President’s Corner by Richard Stutman

**Great City Schools reports on the School Department’s professional development effort**

Warts and all, SD deserves credit for commissioning report

In mid-May, the Council on Great City Schools released a report entitled a “Review of Boston Public Schools Academic Direction.” The report is lengthy and detailed, and contains both positive and negative assessments of the inner workings of the school district. To its credit, the school department commissioned this assessment knowing both the good and the bad might surface. Approximately 50 individuals were interviewed by the Council Team, which was charged with the following:

• Assessing a proposed draft of organizational changes to the district’s academic departments;
• Identifying points of disconnection both within the central office and between the central office and schools that restrict the district’s ability to implement and support instructional reform;
• Reviewing the instructional program of the school system; and
• Making recommendations for shoring up instructional capacity during this transitional period.

In reviewing the report, the media by and large focused on the negative. There were, however, both negative and positive aspects of the council’s findings. We thought it would be interesting to focus on just one aspect of the lengthy report, and we chose the issue of professional development. What we have done below is provide a verbatim excerpt wherein each instance the term “professional development” occurs within the body of the report. In each instance we have provided the complete paragraph in which the phrase occurs. All excerpts occur in the order in which they appear in the text.

**Under Findings & Issues**

A cross-functional team has been established to coordinate district-offered professional development that is aligned with district priorities, and has an intentional focus on capacity-building within our professional development opportunities.

- **Cross-Functional Team:** The district/senior staff have begun to establish cross-functional teams for key district priorities and have started to develop a training and support plan to help the district make this cultural shift, including systems-thinking training and project management training. Examples of teams include: summer learning, professional development, support for English Language Learners, transportation policy implementation, and the district’s implementation of the Achievement Gap policy. (indent added)

The district and the teachers union negotiated an academic lane credit program that involves some 120 hours of professional development with periodic testing throughout the course. The program is being piloted in one school at the moment, and holds great potential if implemented well.

District priorities sometimes conflict or compete with one another. For example, the district’s work on the common core seems to have been displaced by its work on teacher evaluations, and its need to boost staff capacity with professional development appears to have been undermined by its use of contractual professional development time to explain the teacher evaluation system.

The district’s network structure was initiated in part to improve non-instructional support to schools, but has expanded to include an instructional mission. However, in their first year, network leaders have struggled to reconcile their role in providing instructional support and professional development to principals with their non-instructional roles and responsibilities.

Professional development provided by the central office lacks any cohesive strategy or broad focus on district instructional priorities, and is offered to networks separately by each district department. In addition, the amount of contractual professional development is limited and remains optional for teachers. (Higher priority professional development can sometimes be trumped by professional development for which there a stipends from the Gap policy.)

Principals do not regularly attend the same professional development as their teachers attend, and there were few individuals interviewed who could give example of how professional development was informed by and changed as a result of data. In addition, principals are not kept in the loop about the work done by central office and networks with teacher leaders.
Open to the sounds of La Piñata, a youth Latin American cultural performing arts troupe, participants in the 4th annual Boston Education for Social Justice Conference (BESJ) were called into the day with conch shells and drums, dancing to the cardinal directions and dancing into life. Almost 400 people attended the conference on May 9-10th at the Mission Hill School / Margarita Mutilz Academy. [For more information, see http://besj.weebly.com/]

To organize this year’s conference, the YOUNG Coalition and Teacher Activist Group Boston [http://tagboston.org/], were fortunate to be joined by young people from Sociedad Latina. Originally envisioned as a conference for educators, BESJ has expanded over the last three years to include young people and parents in the planning because the organizers recognize all stakeholders as critical partners in creating the schools that everyone deserves. With free registration, free breakfast and lunch, free childcare and free Spanish-language interpretation, the conference itself was also open and available to all.

In keeping with the belief that educational justice can only be achieved when young people are also at the forefront of movement building, the conference program put youth front and center in the Friday evening youth-led open mic and Saturday morning panel, keynote speech, and many of the workshops.

The day concluded with keynote speakers Asean Johnson, an education activist and 4th grader at Marcus Garvey Elementary School in Chicago, and his mother Shoneice Reynolds, who participated in the 2012 Chicago Teachers Union Strike as a union member and parent. Their passion for public education grew in January 2013 when Chicago Public Schools announced the proposed closing of over 100 public elementary schools, including Asean’s school, which prompted them to become involved in the Save Marcus Garvey School Campaign. They started a petition, letter drives to elected officials, community rallies, and other events to get the community involved, which saved the school from closing.

Shoneice and Asean spoke of their continued fight against education reform, high-stakes testing, unequal funding, racial inequalities, and lack of teacher-parent-student voice. To conclude, Asean’s voice rallied the crowd with a chant of, “Education is a right, that is why we have to fight!” which grew stronger and stronger, reaffirming commitments to Reclaim Our Classrooms.

---

By Riana Good, Boston Latin Academy

Amatullah Mervin, Community Organizer at the Boston-area Youth Organizing Project (BYOP) moderated a panel of three Boston Public Schools students: Imani Jiles, a member of BYOP senior at the Josiah Quincy Upper School, Glorya Stamfard-Wornum, a Junior at the Edward M. Kennedy who has served Boston Student Advisory Council for 2 years and Ana Calderon a senior at Brightton High School who has been a Youth Community Organizer with Sociedad Latina for two years. They reiterated the message that youth need to be at the forefront of a movement and set the tone for a day of connecting and moving forward.

