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The Award-Winning Newspaper of the Boston Teachers Union, AFT Local 66, AFL-CIO • Volume 56, Number 1 • September, 2023

President's Report Jessica Tang

Building Blocks: Together and United as One!

Our greatest strength as a union is when each of us as individuals come together and unify around common values, beliefs and hopes. Our collective strength is where our power lies and this fall, we are coming back together to organize and put together the pieces that are needed to fight for the vision of schools we know our students, educators and families deserve. The most important building block of organizing is one to one conversations and relationship building, and that is why we kicked off this year's new contract campaign with peer to peer conversations at our last membership meeting in June.

Over the summer, members of the Collective Bargaining Committee came together to analyze, organize and make sense of all of the information we collected during those one to one conversations. Then, members of the negotiating team and our staff came further sorted those themes and ideas to come up with our initial survey. We are asking all of our members to fill out this survey at the start of the school year so that we can have as many voices as possible informing what will be our next contract proposals package.

This process will happen through September and November, with the goal of finalizing our initial proposals by the end of the calendar year. Our Collective Bargaining Committee members will help to analyze the data from the surveys, community forums and contract coffee hours. The Negotiating Team and staff will then further polish our proposals, ensuring that the proposals are written in contractual language and are consistent with our current contract, and then once approved by our membership, we then hope to begin negotiating regularly at the start of new year.

In addition to working on our contract campaign this fall, we will also continue to enforce our current contract. Implementing the special education and multi lingual learner pieces of our contract, including the Inclusion Planning Teams, is critical to getting Inclusion Done Right. We will have to continue to remain vigilant in ensuring that current provisions in the contract are implemented with fidelity and in the spirit in which they were negotiated and approved. We will have to continue to lean on each other as the work we are pursuing is unprecedented in this district and long overdue.

Together, we will also continue to advocate for the changes we need at the state and federal levels as well. We will continue to fight for the Thrive Act at the state legislature—a bill that we have jointly filed with our siblings at the MTA and AFT-MA as well as our coalition under the Massachusetts Education Justice Alliance. The bill has four main components:

- End state takeovers of schools and districts (and the statutory authority for future takeovers)
- Create a better process for supporting schools identified under federal law (support, not punishment)
- Replace the MCAS-based graduation requirement with one based on coursework certified by districts (similar process to what happened during COVID)
- Create a special commission to shape a future vision for student/school assessment and improvement

Together, on the federal level, our national president **Randi Weingarten** has laid out a new plan of priorities, called *"Real Solutions for Kids and*

Communities" that we are unified around as well. The campaign zeroes in on:

- Unlocking the power and possibility that come from being a **confident reader**.
- Catalyzing a vast expansion of **community schools** that meaningfully partner with families. (NB: In Boston, we call them Boston Community Hub Schools)
- Ensuring that all children have opportunities to learn by doing—engaging in **experiential learning**, including career and technical education.
- Caring for young people's **mental health** and well-being, including by demanding that social media companies protect, not prey on, children.
- Fighting for the teaching and support staff and **the resources students need** to thrive.

Together, unified with educators across our city, state and nation, we are leading the charge to fight for a common vision for our students and schools. Undoubtedly there will be challenges,



Jessica J. Tang
BTU President

roadblocks and threats not just to public education but to democracy itself, but so long as we continue to return to our building blocks – organizing and relationship building one person at a time – we can continue to build the unity we need to prevail.

Together, there are so many ways that we can do this, and we are counting on everyone to do their big and small parts. Throughout the year, whether it be at your school or work site, the BTU building, at a committee meeting or event, we hope you will take the time talk to your colleagues, students families and allies that are just one conversation away from joining with us in fighting for our collective vision of the schools and communities all of us deserve. We look forward to another school year with all of you and continuing to be **BTU All-In!**

BTU Members Participate in 2023 AFT TEACHing Congress



<https://www.aft.org/news/teaching-hill-amplifies-educator-voices-washington>

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



The Boston Teachers Union is the exclusive collective bargaining agent for the Boston Public School System's 7,000+ teachers, paraprofessionals, substitute teachers, guidance counselors, ABAs, COSES, and other non-administrative, professional employees. We also represent 3,500+ retirees.

What Are the BTU's Primary Responsibilities?

- Negotiate and enforce the contract
 - Provide the best education we can for the system's 50,000+ students
 - Work with the school community to insure our schools are as good as they can be
 - Represent the membership in all matters related to their professional work
 - Answer job-related questions and assist in any job-related matter, i.e., help our members navigate through the Bolling Building bureaucracy
 - Promote public education
 - Promote the growth and well-being of our profession
 - Work politically through COPE to elect pro-public education, pro-union candidates
- COPE or the Committee on Political Education is by federal and state law a separate entity within the BTU devoted to supporting candidates who support public education and who otherwise favor our positions on a variety of work-related issues.

The BTU is Affiliated With:

- American Federation of Teachers (AFT)
- AFL-CIO, Massachusetts AFL-CIO
- AFT-Massachusetts (formerly called the Massachusetts Federation of Teachers)

How to Get in Contact With the BTU

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

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

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

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

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

What is the Leadership Structure of the BTU?

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

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

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

BTU Executive Board

Kafunda Banks	Allison T. Doherty	James "Timo" Philip
Cecil Carey	Caitlin Gaffny	Matthew Ruggiero
Robert P. Carroll	Michael J. Maguire	CasSandra Samuel
Brenda B. Chaney	Nicole E. Mullen	Alice M. Yong

The BTU Officers and Staff

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Lea Serena , Elementary Field Representative.....	lserena@btu.org
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Judy Grant , BTU Organizer.....	jgrant@btu.org
Katina McClain , BTU Organizer.....	kmccclain@btu.org
Brendan Deady , Communication Assistant.....	bdeady@btu.org
Carlos Fernandez , AFT National Representative	

Executive Vice President's Report Erik R. Berg

Class Size FAQ

Class Size limits at most grades are lower this school year. It's critical to file a class size grievance via the BTU website as soon as the violation occurs!

As part of last year's contract settlement, class size limits were generally lowered. The limits can be found in the table below. It is important to note that there are some new nuances to the class size maxima, which will be explained here.

Bilingual, ESL, and SEI classes can have no more than 20 students at any grade level, or the lower of the limit in the above table or 25 if a paraprofessional is provided (though only 22 with a para in grades K1 and K2).

What are the class size limits?

The recent contract settlement reduced class sizes at most grade levels and in most schools. The newly negotiated limits may be found in the table below. It is important to note that class sizes in schools with fewer than 6.5% of students on IEPs are somewhat larger.

In elementary schools where there is only one regular education class in a grade level, the above maxima may be exceeded by one or two students. Similarly, in secondary schools where there is a singular regular education course offering (for instance, only a single section of French 4, or AP Physics, etc.), the maxima may be exceeded by one or two students.

Grade Level	Column 1: Class size for schools with an overall student population as of October 1 with 6.5% or fewer students on IEPs	Column 2: Class size for schools with an overall student population as of October 1 with more than 6.5% of students on IEPs
K0	20	20
K1	22	20
K2, Grade 1 and 2	22	22
Grade 3-5	25	23
Grade 6-8	28	25
Grade 9-12	31	28
Resource Room Teacher Caseload	25	25

Are these strict limits?

BTU members, and the students we serve, have among the strongest class size language in the state.

While we might want the actual limits to be lower, the limits themselves are firm. **The most important sentence in our contract around class size is this: "Ultimately, the classroom teacher may insist that the class size maximum be enforced"** (p. 25) This right was reinforced by a settlement agreement reached in 2004 between the BTU and the BPS.

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

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

First, file a grievance immediately. You can do this from the BTU website. At the same time, please download and



Erik R. Berg
BTU Executive Vice President

print the form at the same website and record your class size each day throughout the year. We will need this at the end of the year to process your grievance and ensure proper payment if compensation is required.

Second, you should insist that the class size issue is addressed. This could involve moving a student or students to a different class or section, opening a new class, or adding a teacher. While the district may

continued on page 9

BTU Phone Numbers

Office.....617-288-2000

Health & Welfare.....617-288-0500

AFT Massachusetts.....617-423-3342

Function Office.....617-288-3322

Lounge Office.....617-288-3322

Vision Center.....617-288-5540

Tremont Credit Union.....781-843-5626

What's the Story with Tuition Reimbursement and Where Do I Find Out About That?

The BTU and the BPS have negotiated a tuition reimbursement policy that is not located in our contract but can be found on the public-facing BPS website contained in a Superintendent Circular #HRS-PP03: "Tuition Reimbursement BTU and Administrative Guild Members".

The eligibility for BTU teacher bargaining unit members includes 'permanent' teachers who aren't eligible for a career award and who commit to three years of continuous employment in the BPS who then will be reimbursed for tuition expenses accrued in a given school year up to \$1,000 per school year. 'Provisional' teachers who've completed at least one year of service in the BPS are eligible for a tuition reimbursement payment not to exceed \$500 per school year.

All paraprofessionals who've completed five or more years of full-time service as of the end of the prior school year will be eligible for tuition reimbursement of up to \$1,000 a year for approved college courses. All paraprofessionals who've completed more than three years of full time service as of the end of the prior school year will be entitled to tuition reimbursement of up to \$500 a year for approved college courses.

In the new BTU ABA contract, the BTU negotiated that ABA Specialists with at least one year of service as an ABA in BPS are eligible for up to \$500 per year for approved college or graduate courses. ABAs with at least three years of successful BPS employment as an ABA are eligible for tuition reimbursement of up to \$1,000 for approved college courses until they become eligible to receive their career award.

All coursework must be approved by the assistant of Human Capital (or their designee), consistent with this policy. Eligible courses for SY 2023-2024 are courses that begin anytime from September 1, 2023 through August 31, 2024. Courses that meet the criteria established for salary lane advancement as articulated in Superintendent's Circular HRS-PP01 will be considered eligible for tuition reimbursement. BPS will only reimburse for cost of the class itself and doesn't include consultant or facilitator fees.

To apply in order to receive tuition reimbursement, eligible members must submit:

- A signed PS03 (Personnel Action Request Form) filled out as directed in the circular.
- A signed affidavit for teacher unit BTU members agreeing to three continuous years of employment with the BPS which can be found attached to the Superintendents Circular.
- Official original transcripts clearly indicating a passing grade & graduate credit was awarded from an accredited institution for teacher BTU unit members. Undergraduate coursework is accepted for paraprofessionals. Specific directions included in afore mentioned circular.
- Document of tuition payment in the form of receipt for an out-of-pocket, or credit card statement indicating a payment was made to the institution.

What is the new 'contractual hourly rate' for teacher unit members for this school year?

The new contractual hourly rate for teachers is currently \$56.81. Dur-

ing the standard school day, individual teachers are paid at their own rate (pro rata) based on the amount of years teaching (step level) and the amount of educational degrees obtained and graduate credit earned (salary lanes) applied for, approved, and on file at BPS Office of Human Capital.

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

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

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

City of Boston Employees join health plans by contacting the Health Benefits and Insurance Division (Group Insurance) located on the 8th floor of Boston City Hall, telephone 617-635-4570. New hires have 60 calendar days from the time they are hired in order to sign up for health insurance. Provisional or permanent teachers, who were laid off and then recalled/rehired, must contact Group Insurance within 60 days of being rehired from lay off in order to re-enroll to obtain insurance if needed.

Open enrollment is the window of time when you can change your type of health insurance plan, or sign up for the first time if you've missed another deadline. This period is held annually for 2 weeks in the spring (April/May).

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

During the year if a teacher gets married/divorced, has a baby, or the spouse who carried the health insurance

for the BPS teacher loses their job triggering a loss of coverage, the BPS teacher has 30 calendar days to notify and submit proof to Group Insurance of this event in order to qualify for the change to be made in their health insurance coverage.

Who determines when Parent Open-Houses are held?

The BTU contract states, "teachers will be available to attend two evening parent-teacher meetings during the school year. Such meetings shall be planned by the building administrator in cooperation with the faculty senate and the parent council with one month's advance notice. Such meetings shall not be scheduled to exceed two hours each. Adequate security will be provided by the School Department." Each school is strongly encouraged to have an active faculty senate. If that is not the case, the faculty must still have a month's advance notice of the meetings. BTU Rep(s) should contact the BTU Organizer assigned to their school for assistance in forming one.

As an itinerant teacher, do I get a desk?

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

Do I have to accept an intern or student teacher?

