restrictions apply.
- See contract, page 139. Call City Treasurer’s Office 617-635-4151.

### MISCELLANEOUS

## ADDITIONAL CONTRACTUAL CHANGES FOR 2010-2024

### 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 uncertain dispute regarding any provision of this Contract, the above or any other provision, for that matter, it is your responsibility to call the BTU to speak with a building representative.

Most contractual disputes are resolved informally. However, in this event an issue cannot be resolved, you have a right to have the BTU proceed with a grievance on your behalf should the Contract support your claim.
Welcome Parent Liaisons

Welcome to the Boston Teacher Union. This memo has been written to acquaint you with some of the major benefits as part of the paraprofessional unit. You will automatically receive union mail if you complete and return an application.

Health and Welfare Benefits

You 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, contact the BTU Health and Welfare Office located at Union headquarters at 617-288-0500. Ask for the brochure which gives a detailed explanation of all benefits.

Health Insurance

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

Retirement, Tax-Deferred Savings Plans

Public Pension

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

Participants in a 403(b) or a Tax-Sheltered Annuity (TSA) plan

Participation is voluntary; 40 plus vendors to choose from. The number of vendors is likely to change. Pre-tax salary contributions grow tax-deferred until withdrawal.

Additional Contractual Changes for 2016-2024

2016-2024

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefit</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OTA</td>
<td>The City of Boston paid family leave policy (OTA) members are offered 12 weeks of paid leave.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leave for Adoption</td>
<td>Paid as well as unpaid leave. Limited to 40 days per school year if you have accumulated days in your bank. (Use to be 30 days).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leave for Family Illness</td>
<td>Paid leave for family members’ illnesses. Limited to 30 days per school year if accumulated, though more can be granted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duty-Free Lunch</td>
<td>30 minutes for lunch. Duty-free time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuition Reimbursement</td>
<td>Pending ratification vote. Starting 9/1/22, ABA Specialists who have completed at least one year of service shall be eligible for tuition reimbursement of up to $500 per year for approved college or graduate courses. At three years of successful employment, ABA specialists will be eligible for tuition reimbursements of up to $1,000 for approved college courses until they become eligible to receive their career award.</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 to speak with a building representative.

You may file a written grievance and not have a right to have the BTU proceed with a grievance on your behalf. 

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 will 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 mailings from the AFT, AFTMA and the AFT. To sign up for AFT benefits go to: https://www.aft.org/ member-benefits. 

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

A weekly bulletin from the BTU is posted in the building, or, you can read it on-line at www.btu.org. You can also have it emailed to you automatically by signing up for it on our website.
Welcome Substitutes

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

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 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. 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 BTU, AFTMA and the AFT. To sign up for AFT benefits go to: https://www.aft.org/member-benefits

Joining with nearly 7,000 others makes us a stronger union, better able to help each one 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 www.btu.org. You can also have it emailed to you automatically by signing up for it on our website.

Credit Union

Substitutes are also eligible to join the Tremont Credit Union, with offices located at BTU headquarters and at 2 Granite Avenue, Milton, MA 02186. Through the Credit Union you may authorize pay-roll deductions for savings and checking, arrange for a loan, and take care of many other banking needs. To join, bring $300.00 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

