

BOSTON TEACHERS UNION, LOCAL 66, AFT
180 Mount Vernon Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02125

3-208

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Permit No. 52088

Boston Union Teacher

The Award-Winning Newspaper of the Boston Teachers Union, AFT Local 66, AFL-CIO • Volume 58, Number 1 • September, 2026

President's Report Erik Berg

Looking Back, Looking Ahead!



Erik Berg
BTU President

The start of a new school year is always an exciting time! I distinctly remember sitting with my friend Jim on the city bus to my new high school as I started ninth grade, and feeling butterflies as I was both proud and anxious about what lay ahead of me. Whether you're a 5-year-old starting kindergarten for the first time, a 7th grader entering the big world of a 7-12 school, or a teacher starting the school year for the first time or the thirty-first time, there's a buzz, a sense of hope, and always a bit of anxiety.

And so it is with our union, leaping into a new school year with many accomplishments under our belt, much work left to be done, and new challenges in front of us. Let's start off by taking a look at some of our accomplishments of the past school year:

- We welcomed hundreds of new educators in BPS into our union;
- We implemented new contractual provisions including significant wage increases and workplace improvements;
- We organized to protect our immigrant students and their families;
- We turned out by the hundreds on Labor Day, at No Kings rallies and on May Day to protect our democracy in the face of unprecedented attacks;
- We settled first contracts at Neighborhood House and Codman Academy charter schools, bringing 200 workers into the union fold for the first time;
- We lifted up the voices of educators, students and families at schools announced for closure;
- We organized and fought against devastating cuts to our schools, and were able to restore dozens of positions that were slated to be cut (though far too many cuts went through);
- We lobbied for the PROTECT Act and a state budget that added funds to Boston, and got the Retirement Plus bill one step closer to reality.

We accomplished this through the power of organizing, at the school and work site, and through solidarity actions of thousands of BTU members. It is only through our unity that we are strong enough to make a difference in our schools!

Looking forward to the upcoming school year, we have a whole host of new challenges to confront. This is the part that gives me butterflies still, both because I am concerned about the challenges we face, and excited to take them on:

- Ensuring our elections are free and fair, and mobilizing if they are not;
- Supporting our endorsed candidates in the November election;
- Engaging in an inclusive, democratic process to develop a prioritized set of proposals for contract negotiations;
- Continuing to organize new workers into the union;
- Mobilizing our membership in support of our contract campaign;
- Negotiating a strong successor contract to our current agreement, which expires in August, 2027;
- Launching a campaign with a coalition of other groups to improve our school buildings in Boston;
- Fighting for an increase in the COLA base for our retirees;
- Ensuring that the harmful federal voucher program is not taken up in Massachusetts;
- Staving off further cuts and pushing for mergers and an inclusive process in place of school closures;
- Continuing to build a powerful, welcoming union that makes our schools better for students and for staff!

These are only some of the issues that we will take up as a union in the coming school year. We hope that you will join us in the effort to improve our city and our schools! Join a committee, attend a faculty senate meeting, come to a bargaining session, attend a party at the BTU -- ***we'd love to have you involved in our union!***

Welcome New Special Education Partner Paraprofessionals!



The Special Education Partner Paraprofessional Welcome Event was held at Josiah Quincy Lower School on August 19 and 20. **See articles and more photos on pages 16 & 17.**

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 3,000+ retirees.

What Are the BTU's Primary Responsibilities?

- Negotiate and enforce the contract
- Provide the best education we can for the system's 45,000+ students
- Work with the school community to ensure our schools are as good as they can be
- Represent the membership in all matters related to their professional work
- Answer job-related questions and assist in any job-related matter, i.e., help our members navigate through the Bolling Building bureaucracy
- Promote public education
- Promote the growth and well-being of our profession
- Work politically through COPE to elect pro-public education, pro-union candidates COPE or the Committee on Political Education is by federal and state law a separate entity within the BTU devoted to supporting candidates who support public education and who otherwise favor our positions on a variety of work-related issues.

The BTU is Affiliated With:

- American Federation of Teachers (AFT) AFL-CIO
- Massachusetts AFL-CIO
- AFT Massachusetts (formerly called the Massachusetts Federation of Teachers
- Greater Boston Labor Council (GBLC)

How to Get in Contact With the BTU

- Visit office at 180 Mount Vernon Street, Dorchester, MA 02125
- Business Hours, 8:00 am-5:00 pm, all workdays, except legal holidays – School Year
- Business Hours, 8:00 am-4:00 pm, all workdays, expect 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 Member Listserv

- Go to btu.org, enter the member portal in the upper-right corner

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 Boston Union Teacher?

The *Boston Union Teacher* is a newspaper written by the Boston Teachers Union for its members. The newspaper is edited by an editorial team composed of **Anne Slater,** COSE at the JFK Elementary School, **Cecil Carey,** History teacher at Charlestown High School and **Brendan Deady,** Communications Director for the BTU. The newspaper covers Boston Teachers Union and Labor News, as well as BPS policy updates and contractual information. It also includes a range of publications from and about our members, including what is going on at schools, as well as current educational trends and happenings. We encourage articles on diverse topics and issues and seek to maximize rank-and-file member participation. Please read and write for the *Boston Union Teacher!*

Submissions should be sent to both aslater@btu.org and ccarey@btu.org for consideration.The deadline is the Monday following each month's BTU membership meeting.

If you have questions, complaints or compliments about our content or feel that there has been an error or misprint in the paper, our policy dictates that the member submit a message via email to aslater@btu.org and ccarey@btu.org.

Queries will receive a reply within ten business days. The editors reserve the right to approve or reject submissions.

BTU Audit

Every year, per our union's bylaws, the BTU is required to conduct an audit and share the results with the membership. In lieu of printing it in this newspaper, please find the audit at btu.org behind the member portal.

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 Reps 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
Cecil Carey
Michelle Carroll
Brenda B. Chaney
Amrita Dani
Tom Gosnell
Nora Paul-Schultz
James "Timo" Philip
Bianca Pierre
Matt Ruggiero
Russ Weiss-Irwin
Danielle West

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

The *Boston Union Teacher* is published ten times a year September - July, inclusive.

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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.

All submissions should be sent to both ***aslater@btu.org*** and ***ccarey@btu.org*** for consideration.

If you have questions, complaints or compliments about our content or feel that there has been an error or misprint in the paper, our policy dictates that the member submit a message via email to ***aslater@btu.org*** and ***ccarey@btu.org***.

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DEADLINE:
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3-208

Know Your Rights Caren Carew

What's Our Union Doing To Combat the National Department of Education's New Student Loan Rule Declaring Many Degrees as "Non-Professional" Which Limits Federal Student Loan Support?



Caren Carew
BTU Secondary
Field Representative

According to a press release from our national Union, the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), a coalition of unions representing hundreds of thousands of public service and healthcare workers filed a lawsuit in August challenging the Department of Education's new Reimagining and Improving Student Education rule. The rule sets severe new limits on the amount of federal student loans students can borrow for graduate education in some of our countries' most critical and understaffed professions. This will make many professional workers ineligible for the higher caps it set for "professional" students. This will significantly affect degrees in advanced practice nursing, public health, social work, library sciences and more by considering these degrees to be ***"non-professional"***. That designation will significantly limit federal loan support.

The lawsuit argues that the Education Department's new rule illegally narrowed Congress' definition of a "professional degree". This new definition excludes essential public service professions under a regulation that has been in place for decades and was codified by Congress just last year. The administration is making the path to professional public service jobs unaffordable, thus hurting the communities they would serve as well.

The union coalition filing the suit includes the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, the AFT, National Nurses United and the AFL-CIO. The AFT represents 1.8 million pre-K through 12th-grade teachers; paraprofessionals and other school-related personnel; higher education faculty and professional staff; federal, state and local government employees; nurses and healthcare workers; and early childhood educators. The Boston Teachers Union is Local 66 of the AFT. Stay tuned to see how the lawsuit proceeds.

What is the Sick Bank and why is it important for me to donate to it?

If you get ill or injured and run out of sick days, what are you going to do? You never know when YOU will be in that position.

The Sick Bank Donation Program is a voluntary program where eligible BTU members can donate sick time hours to assist seriously ill or injured colleagues or have the same done for you when in need, when your sick leave/time has run out or become exhausted.

Check out the *Superintendent's Circular on Sick Leave (Bank) Donation Program HRS-PP15* for more specific info. Eligibility requires you to be a BTU member. If in the Teacher unit, you must be permanent or entering your fourth consecutive year of service. If in the Paraprofessional unit BTU members must have at least three consecutive years of service. You must donate one (1) sick day for inclusion in the program which is deducted from the donor's accumulated sick leave/time until the program runs low on days and requires another day to be donated (not required every SY, only when program days are depleted).

