As our schools continue to recover from the last few years that were upended by the COVID pandemic, the challenges this past school year have continued to feel heightened. Too many students, families and adults have faced dysregulation and increased anxiety from years of instability as well as loss. The sense of “normalcy” has shifted in ways that are deeply troubling — from the prevalence of mass school shootings and “lock downs” to reports of abuse and the loss of professionalism accorded to educators, the nation’s schools have felt like the epicenter of many political storms and have borne warning signs to the erosion of democracy.

While our resilient school communities have found many ways to shelter themselves from the storms and troubles, there are certain unprecedented challenges that may seem insurmountable. Perhaps in unprecedented numbers, we have had to come together to organize within our school communities to force the changes that we need for our students to succeed. The process has not always been swift. Oftentimes when there are challenges in the school, there is a belief that if someone just “calls the union,” the problem can be fixed. Sometimes, this is the case. However, more often than not, the solution is not just for someone to make a call, but to organize together to make the changes we need to see and to take the time to organize and engage other educators. This is, after all, the point of a union—not that any one individual is the solution to the problem, but rather that we collectively are stronger together.

We see this strong union culture in schools where there is a habit of collaboration and collective action and where systems and structures to ensure shared leadership and democratic decision-making are in place. Schools where Building Reps act not just as two-way communicators between schools and the union leadership, but also help to organize and engage all BTU educators in both school-based and city-wide or even state-wide actions. These schools usually have regular Faculty Senate meetings that tackle problems with solutions, and active School Site Councils where all stakeholders have a voice and make decisions together.

That culture, however, did not just appear overnight. It took many years and a lot of organizing to help get those schools to where they are at now.

Unfortunately, this year we have seen an increase in the tactics used to keep us disorganized: fear, hopelessness, division, confusion. We see these obstacles coming from a variety of sources, including a top-down, bully school leader who creates a culture of fear and retaliation; inexperienced and insecure school leader who does not know how to ask for help;

A lack of resources leading to a culture of competition as opposed to collaboration; lack of safety to try new things or divert from scripted curriculum... the causes are many and unfortunately, common. The good news, however, is that solutions are also within and amongst all of us.

When we organize together and show that the staff in a school are united over an issue or cause, it shows strength and that we have the solutions that need to be enacted. However, to get everyone on the same page, it often takes time and there is tension when there is also a great sense of urgency and energy to “do something.”

Taking an action in the short term may be easy for a small group of people to do and may feel great in the moment, but it doesn’t always lead to change that is desired and can actually harm the goal in the long run. It may take longer to get 80 people committed to take an action, but it is more powerful than if only 10 people show up for an action.

Organizing takes time, many one to one meetings that feel insurmountable.

Jessica J. Tang
BTU President

MICHAEL McLAUGHLIN
16 years as BTU Elementary Field Rep. and the last two years as Secretary-Treasurer!

AND

MICHAEL J. MAGUIRE
for 13 years of integrity and commitment to the Boston Union Teacher newspaper!

See Michael Maguire’s thank you letter on page 2.

MICHAEL McLAUGHLIN
on his retirement!

Jessica Tang
BTU President

MICHAEL J. MAGUIRE
for 13 years of integrity and commitment to the Boston Union Teacher newspaper!

See Michael Maguire’s thank you letter on page 2.
The film Intergeneration follows a group of Boston teens in an after-school program as they forge relationships with Boston elders during the early stages of the pandemic. A glimpse into an educational process beautifully visualized through the teens’ hand-made, stop-motion animation, the film shows the power of cross-generational storytelling to build community in a time of crisis. https://www.intergenerationfilm.com/

Carolyne Shadid Lewis, BPS parent and filmmaker, recently released a film that was made in collaboration with the Bridge program of the Eliot School School of Fine and Applied Arts. Carolyn thought it would be great to bring the community elders together with teens to share their stories about growing up in the Boston area and to experiment with animation. Carolyn, who has a background in art, always loved to tell stories through art. Her first job was animating distance learning coursework at an Army College in Kassam for soldiers who were deploying to Iraq and Afghanistan.

“My dad was in the military and we talked about the long history of generational memories that we would have a hard time sharing.” Using animation is a way to allow the stories to take life. My interest was intergenerational connection and the mentorship that can happen. In this project, during the Covid-quarantine, the elders were there for the teens and the teens were there for the elders who were really isolated. The teens gave them perspective on their lives; it was a mutually beneficial relationship for both sides.

“This film is important because it taps into a social emotional element that teens need right now. We need to ground young people in a historical context where they can understand themselves within a society that has a greater good.”

“In making this film, I was changed by the process. I received wisdom from both the teens and the elders. It was an amazing experience. I still talk to the elders and they talk to me and their stories keep them going. It has been so beneficial to me beyond the class.”

“This wonderful film is perfect for classroom use and for teacher professional development. Colorful animation techniques bring the stories of elders to life. The narrators share their oral history illustrating the experiences of people of color who emigrated to Dorchester and Roxbury over the last century. Stories include experiences of navigating issues of race and how the narrators acted as change agents in their lives. These stories are animated by student artists who then share their own stories and experiences from family reunions, like doing the chores Sunday mornings to feelings of isolation during quarantine.

