President’s Report  Jessica Tang

Implementation, Enforcement and What to Expect in the Months Ahead

Now that the new contract has been ratified, approved by the School Committee and funded by the City Council, we are quickly moving into the next phase of contract implementation and enforcement. Each week we are meeting with the school department to get the latest updates on when we can see the changes that we have agreed to reflected in everything from our pay stubs to the composition of our classrooms. This process, as always, takes time. However, it is now our collective job to keep the pressure on the school district to make sure that it doesn’t take an unreasonable amount of time to see the changes we know our educators and students need.

Retroactive pay will take longer than the pay adjustments in our salaries. We know that historically it takes at least 2-3 months before we receive the pay adjustments in our current salaries and a month or two longer for the retroactive pay to get calculated and disbursed. With that as a guide, our hope is that we will see the raises reflected in the next month’s (December) pay and retro pay disbursed some time in January. Our conversations with the Office of Human Capital are somewhat consistent with this timeline, although, they have also hinted that both may come after January.

We are also slowly making progress in other areas, but one of the greatest frustrations of this school year, by far, has been the slow response time, lack of communication and egregious mistakes coming from OHC. So while we would like to be optimistic, and despite a commitment from the new superintendent to hire six more staff for OHC, we cannot say with confidence that the timelines we expect will be honored this year as well. Unfortunately. As always, we will continue to advocate for a timely implementation of all aspects of our contract, however.

There are many other provisions within our contract that will need all of our attention to ensure that they are being implemented with fidelity and with the spirit in which they were intended. This will take making sure all of our members are knowledgeable about the new language and now how to enforce it. With that in mind, BTU officers and staff will be launching a new round of school visits to provide “Contract Coffee Hours” where we can answer questions, hear from our members and ensure that what we have won is now being implemented and enforced in our schools. We will continue to hold workshops, trainings and other activities as we did at the Fall Leadership Conference 2022 at Seacrest in Falmouth.

Cheryl L. Kelly, R.N.
Nurse at the Edwards Middle School and Member of the BTU Executive Board for the past 24 years. Requiescat In Pace.

Virginia Tisei
Former teacher at the Farragut and Lee schools, past Vice President of the Boston Teachers Union ’75-’79. Requiescat In Pace.

Fall Leadership Conference 2022 at Seacrest in Falmouth

The union is a family. See story and more photos on pages 8 and 9.
The BTU will be holding an election for all elected positions this spring. BTU and RTC members will have an opportunity to vote for full-time officer and staff positions*, the 12-member executive board, RTC officers, para council, and delegates to various conventions and organizations to which we send representatives. It is never too early to start thinking about running and serving in a position! It is also never too early to make sure your mailing address is accurate in the BTU members portal. The beginning of each Election Committee meeting is set aside to answer member questions. Meetings are held on the 4th Monday of the month at 5:30 pm at the BTU.

Three by-law changes regarding elections have been approved by the membership this fall. These changes allow the election committee to select a vendor without soliciting new bids each cycle. Signatures for nomination can be collected on line and on paper nomination pages. This was piloted during Covid and is now permanent. Due to changes in how schools / departments are organized (K-5, K-8, related services…) field representatives must be adjusted. Members will vote for the Field Representative assigned to service their category of staff. RTC members shall vote for the Field Representative category that they were last assigned before retiring.

**OFFICE AND NUMBER OF SIGNATURES NEEDED TO RUN**

- President .......................................................... 100
- Vice President ...................................................... 100
- Secretary/Treasurer ............................................. 100
- Political Director ................................................. 100
- Field Representatives .......................................... 100
- Executive Board (12 positions) ......................... 50
- Delegates to all affiliated bodies
  (Greater Boston Labor Council, AFL-CIO, AFT, AFT Massachusetts) ............. 25
- Paraprofessional Council .................................. 25
- RTC Chair .......................................................... 25
- RTC Vice Chair .................................................. 25
- RTC Secretary ...................................................... 25
- RTC Treasurer ...................................................... 25

American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (MA AFL-CIO).

The Greater Boston Labor Council (GBLC) is a part of the Massachusetts American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (MA AFL-CIO). The BTU is a member of the GBLC represented by members elected as delegates. The council itself represents over 100,000 Union workers across Massachusetts. Their mission is to improve the lives of families in the 24 communities it represents. The goal of the GBLC is to build a movement of union and workers to advocate for working family issues in city and town halls throughout Greater Boston. The council also seeks to reach out to progressive allies within our communities to advance the cause of economic justice.

The BTU elects has 52 members elected as delegates who are eligible to participate with GBLC. Delegates are eligible to attend meetings, conferences, and vote on candidates that are recommended to be endorsed by GBLC then vote on by the MA AFL-CIO.

STEPS TO RUNNING

- Nomination papers available starting at January membership meeting.
- Nomination papers due by the March membership meeting.
- Voting is conducted both by mail in ballot and in person. Mail in ballots must be received at the post office the day before in person voting. Stay tuned for exact dates the ballots will be mailed out.
- Primary election - 1st Wed of May for in person voting at the BTU.
- Final election - 1st Wed of June for in person voting at the BTU.
- You can reach us at electioncommittee@btu.org and notes are always posted on the portal. Check the BTU weekly bulletin for updates. We look forward to your participation in this important process!

