A Hope for AAPI Heritage Month

By Jessica Tang

As President Randi Weingarten has issued a clarion call to defend public education, transform learning and support children as the institution comes under existential threat from extremist, culture-war peddling politicians.

In an address to the National Press Club, the leader of the 1.7 million-member union urged civil society to fight for the future of public schools and help kids learn in the face of relentless attacks from the far-right intent on dismantling the schools that 90 percent of kids attend.

“Experiential learning embeds the purpose and promise of public education: 25,000 community schools, experiential learning at all kids, including racially and technologically diverse, and transforming the school culture so we have a place to call if you’ve been told to remove a book from the curriculum or from the library if you’ve been told there are topics that can’t be discussed in your classes or that you cannot teach honestly and appropriately, or if politicians in your district or state are targeting vulnerable student groups to score political points.”

Boston Teachers Union
Candidate Statements and Voting Information

President’s Report

May first is International Workers Day as well as the first day of Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) Heritage Month. It is a day to celebrate workers everywhere, including AAPI workers and labor history! Unfortunately, much of this history is not as well known as it could or should be.

For example, many people don’t know why the United Farm Workers with Cesar leader, was a critical partner in starting the AFL, Samuel Gompers, in addition to purposely excluded from joining labor movements for the Chinese Exclusion Act.

Recently, I attended an event that, unfortunately, felt too familiar. I was glad to see that Youth and their stories resonated and made a difference.

The bad news is that they continue to be undervalued and teachers don’t know they exist. Similarly in the labor world, there are new resources that outline the history of AAPI’s, including a new book, “Asian American Workers Rising: APALA Struggle to Transform the Labor Movement” that was published this past year.

Unfortunately, much of this history is not as well known as it could or should be.

The AFT is working closely on CTE and robust workforce strategy with the alliance to connect families and students with the opportunities are paid, can be engaged with the world, new ideas and the excitement of learning that make kids want to be in school.

Community schools wrap academic counseling services, nutrition services, primary health and dental care, and much more around traditional schools to transform them into hubs that connect families and students with supports to learn and live. Weingarten called for 25,000 community schools by 2025, noting that California just approved an investment of $45 million for community schools and that President Joe Biden has doubled federal community schools funding.

Experiential learning is based on the idea that students learn—and become engaged with the world, new ideas and each other—by doing. In one application, career and technical education, students use their minds and their hands to learn everything from welding and auto repair to nursing, IT, graphic design, plumbing, culinary skills and hospitality.

“Experiential learning embeds the things that make kids want to be in school. The excitement of learning that is deeply engaging, and the joy of being together, especially after the isolation of the last few years. The camaraderie and responsibility of working together on a team. And in the age of AI and chatGPT, this type of learning is critical to being able to think and write, solve problems, apply knowledge and discern fact from fiction.”

The formula of starting by high school and identifying school-to-career pathways, including community colleges, partnering with employers, and ensuring the opportunities are paid, can be replicated everywhere.

The AFT is working closely on CTE and robust workforce strategy with the AFL-CIO, Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo, Education Secretary Miguel Cardona, Labor Secretary Julie Su and the Bloomberg Foundation and is reaching out to other business groups.
"This is an event that has been long overdue," BTU president Jessica Tang said welcoming the crowd. "This is work that many of us have been interested in for a very long time."

"The work we do as educators is ridiculously important. The hustle means how we can’t stop learning and we won’t stop learning."

- Dr. Shaun Woodly, guest speaker and best selling author

Participants checking in.

Elizabeth Pimentel and Joan Dikibo.

Jonathan Long and Janelle Engerman from the He Is Me Institute, a Boston based organization: "We create pathways to teaching for black men."
Beginning the story of a new contract.

September 1, 2023, any BTU member may take up to two (2) days of observance of religious holidays without loss of pay or personal time. At least 10 work days prior to the date the holiday falls, BTU members may request the following through the Employee Self-Service (ESS) portal on Access Boston based on your personal religious practices: Divald; Eid al Fitr; Lunar New Year; Orthodox Good Friday; Yom Hashanah; Three Kings Day; Yom Kippur; or one “Approved by Equity/ Other” which is a code that can only be used if signed upon the info described above. If any religious holiday you observe is not on that list, you may request a religious accommodation to take a religious holiday on a different day by completing a “Religious Accommodation Request Form” and submitting it to the Office of Equity at Accommodations@bostonschools.org. If your request is approved, you may take the day as a religious holiday, and sick or personal time. The approved equitable time off may be used in any combination of sick or personal time. BTU members may request the accommodation for all personal days in one school year, and have already taken two religious holidays, you may use a personal day, or a No Pay approved absence.

What is the Employee Attendance Policy and How Could It Impact You?

The Superintendent's Circular HRS-07 “Attendance Policy” is briefly outlined here:

Sign in/out procedure documenting the arrival and departure of all employees.

“Employees must comply with the sign in/out procedure. An employee who fails to comply with the procedure, falsifies such a record, or leaves work early without proper notification will be subject to discipline.” (BTU members who are absent more than five consecutive school days require a doctor's note to be submitted to Office of Human Capital administration to be exonerated.)

Reasonable accommodations: “Chapter 151B And the ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) define a person with disability as someone who (1) has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, (2) has a record of such an impairment in all parties, or (3) is regarded as having such an impairment. Major life activities include, but are not limited to: caring for one's self, performing manual tasks, seeing, hearing, breathing, or learning. An employer seeking reasonable accommodations for a disability may contact the Office of Equity (617-635-9650) to begin an interactive dialogue process. I the district's [claim] it will attempt to provide reasonable accommodations without it would cause undue hardship or fundamentally alter the district's programs. Medical information any employee will reportedly be maintained in strict confidence. The person may also qualify for an extended or intermittent leave of absence. Refer to the Absence and Leave policy and your BTU contract for more information. The BTU circular on reasonable accommodations is Superintendent Circular EQT-07.”

Patterns of absence are explained in the following manner:

1. Four (4) or more separate absences before or after the weekend or holiday/vacation
2. Six absences (6) six or more consecutive days without a physicians' certificate
3. Sick/illness days/leave throughout the school year exceeding or projected to exceed fifteen (15) or more days
4. Two (2) or more absences, consecutive or closely patterned, following layoff notification
5. Two (2) or more absences, consecutive or closely patterned, following contract non-renewal notification
6. Two (2) or more absences immediately following poor performance evaluation
7. Absence during a previously scheduled investigatory meeting
8. Absence after receiving a notice of an investigatory meeting
9. Absence, including a day of release or scheduled release of poor performance evaluation
10. Patterns of two (2) days out, two in, one out
11. Tardiness: two (2) or more days within a one-week period
12. Tardiness: two (2) or more days within a two-week period

Consequences for absence and/or excessive absenteeism/tardiness:

The following are the consequences an employee will face when they have been deemed to engage in a pattern of absences and/or excessive absenteeism/tardiness. These consequences can be applied individually or in any combination with one another.” [BTU members will have due process rights adhered to relative to #1-3 below].

1. Disciplinary up to and including termination
2. Requirement to provide medical documentation substantiating each such and every absence (past, present and future)
3. No pay for time of work if the employee fails to provide requested medical documentation for absences; the absences will be unexcused
4. Absence on the last workday of the month does not meet standards” rating on the employee’s performance evaluation attendance/punctuality standard

Health Insurance – When is Open-Enrollment to Change or Sign Up, What If Someone Gets Retired or Returns From an Unpaid Leave and the Like?

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 617-603-4824. New hires have a 10-day calendar 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 or rehired, must contact Group Insurance within 30 days of being rehired from lay off in order to re-enroll in health insurance if they qualify. 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 and this year it's from May 1 -19 for coverage effective starting July 1, 2023.

Some people assume that because they have their job back, the insurance is automatically reinstated – this is not often the case. These decreased and fast, those wanting to partake in open re-enrollment must contact Group Health Insurance at City Hall.

If a teacher leaves 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 summer open-enrollment period prior to their return in the fall. They will have to pay premiums out of pocket beginning on July 1 through September 1 of the year after which time deductions will be taken from their paychecks. Their insurance will take effect July 1 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 is the other one losing their job, they are losing a loss of coverage, the BTU has 30 calendar days to notify and submit proof to Group Insurance of this event in order to qualify for the change to be made in their health insurance coverage.

How are Bylaws/Operational Procedures for SSC’s determined?

Each School-Site Council determines most of its own operating procedures through the adoption of SSC bylaws. Each SSC is required to pass bylaws to govern its operations. The bylaws must be approved by two-thirds of the BTU members in the school and by two-thirds of the parents who come to a parent meeting for which there must be at least two week’s notice.

The SSC bylaws must include the following operational procedures: how elections will be organized and conducted; when meetings will be held; the notice procedure for announcing meetings; who is responsible for co-charing the SSC with the Principal and for recording minutes; what the system is for selecting alternates who are the same ethical identity as the members they would be representing; the terms of office and how they will be staggered; and what the salary is in regards to members who fail to regularly attend.

The bylaws may also include provisions that address the following: what subcommittees will be established in addition to the Personnel Subcommittee; if a portion of each meeting is set aside for public comment by individuals in attendance; who are not SSC members; how the SCC will inform the wider school community of its decisions and activities; where minutes will be posted and recorded; what the process is for amending the bylaws.

Closing the story of a new contract.

The Boston Union Teacher is published ten times a year September - July, inclusive. The deadline for submitting articles for the next issue of the Boston Union Teacher is May 17th. Letters to the Editor should be sent to letters@btu.org.
AFT President Makes Clarion Call to Defend Public Education…

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Weingarten would also renew and revive the teaching profession by treating educators as the professionals they are, with appropriate pay, time to plan and prepare for classes, to collaborate with colleagues, and to participate in meaningful professional development; and the power to make day-to-day classroom decisions.

To achieve this, the entire community must be involved and engaged at every juncture. Weingarten called for a deepening of the connection between parents, educators, employers and the community.

The AFT has ramped up its Powerful Partnerships Institute, distributing 27 grants to locals totaling more than $1.5 million. For example, Montana is deepening the connection between community.

parents, educators, employers and the power to make day-to-day classroom decisions.

Weingarten ended by underlining the tipping point facing the nation on public schools with a rallying cry for allies to join her and the AFT in the fight ahead.

"This is our agenda. But this can't just be the work of our union or of school staff and schools alone. This is the work of a great nation—this is to ensure that our children's basic human needs are met so they are ready to learn to their full potential. "Our public schools shouldn't be pawns for politicians' ambitions. Or defunded and destroyed by ideologues. We are at a crossroads: Fear and division, or hope and opportunity. A great nation does not fear people being educated. A great nation does not fear pluralism. A great nation chooses freedom, democracy, equality and opportunity.

"All of that starts in our public schools."

A “Cool” Author’s Visit

By Eva Gerena, Sarah Greenwood School Librarian

On March 29, 2023, I had the pleasure of meeting Lulu Delacre, a well-known author and illustrator of children’s books. Her visit to the Sarah Greenwood School was sponsored in part by Wondermore (Pam Yosca). Lulu came to our school promoting her book Cool Green and in Spanish Verde Fresco.

The Sarah Greenwood is a dual-language school and since the author was born and raised in Puerto Rico, she was able to present her book in Spanish and English. She spent most of the day at the school meeting with three groups of students: K2, 1st and 3rd graders for 50 minutes. The students had NEVER met an author or an illustrator. They were delighted to ask questions and learn about her experiences creating a book and illustrations. She also provided a signed copy of her book to each student, 150 copies!

As a new librarian, it gives me great joy to see how we can bring these memorable experiences to our students.

Climate Justice Workshop

On a recent Saturday morning, over 50 people logged on to Zoom to participate in a climate justice workshop facilitated by the Zinn Education Project and hosted by the BTU Climate Justice Committee.

By all accounts, it was an excellent workshop that provided abundant resources that participants could bring back to their classrooms. The morning session was a ‘climate mixer’ with participants assuming the role of individuals from across the globe who were all affected differently by climate change. Some were being forced to leave their homes due to disastrous storms and flooding, while others were struggling with health and food issues exacerbated by climate change, and still others were profiting from their fossil fuel investment decisions or working as climate activists.

In small groups, participants shared their stories and examined connections, implications and common themes. It was easy to see how this activity would be so important in order to bring back to their classrooms. The morning session was a ‘climate mixer’ with participants assuming the role of individuals from across the globe who were all affected differently by climate change. Some were being forced to leave their homes due to disastrous storms and flooding, while others were struggling with health and food issues exacerbated by climate change, and still others were profiting from their fossil fuel investment decisions or working as climate activists.

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Another session was focused on envisioning a future informed by climate activism, an effort to counter climate despair which is so easy to sink into when confronted by the existential crisis we all face. Supporting our students (and ourselves) in these types of visioning activities can be so important in order to maintain momentum and positivity as we work for a sustainable future.