Intergeneration has been accepted for a national public television broadcast on PBS member stations next year. Teachers can contact Carolyn Shadid Lewis through the films site: https://www.intergenerationfilm.com/

Here is where you can request information about an educational license or to book a screening: https://www.intergenerationfilm.com/book-a-screening

Commentary Anne Slater

InterGeneration: Local Filmmaker Uses Animation to Connect BPS Teens and Local Elders

We saw this in action at our Up Schools this past year as well. A small group of Up BTU members at one of the Holland schools saw the inequity of their long hours and less pay. Together, with the support of BTU staff, they took the time to make an organizing plan that would test and see if it was a widely and widely felt issue—not just at the Up Holland, but also at the other two Up schools. They also created an organizing plan that would anticipate needed escalation and strategy. The result was a campaign for “Equal Pay for Equal Work” that involved structure tests and organizing across all three schools. Ultimately, we were able to win contract language that ensures that all of the teachers at the Up Schools at minimum have the Schedule A Pay for the additional hours they work. Oftentimes a small minority of individuals in a school can believe in a righteous cause and decide to take some sort of action on their own because they feel they have to “do something.” However, despite the good intent, if others in the school are not engaged and also organized to take action, it can actually create more divisiveness amongst the staff. It can also create a harmful environment where Building Reps become targets of retaliation or where staff become pit against each other. Doing the work to get a supermajority of BTU members in agreement both about the problems and solutions as well as what actions to take to get the solutions needed can take time and feel slow or frustrating, but in the long-run it strengthens the outcomes and is an opportunity to build power and activate others to take action and build their organizing muscles. This enables us to then be more proactive, and less reactive.

Anne Slater
Boston Union Teacher
Co-Editor

Verba volant, scripta manent.

Organizing for Change:
“We Are All The Union” and the Answer is “All of Us!”

(continued from page 1)

Dear Union Sisters and Brothers,

After thirteen years of co-editing the Boston Union Teacher newspaper, I am stepping down. I have been a source of my own expectations. I want to thank former BTU president Richard Stutman for luring me to fill the vacancy created when Mary Glynn retired, and I want to thank current BTU president Jessica Tang for keeping me on.

Over the years I have had the pleasure of working with very fine union activists and truly remarkable co-editors: Garret Virchick, COLUMN Whyte, and Anne Slater. I shall miss working with Anne and wish my replacement all the luck in the world.

I shall stay involved in our union— and in our classrooms — as I am not retiring from either. I still have a few years left in me, so I want to pass my position on to a different classroom teacher, so that that person can bring a new perspective to the job.

I say classroom teacher because on the Executive Board this year I fought for and won the continuation of the practice that the co-editors of the newspaper be classroom teachers. There had been a plan to fold the editorship of the newspaper into a newly-created Communication Assistant. I believe that school-based personnel should be in charge of stories about and by school-based personnel. Secure in the knowledge that the newspaper will stay in the hands of classroom union members, I now take my leave.

Wishing you a restful summer,
Michael J. Maguire

Phone Numbers

Office:………………617-288-2000
Health & Welfare………..617-288-1940
AFT Massachusetts…………617-423-3342
Function Office…………617-288-5522
Eastern Reps Office…………617-379-7033
Vermont Credit Union……..802-832-5420

Wishing you a restful summer,
Michael J. Maguire
The new teacher's contract states, “BPS will reimburse teachers up to $3,000 during their employment with the BPS for the cost of obtaining another license required by BPS for the teacher’s position, including but not limited to those work- ing under a waiver or emergency license. Teacher has not been granted an R.A. and has received a termination letter from the BPS, they ARE eligible to collect Unem- ployment Compensation.”

To obtain more information, call the Massachusetts Division of Employment via the web www.deaa.org/workers/ howtofile.htm or by phone Federal Services at 1-877-626-6800 or 617-626-6800. Hours are Monday-Thursday 8:30 am-6:30 pm; Friday 8:00 am-4:30 pm.

What does COBRA mean?

COBRA stands for the Consolidated Omnibus Reconciliation Act of 1985. It is the law that requires employers who offer group health insurance plans to the employees to give them the opportunity to stay on their group health insurance plan if they are no longer employed by the employer upon whose former employer isn’t eligible for health insurance cover- age through a spouse’s insurance.

If a teacher is terminated from the BPS/City of Boston they will be mailed information about COBRA benefits. For further inquiries concerning COBRA continuation coverage get in touch with the Health Benefits and Insurance Office, Room 807, City Hall. Give them a call at 617-635-4570.

If move, get a new phone or email address and update it on the HUB does BPS automatically notify the BTU?

No. You must contact the BTU direct- ly to update changes of address, phone or email address.

What is the severance pay policy in the BPS for teachers?

The BPU Contract details, “Persons who retire, resign, or die after ten (10) years of teaching in the BPS shall be paid at the rate of 40% of accumulated, unused sick days without limitation. Pay- ment shall be based on the annual rate of pay of the person at the time of death, retirement or resignation. In the event of death, payment shall be made to the estate.” “...‘severance shall be paid in two installments. One half of the payment shall be made before December 31 of the year of retirement, and the other half shall be paid on or before December 31 of the year after retirement.”

Is summer school treated like the regular school year contractually?

No, it is not. Summer school is not governed by the collective bargaining agreement in the same way the standard school year is. Some time ago the BTU took the issue of summer school salary not being retirement worthy to court to demand that this earned income be retirement worthy. Unfortunately, the court ruled against the case. The BTU/ BPS contract report of the “School Department shall determine the sum- mer program curriculum, all aspects of operation and administration of the pro- gram, including employment of persons in the program, salary, hours, and conditions of employment. Employee participation in the summer programs is voluntary. Selection of employees shall be as deter- mined by the [school] Department.”

What can be done if someone is being harassed in the BPS?

The BPS has a Superintendent’s Circu- lar #EQT-4 ‘Non-Discrimination and Zero Tolerance Policy,’ which outlines BPS’s commitment to “maintaining an educational environment and workplace where bigotry and intolerance, including discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, disability or age have no place, and where any form of intimida- tion, threat, coercion and/or harassment that results the dignity of others and inter- feres with their freedom to learn or work is unacceptable.”