– Marjie Crosby, Christine Battiglieri, Michael O’Halloran, Katie Mallon
Officers for the 2022/2023 BTU Election Committee

- President .......................................................... 100
- Vice President ...................................................... 100
- Secretary/Treasurer ............................................. 100
- Political Director ................................................. 100
- Field Representatives .......................................... 100
- Executive Board (12 positions) ......................... 50
- Delegates to all affiliated bodies
  (Greater Boston Labor Council, AFL-CIO, AFT, AFT Massachusetts) ............. 25
- Paraprofessional Council .................................. 25
- RTC Chair .......................................................... 25
- RTC Vice Chair .................................................. 25
- RTC Secretary ...................................................... 25
- RTC Treasurer ...................................................... 25

Election Information

Election Information

Boston Teachers Union

Endorsed Candidates

November 8, 2022 Election Day Results

Statewide candidates:
Governor Maura Healey
Treasurer Deb Goldberg
Auditor Diana DiZoglio
Secretary of State William Galvin

Senate Incumbent:
Senator Mike Brady ........................................ 2nd Plymouth and Bristol
Senator Patricia Jehlen ..................................... 2nd Middlesex
Senator Jason Lewis ....................................... 5th Middlesex
Senator Brendan Crighton .............................. 3rd Essex
Senator Patrick O’Connor ................................ Plymouth and Norfolk
Senator Marc Pacheco .................................... 1st Plymouth and Bristol
Senator Becca Rausch ........................................ Norfolk, Bristol, and Middlesex
Senator Walter Timilty ..................................... Norfolk, Plymouth, and Bristol
Senator Lydia Edwards .................................... 1st Suffolk and Middlesex

State Representative Incumbents:
State Representative James Hawkins ............... 2nd Bristol
State Representative Erika Uyterhoeven ............ 27th Middlesex
State Representative Brandy флaker Oakley ........ 12th Suffolk
State Representative Tommy Vitolo .................. 15th Norfolk

Non-Incumbent candidates:
State Senator Liz Miranda .................................. 2nd Suffolk
State Representative Samantha Montano ........... 15th Suffolk
State Representative Christopher Worrell .......... 5th Suffolk

Ballot Question 1 ........................................... Fair Share Amendment
Ballot Question 2 ........................................... Drivers License Bill

See Congressional Black Caucus 2022 on page 5.
Given the new contract’s emphasis and commitment to Inclusive Education, what are the Inclusion Planning Teams every school has to have?

How will BTU members of each school’s Inclusion Planning Team be selected?

BTU members of each school’s Inclusion Planning Team must be elected by eligible BTU members at each school in a secret ballot election conducted in person by the school’s BTU Building Representative(s) according to the Below are the bylaws that were adopted as outlined in September 2022’s Boston Union Teacher of this column.

The BTU has and will continue to be the advocate and support for “INCLUSION DONE RIGHT!” In order for that to occur our voices as stakeholders must be part of the process. To that end, we negotiated that at LEAST 50% of the committee must be BTU.

“The Inclusion Planning Team will be charged with making recommendations to the School Site Council or Governing Board on the following:

Planning and Implementation, including:

- Professional Development
- Cultures and mindset building
- Scheduling
- Staffing
- Communicating structures, relationship, and protocols with school based SST/MTSS systems
- Reviewing the class composition and staffing models in the school
- The Inclusion Planning Team may select a representative to participate in the portions of the meeting that don’t involve decisions on individual staff

Submitting recommendations to the annual meeting between the school team and district office team to review staffing for the upcoming school year.

The ILT and/or Inclusion Planning Team will provide ongoing maintenance/assessment of inclusive practices:

- Assessing the successes and challenges
- Soliciting and considering stakeholder voices and experiences
- Advising the school leadership on gaps in their responsibility center manager
- Must make their leave request through the Teacher and Principal
- The contract clearly states, "The new contract language adds that employees are allowed one (1) four (4) hours per calendar year for various types of cancer screening including that for breast, prostate, colon, skin, thyroid, oral cavity, lymph, nodes, reproductive organs, and lungs. The procedure dictates for cancer screening and/or Living Organ Donation" that states that the Mayor signed an Executive Order allowing all city employees to use four (4) hours of leave per calendar year for various types of cancer screening including that for breast, prostate, colon, skin, thyroid, oral cavity, lymph, nodes, reproductive organs, and lungs. The procedure dictates that employees that are allowed one (1) four (4) hours period that will not be broken into hourly units. It requires that they must make their leave request through their responsibility center manager [principal] and they provide them a signed copy of a medical document verifying the date that the employee was granted a cancer screening. For attendance reporting purposes, the time reporting code $1200 to report time taken under this provision must be used. This cancer screening leave time is not charged to any accumulated sick time. All questions concerning this circular should be made to the BPS Office of Human Capital, at 617-635-9670.