There are many resources available on the Zinn Education Project at www.zinneducationproject.org. You will find resources on teaching about climate justice but also about many other important people's history topics. Check it out! And if you want to be added to the BTU Climate Justice google group, email Betsy Drinan at bdrinan@gmail.org.
Confirmed Candidates for BTU Offices and Delegates

**BTU OFFICERS**

**President**  
Jessica Tang

**Vice President**  
Erik Berg

**Secretary-Treasurer**  
1. Trevour Smith  
2. Karen Cross  
3. Nora Paul-Schultz

**Elementary Field Rep.**  
Lea-Antoinette Serena

**Secondary Field Rep.**  
Caren Carew

**Para/Sub/ABA Field Rep.**  
Colleen Hart

**Political Director**  
Johnny McNinis

**PARAPROFESSIONAL COUNCIL**

1. Sharon O’Dwyer  
2. Todd Kerr  
3. Mary Thomas  
4. Debra Brown  
5. Sau Yip  
6. CasSandra Samuel  
7. Vanessa LaRocque  
8. Christine Buttiglieri  
9. Bianca Pierre  
10. Adrienne Jordan  
11. Carla Johnson  
12. Sacha Ruiz  
13. Tracy Romain  
14. Cynthia Ferris  
15. Derrick Smith

**EXECUTIVE BOARD, By Ballot Position**

1. Tracy Doyle  
2. Matthew Ruggiero  
3. Michael Maguire  
4. Brenda Chaney  
5. Michelle Carroll  
6. Nicole Mullen  
7. Allison Doherty  
8. Danielle West  
9. Cecil Carey  
10. Robert Carroll  
11. Alice Yong  
12. Vanessa LaRocque  
13. Kafunda Banks

**DELEGATE, by Last Name**

Maritza Agrait  
Roz Avant  
Kafunda Banks  
Mary Bell  
Erik Berg  
Denise Berkley  
Mae Bishop  
Maria Brooks  
Debra Brown  
Molly Bryson  
Christine Buttiglieri  
Layla Cable  
Caren Carew  
Cecil Carey  
Michelle Carroll  
Robert P. Carroll  
Brenda Chaney  
Paul Christian Jr.  
James Cordero  
Diane Crain  
Michael Crain  
Marjie Crosby  
Karen Cross  
Natália Cuadra-Saez  
Amrita Dani  
Jukurious Davis  
Randi Davis  
Joan Devlin  
Allison Doherty  
Betsy Drinan  
Connor Echols-Jones  
John Enright  
Cynthia Ferris  
Danielle Fraine  
Caitlin Gaffney  
Amy Gebo  
Christine Gorman-Arnold  
Thomas Gosnell  
Colleen Hart  
Thomas Hocker  
Claude James Jr.  
Carla Johnson  
Charles Johnson  
Marta Johnson Faldasz  
Adrianne Jordan  
James Kennedy  
Todd Kerr  
Karen Kilmain-Patriquin  
Heather King  
Erica Kouka  
Samantha Laney  
Vanessa LaRocque  
Josefina Lascano  
Nina Lessin-Joseph  
Sylvaine Lestrade  
Keisha Lewis  
Michael Maguire  
Tim Maher  
Jodie Mallon  
Marilyn Marion  
Gayle Marrow  
Katina McClain  
Suzanne McGlone  
Johnny McNinis  
Lucinda Mills  
Nicole Mullen  
Kimvy Nguyen  
Sharon O’Dwyer  
Catherine O’Flaherty  
Noah Patel  
Nora Paul-Schultz  
Sherry Pedrone  
James (Timo) Philip  
Bianca Pierre  
Kristen Pinto  
Declan Power  
Rebecca Reaves  
Tracy Romain  
Dana Royster-Buefort  
Matthew Ruggiero  
Chelsea Rusic  
CasSandra Samuel  
Ivelisse Santos-Hicks  
Lea-Antoinette Serena  
John Simonetti  
Trevour Smith  
Elisa Sota  
Jessica Tang  
Regina Temple  
Josette Teneus  
Paul Tenney  
Paul Titter  
Teresa Underwood  
Mary Ann Urban  
José Valenzuela  
Samantha Weintraub  
Darren Wells  
Danielle West  
Tatiana Williams-Rodriquez  
Stephanie Wing  
Karen Wood  
Alice Yong

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**BTU Election in Full Swing!!!**

A primary election for the full-time position of Secretary/Treasurer was held in April/May – with mail in ballots due Tuesday, May 2nd and in-person voting at the BTU on Wednesday, May 3rd, 8:00 am-6:00 pm. Results were not available in time to report in this issue, but watch for the e-bulletin.

**FINAL ELECTION** ballots for all candidates will be mailed out by May 15 and MUST be RECEIVED at the Post Office by Tuesday, June 6th. Please return your ballot early to ensure it is received on time. Any BTU/RTC member** who did not vote by mail may vote in person at the BTU on **Wednesday, June 7th, 8:00 am-6:00 pm**. The positions of President, Vice President, Elementary, Secondary and Para/Sub/ABA Field Reps, and Political Director, RTC President, RTC Vice President, RT Secretary and RTC Treasurer are not contested. 19 members are running for 12 executive board slots, and 15 candidates for the 15 para council slots. Write in votes for any position including Delegate to all Affiliated Bodies are still possible. In order to be considered, write in candidates must receive at least as many votes as signatures that were required to be listed on the ballot.

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*continued on page 12*
we all deserve. continue to face and create a stronger the many issues and challenges that we together, we can continue to tackle your vote in the upcoming election so Board member and then also as founding as a Building Representative, Executive successes of open bargaining, the Silent We must also continue to build on the latest contract, we will need to begin continue to implement and enforce our of receivership from the state and, of significant increases in every school, significant increases in social workers, school psychologists and school counselors, lower class sizes, paid parental leave, and higher pay for paraprofessionals and educators overall. We unionized the first Commonwealth charter schools in Boston and led coalitions that fight for and win the Student Opportunities Act, Fair Share Amendment and many other legislative victories. We have also come together to overcome unprecedented and historic challenges including the Janus Supreme Court decision, instability of leadership both within the district and city, threats of receivership from the state and, of course, the Covid pandemic. Together, we have continued to build upon the strong foundations of our union, and we still have much more to do. While we continue to implement and enforce our latest contract, we will need to begin a new round of contract negotiations imminently so that we can meet our goal of negotiating a successor agreement before the current contract expires. We must also continue to build on the successes of open bargaining, the Silent Representatives initiative and Contract Action Teams as we continue to build power for our union.

We must also continue to engage not just our BTU educators in all of our schools and work sites, but also our students, families and community allies as we add their voices to continue to impact our school communities. Building a strong, member-led union that continues to advance educational, social and racial justice is what I set out to do from the time I was first elected as a Building Representative, Executive Board member and then also as founding Organizing Director and then President. I would be honored to continue to serve as President of the BTU, and hope to have your vote in the upcoming election so that, together, we can continue to tackle the many issues and challenges that we continue to face and create a stronger union in the schools and communities we all deserve.

Candidate Statements

BTU OFFICERS
President
Jessica Tang
Since first being elected as President in 2017, I have been proud and honored to represent an incredible in-serv- ice and retired educators of the Boston Teachers Union. During the last 6 years, we have successfully negotiated and ratified 3 master contracts and dozens of additional MOUs covering issues ranging from the creation of new BTU positions to health and safety conditions. The contract wins included historic advances including a full-time nurse in every school, significant increases in social workers, school psychologists and school counselors, lower class sizes, paid parental leave, and higher pay for paraprofessionals and educators overall. We unionized the first Commonwealth charter schools in Boston and led coalitions that fight for and win the Student Opportunities Act, Fair Share Amendment and many other legislative victories.

We have also come together to overcome unprecedented and historic challenges including the Janus Supreme Court decision, instability of leadership both within the district and city, threats of receivership from the state and, of course, the Covid pandemic. Together, we have continued to build upon the strong foundations of our union, and we still have much more to do. While we continue to implement and enforce our latest contract, we will need to begin a new round of contract negotiations imminently so that we can meet our goal of negotiating a successor agreement before the current contract expires. We must also continue to build on the successes of open bargaining, the Silent Representatives initiative and Contract Action Teams as we continue to build power for our union.

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Vice President
Erik Berg
It continues to be my honor and privilege to be part of the great BTU team working to support the educators of Boston, and I hope to earn another two-year term.

Over the past two years, we have had many important victories. We settled a contract with BFS which included paid parental leave, a major new benefit for our members, along with an agreement to provide more resources, staffing and educator voice in our inclusion programs, and salary increases for our members. Believe it or not, we will soon begin the process of negotiating another agreement that provides conditions that are fair to our members, and provides our students the education they deserve.

We look forward to continuing to open up the bargaining process and leverage the strength of our members in that effort.

Also this term, we were able to bring a new group of employees into our union with a negotiated settlement to include family liaisons, we have limited class size overages, and ensured members are paid fairly for their work and successfully represented members who have been treated unfairly with regard to leaves of absences. I’m proud that, working with our legal team, we have prevailed in a large majority of the arbitration decisions that have come in since I have been in our office, and we’ve been able to settle many other cases on favorable terms.

I also chair the Educator Supports Panel, the Health and Welfare Trustees, and have worked on many other issues ranging from impact bargaining over smaller employee groups and job descriptions, to working with our members at City on a Hill School, to employee discipline cases, evaluation concerns, BTU building issues, mediations and facilities issues.

Over the next two years, I hope to work with our team to settle a fair contract, and continue to enforce it with vigor and candor. I also look forward to working on the process of constructing a new headquarters building for the BTU. It is my hope that we can move forward with renewed strength, and continue the struggle for the schools our educators and our students deserve.

The dedication and expertise of our members never ceases to amaze me, and is with humility that I ask for your support for another term as Executive Vice President of the BTU.

Secretary-Treasurer
Please Note: The top two finishers of the May primary election will appear on the final June ballot. The primary election had not been held when this edition of the newspaper went to press. Therefore we are preprinting all three candidates’ statements from the previous edition of the Boston Union Teacher.

Trevour Smith
My name is Trevour Smith and I am a mathematics teacher at Boston Latin School. I am committed to be running for Boston Teachers Unions (BTUs) next Secretary-Treasurer because I truly believe in the power of education to transform lives.

Throughout my involvement with the BTU, whether it’s as a Building Rep, a member of the Action Committee working to build safe and welcoming sanctuary schools, or working as a Silent Rep on our latest contract campaign, I’ve become increasingly passionate about the ways BTU can use its power to fight for a better district for members as well as our students and their families.

I’ve experienced firsthand the challenges that educators of color face in Boston Public Schools, and I’m ready to work together to create a more equitable and inclusive education system that supports the success of all students.

My passion, coupled with my background in business, is what I’m excited to run for Secretary-Treasurer. Through a strategic and data-driven approach, I will help ensure our resources are allocated efficiently and effectively to benefit all teachers and students.

I’m committed to building strong, collaborative partnerships with stakeholders to find innovative solutions to our district’s complex issues. By working together, we can create a stronger, more vibrant educational community that provides every student with the support and opportunities they need to succeed!

Karen Cross
I grew up as an English Language Learner. My mom, a North Korean immigrant, didn’t know a word of English. Thus, she encouraged me to listen carefully and to take copious notes to help her with anything that needed translating. That note-taking has stuck with me even today. Even today, as appointed Secretary of the Asian American Pacific Islander task force, I am still taking notes! Since one key role of Secretary-Treasurer requires record keeping and note-taking, I believe I more than fit the bill!

Twenty-years as a Math Teacher and 25 years as a former owner of successful businesses and serving as Secretary and Trustee of the Pre-paid Legal Fund have certainly paid off. The position of Secretary-Treasurer is multifaceted and these various roles have provided me with such experiences as:

• Working alongside accountants;
• Scrutinizing monthly ledgers;
• Making strategic financial decisions w/Pre-paid integral to the BTU;
• Increasing revenue during my 5-year tenure as board member;
• Introducing “Countrywide,” a financial wellness program.

Owning all components of my businesses including accounting, payroll and accounts receivable;

• Managing multiple employees.

My varied Union experience will inform me as an elected officer include:

• Building relationships as a Building Rep of 9 years;
• Participating in Silent Negotiations, Racial Justice Committee and Pan African American Labor Alliance (APALA) member;
• Promoting awareness about the Thrive Act. (a bill to eliminate overcrowns) as Member Organizer;
• Being an SEIU 509 member as Adjunct Faculty of Northeastern Graduate School BTU must ensure there are no cracks where members fall through! No BTU member left behind!

My vision for our next contract includes advocating for:

• Ensuring mental health support for students and members;
• Improving working conditions that produce better learning conditions;
• Providing greater support for new members to encourage participation & retention;
• Ensuring presence at all School Committee meetings by recruiting more people to attend;
• Participating in/attending the Public Employee Committee (PEC) who negotiates our health insurance benefits;
• Serving on the Boston Retirement Board, as a majority of active members will spend more years in retirement than they have remaining in the field.

The position of Secretary-Treasurer is, indeed, a huge undertaking. I believe I am the right person for the job! I pledge to work to grow our finances and to be transparent about how and where our monies are spent.

I respectfully ask for your vote.

Please visit: www.karencross4btu.org
Candidate Statements

BTU OFFICERS

Secretary-Treasurer
Nora Paul-Schultz

I am excited to be running for Secretary-Treasurer of our union. I am a 11-year veteran physics and engineering teacher at the Franklin D. Roosevelt School of Mathematics and Science, a current BTU Executive Board member, and co-chair of BTU’s Unafraid Educators Committee. I am running for Secretary-Treasurer because I believe in the strength of our union and I want to continue to grow our power. In the last contract fight, I helped transform our negotiation process by creating the structures for silent representatives so that any member could take part in the negotiations. As a leader of the silent representatives, I attended nearly all negotiating sessions and helped to draft summaries to inform members about the process. I hope to bring this experience into the role of Secretary-Treasurer in order to increase transparency and member engagement.

Outside of my work with the BTU, I have been the finance chair of Kavod, a Jewish community in Boston. In that role, I came to see how the budgets of organizations are value statements. I want to bring this view into how we view the BTU’s budget. As Secretary-Treasurer, I would help lead conversations about our financial choices as a union so that we can be grounded in our vision of a more just district and city while ensuring that our union remains in a strong financial position.

As a leader of Unafraid Educators, the BTU’s immigrants rights organizing committee, I have helped to build and promote a scholarship for undocumented BPS Students. I have worked with students, grassroots organizations, and legal groups to create and advocate for a distinct policy that would limit unlawful and dangerous information-sharing between our schools and the Boston Police Department and therefore limit the access ICE and the FBI have to our students and their families. This activism led to the passage of an ordinance at the City Council level as well. Additionally, I am on the BTU’s Racial Justice Standing committee and was appointed to the national AFT’s Civil and Human Rights Committee.

As Secretary-Treasurer, I am eager to work alongside students, community groups, and other educators to fight for policies in BPS that humanize us all — young people, their families, and school staff alike. I would be honored to have your vote. To learn more go to www.norapft.com.

Elementary Field Rep.
Lea-Antoinette Serena

I have been proud to serve as the Elementary Representative for the Boston Teachers Union for the last two years. It has been quite a journey and I am thrilled to have the opportunity to serve you again. In the last two years I have learned so much not only about our schools and systems, but our amazing educators. I have been honored to serve not only our elementary school educators but our Coordinators of Special Education, Hub School Coordinators, Physical Therapist, Psychologist, Supervisors of Attendance, Transportation Specialist, RCD specialist, and many other groups. I have just begun learning the intricacies of all of our different schools and roles and would love the opportunity to continue to support you.

Over the past two years, I have been committed to engaging our BTU members who are in central office positions and not school based. I have also been committed to maintaining my relationships with students and families. Furthermore, as a new representative I wanted to make sure that when I walked into a building, educators knew it was for more than a Grievance Meeting or Investigation Meeting. I have been committed to visiting schools through Literacy with Lea, where I have read to over 100 classes and visited over 40 schools. I have also been consistent with attending training and shadowing our educators in order to ensure I am staying connected to the work happening inside our schools.

Over the next two years, I hope to continue to represent our educators, especially as we roll out inclusion. Also hope to continue to advocate for and create space for anti-racist leadership within our Union. I would be honored to continue to serve as your Elementary Representative and humbly ask your vote this June.