The circular emphasizes; “Therefore, any form of discrimination or harassment (as described [in the body of the circular]), of any BPS student or employee shall be viewed as serious misconduct and shall result in discipline, up to and including termination of the offending employee or expulsion of the responsible student.”

The circular encourages everyone to review the circular in its entirety and if after doing so feels com- pelled to report such matters as set forth should do so in Superintendent’s Circu- lar #EQT-2 ‘Employee Grievances of Discrimination or Harassment,’ #EQT-3 ‘Student Grievances of Discrimination or Harassment’. For additional info contact BPS Equity Office at 617-635-9650.

There are also State and Federal rem- edies outlined at the end of Superintendent’s Circular #EQT-4 to file complaints concerning harassment with the (MCAD) Massachusetts Commission Against Dis- crimination 617-994-0600 or the United States Equal Opportunity Commission (EEOC) located in the JFK Federal Building in Boston.
The BTU Election Committee would like to thank ALL the members who ran for office. This is a big commitment of time and resources and helps to keep our union vibrant. Thanks also to ALL who participated by VOTING. 1,977 members voted by mail and 117 members made their way to the hall to vote in person. Thanks to Michelle Frank from the BTU office for her assistance in keeping membership lists updated and supporting the election process from start to finish. This was the third election run by MK Elections and again we were very pleased with the process. Only 59 ballots were returned as undeliverable and 126 replacement ballots were issued.

Please be sure to fill out the survey in the E-Bulletin to provide feedback about the election process. This helps the election committee sum up and make improvements.

Congratulations and thanks to all the officers who serve so diligently sometimes literally day and night and to those who volunteer their time on the RTC, Executive Board, Paraprofessional Council and as Delegates.

The results of the election are as follows:

**BTU OFFICERS**

**President**
- Jessica Tang (BTU Office) .................................................. 1,786

**Vice President**
- Erik Berg (BTU Office) .................................................. 1,698

**Secretary-Treasurer**
- Karen Cross (Murphy K-8) ........................................... 1,199
- Trevor Smith (Boston Latin School) ................................. 693

**Political Director**
- Johnny McInnis (BTU Office) ........................................... 1,741

**Elementary Field Representative**
- Lea-Antoinette Serena (BTU Office) ................................. 709

**Secondary Field Representative**
- Caren Carew (BTU Office) ............................................... 752

**Paraprofessional/Substitute/ABA Field Representative**
- Colleen Hart (BTU Office) .................................................. 264

**EXECUTIVE BOARD**

- Brenda Chaney (Retired) .................................................. 1,159
- James (Timo) Philip (Retired) ........................................... 1,048
- Michael Maguire (Boston Latin Academy) ......................... 1,041
- Alice Yong (Retired) .......................................................... 1,010
- Robert P. Carroll (Retired) .............................................. 809
- Allison Doherty (Fenway High School) ......................... 710
- Caitlin Gaffney (Maurice Tobin K-8) .............................. 687
- CasSandra Samuel (Curley K-8) ........................................ 658
- Nicole Mullen (Boston Arts Academy) ............................. 601
- Matthew Ruggiero (Charlestown High School) ............... 598
- Cecil Carey (Charlestown High School) ......................... 593
- Kafunda Banks (ABA Special Ed.) ................................. 582
- Danielle West (Curley K-8) ............................................. 552
- A. Vanessa LaRocque (Madison Park) .............................. 527
- Keisha Lewis (Fenway High School) .............................. 467
- Maria Brooks (Mather Elementary School) ....................... 446
- Michelle Carroll (O’Donnell Elementary School) ........... 444
- Tracy Doyle (Perry K-8) .................................................. 392
- Tracy Romain (Chittick Elementary School) .................. 324

**RETIRED TEACHERS CHAPTER**

**Chair**
- Marilyn Marion (Retired) .............................................. 975

**Vice Chair**
- Roz Avant (Retired) ...................................................... 947

**Treasurer**
- Mae Bishop (Retired) .................................................... 944

**Secretary**
- Joan Devlin (Retired) .................................................... 961

**PARAPROFESSIONAL COUNCIL**

- CasSandra Samuel (Curley K-8) ..................................... 157
- A. Vanessa LaRocque (Madison Park) ......................... 146
- Christine Buttiglieri (Retired) ..................................... 126
- Adrianne Jordan (Sumner Elementary School) ............... 123
- Debra Brown (Kenny Elementary School) ...................... 122
- Sharon O’Dwyer (Joseph Lee K-8) .............................. 121
- Todd Kerr (Coverage Para) ........................................... 120
- Mary Thomas (Curley K-8) ........................................... 106
- Sau “Kitty” Yip (Josiah Quincy Elementary School) .. 106
- Bianca Pierre (Beethoven Elementary School) .......... 103
- Tracy Romain (Chittick Elementary School) ............. 100
- Cynthia Ferris (Perry K-8) ............................................ 99
- Sacha Ruiz (Fenway High School) ............................. 98

Thank You for Voting in the Boston Teachers Union 2023 Election!
DELEGATES
(Listed in order of voting results – cut-offs for representation at affiliated bodies will be determined at a later date based on these results.)

