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President's Report Jessica J. Tang

Healing, Recovery and Hopes for a New Year!

At the start of the summer, there was hope that this fall we would be able to return to a greater level of normalcy for in person learning. Fall is now almost here, and it has become much clearer that we are not out of the woods yet, and that the Delta COVID variant is a true threat that must be both mitigated and addressed. As we prepare for the return to school, there is much to think about, reflect on and hope for.

First, to heal and move forward, there is much to acknowledge and understand. Over the last year and a half our students, families, union and larger community have often struggled through a roller coaster of uncertainty, fear, anxiety and loss. The impacts on both physical and mental health are real. Many are still recovering from sickness, loss and/or grief from losing loved ones

and now have further anxiety about the unknowns: What will the impact of the Delta variant be? What will school look like this fall? Will I get sick? Is the vaccination safe for me or my students? When will we really be able to put this all behind us?

While we do have some answers—for example, there is conclusive evidence that vaccines do work and are the most effective mitigation strategy along with masking for those who cannot get vaccinated—there also are many questions we do not have the answers to. We have been working hard throughout the summer to learn as much as we can so that we can both advise our members and advocate for what is needed to have as smooth a school year as possible.

We hope that everyone was able to take time this summer to heal and recov-

er emotionally, physically and mentally. Self-care throughout this school year will be key so that we can continue to be our best for our students, families and each other. Undoubtedly, there will be stressful times and remembering to take a deep breath, centering ourselves and self-regulating our own emotions so that we can treat each other with grace, patience and kindness to the best of our abilities would serve us all well as we struggle together to find solutions and confront the challenges ahead.

In addition to social emotional, mental and physical health healing and recovery, our attention, of course, is on supporting our students and their academic, social and emotional needs as well. We have been advocating for ESSER funds to be used specifically for these goals, in addition to many other needed supports, including those for our highest needs students, special education students, EL students and early education students. Facilities continue to be a priority as we confront both the challenges underscored by the pandemic due to our aging facilities and prepare for the reality of climate change.

Our new contract proposal, "Creating the Schools Our Students and Communities Deserve, Post Pandemic and Beyond" lays out our vision for what our students and schools need both in terms of physical and holistic needs. Please do visit our website www.btu.org to read the whole proposal and learn more about how to take action to win our next contract. It will take all hands on deck to heal, recover and achieve the hopes we have for our students and schools.

We have new member-led structures including Contract Action Teams (CAT), member-organizers, a new Contract Organizing Committee, Silent Representatives and, of course our existing critical structures including Building Reps, Faculty Senates, Executive Board, organizing committees and others leadership groups that will all be working together to build power and strengthen our union. These structures are there to ensure all of our members have a voice,



Jessica J. Tang
BTU President

are able to get involved and stay engaged as we start a new year.

While the challenges ahead are not all known, we are well positioned to confront them, and to lead in the process. Doing so, however, will require thoughtful solutions and proactive positions. It will also require us to look beyond our differences, open our minds to learning and growth and try to do things differently when needed. We will need to be flexible, adaptable and reflective as well. We will touch on these themes in more detail at our fall leadership conference, "Be Water: Building Flexibility, Unity and Strength." We hope to see you there!

The theme is adapted from Bruce Lee, who said,

"Be like water making its way through cracks. Do not be assertive, but adjust to the object, and you shall find a way around or through it. If nothing within you stays rigid, outward things will disclose themselves. Empty your mind, be formless, shapeless, like water. If you put water into a cup, it becomes the cup. You put water into a bottle and it becomes the bottle. You put it in a teapot it becomes the teapot. Now, water can flow or it can crash. Be water, my friend."

Water may be flexible, but it is also strong and can move boulders, carve mountains and nourish us. Let us start the year strong, unified, and looking out for each other.

Notes From the Executive VP Erik R. Berg

Class Size FAQ

Big Idea: Class Size Payments are Way Up so Class Size Violations are Way Down!

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

Class Size Violations are Down

We are pleased to say that due to our aggressive stance to ensure that our students are able to learn in reasonably sized classes, the district has violated our contract less and less. For example, in SY 2016-17, 289 teachers had class size violations, and this past year, the number was down to only 61. While that is still too many, we are making great strides towards reducing the number of violations. Since 2016, BTU members have received settlements totaling over \$2.5M for class size violations, including \$494,000 for SY 19-20.



Erik R. Berg
BTU Executive Vice President

What are the class size limits?
In general, the class size limits are as follows:

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The Boston Teachers Union - Who, What, When, Where...



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

What 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)

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 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.

Check your status or sign up for membership at members.btu.org

Class Size FAQ...

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In inclusion classes, there can be no more than 20 students at any grade level, with not 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.

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.

What is the Leadership Structure of the BTU?

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

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

Serving as a direct link between the union office and the membership are elected BTU Building Representatives from every building and program in the city. BTU Building Rep's are elected each year to service the members at each school site and act as the liaisons between the union office and our membership in our schools.

BTU Executive Board

Robert P. Carroll	Cheryl L. Kelly	Nicole E. Mullen
Brenda B. Chaney	A. Vanessa LaRocque	James "Timo" Philip
Allison T. Doherty	Michael J. Maguire	CasSandra Samuel
Caitlin Gaffny	Rosalinda Midence	Alice M. Yong

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Erica Kouka, BTU Organizer	
Roberto Jiménez-Rivera, Political Organizer	
Carlos Fernandez, AFT National Rep.	

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 our advice is 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 BTU Vice President Erik Berg, at eberg@btu.org. **We believe that class size issues are most effectively addressed by adding personnel.**

What payment is owed to teachers who taught oversubscribed classes and the grievance was not resolved?

There are two arbitration decisions governing this situation, if the violation is not resolved within 15 school days of filing the grievance. The calculations are different for elementary and secondary teachers, and in some cases are many thousands of dollars.

I filed a class size grievance in a previous school year. What is happening with that grievance?

Class Size grievances filed through the 2019-2020 school year have been resolved, and payment should have been made in August. We are continuing to work through the class size grievances from SY 2020-2021 in an effort to resolve them and ensure compensation if the violation was not resolved within 15 school days.

Why is Filing a Class Size Grievance Important and How it is Done?

Data shows that the lower the class sizes the better when it comes to meeting student's needs. As soon as class size maxima have been exceeded in your class, file the information immediately with the BTU directly on the btu.org website. Refer to the grade and type of class you teach (elementary, middle, high, regular ed., SPED, gym, SEI, etc.) in the BTU contract on pages 39-40 to determine the appropriate number for your respective class. You should file a class size grievance once the number of children reporting to your class is in excess of the contractual maxima – it can't just be the number on your class list, the students must have physically attended school at least once and then not have been officially discharged.

Only in special cases are additional students able to remain in the class thus exceeding the maxima as negotiated. The contract states; "In elementary schools where 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 singular regular education course offering, the School Department may exceed the class size maxima by one or two students. For one student in excess, 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 except 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 may insist on the standard class size being enforced.

Filing 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 they 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.

Must Elections Be Held for BTU Building Reps and/or School Site Council Members if the Number 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 it's pointless to run even if interested because it is unlikely they'd win. Even if that likelihood is the case, getting their 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 in our stead. We all must do our collective part in order to remain strong. We can only be divided and conquered or isolated and bullied if we don't 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 communities 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.

Health Insurance – When Do New Teachers Sign Up, When Can We Change Our Plans, What if Someone Gets Rehired or Returns From an Unpaid Leave...?

City of Boston Employees join health plans by contacting the Health Benefits and Insurance Division (Group Insurance) located on the 8th floor of Boston City Hall, telephone 617-635-4570. New hires have 60 calendar days from the time they are hired in order to sign up for health insurance. Provisional or permanent teachers, who were laid off and then recalled/rehired, must contact Group Insurance within 60 days of being rehired from lay off in order to reenroll. Some people assume that because they have their job back, the insurance is 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 five weeks in April and the first week of May. Those wanting to partake in open reenrollment must contact Group Health Insurance at City Hall. 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 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-September 1st after which time; deductions will be taken from their paychecks. Their insurance will take effect July 1st as a result. 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, then the BPS teacher has 30 calendar days to notify and submit proof to Group Insurance of this event in order to qualify for the



Caren Carew
BTU Secondary
Field Representative

change to be made in their health insurance coverage.

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's advance notice. Such meetings shall not 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 still must have a month's advance notice of the meetings. No (traditional school) teacher can be compelled to attend longer than two hours, twice a year in a traditional BPS school.

Do I Have to Accept an Intern or Student Teacher?

No. The contract clearly states, "Any teacher requested to accept a trainee shall have at least one week's advance notice, and may refuse."

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

This coverage was designed to be given by having the student teacher cover for the days so that it is a no cost item for the BPS. If a cooperating teacher does not arrange for the coverage while the student teacher is still in the classroom, the cooperating teacher loses the benefit. It's a use it or lose it scenario.

What are the Primary Responsibilities of the BTU and With Which Groups are We Affiliated?

The BTU is the exclusive collective bargaining agent for the BPS's approximately 7,000 active teachers, other non-administrative / management related service providers, paraprofessionals and substitute teachers. The Union also represents over 2,600 retired BTU members. The BTU promotes public school education, its importance in a democracy and the continued improve-

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Boston Union Teacher

EVERYONE IS WELCOME HERE!

¡TODOS SON BIENVENIDOS AQUÍ!

EVERYONE IS WELCOME HERE!

BLACK LIVES MATTER

**Boston Teachers Union,
AFT Local 66, AFL-CIO**

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All articles must be appropriate to the publication, and in good taste.
Letters to the Editor should be sent to letters@btu.org

DEADLINE:
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All copy should be e-mailed to mmaguire@btu.org to aslater@btu.org
This deadline will be strictly adhered to.

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Function Office	617-288-3322
Lounge Office	617-288-3322
Vision Center	617-288-5540
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Empowerment Through School Site Council Shared Decision Making

By Caren Carew,

BTU Secondary Field Representative

Let's continue to be out front in the area of school reform initiatives at each one of our schools through shared decision making as a part of our School Site Councils.

When we are part of shared decision-making, we are part of the solution. Many initiatives that a school community wishes to implement in order to effect change at their school can be modified or 'waived' through our collective bargaining agreement. Much of what people seek to accomplish when proposing to become pilot, innovation or in-district charter school can largely be achieved through the SSC waiver process. As a school community, let's become more a 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 believe, to stand up, be counted, and to become involved.

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 through the School Site Council (SSC) do just that through our active BTU involvement in the decision-making impacting our collective futures.

While all schools in Massachusetts are mandated to have School Site Councils (SSC) composed of parents, teachers, and the principal – it is only an advisory body to the principal. In contrast, the Boston Public Schools defines SCC 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 that School Site Councils use to engage the school community in the planning and implementation of school improvement/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 – Shared Decision-Making Team. The BTU Building Representatives also run an election to select Faculty Senate members. The faculty elects representatives to these positions and the elected representatives, be they to the BTU, SSC, or Faculty Senate need to be supported by the faculty that elected them as they in turn, support their 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; design and scheduling of instructional program and curriculum; budgeting and fund raising aligned with schools' academic goals; purchasing and disbursement of discretionary funds; space utilization; hiring of new staff and second and third year Provisionals; staff assignment including teaching and non-teaching duties; parent-teacher relations and functions; solicitation and use of outside professionals and social service resources; setting reasonable 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 represent 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/SLC/PLC meetings. Anyone from the school community is encouraged to attend SSC meetings. Only those who are elected

SSC members from their respective constituency/stakeholder groups (BTU, parents, HS students) 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' 2018-2021 (red) 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 does not require that there be unanimous agreement but rather ensures each group member has an opportunity to comment on, understands, and can live with and is willing to implement the decision. 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 school's educational challenges.