Do I have to accept an intern or student teacher?

The contract clearly states, “Any teacher requested to accept a trainer 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.

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 will use as well as training opportunities to support class-based inclusion planning teams."
 Commentary Michael J. Maguire
Like Other Professionals, We Ought To Be Paid For Our Time

T here just isn’t enough time in the school day to do what must be done. Everyone knows this. We can’t do our jobs and still work hours each day for free. Let’s not only get paid for our time but let’s also help our students in the process.

A person who thinks that teachers can finish their work between the starting and dismissal bells is someone who has never had a job. Every proficient person would be challenged to correct papers, plan lessons, answer emails, make photocopies (assuming the photocopier works or that there is enough paper), converse with colleagues, strengthen relationships with students, clean the classroom, and collect evaluation debriefings, and visit the rest room within a daily planning period. So we take work home, we dedicate hours on the weekends, and we sacrifice our family time to help other families’ children. Of course we do, because we love our jobs, we love helping others, and we believe in the purpose of education. All the while the district, the city, the state, and the nation all thank us for being chumps.

Please tell me how many of the BPS’s lawyers work the same amount of free-time as teachers do. Please tell me how many police officers and firefighters voluntarily work the same number of free hours per week as teachers do. The cops and jakes have it right, they get paid for their work. So should we.

Therefore, I propose that we work a little extra hour each school day AND that we be paid for that time. As a secondary school teacher I shall use secondary school as my example. My proposal is that teachers would work a half hour (either before or after the regular school day, or split both before and after depending on the various school times.) This way teachers can do some of their correcting, planning, copying, etc. before they take the rest of the work home.

Struggling students would be able to find all their teachers for extra help. In any school there are some teachers who stay after for hours and some teachers who have to leave immediately to attend to their own children’s school dismissals. In the course of my 29 years of teaching, I’ve been in both situations. From the students’ perspective it does not matter what the situation of their teachers are; for if they need extra help, they need extra help. We could all be there to provide it to them.

Teachers who coach sports teams or run band practice or who direct school plays can and should be able to be the leaders of their students’ activities and be compensated for their extra time grading, prepping, and planning. Those details can be worked out.

Naturally some subjects have more take-home work than others. That issue is probably best settled in class size discussions.

Regardless of the class, most teachers spend at least an hour on average working for free each day. It’s the “for free” part that is particularly painful with today’s inflation.

Michael J. Maguire
Boston Union Teacher
Co-Editor

What is the inflation rate? It’s hard to tell as various sources use different metrics to measure. 2021 is a tough year to nail down and 2022 is not finished yet. However most sources are fairly consistent. To paraphrase US Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart, I know it when I see it.

If you’ve been to the grocery store recently you know that some prices have spiked more than others. Nationally groceries have a single digit inflation rate but locally eggs and butter are up somewhere between 26% and 33%.

Halloween decorations were up only about 3% or 4% but candy was up between 13% and 17%. continued on page 7

Innovative Educators:
Li Ak Kè Kontan (Reading With Joy): Engaging and Motivating the Haitian Community Through Literacy

A s members of the BTU’s Haitian Educators Committee, the Beethoven’s Blanca Pierre (Family Liaison) and Carline Louis-Letang (School Nurse), the Mattahunt’s Yvrose Bourdeau (K1 Dual Language), Charlestown High’s Josette Teneus (Guidance Counselor), and Parent University/Office of Advancement Steve Desrosiers (Family Education Coordinator) shared a common goal for Haitian students in BPS. They wanted to apply for and receive a grant from the BPS/BTU Teacher Leadership Fund. Their project aimed to gather the necessary tools that we think they should have; as educators we have to meet them where they are until they gather the necessary tools.

The team is excited for the potential continued impact of this project, says Pierre. “The families who attended were grateful and excited for the upcoming workshops. The need for equitable access to literacy affects every under-resourced family in the district, and I hope the Reading with Joy project can continue to be a resource for our families throughout the years to come.”

The series began on October 19th with Li Ak Kè Kontan (Reading With Joy): Engaging and Motivating the Haitian Community Through Literacy.
**Scenes from the Dearborn STEM Academy**

- **ESL**
  We are writing the important information from a story we read about going to a new house. We are both from Cape Verde, and we are learning how to read and write and speak English.
  
  -- Marcos Ledo Pontes Mendes & Marcelo Teixeira, Grade 7

- **History**
  We were looking at the map and reading the article and identifying the major problems associated with antibacterial resistance and what pharmaceutical companies are doing to solve them. Over the past couple of years we’ve been learning about the Great Depression. We learned that a lot of people suffered in the times before slavery.
  
  -- Larissa Barbosa, Grade 11

- **Science**
  I was in Ms. Nunes’ Anatomy class. I read an article about antibiotic resistance and how our body fights it. In this photo I was writing about the article’s big ideas: identifying the major problems associated with antibacterial resistance and what pharmaceutical companies are doing to solve them. Over the past couple of years we’ve been learning about the Great Depression.
  