Secondary Field Rep.
Caren Carew

You can count on my experienced pro-active leadership and tenacious, tireless advocacy as your Secondary Field Representative during these sometimes overwhelming and challenging times. As your Field Rep, I’ve developed a wealth of first-hand, in-depth union knowledge listening to your concerns and expeditiously addressing them while fighting with and for you to attain the respect we all deserve. I’ve also been a strong and effective teacher in under-resourced schools which have honed my leadership skills enabling me to be your vigorous, vigilant advocate.

My cumulative experience and knowledge on the job of the teacher’s unit contract and historical / past practices not always enumerated in the contract is imperative to preserve for the good of the Union and YOU. I support great teaching by speaking up on your behalf while effective dealing with administration, prosecuting grievances, through arbitration testimony, providing representation at hearings, prompt email / call responses, addressing work condition changes, conducting SSC trainings, providing evaluation / performance support, promoting conflict resolution, organizing and holding school-based meetings, as well as simultaneously problem-solving and thinking outside of the box. While sugar-coating isn’t my style, you’ll find that my direct, factual, empathetic, and passionate approach is effective.

Working for racial / gender / social / economic justice, we’ll strengthen community and political partnerships through increasing our influence while maintaining hard-fought collective bargaining rights pursuing excellence for all of the children we educate. I effectively and passionately speak up making sure your voice is heard during contract negotiations and beyond!

As members of a public sector union, we frequently find ourselves characterized as self-serving. We must work together with each other joining our collective action. It is my hope to propose a scholarship for undocumented BPS Students. I have worked with families, parents, and the community as one to refocus the agenda through our collective actions and the continued pursuit of excellence for all of the children we educate in the BPS. We are at a crossroads in public education. Strong public schools are our democracy’s cornerstone. Our work conditions are the children’s learning conditions. Maintaining and strengthening our voice in collective bargaining only serves to lift up our profession, our work, as well as the students we hold dear. Public education and labor rights are social justice issues.

Schools our #StudentsDeserve #FindOurFuture #BTUProud!

I’m fighting for you – standing together in #BTPUnity!

It is my honor to be your advocate. I appreciate and thank you for your consideration and vote.

Para/Sub/ABA Field Rep.
Colleen Hart

My name is Colleen Hart and I am your Paraprofessional/ Substitute / ABA Field Rep. I am hopeful I will get the chance to represent you in this upcoming term. In my time in this position, I have had the chance to negotiate three contracts/ sub-bonuses and COVID agreements. I had pleasure of organizing alongside with the Family Liaisons to become BTU members. I have created peer mentorship/facilitator programs, and informed about our programs like Tech Goes Home, Para LED PD and other professional development opportunities. We need to continue to advocate for better working conditions, pay, educational opportunities, professional development and more pathways. I want to continue to stand with you to implement a more equitable working environment and work with you to better our contract.

I hope you consider me for re-election, there is still lots of work to be done. In your Hart you know she is right! Thank you very much for your vote and consideration.

Political Director
Johnny McNinis

I am campaigning for re-election to the office of Political Director for the Boston Union of Teachers. Since being elected I have worked to keep our members informed about our union’s political advocacy locally, state-wide, and nationally. We have recommended candidates to our members who have been elected into public office who support issues important to our active and retired members. We continue to organize our members to support our candidates by knocking doors to door for our endorsed candidates, making phone calls to our members, and participating with coalitions for legislation such as the Education ballot initiatives and various other campaigns. I have spent time meeting with many elected officials advocating for issues that are important for our union.

I have served our union as a Delegate to All Affiliated Bodies, Chair of AFT Black Caucus Boston Chapter, Building Rep, Building Rep Regional Leader, 2007 Secondary Building Rep of the Year, BTU Intervention Team, Music Teacher Faculty Senate, and BTU Arts Committee. In another role I serve as a Vice-President to AFT-MA. Being in the advocacy role as Political Director allows me the opportunity to represent the BTU locally by having conversations with local elected officials and nationally with AFT by having conversations to advocate with our state’s legislators in Washington DC to address issues on a national level. This work has allowed me to advocate for policies that support sustaining high quality schools that our students deserve.

Representing our active and retired members during good times and tough times. Continuing to keep our BTU Strong! I am asking for your vote while continuing to keep our union Politically Strong!
This city is near and dear to my heart. I am a lifelong resident of Dorchester and proud mother of three sons who graduated from Boston Public Schools.

I've worked at the Perry K-6 School for the past 28 years, taking every leadership opportunity available such as multiple years of leading the Faculty Senate, multiple terms on School Site Council and Hiring Committee to advocate for my peers.

But I have what it takes to advocate on a larger scale.

Going forward, I will be a voice working for those of you who feel you've been forgotten. I have seen many principals and supervisors lean on me and go.

Teachers, paras and building staff are the backbone of our city’s youth and their families. So many have forgotten how we rose, and met unprecedented challenges during the pandemic, going back to work side by side with police, fire and EMS, while so many sat safely at home.

Earning my Masters in Special Education at night while raising a family, I understand the struggle of working parents. I want to fight for those of us who may be too tired or busy to fight for what they need. We are the boots on the ground that can make real changes that matter and our voices need to be heard. We need to ensure we can take care of OUR families, OUR health benefits so we can be OUR best each day for OUR students.

I will fight for teachers, paras and staff who irrationally know what our students need.

Matthew Ruggiero

My name is Matthew Ruggiero and I am running for BTU Executive Board. As a student and teacher, I have spent more than half my life at Boston Public Schools. I have taught middle and high school ESL, special education, ELA, and social studies. I have been a building rep, faculty senate facilitator, delegate, member organizer, and member of organizing committees (including Restorative Justice, Ethnic Studies, and Hub Schools) and the Collective Bargaining Committee. In all this, I’ve been guided by the beliefs that the people most impacted by our policies are the ones making them, and that we are stronger the more we are together.

Last year, I was a co-chair of the Our City, Our Schools campaign against the threat of top-down state intervention. We won this fight by connecting with educators, families, and students to understand the problems that affected our working conditions and students’ learning, and to demand real, community-centered solutions instead of greater inequality and failed reforms. The same year, I worked together with colleagues, students, and families from Charlestown High School to fight back against an outside effort to close and take over our school.

As a union, we must continue to work together to guard against threats to public education, and to organize for the conditions in which we, our students, and our communities can thrive.

As an educator, organizer, activist, and union member, my most important experiences have been with people coming together to understand problems affecting them, and advocate for solutions together. I hope to carry this work with me on the Executive Board.

I’m grateful to all of you that I’ve learned from and worked with, and to this community I’ve gotten to be a part of as a union member. Thank you for your consideration.

Michael J. Maguire

I love teaching. I fell into the profession as a substitute teacher at Boston Latin Academy in March, 1994. As I was preparing for the LSAT, I finished out a teacher’s maternity leave. Then I taught summer school (since no one else wanted to). By then I knew that law school was not for me.

It’s now 29 years later and I still love teaching. That time I learned that teaching extends far beyond my classroom door. I learned that thousands of other teachers told alongside me. I also learned that thousands of teachers before me fought hard to improve my students’ learning conditions. By running for Executive Board, I hope to do my part.

Since the last union election, I have worked at improving school lunches, adding air conditioning to our classrooms, and attracting more substitute teachers. I’m glad things are moving in the right direction. In our next contract we must improve our pay. Inflation for the past few years has been running ~7% but our pay raise is only 3%. We must do better next time.

As we move forward we can’t simply return to the status quo ante. The Green New Deal offers us the opportunity to modernize our buildings. Having a plan to fix our buildings is a good start, as a union we ought to work together to ensure that our students and teachers get the best facilities possible.

My wish to remain on the Executive Board is rooted in my desire to help improve the working conditions of our union brothers and sisters. Towards this end we need to hard together to promote a well-funded public school system.

I ask for one of your 12 Executive Board votes. Thank you.

Brenda Chaney

My name is Brenda Chaney and I’m running for Re-Election to the BTU Executive Board and Delegate to All Affiliated Bodies.

I’m a long-time member of the Boston Teachers Union. I was an educator in BPS for 38 years, the last 26 years at the John D’Orbryant School of Math and Science. I was a building representative 35 of those years, as a building representative I handled many grievances and mediations.

I’m considered by many to be a hard working, dedicated and knowledgeable person on BTU issues.

I’m proud to be an advocate for all educators, students, parents and the Boston Public Schools community. I want to continue with the work that needs to be done to make our union, schools and community, a better place for everyone.

– Delegate to AFT Mass, AFT, AFL-CIO and GBLC since 1989
– AFT Mass Vice-President since 1990
– BTU Community Outreach Liaison 2003 – present
– Member of AFT Mass COPE Committee
– Member of the BTU Racial Justice Standing Committee

To continue the work that is needed, I need your help. Please consider voting for me.

Michelle Carroll

My name is Michelle Carroll and I am running for BTU Executive Board and Delegate of the Boston Teachers Union. I firmly believe that by working together, our union can be a strong voice that advocates for public education and always strives to support and energize educators, students, and our communities. I feel that listening and advocating for the issues and policies that directly affect our members should be at the forefront of everything that we do at the BTU. I am proud Boston resident and I have worked in BPS since 1998, five years as a classroom paraprofessional and since as a special education teacher at both the Mary Lyon K-8 and The Boston Arts Academy Pilot School. I have served as a Delegate to AFT Mass, AFT, AFL-CIO, and GBLC. I have worked collaboratively with BTU members, administrators and management to include educator voice in decision making, negotiate working conditions, and organize for our members on their rights outlined in the contract and upthrust due process. In addition, I have served on many BTU/BPS task forces to make sure the BTU voice is at the table. I have helped to facilitate communication, transparency and advocacy in the school community and beyond.

Nicole Mullen

I respectfully ask for your vote to re-elect me for the position of Executive Board and Delegate of the Boston Teachers Union. I firmly believe that by working together, our union can be a strong voice that advocates for public education and always strives to support and energize educators, students, and our communities. I feel that listening and advocating for the issues and policies that directly affect our members should be at the forefront of everything that we do at the BTU. I am a proud Boston resident and I have worked in BPS since 1998, five years as a classroom paraprofessional and since as a special education teacher at both the Mary Lyon K-8 and The Boston Arts Academy Pilot School. I have served as a Delegate to AFT Mass, AFT, AFL-CIO, and GBLC. I have worked collaboratively with BTU members, administrators and management to include educator voice in decision making, negotiate working conditions, and organize for our members on their rights outlined in the contract and upthrust due process. In addition, I have served on many BTU/BPS task forces to make sure the BTU voice is at the table. I have helped to facilitate communication, transparency and advocacy in the school community and beyond.

My name is Nicole Mullen and I’m running for Re-Election to the BTU Executive Board and Delegate of the Boston Teachers Union. I firmly believe that by working together, our union can be a strong voice that advocates for public education and always strives to support and energize educators, students, and our communities. I feel that listening and advocating for the issues and policies that directly affect our members should be at the forefront of everything that we do at the BTU. I am a proud Boston resident and I have worked in BPS since 1998, five years as a classroom paraprofessional and since as a special education teacher at both the Mary Lyon K-8 and The Boston Arts Academy Pilot School. I have served as a Delegate to AFT Mass, AFT, AFL-CIO, and GBLC. I have worked collaboratively with BTU members, administrators and management to include educator voice in decision making, negotiate working conditions, and organize for our members on their rights outlined in the contract and upthrust due process. In addition, I have served on many BTU/BPS task forces to make sure the BTU voice is at the table. I have helped to facilitate communication, transparency and advocacy in the school community and beyond.

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Candidate Statements

EXECUTIVE BOARD

Nicole Mullen
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• In 2011, I was awarded an Education Policy Leadership Fellow from the National Institute for Educational Leadership
• In 2013, Election Committee, a founding chair of the Inclusion Committee
• Since 2015, BTU Negotiating Team and Delegate
• Since 2017, Executive Board and Grievance Committee
• In 2019, BPS/BTU Inclusion unionization
• In 2020-2021, Safe Reopening and Creative Schedule Taskforces during the Pandemic
• In 2023, Inclusion Task Force. I respect all the unionists that fought before me and I am not afraid to elevate the voices of today’s BTU members. I believe we must fight for the policies and working conditions that make being a BPS teacher sustainable, retirement worthy profession now and for educators to come.

Allison Doherty

I am innovative, experienced, outspoken and a proud member of the powerful Boston Teachers Union. It would be an honor for me to be a re-elected member of the Boston Teachers Union Executive Board. Here are my qualifications:

• I was elected to, and served on, the BTU Executive Board from 2003-2013 and 2019-current, BTU Delegate 2001-2021 the Greater Boston Labor Council Executive Board from 2011-2013, where I created the GBLC’s Futures Committee. I was elected Young Worker “Futures” representative for the MA AFL-CIO 2010 and appointed by Randi Weingarten and AFT National to be on the Nation AFL-CIO Young Worker Advisory Council in 2012. I was a building representative at Fenway High School where I am the teacher of students with a diagnosis of autism. I received the Building Representative of the Year Award in 2019 and was the recipient of AFTMA’s “Distinguished Service Award” in the category for members 35 years of age or younger. I have been a member of impact bargaining teams for three separate negotiations fighting for the rights of BTU members. I have shown my vigor and commitment to stand up for Boston Public Schools, BTU members and students.

• I am a BPS graduate, a BPS teacher and a BPS parent! Please vote for Allison Doherty, BTU Executive Board and Delegate to all Affiliated Bodies.

Danielle West

I believe in the power of unions. I was raised in a strong union family, and have been witness to the tremendous impact strong unions can have. Our union is a critical vehicle for building strong schools for our students and a professional, supportive workplace for all union members. Educator voice is essential for decisions that impact our schools. I believe that the BTU is the most democratic way to have our voices heard and respected. Current educators have the most keen insight into what is required to educate our students, which is why I am running for Executive Board and Delegate to All Affiliated Bodies.

I am an 8th grade special education/ ESL teacher at the Curley K-8. At Curley, I serve on the Inclusion Planning Team, and helped write one of the first inclusion plans BPS will implement based on our new contract. As a Member Organizer, I am using what we have learned from our inclusion planning process to advocate across the BTU for clear systems as other Inclusion Planning Teams across the district begin this important work. It is imperative inclusion is done right and, if elected to the Executive Board, I will continue to fight for appropriate and funded inclusion.

I am an active member of the BTU as Building Representative, Delegate, Member Organizer, and Silent Representative for contract negotiations. In these roles, I have the opportunity to spark dialogue, organize and lead members, and advocate for better work conditions. The future success of our union depends on its ability to unite and incorporate all member voices when addressing new challenges and resistance to our hard fought rights and benefits. Please consider voting for me for Executive Board and Delegate. A vote for me is a vote for collaboration and communication.