Jessica Tang (BTU Office) ........................................... 1,066
Caren Carew (BTU Office) ........................................... 1,025
Brenda Chaney (Retired) ........................................... 899
Erik Berg (BTU Office) ........................................... 898
Alice M. Yong (Retired) ........................................... 832
James (Timo) Philip (Retired) ................................... 802
Michael Maguire (Boston Latin Academy) .................. 781
Karen Cross (Murphy K-8) ......................................... 753
Thomas Gosnell (Retired) ........................................... 750
Johnny McInnis (BTU Office) ...................................... 698
Marilyn Marion (Retired) ........................................... 663
Mary Ann Urban (Retired) ......................................... 645
Robert P. Carroll (Retired) ........................................ 614
Betsy Drinan (Retired) .............................................. 605
Colleen Hart (BTU Office) .......................................... 603
Roz Avant (Retired) ................................................ 599
Joan Devlin (Retired) .............................................. 578
Charles Johnson (Retired) ......................................... 538
Mae Bishop (Retired) .............................................. 533
Paul Titter (BTU Office) ............................................. 494
Allison Doherty (Fenway High School) ....................... 479
Trevour Smith (Boston Latin School) ......................... 478
Maritza Agrait (Retired) ........................................... 463
Josefina Lascano (Retired) ......................................... 443
CasSandra Samuel (Curley K-8) ................................. 438
Caitlin Gaffny (Maurice Tobin K-8) ......................... 428
Cecil Carey (Charlestown High School) ..................... 425
Paul Tenney (Retired) ............................................. 420
Lea-Antoinette Serena (BTU Office) ......................... 397
Gayle Marrow (Retired) ........................................... 392
Denise Berkley (Retired) .......................................... 388
Sherry Pedrone (Retired) ......................................... 388
Matthew Ruggiero (Charlestown High School) ........... 380
John Simonton (Retired) ......................................... 378
Kaufunda Banks (ABA Special Ed.) .......................... 372
Marjie Crosby (Retired) ........................................... 368
Christine Buttiglieri (Retired) .................................... 360
Natalia Cuadra-Saez (BTU Office) ......................... 350
Michael Crain (Retired) ........................................... 349
A. Vanessa LaRocque (Madison Park) ...................... 345
Kristen Pinto (Retired) ........................................... 343
Nicole Mullen (Boston Arts Academy) .................... 339
Karen M. Wood (Boston Latin Academy) .................... 317
Kimvy Nguyen (SpED Services Coordinator) ............. 317
Keisha Lewis (Fenway High School) ......................... 316
Danielle West (Curley K-8) ....................................... 308
Catherine O’Flaherty (Boston Latin School) ............... 304
Diane Crain (Retired) ........................................... 303
José Valenzuela (Boston Latin Academy) .................. 293
Nora Paul-Schultz (O’Byant High School) ................. 289
Teresa Underwood (Retired) .................................... 288

Lucinda Mills (Counseling Services) ......................... 286
Darren Wells (Trotter K-8) ......................................... 280
Thomas Hocker (Retired) ........................................ 278
Regina Temple (Retired) ......................................... 273
Michelle Carroll (O’Donnell Elementary School) ........ 267
Teresa Reaves (Retired) ......................................... 264
Dana Royster-Buefort (Retired) ............................... 259
Layla Cable (Retired) ........................................... 254
Maria Brooks (Mather Elementary School) ............... 254
Erika Kouka (BTU Office) ........................................ 253
Paul Christian Jr. (O’Byant High School) ................. 244
Sylvaine Lestrade (Trotter K-8) ................................. 241
Katina McClain (BTU Office) .................................. 239
Adrienne Jordan (Sumner Elementary School) ........... 235
Debra Brown (Kenny Elementary School) ................. 232
Carla Johnson (Shaw Elementary School) .................. 229
Tatiana Williams-Rodriguez (Boston Latin Academy) 221
Francesca Faure (ABA Special Ed.) .......................... 202
James Cordero (East Boston High School) ................. 198
John Enright (Madison Park) .................................. 193
Declan Power (Succeed Boston) .............................. 193
Karin Kilamin-Patruin (Sumner Elementary School) ... 195
Jukurious Davis (Teaching & Learning [Elementary]) .... 152
Stephanie Wing (Gardner Pilot School) .................... 149
Mary Bell (Mattahunt Elementary School) ................. 148
Heather King (Orchard Gardens K-8) ....................... 148
Marta Johnson Faldsaz (Roosevelt Lower School) ...... 147
Josette Teneus (Charlestown High School) ............... 145
Randi Davis (Gardner Pilot Academy) ...................... 144
Nina Lessin-Joseph (Holmes Elementary School) ..... 140
Amy Gebo (Lee Academy Pilot School) .................... 139
James Kennedy (Marganta Muñiz Academy) .............. 134
Suzanne McGlone (James W. Hannigan K-8) ............ 134
Molly Bryson (Succeed Boston) ............................... 125
Katie Mallon (Holmes Elementary School) ............... 124
Samantha Weintraub (Sumner Elementary School) .... 121
Cynthia Ferris (Oliver Hazard Perry K-8) ................. 117
Chelsea Ruscio (Dudley Street Charter School) ........... 113
Elisa Sota (Mather Elementary School) ..................... 111
Samantha Laney (Holmes Elementary School) .......... 93
Connor Echols-Jones (Perkins Elementary School) ..... 78
BUILDING REPRESENTATIVES OF THE YEAR

SECONDARY EDUCATION

By Careen Carew, BTU Secondary Field Representative

I’m proud to announce the 2023 Secondary BTU Building Reps of the year.

The English High School has had a storied history as the first public high school in the country. It boasts a strong and proud alumni association. While the last couple of decades have been challenging for EHS with DESE intervention, being a Commonwealth Pilot School followed by Turn Around designation then by Level 4.5 status, The EHS staff and community have worked hard to live up to its potential and this year that hard work, hope and belief paid off when, after over 13 years, it earned an exit to its TA status. An EHS BTU Building Representative, Frank Swoboda was heavily involved in preparing for and participating in DESE Monitoring Site Visits over the many years to demonstrate the effective work of EHS BTU members as well as the ongoing success and progress of their students. When DESE finally recognized their school’s achievement of their goals, Frank and his fellow two BTU Reps, convened several meetings to identify BTU member priorities for their revised working and teaching conditions followed by several more meetings with BTU and BPS leaders to represent the views of the EHS BTU membership in order to negotiate a new, more equitable working agreement.