If in need of the sick days, the BTU recipient must have used all of their sick/personal time up, be on approved sick leave, have had judicious use of their sick time, and provide required Dr.'s note and application. Provided there is adequate sick leave (days) in the bank, the committee (that reviews the applications) has the authority to grant up to 30 days of sick leave to a recipient per school year. In exceptional cases, the committee may also grant additional 30-day increments, up to a maximum of 90 days for the members' BPS career. There are more specifics included in the circular. If the sick bank runs out of days because not enough members have donated, the eligible members cannot be granted days, even if eligible and in need. This happened this past school year to several deserving colleagues because enough folks did not donate a day. This was heartbreaking and disastrous for them. If time is awarded by the Sick Bank Donation Program, recipients can withdraw sick leave hours from the leave bank of days and maintain active pay status.

Open enrollment to donate to become a member this SY is between September 2-October 30, 2026. To donate, navigate to ess.boston.gov and select the ***"BTU Sick Bank Donation"*** tile. Read and acknowledge the terms and conditions, click ***"submit"***. Note: Submission of a donation to the Sick Bank program doesn't guarantee enrollment. You'll be sent a confirmation notice when accepted into the program. This is a voluntary program but once made, this submission can't be rescinded. The Sick Bank ran out of days a previous school year and was depleted so **EVERYONE** who wants to be a member **MUST** contribute. If you donated last SY and are a confirmed member, you do not have to reapply this SY. All others who are new members or who did not re-up membership last SY, need to apply.

What are the primary responsibilities of the BTU and with which groups are we affiliated?

The BTU is the exclusive collective bargaining agent for approximately 7,000 active teachers, other non-administrative/management related service providers, paraprofessionals and substitute teachers. There is also a retired teachers' chapter of over 3,000 retired teachers. The BTU promotes public school education, its importance in a democracy, and the continued improvement of its quality as well as the growth and quality of our profession.

The Boston Teachers Union negotiates and enforces the BTU/BPS collective bargaining agreement [CBA/contract]. The Union assists in providing the best education we are able for the approximate 57,000 students in the BPS while working with the greater school community to help insure the same.

The BTU represents our membership in issues related to their professional work, including answering job-related questions and assisting in job-related matters.

The Union works politically through the Committee on Political Education [COPE] to assist in electing pro-public education, pro-labor, pro-kid, pro-social justice candidates. Due to federal and state law, COPE is a separate entity within the BTU devoted to supporting candidates and initiatives that are pro-public education and pro-labor generally through a specific process set out in our bylaws. The organizations with which the BTU is affiliated and pays dues to are: the American Federation of Teachers [AFT] our national federation, [BTU is Local 66 of the AFT] - as well as with the Massachusetts AFT [formerly the MFT] which is our state federation; the national and state AFL-CIO; and the Greater Boston Labor Council [GBLC]-a group of state federations or 'state feds' of various labor unions within the greater Boston area that form an alliance primarily related to political and social justice issues. We are all connected working for working people, their families, community, and our collective futures!

Must elections be held for BTU Building Reps and/or School Site Council Members if the # 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 two 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 2 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.

Commentary Madison Kronheim, Joseph Lee K-8 School

Time to Fight for a STRONG CONTRACT!

As I prepare for the upcoming school year, I find myself prepping in all of the usual ways – organizing IEPs, busting out my handy dandy laminator, and mentally preparing for a new group of kiddos. However, this year, a new and important thing is at the forefront of my mind: preparing for our upcoming contract campaign!

As a first-time member of the negotiating team, I am proud and excited to represent my fellow union members at the table once we start negotiating with BPS. This summer, the Collective Bargaining Committee met to identify the most burning issues members are facing across the district and create a survey to make sure BTU members get to share their concerns and help us identify demands, reminding us that this is a fight for every member in our union, and not just for the few. I highly encourage members to fill out the survey presented during the 30-minute meetings at the beginning of the school year, sign up and show up for CBC, and come out to see myself and the rest of the negotiating team sit across from representatives from BPS and City hall for negotiations sessions once they begin. I'm excited to listen, fight, and speak truth to power!

I am aware that this role only means so much, as the true power lies in our members and our solidarity. The only way we'll win any demands we seek is if we can show the city that our membership is unified, activated, and ready for militant action. When I think about building momentum in the contract fight, I look towards those who have run successful campaigns. The United Educators of San Francisco won a historic contract last year, including fully funded healthcare for educators and their families, Sanctuary protections for immigrant families, and better working conditions for special education. In a city that is full of both big-tech billionaires and abject poverty, just like Boston, I have been thinking long and hard about how we can take those lessons to unite and win, just as they did. Just like Boston, San Francisco is a city with politicians that claim to be progressive, while making it more and more difficult for educators to afford living there or complete their job responsibilities. Sound familiar? This alone reminds me that as workers, we all have more in common with one another than we do with the billionaires in power.

How can this transfer to our contract campaign? What San Francisco did didn't happen overnight. They had to build the muscle of the union at every school site, and build solidarity with community partners so that, when they needed to take bold, disruptive action, they knew that they could count on community support and show the politicians that their fight was not just for educators, not even just for public education, but a fight for "the future of the city". This is imperative for the BTU to win our demands. It can be easy to look at other educators within our own union and feel that some have it easier than others, that different hardships keep us divided. But at the end of the day, the one thing we all have in common is struggle. Every educator in the BTU has had to deal with struggle at one point or another, whether it be not having enough time to get work done, physical violence, difficulties paying rent, etc. We have to unite and cultivate solidarity within our great diversity. In order to run a successful contract campaign, we must remember that we cannot win when we stay divided, and that when we unite and fight, we win.

One rallying cry in the UESF campaign was "We don't go back." The BTU has won huge wins over the years, such as paid parental leave and higher wages for paras and ABAs, so the only logical thing to do at this point is to keep aiming higher and fighting for what our students, families, and educators deserve, and that means continuing to mobilize and show up for one another.

Retirement Plus: We're in the Final Stretch

After nearly four years of organizing, advocacy, and persistence, the effort to secure a Fair Fix for Retirement Plus has entered its final stage.

The R+ bill is now before a six-member Conference Committee – three members of the House and three members of the Senate – charged with negotiating the differences between the versions unanimously approved by each chamber. The conferees have already held their first meeting.

The most significant issue remaining is the **interest rate educators will be required to pay to buy into Retirement Plus**. The House version sets the interest rate at 0%, while the Senate version calls for 7% actuarial interest, which functions similarly to compounded interest. The Conference Committee must now negotiate a compromise between those positions.

Once an agreement is reached, the compromise bill will return to both the House and Senate for final votes before being sent to Governor Healey for her signature.

Our immediate goal is passage and signing by August 29.

This date is especially important for two groups of educators: those who have already filed for June retirement and are waiting to learn whether R+ will allow them to retire with the maximum pension rate and those would finally be able to retire by the August 29 deadline rather than return to their classrooms for another school year.

So this is no time to let up.

We are asking educators across Massachusetts to continue contacting the Conference Committee members and House and Senate leadership and respectfully urge them to finish the job by August 29.

We have come an extraordinary distance together. Thousands of educators have organized, written, called, testified, shared their stories, and refused to give up.

We are incredibly close.

Now we need to bring this home.

How can you find out more about the retirement process?

Attend the BTU retirement information session on Thursday, October 22 from 3:30 to 6:30 pm sign up using this QR Code ☛ ☛ ☛ ☛ ☛

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

NEWS for EVERYONE from the BTU RETIRED TEACHERS CHAPTER

Boston Retirement Board Election



Tom Gosnell
BTU Retired Teachers Chapter Secretary

The Boston Teachers Union (BTU) has endorsed **KAREN CROSS,** BTU Secretary-Treasurer, and **SEAN KELLY,** from the firefighters' union, for reelection to the Boston Retirement Board (BRB) because of their commitment to the maintenance and enhancement of our retirement benefits. Those working and those retired can vote. Ballots have been mailed and must be received electronically or by mail no later than **5 P.M. ON FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 2026.**

Autumnal Luncheon

On **MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 28 AT 11 A.M.** the BTU and the RTC will host the fall luncheon at Venezia in Dorchester. The invitations have been sent to all retirees. You need to send a check for $55. which will be returned upon attendance. We appreciate the work that **Ann Marie Adduci** and **Mary Jo Murphy** always do to make this a stellar event.