Cecil Carey

tm running for BTU Executive Board because I am a passionate fighter for Workers Rights and Education Justice. I’ve put in the work, and I’ll continue to do so whether I win or lose. As the son of a BPS educator and a BPS educator myself, I hope to dedicate even more of my time to improving all of our working conditions, which are our students learning conditions.

I am tired of seeing passionate educators get pushed out or burned out in the BPS system. We need to make a career in BPS sustainable.

How? We need to strengthen our unity and solidarity so that every member’s voice is heard and every issue gets elevated and resolved. We need to enforce our contract so that DESE and BPS can’t put endless responsibilities (without support) on our plates and abuse workers. We need to work with communities to create safe schools, and we need to stand against right-wing attacks on public education.

As a Building Rep at Charlestown High, I know how it feels to work at a school under crushing pressure to increase MCAS scores, enrollment, and attendance with little to no support. My proudest organizing moments include creating a strong Faculty Senate and mobilizing our community to push back against a plan to create a “Charlestown Innovation School” that would replace Charlestown High, its staff, and students.

In addition, I:

• served as a Coach and Organizing Committee member during our last contract campaign
• planned rallies to oppose State Takeover
• played a leading role in the struggle for school safety in 2020, including planning our 300+ member Car Caravan
• served on the Ethnic Studies, Housing Justice, Inclusion Done Right, Black Caucus, and New Educators Committees
• won the AFT-MA “Rising Star” Award

Robert P. Carroll

Thank you for your support by signing my nomination papers for the Executive Board and delegate positions. Now I ask you for your vote! My name is Rob Carroll and I have been a union advocate/activist for 37 years. During that time, I have been a building rep. (Holland, Sumner), a Regional Rep. (West Roxbury/ Roslindale), a delegate and an Executive Board member. I have always sought to bring support and protections for our union brothers and sisters. During the past years of the COVID crisis, as a member of the leadership, I have strived to make sure that the children, parents, community, and YOU were safe and had all the protections possible. As we continue to navigate the fall out of the covid crisis I will continue to make sure we have the necessary protections for our safety.

I have worn many hats in my role as a union activist, but I particularly enjoy welcoming and engaging new members to our union. Someone did it for me when I was new and it’s incumbent upon us to do the same. It is important that we pass on the history, struggles and knowledge of the BTU to the next generation of union activists!

I have recently retired (June 2020) but am back substitute teaching on a daily basis at the Summer School in Roslindale. I enjoy working with my new family, the Retired Teachers Chapter of the BTU. This past year, I have continued to serve actively in the BTU as a member of the Social Committee, Grievance committee, and member of the Executive board. I was a member of the Collective Bargaining team and continue to work as a member organizer with the organizers’ action teams.

In closing, I would like to add that we must continue to engage and build our membership. We must advocate for the best possible solutions to our members’ concerns. We need to create opportunities so our members’ voices will be heard and I promise you – I will LISTEN! Thank you for your continued support!
Alice A. Yong

Once again, I come before you to ask for your vote. The future of the union is to ensure that everyone is included as a strong "Boston Teachers Union." We have many battles ahead of us to be masterful teachers, para, nurses, and students. I am here to help our students through various evaluations of our performances within the academic environment. I am committed to building a stronger union and committed to one another to unite all members including our Retired Teachers Chapter who consistently continue to energize our efforts in addressing pensions and educational issues.

We must join our voices and talents to be seen as a united force to instill all bargaining rights, salaries, and class size issues. I am determined more than ever to work for our contract. This contract is fair and when utilized well it meets the needs necessary for our members to be successful in our jobs.

A. Vanessa LaRocque

A. Vanessa LaRocque is a long-time Boston resident who has over 25 years in education, 18 of those years has been dedicated to supporting Special Education students in the BPS. LaRocque is seeking re-election as an Executive Board member. She is dedicated to continue working hard to not only advocate for all of our members but also give the paraprofessionals a stronger and deserved voice on the board. Our CPFCS, Security Paras and other non-classroom support staff in our unit needs to be represented. As a longtime building representative, LaRocque has been engaged in many union issues and battles, including but not limited to COVID-19 related matters, flexible schedule planning, advocating for schools our students deserve and the need for new numbers for BPS members to be successful in our jobs.

Keisha Lewis

I have been a BTU member for over 20 years. I worked as a paraprofessional for many years before becoming a special education teacher. I currently teach high school students diagnosed with autism. I served as a building representative in the past and received the Building Representative of the Year Award in 2017. I am a current member of the COPE Committee, the Woman's Rights Committee for The BTU and the Woman's Rights Committee for AFT. I was extremely active during the "No On 2" campaign by knocking on doors, phone banking and being interviewed by local newspapers and radio stations. I graduated from a Boston Public School and my children attend Boston Public Schools. I am dedicated to the success of both students and teachers of BPS. Please vote for Keisha Lewis, BTU Executive Board and Delegate to all Affiliated Bodies.

Kafunda Banks

Dear BTU Members,

I would love the opportunity to serve you as delegate and executive board member. Together we can continue to make gains to get what educators, families, and children need.

I feel that my experience as co-founder of the ABA of Color Affinity Group (AOC), co-chair of the Inclusion Done Right Committee, as well as the newly formed ABA Faculty senate has proven my leadership abilities and my deep commitment to improve the conditions of my colleagues as well as champion the rights of our students. As a member of the School Based Inclusion Planning Team at the Curley K-8 School and the District's Inclusion Work Group, I have exhibited my commitment to see that Inclusion is done right. I have further shown a deep interest in writing policy reform through my involvement with the Education Policy Program. It was here that I created a presentation focused on best practices and inclusion in the public school system. I have gained a deeper understanding and appreciation of the strength of our union by serving on the Collective Bargaining Committee as well as participating in Summer Organizing Union Leader (SOULS) and as a Silent Representative, I have fought alongside our BTU brothers and sisters on various BPS task force committees regarding the safe opening of our schools during the pandemic. As a 19 year veteran ABA educator in BPS, I have no fear of working hard for the things that I believe in. It is my desire to continue this work through the BTU where creativity meets policy reform. We can't wait for a fair school district to happen, together we have to make it happen and accept no substitute.

Please help me continue the work with you by voting me in for the position of delegate and executive board member for the BTU.

Maria Brooks

I am asking for you to vote for me for Executive Board and Delegate. I teach Second Grade Special Education at the Mather School. I have 25 years of teaching experience and the last ten years have been in BPS. I have served as a building Rep for the last 8 years. I was previously a Regional Building Rep for three years, served as one of the co-chairs of the BTU Inclusion Committee, was an Executive Board member, and worked on the No on 2 Campaign.

I am running for the Executive Board because I believe in Public Education, unity, and most of all voice. I desire to be a voice for our membership in order to protect our members' best interests. As a Union we are better and stronger together, which can only happen when our members are involved and our voices are strong. Please help me to amplify your voice by voting for Maria Brooks.

Tracy Romain

Hi BTU Members,

My name is Tracy Romain, I am a 20 plus veteran ABA Para. I would like to take this time to ask for your upcoming vote for my next voice in our BTU Community, coming soon. On the next 203 BTU ballot you will have the opportunity to see my name please name me for the following positions by numbers: 16 Executive Board, 13 Para Council and Delegate number just by name. In the past couple of years I’ve learned and come to realize how important it is to play a part in our union and have a voice. Our union is a huge part of our lives and so many of us don’t know and realize how important it is to show up and speak up, it took me a long time to do that! In my years in BPS I have witnessed good changes and not so good changes. I would love to be that extra voice for our community and most importantly for our students. I have had the great opportunity to help each year with our Welcome Back to School Book Fair and book give away. Along with ringing for DESE to understand what we really do for our students. Participating in (SOULS) Summer Organizing Union Leader gave me the clarity on how much our union needed more voices to help our families and students with housing. I am an ABA Para, Back to School fair volunteer, Housing Justice committee member, Inclusion Done Right participant, Black Caucus committee member and a Building Representative. I hope to earn your vote! Look for me on our upcoming BTU voting ballot coming soon. Thank you Tracy Romain. On your ballot: 16 Executive Board 13 Para Council and Delegate.

CasSandra Samuel

My name is CasSandra Samuel and I am a candidate running for re-election to the BTU’s Executive Board, Para Council and Delegate to All Affiliated Bodies. As a Paraprofessional re-elected candidate for the Executive Board, I am determined to continue to bring that voice to the forefront as well as serve all members of the Union. My experience with Boston Public Schools started as a student and then as a parent of a Boston Latin Academy Alumna. I have been a BPS paraprofessional for 20+ years, currently working as a Library Paraprofessional at the Curley K-8. As a Paraprofessional, I have served in Lab class grades 3-5, 4th/5th grade SAR, Library/Media,
EXECUTIVE BOARD

CasSandra Samuel
Early Childhood and as a One to One. Additionally I have served as a Tech Goes Home Trainer, BTU Tech Goes Home Trainer for Paraprofessionals and Subs, Faculty Senate Representative, Building Representative, Volunteer Organizer with Texas AFT Back to School Campaign, Volunteer of The Parent Associates on the E-Board. If re-elected, I will continue to bring my experience as an educator to represent you with honesty, integrity, and energy. With this opportunity, my knowledge will allow me to bring my skills and strategies to help coordinate decisions and facilitate new opportunities for all members that will move our Union forward in solidarity. Your Vote is your Voice!

Your support of my re-election to the Executive Board, Paraprofessional Council and Delegate to All Affiliated Bodies is much appreciated.

James (Timo) Philip
Please, vote to re-elect me to the BTU Executive Board and as a Delegate to all BTU affiliates. Throughout my 49 years of membership, I have been a LOUD advocate for full participation of all members, chances for members to connect with colleagues from around the country, and DIVERSITY within the leadership. I have represented us nationally at AFT Conventions and as Parliamentarian of the AFT Black Caucus, statewide as a 30 year Vice President of AFT Massachusetts, and locally – wrote the first Code of Discipline for the BPS, selected a Superintendent, and served for 38 years on the JSC. I shall your interests in the struggle for Quality Public Education in Boston. As a retiree, I am one of 3,000+ members who value the BTU’s impact on our lives – professionally and afterwards. We support your efforts by volunteering in schools, testifying at hearings when school is in session, swelling crowds at demonstrations, and lobbying for IMPROVED RETIREMENT BENEFITS.

I NEED YOUR VOTE to keep me in the fight.

PI. S. urge you to vote for: Karen Crox for Secretary-Treasurer Ceci Carey & Matt Ruggerio for E-Board

Vote for collaboration and communication.

Caitlin Gaffney
I am honored to serve as your Executive Board member for the last four years and as a Tobin K-8 School teacher for the last twenty-three. We deserve Executive Board members who are vocal and active in the position, and I pursue that goal in a multitude of ways.

In co-facilitating the Election Bylaws Review Committee, a collaborative effort of retired and active members, we improved and strengthened the voting process for our membership.

As a Collective Bargaining Committee member, Contract Organizing Committee member, and Member Organizer, I advocate for equity of resources for all students, remain deeply invested in union activism, and commit to ensuring our bargaining rights are upheld by improving working conditions.

As a vocal supporter of the R+ Committee and New Educator Committee, I have proven my core belief that the more connections we establish within our union, the stronger we will be.

I will keep working jointly with our RTC, so that we can learn from those who fought to achieve so much for our union and open more spaces to hear from experienced members.

I participate in our rallies and events, help plan union efforts, and have continued to speak out at hearings and to the media. My growth as an antiracist pedagogue as I listen to and learn from colleagues, supporting our ongoing social justice work.

I will persist in advocating that educator spaces in BPS, BTU, and higher education are representative of the students that we serve. My ongoing goals are to help increase our power. Focus on fulfillment of PILOT, and strengthen our connection with families, the community, and fellow unions.

I will continue devoting myself to the work and respectfully ask for your vote for Executive Board and Delegate.

P.S. I urge you to vote for:

Karen Crox for Secretary-Treasurer
Ceci Carey & Matt Ruggerio for E-Board

Vote for collaboration and communication.

Caitlin Gaffney
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PARAPROFESSIONAL COUNCIL

Sharon O’Dwyer
No statement submitted.

Todd Kerr
My name is Todd Kerr and I am again grateful to accept your nomination to serve as a member of the Paraprofessional Council. I have served on the Council for four years. With your vote in the June election I will be able to SERVE you for another two years where it has been my pleasure to serve.

Currently I serve on the Election Committee where I have served for the past two elections. This Committee is approved by the Executive Board and voted by membership. While working as a Para I have fought for Para and Substitutes on a variety of issues on various Union committees from Collective Bargaining and Silent rep for our last contract and Collective bargaining for Impact Bargaining regarding Covid issues. This past summer, I served as an elected delegate to the AFT National Convention and the AFT-MA Convention. I also had the opportunity to join several Para colleagues at a PSRP conference this past April.

I ask for your vote for Para Council and Delegate for all Affiliated Boards. I have always put your self-interest first.

Mary Thomas
No statement submitted.

Debra Brown
My name is Debra Brown and I am running for the position of Para Council and Delegate to all Bodies. I would like to present my history with the Boston Public Schools and the Boston Teachers Union:

• Paraprofessional for 30 years
• Worked in the classroom in a variety of settings
• Currently an inclusion Para at the Kenny, former Librarian Para at Charles Sumner
• Was Building Representative for the Charles Sumner School for over 25 years
• Para Council for over 20 years
• Trustee to the Health and Welfare Fund
• Member of the Collective Bargaining Unit
• Delegate for all bodies of the Union

To keep our union strong and to build this union, we need everyone’s energy, talents and ideas, making it more important than ever that we bridge the gap between seasoned activists and new members. Paraprofessional / Substitute Teacher and ABA roles are changing, and I want to insure the paras, ABA’s and substitutes recognize the dignity and respect they deserve from the BPS as well as the Boston Teachers Union. I will not let the Paraprofessionals, ABA’s and Substitutes be forgotten in the Union. It’s a whole new world out there for Unions and times may be tough, but I am ready for the challenge.

Please consider me for the positions of Para Council and Delegate to all Bodies when voting.

Sau Yip
No statement submitted.