  -- Claudia Alves, Grade 12

- **Math**
  In this picture I’m writing about a math equation and Mr. B is explaining what to do. This is in my pre-algebra class where we’re learning how to multiply and divide negative and positive numbers. This is my first year here and I like the building, the kind teachers, and the positive atmosphere.
  
  --Teresa McShaw, Grade 7

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**Congressional Black Caucus 2022**

The convening of the 51st Annual Congressional Black Caucus was held in September of this year for the first time in two years in Washington, DC. The mission of the CBC is to advance the global Black community by developing leaders, informing policy and educating the public. The American Federation of Teachers along with Delta Research and Education Foundation Professional Development sponsored a professional development series for members. There were AFT members who arrived from several other locals across the country like California, Texas, and Florida to name a few. You may recall that was the same week as the devastating hurricane Ian in Florida as Floridians traveled away from the storm to be there.

Our morning began with a film screening titled “Who We Are: A Chronicle of Racism in America”. We listened to the rationale for this film from the film’s creator and were able to have questions answered by some of the film’s production team. This was a very intense film with a lot of conversation. The Plenary “Bring Back Our Educators” after lunch gave everyone a chance to reflect on the pipeline for recruiting, retaining, educators of color. The other part of the conversation was about strategies to support your colleagues in schools. We also had a session titled “A New Normal: COVID-19 Coping and Supportive Strategies for Students and Educators.” The two concurrent sessions were “Organizing the Village: Parent, Family, and Community Engagement” and “Reimaging Leadership and Building Equity in Schools.”

The conference itself was filled with several different topics with sessions on Health Care, Financial Wellness, Voter participation to name a few along with several other important topics to support legislatively. Friday morning Congresswoman Ayanna Pressley held a roundtable that featured Boston City Councilor Ruthieh Louijeine as a panelist.

-- Johnny McInnis, BTU Political Director
The City of Boston recently held the annual Fay Chandler EMERGING Art Exhibition at Boston City Hall, a celebration of the Boston visual arts community. Artists that live, work, or create in the Greater Boston area are encouraged to submit their work for consideration. Hosted by the Mayor’s Office of Arts and Culture, the Fay Chandler EMERGING Art Exhibition features fresh, original, and contemporary works of art created by Greater Boston area artists.

Quote from Kara Elliott-Ortega, Chief of Arts and Culture for the City of Boston:
"This exhibition is a great opportunity to recognize the immense talent that exists in Boston, support up and coming artists, and brighten the walls of City Hall. It’s wonderful to see so many new artists share their work as part of this exhibition year after year, and we’re always amazed by the variety of artworks that are submitted. Artists and creatives contribute so much to our economy, wellness, and vibrancy of our city, and this is one small way we’re able to recognize those in the beginning stages of their creative careers."

Hala Ashour, BPS Multilingual Translator entered her oil painting of a Lotus Flower.

Hala Ashour, former East Boston EEC paraprofessional and current BPS multilingual translator, exhibited her oil painting, Lotus Flower. Hala won the prize for New to Making Art in 2018. This year she submitted her painting of a Lotus flower. Hala is an Egyptian artist who was born in Cairo and moved to the US in 2009.

In addition to the Emerging Artist contest, the City of Boston also hosts the National Art Program which is a City Hall gallery exhibit/awards ceremony specifically for City employees and their immediate family members. Youth who are relatives of City employees are eligible to participate and they would love for BPS teachers to submit work!

Quote from Kara Elliott-Ortega, Chief of Arts and Culture for the City of Boston:
"This exhibition is a great opportunity to recognize the immense talent that exists in Boston, support up and coming artists, and brighten the walls of City Hall. It’s wonderful to see so many new artists share their work as part of this exhibition year after year, and we’re always amazed by the variety of artworks that are submitted. Artists and creatives contribute so much to our economy, wellness, and vibrancy of our city, and this is one small way we’re able to recognize those in the beginning stages of their creative careers."

East Boston EEC staff members Hala Ashour, Jen Ford and Elizabeth Self.

NEW TO MAKING ART • $1,000.00
Yana Nosenko
More About Breast Cancer Awareness Month!

My name is Jackie Shroud, and I am one of the many faces of a “Caregiver” for a Breast Cancer Survivor.

Why am I passionate about Breast Cancer Awareness Month?

Unfortunately, breast cancer has stricken my family, NOT once but twice. In 1996, my big sister was diagnosed with breast cancer and had a double mastectomy. Then twenty-five years later, in 2021 my mother was diagnosed with breast cancer and part of her treatment plan required a double mastectomy.

In 2020, I became my mother’s caregiver due to COVID. In 2021, I once again became an instant caregiver for my mother due to breast cancer and I panicked. Why? The sound of my mother having breast cancer scared me, I was not prepared to take on this huge challenge. I was determined to provide my mother with the love and care she deserved. Being a caregiver is a tough and exhausting job. There was no training for watching my mother struggle to survive breast cancer. My journey as a caregiver has not been easy. It has been a learning experience, I tried to learn everything I could about the disease. I hope one day others don’t have to experience the journey of caregiving for a breast cancer survivor…because one day there will be a cure. In 2021, I became aware that I am a high-risk candidate for the disease. I guess you cannot escape from your genetics.