Monthly SSC meetings *must* be held and are subject to the Massachusetts Open Meeting Law requiring all meetings be posted and open to the entire school community – not held behind closed doors. Shared decision making requires give and take. Decisions should 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, two teachers and two parents for an SSC of 9-12 members. For an SSC with 13 or more members, a quorum includes the principal, three parents and three 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 in identifying challenges, defining goals, formulating policy, implementing programs, and learning from experience. In BPS 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 on the SSC are elected by 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, there is not adequate communication within the school community of what is occurring in the decision-making body of the school which often results in a feeling of disenfranchisement. Any SSC member can put items on the agenda of an SSC meeting as long as they fall under the authority of the SSC. SSC meetings are to be co-chaired by the principal and one other member elected by the SSC. This is to ensure that one person and their agenda do not dominate the meetings. The concept is shared decision making – not having one person make the decisions and then share them with the rest of the committee!

This structure is a potentially powerful tool enabling the SSC to effectively 'waive' certain components of the BTU Contract. The Union has provided a means for individual schools to have more autonomy as it relates to our contract – if the procedure is followed properly. The BTU is part of the solution to school improvement efforts. Our Contract reads in part, "*The purpose of shared decision making is to create a climate in the schools where the faculty, parents, administrators, ... working together share the responsibility and accountability for school improvement, better student performance, increased satisfaction among professional educators, greater involvement by and with parents, and stronger support from the community.*"

The SSC is able to adopt waiver proposals which must then be brought to a vote and approved by a specified threshold of BTU staff which then must be approved by the district-wide SSC Steering Committee. These waivers can include decisions which are contrary to the contract rules, regulations and policies of the School Committee and the Superintendent. There are very specific things that may and may not be waived and there is a specified process listed in the contract in which things that are able to be waived may be waived. Please refer to the official BPS SSC Manual and the BTU contract for more info. The SSC has a very specific role with respect to the school's budget process as well. SSCs must adhere to all federal and state laws, regulations and court orders.

Well-planned, well-attended SSC meetings are at the heart of successful SBM-SDM. The SSC monthly meetings must be convened at times mutually agreed upon by the parent and teacher elected members with the established schedule then publicized for the entire school year. The SSC sets the agenda for meetings and items can be submitted by any SSC member. The School Administrator and the other SSC Co-Chair must solicit agenda items from all SSC members as well as from the greater school community prior to each meeting date. Minutes of each SSC meeting must be distributed within 5 (five) school days of the meeting according to the BTU contract and in the interest of keeping the school community fully informed.

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

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Know Your Rights...

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ment 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 [CBA/contract]. The Union assists in providing the best education we are able for the approximate 65,000 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 assist in 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] – our national federation – as well as with the Massachusetts AFT [formerly the MFT] 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 greater Boston area that form an alliance primarily related to political and social justice issues. We are all connected working for working people, their families, community, and our collective futures!

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 grieve it immediately.

Why is Political Action Important for Our Union?

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

The political action program makes decisions to endorse candidates. The program follows a process for endorsing candidates after completing a questionnaire, interviewed then voted upon by the committee for recommendation to the executive board then recommended for a vote to the membership for the final approval. Elected officials affect education through decisions they make which becomes policy or law. They vote on education initiatives, funding, and they set policies that affect our members and schools. These decisions can have an impact on our collective bargaining ability to negotiate issues such as salary, class size, transfer provisions, school building improvements, and many other factors that impact our students, members working conditions, and schools. Elected leaders can have a huge impact on our ability to do our job well and support our students!

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

- To support and strengthen the commitment of the citizens and the government to excellence in public education at all levels.
- To promote and strive for the

improvement of the public schools by encouraging and stimulating educators to take a more active part.

- To encourage educators to know and understand the nature and actions of their government and the important political issues, as they pertain to public education.
- To assist educators in organizing themselves for more effective political action, and in carrying out their civic responsibilities.
- To engage in any suitable activities to achieve the purposes stated above.

What is the process used by the Union to endorse candidates?

The COPE committee meets when needed to make decisions on whether or not to make a recommendation to endorse a political candidate running for office. First candidates are provided a questionnaire with a series of questions pertaining to issues that would support our members before being asked to come before the committee for an interview. Decisions are made via candidate voting records by incumbent candidates,

responses to questionnaires, and in-person interviews. Decisions can also be made based on support for or against bills presented for upcoming legislation or City Council Motions that are voted on. That legislation could include COLA for retirees, support for English Language Learners, funding for education, educator licensure, MCAS moratorium, and other interests on education. The COPE committee then votes by a 2/3's decision to recommend to the Executive Board. The Executive Board votes on the recommendations from COPE by a 2/3's decision before sending it to a vote by the members for a 2/3's decision at the membership meeting. If the membership endorses the candidate, the candidate will be backed by our Union throughout their campaign.

Why are members asked to pay into COPE?

Based on state and federal laws there are restrictions on what Union dues are used for. A member can voluntarily decide how much is deducted for COPE. For example, members can contribute through payroll deduction by a suggested minimum of \$2.00 for Teachers and \$.75 for Paraprofessionals on their COPE



Johnny McInnis
BTU Political Director

card which is attached to the Membership card. COPE reports political actions to members at membership meetings. As required by law there is a yearly audit to confirm that funds were documented for appropriate use.

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

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

#BTUVotes

<p>At-Large</p> <p>Michael FLAHERTY www.michaelflaherty.com</p>	<p>At-Large</p> <p>Julia MEJIA www.juliaforboston.com</p>	<p>At-Large</p> <p>Ruthzee LOUIJEUNE www.ruthzeeforboston.com</p>	
<p>District 1</p> <p>Lydia EDWARDS www.lydiaedwards.org</p>	<p>District 2</p> <p>Ed FLYNN www.edforboston.com</p>	<p>District 4</p> <p>Joel RICHARDS www.moreforD4.com</p>	<p>District 5</p> <p>Ricardo ARROYO www.votearroyo.com</p>
<p>District 6</p> <p>Kendra HICKS www.hicksfordistrict6.com</p>	<p>District 7</p> <p>Angelina CAMACHO www.camacho4community.com</p>	<p>District 8</p> <p>Kenzie BOK www.kenziebok.com</p>	<p>District 9</p> <p>Liz BREADON www.liz4AB.com</p>

The Boston Teachers Union is proud to endorse these candidates for Boston City Council.

*Jessica Tang, President, BTU
Johnny McInnis, Political Director, BTU*

PRIMARY DAY IS TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 2021

Great Read Alouds for September 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3	4
5	6 Labor Day	7 Rosh Hashanah	8 International Literacy Day	9	10	11 9/11
12	13	14	15 First day of Hispanic Heritage Month	16 Yom Kippur	17	18 Fugitive Slave Act
19	20	21 Mid Autumn Festival - Chinese Moon Festival	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	28	30		



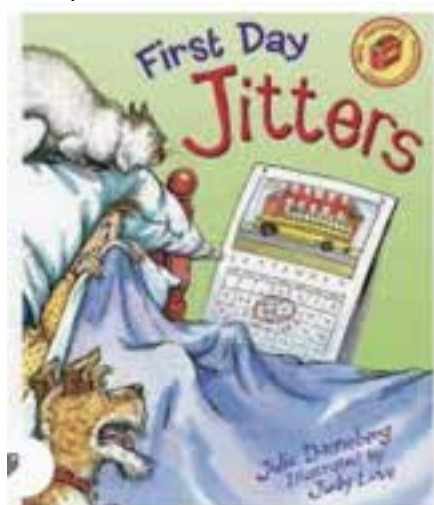
Lea Serena
BTU Elementary
Field Representative

tember favorite! It's another great way to establish owning who you are, being proud of who you are, and understanding our differences right from the start.

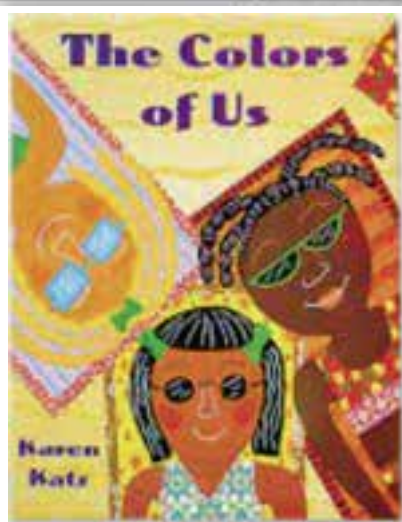
If you can't tell I love a good September read aloud and I am also very proud of my big hair, especially on the days I just don't want to do it. *Don't Touch my Hair!* by Sharee Miller is about a girl who is annoyed by people asking or not asking to touch her big beautiful hair all the time. By the end of the story she learns to simply say no.

If there is anything I am going to miss about the classroom it's going to be read alouds. I don't mean the kind they "make" you read or the kind you don't really want to read. I mean the kind me and my work best friend would randomly drive to Barnes & Noble – or even better, Frugal Bookstore – and just be there for hours picking out. I mean the kind that lights up a child's face and really sparks a whole classroom conversation and boy did I miss a good ol' rug read aloud during the pandemic.

So here it is "Lit with Lea," because chances are you will still find me at your local bookstore after a long day at the office! This month, I am reading all my favorite back to school books, which include establishing community through understanding who we are, what we all bring to the table, and we can't forget all our September festivities!



The Best Part of Me with positive affirmations and photos, and *The Color of Us* with self portraits. They are on my list of September favorites for sure! However, I started noticing more and more all my amazing students were coming in having done all my activities already, so I had to switch things up! Luckily (even though we have a long way to go) the world is doing better with diverse book selections too!



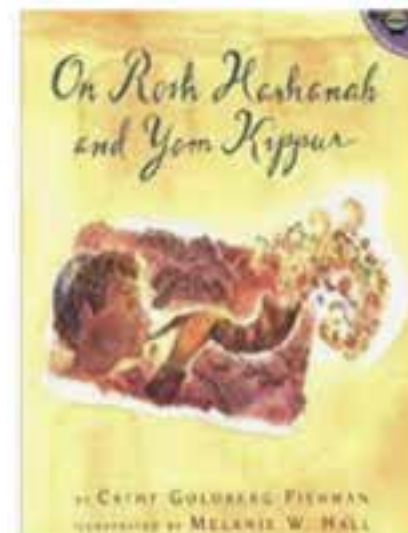
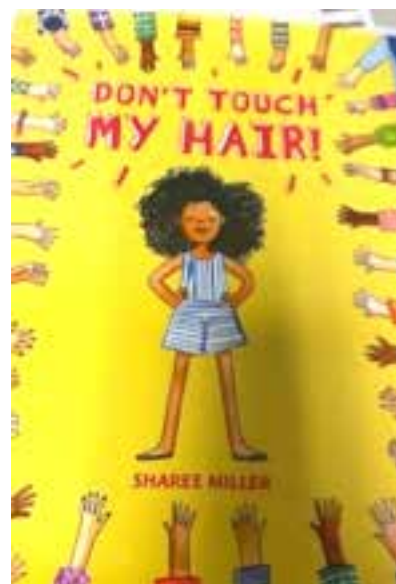
For instance, have you ever read *Brown: The Many Shades of Love* by Nancy Johnson James and Constance Moore? In this story the main character talks about how everyone in his family has different shades of brown skin color. He compares his skin color to gingerbread, but his uncle's to coffee, and aunts to the desert sand.