CasSandra Samuel
Hello BTU Paraprofessionals, First and foremost, Thank you for many years of electing me to be a voice on Para Council for you. As a re-elected candidate for Paraprofessional Council, I will continue to bring my experience as an educator to represent you with honesty, integrity and the energy to help us move forward in the coming year. For twenty-three years I have been a Paraprofessional in the Boston Public Schools for 20+ years. My experience includes: LAB paraprofessional in grades 3/4/5, 6/7/8, 9th grade, SAR in the classroom Paraprofessional, Library / Media Paraprofessional, Early Childhood Paraprofessional, One to One Paraprofessional, Tech Goes Home Trainer, BTU Tech Goes Home Trainer for Paraprofessionals and Subs, Faculty Senate Representative, Building Representative, Alumni of Boston Technical High School, Parent of Boston Latin Academy Alumni, Building Rep. Award 2012 and AFT Mass Distinguished Service Award in 2019, member of the BTU Negotiation Team for 2½ contracts, appointed BTU Paraprofessional Health & Welfare Trustee, volunteer of the Parent Association E-Board at Bridgewater State University. I will continue to bring my experience as an educator to help the board facilitate new opportunities for Paraprofessionals on every level. Please cast your vote for me in June. Remember again, your vote is your voice! Your support is very much appreciated.

A. Vanessa LaRocque
A. Vanessa LaRocque is a long-time Boston resident who has over 25 years in education, 18 of those years has continued on page 12
A. Vanessa LaRocque

has been dedicated to supporting Special Education students in the BPS. LaRocque is seeking re-election as an Executive Board member, Delegate of All Affiliated Bodies and Para Council. She is dedicated to continue working hard to not only advocate for all of our members but also give the paraprofessionals a stronger and deserved voice on the board. Our CPCs, Security Paras and other non-classroom support staff in our unit needs to be represented. As a longtime building representative, LaRocque has been engaged in many union issues and battles, including but not limited to COVID-19 related matters, flexible schedule planning, advocating for schools our students deserve and helping lead the charge to save McKinley SEA from eviction. She believes the distinction and hard work exemplified by paraprofessionals is not fully appreciated and would continue to be a powerful advocate for them to have their unique concerns addressed. She is also committed to make certain the needs of paraprofessionals in all areas of the school system need to be strongly advocated.

LaRocque’s excellence has been recognized in many ways. She was amongst the first group selected for the Regional Building Representative Leaders. She is the past recipient of the AFT’s Distinguished member award. In 2016, she was selected as the Paraprofessional Building Representative of the year. LaRocque also represents the union as a Delegate at state and national conventions, Sergeant-At-Arms and as a member of the following committees: Collective Bargaining Committee, COPE, Greater Boston Labor Council (E-Board Member), Silent Rep during contract negotiations, Social Committee Chair, Women In Leadership Development and she serves as an officer for A. Philip Randolph Institute Boston Chapter.

LaRocque will continue to be a powerful voice for all our members as they fight for a fair contract that recognizes their value to the system, and defend those who are not treated fairly and respectfully. If you are looking for a dedicated person who will work tirelessly on your behalf, then look no further than Vanessa LaRocque.

Christine Buttiglieri

Hello, BTU members, my name is Christine Buttiglieri.

I am retired Library / Para Professional, I worked at The Mario Umana School in East Boston for over 30 years. Even though I am retired, I have been active with our union, some of my favorite things to do is to work with the Election Committee and Paras. I am also presently active with Para Council, Health & Welfare as a trustee, I am also part of the RTC Board and a Delegate. I enjoy working with the Union supporting all members. This is where I ask for your support by voting for me in the coming election. So, I will be able to continue my support to all our Union members. I am a candidate for Para Council and Delegate. I would appreciate your consideration in both positions. Remember you can vote by mail or in person. Thank you.

Blanca Pierre

My name is Blanca Pierre, and I have been a proud employee of Boston Public Schools for the past 8 years. My goal as a member of the para council is to be a primary voice for all concerns shared with me. I believe that every opinion deserves to be brought forward and considered, and I am not afraid to speak out. I used my considerable experience as a paraprofessional to facilitate Para 101 workshops for the past three years to help paraprofessionals grasp an understanding about their roles and responsibilities, as well as information about further involvement within the BPS/ BTU community. As the chair of the Haitian Educators Committee, I learned quickly that several children in my community had significant reading challenges and needed more learning opportunities and guidance. After becoming a family liaison at Beethoven Elementary last year, I was able to secure the Teacher Leadership Fund grant to run a series of literacy workshops called Reading avèk Jwa (Reading with Joy). The children and families showed tremendous growth and improvement throughout our workshops, and I hope we are able to continue these efforts again next year. I am eager to be a part of this council and help create more opportunities for paraprofessionals to have a bigger role in the education of our children. Please vote for me.

Adrienne Jordan

No statement submitted.

Carla Johnson

No statement submitted.

Sacha Ruiz

No statement submitted.

Tracy Romain

No statement submitted.

Cynthia Ferris

No statement submitted.

Derrick Smith

No statement submitted.

RETIRED TEACHERS CHAPTER OFFICERS

The RTC Team

We are running for officers of the RTC and ask for your vote.

Marilyn Marion
Chair

Roz Avant
Vice Chair

Joan Devlin
Secretary

Mae Bishop
Treasurer

We thank you for the opportunity to continue to work on your behalf to promote pension improvement, maintain health benefits, provide opportunities to continue connections to the BTU and your colleagues.

The team is committed to finding solutions to raising the COLA base and to providing enhanced benefits to those retirees who have fallen far behind with pensions inadequate to maintain an income that provides sufficient money in order to survive in this super inflationary cycle.

None of us can guarantee a successful outcome, but we can guarantee that we will continue to fight to raise the pension, provide information and connections to services to assist our members, and continue our fight to improve our schools and communities.

We ask for your continued support and your vote for the positions as your RTC officers and for Delegate to All Affiliated Bodies.

BTU Election in Full Swing!!!.... continued from page 5.

Candidates for all positions except Delegate have been invited to make a 2 minute video that can be found by going to the BTU website (btu.org) to introduce themselves to members. Take some time to review the videos to help you make an informed choice.

This is a chance for every BTU/RTC member to exercise their voice. A robust turn out helps build the strength of the BTU!!

**You must be a member in good standing in order to run and to vote. Please be aware of the following by-laws change, which was passed in January:

a. a member must be in good standing to vote;

b. a member who is in arrears in dues payments for three (3) or more months is not in good standing and not eligible to vote;

c. members on unpaid leave may make arrangements to pay their dues directly to the Union;

d. upon payment of all back dues, the member shall be restored to good standing;

e. members on unpaid leave shall be required to pay only half the amount of dues that would normally be due; this reduction shall only apply to each full month of unpaid leave;

f. a written message containing the above information must be provided to all members electronically or by regular mail; or, in the alternative, it can be included in the election information provided to each member from the election committee;

g. a member on paid leave as a result of a criminal indictment shall not be eligible to vote.

Candidate Statements

PARAPROFESSIONAL COUNCIL

Candidate Statements

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Fighting For Our Pensions

Retired Teachers Chapter
By Joan Devlin, Secretary

At the April BTU membership meeting, Janey Frank, the Chair of the RTC Legislative Committee gathered signatures on a petition to Mayor Michelle Wu to raise the Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) base. The current COLA base is $15,000. When the Boston Retirement Board (BRB) votes to give its retirees a 3% COLA annual increase in the pension, it is based only on 3% of the first $15,000. Unlike Social Security, Retirees do not receive the increase on the rest of their pension.

We ask you to join us in contacting the Mayor, City Council and Retirement Board by signing our petition to raise the COLA Base to $20,000 with annual future increases. The success we have in increasing the base now means that all members—active members and retired—will benefit from this effort.

There are two bills, An Act to Provide Fair and Affordable Public Retiree Benefits, at the State House which have gone to the Joint Committee on Public Service—Massachusetts H.2505 and S.1638. We urge you to call your state senators and representatives to encourage them to vote for passage.

If it is Spring…

Can our annual Spring Luncheon be far off? By now you have received your invitation and information about our Spring events.

Our business meeting will include a hearing test by TruHearing (formerly Hear USA) and a presentation by Michelle Rosander, National Account Manager of TruHearing on how RTC members can access their services.

In addition, we will hear from one of our members about the need to repeal the WEP/GPO provisions that affect public employees in seven to twenty-seven states. The focus will be on the GPO bill and how we can help support its repeal. The GPO disallows any spouse of a public employee receiving their spouse’s pension benefits from Social Security if they receive a public pension of their own. The two bills filed at the federal level are HR 82 and S.5497. Contact your congressional representatives and senators to vote for these bills.

Spring Luncheon

Our Spring Luncheon is time to celebrate with our colleagues. The deadline for purchasing tickets – and setting up tables of friends – is April 28. No Exceptions.

The doors at the Venezia Restaurant in Dorchester open at 11:00 a.m. on Thursday, May 18. Tickets may be purchased for $50. Unlike the Fall luncheon, these tickets are nonrefundable.

Election Time

It is election time at the BTU. You have received a mail-in ballot. Please fill it out and send it in. Don’t wait until it is too late and you have misplaced it. Keeping our union functioning well and fighting for us depends on you. You make the difference. Find out as much as you can about the candidates and then choose those candidates that you want to represent you. Yes, people can win or lose by one vote and sometimes there is only one person seeking the office but your engagement, your choosing counts.

If you don’t want to mail your ballot in you can cast your ballot in person at the BTU hall from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. No One Ever Tells Me Anything

If you haven’t been receiving the RTC email bulletin call us and share your email address with us. Check on your home address, phone number while you are sharing. We will not share your email or phone number with anyone without your permission.

If You Are Looking For Us

You can find either Marilyn or Roz in the RTC office in the BTU every Wednesday and Thursday from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. If you have a question about health benefits, please call the Health and Insurance division of City Hall. If you are not getting your pension or it is incorrect contact payroll at City Hall.

You are always welcome to drop by and visit, but the phones will drive you crazy!!
Colleen Hart, BTU Paraprofessional and Substitute Teacher Field Representative, was joined by BTU president Jessica Tang and AFT-MA president Beth Kontos in kicking off the 37th annual statewide paraprofessional conference held at the BTU Hall on Saturday, April 1, 2023.

The conference attended by paraprofessionals from Chelsea, Fall River, Lawrence, Lowell, Lynn, Medway, New Bedford, Salem, Springfield and Boston was divided into three sections with participants rotating through each section. Awde Jeranian led the session on “Transformative ESL.” Violet Knoll led the session on “What We’re Asking For: Respect!” In this session, presenters discussed how any campaign is a statement of urgency – of what we value and why and asked the questions: What do we mean when we say we want respect? What are concrete steps unionists and school support staff can take to move a respect campaign forward? Jeremy Shenk led a panel discussion called: “This Is How We’ve Done It.” This session focused on sharing successes, failures and what we’ve learned along the way.

After lunch the attendees regrouped for a stress management session on mindfulness and meditation led by Krysta-Lyn Martinelli of Radiate Wellness. During the afternoon session, Krysta-Lyn talked to the room full of paraprofessionals about spending less time on screens and making sure that we save at least 20 minutes a day for time to destress. Kryst-Lyn talked about Burnout and how it can be defined as a feeling of overwhelming exhaustion, cynicism and inefficacy and how the fatigue that is a result of prolonged stress and overworking can have serious impact on health, business and relationships.

“Paraprofessionals and School Related Personnel (PSRPs) came together [at the conference] to demand respect. We are the backbone of our educational system and we deserve fair pay for our work. “No matter who you are or where you live across Massachusetts, we all depend on paraprofessionals and school related staff to make our schools and communities run.”

AFT-Massachusetts via Twitter (@AFTMass)

“Stress not only affects mental states, but physical health as well. Finding ways to slow down and be mindful, connecting with yourself creates a better state of mind.”

– Krysta-Lyn Martinelli

“SEL is important to me because we need to care for ourselves or we cannot take care of others. You always need to make sure you fill up your soul so that you can be your best self and your best self for your students and family. We shared what mantras as a group. We were asked for a mantra that we lived by and got us charged to keep going. My mantra was “Bloom where you are planted.”

– Colleen Hart

Cut Out Activities That Increase Stress

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<td>• Watching the news</td>
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<td>• Caffeine</td>
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<td>• Social Media</td>
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<td>• Alcohol</td>
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<td>• TV time right before bed</td>
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<td>• Focusing on the negative</td>
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<td>• Cell phone time</td>
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Cut Out Activities That Increase Stress

Stop, stand up and step back
Tune into the body, mind and spirit
Observe something beautiful around you
Proceed – with new possibilities

“Stress not only affects mental states, but physical health as well. Finding ways to slow down and be mindful, connecting with yourself creates a better state of mind.”

– Krysta-Lyn Martinelli

“SEL is important to me because we need to care for ourselves or we cannot take care of others. You always need to make sure you fill up your soul so that you can be your best self and your best self for your students and family. We shared what mantras as a group. We were asked for a mantra that we lived by and got us charged to keep going. My mantra was “Bloom where you are planted.”

– Colleen Hart
CELEBRATE PARAPROFESSIONAL APPRECIATION DAY!

Wednesday, April 5, 2023

We want to extend a Thank You to all of the Paraprofessionals.
Three Cheers to You for supporting the students every day!
You teach...
You lead...
You care...
You rock...

Your dedication is appreciated!

Sincerely,
From all of us at AFT and BTU
The West Zone Early Learning Center is tucked into a corner of the Henningan K-8 building on Heath Street in Jamaica Plain and provides “Surround Care” for children from 7:30 AM to 4:30 PM every day. With only seven classrooms, it serves 107 Pre-K > Grade 1 students this year. The atmosphere is warm and welcoming — a bulletin board at the entrance invites adults to thank a colleague for support and everyone on the staff appreciates the “family feeling” of working in a small school.

Several classes are studying animals and there is a hallway display on camouflage. Mirabelle writes: “Predator and prey animals use camouflage so they don’t attract too much attention.” In first grade, students have each selected an animal to study and are working diligently on writing about them. Animal habitat dioramas top a shelf at the entrance to Erika Barros’ room. When asked what he’d like to share with teachers throughout the district, her colleague Thomas Foster says using the movement and hands-on activities of the Orton-Gillingham approach has been a “game-changer” throughout the district, her colleague Thomas Foster says using the movement and hands-on activities of the Orton-Gillingham approach has been a “game-changer”

Tiffany Young’s K2 classroom next door, children are learning how to write the letter Z — making the shape in the air, with their fingers, and then on paper. These children tell me they’re also learning about architects who plan buildings and the construction workers who pour foundations!

In K1 classes, children are exploring light and shadow at various activity centers — using mirrors, making collages with “shiny things” and shining flashlights on plastic animals to watch their shadows change size. With a bit of coaching from their teacher, Margaret Anne Mikita, students come up with the word REFLECTION to describe how light “bounces off” mirrors and other shiny materials.