Why do I advocate for breast cancer?

Thanks to research, Breast Cancer Treatment has come a long way… it is no longer an instant death sentence. I advocate for the disease to raise awareness to communities, ensure research continues to find a cure not just a treatment, and so all families are provided the support and education needed to understand the disease. Breast Cancer is not discriminatory, and it does not ask for permission to enter your body. It affects both women and men, rich or poor and it crosses all racial lines.

I encourage both women and men to get annual breast screening, as well as conduct monthly at home self-breast exams. Learn and know your body and don’t be afraid to say something should you find a change in your breast. Learn and know the risk factors for breast cancer.

Thank you all for participating in our first Breast Cancer Event. I’m looking forward to this becoming an annual event. “WEAR PINK!”

(Jackie Shroud works at the Lee Academy Pilot School.)

Like Other Professionals, We Ought To Be Paid For Our Time…

continued from page 4

Here’s what I found after surfing the internet for an hour. The inflation rates for the past several years (roughly) are 2.1% (2017), 1.9% (2018), 2.3% (2019), 1.4% (2020), 7.0% (2021), and 8.3% (2022). There can be some quibbling over 2021 and 2022 but generally we can agree that the inflation rate is significantly up. Over that same time period our pay has not kept pace. Our annual pay raises were 0% (2017), 2% (2018), 2% (2019), 2% (2020), 3% (2021), and 3.5% (2022).

Inflation has been +22% (most a memoir) while our pay has been +12.5% This year we have roughly 9.5% less spending power than in 2017. And that’s not taking into account the skyrocketing home prices and rent in the greater Boston area. (Boston recently passed San Francisco to become the second most expensive city to live in. NYC tops that list.)

In my 29 years of teaching, the highest pay raise we got was when we increased our work day. The contract settled in 2000 was for three years and a 12% increase in base pay. The pay was evenly distributed over the three years so it was 4% (2000), 4% (2001), and 4% (2002).

What most people may not realize is that the actual pay raise was 3% annually for inflation and another 3% because the school day was extended by 3%. The union wanted the pay to be 6% (3% for the extra time and 3% for the raise), 3% and 3% for a total of 12%. However mayor Menino did not want a 6% increase in one year (for a variety of reasons) so in the course of the usual horse trading, the BTU agreed to spread the 3% increase in time over three years.

What I am proposing is similar. Let’s say we increase our work day by 30 minutes. Presently I sign in by 7:10 am and stay contractually until 1:50 pm. That’s 6 hours and 40 minutes. If we add 30 minutes, that’s an increase of work time of 7.5%. Wouldn’t an extra 7.5% pay raise sound good right about now?

Earlier, I noted that we are (roughly) 9.5% behind in pay compared to 2017. My proposed 7.5% increase would still leave us 2.5%, which isn’t great but it’s better than what we have now.

Let’s remember that in 2023 we are getting a 3% pay raise. That raise would put us back to even, provided we have no inflation (which is highly unlikely).

A good part of this plan is that it would not alter the start-stop times for schools, and it would not affect bus routes. The bell schedule at that schools would not change, only the sign in and sign out times of the faculty. If ever there were a win-win situation, this could be it.

(Michael J. Maguire teaches Latin at Boston Latin Academy and is Co-Editor of the Boston Union Teacher.)

Teachers Teaching Under a Provisional License Need to Know About: MA DESE’s Alternative Route to Initial Licensure

DESE’s Alternative Route to Initial Licensure is a way to keep Massachusetts teachers appropriately licensed without them having to take valuable time out from teaching.

PRPIL (Performance Review Program for Initial Licensure) is the alternative Massachusetts Teachers License program for teachers who wish to advance from a Provisional license to an Initial license.

It enables teachers to earn their Initial license in less than six months, while they teach, and at a lower cost than other routes. Most importantly, it improves practice within the classroom.

MA DESE has recently announced an update to the eligibility terms for PRPIL. Teachers can now count the years on an emergency license towards the three years of teaching criteria needed to apply to the program. The years teaching on the emergency license must have been teaching the same content as the provisional license.

Further details about the program can be found at the Class Measures website (classmeasures.com/prpil) on the PRPIL pages, including:

• Information Pack download
• Eligibility
• Accounts from PRPIL graduates and why the program suited their situation
• How to apply
• FAQs
This year’s Fall Leadership Conference (formerly called the Building Reps Conference) was held October 21-23 at the Seacrest in Falmouth. While it was the off-season on the Cape, the Boston Teachers Union was in full swing recapping the past year and launching this year’s strategic plan.

BTU President Jessica Tang began the conference on Saturday morning with a recap of the goals the union had set at last year’s Leadership Conference in New Hampshire. The goals then were:

- Obtain a strong contract
- Build political power
- Unifying the union

“Now we have a contract!” exclaimed Tang. The work of getting a contract was helped, according to President Tang, because we built power with our allies in education.