No. The contract clearly states, "Any teacher requested to accept a trainee shall have at least one week's advance notice, and may refuse." If a teacher does become a cooperating teacher, the contract outlines the following. "Each cooperating teacher shall be given two days of leave with pay, without loss of benefits. Such days shall be taken as mutually agreed upon by the teacher and the administrative head during the last two weeks of the student-teacher training period. In cases of conflict, seniority shall prevail in the selection of days."



Caren Carew
BTU Secondary
Field Representative

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

Do itinerants get a place to secure files in schools they service?

There is an item in the contract that addresses this issue. It is found under Article VII, Section A, 18 and states; "The school committee agrees to provide a lockable file cabinet in each school and location serviced by itinerants (e.g., school psychologists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, speech and language pathologists) for secure storage of student records." Please let the BTU know if this is not occurring.

How many personal days do teachers get and how do we take them?

Teachers are entitled to four (4) personal days per school year. There are specific provisions for bereavement in addition to these days. Requests to take a personal day should be submitted to the building administrator as early as possible prior to the day requested off. Each school may have developed a written/on-line form. Except at the discretion of the building administrator (such as a school emergency), not more than 5% of teachers are eligible for a personal day at one time. No teacher may take a personal day on both the day before and the day after a school break/vacation, including the Thanksgiving recess. Personal days not used each year are rolled into your accumulated sick days in the following SY.

Boston Union Teacher

Boston Teachers Union,
AFT Local 66, AFL-CIO

EDITORIAL NOTE:

The opinions expressed in the *Boston Union Teacher* do not necessarily represent the views of the Boston Teachers Union, or those of its members.

WHEN WRITING:

All correspondence to the *Boston Union Teacher* must be typewritten and include the author's name and school or department if not school-based. All articles must be appropriate to the publication, and in good taste. Letters to the Editor should be sent to letters@btu.org

DEADLINE:

The deadline for submitting articles for the next issue of the *Boston Union Teacher* is September 13th. All copy should be e-mailed to ccarey@btu.org and aslater@btu.org. This deadline will be strictly adhered to.

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Why COPE is Important to You?

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

Why is political action important for our Union?

The political action program makes decisions to endorse candidates. The program follows a process for endorsing candidates after completing a questionnaire, interviewed, then voted upon by the committee for recommendation to the executive

board, then recommended for a vote to the membership for the final approval. Elected officials affect education through decisions they make which becomes policy or law. They vote on education initiatives, funding, and they set policies that affect our members and schools. These decisions can have an impact on our collective bargaining ability to negotiate issues such as salary, class size, transfer provisions, school building improvements, and many other factors that impact our students, members working conditions, and schools. Elected leaders can have a huge impact on our ability to do our job well and support our students!

The Union's Committee on Political

Education (COPE) has five main purposes as described in the BTU bylaws:

- To support and strengthen the commitment of the citizens and the government to excellence in public education at all levels.
- To promote and strive for the improvement of the public schools by encouraging and stimulating educators to take a more active part.
- To encourage educators to know and understand the nature and actions of their government and the important political issues, as they pertain to public education.
- To assist educators in organizing themselves for more effective



Johnny McInnis
BTU Political Director

political action, and in carrying out their civic responsibilities.

- To engage in any suitable activities to achieve the purposes stated above.

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

The COPE committee meets when needed to make decisions on whether or not to make a recommendation to endorse a political candidate running for office. First candidates are provided a questionnaire with a series of questions pertaining to issues that would support our members before being asked to come before the committee for an interview. Decisions are made via candidate voting records by incumbent candidates, responses to questionnaires, and in-person interviews. Decisions can also be made based on support for or against bills presented for upcoming legislation or City Council Motions that are voted on. That legislation could include COLA for retirees, support for English Language Learners, funding for education, educator licensure, MCAS moratorium, and other interests on education. The COPE committee then votes by a 2/3's decision to recommend to the Executive Board. The Executive Board votes on the recommendations from COPE by a 2/3's decision before sending it to a vote by the members for a 2/3's decision at the membership meeting. If the membership endorses the candidate, the candidate will be backed by our Union throughout their campaign.

Why are members asked to pay into COPE?

Based on state and federal laws there are restrictions on what Union dues are used for. A member can voluntarily decide how much is deducted for COPE. For example, members can contribute through payroll deduction by a suggested minimum of \$2.00 for Teachers and \$.75 for Paraprofessionals on their COPE card which is attached to the Membership card. COPE reports political actions to members at membership meetings. As required by law there is a yearly audit to confirm that funds were documented for appropriate use.

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

Contact Political Director, **Johnny McInnis** by email jmcinnis@btu.org, BTU office, 617-288-2000.



The Boston Teachers Union is proud to endorse
TANIA FERNANDES ANDERSON
for Boston City Council District 7



Please Vote for Tania Fernandes Anderson on Tuesday, September 12th • 7:00 am-8:00 pm

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

Learn more about Tania's campaign at www.taniaford7.com.

If you would like to get involved in Tania's or Liz's campaign, please contact [Johnny McInnis](mailto:jmcinnis@btu.org) at jmcinnis@btu.org or by calling 617-288-2000.

Learn more about Liz's campaign at www.lizforab.com.



The Boston Teachers Union is proud to endorse
LIZ BREADON
for Boston City Council District 9



Please Vote for Liz Breadon on Tuesday, September 12th • 7:00 am-8:00 pm

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

Welcome – A Newspaper is a Tool to Build Solidarity

Dear BTU Family,

Hi! My name is **Cecil Carey**, I'm a teacher at Charlestown High School, a proud (new) member of the BTU Executive Board, and, as of this issue, the co-editor of the *Boston Union Teacher* newspaper. I would like to thank President **Jessica Tang** for picking me to fill the huge shoes of **Michael Maguire**, and I'd like to thank Michael, **Anne Slater**, and our new Communications Assistant **Brendan Deady** for their support and words of wisdom as I acclimate to this new role.

I am so excited to help bring my favorite Boston-area newspaper to life every month. My goal as co-editor is to increase member engagement with our

paper and a desire to use the paper as a strong **agitational** tool. So often we need to defend ourselves from attacks, whether they be from the *Boston Globe*, DESE, or elsewhere. I want us to increase our use of *our newspaper* as a tool to respond and present *our perspective*, the *worker's perspective*, on these issues. I want to continue the amazing work that Michael and Anne have done in highlighting all the **great teaching and learning** that's happening across our district and disrupt the narrative of failure so often placed upon us.

I want to use the paper as a forum to discuss the important issues in our union: burnout, school safety, anti-racist education and Ethnic Studies,

inclusion, etc. I will help ensure diverse representation in the topics and writers we choose – but that's not possible without all of you! I encourage you to reach out to myself, Anne, or Brendan because, just like our union, our newspaper is only as strong as what its members contribute to it.

Most importantly, I'm excited to work with the **Organizing Team**, **Silent Reps**, and **Contract Bargaining Committee** to use our newspaper to fight for what we and our students deserve in our upcoming contract campaign! The way I see it, **a newspaper is a tool to build solidarity** – and we're ready to get to work!

In Solidarity,
Cecil Carey



Cecil Carey
Boston Union Teacher
Co-Editor

It's About Time to Reclaim Our Power Through School Site Councils

By **Caren Carew**,
Secondary Field Representative

Stand up, speak out – building our collective agency and power through being active stakeholders reclaiming our School Site Council power! Let's continue to be out front in the area of school reform initiatives at each one of our schools through shared decision making as participants in our School Site Councils.

Being an active part of shared decision making enables us to be part of the solution. Many initiatives that a school community wishes to implement in order to effect change at their school can be modified or 'waived' through our collective bargaining agreement/contract. Much of what people seek to accomplish when proposing to become pilot, innovation or in-district charter school can largely be achieved through the SSC waiver process. Let's become more a part of the active solution of these concerns now facing us, rather than allowing, by tacit agreement, educational reforms be done *to us not with us*.

Shared decision making utilizing the School Site Council model works better with increased BTU & parent members active involvement. The time is now for all of us to believe, to stand up, be counted, and to become involved along with parent and community partners to reclaim our schools & collective futures!

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

While all schools in Massachusetts are mandated to have School Site Councils (SSC) composed of parents, teachers, and the principal – it is only an advisory body to the principal in other MA municipalities. In contrast, the Boston Public Schools defines SCC as a shared decision-making body with actual authority and responsibility for their schools. School Based Management/Shared Decision Making (SBM/SDM) is the process that School Site Councils use to engage the school community in the planning and implementation of school improvement/decision-making efforts.

In each school, first there is an election to choose Building Representatives run each year in May/June. Once BTU Building Reps are in place, they run elections prior to October 15th for BTU members to serve on the School Site Council – Shared Decision-Making Team. The BTU Building Representatives also run an election to select Faculty Senate members and Inclusion Planning Teams. The faculty elects representatives to these positions and the elected representatives, be they to the BTU, SSC, IPT, or Faculty Senate need to be sup-

ported by the faculty that elected them as they in turn, support their colleagues. We are all connected.

The role of the SSC, as established in the contract between the Boston School Committee and the BTU, is to manage all matters that relate to the operation of the school, including: priority & objective setting; development of a QISP; design & scheduling of instructional program & curriculum; budgeting & fund raising aligned with schools' academic goals; purchasing & disbursement of discretionary funds; space utilization; hiring of new staff & 2nd & 3rd year provisionals; staff assignment including teaching & non-teaching duties; parent-teacher relations & functions; solicitation & use of outside professionals & social service resources; setting reasonable dress codes; any other matter relating to the operation of the school; on high school level review of student handbook.

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

It is expected that SSC will function by consensus or general agreement of its members. Consensus does not require that there be unanimous agreement but rather insures each group member has an opportunity to comment on, understands, and can live with and is willing to implement the decision. Building consensus involves everyone having the opportunity to be heard. Members of the SSC are expected to operate as a single decision-making team to work together to fashion effective solutions to the school's educational challenges.

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

Shared decision-making is a process in which all members of the education com-

munity at the school level collaborate in identifying challenges, defining goals, formulating policy, implementing programs, and learn from experience. In BPS the SSC is an elected group of parents, teachers/BTU members, and students at the high school level, including the principal - that has the authority to make many of the decisions about the school. There can also be Associate members as well as the general public who are non-voting that can participate fully in SSC meetings. Elections for new BTU members to the SSC should be held by each school's BTU Reps for openings on the SSC prior to the Council's first meeting which contractually must be held no later than October 31st. The parent members to represent on the SSC are elected by each school's parent council (SPC).

Minutes of the meetings must be made available within five school days following said meetings. If this does not occur, there is not adequate communication within the school community of what is occurring in the decision-making body of the school which often results in a feeling of disenfranchisement. Any SSC member can put items on the agenda of an SSC meeting as long as they fall under the authority of the SSC. SSC meetings are to be co-chaired by the principal and one other member elected by the SSC. This is to ensure that one person and their agenda do not dominate the meetings. The concept is shared decision making – not having one person make the decisions and then share them with the rest of the committee!

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

The SSC is able to adopt waiver proposals which must then be brought to a vote & approved by a specified threshold of BTU staff which then must be approved by the district-wide SSC Joint Labor/Management Steering Committee. These waivers can include decisions which are contrary to the contract rules, regulations and policies of the School Committee and the Superintendent. There are very specific things that may and may not be waived and there is a specified process listed in the contract in which things that are able to be waived may be waived. Please refer to the official

BPS SSC Manual and the BTU contract for more info. The SSC has a very specific role with respect to the school's budget process as well. SSCs must adhere to all federal & state laws, regulations and court orders.

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

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

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

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

We deserve to be heard and respected. The first step is to believe our voice can make a difference. I believe it does. We need to build power, stand up, speak out and work with parents to hold the educational space and our shared communities! We are all depending upon each other. We are all connected. Let's support one another and our kids. We can make it better. Believe in *BTU*unity!