A bit later in the day, science teacher Maria Pires brings in a variety of seeds for examination and reviews the parts of a flowering plant. On a hallway wall outside the classroom, drawings accompany expressions of appreciation for family members as “Women in Our History” — Arthenie writes, “My sister is special because she plays with me.”

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“What’s working in YOUR school?”
West Zone Early Learning Center

The West Zone Early Learning Center is tucked into a corner of the Hennigan K-8 building on Heath Street in Jamaica Plain and provides “Surround Care” for children from 7:30 AM to 4:30 PM every day. With only seven classrooms, it serves 107 children from 7:30 AM to 4:30 PM every day. With only seven classrooms, it serves 107

K0 > Grade 1 students this year. The atmosphere is warm and welcoming — a bulletin board at the entrance invites adults to thank a colleague for support and everyone on the staff appreciates the “family feeling” of working in a small school. Dance teacher Kerry Glennon teaches ELC-West students during and after school, currently preparing for an end-of-year tap dancing performance. In the Hennigan gym with Scott Chamberlain, K0 students practice throwing and catching balloons.

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We are working on our animal projects. Ms. Parker is helping us. King is writing about how a seahorse can change colors when an enemy gets near, and Kendrick has learned that pigs like to roll in the mud to keep their skin cool. We have also learned that the “Magic E” at the end of a word jumps over one consonant and makes the vowel in front long.

Kendrick Harrison & King Baker McCoy, Grade 1

We are making friends with a purple balloon. We are making friends in gym class. Amelia Qin & Emily Sun, K0, with a little help from Surround Care Paraprofessional, Cora McNiel

I was working on my animal book and Mr. Foster was helping me with my writing. One interesting thing I learned about dolphins is that their calves can swim as soon as they are born. I really like animals!

Maliya Holley, Grade K

We are looking at different seeds that Ms. Pires [our science teacher] brought into the classroom. The big seed was from an avocado. We learned that dirt is good for growing food and other plants. We also learned that worms live in the dirt.

Aiya Coote & Maliya Holley, K2

We were using our fingers to make the letter Z in the air. We are learning our letters and lots of other things this year. We’ve learned that architects make plans and construction workers dig to make a foundation for buildings. We’re learning about animals like wolves and frogs and salmon and owls, too! K2 students in Tiffany Young’s classroom

We were drawing pictures of dirt. We learned that dirt is good for growing food and other plants. We also learned that bugs live in the dirt.

I wrote my name and was holding my paper up to the mirror. Ms. Downing was helping me. My name looked different in the mirror — the capital A was at the end of it instead of the beginning! I learned that light bounces off a mirror.

Armani Negron

I was working on my animal book and Mr. Foster was helping me with my writing. One interesting thing I learned about dolphins is that their calves can swim as soon as they are born. I really like animals!

Maliya Holley, Grade K

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Armani Negron

We are making collages with shiny stuff. We learned that light bounces off things that are shiny and that’s called REFLECTION!

Hadiasha Muñoz Castillo, B Smith, & Jelivelle Sotolino, K1

We are working on our animal projects. Ms. Parker is helping us. King is writing about how a seahorse can change colors when an enemy gets near, and Kendrick has learned that pigs like to roll in the mud to keep their skin cool. We have also learned that the “Magic E” at the end of a word jumps over one consonant and makes the vowel in front long.

Kendrick Harrison & King Baker McCoy, Grade 1

We are playing catch with a purple balloon. We are making friends in gym class. Amelia Qin & Emily Sun, K0, with a little help from Surround Care Paraprofessional, Cora McNiel

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Kendrick Harrison & King Baker McCoy, Grade 1
Confirmed Candidates for BTU Offices and Delegates

**BTU OFFICERS**

**President**
Jessica Tang

**Vice President**
Erik Berg

**Secretary-Treasurer**
1. Trevour Smith
2. Karen Cross
3. Nora Paul-Schultz

**Elementary Field Rep.**
Lea-Antoinette Serena

**Secondary Field Rep.**
Caren Carew

**Para/Sub/ABA Field Rep.**
Colleen Hart

**Political Director**
Johnny McInnis

**PARAPROFESSIONAL COUNCIL**

1. Sharon O’Dwyer
2. Todd Kerr
3. Mary Thomas
4. Debra Brown
5. Sau Yip
6. CasSandra Samuel
7. Vanessa LaRocque
8. Christine Buttiglieri
9. Bianca Pierre
10. Adrienne Jordan
11. Carla Johnson
12. Sacha Ruiz
13. Tracy Romain
14. Cynthia Ferris
15. Derrick Smith

**RETIRED TEACHERS CHAPTER**

**Chair**
Marilyn Marion

**Vice Chair**
Roz Avant

**Secretary**
Joan Devlin

**Treasurer**
Mae Bishop

**EXECUTIVE BOARD, By Ballot Position**

1. Tracy Doyle
2. Matthew Ruggiero
3. Michael Maguire
4. Brenda Chaney
5. Michelle Carroll
6. Nicole Mullen
7. Allison Doherty
8. Danielle West
9. Cecil Carey
10. Robert Carroll
11. Alice Yong
12. Vanessa LaRocque
13. Kafunda Banks
14. Maria Brooks
15. Keisha Lewis
16. Tracy Romain
17. CasSandra Samuel
18. James (Timo) Philip
19. Caitlin Gaffney

**DELEGATE, by Last Name**

- Maritza Agrait
- Roz Avant
- Kafunda Banks
- Mary Bell
- Erik Berg
- Denise Berkley
- Mae Bishop
- Maria Brooks
- Debra Brown
- Molly Bryson
- Christine Buttiglieri
- Layla Cable
- Caren Carew
- Cecil Carey
- Michelle Carroll
- Robert P. Carroll
- Brenda Chaney
- Paul Christian Jr.
- James Cordero
- Diane Crain
- Michael Crain
- Marjie Crosby
- Karen Cross
- Natalia Cuadra-Saez
- Amrita Dani
- Jukurious Davis
- Randi Davis
- Joan Devlin
- Allison Doherty
- Betsy Drinan
- Connor Echols-Jones
- John Enright
- Cynthia Ferris
- Danielle Fraine
- Caitlin Gaffney
- Amy Gebo
- Christine Gorman-Arnold
- Thomas Gosnell
- Colleen Hart
- Thomas Hocker
- Claude James Jr.
- Carla Johnson
- Charles Johnson
- Marta Johnson Faldasz
- Adrianne Jordan
- James Kennedy
- Todd Kerr
- Karen Kilmain-Patriquin
- Heath King
- Erica Kouka
- Samantha Laney
- Vanessa LaRocque
- Josefina Lascano
- Nina Lessin-Joseph
- Sylvaine Lestrade
- Keisha Lewis
- Michael Maguire
- Tim Maher
- Katie Mallon
- Marilyn Marion
- Gayle Marrow
- Katrina McClain
- Suzanne McGlone
- Johnny McInnis
- Lucinda Mills
- Nicole Mullen
- Kimvy Nguyen
- Sharon O’Dwyer
- Catherine O’Flaherty
- Noah Patel
- Nora Paul-Schultz
- Sherry Pedrone
- James (Timo) Philip
- Bianca Pierre
- Kristen Pinto
- Declan Power
- Teresa Reaves
- Tracy Romain
- Dana Royster-Buefort
- Matthew Ruggiero
- Chelsea Ruscio
- CasSandra Samuel
- Ivelisse Santos-Hicks
- Lea-Antoinette Serena
- John Simonetti
- Treavor Smith
- Elisa Sota
- Jessica Tang
- Regina Temple
- Josette Teneus
- Paul Tenney
- Paul Titter
- Teresa Underwood
- Mary Ann Urban
- José Valenzuela
- Samantha Weintraub
- Darren Wells
- Danielle West
- Tatiana Williams-Rodriquez
- Stephanie Wing
- Karen Wood
- Alice Yong

**BTU Election in Full Swing!!!**

A primary election for the full-time position of Secretary/Treasurer was held in April/May – with mail in ballots due Tuesday, May 2nd and in-person voting at the BTU on Wednesday, May 3rd, 8:00 am-6:00 pm. Results were not available in time to report in this issue, but watch for the e-bulletin.

**FINAL ELECTION** ballots for all candidates will be mailed out by May 15 and MUST be RECEIVED at the Post Office by Tuesday, June 6th. Please return your ballot early to ensure it is received on time. Any BTU/RTC member** who did not vote by mail may vote in person at the BTU on Wednesday, June 7th, 8:00 am-6:00 pm. The positions of President, Vice President, Elementary, Secondary and Para/Sub/ABA Field Reps, and Political Director, RTC President, RTC Vice President, RTC Secretary and RTC Treasurer are not contested. 19 members are running for 12 executive board slots, and 15 candidates for the 15 para council slots. Write in votes for any position including Delegate to all Affiliated Bodies are still possible. In order to be considered, write in candidates must receive at least as many votes as signatures that were required to be listed on the ballot.

*continued on page 8*
we all deserve. Union and the schools and communities the many issues and challenges that we that, together, we can continue to tackle your vote in the upcoming election so I would be honored to continue to serve Organizing Director and then President. Board member and then also as founding as a Building Representative, Executive to do from the time I was first elected to impact our school communities. we address the many issues that continue before the current contract expires. imminently so that we can meet our goal a new round of contract negotiations latest contract, we will need to begin still have much more to do. While we strong foundation of our union, and we have continued to build upon the strong foundations of our union, and we still have much more to do. While we continue to implement and enforce our latest contract, we will need to begin a new round of contract negotiations imminently so that we can meet our goal of negotiating a successor agreement before the current contract expires. We must also continue to build on the successes of open bargaining, the Silent Representatives initiative and Contract Action Teams as we continue to build power for our union.

We must also continue to engage not just our BTU educators in all of our schools and work sites, but also our students, families and community allies as we add additional voices to continue to impact our school communities. Building a strong, member-led union that continues to advance educational, social and racial justice is what I set out to do from the time I was first elected as a Building Representative, Executive Board member and then also as founding Organizing Director and then President. I would be honored to continue to serve as President of the BTU, and hope to have your vote in the upcoming election so that, together, we can continue to tackle the many issues and challenges that we continue to face and create a stronger union and the schools and communities we all deserve.

Vice President Erik Berg

It continues to be my honor and privilege to be part of the great BTU team working to support the educators of Boston, and I hope to earn another two-year term.

Over the past two years, we have had many important victories. We settled a contract with BFS which included paid parental leave, a major new benefit for our members, along with an agreement to provide more resources, staffing and educator voice in our inclusion programs, and salary increases for our members. Believe it or not, we will soon begin the process of negotiating another agreement that provides conditions that are fair to our teachers, and provides our students the education they deserve. We look forward to continuing to open up the bargaining process and leverage the strength of our members in that effort.

Also this term, we were able to bring a new group of employees into our union with a negotiated settlement to include family liaisons, we have limited class size averages, and ensured members are paid fairly for their work and successfully represented members who have been treated unfairly with regard to leaves of absences. I’m proud that, working with our legal team, we have prevailed in a large majority of the arbitration decisions that have come in since I have been in office, and we’ve been able to settle many other cases on favorable terms. I also chair the Educator Supports Panel, the Health and Welfare Trustees, and have worked on many other issues ranging from impact bargaining over smaller employee groups and job descriptions, to working with our members at City on a Hill School, to employee discipline cases, evaluation concerns, BTU building issues, mediations and facilities issues.

Over the next two years, I hope to work with our team to settle a fair contract, and continue to enforce it with vigor and candor. I also look forward to working on the process of constructing a new headquarters building for the BTU. It is my hope that we can move forward with renewed strength, and continue the struggle for the schools our educators and our students deserve.

The dedication and expertise of our members never ceases to amaze me, and is with humility that I ask for your support for another term as Executive Vice President of the BTU.

Secretary-Treasurer

Please Note: The top two finishers of the May primary election will appear on the final June ballot. The primary election had not been held when this edition of the newspaper went to press. Therefore we are preprinting all three candidates’ statements from the previous edition of the Boston Union Teacher.

Trevour Smith

My name is Trevour Smith and I am a mathematics teacher at Boston Latin School. I am committed to be running for Boston Teachers Unions (BTU’s) next Secretary-Treasurer because I truly believe in the power of education to transform lives. Throughout my involvement with the BTU, whether it’s as a Building Rep, a member of the Action Committee working to build safe and welcoming sanctuary schools, or working as a Silent Rep on our latest contract campaign, I’ve become increasingly passionate about the ways BTU can use its power to fight for a better district for members as well as our students and their families.

I’ve experienced firsthand the challenges that educators of color face in Boston Public Schools, and I’m ready to work together to create a more equitable and inclusive education system that supports the success of all students.

My passion, coupled with my background in business, is why I’m excited to run for Secretary-Treasurer. Through a strategic and data-driven approach, I will help ensure our resources are allocated efficiently and effectively to benefit all teachers and students.

I’m committed to building strong, collaborative partnerships with stakeholders to find innovative solutions to our district’s complex issues. By working together, we can create a stronger, more vibrant educational community that provides every student with the support and opportunities they need to succeed!

Karen Cross

I grew up as an English Language Learner. My mom, a North Korean Immigrant, didn’t know a word of English. Thus, she encouraged me to listen carefully and to take copious notes to help her with anything that needed translating. That note-taking has stuck with me ever since. Even today, as appointed Secretary of the Asian American Pacific Islander task force, I am still taking notes! Since one key role of Secretary-Treasurer requires record keeping and note-taking, I believe I more than fit the bill.

Twenty-years as a Math Teacher and 25 years as a former owner of successful businesses and serving as Secretary and Trustee of the Pre-paid Legal Fund have certainly paid off. The position of Secretary-Treasurer is multifaceted and these various roles have provided me with such experiences as:

- Working alongside accountants;
- Scrutinizing monthly ledgers;
- Making strategic financial decisions w/Pre-paid integral to the BTU;
- Increasing revenue during my 5-year tenure as board member;
- Introducing “Countrywide,” a financial wellness program.
- Overseeing all elements of my businesses including accounting, payroll and accounts receivable;
- Managing multiple employees.

My varied Union experience will that inform me as an elected officer include:

- Building relationships as a Building Rep of 9 years;
- Participating in Silent Negotiations, Racial Justice Committee and Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance (APALA) member;
- Promoting awareness about the Thrive Act. (a bill to eliminate recoupment) as Member Organizer;
- Being an SEIU 509 member as Adjunct Faculty of Northeastern Graduate School

BTU must ensure there are no cracks where members fall through! No BTU member left behind! My vision for our next contract includes advocating for:

- Including mental health support for students and members;
- Improving working conditions that produce better learning conditions;
- Providing greater support for new members to encourage participation & retention;
- Ensuring presence at all School Committee meetings by recruiting representatives to attend;
- Participating in/attending the Public Employee Committee (PEC) who negotiates our health insurance benefits;
- Serving on the Boston Retirement Board, as a majority of active members will spend more years in retirement than they have remaining in the field.