Similarly to the story *The Color of Us*, James and Moore end by talking about painting the different shades of brown. This book is short and sweet and definitely celebrates and encourages welcoming of all skin colors. Highly

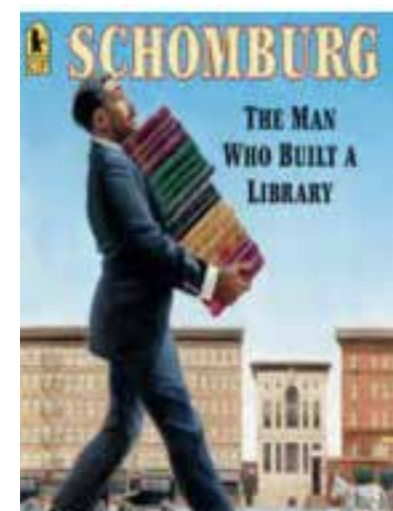
recommended for Pre-K-2nd. Speaking of second grade! I've lived



there for the last five years! So I'm not sure if it's just me or what, but one of my pet peeves that I try to nip right from the start is hair playing/idolizing! I do not enjoy seeing children playing with each other's hair or making fun of each other's hair or being embarrassed by their own hair. So here is another all-time Sep-



I could go on for days, but I will leave you with just a few more. *On Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur* by Cathy Goldberg Fishman is a great informational narrative that teaches children about these two holidays. The young girl in the story shares the joy of the New Year for her family. I love teaching about holidays and I think it's so important to start the year off remembering to embrace and celebrate the different holidays and cultures that may and may not be celebrated in your classroom.



Now in honor of International Literacy day and the love of reading, I love the book *SCHOMBURG, The Man who Built a Library* by Carole Boston Weatherall.

erford. In this book, Arturo Schomburg collects achievements of people of the African diaspora and turns them into the New York Public Library. This book is definitely geared more towards grades 3-5 and is broken into different headings. It's a remarkable tribute to understanding the creation of libraries and also understanding of how history/ books are collected. I love thinking about understanding how access to literacy and seeing ourselves in literature is just as important as being able to decode and comprehend, so we need to

understand history in all contexts.

I hope you enjoy these books and consider signing up to have me visit your classroom and share a read aloud with you and your students at <https://bit.ly/readwithLea>. For September and in the honor of organizing and activism I am planning on reading *Click, Clack, Mo, Cows that Type, Side by Side*, and experts from *We Rise, We Resist, and We Raise our Voices*. I am also always open to book and holiday suggestions for future articles and the calendar, so please feel free to share them with me

at <https://bit.ly/litwithLea>.

I leave you with this, the great Toni Morrison once said, "If there's a book you want to read, and it hasn't been written yet, then you must write it." I told my students every day that they were authors and even if they never published a physical piece to be sold, they wrote their own story each and every day. Happy September, go on and write your 2021- 2022 story; I sure do hope that when this chapter closes in June we all have plenty to laugh and smile about!

Empowerment Through School Site Council Shared Decision Making...

continued from page 5

to resolve these problems prior to filing the complaint."

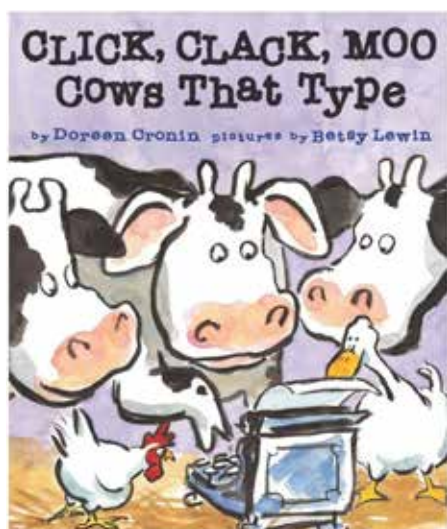
The BPS/BTU Joint Steering Committee through the Boston Teachers Union and BPS Office of Family and Community Advancement coordinates training for SSC members. Please contact either Caren Carew at the BTU for further information.

It's time to step up and be a part of the solution! Each member of the school community is part of the team that either decides to be a part of the process or stay on the bench. All of us are accountable for our collective and individual participation, large and small, in the governance and decisions made in our schools affecting our classrooms, our kids, and ourselves.

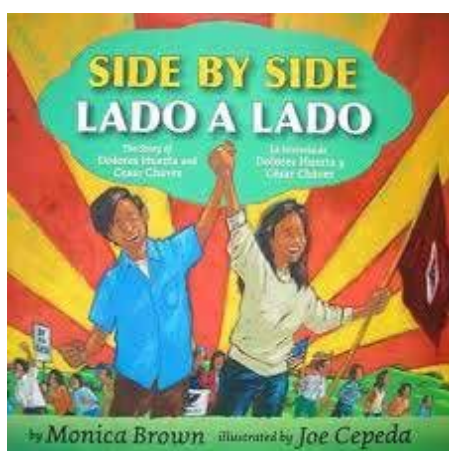
We deserve to be heard and respected. The first step is to believe our voice can make a difference. I believe it does. The ball is now in your court. Are you going to use it or lose it? We are all depending upon each other. We are all connected. Let's support one another and our kids. We can make it better. Believe in BTUnity! Teamwork makes the dream work and enables us to build power!

Classroom Visit Read Alouds

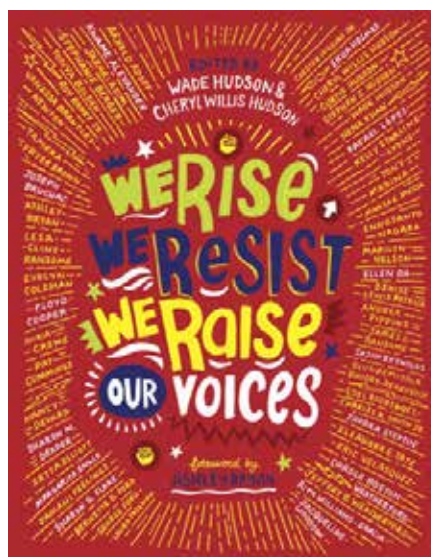
K-2



3-5



6-8



Contractual Benefit Package for All Teachers*



All BPS teachers (*) are eligible to take advantage of a range of contractual benefits and provisions that have resulted from years of collective bargaining between the School Department and the Boston Teachers Union. A summary of many of the more important benefits and provisions follows.

Where mentioned, the BTU office can forward more detailed information. The BTU Field Reps., **Caren Carew** and **Lea Serena** can provide more information. Or please feel free to call or email me (jtang@btu.org). Also, please note that each school has BTU Building Representatives, elected at each school, who can provide more detailed information. Further, we now have BTU Regional Leaders, just one more way we are trying to meet your needs by bringing better service.

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

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

If you need a booklet, please call the BTU office. References to the school department's web page are accurate as of mid-August, though they will change as the department updates its yearly circular offerings. A complete listing of department circulars can be found at <http://www.bostonpublicschools.org/domain/1884> as of mid-summer, 2017. All web pages referred to are accurate as of early August 2017 but all locations may have changed when newspaper

appears in print. The postings are yearly staples and are easy to track down. If you have any questions, please call the union office.

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

Please remember that the links on the BPS webpage below are subject to change (*but they won't go far!*).

All references to the BTU contract refer to the red contract booklet, which goes from 9/1/2018 through 8/31/2021, and continues until a successor agreement is reached and ratified.

Booklets can be obtained through your BTU School Building Rep., or by calling the office at 617-288-2000. You may also access the information online here: <https://btu.org/contracts/>

Continues on pages 8 & 9

SALARY & BENEFITS

	BENEFIT	HOW IT TAKES EFFECT?	HOW TO LEARN MORE?	WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR?
Salary Step Placement	Up to 3 years' credit for both inside and outside the system, (6 total) if service meets certain criteria.	You must apply with app and documentation. Not necessarily retroactive , so do not delay in filing.	See https://btu.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Salary-Grids.pdf also contract pp. 99-100 or call the BTU office at 617-288-2000 and ask for a field representative.	'Inside' or prior Boston service includes substitute teaching time under certain conditions. Outside service does not.
Salary Lane Placement	B+15, Masters, M15, 30, 45, 60, 75, Doctorate	You must apply and supply documentation. Not necessarily retroactive ; do not delay in filing either PS O3 form or supporting credentials	See BTU contract pp. 101-102.	Maintain date-stamped records of all transmissions to the Bolling Building. It is suggested that these documents be hand delivered as the lane change maybe time sensitive.
Salary Lane: In-Service Credits	Limit of in-service credits increased to 30	Upon application to HR; make sure you follow instructions and keep a copy of documents transmitted, with date stamp	See procedure found here: Go to http://www.bostonpublicschools.org/page/7959	The 20 in-service limit was in place for at least 25 years, so you may have long forgotten about surplus credits earned. These credits you may have squirreled away are now valuable.
Health Insurance	3 different plans, PPO, 2 HMOs	You must apply w/i 60 days of date of hire. Deadline is FIRM . New dependents must be added within 30 days.	See BTU or call Group Insurance Office @ 617-635-4570 or see https://www.bostonpublicschools.org/Page/3180 Each spring there is an Open Enrollment period to change plans. Group Insurance hosts for your convenience an insurance fair at the BTU, also in the spring. All changes elected during Open Enrollment take place on July 1.	This is a most important benefit. Talk to a few colleagues before making a decision. Health coverage takes a month or so to start, depending on when you sign up at City Hall. If you take a leave of absence and drop your coverage, you must re-enroll during the open enrollment period. The plans are under an agreement with all city unions.
Health and Welfare	Includes Dental, Eye Care, and Legal benefit. City pays plan premium, but some benefits have small co-pays.	Apply at BTU H&W office or at 288-0500. Benefit effective retro. to start of prov. contract, but implementation can be delayed.	Call BTU H&W @ 617-288-0500 or see http://www.btuwhf.org	H&W Dental coverage is different from city's health plan. And 2) The H&W dental plan has two options, one through Delta Dental and one through Harvard Dental. Take your time to make an informed decision.
Salary Item: Tuition Reimbursement	All permanent teachers on 'steps' 1-9 (9 for the 1st time) get up \$1,000/yr. Provs. get \$500. Paras with three or more years of service are covered with similar benefit	This took effect 9/1/04, and is paid as tax-free reimbursement for tuition. Paras are added as of 9/1/07.	See: https://www.bostonpublicschools.org/cms/lib07/MA01906464/Centricity/Domain/293/Circulars/Tuition%20Reimbursement.pdf	If you were eligible for this benefit last year but did not submit documentation in time, call the union office. Pay attention to reporting deadlines.
Salary Item: NBPTS Teachers	Members certified under the standards of the NBPTS now get a 4% raise. Members also get reimbursed for the cost of application fees upon successful attainment of certification.	This salary differential took effect 9/1/03	See the National Board (NBPTS) website at http://www.nbpts.org/ for eligibility rules, subject areas covered, etc., and the BTU contract, pp 85-86.	The NBPTS regrettably does not grant certification in all subject areas and in all job categories, though categories are expanding regularly.
Performing Arts Teachers	Performing Arts, theater, music, drama drama, and choral group teachers can get \$1600 stipend.	If one of the aforementioned teachers conducts after school rehearsals and practices which culminate in final precautions and/or festivals.	BTU contract, P. 47	This is a relatively new benefit, a long time in coming. Please call one of the field reps if you have any questions.
Flexible Spending Program – Dependent Care	Use up to \$5,000 in pre-tax dollars for dependent care; excellent tax benefit. This is an IRS-approved program that is quite beneficial when used properly.	Apply within 30 days of hire or during Open Enrollment usually beginning mid-October; announcement will be made in BTU e-Bulletin. To sign up for e-Bulletin, go to: https://btu.org/bulletin/	Call the BTU office @ 617-288-2000. For more detailed information, call CPA, Inc. @ 1-800-544-2340 or Group Insurance at 617-635-4570 or see http://www.cpa125.com/	Be careful when creating a deduction as you cannot change the deduction for the entire calendar year once you agree to it. Your dependent care reimbursements CANNOT outpace your deduction schedule.
Flexible Spending Program – Medical	Use up to \$2,550 (new cap this year) in pre-tax dollars for out-of-pocket medical expenses; excellent tax benefit	Same as dependent care (above).	Same as dependent care see http://www.cpa125.com/ or http://www.bostonpublicschools.org/domain/1884 and search for flexible.	Again, be careful when setting up your deduction. Your medical reimbursements CAN outpace your deduction schedule.
Flexible Spending Program – Transportation and Parking	As with the above programs, though subject to different dollar limitations, this program allows the use of pre-tax dollars to be spent on mass transit and parking activities.	No eligibility requirement.	See http://www.cpa125.com/ or same as above.	Make sure you will need this benefit for the entire calendar year when you sign up, as deductions cannot generally be stopped once started. All of these programs are extremely beneficial when properly used, but caution is advised.
Life Insurance	City sponsors standard \$5,000 term insurance plan for BPS employees and city vendor sells additional coverage. See here: http://www.cityofboston.gov/ohr/benefits/life.asp	First \$5,000 of term coverage comes with purchase of health insurance. 1/2 of premium for first \$5,000 coverage paid by the city; rest paid by employee.	Call 617-635-4570 for more information. You are strongly advised to shop around to private vendors for best cost before purchasing additional insurance beyond the standard \$5,000.	Beware of insurance salespeople 'popping in' to the teachers' room to sell you insurance. Salespeople in the building often pretend to have some exclusive approval or license to sell insurance. They do not. You are advised strongly to shop around before making a purchase of any additional life insurance product.
Disability Coverage	Public Pension Law grants limited coverage for total disability, none for short-term disability.	Public coverage is inadequate & eligibility is restrictive. If you desire adequate coverage, you'll need to purchase it privately.	See the Mass State Teacher Retirement Board Web Page for understanding the law at http://www.mass.gov/mtrs/ . The state and the city have different but essentially parallel retirement and disability plans in all respects. The state's web page is excellent.	There is a sick leave bank for teachers and paras, which eligible members can obtain days from, after an application process. The bank plus use of your own days (see below), which must be exhausted first, amounts to a quasi-short term disability plan.
Debt Forgiveness	The AFT now has a resource for those who need to learn the landscape of free and underused federal programs that help many student loan borrowers lower their monthly payments and, in some cases, even have their debt forgiven.	If you work in the public service, a little-known government program, called "Public Service Loan Forgiveness" could allow you to have all of your direct federal student loans forgiven, tax-free.	Visit http://www.forgivemystudentdebt.org .	The BTU will be offering a Student Debt Clinic. Please watch for more information in the BTU's weekly e-bulletins. A date and time will be set when this is finalized.