Contractual Benefit Package for All Teachers*



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

SALARY & BENEFITS

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

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

	HOW DOES THE BENEFIT WORK?	SUMMARY DETAILS	HOW TO LEARN MORE?	WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR?
Class Size Maxima; Caseloads	Enforces class size maxima and caseloads. Important benefit.	Too lengthy to list here; ask building rep at school for class size fact sheet. See Erik Berg's article on page 2 of this newspaper.	Contract pp. 25-27, speak with BTU Building Rep.; call BTU at 617-288-2000 or visit here at http://www.btu.org/member-resources/csg/ .	Do not procrastinate! File a class size grievance on the BTU website as soon as your class is over the limit.
Sick Days	Grants paid leave when ill, up to time accumulated.	15 days granted per year; unused days accumulate & have cash value at separation after 10 years of service.	Talk to Building Rep. or call BTU at 617-288-2000.	Will need a doctor's note if absent for six or more consecutive school days.
Personal Leave	Grants paid leave for personal reasons with one day's notice.	4 days per year; unused days accumulate.	Contract pp. 113-117; see building rep at school, call BTU office at 617-288-2000.	Your reason for taking a personal day is personal and need not be shared, but you do have to give notice. Unused days are automatically converted to accumulated 'sick' days at the end of year.
Professional Leave	Grants limited paid leave to attend educational conferences.	Limited system-wide allotment of 2,000 days distributed to individual staff on a pro-rata basis.	Talk to building rep or call BTU at 617-288-2000 or email ptritter@btu.org .	
Bereavement Leave	Grants paid leave under limited circumstances.	Depends on family relationship to the decedent.	See contract p.115 or talk with Building Rep. or call BTU office at 617-288-2000.	
Religious Holy Days	Grants paid leave under limited circumstances.	Depends on holiday specifics.	See contract p.115 or talk with Building Rep. or call BTU office at 617-288-2000.	
Maternity Leave	Grants paid as well as unpaid leave & city continues to pay its share of health coverage.	Paid maternity time limited by number of sick days accrued.	See contract p.116 or talk with Building Rep. or call BTU office at 617-288-2000.	Complicated procedure; it is suggested you call one of field rep.'s for more information. This procedure becomes particularly more complicated when the birth is scheduled for the summer months. Again, please contact the BTU office.
Leave for Adoption	Grants paid as well as unpaid leave.	Limited to 40 days per school year if you have 'accumulated' days in your bank; used to be 30 days.	Contract, p. 117.	
Leave for Family Illness	Grants paid leave for family member's illness	Limited to 30 days per school year if accumulated, though more can be granted.	Contract, p. 114.	May need a note from family member's doctor; those who need more than 30 such days are advised to contact the BTU office.
Planning and Development Time	Grants staff unassigned time when one is not given a programmed duty or responsibility. P&D periods are 'teacher directed,' i.e., teacher alone decides what he/she does during that period.	Middle and High Teachers – 5 full-length periods (48+ minutes per) per week. Elementary Teachers get four 48-minute P&D periods per week, plus one CPT period that is administratively directed. N.B. Specialists and Itinerant Specialists get identical benefit of individual grade levels	Contract pp. 230-31; or see Building Rep. or call BTU office at 617-288-2000.	You do not have to complete ISSP's or any other administrative work on this time. It is your time and you cannot be assigned a specified duty or meeting. If you 'lose' a P&D, you are eligible for pay for the lost time unless it is made up. Call the BTU office.
Schedule A ELT Schools	In addition to the above, all teachers receive two more blocks of time – see right hand box.	Teachers receive an additional 40-minute block of time that is P&D time for elementary teachers and may be incorporated into CPT time in middle grades. In addition, teachers receive a weekly 35-minute block of time (either as one block or as 7-minute daily sessions added on to the typical P & D). This 75-minute, in the aggregate, time is not PD time – it's a combination of P&D and teacher-directed planning time.		
Duty-Free Lunch	Grants daily duty-free time to all for lunch, in addition to daily P&D time.	Middle and High Teachers – no less than 25 minutes per day; Elementary Teachers – no less than 40.	Contract p. 31; or see Building Rep. or call BTU office at 617-288-2000.	This is your time and you cannot be assigned any duty during this time.
Job-Sharing	1/2 salary, 1/2 position	Two people share one job; each gets 1/2 salary and full benefits	See here: https://www.bostonpublicschools.org/cms/lib07/MA01906464/Centricity/Domain/293/Circulars/hrs-hs-2.pdf	Start early in the year if looking for a partner; this is most difficult for many, as good 'matches' are hard to find.
Educator Support Program	Experienced teachers in need of assistance can volunteer for a peer assistant.	Peer assistant can provide assistance to one who needs help.	Call BTU office at 617-288-2000 or email Mike McLaughlin at mmclaughlin@btu.org	This is a good, useful program for those who are having difficulty with the performance evaluation process.
Accepting a student-teacher	If you accept a student teacher, you receive two days' leave with pay.		Contract pp. 31, 108 or see Building Rep. or call BTU office at 617-288-2000.	Days are to be taken during last two weeks of teacher trainee's tenure.
Mileage	Traveling between two or more schools on a given day.	If you travel between two or more schools in a given day as part of your duties, you are generally entitled to a mileage payment.	Contract pp. 46, 108-109, 142, 175, or see Building Rep. or call the BTU office at 617-288-2000.	Mileage is generally not for travel to and from your assignment each day, but for all other miles mandated within; call the BTU for more info.

RETIREMENT, TAX-DEFERRED SAVINGS PLANS

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

GRIEVANCE RIGHTS

As a covered member you have a right to an interpretation of any provision of the collective bargaining agreement. In the event of an uncertainty or dispute regarding any provision of the Contract cited above (or any other provision, for that matter), it is in your best interest to call the BTU at 617-288-2000 or speak with a building representative. Also, see [btu.org](http://www.btu.org). Most contractual disputes are resolved informally. However, in the event an issue cannot be resolved, you have a right to have the BTU proceed with a grievance on your behalf should the Contract support your claim.

Retirement Information

By Karen T. Cross, BTU Secretary-Treasurer

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

HIRE DATE

Prior to Jan. 1, 1975.....	5% deducted
Jan. 1, 1975.....	7% deducted
Jan. 1, 1984.....	8% deducted
July 1, 1996.....	9% deducted
If hired between 1/1/79 – 7/30/01	an additional 2% is deducted for earnings over \$30,000
July 1, 2001 and thereafter	11% deducted

MASSACHUSETTS GROUP 1 RETIREMENT PERCENTAGE CHART

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

AGE AT RETIREMENT									
		60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67+
YEARS IN SERVICE	10	14.5	16.0	17.5	19.0	20.5	22.0	23.5	25.0
	11	16.0	17.6	19.3	20.9	22.6	24.2	25.9	27.5
	12	17.4	19.2	21.0	22.8	24.6	26.4	28.2	30.0
	13	18.9	20.8	22.8	24.7	26.7	28.6	30.6	32.5
	14	20.3	22.4	24.5	26.6	28.7	30.8	32.9	35.0
	15	21.8	24.0	26.3	28.5	30.8	33.0	35.3	37.5
	16	23.2	25.6	28.0	30.4	32.8	35.2	37.6	40.0
	17	24.7	27.2	29.8	32.3	34.9	37.4	40.0	42.5
	18	26.1	28.8	31.5	34.2	36.9	39.6	42.3	45.0
	19	27.6	30.4	33.3	36.1	39.0	41.8	44.7	47.5
	20	29.0	32.0	35.0	38.0	41.0	44.0	47.0	50.0
	21	30.5	33.6	36.8	39.9	43.1	46.2	49.4	52.5
	22	31.9	35.2	38.5	41.8	45.1	48.4	51.7	55.0
	23	33.4	36.8	40.3	43.7	47.2	50.6	54.1	57.5
	24	34.8	38.4	42.0	45.6	49.2	52.8	56.4	60.0
	25	36.3	40.0	43.8	47.5	51.3	55.0	58.8	62.5
	26	37.7	41.6	45.5	49.4	53.3	57.2	61.1	65.0
	27	39.2	43.2	47.3	51.3	55.4	59.4	63.5	67.5
	28	40.6	44.8	49.0	53.2	57.4	61.6	65.8	70.0
	29	42.1	46.4	50.8	55.1	59.5	63.8	68.2	72.5
	30	43.6	48.0	52.8	57.0	61.5	66.0	70.5	75.0
31	45.1	49.6	54.6	59.0	63.5	68.0	72.5	77.5	
32	46.6	51.2	56.4	60.8	65.5	70.0	75.0	80.0	
33	48.1	52.8	58.2	63.0	68.0	73.0	78.0	80.0	
34	49.6	54.4	60.0	65.0	70.0	75.0	80.0	80.0	
35	51.1	56.0	61.8	67.0	72.0	77.0	80.0	80.0	
36	52.6	57.6	63.6	69.0	74.0	79.0	80.0	80.0	
37	54.1	59.2	65.4	71.0	76.0	81.0	80.0	80.0	
38	55.6	60.8	67.2	73.0	78.0	83.0	80.0	80.0	
39	57.1	62.4	69.0	75.0	80.0	85.0	80.0	80.0	
40	58.6	64.0	70.8	77.0	82.0	87.0	80.0	80.0	

Due to Pension Reform the Minimum Retirement Age For State Employees in Group 1 is **Age 60**

Multiply the indicated percentage by the average of your highest consecutive five-year annual rate of regular compensation

For members of Group 2: add 5 years to your age when finding your pension percentage

For members of Group 4: add 10 years to your age when finding your pension percentage

FOR ESTIMATING PURPOSES ONLY.

(with less than 30 years of service)

Age upon date of Retirement	Percentage of Average Annual Rate of Regular Compensation		
	Group 1	Group 2	Group 4
67 or older	2.5	2.5	2.5
66	2.35	2.5	2.5
65	2.20	2.5	2.5
64	2.05	2.5	2.5
63	1.90	2.5	2.5
62	1.75	2.5	2.5
61	1.60	2.35	2.5
60	1.45	2.20	2.5
59	N/A	2.05	2.5
58	N/A	1.90	2.5
57	N/A	1.75	2.5
56	N/A	1.60	2.35
55	N/A	1.45	2.20
54	N/A	N/A	2.05
53	N/A	N/A	1.90
52	N/A	N/A	1.75
51	N/A	N/A	1.60
50	N/A	N/A	1.45

Check your direct deposit receipts to make sure the correct amount is being deducted. If there's a mistake, you should report it immediately. Boston Retirement System (BRS) policy adopted in 2011 allows BRS to collect errors in deduction rates. The deduction rates are entered by the Boston Public Schools OHC Dept. upon your hiring. We have seen many mistakes over the years. Contact BRS, Room 816 at City Hall, 617-635-4305. You may have to leave a message as many of the BRS staff are still working remotely. Members can also contact **Karen Cross** directly for information and help with retirement procedures or with questions emailing kcross@btu.org.

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

50=1.0	54=1.4	58=1.8	62=2.2
51=1.1	55=1.5	59=1.9	63=2.3
52=1.2	56=1.6	60=2.0	64=2.4
53=1.3	57=1.7	61=2.1	65=2.5(max)

is multiplied by years of creditable service. This yields a percentage. Next, average your three highest salaried years and multiple the percent by that average. The maximum percent allowable is 80%. This amount would be your estimated yearly retirement benefit before taxes and other deductions. Dividing that amount by 12 gives you a good idea of your monthly gross benefit, in pre-taxed amounts.

Retirement paperwork can be confusing. So too can be the bureaucracy at BRS. It's advisable to go into the retirement board 3-5 years before you're planning to retire to get a "Counter Estimate." Call and make an appointment with one of the customer service reps. It is also a good idea for members who have additional creditable service other than BRS service to go to Room 816 at City Hall and request the outside service be transferred to BRS. Do this within two years of beginning your employment with BPS to avoid additional interest rate charges.

As a trustee of the State-Boston Retirement Board I want to extend a welcome to our newest members starting out this year in the BTU/BPS. Those hired after April 2, 2012 were subject to most of the pension changes legislated during the Gov. Deval Patrick Administration. Retirement charts for pre- and post-4/2/2012 membership are provided here.

Contact **Karen Cross** (kcross@btu.org) or the BTU office with your retirement questions. There's also a Retirement FAQ on our BTU website, btu.org.

The "Retirement percentage" chart

For members with effective membership dates before April 2, 2012

A comparison of the percentage of salary average allowed under the regular and RetirementPlus formulas, by service and age

To be eligible for regular retirement (also known as *superannuation* retirement) under either the "regular" formula, or, if you are participating in RetirementPlus, the enhanced RetirementPlus benefit, you must meet the corresponding eligibility requirements:

- **Regular** formula: You must **EITHER** have 20 or more years of creditable service at any age, **OR** be age 55 with 10 or more years of creditable service.
- **RetirementPlus** formula: You must have 30 or more years of creditable service, at least 20 years of which are membership service with the MTRS or the Boston Retirement System as a teacher; there is no minimum age requirement. If you **elect** to participate in RetirementPlus, but then do not meet either the 20-year "teaching" or the 30-year total service requirement by your date of retirement, you will receive a retirement benefit calculated under the regular formula and a refund of your RetirementPlus contributions, plus regular interest.