The position of Secretary-Treasurer is, indeed, a huge undertaking. I believe I am the right person for the job! I pledge to work to grow our finances and to be transparent about how and where our monies are spent.

I respectfully ask for your vote. Please visit: www.karencross4btu.org
BTU OFFICERS

Secretary-Treasurer

Nora Paul-Schultz

I am excited to be running for Secretary-Treasurer of our union. I am a 11-year veteran physics and engineering teacher at the O'Brian School of Mathematics and Science, a current BTU Executive Board member, and co-chair of BTU's Unafraid Educators Committee. I am running for Secretary-Treasurer because I believe in the strength of our union and I want to continue to grow our power. In the last contract fight, I helped transform our negotiation process by creating the structures for silent representatives so that any member could take part in the negotiations. As a leader of the silent representatives, I attended nearly all negotiating sessions and helped to draft summaries to inform members about the process. I hope to bring this experience into the role of Secretary-Treasurer in order to increase transparency and member engagement.

Outside of my work with the BTU, I have been the finance chair of Kavod, a Jewish community in Boston. In that role, I came to see how the budgets of organizations are value statements. I want to bring this view into how we view the BTU's budget. As Secretary-Treasurer, I would help lead conversations about our financial choices as a union so that we can be grounded in our vision of a more just district and city while ensuring that our union remains in a strong financial position.

As a leader of Unafraid Educators, the BTU's immigrants rights organizing committee, I have helped to build and promote a scholarship for undocumented BPS Students. I have worked with students, grassroots organizations, and legal groups to create and advocate for a district policy that would limit unhelpful and dangerous information-sharing between our schools and the Boston Police Department and therefore limit the access ICE and the FBI have to our students and their families. This activism led to the passage of an ordinance at the City Council level as well. Additionally, I am on the BTU's Racial Justice Standing Committee and was appointed to the national AFT's Civil and Human Rights Committee.

As Secretary-Treasurer, I am eager to work alongside students, community groups, and other educators to fight for policies in BPS that humanize us all—young people, their families, and school staff alike. I would be honored to have your vote. To learn more go to www.nwsftu.com.

Elementary Field Rep.

Lea-Antoinette Serena

I have been proud to serve as the Elementary Representative for the Boston Teachers Union for the last two years. It has been quite a journey and I am thrilled to have the opportunity to serve you again. In the last two years I have learned so much not only about our schools and systems, but our amazing educators. I have been honored to serve not only our elementary school educators but our Coordinators of Special Education, Hub School Coordinators, Physical Therapist, Psychologist, Supervisors of Attendance, Transportation Specialist, RCD specialist, and many other groups. I have just begun learning the intricacies of all of our different schools and roles and would love the opportunity to continue to support you.

Over the past two years, I have been committed to engaging our BTU members who are in central office positions and not school based. I have also been committed to maintaining my relationships with students and families. Furthermore, as a new representative I wanted to make sure that when I walked into a building, educators knew it was for more than a Grievance Meeting or Investigation Meeting. I have been committed to visiting schools through Lit with Lea, where I have read to over 100 classes and visited over 40 schools. I have also been consistent with attending training and shadowing our educators in order to ensure I am staying connected to the work happening inside our schools.

Over the next two years, I hope to continue to represent our educators, especially as we roll out inclusion. I also hope to continue to advocate for and create space for anti-racism leadership within our Union. I would be honored to continue to serve as your Elementary Representative and humbly ask for your vote this June!

Secondary Field Rep.

Caren Carew

You can count on my experienced proactive leadership and tenacious, tireless advocacy as your Secondary Field Representative during these sometimes overwhelming and challenging times. As your Field Rep, I have developed a wealth of first-hand, in-depth union knowledge listening to your concerns and expeditiously addressing them while fighting with and for you to attain the respect we all deserve. I have also been a strong and effective teacher in under-resourced schools which have honed my leadership skills enabling me to be your vigorous, vigilant advocate.

My cumulative experience and knowledge on the job of the teacher’s unit contract and historical / past practices not always enumerated in the contract is imperative to preserve for the good of the Union and YOU. I support great teaching by speaking up on your behalf while effectively dealing with administration, prosecuting grievances, through arbitration testimony, providing representation at hearings, prompt email / call responses, addressing work condition changes, conducting SSG trainings, providing evaluation / performance support, promoting conflict resolution, organizing and holding school-based meetings, as well as simultaneously problem-solving and thinking outside of the box. While sugar-coating isn’t my style, you’ll find that my direct, factual, empathetic, and passionate approach is effective.

Working for racial / gender / social /economic justice, we’ll strengthen community and political partnerships through increasing our influence while maintaining hard-fought collective bargaining rights pursuing excellence for all of the children we educate. I effectively and passionately speak up making sure your voice is heard during contract negotiations and beyond!

As members of a public sector union, we frequently find ourselves characterized as self-serving. We must work together with each other joining our local allies, parents and the community as one to refocus the agenda through our collective actions and the continued pursuit of excellence for all of the children we educate in the BPS. We are at a crossroads in public education. Strong public schools are our democracy’s cornerstone. Our work conditions are the children’s learning conditions. Maintaining and strengthening our voice in collective bargaining only serves to lift up our profession, our work, as well as the students we hold dear. Public education and labor rights are social justice issues.

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I am your 2023 ELECTION PULLOUT  |  May, 2023  | 3
I have worked collaboratively with BTU members, administrators and management to include educator voice in decision making, negotiate working conditions, and support members on their rights outlined in the contract and uprift due process. In addition, I have served on many BTU/BPS task forces to make sure the BTU voice is at the table. I have helped to facilitate communication, transparency and advocacy in the school community and beyond.

I respectfully ask for your vote to re-elect me for the position of Executive Board and Delegate of the Boston Teachers Union. I firmly believe that by working together, our union can be a strong voice that advocates for public education and always strives to support and energize educators, students, and our communities. I feel that listening and advocating for the issues and policies that directly affect our members should be at the forefront of everything that we do at the BTU. I am a proud Boston resident and I have worked in BPS since 1998, five years as a classroom paraprofessional and since as a special education teacher at both the Mary Lyon K-8 and The Boston Arts Academy Pilot School. I have served as a BTU Board member for many years and have held various other leadership roles.

I am a proud mother of three sons who graduated from Boston Public Schools.

I am a lifelong resident of Dorchester and proud mother of three sons who graduated from Boston Public Schools.

I have worked at the Perry K-6 School for the past 30 years, taking every leadership opportunity available such as multiple years of leading the Faculty Senate, multiple terms on School Site Council and Hiring Committee to advocate for my peers.

I have many principal and superintendent contacts and go. Teachers, paras and building staff are the backbone of our city’s youth and their families. So many have forgotten how we rose, and met unprecedented challenges during the pandemic, going back to work side by side with police, fire and EMS, while so many sat safely at home.

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I am a proud mother of three sons who graduated from Boston Public Schools.
Nicole Mullen

In 2011, I was awarded an Education Policy Leadership Fellowship from the National Institute for Educational Leadership.

In 2013, I was appointed by the Executive Board to be a BTU Delegate to all Affiliated Bodies.

Since 2015, I have been a member of the Executive Board and Delegate to all Affiliated Bodies.

Since the Pandemic, I have been a member of various task forces and working groups.

I believe the BTU is a critical vehicle for building strong schools for our students and a professional, supportive workplace for all union members. Educator voice is essential for decisions that impact our schools. I believe that the BTU is the most democratic way to have our voices heard and respected.

I respect all the unionists that fought before me and I am not afraid to elevate the voices of today’s BTU members. I believe we must fight for the policies and working conditions that make being a BPS teacher a sustainable, retirement worthy profession now and for educators to come.

Allison Doherty

I am innovative, experienced, outspoken and a proud member of the powerful Boston Teachers Union. It would be an honor for me to be a re-elected member of the Boston Teachers Union Executive Board. Here are my qualifications:

I was elected to, and served on, the BTU Executive Board from 2003-2013 and 2019-current, BTU Delegate 2001-2021. I am the current Boston Labor Council Executive Board from 2011-2013, where I served as the GRLC’s Futures Committee. I was elected Young Worker “Futures” representative for the MA AFL-CIO 2010 and appointed by Randi Weingarten and AFT National to be on the Nation AFL-CIO Young Worker Advisory Council in 2012. I was a building representative at Fenway High School where I am the teacher of students with a diagnosis of autism. I received the Building Representative of the Year Award in 2019 and was the recipient of AFTMA “Distinguished Service Award” in the category for members 35 years of age or younger. I have been a member of impact bargaining teams for three separate negotiations fighting for the rights of BTU members. I have shown my vigor and commitment to stand up for Boston Public Schools, BTU members and students.

I am a BPS graduate, a BPS teacher and a BPS parent! Please vote for Allison Doherty, BTU Executive Board and Delegate to all Affiliated Bodies.

Danielle West

I believe in the power of unions. I was raised in a strong union family, and have been witness to the tremendous impact strong unions can have. Our union is a critical vehicle for building strong schools for our students and a professional, supportive workplace for all union members. Educator voice is essential for decisions that impact our schools. I believe that the BTU is the most democratic way to have our voices heard and respected.

Current educators have the most keen insight into what is required to educate our students, which is why I am running for Executive Board and Delegate to All Affiliated Bodies.

I am an 8th grade special education/ ESL teacher at the Curley K-8. At Curley, I serve on the Inclusion Planning Team, and helped write one of the first inclusion plans BPS will implement based on our new contract. As a Member Organizer, I am using what we have learned from our inclusion planning process to advocate across the BPS for clear systems as other Inclusion Planning Teams across the district begin this important work. It is imperative inclusion is done right and, if elected to the Executive Board, I will continue to fight for appropriate and funded inclusion.

I am an active member of the BTU as Building Representative, Delegate, Member Organizer, and Silent Representative for contract negotiations. In these roles, I have the opportunity to spark dialogue, organize and lead members, and advocate for better working conditions. The future success of our union depends on its ability to unite and incorporate all member voices when addressing new challenges and resistance to our hard fought rights and benefits. Please consider voting for me to come to the bargaining table. Please consider voting for me to come to the bargaining table.

Cecil Carey

I’m running for BTU Executive Board because I am a passionate fighter for Workers Rights and Education Justice. I’ve put in the work, and I’ll continue to do so whether I win or lose. As the son of a BPS educator and a BPS educator myself, I hope to dedicate even more of my time to improving all of our working conditions, which are our students learning conditions.

I am tired of seeing passionate educators get pushed out or burned out the BPS system. We need to make a career in BPS sustainable. How? We need to strengthen our unity and solidarity so that every member’s voice is heard and every issue gets elevated and resolved. We need to enforce our contract so that DSE and BPS can’t push endless responsibilities (without support) on our plates and abuse workers. We need to work with communities to create safe schools, and we need to stand against right-wing attacks on public education.

As a Building Rep at Charlestown High, I know how it feels to work at a school under crushing pressure to increase MCAS scores, enrollment, and attendance with little to no support. My proudest organizing moments include creating a strong Faculty Senate and mobilizing our community to push back against a plan to create a “Charlestown Innovation School” that would replace Charlestown High, its staff, and students.

In addition, I:

• served as a Coach and Organizing Committee member during our last contract campaign
• planned rallies to oppose State Takeover
• played a leading role in the struggle for school safety in 2020, including planning our 300+ member Car Caravan
• served on the Ethnic Studies, Housing Justice, Inclusion Done Right, Black Caucus, and New Educators Committees
• won the AFT-MA “Rising Star” Award

Robert P. Carroll

Thank you for your support by signing my nomination papers for the Executive Board and delegate positions. Now I ask you for your vote! My name is Rob Carroll and I have been a union advocate/activist for 37 years. During that time, I have been a building rep. (Holland, Summer), a Regional Rep. (West Roxbury/ Roslindale), a delegate and an Executive Board member. I have always sought to bring support and protections for our union brothers and sisters. During the past years of the COVID crisis, as a member of the leadership, I have strived to make sure that the children, parents, community, and YOU were safe and had all the protections possible. As we continue to navigate the fall out of the covid crisis I will continue to make sure we have the necessary protections for our safety.

I have won many hats in my role as a union activist, but I particularly enjoy welcoming and engaging new members to our union. Someone did it for me when I was new and it’s incumbent upon us to do the same. It is important that we pass on the history, struggles and knowledge of the BTU to the next generation of union activists!

I have recently retired (June 2020) but am back substitute teaching on a daily basis at the Summer School in Roslindale. I enjoy working with my new family, the Retired Teachers Chapter of the BTU. This past year, I have continued to serve actively in the BTU as a member of the Social committee, Grievance committee, and member of the Executive board.

I was a member of the Collective Bargaining team and continue to work as a member organizer with the organizers’ action teams.

In closing, I would like to add that we must continue to engage and build our membership. We must advocate for the best possible solutions to our members’ concerns. We need to create opportunities so our members’ voices will be heard and I promise you – I will LISTEN! Thank you for your continued support!
EXECUTIVE BOARD

Alice A. Yong

Once again, I come before you to ask for your vote. The future of the union is to enable all members to be committed in our efforts to be united as a strong "Boston Teachers Union." We have many battles ahead of us to be masterful teachers, paras, nurses and supervisors. I have fought against various evaluations of our performances in the academic environment. I am committed to building a stronger union and appreciated to unite all members including our Retired Teachers Chapter who consistently continue to energize our efforts and needs to pensions and educational issues.

We must join our voices and talents together to be seen as a united force to install all bargaining rights, salaries, and class size issues. I am determined more than ever to work for our contract. This contract is fair and when utilized well, it meets the needs necessary for BTU members to be successful in our jobs.

A. Vanessa LaRocque

A. Vanessa LaRocque is a long-time Boston resident who has over 25 years in education, 18 of those years has been dedicated to supporting Special Education students in the BPS. LaRocque is seeking re-election as an Executive Board member, Delegate of All Affiliated Bodies and Para Council. She is dedicated to continue working hard to not only advocate for all of our members but also give the paraprofessionals a stronger and deserved voice on the board. Our CFCs, Security Paras and other non-classroom support staff in our unit needs to be represented. As a long-time building representative, LaRocque has been engaged in many union issues and battles, including but not limited to COVID-19 related matters, flexible schedule planning, advocating for schools our students deserve and the need to save McKinley SEA from eviction. She believes the distinction and hard work exemplified by paraprofessionals is not fully appreciated, and would continue to be a powerful advocate for them to have their unique concerns addressed. She also commits to making certain the needs of paraprofessionals in all areas of the school system need to be strongly advocated.