Fall Business Meeting

On **THURSDAY, OCTOBER 8 AT 11 A.M.** the fall business meeting of the RTC will be at the BTU. The topic is wills and trusts. More information will be available in a September mailing. We appreciate the work that the RTC's chair, **Mae Bishop,** has done to set up this event.

Public Employee Committee (PEC) Negotiations For Health Insurance

PEC negotiates health insurance for active and retired school department and city employees. Negotiations for this extraordinarily important issue have commenced. The BTU and the retirees have significant representation on PEC. Given the current national and local financial situations and the need for excellent health insurance coverage for employees and retirees, these negotiations are most important. We shall keep you informed.

COLA (Cost Of Living Allowance) For The Retirement Base

The Retired Teachers Chapter of the Boston Teachers Union has been working mightily to increase the base from $15,000. The base is the sole amount on which our retirement is increased. Five years have passed since a majority of the Boston Retirement Board has voted to increase the base. At the last BRB meeting the same majority voted against an increase. The union members of the Board have every time voted unanimously for an increase. This undertaking will continue until we have an increase in the base. This issue affects all current and future retirees.

State Legislation

The Legislature has passed and the Governor has signed legislation which will provide some pension increases for some retirees. However, the legislation is subject to local option which means that the City of Boston must accept for it to become effective. We shall be working to make that happen and will provide more details in later communications.

Negotiations For BTU Contract

The BTU will be negotiating the master contract during the upcoming school year. The RTC is committed to supporting vigorously BTU efforts. The BTU contract is essential for the provision of a fair salary, excellent benefits, and enhanced working conditions for currently working members and for the education of our children.

Retirement Information



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

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

YEARS IN SERVICE	AGE AT RETIREMENT 60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67+
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	48.8	52.5	56.3	60.0	63.8	67.5	71.3	75.0
31	50.4	54.3	58.1	62.0	65.9	69.8	73.6	77.5
32	52.0	56.0	60.0	64.0	68.0	72.0	76.0	80.0
33	53.6	57.8	61.9	66.0	70.1	74.3	78.4	80.0
34	55.3	59.5	63.8	68.0	72.3	76.5	80.0	80.0
35	56.9	61.3	65.6	70.0	74.4	78.8	80.0	80.0
36	58.5	63.0	67.5	72.0	76.5	80.0	80.0	80.0
37	60.1	64.8	69.4	74.0	78.6	80.0	80.0	80.0
38	61.8	66.5	71.3	76.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0
39	63.4	68.3	73.1	78.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0
40	65.0	70.0	75.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	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, 617-635-4311. 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 ***elected*** 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.

YEARS OF SERVICE*	RetirementPlus % INCREASE		AGE AT RETIREMENT 46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65+
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
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
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
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
		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	80.0	80.0	80.0
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
		R+						48.1	51.2	54.3	57.4	60.5	63.6	66.7	69.8	72.9	76.0	79.1	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0
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
		R+							54.4	57.6	60.8	64.0	67.2	70.4	73.6	76.8	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0
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	80.0
		R+								60.9	64.2	67.5	70.8	74.1	77.4	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0
34	20%	Regular									47.6	51.0	54.4	57.8	61.2	64.6	68.0	71.4	74.8	78.2	80.0	80.0
		R+									67.6	71.0	74.4	77.8	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0
35	22%	Regular										52.5	56.0	59.5	63.0	66.5	70.0	73.5	77.0	80.0	80.0	80.0
		R+										74.5	78.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0
36	24%	Regular											57.6	61.2	64.8	68.4	72.0	75.6	79.2	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
37	26%	Regular												62.9	66.6	70.3	74.0	77.7	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
38	28%	Regular													68.4	72.2	76.0	79.8	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
39	30%	Regular														74.1	78.0	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
40	32%	Regular															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

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.)

Why Donating to the Sick Bank Matters?

Editor's Note: This article was featured in last year's Back2School edition of the Boston Union Teacher, *but we think it's important to continue to highlight the sick bank and the importance of donating for new and veteran BTU members!*

★★★★★★★★★★★★★★

In any profession, life's unexpected turns – illness, injury, grief – can threaten not only your health but your livelihood. For educators, these moments often come with unique challenges: demanding classrooms, limited time off, and the need to support both their own families and the students they serve. The **Sick Bank**, a shared pool of donated sick days, provides a crucial safety net in times of crisis. The Sick Bank is open **ONLY** one time a year, from September 4th to October 31st. If you donate one sick day before October 31st, then you can access up to 30 days at a time for 90 days for the lifetime of your career.

Eligibility requires you to be a BTU member. If in the Teacher unit, you must be permanent or entering your 4th consecutive year of service. If in the Paraprofessional unit BTU members must have at least three (3) consecutive years of service. You must donate one (1) sick day for inclusion in the program which is deducted from the donor's accumulated sick leave/ time until the program runs low on days and requires another day to be donated.

For the first time in BTU history, the sick bank was depleted! You only need to donate once, unless the sick bank is depleted. Because the sick bank was depleted this past year, we are refilling our bank from scratch! So we are asking all Union members to join us in solidarity, by donating 1 day to the sick bank.

Check out the *Superintendent's Circular on Sick Leave (Bank) Donation Program HRS-PP15* for more specific info. To donate, navigate to ess.boston.gov and select the "BTU Sick Bank Donation" tile. Read and acknowledge the terms and conditions, click "submit."

Note: Submission of a donation to the Sick Bank program doesn't guarantee enrollment. You'll be sent a confirmation notice when accepted into the program. This is a voluntary program but once made, this submission can't be rescinded.

Educators give their all – mentally, physically, and emotionally every single day. But when they're faced with serious medical conditions or life-altering events, they often have little left in reserve. For many BTU members, in a profession that is predominantly women and that just recently won paid parental leave, all of their accrued sick days are used up raising children, making them vulnerable when tragedy strikes later in life, which is why our Sick Bank is so vital to so many.

No one expects to need the Sick Bank. But when unexpected emergencies happen – and they do – the support is life-changing. If you get ill or injured and run out of sick days, what are you going to do? You never know when **YOU** will be in that position.These are the voices of real educators who leaned on the Sick Bank when life took a turn, and whose stories show the power of compassion, community, and collective care:



Lea-Antoinette Serena
BTU Executive Vice President



Caren Carew
BTU Secondary Field Representative

A Small Donation, A Huge Impact

"You only need to donate one sick day. That small act could mean everything to someone else. It's truly a charitable gift."

"Think of it as insurance for yourself – and an act of solidarity with your fellow educators. One donated day could keep a colleague out of financial ruin."

"It's a simple act of kindness that ensures no teacher ever has to choose between their health and their paycheck."

"People don't take this lightly. The application requires documentation. It's not easy to ask for help – but it's a lifeline."

"The Sick Bank isn't just about days off. It's about dignity, survival, and solidarity. It's there when no one else can help."

A Lifeline in Times of Crisis

"Over my 24-year career, I was diagnosed with two painful, mobility-limiting diseases. As a single mom, I couldn't afford unpaid time off. The Sick Bank gave me the time I needed to heal and return to the classroom. I'll always be grateful."

"After the sudden passing of my husband, the Sick Bank allowed me to grieve and care for my children without the added stress of income loss. Just knowing it was there gave me peace during an unimaginable time."

Health Shouldn't Mean Financial Hardship

"After a kidney transplant and a year of dialysis, my short-term disability ran out. Without the Sick Bank, we wouldn't have made it. It helped me focus on healing instead of worrying how we'd survive."

"Getting diagnosed with cancer at 49 was never part of the plan. I used all my sick days during chemo, and the Sick Bank helped me stay afloat during recovery. I could focus on my health, not my finances."

"I had breast cancer at 40. I was in good shape and hardly ever sick, but life changed overnight. The Sick Bank helped relieve the emotional and financial toll of a year-long battle."

Mental Health and Grief Deserve Support, Too

"After losing my 7-year-old son, I was diagnosed with severe depression and PTSD. The Sick Bank gave me time to grieve, seek counseling, and be there for my other children. It saved my mental health – and my career."

Accidents, Emergencies, and the Unexpected

"I was injured on the job and spent months without workers' comp. The Sick Bank allowed me to keep paying rent and my daughter's college tuition while I waited for my case to resolve."

"After a concussion, I couldn't work for six months. The Sick Bank helped bridge the gap when my own time ran out. Without it, the financial stress would've been devastating."

"I had a motorcycle accident and no more sick time. I've donated every year, never expecting to need it myself. It helped me keep the lights on and food in the house. I'm so grateful."