Frank has taught history for 11 years in BPS all at The English High School and has been a BTU Rep since 2016. The EHS School Site Council was defunct in 2017, so he spearheaded its re-start and is proud that 21 diverse BTU members including teachers, paras, social workers and school counselors have served on SSC since then. He successfully organized and brought back the Faculty Senate in 2020 after five years without any meetings. He’s served on a teacher-led Data Team to track student progress and develop interventions around school culture, academics & instruction and SEL. Frank’s served on ILT & co-facilitated the history department and has been a part of establishing a school-wide grading policy. While chartering for EHS Outdoor Adventure Club and Sapere Aude travel program, he’s taken students to the White Mountains, Italy, France, Germany, Czech Republic, and Greece. When his feet have been firmly planted in the halls of English High, he’s been a very reliable BTU Building Representative in supporting colleagues in disciplinary Investigatory Meetings as well. Frank has also been an outstanding and diligent BTU Building Representative. A teacher for 27 years, in BPS at BLA preceded by teaching at the BPS Curley Middle, O’Flaherty has also been an outstanding and diligent BTU Building Representative. Cathy has consistently been a go-to person attending Investigatory Meetings as well as other potential disciplinary meetings with her BTU colleagues. You may think that being a BTU Rep at an exam school is a breeze. If so, you’d be very wrong. The breeze can turn into a tsunami pretty quickly, which has occurred on a number of occasions at BLA. Currently, there have been an ongoing series of challenges with administration which have required a plethora of interventions, mediations, meetings and organizing. This type of activity can be a delicate balance of collaboration and when that activity is less than efficacious, taking action. When engaged in the real work of trying to improve conditions, communication, and school climate, there can be anxiety, despair and anger. How to manage these reactions by oneself and colleagues takes experience, the ability to listen, speak up and effectively work with others in order to try to achieve an outcome supportive of the BTU members and that is beneficial to our students. Cathy works effectively with her fellow BLA BTU Building Reps and Faculty Senate members towards achieving these goals despite set-backs and road blocks that could make one feel as if they were hitting a wall. Never daunted, she continues to support and work with her fellow BTU members towards a better BLA for the entire community. Ever involved in the BTU, Cathy is also a member of the BTU Election Committee in between taking the Pathways Program for Moderate Disabilities, earning National Board Certification and being a Teach to Lead participant.

These two BTU Building Representatives can multi-task successfully as both effective educators and effective union leaders and I thank them and the many like them in our schools and members of our union for pouring their heart and soul into making the world a better place, one kind act at a time.

ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

By Lea-Antoinette Serenza, BTU Elementary Field Representative

Maria Brooks has been an active building rep for years. She collaboratively works things out on the school level and is always thinking about solutions. In the midst of lots of changes at the Mather Elementary School between inclusion, sixth grade expansion, and a new dual language program just to name a few. Maria has kept the Mather educators moving and motivated. Maria has been the building rep under at least four different principals and has still been able to support in keeping staff culture positive and pushing towards solutions! She was previously part of the E-board and Inclusion Done Right committee. She is never missing from a BTU social or conference. She is also truly a mobilizer, always thinking about who to bring into leadership and who to uplift. She is supportive and patient. Maria Brooks is truly one of a kind building rep!

PARAPROFESSIONAL

By Colleen Hart, BTU Paraprofessional Field Representative

Awilda Concepcion, Blackstone, as we all fondly know her as Ms. Giggi. Awilda has been building rep for five years at the Blackstone. She is a member of the parc council. Giggi is someone who is the first one to say, “What do you need?” and “I got this!” You can always count on her. Must like she supports her colleagues at Blackstone, she also supports her fellow council members and paraprofessionals. She brings light into a room. I am grateful to have her as a fellow paraprofessional and a council member and a BTU sister.

Here are some words from some of her co-workers:

“Giggi is the best.”

“She is motivated and energetic. She wants everyone involved/incldued and wants everyone informed.”

“You couldn’t ask for more from a building rep. Truly a blessing.”

“I would like to say, Thank you Awilda (Giggi) for all you do for your fellow BTU members and your students at Blackstone. Congratulations.”

“Tracy keeps us informed and always there for us.”

Thank you Tracy for all you do for your fellow BTU members and your students and families at Chittick. Congratulations.

KAREN CROSS is not only our newly-elected Secretary-Treasurer but an amazing building rep. She is inquisitive and solution oriented. Karen has led her school gracefully, always making sure to ask questions before making decisions and trying to include her school in all union activities. She supported students in participating in our Lunar New Year celebrations and even had students outside on election day! She has dressed up as Pete the Cat in our book fair and taken advantage of many union opportunities! She is part of APALA and racial justice standing committee, and has been a member organizer. There is nothing Karen will not do for the members at the Murphy or all of us here at the BTU!”
The American Federation of Teachers is a union of professionals that champions fairness, democracy, economic opportunity, and high-quality public education, healthcare and public services for our students, their families and our communities. We are committed to advancing these principles through community engagement, organizing, collective bargaining and political activism, and especially through the work our members do.

Every year, AFT Massachusetts awards thousands of dollars in scholarships to eligible high school seniors who are dependents of AFT Massachusetts members. The awards, named in honor of former AFT leaders Kathy Kelley, Albert Shanker and Sandra Feldman, and for long-time AFT Massachusetts field representative Jay Porter, are awarded on the basis of a labor history exam administered by the Massachusetts AFL-CIO.