		AGE AT RETIREMENT																				
		RETIREMENTPLUS % INCREASE																				
		46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65+	
YEARS OF SERVICE *	25	Regular	15.0	17.5	20.0	22.5	25.0	27.5	30.0	32.5	35.0	37.5	40.0	42.5	45.0	47.5	50.0	52.5	55.0	57.5	60.0	62.5
	26	Regular	15.6	18.2	20.8	23.4	26.0	28.6	31.2	33.8	36.4	39.0	41.6	44.2	46.8	49.4	52.0	54.6	57.2	59.8	62.4	65.0
	27	Regular	18.9	21.6	24.3	27.0	29.7	32.4	35.1	37.8	40.5	43.2	45.9	48.6	51.3	54.0	56.7	59.4	62.1	64.8	67.5	70.2
	28	Regular	22.4	25.2	28.0	30.8	33.6	36.4	39.2	42.0	44.8	47.6	50.4	53.2	56.0	58.8	61.6	64.4	67.2	70.0	72.8	75.6
	29	Regular	26.1	29.0	31.9	34.8	37.7	40.6	43.5	46.4	49.3	52.2	55.1	58.0	60.9	63.8	66.7	69.6	72.5	75.4	78.3	81.2
	30	12% Regular	30.0	33.0	36.0	39.0	42.0	45.0	48.0	51.0	54.0	57.0	60.0	63.0	66.0	69.0	72.0	75.0	78.0	81.0	84.0	87.0
		R+	42.0	45.0	48.0	51.0	54.0	57.0	60.0	63.0	66.0	69.0	72.0	75.0	78.0	81.0	84.0	87.0	90.0	93.0	96.0	99.0
	31	14% Regular	34.1	37.2	40.3	43.4	46.5	49.6	52.7	55.8	58.9	62.0	65.1	68.2	71.3	74.4	77.5	80.6	83.7	86.8	89.9	93.0
		R+	48.1	51.2	54.3	57.4	60.5	63.6	66.7	69.8	72.9	76.0	79.1	82.2	85.3	88.4	91.5	94.6	97.7	100.8	103.9	107.0
	32	16% Regular	38.4	41.6	44.8	48.0	51.2	54.4	57.6	60.8	64.0	67.2	70.4	73.6	76.8	80.0	83.2	86.4	89.6	92.8	96.0	99.2
		R+	54.4	57.6	60.8	64.0	67.2	70.4	73.6	76.8	80.0	83.2	86.4	89.6	92.8	96.0	99.2	102.4	105.6	108.8	112.0	115.2
	33	18% Regular	42.9	46.2	49.5	52.8	56.1	59.4	62.7	66.0	69.3	72.6	75.9	79.2	82.5	85.8	89.1	92.4	95.7	99.0	102.3	105.6
		R+	60.9	64.2	67.5	70.8	74.1	77.4	80.7	84.0	87.3	90.6	93.9	97.2	100.5	103.8	107.1	110.4	113.7	117.0	120.3	123.6
	34	20% Regular	47.6	51.0	54.4	57.8	61.2	64.6	68.0	71.4	74.8	78.2	81.6	85.0	88.4	91.8	95.2	98.6	102.0	105.4	108.8	112.2
		R+	67.6	71.0	74.4	77.8	81.2	84.6	88.0	91.4	94.8	98.2	101.6	105.0	108.4	111.8	115.2	118.6	122.0	125.4	128.8	132.2
	35	22% Regular	52.5	56.0	59.5	63.0	66.5	70.0	73.5	77.0	80.5	84.0	87.5	91.0	94.5	98.0	101.5	105.0	108.5	112.0	115.5	119.0
		R+	74.5	78.0	81.5	85.0	88.5	92.0	95.5	99.0	102.5	106.0	109.5	113.0	116.5	120.0	123.5	127.0	130.5	134.0	137.5	141.0
	36	24% Regular	57.6	61.2	64.8	68.4	72.0	75.6	79.2	82.8	86.4	90.0	93.6	97.2	100.8	104.4	108.0	111.6	115.2	118.8	122.4	126.0
		R+	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0
	37	26% Regular	62.9	66.6	70.3	74.0	77.7	81.4	85.1	88.8	92.5	96.2	99.9	103.6	107.3	111.0	114.7	118.4	122.1	125.8	129.5	133.2
		R+	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0
38	28% Regular	68.4	72.2	76.0	79.8	83.6	87.4	91.2	95.0	98.8	102.6	106.4	110.2	114.0	117.8	121.6	125.4	129.2	133.0	136.8	140.6	
	R+	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	
39	30% Regular	74.1	78.0	81.9	85.8	89.7	93.6	97.5	101.4	105.3	109.2	113.1	117.0	120.9	124.8	128.7	132.6	136.5	140.4	144.3	148.2	
	R+	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	
40	32% Regular	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	
	R+	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	

RetirementPlus vs. regular formula

NO DIFFERENCE

MAXIMUM DIFFERENCE: Member receives full amount of RetirementPlus % increase

LESSER DIFFERENCE: Member receives only that amount of RetirementPlus % increase needed to reach 80% salary maximum

Effective April 2010

* Two notes on "years of service": For the purposes of determining your:

- 1) "RetirementPlus % increase," only **whole** years of creditable service will be counted (the amount is not rounded up). For example, if you have 32.9 years of creditable service, your "RetirementPlus % increase" is based on 32 years of creditable service, or 16%.
- 2) **Percentage of allowable salary average, your full years and full months** of creditable service will be counted. For example, Jane Educator is a teacher on a 10-month contract, and is retiring mid-year, on March 10. At that time, she will have 32 years, 6 months and 10 days of creditable service—or 32.6549 years of creditable service. The amount of creditable service that will be used to calculate Jane's allowable percentage of salary average is 32.6 years. (Because the first decimal place represents full months, and the last three decimal places represent only partial months, the last three decimal places will not be included in Jane's final benefit calculation.)

What are the BTU Organizing Committees?

by Natalia Cuadra-Saez, BTU Organizer

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

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

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

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

List of active organizing committees:

Unafraid Educators

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

Black Lives Matter at School

A planning committee for the annual Black Lives Matter Week of Action in February.

Class Size FAQ...

continued from page 2

offer a paraprofessional or payment to you, our advice is to “insist that the class size maximum be enforced.” This follows our contract, and ensures that our students get the education they deserve. **Stay strong. Your principal and others may try to pressure you to settle for payment. If you do this, you are letting our colleagues and our kids down.**

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

No. These forms are not valid without involvement of a member of the BTU staff. Do not sign any form without consulting with your field representative, or BTU Vice President Erik Berg, at eberg@btu.org. **We believe that class size issues are most effectively addressed by adding personnel, not paying money.** And with the limited exceptions of single-strand elementary schools and secondary schools with a single course offering, and the rare circumstance of a column 2 maximum being exceeded in order to accommodate a child already in the school, the payment that is owed to teachers is significantly more than \$1,500 or \$2,500.

Are there exceptions to the class size limits?

There are two limited exceptions. In elementary schools with only a single class at a grade level or secondary schools with only a singular course offering, the limits may be exceeded by two. And in the case where the limit in Column 2 is exceeded in order to keep a student **already in the school**, the limit may be extended to the Column 1 limit. But in either case, payment is owed to the teacher. These payment amounts may not be applied to other situations. Check with your field rep if you are unsure about your situation.

What about inclusion classes?

As BPS transitions away from designated inclusion classes, the limits above will be for all general education classrooms. However, unless and until your school and/or grade level has had a new inclusion plan approved and implemented, the previous inclusion class size limit of 20 remains in place.

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

There are two arbitration decisions governing this situation. The calculations are different for elementary and secondary teachers, but in every case, teachers are owed significantly more than \$1,500 or \$2,500 per student. In general, after each school year the district and the union get together and work out compensation for any teachers who may be owed payment. This can take many months to resolve.

Haitian Educators

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

Ethnic Studies Now!

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

New Educators

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

Housing Justice Committee

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

Inclusion Done Right

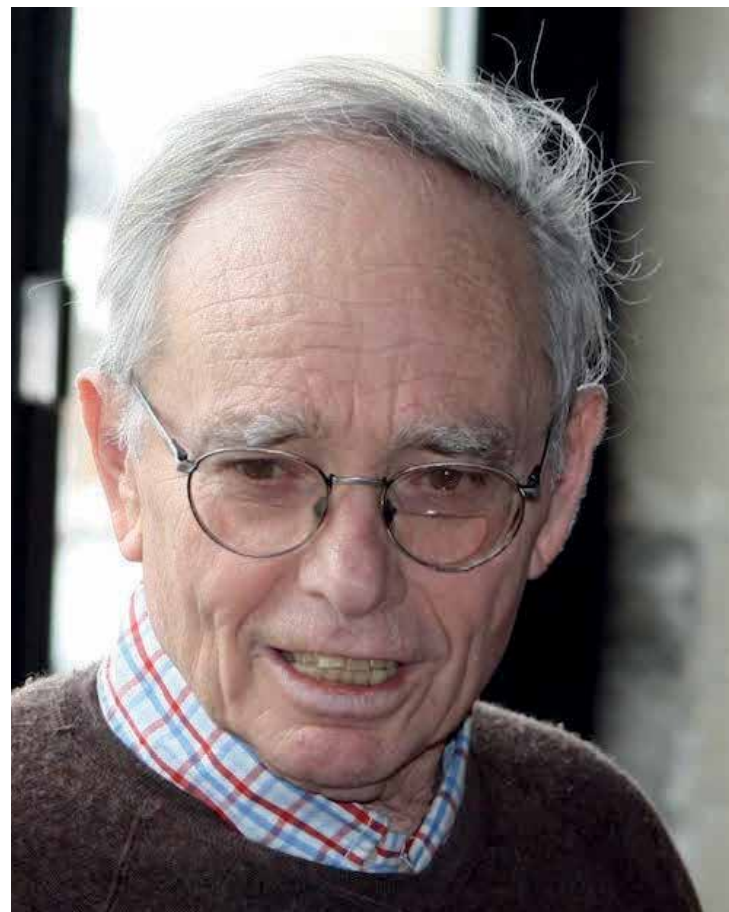
Fighting for fully supported and funded inclusion classrooms and for the services our students deserve.

Climate Justice

Advocates in solidarity with local climate justice movements.

To get involved with any of these committees email Natalia at ncuadrasaez@btu.org.

Join family, friends, students, and colleagues to remember Steve Gordon



Celebrating a Life of Learning

Thursday, September 28th

4:30-7:00pm

Boston Teachers Union Hall

Refreshments and light dinner will be served

Please RSVP at bit.ly/drgordonmemorial

Welcome Paraprofessionals/CFCs/ Family Liaisons

Dear Paraprofessional:

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

Salary Step Placement

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

Sick and Personal Days

Commencing with the first year of service (following a sixty-day probationary period) and annually thereafter, each September, fifteen (15) days of sick leave shall be granted to each paraprofessional in actual service on or before October 1st of that year. Two (2) personal days are also granted each year. Unused sick and personal days accumulate year to year. You may use personal day(s) for any reason with notice to the building administrator. You do not need to give a reason for requesting a personal day, and you may take the day(s) anytime you wish. (There are a few minor contractual restrictions regarding the use of personal leave, please consult your building representative for a full explanation.) In addition, days are given for bereavement, and for a complete list, please consult the contract. A 10-minute break and 30-minute lunch is part of the para workday.

Health and Welfare Benefits

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

Health Insurance

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

Joining the BTU

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

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

Credit Union

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

Union Operations

Our membership meetings are typically held the 2nd Wednesday of each month at 4:30 PM. Please keep an eye on the bulletin for more information and details.

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

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

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



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

Welcome ABA Specialists



Dear ABA Specialist:

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

Salary Step Placement

ABA Specialists shall advance one pay step per year. The ABA pay scales shall increase by the same percentage increases as the other BTU bargaining units and the effective date(s) of those percentage increases shall be the same as the effective dates applied in those other BTU bargaining units.

Sick and Personal Days

Commencing with the first year of service (following a sixty-day probationary period) and annually thereafter, each September, fifteen (15) days of sick leave shall be granted to

each ABA Specialist in actual service on or before October 1st of that year. Sick leave not used in the year of service for which it was granted shall be accumulated for use in subsequent years. ABA specialists who have completed their probationary period will be allowed personal leave for personal needs not otherwise provided for, not more than four days per year without loss of pay. All personal days not used in the year for which they are granted shall be added to the employee's sick leave entitlement for use in subsequent years.