During the conference the union also emphasized the importance of Yes on ballot questions 1 and 4. (Both measures passed in the recent election.) Getting Question 1 on the ballot was the result of years of organizing. Now that it is passed, we shall see increased funding for our schools. At the time of the conference the BTU had made 2,500 phone calls to members asking for them to vote. (By the time of the election the BTU had surpassed 7,000 calls.)

The third of last year’s goals was welcoming all into the union especially those who previously felt unwelcomed. In September, 2022 the BTU signed up over 200 new members at the New Educators Reception (see page 4 of the September Boston Union Teacher). Key elements of establishing a more inclusive union were the Black Lives Matter Week @ School and the February action called Show Our Students Some Love.

Not to be overlooked in the union’s fight for a contract and its simultaneous fight against receivership. On the first day of summer break, June 28, 2022, the BTU members and allies showed up en masse to fight a state takeover of our schools. The union won because the union followed it strategic goals.

This conference launched new goals.

- Building strong union structures at school sites
- Education about, and implementation and enforcement of our new contract
- Being more on the offensive rather than on the defensive as a union.

You can read more about these three new strategic goals on page 1 of this paper.

We hope to see you at next year’s Fall Leadership Conference. You don’t have to be a building rep to be a strong voice in public education. All are welcome. All are encouraged.
Cecil Carey (l) and Anne Brochu (r) participating in a panel discussion on equity and inclusion.
Cecil said, “parents often don’t know how to navigate the BPS…we need to be partners with parents.”
Anne said what everyone was thinking, “When I say (we need) resources, what I mean is money. Pay teachers well!
We need to put more teachers in our schools to help us share our load.”
Both Cecil and Anne emphasized that multiple licenses is no substitute for multiple teachers.

Nora Paul-Shultz is now on the BTU Executive Board.
Nora finished 13th in the 2021 union elections which
made her first in line to fill the vacancy caused by the
passing of Cheryl Kelly. We wish Nora well and wel-
come her contributions to the Executive Board.
Implementation, Enforcement and What to Expect in the Months Ahead…

Fall Leadership Conference to provide opportunities to learn more about contract implementation, particularly regarding the new special education inclusion language.

This is the first part of our three new strategic priorities as we settle into the new school year. In addition to the first priority of contract education, implementation and enforcement, our second strategic priority includes building strong union structures at our school sites. In order to facilitate two way communications, build our collective power, and engage and welcome all of our members in the work of our union, we need to commit to building strong union structures including: Building Reps, Faculty Senates, School Site Councils, Inclusion Planning Teams, CAT Teams, point people for racial equity work, including Black Lives Matter at Schools Week of Action.

The stronger our structures are, the greater capacity we will have to address the many challenges facing our schools and communities. As the age old adage goes, "many hands make light work." All our members should feel that they have a place to get involved, get informed, and take action beyond our membership meetings and weekly bulletins. Having structures in place before there is a crisis or situation helps us to stay flexible and nimble in our greatest times of need and also helps us to carry out the day to day work that each of us depend on throughout the year.

Lastly, our third strategic priority is to be more on the offense than on the defense as a union. This includes controlling the narrative around special education inclusion, developing materials to make it easy for members to understand our priority campaigns including Inclusion Done Right, Our City Our Schools, and our campaign for a stakeholder-informed Green New Deal for BPS that results in new school buildings, renovations and climate solutions. It also includes continuing to invest proactively in our relationships with student, parent, family and community allies as well as elected leaders.

As we have seen in our successful campaigns to fight for the Student Opportunities Act, Fair Share ballot question as well as fights against state receivership or unfettered charter expansion in 2016, when we fight alongside our students, communities and pro-public education elected officials, we are able to fight stronger and we win. These three strategic priorities will continue to guide our work this school year as we start to get ready for another round of successor bargaining, which will likely begin in earnest by the end of next year. Before then, however, we have much to do, and will hopefully see you soon either at your school, membership meeting or other BTU sponsored event as we continue to learn, grow and build together.

Local BPS schools participated in the annual Roslindale Day Parade. A big thank you to all the teachers and paras who volunteered their time for the benefit of the students who participated. In attendance were the Charles Summer, the Mozart and Philbrick teamed up on one float, and Boston Latin School invited Boston Latin Academy to march together.

Roslindale Parade Was a Lot of Fun for BPS Students and Teachers
The American Federation of Teachers (AFT) led a virtual petition delivery on October 7, 2022 to demand Instagram's parent company, Meta, address rampant bullying of kids and teachers on Instagram platform via anonymous school "confessions" accounts.

The petition, signed by over 10,000 classroom teachers, school staff and parents around the country, calls on Meta to urgently halt the proliferation of school "confessions" or "secrets" Instagram accounts to spread false rumors and abuse. There are dozens of such accounts currently live on Instagram, despite company guidelines on bullying and harassment. Dozens of parents and teachers have reported them, but the company has repeatedly failed to act.