MAJOR (BUT NON-INCLUSIVE) LIST OF CONTRACTUAL WORKING CONDITIONS

	HOW DOES THE BENEFIT WORK?	SUMMARY DETAILS	HOW TO LEARN MORE?	WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR?
Class Size Maxima; Caseloads	Enforces class size maxima and caseloads. Important benefit.	Too lengthy to list here; ask building rep at school for class size fact sheet. See Erik Berg's article on page 2 of this newspaper.	Contract pp. 25-27, speak with BTU Building Rep.; call BTU at 617-288-2000 or visit here at http://www.btu.org/member-resources/csg/ .	Do not procrastinate! File a class size grievance on the BTU website as soon as your class is over the limit.
Sick Days	Grants paid leave when ill, up to time accumulated.	15 days granted per year; unused days accumulate & have cash value at separation after 10 years of service.	Talk to Building Rep. or call BTU at 617-288-2000.	Will need a doctor's note if absent for six or more consecutive school days.
Personal Leave	Grants paid leave for personal reasons with one day's notice.	4 days per year; unused days accumulate.	Contract pp. 113-117; see building rep at school, call BTU office at 617-288-2000.	Your reason for taking a personal day is personal and need not be shared, but you do have to give notice. Unused days are automatically converted to accumulated 'sick' days at the end of year.
Professional Leave	Grants limited paid leave to attend educational conferences.	Limited system-wide allotment of 2,000 days distributed to individual staff on a pro-rata basis.	Talk to building rep or call BTU at 617-288-2000 or email ptritter@btu.org .	

MAJOR (BUT NON-INCLUSIVE) LIST OF CONTRACTUAL WORKING CONDITIONS

	HOW DOES THE BENEFIT WORK?	SUMMARY DETAILS	HOW TO LEARN MORE?	WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR?
Bereavement Leave	Grants paid leave under limited circumstances.	Depends on family relationship to the decedent.	See contract p.115 or talk with Building Rep. or call BTU office at 617-288-2000.	
Religious Holy Days	Grants paid leave under limited circumstances.	Depends on holiday specifics.	See contract p.115 or talk with Building Rep. or call BTU office at 617-288-2000.	
Maternity Leave	Grants paid as well as unpaid leave & city continues to pay its share of health coverage.	Paid maternity time limited by number of sick days accrued.	See contract p.116 or talk with Building Rep. or call BTU office at 617-288-2000.	Complicated procedure; it is suggested you call one of field rep.'s for more information. This procedure becomes particularly more complicated when the birth is scheduled for the summer months. Again, please contact the BTU office.
Leave for Adoption	Grants 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.	Contract, p. 117.	
Leave for Family Illness	Grants paid leave for family member's illness	Limited to 30 days per school year if accumulated, though more can be granted.	Contract, p. 114.	May need a note from family member's doctor; those who need more than 30 such days are advised to contact the BTU office.
Planning and Development Time	Grants staff unassigned time when one is not given a programmed duty or responsibility. P&D periods are 'teacher directed,' i.e., teacher alone decides what he/she does during that period.	Middle and High Teachers – 5 full-length periods (48+ minutes per) per week. Elementary Teachers get four 48-minute P&D periods per week, plus one CPT period that is administratively directed. N.B. Specialists and Itinerant Specialists get identical benefit of individual grade levels	Contract pp. 230-31; or see Building Rep. or call BTU office at 617-288-2000.	You do not have to complete ISSP's or any other administrative work on this time. It is your time and you cannot be assigned a specified duty or meeting. If you 'lose' a P&D, you are eligible for pay for the lost time unless it is made up. Call the BTU office.
Schedule A ELT Schools	In addition to the above, all teachers receive two more blocks of time – see right hand box.	Teachers receive an additional 40-minute block of time that is P&D time for elementary teachers and may be incorporated into CPT time in middle grades. In addition, teachers receive a weekly 35-minute block of time (either as one block or as 7-minute daily sessions added on to the typical P & D). This 75-minute, in the aggregate, time is not PD time – it's a combination of P&D and teacher-directed planning time.		
Duty-Free Lunch	Grants daily duty-free time to all for lunch, in addition to daily P&D time.	Middle and High Teachers – no less than 25 minutes per day; Elementary Teachers – no less than 40.	Contract p. 31; or see Building Rep. or call BTU office at 617-288-2000.	This is your time and you cannot be assigned any duty during this time.
Job-Sharing	1/2 salary, 1/2 position	Two people share one job; each gets 1/2 salary and full benefits	See here: https://www.bostonpublicschools.org/cms/lib07/MA01906464/Centricity/Domain/293/Circulars/hrs-hs-2.pdf	Start early in the year if looking for a partner; this is most difficult for many, as good 'matches' are hard to find.
Peer Assistance Program	Experienced teachers in need of assistance can volunteer for a peer assistant.	Peer assistant can provide assistance to one who needs help.	Call BTU office at 617-288-2000 or email Mike McLaughlin at mmclaughlin@btu.org	This is a good, useful program for those who are having difficulty with the performance evaluation process.
Accepting a student-teacher	If you accept a student teacher, you receive two days' leave with pay.		Contract pp. 31, 108 or see Building Rep. or call BTU office at 617-288-2000.	Days are to be taken during last two weeks of teacher trainee's tenure.
Mileage	Traveling between two or more schools on a given day.	If you travel between two or more schools in a given day as part of your duties, you are generally entitled to a mileage payment.	Contract pp. 46, 108-109, 142, 175, or see Building Rep. or call the BTU office at 617-288-2000.	Mileage is generally not for travel to and from your assignment each day, but for all other miles mandated within; call the BTU for more info.

RETIREMENT, TAX-DEFERRED SAVINGS PLANS

	PARTICIPATION	DETAILS	MORE INFORMATION	WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR?
Public Pension	Participation is mandatory under state law; vested employees obtain a pension at retirement.	Call the BTU for more information.	See MTRS at http://www.mass.gov/mtrs/ for more information, or see the city webpage at http://www.cityofboston.gov/retirement/ . The former is superior and provides all you need to know. Or call Michael McLaughlin at the BTU for more information.	If you leave the system prior to retirement, consult the BTU before withdrawing your funds out.
Participation in a 403(b) or a Tax-Sheltered Annuity (TSA) plan	See accompanying article.	Pre-tax salary contributions grow tax-deferred until withdrawn.	See accompanying article in this newspaper.	Vendors walking the halls at your school or visiting you in the teachers' lounge have no special license from the city. Their plans do not operate with any special imprimatur from the city. The vendors are by and large salesman and saleswomen selling a product. Before agreeing to any salary reduction, you are advised to consult with a licensed independent financial planner. Otherwise you may be purchasing what may be a life-time product that will carry with it a heavy lifetime penalty for withdrawal.
Participation in the State's Deferred Compensation or 457 Program	Participation is voluntary; state-chosen vendor Great West. See accompanying article.	Pre-tax salary contributions grow tax-deferred until withdrawn.	Call the BTU for more information and/or Great West at 1-877-457-1900. See www.mass-smart.com or email lisa.cardinal@gwrs.com .	Very good plan, with slightly less flexibility than a 403.b, but worth investigating, as the state has done much of the 'homework' for you. Fees are minimal, much lower than in typical 403.b plans. Plan is monitored by state, which is a real plus. 403.b plans are not monitored. Terrific option with many similarities to a 403.b.
Social Security	Mass. public employees do NOT pay into SS; employees can, however, accrue SS credits at any time in non-public employment.	Those with SS credits can combine SS pension with teacher (public) pension, but some restrictions and offsets generally apply.	Call the BTU for detailed, written explanation or go to http://www.ssa.gov/pubs/10045.html or http://www.ssa.gov/pubs/10007.html for a discussion of the restrictions and offsets. These are most important topics for those who expect to get some benefit from SS credits.	Log onto http://www.mass.gov/mtrs/benefit-recipients-retirees-and-survivors/social-security/ for news pertaining to public employees.

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 at 617-288-2000 or speak with a building representative. Also, see btu.org.

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.

Update on Retirement +/ Teacher Accelerated Retirement Plan

Still a hot topic, the reopening of the eligibility for R+/TARP is still unresolved. Although we remain hopeful we can't help but feel our Boston legislators have not been as responsive as we hoped. We have spent several hours in and out of the State House expressing the importance and urgency of this issue with no results to date. We remain committed to correcting this inequity. As such, please see the

accompanying flyer below. This is our lobbying document. It has gone through several iterations and we believe that it is currently ready to present to the legislature. Our R+ Committee has been diligent and relentless making this a priority. We will be calling on everyone to contact their state legislators to get a bill numbered assigned and then passed at the State House.



Michael W. McLaughlin
BTU Secretary-Treasurer



Home Rule Petition for Retirement (R+)/ Teacher Accelerated Retirement Plan (TARP)

**SPONSORED BY: COUNCILOR ANNISSA ESSAIBI-GEORGE
REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON SEPTEMBER 16, 2020**

In January of 2001, TARP, an enhanced retirement option with a deduction rate of 11%, was introduced and offered to teachers, school nurses, related service providers and other educators throughout Massachusetts. Educators had the option to elect into R+/TARP and increase their retirement contribution and end the **additional 2%** on regular earnings over \$30,000, which would thereby accelerate their retirement. During the six-month period starting January 1, 2001 until June 30, 2001, members had the option to elect into this program. (All educators hired from July 1, 2001 and thereafter were automatically enrolled at an 11% contribution rate.)

During this six-month period, the communication from the Boston Retirement System involving the rollout of TARP was extremely complicated and confusing. Eligible educators received conflicting information and flawed data about the impact of R+/TARP. Additionally, the branding of TARP as "Retirement Plus" caused eligible teachers to think they were already in the program when they saw **9 +2% on their paychecks**. Other educators were unenrolled when they transferred from other school districts, and the BRS sent them checks for "overpayment" without informing the educator that he/she was being removed from the program. Because of these and other administrative errors, all of these disenfranchised educators will have to work from 3-5 years longer to earn the maximum **retirement benefit of 80%**.