The work day for all ABA Specialists shall be seven and one half hours, inclusive of lunch. ABA Specialists shall have a paid duty-free lunch of at least thirty (30) minutes and not less than sixty (60) minutes of self-directed time per day without the presence of students. The supervisors of ABA Specialists shall review and approve ABA Specialists' work day schedules prior to September 1st of each year.

Health and Welfare Benefits

ABA Specialists are eligible to partake in benefits provided by the union's Health and Welfare Fund. Major benefits include a dental insurance plan and an eye care center. For enrollment in the plan, call the Health and Welfare Office (located at Union headquarters) at 617-288-0500. Ask for a brochure which gives a detailed explanation of all benefits.

Health Insurance

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

Joining the BTU

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

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

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

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

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

Credit Union

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

Union Operations

Our membership meetings are held the 2nd Wednesday of each month at 4:30 PM.

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

The Union employs seven full-time officers and staff to serve the membership. Office hours are 9 AM to 5 PM. The office is open all weekdays including school vacations, but is closed on state, local and national holidays, the day after Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve and Good Friday. The office number is 617-288-2000.

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

Contractual Package for Paraprofessionals



SALARY & BENEFITS

	BENEFIT	HOW IT TAKES EFFECT?	HOW TO LEARN MORE?
Salary Step Placement	Step 1 (first three years) Step 2 (after three years) Step 3 (after six years) Step 4 (after nine years) Step 5 (after twelve years)	Step increase takes place automatically through Payroll.	See contract, page 139
Salary Lane Placement	Basic Rate and then Rates with 30, or 60, or 90 or In-Service and/or College credits and Bachelors degree plus Bachelors + 15.	Provide O.H.C. with a transcript of college credits or certificate for in-service credits.	See contract, page 139
Career Awards	After completion of 9 years of service and increase every 5 years.	Provide Payroll with PS-03 form via the HUB to receive salary increase.	See contract, page 144
Substituting for a Teacher	Pay is \$13.00 in addition to regular pay for substituting in his/her regular classroom.	Para must be certified as a teacher or have 10 years' service.	See contract, page 134
Health Insurance	6 different plans, HMO and out-of-network individual and family plans.	You must apply within 60 days of the date of hire. Deadline is firm. New dependents must be added within 30 days.	Call Group Insurance office at 617-635-4570 or see contract pg. 142 or http://www.cityofboston.gov key word: Health Benefit
Medicare	Anyone entering public employment after 3/31/86 must pay Medicare tax and is eligible @ age 65 provided he/she has 10 years' service.	Employees pay 1.45% of gross wages. Deductions are mandatory and continue with employment.	http://www.medicare.gov
BTU Health and Welfare Fund	Includes Dental, Eye Care and Legal benefit. City pays plan premium, but some benefits have co-pays. Terrific benefit!	Apply at BTU H&W office at 617-288-5883 at start of employment	Call BTU H&W at 617-288-5883 or see http://www.btuhwf.org
Sick Days	Grants paid leave when ill, up to time accumulated.	15 days granted per year; unused days accumulate and have cash value at separation after 10 years of service.	See contract, page 146, or see building rep at school, or call BTU 617-288-2000.
Personal Leave	Grants paid leave for personal reasons.	2 days per year; unused days accumulate. Also, graduation days allowed.	See contract pg. 146. Graduation days for members of immediate family including niece or nephew.
Bereavement Leave	Grants paid leave under limited circumstances.	Depends of family relationship.	See contract, page 145
Religious Holy Days	Grants paid leave under limited circumstances	Depends of holiday specifics.	See contract, page 146, 116
Maternity Leave	Paid as well as unpaid leave & city continues to pay its share of health coverage.	The City of Boston paid Family leave policy offered 12 weeks of paid leave. Pending the ratification vote of the new contract.	See contract, page 146, 117
Leave for Adoption	Paid as well as unpaid leave.	Limited to 40 days per school year if you have accumulated days in your bank. (used to be 30 days)	See contract, page 146, 115
Leave for Family Illness	Paid leave for family members' illness.	Limited to 30 days per school year if accumulated, though more can be granted.	See contract, page 146
Duty-Free Lunch & Break	30 minutes for lunch plus a 10-minute break per day.	Duty-free time.	See contract, page 139
Dependent Care Program	Use pre-tax dollars for dependent care.	Apply within 30 days of hire or during open enrollment beginning mid October	For more info, call CPA Inc. @ 1-800-544-2340 or Group Insurance at 617-635-4570.
Flexible Spending Program	Use pre-tax dollars for out-of-pocket medical expenses.	Same as dependent care above, but additional eligibility requirement of one year's service.	Same as Dependent Care.
Life Insurance	City sponsors plan.	First \$5,000 of term coverage comes with purchase of health insurance. 1/2 of premium for first \$5,000 coverage paid by the city; rest paid by employee.	Call 617-635-4570 for more info. You are advised to shop around to private vendors for best cost before purchasing additional insurance beyond the standard \$5,000.

RETIREMENT, TAX-DEFERRED SAVINGS PLANS

	PARTICIPATION	DETAILS	NOTES
Public Pension	Participation is mandatory under state law; vested employees obtain a pension at retirement.		See contract, page 141.
Participation in a 403B or a Tax Sheltered Annuity (TSA) plan	Participation is voluntary; 40 plus vendors to choose from. The number of vendors is likely to change.	Pre-tax salary contributions grow tax-deferred until withdrawn.	See contract, page 141. Call City Treasurer's Office 617-635-4151.

MISCELLANEOUS

Job-Sharing	1/2 salary; 1/2 position.	Full benefits.	See contract page 135.
Tuition Reimbursement	\$500 per year/\$1,000 per year.	For paras with 3 or more years of service \$500 tuition reimbursement. 5 years, \$1000 tuition reimbursement.	See contract page 144. (Total BPS expenditure not to exceed \$20,000)-with new contract)
Paraprofessional/Teacher Preparation Grant Program	Legislative benefit, not contractual.	State provides financial assistance for a para to become a teacher by obtaining a B.S. degree at a Mass. College. Some restrictions apply.	http://www.osfa.mass.edu quick link at top right to "grants"

ADDITIONAL CONTRACTUAL CHANGES FOR 2010-2024

2010-2024	Effective 11/1/11 a 1% raise Effective 11/1/12 a 2% raise Effective 11/1/13 a 3% raise Effective 11/1/14 a 3% raise Effective 11/1/15 a 3% raise Effective 9/1/16 a 2% raise Effective 9/1/17 a 3% raise Effective 9/1/18 a 2% raise Effective 9/1/19 a 2% raise	Effective 9/1/20 a 2% raise Effective 9/1/21 a 3% raise Effective 9/1/22 a 3.5% raise Effective 9/1/23 a 3.3% raise Paras with 3+ years eligible for \$500 yearly tuition reimbursement. Paras with 5+ years eligible for \$1,000 yearly tuition reimbursement
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GRIEVANCE RIGHTS

As a covered member you have a right to an interpretation of any provision of the collective bargaining agreement. In the event of an uncertainty or dispute regarding any provision of the Contract cited above (or any other provision, for that matter,) it is in your best interest to call the BTU or to speak with a building representative.

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

Contractual Package for ABA Specialists



SALARY & BENEFITS

	BENEFIT	HOW IT TAKES EFFECT?
Salary Step	Shall advance one step per year after completion of 120 days in previous SY.	Advance one step effect 9/1.
Career Award	Completion of 7 th year on anniversary date	Should be automatic. If there are any issue complete and submit PS03.
Health Insurance	6 different plans, HMO and out-of-network individual and family plans.	You must apply within 60 days of the date of hire. Deadline is firm. New dependents must be added within 30 days. Call Group Insurance office at 617-635-4570 http://www.cityofboston.gov key word: Health Benefit
Medicare	Anyone entering public employment after 3/31/86 must pay Medicare tax and is eligible @ age 65 provided he/she has 10 years' service.	Employees pay 1.45% of gross wages. Deductions are mandatory and continue with employment. http://www.medicare.gov
BTU Health and Welfare Fund	Includes Dental, Eye Care and Legal benefits. City pays plan premiums, note some benefits have co-pays Terrific benefit!	Apply at BTU H&W office at 617-288-0500 at start of employment. http://www.btuwhf.org
Sick Days	Grants paid leave when ill, up to time accumulated.	15 days granted per year; unused days accumulate.
Personal Leave	Grants paid leave for personal reasons.	4 days per year; unused days rollover to sick days. Graduation days including niece or nephew. Depends on family relationship.
Religious Holy Days	Grants paid leave under limited circumstances.	Depends of holiday specifics.
Maternity Leave	Paid as well as unpaid leave & city continues to pay its share of health coverage.	The City of Boston paid family leave policy BTU members are offered 12 weeks of paid leave.
Leave for Adoption	Paid as well as unpaid leave.	Limited to 40 days per school year if you have accumulated days in your bank. (used to be 30 days)
Leave for Family Illness	Paid leave for family members' illness.	Limited to 30 days per school year if accumulated, though more can be granted.
Duty-Free Lunch	30 minutes for lunch.	Duty-free time.
Tuition Reimbursement	One year of service - \$500 Three years of service - \$1,000	Starting 9/1/22, ABA Specialists who have completed at least one year of service shall be eligible for tuition reimbursement of up to \$500 per year for approved college or graduate courses. At three years of successful employment, ABA specialists will be eligible for tuition reimbursements of up to \$1,000 for approved college courses until they become eligible to receive their career award.
Flexible Spending Program	Use pre-tax dollars for out-of-pocket medical expenses.	
Life Insurance	City sponsors plan.	First \$5,000 of term coverage comes with purchase of health insurance. 1/2 of premium for first \$5,000 coverage paid by the city; rest paid by employee. You are advised to shop around to private vendors for best cost before purchasing additional insurance beyond the standard \$5,000.

RETIREMENT, TAX-DEFERRED SAVINGS PLANS

	PARTICIPATION	DETAILS	NOTES
Public Pension	Participation is mandatory under state law; vested employees obtain a pension at retirement.		See contract, page 175.
Participation in a 403B or a Tax Sheltered Annuity (TSA) plan	Participation is voluntary; 40 plus vendors to choose from. The number of vendors is likely to change.	Pre-tax salary contributions grow tax-deferred until withdrawn.	See contract, page 175. Call City Treasurer's Office 617-635-4151.

ADDITIONAL CONTRACTUAL CHANGES FOR 2016-2024

2016-2024	Effective 9/1/16 a 2% raise	Effective 9/1/20 a 2% raise
	Effective 9/1/17 a 3% raise	Effective 9/1/21 a 3% raise
	Effective 9/1/18 a 2% raise	Effective 9/1/22 a 3.5% raise
	Effective 9/1/19 a 2% raise	Effective 9/1/23 a 3.3% raise

GRIEVANCE RIGHTS

As a covered member you have a right to an interpretation of any provision of the collective bargaining agreement. In the event of an uncertainty or dispute regarding any provision of the Contract cited above (or any other provision, for that matter,) it is in your best interest to call the BTU or to speak with a building representative.

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

Welcome Parent Liaisons



Dear Family Liaisons:

Welcome to the Boston Teacher Union. This memo has been written to acquaint you with some of the major benefits as part of the paraprofessional unit.

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

Health and Welfare Benefits

You are eligible to partake in benefits provided by the union's Health and Welfare Fund. Major benefits include a dental insurance plan and an eye care center. For enrollment in the plan, call the Health and Welfare Office (located at Union headquarters) at 617-288-0500. Ask for the brochure which gives a detailed explanation of all benefits.

Health Insurance

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

Joining the BTU

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

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

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

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

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

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Welcome Substitutes



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

Dear Substitute Teacher:

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

Health Insurance

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

As exclusive bargaining agent, the BTU negotiates the contract, enforces

the contract and promotes the general welfare of the membership.

As a member of the BTU, you'll also belong to the American Federation of Teachers, Massachusetts (AFTMA), the Massachusetts AFL-CIO, and the American Federation of Teachers in Washington D.C. (AFT). You will begin to receive monthly mailing

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

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

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

Credit Union

Substitutes are also eligible to join the Tremont Credit Union, with offices located at BTU headquarters and at 2 Granite Avenue, Milton, MA

02186. Through the Credit Union you may authorize payroll deductions for savings and checking, arrange for a loan, and take care of many other banking needs. To join, bring \$30.00 and a paystub or a copy of your individual contract to either office and fill out an application. For more information, call 781-843-5626.