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Contractual Package for Substitutes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BENEFIT</th>
<th>HOW IT TAKES EFFECT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Per diem sub bonus</td>
<td>Per diem substitute teachers are eligible. Long term &amp; Cluster Subs are not eligible for the bonus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Licensed Differential</td>
<td>3% differential based on the per diem rate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Insurance</td>
<td>6 different plans, HMO and out-of-network individual and family plans.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retirement</td>
<td>All Substitutes must contribute to the CSIRA Retirement System.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BTU Health and Welfare Fund</td>
<td>Includes Dental, Eye Care and Legal benefits. City pays plan premiums, but some benefits have co-pays.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sick Days</td>
<td>Giants paid leave when ill, up to time accumulated. Pending ratification of the new contract. Starting 9/1/22, Long Term Substitutes will receive prospectively one (1) day of sick leave for every twenty (20) days worked. Cluster building substitutes will begin each school year with 9 sick days deposited in their bank each September 1. Sick leave will be cumulative from year to year, provided that the substitute teacher remains a bargaining unit member. Accumulated sick leave cannot be used while serving as a per diem substitute.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holidays/School Vacations</td>
<td>Giants paid leave. Pending ratification of the new contract. Cluster building substitutes will be paid for school holidays and vacation weeks. List the same holidays as in the other contracts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Development</td>
<td>Long Term Cluster Per Diem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maternity Leave</td>
<td>Paid as well as unpaid leave &amp; city continues to pay its share of health coverage. Pending ratification of the new contract. The City of Boston paid family leave policy BTU members are offered 12 weeks of paid leave.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duty-Free Lunch</td>
<td>All Substitutes will receive a duty-free lunch, consistent with school schedule. Duty-free time.</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. If ever an uncertainty or dispute regarding any provision of the Contract is discussed or any other provision, for that matter, in your best interest, call the BTU to speak to a building representative. Most contractual disputes are resolved informally. However, in the event an issue cannot be resolved, you have a right to have the BTU proceed with a grievance on your behalf should the Contract support your claim.
Facebook

The BTU has a Facebook Page called Boston Teachers Union. Please like the page to receive updates of union activities. Share with your own Facebook friends those items that are of interest to you. Engage in educational talk with your Facebook friends. Ask them to repost stories that are important to you. That way the union’s message is delivered to non-union people.

Twitter

The BTU’s Twitter handle is @BTU66. All unions have a “local” number for their national affiliation. Our local number is 66, hence the handle. Please “follow” us at @BTU66, like and/or retweet often. Good hashtags to employ are #BTUProud or #BTUContractNow.

Twitter is very popular with news media. Follow a local reporter whose stories you like. Retweet their stories when they are promoting public education, and reply to their tweets when they are.
We want to extend a warm welcome to our colleagues who have retired recently and joined the Retired Teacher Chapter. Thank you for the wonderful work you did educating students in our city. Now it is time to enjoy the pleasures of retirement.

If you or if you know someone who has retired recently and has yet to join, please encourage them to contact us at the BTU office every Wednesday and Thursday for an application and information about the RTC. Remember that you must join the RTC. Membership is not automatic. Dues are $5 per month for teachers and $2.50 for paraprofessionals. You can download an application from the RTC section on the BTU website; sign it; email it to mmarion@btu.org or mail it to the office, 180 Mt. Vernon Street, Dorchester, MA 02125. We also have a Facebook page that you can access at www.facebook.com/BTURTC or you can call the RTC office on Wednesday or Thursday and request an application.

New retirees should call the Health and Welfare Department of the BTU to apply for COBRA to continue your Delta Dental and eyeglass benefits for two years. After two years, you can apply for the RTC's Delta Dental plan or you can enroll in the City of Boston Metropolitan Life Delta Plan for all city retirees. Joining the Retired Teachers Chapter (RTC) of the Boston Teachers' Union means you are entitled to some interesting benefits. We offer RTC members the following benefits after two years of RTC:

- a free pair of eyeglasses from the Eye Care Center at the BTU Health and Welfare Fund, and apply for the RTC Delta Dental program for members and their spouse, or an individual plan. We offer a variety of travel opportunities. Members in the RTC can also take advantage of their continuing membership in the Boston Teachers Union to take advantage of the international travel opportunities offered to all BTU members.

For more information on the RTC's Delta Dental Program or the eyeglasses' benefit you can contact Roz Avant, RTC Vice-Chair at the RTC office on Thursdays from 10 am to 2 pm.

The RTC holds two business meetings each year; one in the Fall and again in the Spring. We are excited to be holding our meetings in person again. We also hold a luncheon in the Fall for all RTC members. The social committee is working on the luncheon and more information will be provided as soon as the plans are finalized. In addition to the Fall Luncheon, we hold a holiday brunch in early December and a Spring Luncheon in May.