“We don’t do this for the money. We wouldn’t be in these professions if we didn’t believe that the labor movement, public education, and what we do are more important than a paycheck.”

Randi Weingarten at the AFT-Massachusetts Annual Convention

Sandra Feldman Scholarship Award

Declan Hocker, Archbishop Williams, is the son of two BTU members: Tom Hocker (retired) and Karen Wood (BLA). Declan Hocker was not in attendance for the award ceremony because he was competing in the USA Men’s Eastern National Gymnastics Competition, where he placed 6th in the nation (4th on vault, and 3rd on high bars!). Way to go, Declan. His 5th grade teacher, Karen Cross, accepted the award on his behalf.
We have audited the accompanying financial statements of Boston Teachers Union (a nonprofit organization), which comprise the statements of financial position as of August 31, 2022 and 2021, and the related statements of activities, and cash flows for the years then ended, and the related notes to the financial statements.

In our opinion, the financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of Boston Teachers Union as of August 31, 2022 and 2021, and the changes in its net assets and its cash flows for the years then ended, in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

1. Basis for Opinion
   We conducted our audits in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditors' Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements section of our report. We are required to be independent of Boston Teachers Union and to meet our other ethical requirements as an audit firm that according to our knowledge is not subject to any disqualification impairments.

2. Responsibilities of Management for the Financial Statements
   Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of these financial statements in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America, for design, implementation, and maintenance of internal control relevant to the preparation of and fair presentation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

3. Auditors' Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements
   Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free of material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not absolute assurance and therefore is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists.

4. Auditors' Responsibilities under Those Standards
   In our opinion, the financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of Boston Teachers Union as of August 31, 2022 and 2021, and the changes in its net assets and its cash flows for the years then ended, in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

5. Materiality
   The materiality thresholds used by us in performing our audit were $3,707,000 and $3,523,000 for 2022 and 2021, respectively. An audit involves performing procedures to obtain evidence regarding the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

6. Report on Other Financial Information
   We have audited the related schedules of other financial information, which are considered part of the financial statements for purposes of generally accepted accounting principles. Our report expresses an opinion on the other financial information based on our audit of the financial statements.
1. Organization and Nature of Activities

Boston Teachers Union (the Union) is a nonprofit labor union organized, funded and managed by current and retired school teachers and paraprofessionals working in the Boston area. Support is primarily derived from union member dues.

2. Summary of Significant Accounting Policies

Basis of Presentation

The financial statements of Boston Teachers Union are prepared on the accrual basis of accounting, and in accordance with the Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB) Accounting Standards Update (ASU) 2016-14, Presentation of Financial Statements of Not-for-Profit Entities. As such, net assets are reported within two net asset classifications: without donor restrictions and with donor restrictions. Descriptions of the two net asset categories are as follows:

- **Net Assets Without Donor Restrictions**: Net assets available for use in general operations and not subject to donor restrictions are recorded as “net assets without donor restrictions.” Assets restricted solely through the actions of the Executive Board are referred to as Executive Board designated and are also reported as net assets without donor restrictions.

- **Net Assets With Donor Restrictions**: Contributions restricted by donors are reported as increases in net assets without donor restrictions if the restrictions expire (that is, when a stipulated time restriction ends or purpose restriction is accomplished) in the reporting period in which the revenue is recognized. All other donor-restricted contributions are reported as increases in “net assets with donor restrictions,” depending on the nature of the restrictions. When a restriction expires, net assets with donor restrictions are reclassified to net assets without donor restrictions and reported in the Statement of Activities and Changes in Net Assets as net assets released from donor restrictions.

3. Investments

The Union held investments in mutual funds invested in equities and bonds that are classified in their entirety based upon the lowest level of input that is significant to the fair value measurement.

4. Fair Value Measurement

Accounting standards define fair value as the price that the Union would receive upon selling an investment in a timely transaction to an independent buyer in the principal or most advantageous market of the investment and provides a framework for calculating fair value. That framework provides a fair value hierarchy that prioritizes the inputs to valuation techniques used to measure fair value. The hierarchy gives the highest priority to unadjusted quoted prices in active markets for identical assets or liabilities (level 1 measurements) and the lowest priority to unobservable inputs (level 3 measurements). Inputs may be observable or unobservable. Observable inputs are inputs that reflect the assumptions market participants would use in pricing the asset or liability developed based on market data obtained from sources independent of the reporting entity. Unobservable inputs are inputs that reflect the reporting entity’s own assumptions about the assumptions market participants would use in pricing the asset or liability developed based on the best information available in the circumstances.

The three levels of the fair value hierarchy are described below:

- **Level 1**: Unadjusted quoted market prices in active markets for identical assets or liabilities at the reporting date.
- **Level 2**: Observable inputs other than Level 1 unadjusted quoted market prices such as quoted market prices for similar assets or liabilities in markets, quoted prices for identical or similar assets or liabilities that are not active, and inputs other than quoted prices that are observable corroborated by observable market data.
- **Level 3**: Unobservable inputs that are supported by little or no market activity.

A financial instrument’s level within the fair value hierarchy is based on the lowest level of input that is significant to the fair value measurement. Following is a description of the valuation methodologies used for assets measured at fair value. There have been no changes in the methodologies used at August 31, 2022 and 2021.

Putnam Dynamic Asset Allocation Conservative Fund - A: Valued based on yields currently available on comparable securities of issuers with similar credit ratings.

Putnam Government Money Market Fund - A: Valued based on yields currently available on comparable securities of issuers with similar credit ratings.