The R+ Committee convened in 2018 with the goal of reopening the availability of TARP to educators hired before July 1, 2001 that were unable to register. The Boston Teachers Union and the R+ Committee is now asking for this Boston home rule petition to be passed to recognize the service and commitment of educators employed by the City of Boston.

If passed, current non-TARP educators hired before July 1, 2001 will be given an opportunity to elect into TARP. If a member elects to join TARP, Boston Retirement System will calculate the difference between the members current contribution rate and the TARP rate of 11% from July 1, 2001 to the date of the passing of the bill. Ordinary interest will be added. The "make-up amount" can be paid in either **1, 2, or 3-year increments** (via payroll deductions) or in **one lump-sum payment**.

858	CURRENT NON-TARP EDUCATORS
hired before 7/1/01 could benefit from R+:	
30 or more years	85
25-30 years	158
20-25 years	283
<20 years	332

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts funds the retirement benefits of Boston teachers by making annual appropriation to the Boston Retirement System. The Commonwealth's appropriation would need to increase by approximately \$3million, increasing 9.63% per year, to fund these additional benefits.

However, passage of this legislation will result in substantial savings to the city of Boston and the Boston Public Schools, which could reduce current expenditures by approximately \$38 million through the attrition of R+ educators and the hiring of new teachers at significantly lower salaries.

Why is it Important for Teachers to be Unionized?

The history and importance of the teacher unions in America

By Zaryah Qareeb

How important is education? Is a question we as a society must answer. In America we value knowledge and view it as a fundamental right that every individual should have access to. So why do our government legislation give educators that are teaching our generation lower wages and little to no benefits? Teachers in the US's third-largest school district formed a labor union in 1937 known as the "The Chicago Teachers Union" (CTU). Many public school teachers struggled teaching in poor working conditions. After forming a union, workers were able to negotiate with the government for better pay and resources on behalf of all members of the union and eventually won. This later inspired modern teacher-led protests, such as the 2018 #Red4Ed and the teachers union fighting for better protocol in the covid pandemic era.

Despite the great accomplishments, many argue that labor unions are simply not needed. If it wasn't for these labor unions many teachers would be exploited by the schools. The CTU is a perfect example as to why labor unions are an essential within the workforce, to prevent workers from being exploited. The union impacted the government legislation and was able to have their voice heard. Therefore, Chicago teachers rebelling against the government officials was needed, and show why labor unions are important.

Poor administrative support, large classroom sizes, insufficient resources and little benefits are only the tip of the icebergs that teachers have to deal with, especially others in low income areas. When individual teachers speak up against these conditions and demand more support, many are threatened. Fearing that they could lose their jobs, they simply stayed silent. Having no voice in their environment, this can create an unbalanced power dynamic between the workers and the federal government and later lead to them being exploited. As these problems continue to impact our communities, unions are here to prevent them. In the article titled "Unions in the 21st Century: A potent weapon against inequality" it states, "Unions have played a central role in the drive for a wide variety of policy measures to ensure that everyone benefits from prosperity, which is the opposite outcome of rising inequality. This list includes Social Security, Medicare, paid family leave, civil rights legislation, fairer tax policy, and higher minimum wages" (Bernstein 1). This quote shows that the main focus of Unions was to ensure that workers have the resources to secure basic necessities. In this economy, workers need to be paid substantial wages to keep up with the prices of their basic needs. Unions are sometimes viewed negatively because it can lead to hostilities between labor and management. People fear that workers unions can drive up costs and lead to an adversarial relationship between labor and management. Nevertheless, both sides will always have opposite views and inherently adversarial relationships. But issues like an unfit environment and little wages for at risk workers should not be up for debate. One can infer that union can be less inherently malicious if multiple people can find a common ground and agree on a reasonable conclusion. In this article, it

clearly proves that unions can ensure protection for workers. To further my point of unions being needed, in another article "The Pros and Cons of Unions," Josephson claims, "They make it easier for workers to handle disputes and complaints, with other workers and with management. There are formal processes in place, which makes it easier for any worker – regardless of their individual status" (Josephson 1). Again, the author demonstrates how unions protect workers and further suggests that an organized community to rebel against the status quo is what makes the union so effective. Our world is constantly changing at a fast pace, and the workforce is always in high demand. If we want to prevent educators from being exploited and dissolve hostile environments, unions can be our best solution.

However, these are not new issues that magically appear; these are the same issues workers have struggled with since the 19th century. In 1898 the first teacher union also known as The Chicago Teachers' Federation union was created, which later became successful in winning back taxes and raising teachers' pay. Public schools were heavily impacted by politics and teachers did not feel that they were a vital part of the reform effort at the time, which included boosting teaching standards, assuring student progress, and rooting out corruption. Teachers began creating local groups in response to the changes enacted by business leaders and education administrators, and these eventually matured into the teacher unions that exist today. Activists fought to improve public education and the working conditions of Chicago's elementary school. The article "Chicago Teachers Union" by The Capital Research Center writes "Founded in 1937, CTU is well known for its aggressive political engagement such as strikes, marches, and protests in favor of left-of-center educational priorities and approaches to racial equality" (CRC 1). In reality it is impossible to keep politics and our education system separate from each other. Our government has cut funding from schools and willingly fails many students who suffer academically. Students that are enrolled in public schools with low funding are impacted the most. That is why it is important to give unions a political voice for their community, which is exactly what the CTU did in the 1930s.

Although the unions were formed so students have a higher chance of succeeding, the argument that unions can harm students is a concern for many. Unions increase salaries and benefits; and schools that perform higher have higher paid educators within their facility; therefore, the student's concern is also the teacher's concern because they are impacted by their scores. Sadly, unions can't fix every problem. As one author, Grace Chen states in the "Why It Can Take Six Years to Fire an Inappropriate or Ineffective Teacher" article, writes about how difficult it is to fire teachers with strong unions. They say, "This process can take up to six months to complete. If the teacher does not like the decision handed down at the end of the hearing process, he can appeal the decision in court, taking another two to three years to finalize the process" (Chen 1). However a 2019 study tells us otherwise, "highly

unionized districts actually fire more bad teachers," states Jennifer Berkshire, author of the Edushyster website, (Berkshire 1). There is no doubt that the country's public education system is in desperate need of reform. The question is whether politicians and school authorities have the courage to implement the necessary changes. Unions are not the final solution to fix this problem, but it is leading us in the right direction. The 1937 Chicago teacher union impacted the government legislation and its effects had a long lasting effect on our school. In general, a union does more good than bad for both students and teachers.

As the fight for school reform continues, the pandemic has affected schools across the country even more. Nevertheless, teachers have expressed their concern way before the pandemic. The 2018 social movement "red for ed" has been in the front lines of this topic. It all started when teachers in all fifty-five counties of West Virginia closed classrooms in late February. Their walkout encouraged educators around the country, raising hopes that organized labor's long-awaited resurgence had finally arrived. School employees in Oklahoma, Arizona, and other states went on strike in the spring of that year to demand more education spending and better wages. These actions erupted in Republican-dominated states with weak labor unions and public sector strike restrictions. The "Red for Ed" movement quickly swept throughout the country, with strikes crippling school districts in Democratic towns throughout 2019. In *The Washington Post*, Author Valerie Strauss reports, "West Virginia, the state ranking 48th in average teacher salaries in 2016, according to National Education Association data, legislators finally agreed to a 5 percent pay raise – less than the teachers were seeking – while offering no promise on relief for health-care costs" (Strauss 1). This might be viewed as a victory for West Virginia, but Strauss later states, "Now, bills in the legislature seek to ensure that teachers never strike again. S.B. 592 would require any organized protest of 100 or more people at the State Capitol to pay \$50,000 in advance to the Oklahoma Capitol Improvement Authority, the state agency that provides bond funding for government office buildings" (Strauss 1). What this means is that the government is creating laws to prevent the Union from exercising their political voice, which is why it is important to have unions in the first place. Throughout it has been shown that when a community comes together, justice will be served. The more we encourage unions, the more our education system will blossom.

When comparing the United States to other western cultures with high education levels, most have strong foundational unions. Authors Jared Bernstein and Dean Baker from *The Washington Post* in "In the Unions in the 21st Century: A potent weapon against inequality" says, "Denmark and Sweden, which have a far more equal distribution of income than the United States, more than 70 percent of the workforces are represented by unions" (Bernstein and Baker 1). If cultures similar to ours with substantial union that benefits everyone, then America can do the same. This is proof that Unions can do more good than harm within western counties. When schools started to reopen during covid, Union were against returning back to the classroom. Many parents were unsettled by this response. One parent in the "Teachers unions resist reopening," a *USA Today* says, "Of course, we all feel for the teachers, and we appreciate the work they're doing, but it feels like the union is looking out for themselves, which is their job, but it's at the expense of a whole lot of kids and families" (Richard 1); however, the writer later states, "A new study by researchers in Florida and China shows that although children are less likely to get sick, they are 60% more likely than adults over 60 to spread the infection" (Richard 1). Perhaps these teachers were truly looking only forward themselves, but staying remote would still benefit everyone's safety in the end.

"Why do we turn a blind eye to our government legislation providing lesser compensation to teachers who are teaching our future leaders?" is what us Americans should be asking ourselves. Our education system has failed too many of our students and it must be reformed. As I said before, unions are not the final solution to fix it but it is one step closer to that goal. To summarize, unions may be the best approach for preventing educators from being exploited and dissolving unfavorable settings. In addition, organized unions can provide a political voice to a community, as the Chicago Teacher Union did in the 1930s. Finally, the social campaign, Red for Ed, as well as the aftermath of the pandemic, demonstrate that unions are needed now more than ever.

Today, unions are more vital than they have ever been. The nature of labor is changing in a global market, and some businesses are resisting unionization. Many firms understand the benefits of providing greater wages and benefits to their employees, in addition to assuring fairness and equitable treatment.

(Zaryah Qareeb was a student in Ms. Chesnakas' Humanities 3 class last school year.)

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Edith Bazile Deserves To Be Heard

In the late 80s, I had the privilege, yes, I mean privilege, of working with **Dr. Edith Bazile** at the Michael J. Perkins in South Boston, where she was on staff as a Speech Therapist while I was teaching K-1, in the half-day, program, with a large number of students who were serviced for Speech Therapy, by Edith, who could readily identify speech/language delay and articulation issues, which, if not serviced early, would only serve to become a yoke around the neck of a child, and proceed to phonics struggles in the later grades and psychological problems. Early Intervention. Solve small problems before they become big ones. Edith helped them not only succeed in K-1 but down the line, when they hit Grade One. Edith treated and advocated for them as I hope I treated and advocated for them – as I would my own children. *In loco parentis*.

A short time ago, I pulled up her article, re-read it, and now realize that it comes from a place of deep frustration and almost a primal scream. I share some of that collective rage, maybe for other reasons.

Renaming a school for a more appropriate role model is not a bad thing. My only connection to **Mel King** is when I was lifeguarding at Magazine Beach Pool for the MDC (before DCR) while attending summer school trimester at the 1980s cancelled college called Boston State College, my father's alma mater, for its real estate value and lack of pedigree, before my pool shift. Mel would come in at about 7:30 and swim laps by the Charles River sunset in the lopsided, 50 yard Magazine Beach Pool in Cambridge. When the pool was topped off and filled, usually on Sundays, one side would overflow on one side, towards the banks of the Charles River – the Dirty Water that The Standells sang about – “*Oh Boston, you're my town!*”

My rage comes from the unaccountable BPS school governance – and the b.s. of politically-based Ed. Reform from the 90s. We need an elected board because there is no vehicle to solve problems in the public square. I must disclose that one of my parents served on the last elected Boston School Committee, when they were compensated at a windfall of \$7,500 a year, disparaged/scapegoated by formerly elected skills, who were in favor of power consolidation under a mayor. It made it easier for the vendors to get those cereal and book contracts and only deal with the Mayor's Office. And who had a Sunday morning TV bully pulpit for *ad hominem*, personal character attacks which now can be attributed to Senate Presidents and House Speakers as well as City Council Members. The last group who served, for that paltry sum, were even lauded by Judge **W. Arthur Garrity, Jr.** as being part of the solution during the winding down of the desegregation case.