Union Operations

Our membership meetings are held the 2nd Wednesday of each month at 4:30 PM.

Each school has Union Building Representatives, elected to serve the

staff in the buildings in dealings with the administration. The building representatives are also the first line of communication between the building staff and the Union office. Many questions can be easily and quickly answered at the building level by asking the building representative.

The Union employs seven full-time officers and staff to serve the membership. Office hours are 9 AM to 5 PM. The office is open all weekdays including school vacations, but is closed on state, local and national holidays, the day after Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve and Good Friday. The office number is 617-288-2000.

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

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

Contractual Package for Substitutes



	BENEFIT	HOW IT TAKES EFFECT?
Per diem sub bonus	Per Diem substitute teachers are eligible. Long term & Cluster Subs are not eligible for the bonus.	\$1,250.00 annual bonus after working more than 120 days in a school year. \$1,750.00 annual bonus after working more than 150 days in a school year.
Licensed Differential	3% differential based on the per diem rate.	If the substitute is licensed by Dept. of Education.
Health Insurance	6 different plans, HMO and out-of-network individual and family plans.	You must work 20 hours per week during a 90 day period to be eligible for health insurance. Call Group Insurance office at 617-635-4570 http://www.cityofboston.gov key word: Health Benefit
Retirement	All Substitutes must contribute to the OBRA Retirement System.	As a part-time, seasonal, or temporary employee of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts or a Massachusetts local government employer, you are required to participate in the SMART Plan. The SMART Plan is an alternative to Social Security as permitted by the federal Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1990 (OBRA). OBRA, passed by the U.S. Congress, requires that beginning July 1, 1991, employees not eligible to participate in their employer's retirement program be placed in Social Security or another program meeting federal requirements. The SMART Plan meets those federal requirements.
BTU Health and Welfare Fund	Includes Dental, Eye Care and Legal benefits. City pays plan premiums, but some benefits have co-pays.	H&W office at 617-288-0500 at the start of employment. http://www.btuwhf.org This benefit is for Cluster Subs.
Sick Days	Grants paid leave when ill, up to time accumulated.	Starting 9/1/22, Long Term Substitutes shall receive prospectively one (1) day of sick leave for every twenty (20) days worked. Cluster/building substitutes shall begin each school year with 9 sick days deposited in their bank each September 1. Sick leave will be cumulative from year to year, provided that the substitute teacher remains a bargaining unit member. Accumulated sick leave cannot be used while serving as a per diem substitute.
Holidays/School Vacations	Grants paid leave.	Cluster/building substitutes will be paid for school holidays and vacation weeks. List the same holidays as in the other contracts.
Professional Development	Long term Cluster Per Diem	Long term/Cluster substitute teachers are required to participate in professional development days with regular teachers and are compensated for this time. In addition, long term substitute teachers are required to attend the 18 hours of professional development required of regular teachers. This professional development is scheduled beyond the school day and consequently long term substitute teachers are paid for this time. All New substitute teachers may also be required to attend up to three days of training to prepare them to teach in the Boston Public Schools.
Maternity Leave	Paid as well as unpaid leave & city continues to pay its share of health coverage.	The City of Boston paid family leave policy BTU members are offered 12 weeks of paid leave
Duty-Free Lunch	All Substitutes will receive a duty free lunch, consistent with school schedule.	Duty-free time.

ADDITIONAL CONTRACTUAL CHANGES FOR 2016-2024

2016-2024	Effective 9/1/16 a 2% raise	Effective 9/1/20 a 2% raise
	Effective 9/1/17 a 3% raise	Effective 9/1/21 a 3% raise
	Effective 9/1/18 a 2% raise	Effective 9/1/22 a 3.5% raise
	Effective 9/1/19 a 2% raise	Effective 9/1/23 a 3.3% raise

GRIEVANCE RIGHTS

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ESP

Educator Supports Program



2022-23 Panel Members:
A. Holland, R. Lee, G. Desir, M. Castro, L. Gant, J. Doherty, E. Berg, K. Jenkins



What is ESP?

The Educator Supports Program (ESP) is a partnership between BPS and the BTU that offers coaching, support, and evaluation for teachers who are not currently rated as "Proficient" on their evaluation.

ESP offers two levels of support:

- **Peer Assistance** support provides non-evaluative coaching. Your primary evaluator does not change.
- **PAR** support provides a Consulting Teacher who serves as the primary evaluator. At the end of the evaluation cycle, the Consulting Teacher recommends a rating to the ESP Panel. The Panel reviews the evidence, deliberates, and votes to determine the summative rating.

"The coaching support piece is HUGE! Participating teachers are afforded an opportunity to work closely with a coach in a way that administration typically cannot."
—BPS Principal

ELIGIBILITY

ESP is a voluntary program open to any BTU educator under the following circumstances:

Third-year Provisional Teachers who have been rated overall "Needs Improvement" at the end of their second year may choose Peer Assistance or Peer Assistance Review support from a Consulting Teacher.

Permanent Teachers who have been rated overall "Needs Improvement" or "Unsatisfactory" by their evaluator, may choose Peer Assistance support from a Consulting Teacher, or if the educator's evaluation plan is 6 months or longer they are eligible for PAR.

Not sure? Contact us anyway. We are here to help.

"PAR was the best thing that could have happened to me as an educator. My CT was an incredible coach, mentor, and cheerleader. I received honest feedback when I needed to improve and was given positive feedback about what I did well."
—PAR Teacher

Q & A

Who are the Consulting Teachers?

Consulting Teachers are veteran BTU teachers who are trained as coaches and evaluators.

How is my principal involved?

When you enroll in PAR, your principal serves as a secondary evaluator. Principals may also present evidence to the PAR panel during deliberation.

In Peer Assistance, your principal remains your evaluator. Your Consulting Teacher is available for coaching and support in meeting prescriptions set by your evaluator.

What if I'm not eligible?

- First- and second-year teachers are provided a New Teacher Developer and mentoring beyond the first year.
- We offer **consultancy visits** if you'd like some feedback on your practice. More at tinyurl.com/BPSESP.

Other Resources

- We offer **PD workshops** on coaching, peer evaluation, and best teaching practices.
- We also share **online resources** like "Lesson Planning 101" at tinyurl.com/BPSESP.

Mission

The mission of the Educator Supports Program (ESP) is to strengthen student learning and teacher performance through coaching and/or evaluation that feels fair, transparent, and humane for all stakeholders.

We accomplish this through two main support options:

Peer Assistance (PA) and Peer Assistance & Review (PAR).



ESP Panel

The ESP Panel supervises the Consulting Teachers and determines final evaluation ratings for PAR teachers. The SY2023-2024 Panel:

Molly Buckley
Gina Desir
Lesley Gant
Albert Holland
Karla Jenkins
Robin Lee
Darlene Prado
Erik Berg (BTU Co-Chair)
Jerome Doherty (BPS Co-Chair)

Enrollment

1. Fill out Contact Form tinyurl.com/espcontact
2. A consulting teacher will meet with you to discuss the program and then you can decide whether you want to join.



Contact Us

WEBSITE:
tinyurl.com/BPSESP

EMAIL:
esp@bostonpublicschools.org

A partnership between the Boston Teachers Union and Boston Public Schools

History

In September 2019, the Boston PAR program merged with the PA program to become the Educator Supports Program (ESP). PAR first started in 1981 in Toledo, Ohio. Boston's PAR program began in 2014 and is the first PAR program in Massachusetts. The PA program has been in existence in BPS since 2007.

Let's Put Social Back Into Media

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

There are other meaningful ways to engage policy makers. Social media is an important tool in our modern method of communication. Regardless of which platform(s) you favor, there is a way to stay informed, be involved, and to promote policies to benefit our students.

Before we move on, allow me to gently remind everyone that you can catch more flies with honey than with vinegar. Too often social media posts become rants of frustration. While venting is a normal and necessary part of life, venting on social media leaves a lasting impression of a temporary state of mind. Let us be mindful that it's not only our supporters who read what we write.

Facebook

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



Twitter

The BTU's Twitter handle is [@BTU66](#). All unions have a "local" number for their national affiliation. Our local number is 66, hence the handle. Please "follow" [@BTU66](#), like and/or retweet often. Good hashtags to employ are [#BTUProud](#) or [#BTUContractNow](#).



Twitter is very popular with news media. Follow a local reporter whose stories you like. Retweet their stories when they are promoting public education, and reply to their tweets when they are off base. Soon you'll develop a relationship with that reporter who may ask you for a quote in an upcoming story.

Instagram

On Instagram, the BTU is [bostonteachersunion](#). If Instagram is your preferred method of social media, we could use a boost in this realm.



Blogs

The *Boston Globe*, the *Boston Herald*, and the *Bay State Banner* frequently run stories and editorials about the Boston Public Schools. Print media may be on the decline but the online versions are alive and well. Boston policy makers read these newspapers and they read the comment sections too. If you have the time please post a comment, drawn from your personal experience, in these blogs. If time is short or you don't quite know what to say, simply "like" the existing blog posts that speak to you.

Letters to the Editor

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

My advice in writing a letter to the

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

Other Media

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



BTU members in support of SAG/AFTRA (above) and Teamsters (below).

We urge Boston Teachers Union members participate in these special events!



SAVE THE DATE!
SEPTEMBER 23RD

10TH ANNUAL
BACK TO SCHOOL
FAIR

40,000 FREE BOOKS AND ACTIVITIES FOR BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOL FAMILIES!
Stop by between 1:00 and 4:00 PM on Saturday, September 23rd, 2023
Boston Teachers Union & Carson Beach
180 Mt. Vernon St., Boston, MA 02125
(Entrance is off of Day Boulevard, before Carson Beach)

WE NEED VOLUNTEERS TO HELP US SORT BOOKS ON MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 18 FROM 3-7 PM, TUESDAY and WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 19 & 20, 9 AM-7 PM. CAN YOU HELP OUT?
Sign up to volunteer at btu.org/backtoschool
ALL ARE WELCOME TO PITCH IN, INCLUDING STUDENTS FULFILLING COMMUNITY SERVICE.
Please contact Katina at kmclain@btu.org or Brenda at bchaney@btu.org with any questions!

BRING YOUR OWN SHOPPING BAG!

CLOSEST MBTA T-STOP
JFK/UMASS
ON THE RED LINE

BTU.ORG/BACKTOSCHOOL



Walk for the pink ribbon!
Making Strides Against BREAST CANCER

Please join the BTU Walkers as we join the thousands of others fighting the good fight. You can support it too by helping us reach (or exceed!) our fundraising goal.

SUNDAY OCT 1 2023

For more information or to join the walk, contact Brenda Chaney at bchaney@btu.org

EL in Action Learning Site: One Teacher's Journey From Novice to Humble Expert

By Kristen Cacciatore (Telescope Networker)

It was the Friday afternoon before April break, and **Nia Reid-Patterson's** third-floor classroom at the Conley Elementary School in Roslindale was hot – really hot – thanks to some unusually warm spring weather. Outside the window, the sun was shining and vacation awaited. These were not the most conducive conditions for serious academic work, but Nia and her 6th-grade ELA inclusion students were unfazed. They were working in pairs to describe the main character's point of view in *Two Roads* by **Joseph Bruchac**, a historical novel in which twelve-year-old protagonist Cal discovers his Native American heritage as he and his father travel the country and endure many hardships. Students were eager to share their ideas and quotes to support their ideas during the whole-class share-out.

Nia's class was using the Expeditionary Learning (EL) grades 3-6 English Language Arts curriculum the district recently adopted. Her journey with

writing and talking with each other about what they are reading and I just feel so proud of them. They are finding their voices.”

Nia described the learning journey for one student in her class, “He came to me as an ELD 4 student, and at first he just completely refused to write. Once I convinced him to write something, he would just pick random quotes from the text as ‘evidence.’ It was a long, slow process, but now he is able to really dive deep into the text and identify characters’ struggles. He was able to explain what cultural genocide is from the book and connect it to things happening in Boston. He can write full essays and participates in class discussions. Now he is one of my ‘roving reporters’ who goes around the room to

check in with other students and help them answer questions using evidence from the text.”