How to Access the Sick Bank

If in need of the sick days, the BTU recipient must have already used all of their sick/personal time up, be on approved sick leave, have had judicious use of their sick time, and provide required Dr.'s note and application. Provided there are adequate sick leave days remaining in the bank, the committee that reviews the applications has the authority to grant up to 30 days of sick leave to a recipient per school year. In exceptional cases, the committee may also grant additional 30-day increments, up to a maximum of 90 days for the members' BPS career. There are more specifics included in the circular. If the sick bank runs out of days because not enough members have donated, the eligible members cannot be granted days, even if eligible and in need. As you can imagine, this was heartbreaking and disastrous for several of our deserving colleagues last year. If time is awarded by the Sick Bank Donation Program, recipients can withdraw sick leave hours from the leave bank of days and maintain active pay status.

So, Why Should You Donate?

No one can predict when illness, injury, or tragedy might strike. What educators *can* do is look out for each other. The Sick Bank is only as strong as its members' willingness to support it. The bottom line is that donating one sick day is a small sacrifice with an immeasurable impact. Whether you ever need to use the Sick Bank or not, your contribution helps a fellow educator through their darkest days. In the words of one teacher:

"I never thought I'd need it, but when I did, it saved me. Please donate in the fall. Give so someone else can stay healthy, stay paid, and stay covered."

Please consider donating this fall. Your support truly saves lives and careers.

Thank you to all the BTU members quoted above, the ones who donated a day, probably never expecting to need it, but did and humbly told their stories. We are proud to do this work with you and are so glad to have you as a BTU member.

How BTU Members Are Supporting Our Immigrant Students and Families

By Theresa Garcia de Quevedo, Mason Elementary School

"They've left us with nothing," says one Boston educator, referring to the gaps in guidance issued by Boston Public Schools. School leaders and staff have received guidance on how to respond to immigration officials attempting to enter a school building or requesting information about a specific individual, but BTU members are concerned that it is insufficient. Members of the Unafraid Educators Committee know that schools need plans in place when there is verified ICE activity in the area near a school, especially during arrival and dismissal. In response, they have created the School Defense Toolkit to help school-based staff develop plans that meet the specific needs of their school communities.

Educators have been supporting the work in different ways across the district. In one elementary school without a school safety plan/team already in place, there was a report of ICE near the school during arrival. The school leader called non-homeroom teachers to the office and asked them to monitor arrival and station themselves near all doors to the outside. One staff member was designated to walk to each classroom and tell homeroom teachers in-person to avoid spreading conflicting information. The school leader later held an after-school meeting to debrief staff. **Key factors: staff had strong trust in the school leader and the school leader had strong operations skills**.

In this case, the school leader handled the situation well and had the support of the staff to carry-out the plan as it developed. In other schools, school staff are taking a leading role in developing these plans. In one secondary school, BTU members reached out to fellow staff to recruit volunteers for specific duties in the event of a surge. Knowing that educators are spread thin, this group framed their request as something they would activate only in case of an increase in immigration enforcement activity. Educators were quick to respond and now that school has a volunteer list of educators willing to complete specific tasks such as delivering food to families in need, activating a phone tree to contact families, or patrolling the area near the school. **Key factors: proactive planning and volunteer roles ready but not activated yet to avoid over-loading staff.**

Other schools are building on previous organizing. In one elementary school with an established school safety team, the work started last spring with an active parent team that set up patrols during family events and set up online fund drives for legal fees and other needs of impacted families. This school built out a school-safety team with parents and key staff. The team set up a phone tree to contact families in need of support with pick-up/ drop-off in the event of a surge but ensured the safety of those families by not keeping a written list. Volunteers get a phone number and the first name of a contact but no other identifying information in order to protect the family's privacy. **Key factors: strong family-staff partnership and thoughtful decisions about keeping information secure.**

BTU educators know how much is asked of our members during the school year, but we also know that this work is another key part of protecting our students. We can continue to push for more guidance from the district but the

continued on page 9

Around the Elementary Schools Caitlin Gaffny

Have the Year You Deserve



Caitlin Gaffny
BTU Elementary
Field Representative

This summer, the BTU was out en force supporting union siblings as they fought for better working conditions and fair contracts across the city. As we return to our schools and classrooms ramping up for our next contract fight, we must continue to protect what we have already fought for, holding the line while organizing around our priorities.

At this year's NEI, we listened to our newest members describe with refreshing alacrity why they were so passionate about joining the Boston Teachers Union. Their reasons were clear – protection of working conditions, quality professional development, advocacy opportunities, community connections, and excellent benefits to cite a few. When asked about their hopes for the school year, one participant named work-life balance. It is encouraging to know that this is top of mind for those entering our ranks as educators continue to be asked to do more.

It is incumbent upon those of us who have the length of experience to lead by example. Let your building representative and/or field representative know right away if:

- You do not have your schedule at the start of school, if it is unclear, or violates the contractual bounds.
- You have less planning (consecutive or total) minutes than you are owed.
- Your class size is over the limit. As inclusion continues to roll out, be mindful of push in opportunities as there should be a conversation and clear plan prior that does not cause an overage.
- There is no arrangement for student coverage after dismissal when buses are late or do not arrive, as you should not stay hours after your end of work day without compensation.
- You are asked to log information or communications in duplicate or triplicate across platforms.
- Meetings are scheduled during your planning time or duty free lunch, or you are told that you will not be having a lunch break.
- There are health and safety issues in your physical space.
- You are spoken to disrespectfully or demeaned at your worksite.

We have a collective responsibility to ourselves and to our union siblings to speak up when our working conditions are trod upon. We can not afford to be laissez-faire about violations or succumb to gaslighting and guilting. For the sake of keeping the work-life balance, staying healthy in mind/body, make sure that you advocate for yourself and others so that you have the year that you deserve.



Chinese Ceramics, Mrs. Lopez-Kodis' Visual Arts, Grade 4 and 5 Students, Gardner Pilot Academy

Organizing With Parents: SOUL 2026

By Wednesday Romero-Klevisha, BTU Organizer

Hi all! I'm Wednesday, one of the BTU's staff organizers. This year, I had the pleasure of coordinating our SOULs program to continue to build BTU member leadership and collective power over the summer!

For those who are unfamiliar, Summer Organizing Union Leaders (SOULs) is our organizing program that members participate over the summer break to learn the fundamentals of organizing, connect with fellow members and advance the work of building power within the union.

In the past, the program has focused on different themes, from charter school organizing to engaging members in the contract fight. With another contract fight looming around



the corner, the focus this year has been around the question, *what matters to Boston parents and what issues do BPS parents and BTU members share?*

The way we decided to approach this question was to simply ask, so between July 27th and August 28th, our cohort of 15 members aims to have over a hundred conversations with Boston parents to see what some of the most widely felt and deeply felt issues may be. From this, members will analyze their findings to inform the BTU's community survey and eventually plan full community forums.

Aside from practicing having organizing conversations with parents, participants also got to connect with organizers from different parts of the labor movement, learn about BTU union history from retired educators and a local historian, learn about community organizing from longtime activists, and contribute to BTU's current political campaigns.

Whether it's phone banking, canvassing, talking to folks at community events or speaking with their colleagues, participants learn that the fundamental building block to growing the movement is rooted in conversations and building relationships and trust. And if there's one thing I hope folks take away in organizing, it's that it's 80% listening and 20% talking. So let's hear what our participants have to say:

"The SOULs Program has been very informative. It has opened my eyes to new knowledge, perspectives, and, most importantly, to a community I didn't know I needed. I am grateful for the connections I've made and everything I've learned through this experience."

–Emilia Escobar, Hennigan

"SOULs is such an amazing educational experience. I have learned so much, not just the history of the union but also actions that are currently happening! I'm so grateful to be participating."

– Katryana Tovar, Ohrenberger

"BTU SOULs has given me new, invaluable perspectives – from parents, students, and other teachers – I am excited to bring these perspectives into my classroom and organizing work in the fall."

– Ellayna Dietz, Community Academy of Science & Health

"The SOUL program has been a great way to get plugged into the community we serve."

– Maya Johnson, Margarita Muñiz Academy

"I've enjoyed speaking with parents about their experiences with BPS and hearing what changes they would like to see in our schools. The workshop facilitators have been very knowledgeable and have shared a lot about both the history of the union and the work it is doing today. It has also been nice meeting union members from other schools and getting to know them. Overall, it has been a positive experience, and I've learned a lot along the way."

– Janet Iraola, Hennigan

★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★

If you're interested in learning more about the program or would like to stay tuned to more opportunities like this, reach out to this writer at wromeroklevisha@btu.org.