Common content includes posts featuring students' and teachers' full names and photos, rumors (often explicitly homophobic) about minors' sexual activity, accusations of sexual misconduct against teachers, accusations of sexual assault, cruel mockeries of personal appearance (including blatant racism), and more.

"The explosion of social media has changed how we all interact with each other, and while it can sometimes be a force for good, these platforms need to do a far better job of regulating behavior that is dangerous, disruptive and detrimental to our kids and educators’ mental health and well-being," said AFT President Randi Weingarten.

"That's why we asked our union's members and trustees to sanction Meta—and it's why we're delivering this petition today to demand the company address rampant bullying of kids and teachers on Instagram. Teachers and support staff want our students to have safe, welcoming schools where kids can learn, and the online harassment and abuse facilitated by Meta erodes and corrodes that ideal."

Research suggests the accounts and similar types of online bullying are not only classroom distractions but also lead to a higher incidence of depression and even suicide for kids and teens.

"Online bullying, like the rumors, slurs and accusations these Instagram accounts enable, is dangerous for kids," said Allen Arreaza, co-director of ParentsTogether. "Recent research has shown online bullying leads to more suicidal thoughts and behaviors than in-person bullying. Educators and administrators have been trying to protect kids and put a stop to this kind of behavior for years, and parents are fed up with platforms like Instagram refusing to take their reports seriously and remove this harmful content."

The rise of "confessions" accounts corresponds with increased disruptions and tension in school communities. Educators and administrators also indicate that the increased time spent trying to shut down or mitigate the effects of these accounts puts undue stress on teachers and school support staff.

The petition asks Instagram to:
- Enforce Instagram's community guidelines by taking down all accounts that solely or primarily feature bullying content.
- Prioritize reports of harassment and bullying made from verified school accounts.
- Meet with a group of teachers and parents to better understand these accounts and the harm they cause in school communities.

AFT Addresses Cyber Bullying

A merican Federation of Teachers President Randi Weingarten issued the following statement on November 11, 2022 after a district court judge struck down the Biden administration’s student debt relief policy, as a lawsuit from fringe special interests:

“Today’s bad-faith lawsuit brought by far-right extremists is a full-frontal attack on young people’s futures. It is shameful, but not surprising, that a federal judge would side with the MAGA Republicans who appointed him, rather than the 26 million borrowers who have applied for life-changing loan forgiveness. And it is telling that the special interests fighting forgiveness in this case were nowhere to be seen when President Trump suspended the special interests fighting forgiveness in this case were nowhere to be seen when President Trump suspended payments at the height of the pandemic."

"The Biden administration is committed to securing relief for the tens of millions of families struggling under the yoke of $1.7 trillion in student debt. Debt discharge was enacted by the president in concert with reforms to Public Service Loan Forgiveness and a suite of other measures. Alongside an appeal in this case, the administration should also consider further mechanisms to promote fairness, including a delay in the resumption of loan payments next year."

"Young people across the country are eagerly awaiting the breathing room—and the resumption of their lives—that student debt relief would bring. Many sent that message at the ballot box on Tuesday. Together, we must stare down this wave of legal and political assaults and honor our commitment to borrowers as they regain their financial footing."

On Friday, November 11, 2022 the American Federation of Teachers announced a $75,000 donation to the Asociación de Maestros de Puerto Rico to provide financial assistance to educators in Puerto Rico who continue to be severely impacted by natural disasters, including Hurricane Fiona.

"In the last few years, Puerto Rico has been battered and devastated by earthquakes, hurricanes and tornadoes, leaving them to rebuild over and over again," said AFT President Randi Weingarten. "This $75,000 donation will provide a lifeline and help our children and teachers giving them all to assist the island in its recovery. This is what it means to be in a union, and we have a responsibility to lift each and every community up when they are struggling."

AFT members donate to the Disaster Relief Fund throughout the year to provide support to other members and communities directly impacted by natural or human-made disasters. Proceeds from that fund were used here as well.

In addition to the donation, the AFT and AMPR, and several volunteer groups from New York State United Teachers, the United Federation of Teachers and other unions, joined dozens of volunteers for a day of service during the 2022 SOMOS conference at Escuela Antonia Sarriera Egorzuce in San Juan, one of the many schools that were heavily impacted by Hurricane Fiona. They helped clean and paint the school and provided students and their families with backpacks and school supplies.

"Our union siblings from the state of New York and the teachers union movement came to Puerto Rico as a result of a powerful alliance with SOMOS to support our teachers, our students and our school communities," said AMPR President Víctor Bonilla Sánchez. "As part of this visit, the AFT also made a large donation to support the economic recovery of our teachers who have yet to recover from the losses caused by Hurricane Fiona and other disasters. On behalf of all of our members, we send our gratitude and solidarity."

"That's why we asked our union's pension trustees to sanction Meta—and it's why we're delivering this petition today to demand the company address rampant bullying of kids and teachers on Instagram. Teachers and support staff want our students to have safe, welcoming schools where kids can learn, and the online harassment and abuse facilitated by Meta erodes and corrodes that ideal."