In the middle of the school year, others started to notice and admire the work Nia and her colleagues at the Conley were doing with the EL curriculum. **Stacie Withington**, an ELA program director, said, “I was so excited at the Tier 1 learning that was taking place at the school in all rooms. The Tier 1 accessibility for all students was such a showcase of love. Teachers were making

the curriculum their own while also keeping the fidelity and standards based learning at the forefront.” Nia's class was featured on the BPS Twitter and the superintendent dropped by for a visit. Soon thereafter, Telescope Networkers



Kadian Simmonds and **Mark Lonergan** observed Nia's class that warm Friday in April with admiration. It was hard for them to believe that Nia was in her first year of implementing a new curriculum. They were looking for a teacher who was

6th-grade inclusion teacher at the Clap Elementary school, explained that she wanted to learn what parts of the huge EL curriculum to prioritize. Her Clap colleague **Sarah Moore**, a learning specialist, added, “This is our first year of full implementation and we are in the process of learning what works, what doesn't, and where there is room to make adjustments that fit the needs of all of our students.” **Victor Joyner**, a 6th-grade teacher at the Manning Elementary school, was focused on both the pacing of the EL modules and inclusive supports that would provide access for all students. The group spent several minutes talking about what made the curriculum intimidating and challenging to use. All agreed that they were excited to see how another BPS colleague was using it.

On the morning of the Learning Site, the group met in the bright and cheerful Conley art room for a pre-observation meeting. Kadian helped each participant choose an observation focus from the six components of successful practice she and Nia had identified – close reading routines, intentional grouping, authentic texts, planning with the student lens in mind, addressing all four language domains, and explicit instruction in metacognition. Then the group walked upstairs to Nia's room for a 45-minute classroom observation, where, fortunately for all, air conditioning had been recently installed.

Students were tasked with writing a summary of one chapter of *Two Roads*. After Nia reviewed the criteria for a high-quality summary, students worked diligently, writing in their workbooks, referring to the text and their success checklists, and talking quietly with their partners. Nia sat in the back at one of the student tables, providing support to a group of four students through occasional prompting and affirmation. After about 25 minutes, Nia and her students transitioned to peer review of their partner's summary. Students made substantive suggestions to each other, critiquing their identification of central ideas and pushing each other to use more descriptive language.

Back in the art room after the observation, participants were abuzz about what they had seen. They recalled that every student was engaged in the learning activities, how confident the students were as they described their work, and how eager they were to give and receive feedback from each other

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the curriculum had begun only seven months earlier, at the beginning of the 2022-23 school year. It was a daunting task, starting with a totally new, complex curriculum she received just before the year began and delivering it in an inclusion setting without another teacher or paraprofessional. Nia recalled, “I received the boxes with all of the materials at 5 o'clock in the afternoon the day before school started! There was so much and I felt overwhelmed. And there was no pacing guide at all from the district at that point. But I just got started.” She was transparent with students, “I told my students that it was my first time with the curriculum and if something isn't working then we will talk about it and do something different.” The first six weeks were especially challenging, because, “I didn't know the curriculum and I didn't know my learners. And because we had just adopted EL, the students hadn't learned things in fourth grade that the sixth grade curriculum assumed they knew, like Greek and Latin prefixes.”

As the year went on, Nia found that EL got a little easier, though, “I was still spending so much time planning!” But she was motivated to continue, because she noticed that students were making gains, including the students who were significantly below grade level at the beginning of the year. Near the end of the school year, she reflected on their growth, “I see that every student is reading and

finding success with EL because they had been hearing from many teachers that it was a big challenge to implement. Seeing that Nia and her students were clearly in an EL groove, they quickly determined that this classroom presented a powerful opportunity for professional learning for other BPS teachers. And thus the “EL in Action” Learning Site was born.

Four weeks later, eight BPS 6th grade teachers from schools around the district convened at the Conley for a day of learning and collaboration. The



stage had been set the afternoon before when the group came together on Zoom to share their own experiences and challenges with implementing the EL curriculum in their classrooms and schools. Participant **Kat Hepburn**, a

about their writing. Victor expressed interest in learning more about the checklist Nia had given the students so they could monitor their own progress. Kat wondered if Nia was having students read the whole book or if she had strategies to move students through the material without doing so.

After lunch, the group spent an hour debriefing with Nia. Each of the small groups presented their observations and appreciations related to their focus, then asked Nia an excavating question to get at the “how and why” of her successful practice, such as, “How do you decide which parts of the EL curriculum to prioritize?” Nia shared her approach to unpacking the curriculum, scaffolding for struggling readers and writers, and building community during the wide-ranging conversation. “This is my first year with EL so I am learning as I go. It’s a process and I tell students that if something isn’t working then we will talk about it and do something different,” she told the group. She emphasized the importance of knowing students and



respecting them as people, saying, “Really knowing who they are is so important, not just checking boxes. I tell students, ‘We’re family in here. Sometimes we can’t stand each other but we’re together all year and we are here to support each other.’” She spoke passionately about the high expectations for students, “They have to know that you believe in them, that they can do the work. Because they can!”

The dialogue also included specific strategies for developing students’ content knowledge; for example, how to help students identify themes in literature and to distinguish between central ideas and themes. Nia also talked about her strategy for building student skills over time by gradually adding components and complexity, as she had with peer feedback and summary writing tasks. When one participant asked how she’s handling some of the challenging

themes in the text like racism, Nia explained that she doesn’t shy away from conversations about potentially sensitive topics with students, saying, “Sometimes when we shelter students we do them more harm.” The debrief ended with participants sharing their gratitude for the experience and for Nia’s incredible work.

After the debrief, each participant reflected on their big takeaways and formulated a plan to put their learning into action in their own context. Victor zeroed in on evaluation, saying, “I will find more authentic opportunities for students to evaluate models of writing and peer writing.” Kat made short- and long-term plans to build student independence both for the remainder of the school year and more holistically in the fall. Sarah was also thinking about student independence, noting, “I need to think about how to build routines for reading text for understanding because I do not see all students able to do that independently.”

At the end of the session, everyone had the chance to share what made the Learning Site experience a professional learning success. Several mentioned the opportunity to observe a classroom for a long time and see the lesson develop. Other highlights were the debrief

protocol and length, which fostered a deep, meaningful conversation. Most important of all was Nia’s openness. As Kat said, “Nia’s responses to our questions were so helpful!” Overall, it was an inspiring experience for all and provided a big boost of optimism as participants looked ahead to implementing EL in their classrooms next year.

Nia found the experience of being a host teacher both motivating and gratifying, explaining, “Planning for the Learning Site really pushed me to look ahead further in the curriculum, because I knew that I wanted the visitors to see a particular type of lesson on this set date three weeks ahead. And I had been planning only about a week at a time.” She also noted that it was a positive experience for her students. “They enjoyed hearing the thank you notes (participants wrote) – it builds their confidence and their ability to work independently and it makes them proud to be models.” In summary, she said “I enjoyed the experience and making connections with other sixth grade teachers, because this is a single-strand school. It made me think that I am doing stuff right if other teachers see that. And it felt good to help other teachers see the curriculum in action because I wish I had had that when I was starting.”



Supports for BPS Teachers Seeking National Board Certification

By Margaret Arlauskas, NBCT
& Cathy O’Flaherty, NBCT,
BPS/BTU NBCT Leadership Team

The BTU with the BPS Office of Teacher Leadership and Development supports BPS teachers pursuing National Board certification. Teachers can begin the certification process before three years of teaching is complete. Part-time and long-term substitute teaching does count towards the three year employment requirement. Teachers need to complete three years of teaching before becoming National Board certified. Prior to completing the process, teachers need to hold a Bachelor’s Degree and teacher’s license.

Leadership

The BPS/BTU National Board program seeks to increase the numbers of National Board Teachers (NBCT’s) in Boston. National Board is a process designed for teachers to demonstrate, through standards-based evidence, the positive impact they have on student learning as a result of their deep and abiding understanding of students, content knowledge, pedagogical practice, ongoing reflection, and participation in learning communities. National Board Certification empowers teachers and raises the status of accomplished teaching in a demonstrable way. It paves a path



for teacher leadership. Our program seeks to connect teachers in Boston to the resources they need to complete this process and become NBCTs.

Financial Benefits

The financial pay-off is another incentive to become a National Board Certified Teacher. The Boston Teachers Union fought hard and won a 4% pay increase (retirement worthy) for NBCTs. Under our current BTU contract, we also enjoy reimbursement of fees upon certification along with the opportunity to earn graduate credit through George Mason University. More information for graduate credit can be found here: <https://education.gmu.edu/teacher-professional-development/nbpts-options-at-mason/nbct-achievement>

Becoming a National Board Certified Teacher in Boston can therefore result in a 4% pay increase and possible salary lane advancement along with the affirmation of your positive commitment and impact on student learning.

Resources

The BPS/BTU National Board Program offers multiple resources and supports. One is the National Board Certified Teacher Leadership Team (NBCT LT) which consists of five NBCTs: Margaret Arlauskas, Cristina DeGuzman, Suzanne Gill, Matthew Kazlauskas, and Emmanuel Fairley-Pittman. They work to organize candidate support with no-cost, online workshops and information sessions that will be held throughout the school year. The NBCT LT has also developed a framework of support including On-Call Readers who are NBCTs and can read each candidate’s component entry twice. In addition, the NBCT LT has developed Professional Learning Facilitators/ Cohort leaders to run online cohorts both at the school level and regionally throughout Boston. Cohorts of teachers pursuing certification will be facilitated by National Board Certified Teacher Leaders.

The National Board has online webinars to support candidates. Candidates can watch them live or at a later time that may be more convenient. All webinars are led by National Board staff and NBCTs throughout the United States. For more information about these webinars, please visit <https://www.nbpts.org/support/webinars/> where you

will find webinars on every aspect of becoming an NBCT.

NBCT Leadership Opportunities

If you are a BPS NBCT and would like to support our Boston Network, please contact our team to express your interest. There will be opportunities to lead a cohort at your school or for the district remotely. Another opportunity is to become an On-Call reader to support MOC and New NBCT candidates by reading their portfolio components.

How Can You Contact Us?

You can contact the NBCT LT by emailing nationalboard@bostonpublicschools.org and one of the members will answer any questions you may have. You can also visit our website bit.ly/2019nbctl or announcements check us out on Twitter [@BostonNbct](https://twitter.com/BostonNbct).

More information regarding the Boston Network can be found on the National Board’s website: <https://www.nbpts.org/support/in-your-state/ma/>

In addition, you can contact the National Board at 1-800-22-TEACH or submit a question online using the following link: <https://pearsonsacommunity.secure.force.com/nbptsform/sanbptswebform?nbptsid=customer-support>

We're Learning Here!

By Amika Kemmler Ernst, Ed.D.



(Amika Kemmler Ernst is a retired BPS New Teacher Developer with extensive experience as a classroom teacher, curriculum developer, and graphic artist. Her "We're Learning Here" Project features images of everyday learning in our public schools, along with the words of the students pictured.)

Conley Elementary School

The Conley Elementary School on Poplar Street in Roslindale serves 165 students in grades K0-6. On the way into the building from the parking lot, I notice a sign outside the small garden area saying, in English and Spanish: "We are growing food. All of it will be donated to a local food distribution site."

Coach **Kevin Collins** supervises a small group of K0/K1 students with special needs who are joyfully riding tricycles around the hard-top playground or using a bat to hit lightweight balls off a shoulder-height stand.

Inside, almost every classroom is labeled with a colorful welcome sign including grade level, teacher names, and room number. Art teacher **Hilary Blair** helps another group of K0/K1 children paint leaves for an upcoming school-wide Art Show, while students in **Antonietta Brownell's** K0/K1 class learn about how chicks they are hatching in the classroom develop inside their shells.

Students in grades K2 > 2 work on a variety of word study activities. **Rochelle Perry's** K2 students use whiteboards to write out the alphabet with lower case letters. Second graders learn about double vowel word syllables, identifying different ways the long e sound can be spelled. In **Sara Colella's** science class, students in grades 2-3 are looking closely at caterpillars that will soon turn into butterflies!

A third grade boy reads aloud a scene he's created for the story of *Peter Pan*, while teacher **Faith Nery** helps other students provide constructive feedback. Fourth and fifth grade students are taking a MAP test in math or doing independent reading when they complete it.

Here's hoping you'll have a great year! Please invite me to visit!

Amika ü

Amika Kemmler Ernst, Ed. D.
Amika45@gmail.com



We were painting leaves green and Ms. Blair was helping us. In art class we've learned how to mix colors and how to make collages with pieces of paper.

Ava Bragg, Declan Pamera & Rujovan Cherubin, K0/K1

I was reading a book after I finished testing. I like action, anime, and the Babysitter Club books. One activity I really enjoyed this year was our Family Outing Project: we had to plan an outing for our family and figure out all the costs involved. My trip to Franklin Park Zoo cost \$99 -- more than I thought it would! This project taught me how to plan and do math better.