The following tables present by level, within the fair value hierarchy, the Union’s investment assets at fair value, as of August 31, 2022 and 2021. Investment assets are classified in their entirety based upon the lowest level of input that is significant to the fair value measurement.

**Assets at Fair Value as of August 31, 2022**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Fair Value</th>
<th>Quoted Prices In Active Market for Identical Assets (Level 1)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dynamic Asset Allocation Conservative Fund A</td>
<td>$7,309,623</td>
<td>$7,309,623</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government Money Market Fund - A</td>
<td>2,017,015</td>
<td>2,017,015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>9,326,638</td>
<td>9,326,638</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Assets at Fair Value as of August 31, 2021**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Fair Value</th>
<th>Quoted Prices In Active Market for Identical Assets (Level 1)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dynamic Asset Allocation Conservative Fund A</td>
<td>$8,432,446</td>
<td>$8,432,446</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government Money Market Fund - A</td>
<td>2,010,546</td>
<td>2,010,546</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>10,443,392</td>
<td>10,443,392</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. Risks and Uncertainties

The Union invests in various investment securities. Investment securities are exposed to various risks such as interest rate, market, and credit risks. Due to the level of risk associated with certain investment securities, it is at least reasonably possible that changes in the values of investment securities will occur in the near term and that such changes could materially affect the amounts reported in the statement of financial position.

6. Transactions with Related Entities

The Union rents office and conference room space from a related entity, B.T.U. H.W.F. Building Corporation, on a tenant-at-will basis, and pays rent for the entire space. Payments to B.T.U. H.W.F. Building Corporation totaled $126,507 and $121,350, respectively, for the years ended August 31, 2022 and 2021.

**continued on page 10**
7. Retired Teachers’ Benefits
Effective July 31, 1987, dues paid to the Union by retired teachers and retired paraprofessionals for two consecutive years qualify them to participate in eye care benefits. Eyeglasses will be provided not more frequently than once in any 24-month period. Full details of benefits and limitations are described in “Guidelines for Retirees Eyeglass Benefit”.

8. Retirement Plan Contribution
The employees of the Union participate in a defined contribution retirement plan. The Union’s contributions are equal to 10% of the annual salary of participating employees plus administration fees. The Union’s contributions to the plan totaled $200,732 and $195,060 respectively, for the years ended August 31, 2022 and 2021.

9. Advertising
Advertising costs are charged to expense when incurred. Advertising expense was $3,440 and $0 for the years ended August 31, 2022 and 2021, respectively.

10. AFT National Board Certification Grant
In July 2019, the Union received a National Board Certification grant from the American Federation of Teachers in the amount of $20,865 to provide professional facilitator training and to support the Union to related efforts in its General Fund. The grant was an award of $168,330 on March 25, 2022. The Union was reimbursed $72,000 from the Union’s insurer in connection with the grant.

11. Defense Fund Grants/Legal General Union Issues
For the fiscal years ended August 31, 2022 and 2021, the Union received $107,217 and $65,892 respectively, in defense fund grants from AFT and AFT Massachusetts to help defray legal costs incurred in defense of BITU members. General Union issue legal fees, net of these grants, incurred in the fiscal years ended August 31, 2022 and 2021, totaled $3,523 and $3,707, respectively.

12. Legal Settlement
In early 2021, the Internal Revenue Service commenced an audit of the Boston Teachers Union #66 Money Purchase Pension Plan (“the Plan”) which is a pension plan for employees and officers of the Boston Teachers Union. In the course of this audit, it was discovered that during the plan year ended August 31, 2019, the Plan permitted a substantial distribution of one participant’s account without first obtaining the correct paperwork, resulting in an improper distribution. As a result of the improper distribution, the IRS and the Plan reached an agreement in March 2022 on the terms of settlement. Pursuant to the settlement, as the Plan is an individual retirement account plan, the Boston Teachers Union, as the owner of the Plan, made a lump sum payment of $118,330 on March 25, 2022. The Union was reimbursed $72,000 from the Union’s insurer in connection with the audit.

13. Liquidity
At August 31, 2022, financial assets and liquidity resources available for general expenditures within one year of the Statement of Financial Position date comprised the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cash</td>
<td>$5,790,630</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investments</td>
<td>9,326,638</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accounts Receivable</td>
<td>411,789</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepaid Expenses</td>
<td>239,586</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$15,768,643</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As part of the Union’s liquidity management, it has policies to structure its financial assets to be available as its general expenditures, liabilities and other obligations become due.

14. Evaluation of Subsequent Events
The Union has evaluated subsequent events through April 19, 2023, the date which the financial statements were available to be issued.

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Teach Earth Fellowship:
K2 teacher Elizabeth Self Gets Ready to Count Some Caterpillars

By Elizabeth Self

I found out about the Earth Watch organization and the Teach Earth fellowship through the BTU professional development newsletter. Earth Watch is a group that helps scientists find willing hands to help them complete their field studies by recruiting researchers, teachers with students who want to learn more about scientific field work so that they can enrich science instruction in their classroom. The Teach Earth fellowship helps teachers acquire these stipends by providing grants to cover the program fees and associated travel costs.

I worry a lot about climate change, and I see the effects of it on my students here in East Boston daily. I wrote to Teach Earth in my application about how I wanted my students to experience science in a more hands-on way so that they could understand, in a tangible and age-appropriate way, how the Earth needs care and what they can do to help. I was lucky enough to be awarded with a fellowship for this summer.

This July, I am going to fly out to Nevada and join a group of like-minded teachers to count caterpillars and collect evidence of the parasites that control caterpillar populations there. In addition to completing the field research, our itinerary includes activities designed in which we meet in grade-level groups and discuss how we can “flip” our experiences into learning opportunities for students. The goal is to leave having contributed to original research, to document the changes to our living world due to climate change, and to have a plan ready for students to conduct their own research experience, as well.