How We Exercise Our Decision Making Power?: School Site Councils



Caren Carew
BTU Secondary
Field Representative

By Caren Carew,
Secondary Field Representative

Where can our voices and opinions be heard having a direct effect on the decisions running our school? School Site Councils are the contractual framework where educators, and parents stand up, speak out and build collective agency through being active stakeholders reclaiming our School Site power!

Many initiatives that a school community wants to implement to effect school change can be modified or 'waived' through our collective bargaining agreement/contract. Much of what folks seek to accomplish when proposing to become pilot, innovation or in-district charter school can be achieved through the SSC waiver process. Becoming a part of the solution to school based concerns through our active participation, we flip the script of educational reforms done to us by initiating and becoming part of the solution.

The School Site Council - shared decision making process including increased BTU and parent members actively involved, builds power and consensus. We all need to become involved along with parent and community partners to reclaim our schools through SSC!

Becoming an active member of the community can be difficult but it is more difficult not to act and to suffer the consequences of our voices, expertise, and concerns not being heard and included in the decision and solution making process. 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 members' 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 each school's 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 (IPT). Eligible BTU members elect representatives to these positions and the elected representatives, be they to the BTU, SSC, IPT, or Faculty Senate need to be supported by the BTU members 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 (BSC) and the BTU, is to manage all matters that relate to the operation of the school, including: priority and objective setting; development of a QISP; design and scheduling of instructional program and curriculum; budgeting and fund raising aligned with school's' academic goals; purchasing and disbursement of discretionary funds; space utilization; hiring of new staff and 2nd and 3rd year Provisionals; staff assignment including teaching and non-teaching duties; parent-teacher relations and functions; solicitation and use of outside professionals and social service resources; setting reasonable Student 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 (BTU members, parents, high school students), not only themselves as individuals. In order to be able to do this effectively, BTU SSC members 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, two (2) teachers/BTU and two (2) parents for an SSC of 9-12 members. For an SSC with 13 or more members, a quorum includes the principal, three (3) parents and three (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 community 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 council!

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

The SSC is able to adopt waiver proposals which must then be brought to a vote and approved by a specified threshold of BTU staff which then must be approved by the district-wide SSC 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 and state laws, regulations and court orders.

Well planned, well attended SSC meetings are at the heart of successful SBM-SDM. The SSC monthly meetings must be convened at times mutually agreed upon by the parent and teacher/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 five (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 and BPS Office of Advancement coordinates training for SSC members. Please contact Caren Carew at the BTU for further information ccarew@btu.org.

It's time to step up and be a part of the solution!

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 in 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 *BTUnity*!**

Proposed SSC Training Schedule SY 2026-27

SSC 101: School Site Council Basics: Monday, October 19, 2026, repeated Monday, October 26, 2026 – 5:30-7:00 p.m. on Zoom.

SSC 106: Personnel Subcommittee: Monday, November 16, 2026, repeated Monday, November 30, 2026, repeated Monday, February 1, 2027, repeated Monday, March 1, 2027, repeated Monday, March 6, 2027 – 5:30-7:00 p.m. on Zoom.

SSC 102: Budget Basics: Monday, December 7, 2026, repeated Monday, December 14, 2026 – 5:30-7:00 p.m. on Zoom.

Commentary Michael J. Maguire, Boston Latin Academy

The Poetry of Parenting



Michael J. Maguire
Boston Latin Academy

After having taught poetry for decades, I tried writing a poem of my own. While I was inspired and motivated, I was quite apprehensive since I was not very successful at poetry in my high school English classes.

Things didn't improve much in college. I would often get papers returned to me with more comments from the professor than original text by me. Fortunately, I was able to understand Latin poetry better than the English variety.

Docendo discitur. One learns by teaching. (Seneca) Over my career I have taught Virgil, Ovid, Horace, and Catullus. In my attempts to have students understand what the ancients tell us about life, I developed a deep appreciation for how words can convey meaning beyond the literal. So I screwed up my courage and wrote the following:

An empty nest is how it's described
When they are no longer by your side.

My children are grown adults now,
years have evaporated somehow.

It's not that I don't want them to be independent;

I'm now painfully aware of how my time is spent.

I have only weeks with them before they go,

I pray and pray for the time to pass by slow.

Our house was once quiet, before they were born.

This time it feels different, like something's been torn.

The void in my heart is wide and grows larger still

Yet I dare not interfere or impose my will.

Children are supposed to leave the nest, as it were;

I once did and now I understand what parents are for:

We offer advice and teach them how to survive

In a world full of choices, I hope that they thrive.

I am proud of whom each has become

I am getting old while they stay young.

I next attempted to write the same poem in Latin. Roman poetry follows a pattern of long and short syllables. English, on the other hand, generally follows a pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables; think Shakespeare's iambic pentameter.

I first attempted hendecasyllabic, a favorite of Catullus, but I quickly switched to dactylic hexameter since I am more familiar with it. (I have taught Virgil and Ovid since the '90s.)

In nido vacuo pennato mox habitabo
Nati suntque parentibus paene volaturi uterque

Not being a native speaker, the task proved challenging. Virgil reportedly wrote an average of three lines a day. My pace, by comparison, is glacial. Hopefully over time I shall add to my Latin poem.

The temptation is mighty to run my work through an AI program since it would likely spit out an amazing facsimile of Roman poetry. But it wouldn't be my writing, and considering the topic, artificial just won't do.

Harry Chapin's 1974 song *Cat's In the Cradle* gives a vivid and painful lesson on not being there for your child. No amount of money can buy back the missed years. We all say we know and understand the song, yet we all know people who act out the lyrics to the detriment of their family life.

Earlier this summer Jim Parsons, who played Sheldon in *Big Bang Theory*, said "I wouldn't do [the show] again for any amount of money." He said that working day and night for years took a toll on his mental health and that he missed too many other things in life.

So to all my parents of young children: go to all the plays, be at all the recitals, attend every school meeting.

To all the bosses and supervisors:

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Making Strides Against Breast Cancer Walk • October 3rd, 2026



Almost everyone has been touched by breast cancer in some way, so we've decided to make a difference by walking and raising money in our local **American Cancer Society Making Strides Against Breast Cancer** event.

Today 1 of every 2 women newly-diagnosed with breast cancer reaches out to the American Cancer Society for help and support. The donations our team raises will enable investment in groundbreaking breast cancer research, free information and services for women diagnosed with the disease, and access to mammograms for women who need them. Our donations will help more than 2.9 million breast cancer survivors celebrate another birthday this year!

Saving lives from breast cancer starts one team, one walker, and one dollar at a time. We know that the American Cancer Society is the leader in the fight to end breast cancer. We know that supporting them will ensure that if you need someone to talk to anytime of the day or night, they'll be there. If your friend is losing her hair from chemo, your mother needs a ride to treatment, or a loved one needs a place to stay when treatment is far from home, they will be there to help. Join us and together we will walk for a world without breast cancer.

Every step taken and every dollar raised will help finish the fight against breast cancer, so please consider either walking with the BTU Walkers Team or donating.

Look for either BTU Walkers Team or **Brenda Chaney** (*bchaney@btu.org*) to donate or walk.

Thank you so much for your support!

Visit our TEAM's page:

http://main.acsevents.org/site/TR?team_id=1876898&pg=team&fr_id=70168&s_locale=en_US&et=sySmVVVfKGzCL4_FXwwaHg&s_tafId=1627798

How BTU Members Are Supporting Our Immigrant Students and Families…

continued from page 6

Unafraid Educators aren't waiting around for that to happen. They are acting now. One BTU member said it loud and clear: ***"If I'm really needed, I'll do it."*** As we start this new school year, check out the toolkit and reach out to Unafraid Educators to get connected with an organizer in your school's neighborhood.

Toolkit for Setting up Unafraid School Teams: *http://bit.ly/UnafraidToolkit*

To get involved or get support, contact: *wromeroklevisha@btu.org* or *unafraideducators@gmail.com*.

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. for teachers, **Caren Carew** and **Caitlin Gaffny** can provide more information. Or please feel free to call or email me (*eberg@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 online. For more detailed information on any of the below, please call the BTU office.

All references to the BTU Contract are to the pink 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 *https://www.bostonpublicschools.org/about-bps/policies-and-procedures-superintendents-circulars*.

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 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.