Please make sure that we have your up-to-date email address. We cannot use the BPS email for our RTC communications, so if you want to receive the latest information from us, we need your email address. We do not share your information with anyone. You can also find the latest information on our Facebook page (www.facebook.com/BTURTCL).

Our legislative committee worked very hard throughout the pandemic. We were able to secure an increase to our COLA base and continue to push for a higher COLA base. If you are interested in working on this committee, or any of our other committees you can contact the RTC office on Wednesday or Thursday from 10 am to 2 pm.

Many RTC members joined the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) of the University of Massachusetts at Boston to take advantage of the wide variety of courses that range from language to film to literature to Tai Chi to American history, American politics, art and food. Details of the Institute’s offerings, newsletters and special events can be found at the following links:

- [https://www.umb.edu/olli](https://www.umb.edu/olli) (main OLLI web page)
- [https://www.umb.edu/olli/courses](https://www.umb.edu/olli/courses) (information about courses)

### AFT Women’s Committee honors Union Activists at the Convention

The AFT Women’s Committee honored Union Women that have been long-time activists in their locals. This year, the AFT honored the following BTU activists:

- **Diamond Recognition for 50 Years of Service**
  - MaryAnn Urban

- **Gold Recognition for 40 Years of Service**
  - Roz Avant
  - Mae Bishop
  - Denise Henderson
  - Josefina Lascano
  - Kristin Pinto

- **Silver Recognition for 30 Years of Service**
  - Maritza Agrait

We continue to explore additional benefits for our members and welcome your input. If you have a idea of activities the members would be interested in doing or benefits we should explore, please let us know. You can call the RTC office Wednesday or Thursday from 10 am-2 pm or send an email to mmarion@btu.org.

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### BOSTON TEACHERS UNION INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL PROGRAM 2023-2025

#### Greece/Dubai

Oct 21 - November 3, 2022

- $3999.00 pp sharing
- Single Supplement $950.00

- **Destinations:**
  - Acropolis, Greece
  - The Museum of the Future Dubai

- **Deposit is $500; first-come, first-served**

- **Price:**
  - Early Bird Price:
    - Greece: $3999.00 pp sharing
    - Dubai: $2599 per person sharing
    - Lisbon: $2599 per person sharing
  - Regular Price, register after September 5, 2022:
    - Greece: $4699 pp sharing
    - Dubai: $3299 per person sharing
    - Lisbon: $3299 per person sharing

- **Program Dates:**
  - February 16-25, 2023
  - September 5-15, 2023

- **Additional Costs:**
  - 4-day Barcelona extension is $699 per person sharing

- **Deposit:**
  - $500; first-come, first-served

- **Contact:**
  - Dana Royster-Buefort
  - 617-838-9742
  - roybue02@gmail.com

#### Portugal/Spain/Barcelona

Feb 16 - 25, 2023

- **Program Dates:**
  - February 16-25, 2023
  - September 5-15, 2023

- **Price:**
  - Early Bird Price, October 1, 2022:
    - Portugal/Spain/Barcelona: $2999 per person sharing
    - Lisbon: $2599 per person sharing
  - Regular Price, register after September 5, 2022:
    - Portugal/Spain/Barcelona: $2599 per person sharing
    - Lisbon: $2599 per person sharing

- **Deposit:**
  - $500; first-come, first-served

- **Contact:**
  - Maritza Agrait
  - 617-529-0519
  - magrait@comcast.net

- **Tentative Upcoming Travel Opportunities:**
  - Thailand (February 2023)
  - Vietnam (April 13-23,2024)
  - South Africa (April 13-23, 2022)
  - Ghana (August 3-15, 2023)
  - Hong Kong (November 2-11, 2023)
  - South Africa (April TBD 2025)

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Welcome Parent Liaisons...
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– Colleen M. Hart,
BTU Paraprofessional/ABA/Substitute Field Representative