I hope to report back on my experiences after I return!

I am grateful for the opportunities that the BTU in general and the professional development newsletter in particular have provided me since I began teaching here in Boston. I would encourage anyone who is considering this program to send me any questions they have about it in the fall. I can be reached at marion@btu.org.

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About Earthwatch:
Earthwatch’s long-running Teach Earth fellowship, launched in 1975, is one of the few programs in the country that embeds teachers with world-class scientists on active research expeditions. By taking part in meaningful, hands-on research in the field, teachers return to school with a fresh perspective and are better able to engage their students on topics of science and environmental stewardship.

Teach Earth fellows step out of the classroom for 7 to 14 days and work alongside scientists to study nature, learning real-world research protocols, and recording observations and measurements in the field. They collect data that underpin scientific progress and, over time, change the world. In the evenings, teachers fellow work together to brainstorm new lesson plans that will bring science to life in the classroom.

Apply at earthwatch.org/education

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Retired Teachers Chapter
Joan Devlin, RTC Secretary

Retirees Year in Review

Thank you so much!

The election for the BTU and RTC officers was held with members voting both in person and by mailed ballot. The RTC officers were uncontr.

About Thank you so much!

The election for the BTU and RTC officers was held with members voting both in person and by mailed ballot. The RTC officers were uncontrast.

Are you receiving the RTC e-bulletins?

If you are not receiving the RTC e-bulletin it is because we do not have your email address. Please contact the office and let us know what your email address is and we will add it to the list. We do not share your information with anyone.

This bulletin allows us to keep in touch with you about the latest information in the fastest possible way.

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Recruiting members new and old

We want all of our retirees to join the RTC. You may be a very recent retiree or perhaps you didn’t join because you didn’t know you had to make a new application to belong, you didn’t know we were here or you meant to do it but forgot.

We want everyone who receives a pension from the City of Boston because they worked in the Boston Public Schools and belonged to the Boston Teachers’ Union to join us. You can find out your pension check or obtained from the Boston Retirement Board. All are welcome.

In this post pandemic world, it is wise to review where we have been this year. As always, life deals us blows that are difficult and could be disastrous if we did not have such strong leadership at the committee level. We lost both of our Legislative Committee members co-chairs, and Larry resigned his position as the Legislative Chair and member of the Executive Board. We miss their wisdom and...
We met in person

The social committee outdid themselves this year. The committee headed by Mary Jo Murphy and Annemarie Aducci arranged the Fall luncheon, the Fall Business meeting, the Jazz Brunch, the Spring Luncheon and the Spring Business meeting. Each was a success. Venezia opened its doors to us for two luncheons. In the Fall (on a Monday when the restaurant is usually closed) and again in the Spring. We note that good food and company was enjoyed by all.

In December, we held the Jazz Brunch at Florian Hall. The social committee found the perfect caterer and our Jazz Band performed a miracle and had the entire place up and dancing. The Marines sent two wonderful young men to retrieve the incredible number of gifts from the Brunch participants. The Jazz Brunch is a great way to kick off the holiday season.

The two business meetings returned to the BTU hall and refreshments were served to start the meetings. We heard excellent speakers at both meetings, including a presentation by TruHearing, the company that provides hearing aid services for our members. They provided members an opportunity to take a brief hearing test. At each of the luncheons, we missed our good friend Mary Gaughan who always ran the half and half raffle. But our members jumped in to help and the raffle continues to be a tradition at the luncheons.

Pack your bags

Travel opportunities are once again possible check the website or our Facebook page for information about upcoming trips. Whether it is a boat trip to the Encore Casino or a train to Mount Washington, we are traveling again.

Stay in touch

Office Hours for the RTC are Wednesday and Thursday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Call us if we can provide information or assistance with our benefits or programs or to update your information.
Joyce Kilmer K-8 School

The Joyce Kilmer K-8 School serves about 400 students at two sites in West Roxbury, surrounded mostly by single family homes with a distinct suburban feel. Both buildings are tight on space, however, with tiny basement ‘cateria’ areas and no gym.

In a paved area in front of the Lower Campus, P.E. teacher Shannon Wyman demonstrates how to throw and catch while her K1 students practice their stance, arm movements, and how to cup their hands to receive a ball. Inside, Mike Ballasalle and Chuck Roderick help first and second grade ABA students learn vowel sounds. In Paul Kearnan’s third grade class upstairs, students work in small groups as they try to persuade classmates that their favorite season is the best, using sentence starters to “keep the conversation going.”

‘Two miles away, at the Upper Campus building, fourth graders in Shandalea Abdul-Hadi’s class are reading and discussing themes in The Hope Chest. Across the hall, Danielle Moran’s fifth grade students take turns teaching their classmates about science topics they’ve researched, such as sound or shadows, complete with slide show presentations and assessment questions. After a lesson on hip hop, John Glennon takes his sixth grade music class outside to practice keeping a synchronized rhythm with bucket drums!’

The Kilmer’s ESOL teacher Beth Matlin says: “I appreciate the fact that my colleagues truly care about each other’s social and emotional well being. We check in with each other and support each other. It feels good to know that if I have a bad day, I can count on a colleague to check in and vice versa.”

A string of cut-out footsteps lines the stairway walls heading to middle school classrooms – “a Marathon of Kindness” – decorated and labeled with student notes of appreciation for teachers and classmates. I hope YOU feel appreciated as this challenging year comes to a close!

Amika Kemmler-Ernst, Ed.D.

amika45@gmail.com