Contract 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 service 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, pg. 108.	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 theBTU, 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, Health and Welfare, 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.btuhwf.org*	H&W Dental coverage is different from city's health plan.
Salary Item: Tuition Reimbursement	All teachers after one year get up to $1,000/yr. for everyone. Paras with three or more years of service are coveredwith 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.
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, pg. 54	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 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.	Contract pp. 25-26, 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. 123-125; 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.	Contract pp. 123-125; or talk with 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.	Contract pp. 123-125; 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.	Contract pp. 123-125; or talk with Building Rep. or call BTU office at 617-288-2000.	
Parental Leave	Grants paid as well as unpaid leave & city continues to pay its share of health coverage.	All parents receive full pay for 4 weeks. 75% pay for 4 weeks, 50# pay for 4 weeks, then you can take up to 12 months using sick leave or unpaid time.	Contract pp. 123-125; 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.
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 adminstratively directed. (see below Reg.Schedule A.) N.B. Specialists and Itinerant Specialists get identical benefit of individual grade levels	Contract pp. 35-36; 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. 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).		
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 pp. 36-37; 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.
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. 53, 113, or see Building Rep. or call the BTU office at 617-288-2000.	Mileage is generally not for travel to and rom 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.	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 h*ttp://www.ssa.gov/pubs/10045.html* or *http://www.ssa.gov/pubs/10007.html* for a discussion of the restrictions and offsets. These are most important topics for those who expect to get some benefit from SS credits.	Log onto *http://www.mass.gov/mtrs/benefit-recipients-retirees-and-survivors/social-security/* for news pertaining to public employees.

GRIEVANCE RIGHTS

As a covered member you have a right to an interpretation of any provision of the collective bargaining agreement. In the event of an uncertainty or dispute regarding any provision of the Contract cited above (or any other provision, for that matter), it is in your best interest to call the BTU at 617-288-2000 or speak with a building representative. Also, see *btu.org*.

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

Welcome Paraprofessionals/CFCs/ Family Liaisons

Dear Paraprofessionals/ CFCs/ Family Liaisons:



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

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. Four (4) 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 workday.

Health and Welfare Benefits

Para Unit members 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 8000 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

Para unit members 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.

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 1 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 signup for AFT benefits go to: https://www.aft.org/member-benefits

Joining with nearly 8000 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 9AM 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, CFCs & Liaisons

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 149
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 149
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 156
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 140
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 159, or see building rep at school, or call BTU 617-288-2000.
Personal Leave	Grants paid leave for personal reasons.	4 days per year; unused days accumulate. Also, graduation days allowed.	See contract pg. 149. 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 158
Religious Holy Days	Grants paid leave under limited circumstances	Depends of holiday specifics.	See contract, pages 159, 124
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 148
Leave for Adoption	Paid as well as unpaid leave.		See contract, pages 159, 124
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 159
Duty-Free Lunch & Break	30 minutes for lunch plus a 10-minute break per day.	Duty-free time.	See contract, page 148
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. ½ 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 153.
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 153. Call City Treasurer's Office 617-635-4151.

MISCELLANEOUS

		DETAILS	NOTES
Job-Sharing	½ salary; ½ position.	Full benefits.	See contract page 141.
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 156. (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 2010-2027

2010-2027

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

Effective 9/1/24 – **2.5% + $4; Classroom Paras, Surround Care, Library, Security, 1 to 1 2.5% + $3; CFCs, Health and Liaison 2.5% + $2; Sign Language Interpreter 2.5% +$1**
Effective 9/1/25 – **2% + $.50; Surround Care, Library, Security, 1 to 1 2% + $3; CFCs, Health and Liaison 2.5% + $2; Sign Language Interpreter 2.5% +$1**
Effective 9/1/26 – **2% + $1; Surround Care, Library, Security, 1 to 1 2%; CFCs, Health and Liaison 2%; Sign Language Interpreter 2%**
Increase para career awards by 10% and establish a new 34 year award
Paras with 3+ years eligible for $500 yearly tuition reimbursement
Paras with 5+ years eligible for $1,000 yearly tuition reimbursement

GRIEVANCE RIGHTS

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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 7th year on anniversary date	Should be automatic. See pg. 192. 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.btuhwf.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. Apply through Office of Civil Rights with 10 days notice.
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.	See page 193.
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. ½ 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 191.
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 191. Call City Treasurer's Office 617-635-4151.

ADDITIONAL CONTRACTUAL CHANGES FOR 2016-2027

2016-2024

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
Effective 9/1/24 a 2.5% raise
Effective 9/1/25 a 2% raise
Effective 9/1/26 a 2% 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 Substitutes

Dear Substitute Teacher:

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

Health Insurance

Substitute teachers and nurses who work a minimum of three days per week are eligible for health insurance, and this should be obtained within the first 60 days of employment by calling Group Insurance at City Hall, 617-635-4570. Cluster 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.

Sick and Personal Time

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 nine (9) sick days deposited in their bank each September 1st.

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.

Cluster and Long Term Subs will receive one (1) personal day each year that can be used after January 1st.

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

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

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

Joining with nearly 8,000 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.

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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.btuhwf.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 2016-2027

2016-2027

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
Effective 9/1/24 a 2.5% raise
Effective 9/1/25 a 2% raise,
Add $5 per day for Per Diem and Cluster Subs
For Long-Term Subs add $7 for 11-25 day rate
Effective 9/1/26 a 2% raise

GRIEVANCE RIGHTS

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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 Substitutes...

continued from page 14

Credit Union

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

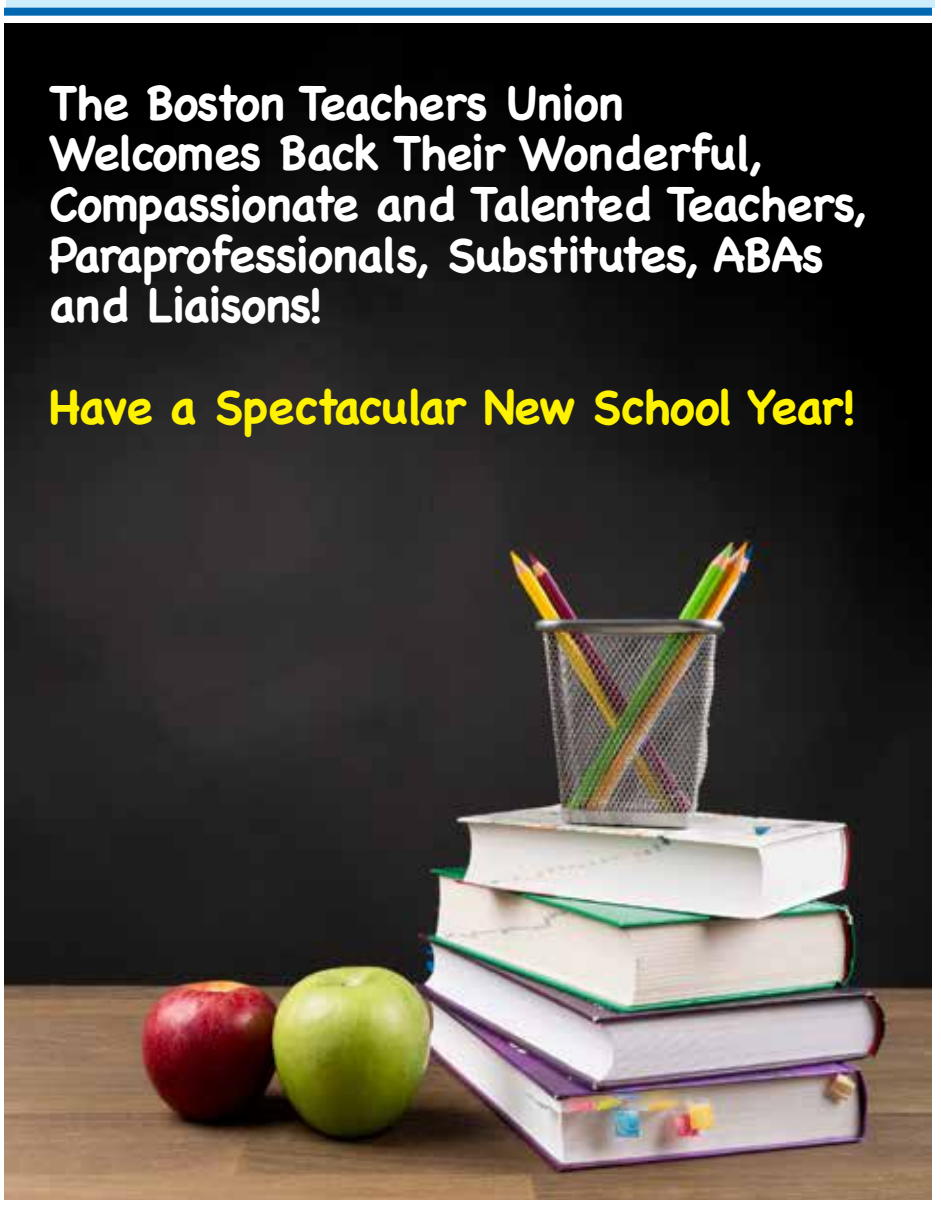
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– Colleen M. Hart
Paraprofessional/Substitute/ABA Field Representative



Welcome New Special Education Partner Paraprofessionals!