Carol Boston, Grade 5



We were writing all the letters of the alphabet. We've learned how to read and write upper and lower case letters. This year we also learned sight words, consonants and vowels, and how to tap out letter sounds.

Rochelle Perry's K2 Class



I am working on a project about my Puerto Rican heritage. I learned Bomba is a dance that was created in Puerto Rico. I'm proud of how I became a better student and a better dancer by working really hard this year.

Layla Molina, Grade 6

I was drawing a picture of a caterpillar in Science. Ms. Colella was helping me. I learned a caterpillar turns into a butterfly!

Ayden Santana, Grade 2



After reading Peter Pan as a class, we each chose a chapter and rewrote a scene from it. In this picture, Blake is reading his revised scene aloud. We've learned that getting other people's feedback helps make our writing better. We also learned that our classmates have very creative ideas!

Faith Nery's Grade 3 Students

I was racing with Rujo on our bikes in P.E. We learned to ride a bike safely -- no crashing!

Tristan Noj, K1





I was taking the MAP test and solving one of the problems. In math this year we've learned about decimals, fractions, division, and how to do 4-digit multiplication. I learned that fractions and decimals show the same thing differently. I think it's interesting how you need to know multiplication facts in order to solve division problems.

Eliana Chiola, Grade 4

The children are taking turns finding a picture to match each word as I give clues and/or name different foods. These nonverbal K2 students are learning functional vocabulary and inferencing skills.

Liz Natale,
Speech &
Language
Pathologist



2023-24 Calendar

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING EVENTS

	Topic	Dates	Links
PC	Illustrative Math (Grades 6-11) Planning Cohort "How do we thoughtfully implement the Illustrative Math curriculum to provide all students access to rich mathematical tasks and learning experiences?" Led by Lisa Schad (Alighieri) & Ana Mena Martinez (Brighton)	8/21	Flyer / Waitlist
PC	Open Up/ MVP Math (Secondary) Planning Cohort "How do we thoughtfully implement the Open Up curriculum to provide all students access to rich mathematical tasks and learning experiences?" Led by Joanie Decopain & Christina McNicol (English High School)	8/24	Flyer / RSVP
PC	StudySync (Grade 6 - 8) Planning Cohort "How do we plan the StudySync curriculum in an efficient and effective way to meet the needs of our students?" Led by Gretchen LaFond (TechBoston Academy)	9/19	Flyer / RSVP
E	Edcamp for SLIFE Educators (K-12) Edcamp Join us to connect with BPS colleagues and discuss the question, "How do we start the year strong with our SLIFE students?"	9/19	Flyer / RSVP
PC	EL Education (ESL Adapted) (Grades 3 - 6) Planning cohort "How do we thoughtfully implement the EL curriculum to provide all students, especially our English language learners, access to grade level texts and content?" Led by experienced BPS Educators	9/20	Flyer / RSVP
PC	OpenSciEd (Grades 6-8) Planning Cohort "How do we implement the OpenSciEd curriculum in an efficient and effective way to meet the needs of our students?" Led by Michelle Carroll (Charlestown High School)	9/28	Flyer / RSVP
PC	SLIFE (Grade 3 - 12) Planning Cohort "How do we plan SLIFE curriculum in an efficient and effective way to meet the needs of our students?" Led by Erin McCorty, Beth Nibberich & Ariana Sicairos-McCarthy (BINcA)	10/2	Flyer / RSVP
PC	StudySync (Grades 9-12) Planning Cohort "How do we plan the StudySync curriculum in an efficient and effective way to meet the needs of our students?"	10/17	Flyer / RSVP
PO	1-1 Peer Observation Got an individual challenge? Use our resources/templates to observe & debrief with a BPS colleague. Complete the RSVP form if you want help finding a connection or facilitating your visit.	ongoing	Info Sheet / RSVP



KEY: CS = Connect & Share webinar; E = Edcamp
LS = Learning Site; LC = Learning Cohort

In a [Telescope PD](#) you can . . .

- Learn from your BPS colleagues
- Learn with your BPS colleagues
- Follow-up coaching available
- Sub coverage \$ available
- PD Hours or ALCs credits
- Stipends \$ for peer leaders

Professional Learning

RSVP @

tinyurl.com/telescopeRSVP



Telescope Programs [\(read more\)](#)

LS Learning Site In a Learning Site, educators come together for a 1/2 day in a real live classroom around a common area of practice. Participants debrief with the host teacher and set goals for their own classrooms. Participants continue the learning through virtual follow-up sessions to earn an ALC credit.

12 hr

LC Learning Cohort In a Learning Cohort, you join with a group of BPS colleagues to learn together as a team. You will address a common challenge, observe a peer to discuss their practice, develop ideas to bring back to your own setting, and get support as you try out new strategies.

12 hr

PC Planning Cohort A Planning Cohort is a space for educators to collaboratively plan with the support of a teacher expert. During the planning cohort you will have time to unpack curriculum to develop a thoughtful unit plan, pool resources with other teachers in a similar context, and receive feedback from peers and coaches.

12 hr



1-2 hr



2-3 hr



2-3 hr

Connect & Share Panel Discussion

During a Connect & Share panel webinar, participants hear from BPS colleagues about what's working in their classrooms and schools. Presenters share a 10-minute presentation about an effective practice. Participants connect with peers from across BPS, get new ideas, and earn PD hours.

E Edcamp Edcamps are "an innovative form of training with no predetermined speakers or sessions." Participants create the session topics at the start of the event based on their interests and questions. Participants learn new practices while connecting, and sharing expertise with others in the room.

PO Peer Observation During an individualized peer observation, you can observe a recommended BPS colleague. Afterwards, participants will have time to debrief and set goals to bring back to their own classrooms.

More at bostonpublicschools.org/telescope

It's A New Year! RTC Welcomes New Members

We want to extend a warm welcome to our colleagues who have retired and recently joined the Retired Teacher Chapter (RTC) of the BTU. Thank you for the wonderful work you did educating students in our city. Now it is time to enjoy the pleasures of retirement.

If you know someone who has retired recently, but has yet to join the RTC, please encourage them to contact us at the BTU office every Wednesday and Thursday for an application and information about the RTC. Even though you have been a member of the BTU for years, you must join the RTC once you retire. Membership is not automatic. Dues are \$5 per month for teachers and \$2.50 for paraprofessionals. If you prefer you can download an application from the BTU website from the section on Retirees, fill it in and mail it to the Retired Teacher Chapter at the BTU, 180 Mount Vernon Street, Dorchester, MA 02125.

Things you should do

New retirees should contact the Health and Welfare Fund of the BTU to apply for COBRA to continue your Delta Dental and Eyeglass benefits for two years. After two years you can apply for the RTC Delta Dental plan or you can enroll in the City's Metropolitan Life plan for all city retirees.

Joining the RTC means you are entitled to some interesting benefits. We offer RTC members the following benefits when their COBRA benefits expire: a free pair of glasses from the Eye Care Center at the BTU Health and Welfare Fund and the RTC's Delta Dental plan either for the individual member or the family plan that covers the member and spouse. We offer a variety of travel opportunities. Members of the RTC can also take advantage of their continuing membership in the BTU. Members of the RTC can serve on committee of the BTU, and take advantage of the BTU's International travel program as well as enjoy benefits available through the AFT, our national affiliate.

For more information on the Dental and Eye Care benefits please contact Roz Avant, the RTC Vice Chair any Thursday at the BTU office from 10 am-2 pm.

We keep busy

We hold two business meetings each year, one in the fall and another in the spring. These meetings provide an opportunity to connect with your colleagues and to get the latest information from the chairs of the RTC's committees. In addition, we also have presentations on topics of interest for our members from health and nutrition to staying active, to services from the city and/or state that are available to members.

The Social Committee plans our events that include the Annual Fall Luncheon – usually held in October or November, it is being held early this year. A letter describing the price of the tickets (\$50 per person that is refundable for members. Guest tickets are not refunded.) from the RTC Social Committee with the ticket information and directions for reserving a table for your friends and colleagues. Check out the "Save the Dates" information in the box at the end of this article.

Plans are in progress for the Holiday Jazz Brunch and the annual spring luncheon and business meeting.



We need your help

We communicate through this newspaper but we also maintain an ebulletin that provides the latest information about activities, issues, and events. To do this we need your personal email. We cannot use the old BPS email addresses. We have a strict policy of never giving out personal contact information to others. You can also find information of importance on our Facebook page at (www.facebook.com/BTURTC).

Join us

Our Legislative Committee works hard to enhance our pension benefits and to support legislation on issues that provide support for our members, schools and communities. This past year we fought to increase the pension for FY 2023 to 5% to help offset the increase in the cost of living. We were able to do that, but we were not able to increase the COLA base beyond the current \$15,000. If you are interested in joining the legislative committee you can contact Janey Frank, the Committee chair through the RTC office. We are always seeking your participation in contacting the members of the City Council, the Mayor and the members of the Boston Retirement Board. In addition to our pension issues we also support state

legislation that improves pension of long-time retirees and supports increases for the state teachers' retirement system. On the federal level, we continue to work with allies across the country to repeal the Windfall Elimination Provision and the GPO.

We have other committees that help do the work of planning and executing the RTC activities. We have a social committee that plans our events, a membership committee that keeps track of our membership information; Data Processing Committee updates the membership lists; the Social Media Committee keeps our Facebook page interesting and up to date; the Archives Committee helps build and maintain the history of the chapter and our work at the BTU and BPS; the benefits committee that keeps track of our benefits program; our travel committee that plans our local travel opportunities (international travel is a BTU program that includes retirees); the Remembrance Committee provides condolence cards to families of deceased members; the Scholarship Committee reviews the rules for the three designated BTU scholarships and determines the scholarship winners.

If you want to help with one of the RTC committees please call us any Wednesday or Thursday from 10 am-2 pm and talk to us about how you can contribute to our committees.

Be Life-long Learners

Many of our members belong to the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute of the University of Massachusetts at Boston to take advantage of the wide variety of courses that range from language to film to literature to Tai Chi to American history, American politics, art, music and food. Details of membership and courses can be found at the following links:

- <https://www.umb.edu/olli/>
- <https://www.umb.edu/olli/courses>
- <https://www.umb.edu/olli/events>

Let's have fun again!

What ever happened to the bowling league? It did not bowl during the pandemic, but we have good news to share. The Bowling League survived the pandemic, but needs more bowlers. Sandy Hines and Katherine Grogan are seeking to reestablish our once vibrant bowling league. They are seeking new members from the BTU active teachers and paras and to all of our retirees. The league meets every Monday at 4 pm at Boston Bowl in Dorchester. It is a fun way to socialize and you really do not need to be a good bowler. It costs \$16.00 a week and you bowl three strings a night. Teams are generated based on averages so that there's a fairness of how teams are formed. Guaranteed that you will have loads of fun and enjoy great company-spares and strikes are up to you!

SAVE THESE DATES

Fall Luncheon

Thursday, September 28, 2023
Venezia Restaurant in Dorchester
11 am - 2 pm
Luncheon at Noon

Fall Business Meeting

Thursday, October 12, 2023
BTU Hall
Meeting starts at 11 am
Light refreshments available at 10 am

Welcome Parent Liaisons...

continued from page 12

Credit Union

Paras are also eligible to join the Tremont Credit Union, with offices located at BTU headquarters and at 2 Granite Avenue, Milton MA, 02186. Through the Credit Union you may authorize payroll deductions for savings and checking, arrange for a loan, and take care of many other banking needs. To join, bring \$30.00 and a paystub or a copy of your individual contract to either office and fill out an application. For more information, call 781-843-5626.

Union Operations

Our membership meetings are held the 2nd Wednesday of each month at 4:30 PM.

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

The Union employs seven full-time officers and staff to serve the membership. Office hours are 9 AM to 5 PM. The office is open all weekdays including school vacations, but is closed on state, local and national holidays, the day after Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve and Good Friday. The office number is 617-288-2000.

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

– Colleen M. Hart,

BTU Paraprofessional/ABA/Substitute Field Representative



BTU Back to School Party
Friday, September 29, 2023
3:00-8:00 pm

Making Strides Against Breast Cancer Walk
Sunday, October 1, 2023

BTU Fall Conference
Fri.-Sun., October 20-22, 2023

BTU Winter Party
Friday, January 19, 2024
3:00-8:00 pm

BTU End of the Year Cruise
Saturday, June 8, 2024
5:00-8:00 pm