We have had 30 years of a City Hall rubber stamp committee – where there is really little access for parents – a city councilor who functions as an ombudsman, for all school problems. The late **Chuck Turner** – who along with **Charles Yancey**, were the only city councilors who had the courage to be responsive about Indoor Air Quality issues in BPS. Maybe a school renamed in their honor.

But rename for a purpose, not just to “cancel.”

Edith's story about “Justin” was very compelling. She painted the picture and I understood immediately! The kid who did not want to read orally, which triggered an outburst from shame and frustration-likely from a succession of politically-correct outsourced reading programs, (*yes, I said it*) which do not give kids actual skills, of reading orally, as part of the developmental reading process, from the first Dolch sight word, leading to life-skills of being able to make a presentation in front of your co-workers, or making an argument, in a court-of-law, but which served to confer doctorates on graduate students, some, from outside of the US.

The kid who was railroaded by the “team” in other words – “Get that kid out!” – under the direction of the principal/administration, where the core evaluation meeting often happens before the actual meeting with the parents and other members. Or, some teacher needs a few more students in their Point 4 substantially separate classroom and they steer the placement in that direction. Say it isn't so.

Let's separate this out from the laborers-in-the-vineyard who don't play that game. Edith is one of those people who looked only at the kid, and their skill set. If they were on level, they got no services, and if they were not on level, she recommended services and provided them beautifully. She went by the book.

What I see is not what Edith is saying, (*and I may not agree with her premise, it does not matter if I agree*) but only that she has the right to say it. The editors' job is not to vet viewpoints. This is not Twitter or Facebook. This is a union paper to serve union members' concerns about wages, hours, and working conditions.

That is why we have a First Amendment. Edith is a dues-paying member. More importantly, she is protected by the U.S. Constitution. And, I get the position of the McKinley teachers. During the pandemic, the high-needs kids were serviced in person not online. There should always be a pathway for those kids to return to regular ed. The standard is the “least restrictive setting.” There should

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SAVE THE DATE!
SEPTEMBER
23-25

8TH ANNUAL
BACK TO SCHOOL
FAIR

40,000 FREE BOOKS
FOR BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOL FAMILIES!

Sign Up to Volunteer Sorting Books at <https://tinyurl.com/3xm77sds>

September 20
11:00 am-7:00 pm

September 21
8:00 am-7:00 pm

September 22
8:00 am-7:00 pm

Book Distribution Dates - Time TBA

September 23

September 24

September 25

Register for Book Distribution at <https://tinyurl.com/ykhujeej>

ALL ATTENDEES MUST WEAR MASKS AND GLOVES
The fair will be scaled down this year without the usual activities, food and resource fair due to COVID-19.

BTU.ORG/BACK-TO-SCHOOL

Let's Put Social Back Into Media

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

There are other meaningful ways to engage policy makers. Social media is an

Letter to the Editor...

continued from page 13

not be a school-to-jail pathway. I respect those teachers telling the nuts-and-bolts, Day-in-the-Life-of-a-Day in the McKinley setting. Their viewpoint is protected as well. They are walking-the-walk.

The BTU newspaper during "slow news" months, sometimes degenerated into a happy-talk, officers – shaking hands – with – politicians publication, not addressing the actual job and issues of the union in a lively debate. I used to really enjoy the role that **Bob Perlman** took on, when he went after the discrepancies of the BPS budget. I think we should have such a position created, voted on, and professionalized as a union office holder. That is well worth the salary. Some BTU member with an MBA. BPS has no practical budget oversight and a parent population who is enraged these days. Who can blame them?

There are three prime functions of the union, which I learned when I took a course in law school on Public Sector Labor Law and discovered that close to 50% of the cases were "*BTU v. Boston School Committee*" cases, in the collective bargaining context, which were on appeal. Imagine my surprise coming from BPS. Maybe some of these cases should have space in the BTU paper. What the leadership legal team does, is largely an abstraction, to the rank-and-file members. Use space to inform the members about legal cases. I had no idea what went on behind-the-scenes as part of our union dues. Why would I? No one ever shared that information.

The union job is primarily 1) wages, 2) hours and, 3) working conditions. I ended up in law school as a result of being a whistleblower experiencing predictable retaliation, concerning toxic mold (yes it is toxic, if it makes you sick) getting great support from former BTU President **Richard Stutman**. And, in order to share and network this with my fellow union members who were also in sick buildings with poor ventilation or individual classrooms with problems, I wrote in this paper to open the discussion about Indoor Air Quality (*or lack thereof*). Now with COVID, the BPS is finally concerned about Indoor Air Quality – it only took 20+ years! I realize Richard Stutman's activism pre-dated mine.

The pen is mightier than the sword. This is exactly the place to put the First Amendment to work, and fearlessly. You may not agree with Edith, but it is her right to speak and write, as it is, the right of the McKinley faculty and other BTU members to counter-argue any-or-all of her statements.

What shocks me is that there is some pervasively growing concept that the editors should censor Edith for opening

important tool in our modern method of communication. Regardless of which platform(s) you favor, there is a way to stay informed, be involved, and to promote policies to benefit our students.

Before we move on, allow me to gently remind everyone that you can catch more flies with honey than with vinegar. Too often social media posts become

a discussion that could be controversial. Should "Edith be cancelled" because there is a lack of agreement? Should her "viewpoint be silenced" because she could be erroneous or because there is not agreement? Even if she might be wrong, Edith (as do we all) has the right to speak and publish. Whether there is agreement or non-agreement; the discussion is open.

The McKinley faculty appear to be very committed and dedicated to the students who are referred for placement there, which should be more a summer camp with return to regular education and not a "sentence" in an institutional setting. Theirs is not an easy job. My hat has always been off to those teachers in special needs classrooms. I don't know you, but I already like you. And your transparent kindness to the kids. You never can reach a child if you are unkind or punitive when dealing with them. "Smart" has many faces. Often behaviorally, non-conforming kids require a different approach to allow their smartness to shine.

Should the editors be cancelled because they did not block her article? Or use their own fact-checkers? The remedy for uncomfortable speech is more uncomfortable speech. It is long-standing Protected Speech. These days people are often afraid to speak for fear of being cancelled or silenced. But they do speak - in their own circles, where they are comfortable. We as BTU members should be comfortable speaking in our own paper. And as one of my principals used to repeat an old Harvard expression, "*We can disagree without being disagreeable.*" I may have attended the cancelled peasants' college, but I agree with that expression.

I would like to see the BTU really harness their resources to lobby for power. Real power is in school governance and in an elected school board. One can complain and vent about working conditions or important issues in the teachers' room. You can network and help organize frustrated parents. It goes nowhere and it is wholly unproductive without a responsive independently elected school board. Fearless people take the risk and put-it-out-there to debate, under the protection of the First Amendment. Right or wrong – popular or unpopular.

Both / many sides / viewpoints are needed for productivity.

The "protected speech" pen is still mightier than the sword.

– Ginny Lane, Esq.
B.S. in Early Childhood Education
M.S. in Urban Education
J.D.
BTU/Local #66, Retired

rants of frustration. While venting is a normal and necessary part of life, venting on social media leaves a lasting impression of a temporary state of mind. Let us be mindful that it's not only our supporters who read what we write.

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" [@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 off base. Soon you'll develop a relationship with that reporter who may ask you for a quote in an upcoming story.

Instagram

On Instagram, the BTU is [bostonteachersunion](#).



If Instagram is your preferred method of social media, we could use a boost in this realm.

Blogs

The *Boston Globe*, the *Boston Herald*, and the *Bay State Banner* frequently run stories and editorials about the Boston Public Schools. Print media may be on the decline but the online versions



Michael J. Maguire
Boston Union Teacher
Co-Editor

are alive and well. Boston policy makers read these newspapers and they read the comment sections too. If you have the time please post a comment, drawn from your personal experience, in these blogs. If time is short or you don't quite know what to say, simply "like" the existing blog posts that speak to you.

Letters to the Editor

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

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

Other Media

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

Save the Dates!



Back to School Party at Carson Beach

Friday, September 17, 2021

3:00-8:00 pm

Fall Leadership Conference

October 22-24, 2021

at the Sheraton Harborside Hotel
in Portsmouth, NH.

Our theme this year is

"Be Water: Power, Unity, Flexibility & Strength."

Free and open to all BTU members!

Registration coming soon.

A Primer of Rights and Benefits For Paraprofessionals/CFs For ABA Specialists



Dear Paraprofessional:

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

Salary Step Placement

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

Sick and Personal Days

Commencing with the first year of service (following a ninety-day probationary period) and annually thereafter, each September, fifteen (15) days of sick leave shall be granted to each paraprofessional in actual service on or before October 1st of that year. Two (2) personal days are also granted each year. Unused sick and personal days accumulate year to year. You may use personal day(s) for any reason with notice to the building administrator. You need not give a reason for requesting a personal day, and you may take the day(s) anytime you wish. (There are a few minor contractual restrictions regarding the use of personal leave. Consult your building representative for a full explanation.)

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

You will automatically receive union mail if you complete and return an application for union membership. Call the BTU Office at 617-288-2000 for an application, or request one from your building representative.

Health and Welfare Benefits

Paras are eligible to partake in benefits provided by the union's Health and Welfare Fund. Major benefits include a dental insurance plan and an eye care center. For enrollment in the plan, call the Health and Welfare Office (located at Union headquarters) at 617-288-5883. Ask for a brochure which gives a detailed explanation of all benefits.

Health Insurance

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

Joining the BTU

All of the above benefits have come as a result of collective bargaining between the BTU and the Boston School Committee.

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

As a member of the BTU, you'll also belong to the American Federation of Teachers-Massachusetts (AFT-MA), the Massachusetts AFL-CIO, and the American Federation of Teachers in Washington D.C. (AFT). You will begin to receive monthly mailings from the BTU, AFT-MA and the AFT. To sign up for AFT benefits, go to: <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 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

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

Union Operations

Our membership meetings are held the second Wednesday of each month at 4:30 PM at the Union headquarters in Dorchester.



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

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 above ABA pay scales shall increase by the same percentage increases as the other BTU bargaining units for the period commencing September 1, 2018 and the effective date(s) of those percentage increases shall be the same as the effective dates applied 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 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 shall have a paid duty free lunch of at least thirty (30) minutes and not less than sixty (60) minutes of self-directed time per day without presence of students. The supervisors of ABA Specialists shall review and approve ABA Specialists' work day schedules prior to September 1st of each year.

Health and Welfare Benefits

ABA Specialists are eligible to partake in benefits provided by the union's Health and Welfare Fund. Major benefits include a dental insurance plan and an eye care center. For enrollment in the plan, call the Health and Welfare Office (located at Union headquarters) at 617-288-5883. Ask for a brochure which gives a detailed explanation of all benefits.