By Katie DeLaRosa, BTU Inclusion Liaison

This September, several classrooms across Boston Public Schools will implement a new partnership model for supporting students with disabilities in general education classrooms.

The Special Education Partner (SEP) Paraprofessional position was established in the most recent contract to provide direct support to students with disabilities in inclusive settings. Working under the supervision of a special education / resource teacher, SEP paraprofessionals will help students meet their academic, behavioral, and social goals as written in the B grid of their IEPs, while supporting a wide range of learning needs.

During the most recent budget cycle, school-based Inclusion Planning Teams (IPTs) collaborated with administrators to review student needs and staffing before determining whether this new model was appropriate for their schools.

The position officially launched on August 19th at the Josiah Quincy Elementary School, where approximately 50 SEP paraprofessionals gathered for a two-day training led by the Office of Specialized Services. The group of new SEP Paras includes educators with extensive classroom and special education experience in BPS.

I had the opportunity to open the training with an overview of inclusive education. We began by discussing how the ways we think, talk, and write about disability influence how we teach students with disabilities. The session also addressed asset-based approaches, the benefits of inclusive education for students with and without disabilities, the least restrictive environment, and classroom support strategies, including several co-teaching models.

The remainder of the training covered the responsibilities of the SEP role, key elements of Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), effective partnerships, role-playing scenarios, and curriculum review.

Colleen Hart, the Boston Teachers Union paraprofessional field representative, also spoke during the opening session. She shared that she was excited, and "a little nervous", about the new position. She expressed enthusiasm about seeing educators in this role contribute their talents and strengths. At the same time, she acknowledged that launching a new model will require strong communication and collaboration.

The group shared this perspective and raised an essential question: How and when will SEP paraprofessionals connect and plan with their partner teachers? The contract addresses this need by specifying that each SEP paraprofessional will work with no more than two special education teachers and will receive at least 45 minutes of shared planning time each week.

As with many new initiatives, implementation will likely vary across schools. Ideally, partnering educators will have time to meet before students arrive so they can begin communicating, clarifying responsibilities, and planning together.

SEP paraprofessionals with questions about the role's responsibilities or implementation should contact **Colleen Hart,** BTU paraprofessional field representative. Questions about inclusive practices and instructional strategies may be directed to **Katie DeLaRosa,** Inclusion Liaison.

Special Education Partner (SEP) Paraprofessional role. The language in the new contract states; *"The position of "Special Education Partner (SEP) Paraprofessional" shall be established commencing in September 2025, with a job description to be negotiated by the BTU and BPS. No SEP paraprofessional position may be posted and no SEP paraprofessional may be hired until negotiations on the job description are completed. The title of the position may be changed by mutual agreement in writing.*

SEP paraprofessionals shall be compensated at the same rate as security, library, coverage, one-to-one, and surround care paras."

There are some other specifics about the SEP role in the contract not included in this column. Other particulars include but are not limited to; *"Paraprofessionals who are newly assigned into the SEP Paraprofessional role or newly hired into a SEP Paraprofessional role, shall be required to attend up to 10 hours of professional development, compensated at their hourly rate. All SEP Paraprofessionals hired or assigned into the position by August 1st will be required to attend up to five-and-a-half hour days of professional development (inclusive of a 30-minute lunch break) in the last two weeks of August. SEP Paraprofessionals hired after August 1st may attend the professional development in August, if feasible, otherwise, they will be required to attend make-up professional development offered throughout the school year. In such cases, the professional development shall be scheduled during regular work hours or, after work hours on a regularly scheduled workday with no less than 30 days notice or at the date of hire."*

…"SEP Paraprofessional will receive at least one planning period per week of no less than 45 minutes at a time scheduled by the school leader with a special education teacher of record without diminishing the required contractual time of that teacher.'

…"Compliance with State and Federal Law the work of SEP Paraprofessionals will comply with all laws and regulations governing paraprofessionals providing special education service minutes."

… "No SEP Paraprofessional may be scheduled to work with students from more than two special education resource room teachers."

… "SEP Paraprofessionals have required professional development"… as previously outlined.

If you are asked to do anything outside your job description in the role of SEP para please reach out to **Colleen Hart** at chart@btu.org with any questions or concerns.



The Poetry of Parenting…

continued from page 9

allow your people to fulfill their parental responsibilities.

Just like there are no short cuts in teaching or parenting, there is no substitute for authentic activities. AI may be the latest and greatest Wall Street investment, but it's a bad bet when it comes to the arts. Professor Keating in *Dead Poets Society* taught us "We read and write poetry because we are members of the human race. And the human race is filled with passion."

Passion, in its pro-Indo-European form *peh_1-, means "to hurt." And it does hurt to miss out on life's events. It hurts, financially, to be a good parent. And it hurts even more to have been witness to, and to have been present for, the important life events of your children and then to know that they are coming to an end.

Well, the wit-nessing part and the being present part is coming to an end for me. But the best part is coming for them. They are going to spread their wings and fly… and fall, and soar higher and higher, and see and do things I never imagined.

I couldn't be happier or prouder. And I wish my children a life full of their own versions of passion.

(Michael J. Maguire teaches Latin and Ancient Greek at Boston Latin Academy.)

Creating Space for Open Discussions



By Anne Slater,
***Boston Union Teacher* Co-Editor**

Special education is a team process. There is no "who". The special education team is composed of a range of players who all contribute to the success of an IEP or 504 plan. As the district moves to a fully inclusive environment, teams can learn and evolve to best meet the needs of our students. New SEP paras will join the special education team to support specialist educators. In this model, SEP paraprofessionals will join the resource room teacher or special education teacher to deliver in class (B grid) support for students.

Teaching has evolved over the last 30 years or so from a solo performance to an ensemble. An inquiry based approach may be a good lens for talking through evolving models of inclusion. Teams include classroom teachers, special educators, related service providers such as OT and Speech and language pathologists, school psychologists, administrators, school based social workers and ABA providers. This broad team based approach allows for teams to be innovative to create goals and support for students. When SEP paraprofessionals join the team we need to be able to create a welcoming inquiry based environment where teams feel comfortable talking through the way we understand teaching and learning. It is important for teams to meet regularly during the contractual prep time to go over IEP goals and student data and to clarify roles and expectations.

If you are used to doing something in your own way, a way that you believe is the right way and that you feel best serves the needs of your students, and then some of your control is reduced, this can cause some dissendence. How can we talk about the way instruction is delivered?

This summer's Marshall Memo (The Marshall Memo *www.marshallmemo.com* is a newsletter compiled by Kim Marshall, former BPS principal, summarizes current educational research.) The summer edition offers some research-based advice:

Leadership Beliefs That Shape Success

In this Leadership Freak article, **Dan Rockwell** says our beliefs shape what we see, feel, and do. He lists ten leadership beliefs that nurture a successful organization:

People can grow.
Curiosity builds confidence.
Progress beats perfection.
Accountability demonstrates respect.
Feedback fuels improvement.
Assumptions should be challenged.
Trust grows through consistency.
Success is a team activity.
Problems create opportunities.
Purpose energizes persistence.

"The Three Powers of Belief" by Dan Rockwell in Leadership Freak, July 30, 2026; Rockwell can be reached at dan@leadershipfreak.com.

Informal Coaching Conversations Where Supervisors Just Listen
(Originally titled "Real Coaching in Five Minutes [or Less]")

Here are some open-ended conversation starters for special education teams:

An informal greeting or affirmation about something that was noticed, then asking:

What went well? This gets the teacher reframing the lesson in positive terms, even if there were things that didn't go well.

Did anything surprise you? "In processing surprises," says Buskey, "teachers naturally go deeper by processing why something was surprising."

Is there is anything you would do differently? This question "offers people the chance to reflect critically without the emotion of negativity," he says. "It isn't about what the person did wrong this time. It's about what they might do differently next time."

Thank you for sharing. "Say this with sincerity," says Buskey. ""You may be tempted to ask more questions and go deeper, but this is not the place."