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Our National Union Works Hard On Our Behalf

BOSTON UNION TEACHER | November-December, 2022 | 11
We tried these steps:
1. Group Reading Protocols
2. Partner Reading Protocols
3. Question-Answer Relationship (QAR) Activities

Connect and Share:
“How can we help our students to read and understand texts about the physics content they are learning?”

By Kristen Cacciatore

This was the burning question that my two science teacher colleagues at East Boston High School, Nilemi Kolayemi (now at the John D. O’Bryant) and Shannon Morey (now an educator in Lawrence), and I (now at Charlestown High School) asked as we began our collaborative instructional planning one August a few years ago. We had been working together to plan and deliver a 9th grade physics course for two years already, and we were proud of the changes we had made to the course structure and instructional style. Our students were doing hands-on activities nearly every day, creating interactive notebooks, and using talking protocols to make sense of what they were learning. But we were stuck on reading, because it was frequently a pain point in class. Most students were resistant and often became quickly frustrated. As a science teacher for many years, and the most senior member of our triad, I knew this was a common problem across science courses for all student populations.

Based on these experiences, our school’s focus on literacy across the curriculum, and our knowledge that students often left open response questions that contained a significant amount of text completely blank, we decided that our goal for the upcoming school year would be to have our students read physics content with confidence. But how to do that? We talked to two of our English colleagues about literature circles, did some research around reading informational text, and looked at the speaking protocols we were using with students to come up with our strategies.

First, we created student roles for four-person reading circles: Reader, who read the paragraph out loud; Explainer, who summarized the key points; Picture Descriptor, who chose an image or figure on the page and related it to the text; and Real-World Connector, who stated some way that the content related to “real life”. We created laminated cards describing the responsibilities for each role, and selected two or three short passages from our physics textbook for each week of curriculum.

And then we tried it out with our students, starting in the first full week of school. It definitely wasn’t an instant success – looking back on our reflection log from the first few weeks, we had real concerns. The reading circles were slow, and took up a lot of class time. Some students didn’t like to read aloud, especially multilingual learners (MLLs). There was near-universal struggle with the real world piece.

Despite these challenges, we vowed to continue. The other changes we had made to the course weren’t first-time hits either. What could we tweak or re-think or add support to? First, we realized our students didn’t know how physics related to real life or what kinds of small connections we were thinking of. So we did a couple of whole class think-alouds to brainstorm connections, and then made an illustrated anchor chart to keep those ideas front and center. Next, we talked to a few MLL students and an ESL teacher about what would help with reading aloud. We tried a strategy they suggested, recording audio of the text passages and allowing students to listen to it before the reading circle, if they wanted. Also, we made sure that we had spent class time adding any Tier 3 vocabulary to our interactive notebook glossary before reading a passage focused on it. To reduce the class time required, we decided to do a four-person circle once a week to attack the meatiest passage. For the other readings, we would switch to a reading pair, where students would alternate reading paragraphs and summarizing the key points out loud.

These changes helped smooth out the rough parts, and of course, with time and practice our students became more comfortable with the routines and also a bit more efficient. And the best part was that we saw on our first unit summative assessment that over 90% of the students attempted both of the open response questions. Our reflections had changed in tone – our interventions were working, and we were excited to see our students reading!

Bouyed by our success, we continued to add new elements focused on reading comprehension. We asked students to use the text content to create interactive notebook pages showing their understanding, to work together to answer questions about the text, and to identify the type of question. And reading remained a regular part of our class every week, as we moved through units on motion, forces, energy, electricity and other big topics in physics.

As it is so often the case in the teaching world, I didn’t really talk about this work implementing reading routines in physics outside of my small group of collaborators. I might have wanted to hear what other science teachers were doing to support reading and share my experience with them, but I didn’t know of any forum to do so. Until last year, when I had the opportunity to share this work at a virtual Connect and Share panel discussion professional learning event offered by the BPS/FTU Telescope Network. Colleagues from around the district came together to listen and learn together one afternoon. After my presentation, attendees and I talked about how this work connected to what they were doing or the challenges they were facing in their classrooms. Then we all heard from another panelist, Kimberly Frazier-Booth of the Edward M. Kennedy Academy of Health Careers, about her work on Visual Analysis Strategies and Text Pairings. Her presentation sparked my interest. Maybe, I thought, I could adapt this for my SLIFE science class and get more conversation going. I talked this through a little bit with the other participants at the session and decided to give it a try. And I’m glad I did, because it became an occasional part of my Do Now opening routine for the class.

This fall, there are three Connect and Share events happening. I encourage all of my BPS colleagues to consider attending or presenting at a Connect and Share event. It’s a fabulous opportunity to learn and get support from your amazing colleagues. I hope to see you there!

(Kristen Cacciatore is an instructional coach at Charlestown High School and a Networker for the BPS/FTU Telescope Network.)

(Th e Telescope Network Fall Connect and Share Panel Discussions series of virtual professional learning takes place on November 2 (Effective Teaming), November 16 (Social Emotional Learning) and December 7 (Equitable Literacy in Math and Science). More information and RSVP at https://tinyurl.com/ConnectFall22.)