Health Insurance

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

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Union Operations

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continued on page 17

Contractual Package for Paraprofessionals



SALARY & BENEFITS

	BENEFIT	HOW IT TAKES EFFECT?	HOW TO LEARN MORE?
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)	Step increase takes place automatically through Payroll.	See contract, page 139.
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	Provide O.H.C. with a transcript of college credits or certificate for in-service credits.	See contract, page 139.
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.	See contract, page 144.
Substituting for a Teacher	Pay is \$10.00 in addition to regular pay for substituting in his/her regular classroom.	Para must be certified as a teacher or have 10 years' service.	See contract, page 134.
Health Insurance	6 different plans, HMO and out-of-network individual and family plans.	You must apply within 60 days of 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 entering public employment after 3/31/86 must pay Medicare tax and is eligible @ age 65 provided he/she 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!	Apply at BTU H&W office at 617-288-5883 at start of employment.	Call BTU H&W at 617-288-5883 or see http://www.btuhwf.org
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, page 146. Graduation days for members of immediate family including niece or nephew.
Bereavement Leave	Grants paid leave under limited circumstances.	Depends of family relationship.	See contract, page 145.
Religious Holy Days	Grants paid leave under limited circumstances.	Depends of holiday specifics.	See contract, page 146, 116.
Maternity Leave	Paid as well as unpaid leave & city continues to pay its share of health coverage.	Paid maternity leave limited by number of sick days accrued.	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, though 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 within 30 days of hire or during open enrollment beginning mid-October.	For more info, call CPA Inc. @ 1-800-544-2340 or Group Insurance at 617-635-4570.
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 sponsors plan.	First \$5,000 of term coverage comes with purchase of health insurance. 1/2 of premium for first \$5,000 coverage paid by the city; rest paid by employee.	Call 617-635-4570 for more info. You are strongly advised to shop around to private vendors for best cost before purchasing additional insurance beyond the standard \$5,000.

RETIREMENT, TAX-DEFERRED SAVINGS PLANS

	PARTICIPATION	DETAILS	NOTES
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.	Pre-tax salary contributions grow tax-deferred until withdrawn.	See contract, page 141. Call City Treasurer's Office 617-635-4151.

MISCELLANEOUS

	BENEFIT	HOW IT TAKES EFFECT?	HOW TO LEARN MORE?
Job-Sharing	1/2 salary; 1/2 position.	Full benefits.	See contract, page 135.
Tuition Reimbursement	\$500 per year/\$1000 per year.	For paras with 3 or more years of service \$500 tuition reimbursement. 5 years, \$1,000 tuition reimbursement.	See contract, page 144. (Total BPS 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.	http://www.osfa.mass.edu quick link at top right to "grants"

ADDITIONAL CONTRACTUAL CHANGES FOR 2010-2020

2010-2020	Effective 11/1/11 a 1% raise	Effective 9/1/16 a 2% raise
	Effective 11/1/12 a 2% raise	Effective 9/1/17 a 3% raise
	Effective 11/1/13 a 3% raise	Effective 9/1/18 a 2% raise
	Effective 11/1/14 a 3% raise	Effective 9/1/19 a 2% raise
	Effective 11/1/15 a 3% raise	Effective 9/1/20 a 2% raise
Paras with 3+ years eligible for \$500 yearly tuition reimbursement.		
Paras with 5+ years eligible for \$1,000 yearly tuition reimbursement.		

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.

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.

Contractual Package for ABA Specialists



SALARY & BENEFITS

	BENEFIT	HOW IT TAKES EFFECT?
Salary Step	Shall advance one step per year after completion of 120 days in previous SY.	Advance one step effect 9/1.
Career Awards	Completion of 7 th years on anniversary date.	Should be automatic. If there are any issues, complete and submit PS03.
Health Insurance	6 different plans, HMO and out-of-network individual and family plans.	You must apply within 60 days of date of hire. Deadline is firm. New dependents must be added within 30 days. Call Group Insurance office at 617-635-4570 http://www.cityofboston.gov key word: Health Benefit.
Medicare	Anyone entering public employment after 3/31/86 must pay Medicare tax and is eligible @ age 65 provided he/she has 10 years' service.	Employees pay 1.45% of gross wages. http://www.medicare.gov Deductions are mandatory and continue with employment.
BTU Health and Welfare Fund	Includes Dental, Eye Care and Legal benefit. City pays plan premium, but some benefits have co-pays. Terrific benefit!	Apply at BTU H&W office at 617-288-5883 at start of employment. http://www.btuwhf.org
Sick Days	Grants paid leave when ill, up to time accumulated.	15 days granted per year; unused days accumulate
Personal Leave	Grants paid leave for personal reasons.	4 days per year; unused days rollover to sick days. Graduation days including niece or nephew. Depends on family relationship.
Religious Holy Days	Grants paid leave under limited circumstances.	Depends of holiday specifics.
Maternity Leave	Paid as well as unpaid leave & city continues to pay its share of health coverage.	Paid maternity leave limited by number of sick days accrued.
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)
Leave for Family Illness	Paid leave for family members' illness.	Limited to 30 days per school year if accumulated, though more can be granted.
Duty-Free Lunch & Break	30 minutes for lunch	Duty-free time.
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.
Life Insurance	City sponsors plan.	First \$5,000 of term coverage comes with purchase of health insurance. 1/2 of premium for first \$5,000 coverage paid by the city; rest paid by employee. You are strongly advised to shop around to private vendors for best cost before purchasing additional insurance beyond the standard \$5,000.

RETIREMENT, TAX-DEFERRED SAVINGS PLANS

	PARTICIPATION	DETAILS	NOTES
Public Pension	Participation is mandatory under state law; vested employees obtain a pension at retirement.		See contract, page 175.
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.	Pre-tax salary contributions grow tax-deferred until withdrawn.	See contract, page 175. Call City Treasurer's Office 617-635-4151.

ADDITIONAL CONTRACTUAL CHANGES FOR 2016-2020

2016-2020	Effective 9/1/16 a 2% raise
	Effective 9/1/17 a 3% raise
	Effective 9/1/18 a 2% raise
	Effective 9/1/19 a 2% raise
	Effective 9/1/20 a 2% raise
2019	educational differential of \$1,500 for ABAs who obtain a BCBA or BCaBA

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.

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Welcome Paraprofessionals/CFCs... continued from page 15

Each school has Union Building Representatives, elected to serve the staff in the building in dealings with the administration. The building representative is also the first line of communications between the building staff and the Union office. Many questions can be easily and quickly answered at the building level by asking the building representative.

The Union employs seven full-time officers and staff to serve the membership. Office hours are 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM. The office is open all weekdays including school vacations, but is closed on state, local and national holidays, the day after Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve and Good Friday. The office number is 617-288-2000.

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 me or email me at chart@btu.org.

Welcome ABA Specialists... continued from page 15

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

Welcome Substitutes



Dear Substitute Teacher:

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

Health Insurance

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

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

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

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

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Union Operations

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

- Colleen M. Hart, Paraprofessional/Substitute/ABA Field Representative

Substitute Teachers – What Has the Union Done For Me?

2018-2020 Substitutes who worked 120 days or more during the SY18-19 in Schedule A schools will be compensated a retroactive payment of \$500.

Per Diem Substitute Bonus increased by \$250.00.

The salary grid below takes into account longer school days. There are three different rates for three different school day hours:

Hours	SUBT1 Per diem	SUBT2 Long term (short)	SUBT3 Long term (long)	REG Cluster Sub
6:00-6:39	\$148.68	\$165.40	\$299.27	\$181.01
6:40-7:09	\$160.68	\$177.40	\$311.27	\$193.01
7:10 +	\$165.68	\$182.40	\$316.27	\$198.01

2010-2018 Compensation (Divide by 7 for hourly rate)

Effective	11/1/11 +1%	11/1/12 +2%	11/1/13 +3%	11/1/14 +3%	11/1/15 +3%	9/1/16 +2%	9/1/17 +3%
Per Diem	126.97	129.51	133.40	137.40	141.52	144.35	148.68
Long Term - After 10 days	141.25	144.08	148.40	152.85	157.44	160.58	165.40
Long Term - After 25 days	255.58	260.69	268.51	276.57	284.87	290.56	299.28
Cluster	154.67	157.67	162.40	167.27	172.29	175.74	181.01

Cluster Substitute Bereavement Leave – Cluster Substitute teachers shall be granted bereavement leave as follows:

1. Death in the immediate family, including mother-in-law, father in-law, and anyone residing in the same household with the substitute teacher: 5 days, no loss.
2. Death of niece, nephew, uncle, aunt or inlaw other than above: 1 day, no loss.
3. Death of grandchild or grandparent: 3 days, no loss.

2006-2010 Compensation (Divide by 7 for hourly rate)

	9/1/06- 8/31/07 +2.0%	9/1/07- 8/31/08 +2.0%	9/1/08- 1/31/09 +2.0%	2/1/09- 8/31/09 +2.0%	9/1/09- 1/31/10 +2.0%	2/1/10- 8/31/10 +2.0%
Per Diem Daily Rate	112.78	116.16	119.65	120.84	124.47	125.71
Long Term (After 10 Days)	125.46	129.22	133.10	134.43	138.47	139.85
Long Term (After 25 Days)	227.01	233.82	240.84	243.25	250.54	253.05
Cluster Subs	137.30	141.42	145.66	147.12	151.53	153.05

Salary Differential – All substitute teachers who hold an active Mass. Teaching License shall receive a salary differential equal to 3% of the per diem rate.

Retired teachers who return to subbing shall not be required to take any test.

Health & Welfare benefits for Cluster Substitutes will increase by \$150.00 effective 9/1/07.

2003-2006 Compensation (Divide by 7 for hourly rate)

	2003-04 +2.0%	2004-05 +2.5%	9/1/05- 12/31/05 +2.0%	1/1/06- 3/31/06 +1.0%	4/1/06- 8/31/06 +1.0%
Daily Salary	103.67	106.26	108.39	109.47	110.57
Per Diem	115.33	118.21	120.58	121.78	123.00
Long Term (after 10 days)	208.68	213.90	218.18	220.36	222.56
Long Term (after 25 days)	126.21	129.37	131.96	133.28	134.61

Per Diem Annual Bonus - \$1,000.00 after working at least 120 days by end of June as a per diem sub; and \$1,500.00 after working at least 150 days as a per diem sub. If the bonus exceeds \$100,000, it will be reduced so as not to exceed the \$100,000 cap.

Long term pay increased after 25 days instead of 30.

2000-2003 Level Subs changed to Cluster Subs.

Compensation:	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03
Daily Salary	\$93.97	\$97.73	\$101.64
Per Diem	104.40	108.58	113.07
Long Term (after 10 days)	189.16	196.73	204.59
Long Term (after 30 days)	114.40	118.98	123.74

Per Diem Annual Bonus - \$1,000.00 after working more than 120 days by end of June. If a per diem substitute teacher works even one day as a long-term sub or cluster substitute, they are no longer eligible to receive the per diem bonus. If the bonus exceeds \$100,000, it will be reduced so as not to exceed the \$100,000 cap.

Sick Days - Long term and cluster substitutes accumulate one sick day for every 20 days worked. Sick time is cumulative from year to year; provided that the substitute remains a bargaining unit member, and sick time shall carry over upon becoming teachers or paraprofessionals. Per diem substitutes are not eligible to use sick time.

Health and Welfare - Cluster substitutes shall be included in the Paraprofessional Health and Welfare Fund benefit for dental insurance, eye care and legal services.

Health Insurance - If a substitute works 20 hours per week on a regular basis, he/she may receive health insurance as follows: 75% of the total monthly premiums for the policy selected by the employer including master medical or the equivalent benefits, or 90% of the total monthly premiums for all approved and authorized health maintenance organizations. Sign up for health insurance at Boston City Hall within 30 days of employment, or at open enrollment in April of each year.

Professional Days - Long term and cluster substitutes shall participate in professional days along with regular teachers/nurses/paras and shall be compensated therefore.

18 Hours of Professional Development - Long term and cluster substitutes will be required to attend the eighteen hours of professional development required of teachers. This time is scheduled beyond the school day and long term and cluster substitutes will be paid for this time.

Application for Teaching Positions - Those substitute teachers who are certified, recommended as a result of central interview, have a letter of recommendation from a Boston Public Schools administrator, and who apply for teaching positions, will be guaranteed up to four interviews. For the central interview, complete a Boston Public Schools Personnel Bulletin that in the past has been issued in November or December of each year. The bulletin is called: "Paraprofessional/Substitute Teacher Applications for Teaching Positions."