Buskey has found this format works well, creating authentic reflection time for busy teachers. The key is listening well to what they say, which "builds trust and communicates that we value and respect the speaker," he says. Some follow-up tips:

Tell teachers about the format in advance, saying that you're working on being a better listener and will refrain from giving feedback in these five-minute conversations.

It's okay for teachers to not respond to the questions. Many "have been traumatized by the teacher evaluation process somewhere in their past," says Buskey, "so they may view the second two questions as threatening. Allowing them to opt out without negative consequences begins to build trust."

Teachers may be curious about what the supervisor thought of the lesson, but Buskey advises not sharing feedback. "This is about their reflection, not ours," he says.

If something needs follow-up, he advises raising it in a separate conversation the next day.

"Real Coaching in Five Minutes (or Less)" by Frederick Buskey in ASCD Online, July 16, 2026, www.ascd.org/blogs/real-coaching-in-five-minutes-or-less.



BOSTON TEACHERS UNION
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SAVE THE DATE!
SEPTEMBER 20TH

13TH ANNUAL

BACK TO SCHOOL FAIR

FREE BOOKS AND FAMILY-FUN ACTIVITIES
FOR BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOL FAMILIES!

10 am- 2 pm, Sunday, September 20th, 2026

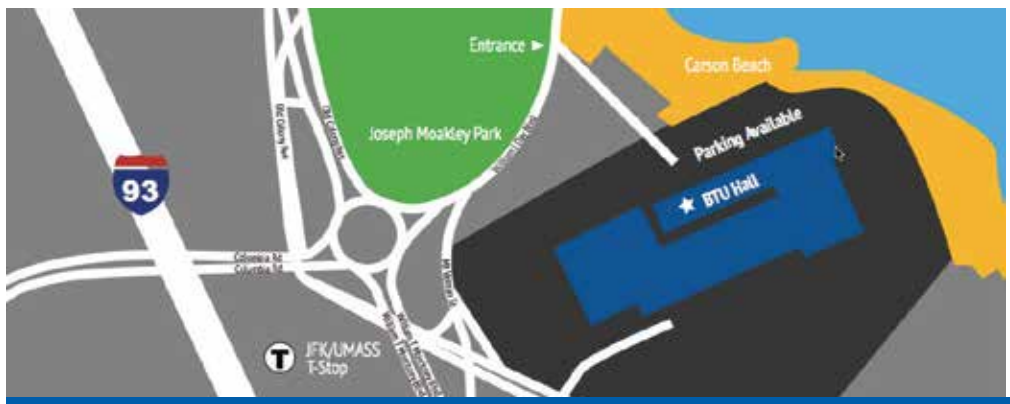
Boston Teachers Union, 180 Mt. Vernon Street, Dorchester 02125

WE NEED VOLUNTEERS TO HELP US SORT BOOKS ON WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 16TH TO FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 18TH WITH FLEXIBLE HOURS! ***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 Brenda at *bchaney@btu.org* with any questions!



READING OPENS THE WORLD

FIRST BOOK

BTU.ORG/BACKTOSCHOOL





The Educator Supports Program

FAIR | TRANSPARENT | HUMANE

Mission

The Educator Supports Program's mission is to strengthen student learning and teacher performance with coaching and evaluation that feels fair, transparent, and humane to all stakeholders.

The **E**ducator **S**upports **P**rogram (**ESP**) is a partnership between the BTU and BPS. We work with educators who have been rated less-than proficient in the educator evaluation system. Teachers can volunteer to have an experienced peer (called a Consulting Teacher) visit their classroom on a regular basis to serve as their coach and/or primary evaluator.

Peer Assistance (PA)



- ESP provides coaching and support through co-planning, observations, modeling, developing new practices
- ESP works with admin to help teacher address prescriptions
- **Admin is primary evaluator**

Peer Assistance & Review (PAR)



- ESP provides coaching and support through co-planning, observations, modeling, developing new practices
- ESP works with admin to help teacher address prescriptions
- **ESP is primary evaluator**

How We Help

- Improving teaching and learning where it's needed most
- Mediating unproductive admin-teacher relationships
- Fostering teacher growth and development
- Artifact guidance, support, and feedback
- Advising on the evaluation process and district policies

SCAN ME

Who is Eligible?

All underperforming educators[1] (rated less than proficient overall or in any evaluation standard) who are in their 3rd year or later including teachers, nurses, SLPs, COSEs, OTs, etc.

Who are the Coaches (ESP CTs)?

Carefully selected exemplary BPS teachers, trained as evaluators and coaches who are no more than 3 years removed from BPS schools.

Contact us for more info:

tinyurl.com/BPSESP | esp@bostonpublicschools.org

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.)

Baldwin Early Learning Pilot Academy

The **Baldwin Early Learning Pilot Academy** is located in Brighton, at the city's Brookline border. Its stately brick building is 100 years old and serves approximately 150 students in K0 through first grade. At 80, I am grateful for the elevator installed not so long ago!

BPS Early Learning Centers provide "surround care" from 7:30 AM to 4:30 PM; unlike many, the Baldwin starts classroom instruction at 7:30. Almost all instruction is center based. By the time I arrive, most classes are engaged in literacy stations – with as many as four adults working with small groups of children.

They are playing with letters, sequencing the events in a story, reading books together, tapping out sounds, writing and illustrating their own stories, and much more! It's a joy to watch young children learning through play and engagement with language that encourages personal connections and curiosity.

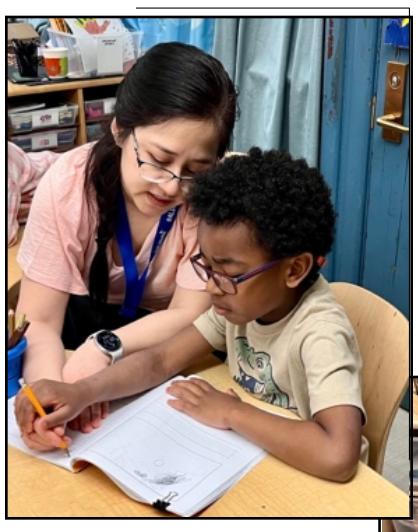
In music class with **Stephen Richards,** K0/K1 students sing songs and use rhythm sticks and shakers to accompany the words. In **Adrienne Ho's** K2 class, children are learning about numbers, counting, and shapes.

Kindergarten classes are also learning about plants through hands-on, interdisciplinary activities – planting flower seeds, learning the parts of plants and what they need to grow. In one class, they have a "flower shop" where students make change on a small cash register. **Fallon Hawks'** first graders have been learning about light and sound, as well as Chinese words in a weekly class with their K2 friends!

Baldwin students tell me they are also learning to listen, to help each other, to be part of a group, and to take care of the earth. I hope this school year brings opportunities for **YOUR** students to engage in "real world" activities that support social/emotional as well as academic learning!

Amika

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



In this picture, Tru is writing and drawing his "weekend news". He is learning how to listen and to follow the group plan. Our class is learning letters, numbers, shapes, and how to be stewards of the earth by recycling.
Adrienne Ho, K2 teacher



Ms. Marlin was helping us put what happened in The Ugly Vegetable story in order. We learned that some people plant flowers and others plant vegetables. They use different garden tools, too, like watering cans and hoses. The Chinese vegetables in the story looked ugly but made a soup that smelled so good that all the neighbors wanted some!
Marlin Cabreja's K0/K1 students



We were writing a story. We are learning to help each other. We are also learning how to count and read books. Every Friday we learn Chinese words with first graders.
Darielys & Gabriela, K2



In this picture, we are reading a book together with Ms. Fallon. We are learning to be better readers and writers. Tapping out sounds helps us learn new words. We've learned to use capital letters at the beginning of sentences and a period or question mark at the end. And we are learning a lot about light and sound!
Fallon Hawks' Grade 1 students



I was drawing a picture of a dragon to go with my writing. I am learning a lot of new words this year. In math we are learning about shapes.
Aiden Raditya, Grade 1



I was making a tower, counting the blocks, and then knocking it down. I made a tower with 15 blocks! Ms. Maritza was helping us. I've learned to count to 100 this year, and to add numbers.
Calli Tseliou, K1



We were in Music class with Mr. Richards. We were singing a song about making pizza and "making the dough" with rhythm sticks. We are learning songs, dancing, and how to use different instruments to make music, like rhythm sticks and shakers.
Stephen Richards' K0/K1 music class



We are watering the flower seeds we planted. We learned that all living things grow, and that plants need water and soil and sunshine to grow. We learned the parts of plants, too, like roots and stems and flowers.
Lucia Rostampur & Raymond Bhanushali, K0