LaRocque’s excellence has been recognized in many ways. She was amongst the first group selected for the Regional Building Representative Leaders. She is the past recipient of the BTU’s Distinguished member award. In 2016, she was selected as the Paraprofessional Building Representative of the year. LaRocque also represents the union as a Delegate at state and national conventions, Sergeant-At-Arms and as a member of the following committees: Collective Bargaining Committee, COPE, Greater Boston Labor Council (E-Board Member), Silent Rep during contract negotiations, Social Committee Chair, Women In Leadership Development and she serves as an officer for A. Philip Randolph Institute Boston Chapter.

LaRocque will continue to be a powerful voice for all our members as they fight for a fair contract that respects their value to the system, and defend those who are not treated fairly and respectfully. If you see for looking a dedicated person who will work tirelessly on your behalf, you look no further than Vanessa LaRocque.

www.votelarocque.com

Keisha Lewis

I have been a BTU member for over 20 years. I worked as a paraprofessional for many years before becoming a special education teacher. I currently teach high school students diagnosed with autism. I served as a building representative in the past and received the Building Representative of the Year Award in 2017. I am a current member of the COPE Committee, the Woman’s Rights Committee for The BTU and the Woman’s Rights Committee for AFT. I was extremely active during the “No On 2” campaign by knocking on doors, phone banking and being interviewed by local newspapers and radio stations. I graduated from a Boston Public School and my children attend Boston Public Schools. I am dedicated to the success of both students and teachers of BPS. Please vote for Keisha Lewis, BTU Executive Board and Delegate to all Affiliated Bodies.

Mary Brooks

I am asking for you to vote for me for Executive Board and Delegate. I teach Second Grade Special Education at the Mater School. I have 25 years of teaching experience and the last ten years have been in BPS.

I have served as a building Rep for the last 8 years. I was previously a Regional Building Rep for three years, served as one of the co-chairs of the BTU Inclusion Committee, was an Executive Board member, and worked on the No On 2 Campaign.

I am running for the Executive Board because I believe in Public Education, unity, and most of all voice. I desire to be a voice for our membership in order to protect our members’ best interests. As a Union we are better and stronger together, which can only happen when our members are involved and our voices are strong. Please help me to amplify your voice by voting for Mary Brooks.

Kafunda Banks

Dear BTU Members,

I would love the opportunity to serve you as delegate and executive board member. Together, we can continue to make gains to get what educators, families and children need.

I feel that my experience as co-chair of the ABA of Color Affinity Group (AOC), co-chair of the Inclusion Done Right Committee, as well as the newly formed ABA Faculty senate has proven my leadership abilities and my deep commitment to improve the conditions of my colleagues as well as champion the rights of our students. As a member of the School Based Inclusion Planning Team at the Curley K-8 School and the District’s Inclusion Work Group, I have exhibited my commitment to see that Inclusion is done right. I have further shown a deep interest in writing policy reform through my involvement with the Education Policy Program. It was here that I created a presentation focused on best practices and inclusion in the public school sector. I have gained a deeper understanding and appreciation of the strength of our union by serving on the Collective Bargaining Committee as well as participating in Summer Organizing Union Leader (SOLUS) and as a Silent Representative. I have fought alongside my BTU brothers and sisters on various BPS task force committees regarding the safe opening of our schools during the pandemic. As a 19 year veteran ABA educator in BPS, I have no fear of working hard for the things that I believe in. It is my desire to continue this work through the BTU where creativity meets policy reform. We can’t wait for a fair school district to happen, together we have to make it happen and accept no substitute.

Please help me continue the work with you by voting me in for the position of delegate and executive board member for the BTU.

Hi BTU Members,

My name is Tracy Romain. I am a 20 plus veteran ABA Para. I would like to take this time to ask for your upcoming vote as your next voice in our BTU Community, coming soon. On the next 2023 BTU ballot you will have the opportunity to see my name please name me for the following positions by numbers: 16 Executive Board, 13 Para Council and Delegate number just by name. In the past couple of years I’ve learned and come to realize how important it is to play a part in our union and have a voice. Our union is a huge part of our lives and so many of us don’t know and realize how important it is to show up and speak up; it took me a long time to do that! In my years in BPS I have witnessed good changes and not so good changes. I would love to be that extra voice for our community and most importantly for our students. I have had the great opportunity to help each year with our Welcome Back to School Book Fair and book give away. Along with raling for DESE I understand what we really do for our students. Participating in (SOLUS) Summer Organizing Union Leader gave me the clarity on how much our union needed more voices to help our families and students with housing. I am an ABA Para, Back to School fair volunteer, Housing Justice committee member, Inclusion Done Right participant, Black Caucus committee member and a Building Representative. I hope to gain your vote! Look for me on our upcoming BTU voting ballot coming soon. Thank you Tracy Romain. On your ballot: 16 Executive Board 13 Para Council and Delegate.

Casandra Samuel

My name is Casandra Samuel and I am a candidate running for re-election to the BTU’s Executive Board, Para, Delegate to All Affiliated Bodies. As a Paraprofessional re-elected candidate for the Executive Board, I am determined to continue to bring that voice to the forefront as well as serve all members of the Union.

My experience working Boston Public Schools started as a student and then as a parent of a Boston Latin Academy Alumnus. I have been a BPS paraprofessional for 20+ years, currently working as a Library Paraprofessional at the Curley K-8. As a Paraprofessional, I have served in Lab class grades 3-5, 4th/5th grade SAR, Library/Media,
Candidate Statements

EXECUTIVE BOARD

CasSandra Samuel

Early Childhood and as a One to One. Additionally I have served as a Tech Goes Home Trainer, BTU Tech Goes Home Trainer for Paraprofessionals and Subs, Faculty Senate Representative, Building Representative, Volunteer Organizer with Texas AFT Back to School Campaign, Volunteer of The Parent Association on the E-Board, if Re-elected, I will bring my experience as an educator to represent you with honesty, integrity and energy. With this opportunity my knowledge will allow me to bring my skills and strategies to help coordinate decisions and facilitate new opportunities for all members that will move our Union forward in solidarity. Your Voice is your Vote! Your support of my re-election to the Executive Board, Paraprofessional Council and Delegate to All Affiliated Bodies is much appreciated.

James (Timo) Philip

Please, vote to re-elect me to the BTU Executive Board and as a Delegate to all BTU affiliates. Throughout my 49 years of membership, I have been a LOUD advocate for full participation of all members, chances for members to connect with colleagues from around the country, and DIVERSITY within the leadership.

I have represented us nationally at AFT Conventions and as Parliamentarian of the AFT Black Caucus, statewide as a 30 year Vice President of AFT Massachusetts, and locally – wrote the first Code of Discipline for the BPS, selected a Superintendent, and served for 38 years as the Building Representative, if re-elected, I shall your interests in the struggle for Quality Public Education in Boston. As a retiree, I am one of 3,000+ members who value the BTU’s impact on our lives – professionally and afterwards. We support your efforts by volunteering in schools, testifying at hearings when school is in session, swelling crowds at demonstrations, and lobbying for IMPROVED RETIREMENT BENEFITS.

I NEED YOUR VOTE to keep me in the fight.

PS. I urge you to vote for: Karen Cross for Secretary Treasurer Cecil Carey & Matt Ruggerio for E-Board Vote for collaboration and communciation.

Caitlin Gaffney

I am honored to serve as your Executive Board member for the last four years and as a Tobin K-8 School teacher for the last twenty-three.

We deserve Executive Board members who are vocal and active in the position, and I pursue that goal in a multitude of ways.

In co-facilitating the Election Bylaws Review Committee, a collaborative effort of retired and active members, we improved and strengthened the voting process for our membership.

As a Collective Bargaining Committee member, Contract Organizing Committee member, and Member Organizer, I advocate for equity of resources for all students, remain deeply invested in union activism, and commit to ensuring our bargaining rights are upheld by improving working conditions.

As a vocal supporter of the Re-Committee and New Educator Committee, I have proven my core belief that the more connections we establish within our union, the stronger we will be.

I will keep working jointly with our RTC, so that we can learn from those who fought to achieve so much for our union and open more spaces to hear from experienced members.

I participate in our rallies and events, help plan union efforts, and have continued to speak out at hearings and to the media. My growth as an antiracist and social justice work.

I will persist in advocating that educator spaces in BPS, BTU, and higher education are representative of the students that we serve. My ongoing goals are to help increase our power, focus on fulfillment of PILOT, and strengthen our connection with families, the community, and fellow unions.

I will continue devoting myself to the work and respectfully ask for your vote for Executive Board and Delegate.

PS. I urge you to vote for: Karen Cross for Secretary Treasurer Cecil Carey & Matt Ruggerio for E-Board Vote for collaboration and communciation.

PARAPROFESSIONAL COUNCIL

Sharon O’Dwyer

No statement submitted.

Todd Kerr

My name is Todd Kerr and I am again grateful to accept your nomination to serve as a member of the Paraprofessional Council. I have served on the Council for four years. With your vote in the June election I will be able to serve you for another two years where it has been my pleasure serve.

Currently I serve on the Election Committee where I have served for the past two elections. This Committee is approved by the Executive Board and voted by membership. While working as a Para I have fought for Para and Substitutes on a variety of issues on various Union committees from Collective Bargaining and Silent rep for our last contract and Collective bargaining for Impact Bargaining regarding Covid issues. This past summer, I served as an elected delegate to the AFT National Convention and the AFT-MA Convention. I also had the opportunity to join several Para colleagues at a PSRP this past April.

I ask for your vote for Para Council and Delegate to all Affiliated Bodies. I always have your self-interest first.

Mary Thomas

No statement submitted.

Debra Brown

My name is Debra Brown and I am running for the position of Para Council and Delegate to all Bodies. I would like to present my history with the Boston Public Schools and the Boston Teachers Union:

• Paraprofessional for 30 years
• Worked in the classroom in a variety of settings
• Currently an inclusion Para at the Kenny, former Librarian Para at Charles Sumner
• Was Building Representative for the Charles Sumner School for over 25 years
• Para Council for over 20 years
• Trustee to the Health and Welfare Fund
• Member of the Collective Bargaining Unit
• Delegate for all bodies of the Union

To keep our union strong and to build this union, we need everyone’s energy, talents and ideas, making it more important than ever that we bridge the gap between seasoned activists and new members. Paraprofessional / Substitute Teacher and ABA roles are changing, and I want to insure the paras, ABAs and substitutes receive the dignity and respect they deserve from the BPS as well as the Boston Teachers Union. I will not let the Paraprofessionals, ABAs and Substitutes be forgotten in the Union. It’s a whole new world out there for Unions and times may be tough, but I am ready for the challenge.

Please consider me for the positions of Para Council and Delegate to all Bodies when voting.

Sau Yip

No statement submitted.

CasSandra Samuel

Hello BTU Paraprofessionals, First and foremost, Thank you for many years of electing me to be a voice on Para Council for you. As a re-elected candidate for Paraprofessional Council, I will continue to bring my experience as an educator to represent you with honesty, integrity and the energy to help us move forward in the coming year. For years I have been a Paraprofessional in the Boston Public Schools for 20+ years. My experience includes: LAB paraprofessional in grades 3/4/5, 4/5grade PARAPROFESSIONAL COUNCIL Leader of those years has over 25 years a Boston resident who in the Boston Teachers Union. I will not let the Paraprofessionals, ABAs and Substitutes be forgotten in the Union. It’s a whole new world out there for Unions and times may be tough, but I am ready for the challenge.

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PARAPROFESSIONAL COUNCIL

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Christine Buttiglieri

Hello, BTU members, my name is Christine Buttiglieri. I am retired Library / Para Professional, I worked at The Mario Umana School in East Boston for over 30 years. Even though I am retired, I have been active with our union, some of my favorite things to do is to work with the Election Committee and Paras. I am also presently active with Para Council, Health & Welfare as a trustee, I am also part of the RTC Board and a Delegate. I enjoy working with the Union supporting all members. This is where I ask for your support by voting for me in the coming election. So, I will be able to continue my support to all our Union members. I am a candidate for Para Council and Delegate. I would appreciate your consideration in both positions. Remember you can vote by mail or in person. Thank you.

Bianca Pierre

My name is Bianca Pierre, and I have been a proud employee of Boston Public Schools for the past 8 years! My goal as a member of the para council is to be a primary voice for all concerns shared with me. I believe that every opinion deserves to be brought forward and considered, and I am not afraid to speak out. I used my considerable experience as a paraprofessional to facilitate Para 101 workshops for the past three years to help paraprofessionals grasp an understanding about their roles and responsibilities, as well as information about further involvement within the BPS/RTU community. As the Chair of the Haitian Educators Committee, I learned quickly that several children in my community had significant reading challenges and needed more learning opportunities and guidance. After becoming a family liaison at Beethoven Elementary last year, I was able to secure the Teacher Leadership Fund grant to run a series of literacy workshops called Reading avèk Jwa (Reading with Joy). The children and families showed tremendous growth and improvement throughout our workshops, and I hope we are able to continue these efforts again next year. I am eager to be a part of this council and help create more opportunities for paraprofessionals to have a bigger role in the education of our children. Please vote for me.

Adrianne Jordan

No statement submitted.

Carla Johnson

No statement submitted.

Sacha Ruiz

No statement submitted.

Tracy Romain

No statement submitted.

Cynthia Ferris

No statement submitted.

Derrick Smith

No statement submitted.

RETIRED TEACHERS CHAPTER OFFICERS

Joan Devlin

Chair

Mae Bishop

Vice Chair

The RTC Team

We are running for officers of the RTC and ask for your vote.

Marilyn Marion

Secretary

Roz Avant

Treasurer

We thank you for the opportunity to continue to work on your behalf to promote pension improvement, maintain health benefits, provide opportunities to continue connections to the BTU and your colleagues.

The team is committed to finding solutions to raising the COLA base and to providing enhanced benefits to those retirees who have fallen far behind with pensions inadequate to maintain an income that provides sufficient money in order to survive in this super inflationary cycle.

None of us can guarantee a successful outcome, but we can guarantee that we will continue to fight to raise the pension, provide information and connections to services to assist our members, and continue our fight to improve our schools and communities.

We ask for your continued support and your vote for the positions as your RTC officers and for Delegate to All Affiliated Bodies.

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