1997-2000 Compensation - same as 1996-97: Per Diem \$83.54; L.T.S. \$92.81 up to \$168.15; Level Subs \$92.81. No contract because the State Labor Relations Commission precluded the BTU from negotiating a contract for substitute teachers until it was determined which union would represent the bargaining unit.

1994-1997 Zone Subs changed to "Level Substitute." L.T.S. and Level Subs shall participate in Professional Days and be compensated. 1994-95, 50 Level Subs. '95-96, 60 Level and '96-97, 70 Level Subs. Salary: 1996-97, second year Per Diem, \$83.54; L.T., \$92.81 to \$168.15; Level Subs \$92.81. Life Insurance plan \$5,000.00

1991-1992 To be negotiated (salary). Subs to carry over sick leave upon becoming teachers under contract. All subs eligible for Professional Development.

1989-1992 Per Diem Subs \$74.27 (year two); L.T.S. \$82.51, up to \$149.49. District \$82.98.

1986-1989 Sick Leave - for Long Term and District Subs. Life Insurance Policy \$2000. Per Diem \$65.23; L.T.S. \$72.48; District \$72.48. District Subs changed to Zone Subs.

1984 January 1, 1984 signed second contract through August 31, 1986. Years 85-86 Per Diem \$56 per day; L.T.S. \$60 per day. Assign 45 District Subs (new category). Health Insurance for Long Term Subs and District Subs. Grievance procedure.

1983 First signed contract - May, 1983 to December, 1983. Per Diem \$45 per day; Long Term Sub \$50 per day. Long Term Sub only - health insurance at 75% paid.

1981 Substitutes were recognized by the Boston Teachers Union in 1981 and represented substitutes on assault cases before any contract ever existed.



RTC Welcomes New Members

Marilyn Marion, RTC President and Joan Devlin RTC Secretary

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 \$5.00 per month for teachers and \$2.50 for paraprofessionals. You can download an application from the RTC section on the BTU website, sign it and 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



RTC Officers Re-Elected – Clockwise from upper left: Roz Avant, Vice Chair; Marilyn Marion, Chair; Anne Broder, Treasurer; and Joan Devlin, Secretary.

Boston State College and UMass Boston Alumni: Get Re-Engaged with UMass Boston

There are a lot of exciting developments over at 100 Morrissey Boulevard – new buildings, plans for more new green space, even a new Chancellor! Some perks that go along with Alumni membership are: use of the *Beacon Fitness Center* at affordable rates; hotel, rental car and insurance *discounts*; and even a *Virtual Book Club*.

If you're not receiving information from the UMass Boston Alumni Office and would like to, please contact Steve Whittemore from the Office of Alumni Engagement at steven.whittemore@umb.edu or call (617) 297-6531.

For All RTC members: Join the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) at UMass Boston

The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) fosters accessible lifelong learning, individual growth and social connection for mature learners (aged 50 or older). Through a moderately priced annual membership, OLLI provides non-credit courses, special lectures, social events, theatre outings, day trips and travel in the US and abroad.

Check out these website links:

<https://www.umb.edu/olli> (main OLLI webpage)

<https://www.umb.edu/olli/courses> (information on courses)

<https://www.umb.edu/olli/events> (upcoming events page, including archived copies of the OLLI Connections newsletter)

or email: ollireg@gmail.com for more information

Note: OLLI classes and lectures will be virtual for the Fall 2021 semester, but there are plans for some in person events.

apply for COBRA, which extends your Delta Dental and eyeglass benefits for two years. After two years, you can apply for the RTC's Delta Dental plan.

Joining the Retired Teachers' Chapter of the Boston Teachers' Union means that you are entitled to some interesting benefits. We offer RTC members the following benefits: After two years of membership, a member can receive a free pair of eyeglasses from the Eye Care Center at the BTU Health and Welfare Fund; Delta Dental Insurance for members and spouse or individual plans; discounts on hearing tests and hearing aids through Hear USA; Travel opportunities locally, and nationally. For more information on the Delta Dental Program and to get an application, please contact **Roz Avant**, RTC Vice-Chair, at the RTC office in the Boston Teachers Union on Thursday from 10:00 am-2:00 pm.

Despite Herculean efforts by the social committee, we will not hold a Fall Luncheon this year. Hotels and restaurants everywhere are suffering a

shortage of serving staff and could not accommodate the number of people that generally attend our luncheon. The committee continues to plan for the Spring Luncheon and hope to hold the Holiday Jazz Brunch.

The fall business meetings will be virtual. We will hold the meeting on Tuesday, October 19th at 11:00 am. Details about the business meeting and instructions for registering will be sent by email as the date gets closer. You should make sure that the RTC office has your personal email. We never share our members' emails with others.

While the pandemic halted many activities, our legislative committee was able to successfully lobby the Mayor, City Councilors and Boston Retirement Board for an increase in the COLA base. We emailed, snail mailed, attended virtual Retirement Board meetings and submitted electronic testimony. We will continue to press the board and city officers to provide pension and benefits for all retirees.

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> (main OLLI web page)
- <https://www.umb.edu/olli/courses> (information about courses)
- <https://www.umb.edu/olli/events> (upcoming event page)

The courses and events for the fall semester will be virtual. Fortunately the institute offers a course in using Zoom for productive meetings!

We continue to explore additional benefits for our members and welcome your input. If you have an 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.

GREECE/DUBAI
OCT 21-NOV 3, 2021
\$3900 pp



EGYPT
FEB 17-27, 2022
\$3600 pp



MOROCCO
APR 14-24, 2022
\$3200 pp



MEXICO/OAXACA
FEB 18-26, 2022
\$2800 pp



FINLAND
APR 8-17, 2022
\$2999 pp



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BTU's SOUL Brings More Interesting Ideas To Members

By Nisa Harrison

Summer Organizing Union Leaders, SOUL for short, accepts a group of ten to fifteen BTU members each summer for five weeks. This summer educators, teachers, specialists, paras, and ABAs worked and learned skills around organizing. Some of the more important skills we learned were creating power maps¹ and having one-to-one conversations. We developed our skills, relationships, and a deeper understanding of how the BTU accomplishes its obligations.

This summer at SOUL many of us are working on projects that will extend into the school year. One of those projects was establishing the BTU Traveling Table. Four of us traveled to different communities and initiated conversations with

families, community members, and parents. So far the Traveling Table has visited Hyde Park and Dorchester and the conversations have been amazing. Parents shared their challenges, struggles, and in some cases, visions of what they want for their children in BPS. Retired teachers (from out of town too!) supported our idea relative to the tenets in BTU's proposed contract. We also asked community members to take pictures with us and highlight which of the six positions they resonated with, one parent said, "all of them!" By "all of them", they meant facilities, social-emotional support, special education, English learners, educator diversity, and housing.

We love that families are excited about our proposals and we hope that all our members are too. I know that I am

excited about all of them, particularly educator diversity! There have been so many firsts for BTU over the last two years that pertain to diversity including, the first black elementary field representative in BTU history (Lea Serena) and the most racially inclusive Executive Board. This year BTU's contract proposal acknowledges the inequities that the pandemic has exacerbated. The proposal also attempts both to address the needs of the whole child and to create working conditions which teachers have been advocating for years.

Personally, SOUL has allowed me to appreciate where the BTU started, how far we have come, and how much more we need to fight for the teachers, students, and families so that we have the schools we all deserve.

I encourage BTU members to familiarize themselves with the current contract by reviewing it online (btu.org/contracts). Please also take a look at the goals and aspirations of our ambitious – but attainable – new contract proposals. (btu.org) Hopefully you will have the opportunity this new school year to connect with one of this year's SOULS. Better yet, maybe you will join the SOUL program next summer. Why? Because it is important to know what we have won at the bargaining table over the years and it is important to know what is possible to achieve when we all stand together.

¹ power map - an organizational chart where the person you wish to influence is highlighted or identified.

(Nisa Harrison teaches pre-calculus at the John D. O'Bryant School of Mathematical and Science.)

Commentary

BTU Needs to Act to Protect Our "Right to Strike"

On July 13, 2021 the Joint Committee on Labor and Workforce Development held a hearing on Bill H.1946. MTA President Merrie Najimy, Vice President Max Page, and educators from all around the state testified in favor of H.1946.

Ann Finkel: What is Bill H.1946?

Tim Maher: H.1946 is a bill in the Massachusetts House of Representatives that would remove the current law that bans public employees from participating in a strike.

Ann: So why did so many educators testify in favor of this bill?

Tim: The ability to strike is such a fundamental human right that it is written into the constitutions of over 90 countries. I'll steal this line of thinking right from longtime labor organizer **Jane McAlevey**: as working class people in our democracy, we have two major levers to exert power. The first is voting – and we rightly condemn the attacks on the right to vote in other states. The second is the ability to collectively withhold our labor in order to force concessions from the employing class. Our democracy is weakened when we do not have the legal right to collectively refuse work.

Ann: Safe learning and working conditions have been on everyone's mind since March 2020. Does this bill have anything to do with school safety?

Tim: Definitely. Last September, when Andover teachers worked from the school parking lot rather than in an unsafe building, they paved the way for many districts to reconsider bringing adults back into poorly ventilated spaces. But within 10 days the state labor board, which typically takes eons to resolve other disputes, called their action an "illegal strike" and forced them into the building. But this goes beyond just schools and COVID concerns – let's say a T bus driver refuses to operate a vehicle because the brakes are not functioning properly or construction workers halt a project that is violating the building code. The legality of these decisions ends up in the hands of the Governor and his appointees on the

labor board, rather than the employees who would be putting themselves and the public at risk.

Ann: So let's say we win some upgrades to our school buildings in this upcoming contract, is this bill still essential?

Tim: Well, right now, when we sit down to bargain with BPS, they are assuming that we won't go on strike to create the schools our students deserve. The passage of this bill would drastically transform the power balance and calculations they make at the bargaining table. But organizing for and going on an all-out strike is about much more than creating a headache for the folks at the Bolling building. In order to fully fund public education in the City of Boston, to create an educational experience for every Boston student that is on par with the ones received by this country's wealthiest families, will require nothing less than a political earthquake.

Ann: When schools are affected by a strike won't people say that we are hurting our students?

Tim: Yes, that is exactly what most major news outlets said about Chicago, Los Angeles, Oakland, Denver, West Virginia, Arizona, Oklahoma, etc.

But Chicago's members, students, and families were not fooled about whose side the Democratic mayor was on after permanently closing 50 schools in one year. In the midst of the 2012 strike, 66% of Chicago Public School parents supported the union over the mayor.

Likewise, LA's strike rallies were more than twice the size of their 34,000 members, thanks to heavy support from students, families, and community. The United Teachers Los Angeles (UTLA) strike won a contract full of student and community-oriented provisions including Green Spaces, an Immigrants Defense Fund, more nurses and guidance counselors, and fewer students per class.

Ann: Okay, so what can BTU members do to protect our right to strike?

Tim: Talk to your coworkers about how deeply unjust it is that a progressive state like Massachusetts punishes workers who use job actions to demand more for their families and communities. Ask Political Director **Johnny McInnis** and Political Organizer **Roberto Jimenez-Rivera** the status of this bill and how we can move it forward. Vote for State Reps like ones who introduced this bill – **Mike Connolly** and **Erika Uytterhoeven** (both of whom BTU also endorsed). Call up your State Rep and ask what they are doing to see H. 1946 into law. Learn more from **Jane McAlevey** and **Eric Blanc** about the essential role strikes have played in defending public education. Keep fighting!

(Ann Finkel is a 7th grade science teacher at the McKay K-8 School. Tim Maher is a 7th grade math teacher at the Lyndon Pilot School.)

Making Strides Against Breast Cancer Boston Walk • Sunday, September 26, 2021



Contact Brenda Chaney
to register for the walk –
bchaney@btu.org