With over forty workshops offered over three workshop sessions, participants could choose from such options as: BPS Code of Conduct (led by Boston Student Advisory Council); How to Build an Active, Multi-ethnic Parent Organization (led by East Somerville Community School PTA); No Such Thing as a Positive Stereotype: Disman-tling the Model Minority Myth (led by MA Asian-American Educators Association); Testing: The Next Generation (led by Citizens for Public Schools); Supporting LGBTQ Students and Loved Ones (led by PFLAG); and Powerful Literacy as Social Justice (led by Boston Teachers Reading and Writing Group.

The day concluded with keynote speakers Asean Johnson, an education activist and 4th grader at Marcus Garvey Elementary School in Chicago, and his mother Shoneice Reynolds, who participated in the 2012 Chicago Teachers Union Strike as a union member and parent. Their passion for public education grew in January 2013 when Chicago Public Schools announced the proposed closing of over 100 public elementary schools, including Asean’s school, which prompted them to become involved in the Save Marcus Garvey School Campaign. They started a petition, letter drives to elected officials, community rallies, and other events to get the community involved, which saved the school from closing.

Shoneice and Asean spoke of their continued fight against education reform, high-stakes testing, unequal funding, racial inequalities, and lack of teacher-parent-student voice. To conclude, Asean’s voice rallied the crowd with a chant of, “Education is a right, that is why we have to fight!” which grew stronger and stronger, reaffirming commitments to Reclaim Our Classrooms.
The contract reads; ‘Whatever master schedule (e.g., six period day, seven period day, block schedule) is in effect in a middle school shall remain in effect for subsequent years unless a new type of schedule is approved through the waiver provisions under school-based management by a vote of 55% of the BTU staff.’

If there will be a change in ‘work conditions’ such as exceeding the maximum teaching time at the secondary level of 240 minutes per day, requiring teachers to teach more than 160 minutes in a row without a lunch break, planning and development period, or an administrative duty, or not providing a minimum of 240 minutes of planning and development time each week (in a ‘traditional school’), then the waiver process under School Site Council (contract pages 12 – 16) needs to be followed. The BTU allows portions of the school staff and union to utilize this very specific process. Waiving provisions as providing direct instructional impact are NOT eligible to collect Unemployment Compensation (RA), they are NOT eligible to collect Unemployment because they have been reasonably assured of a job in the upcoming academic year. If a professional teacher has been granted a letter of Reasonable Assurance (RA), and has received a termination letter from the BPS, they ARE eligible to collect Unemployment Compensation.

If a teacher has been terminated due to just cause and has done so via a settlement agreement drawn up with the BPS Labor Relations Department, then they must refer to the terms of said settlement in relation to filing for Unemployment Compensation when applicable.

To obtain more information, call the Massachusetts Division of Employment via the web www.dmwu.gov/ or phone TeleCalms at 1-877-626-6800 or 617-626-6800. Hours are Monday through Thursday 8:30 a.m.-6:30 p.m., Friday 8:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

What does COBRA mean?

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

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

Do Instructional Leadership Teams (ILT’s) have parents as members?

No. The contract states, The ILT “shall be a representative body of the professional staff at the school. It shall be composed of administrators and teachers from the various grade levels, disciplines, and programs of the school.” The ILT is “an advisory board to the principal on issues related to teaching, learning, assessment and professional development.” The principal must give a report on the ILT’s activities to the SSC each month.

“All recommendations of the ILT that alters the Whole School Improvement Plan or may have a major effect on the school community and which is supported by the principal shall be subject to the approval of the School Site Council before being implemented.” This is the check and balance of the non-elected ILT as a subcommittee of the elected SSC.

Where does a City of Boston Employee turn when things seem unbearable?

The City of Boston provides a ‘free and confidential’ program for its employees and their immediate families called the Employees Assistance Program (EAP). This service is there to help individuals with challenges they may be dealing with including substance abuse issues, job loss, depression, grief, being stressed out, and the like.

To speak with an EAP clinician call 617-635-2200, Monday through Friday, 7:00 a.m.- 5:00 p.m. If in crisis mode, call 617-635-4500 to page an EAP clinician who is on call. EAP will continue to work with affected individuals as long as necessary.

Know Your Rights

by Caren Carew

What kind of a vote do we want to change the school’s class schedule for next year?

T he contract reads; ‘Whatever master schedule (e.g., six period day, seven period day, block schedule) is in effect in a middle school shall remain in effect for subsequent years unless a new type of schedule is approved through the waiver provisions under school-based management by a vote of 55% of the BTU staff.’

If there will be a change in ‘work conditions’ such as exceeding the maximum teaching time at the secondary level of 240 minutes per day, requiring teachers to teach more than 160 minutes in a row without a lunch break, planning and development period, or an administrative duty, or not providing a minimum of 240 minutes of planning and development time each week (in a ‘traditional school’), then the waiver process under School Site Council (contract pages 12 – 16) needs to be followed. The BTU allows portions of the school staff and union to utilize this very specific process. Waiving provisions as providing direct instructional impact are NOT eligible to collect Unemployment Compensation (RA), they are NOT eligible to collect Unemployment because they have been reasonably assured of a job in the upcoming academic year. If a professional teacher has been granted a letter of Reasonable Assurance (RA), and has received a termination letter from the BPS, they ARE eligible to collect Unemployment Compensation.

If a teacher has been terminated due to just cause and has done so via a settlement agreement drawn up with the BPS Labor Relations Department, then they must refer to the terms of said settlement in relation to filing for Unemployment Compensation when applicable.

To obtain more information, call the Massachusetts Division of Employment via the web www.dmwu.gov/ or phone TeleCalms at 1-877-626-6800 or 617-626-6800. Hours are Monday through Thursday 8:30 a.m.-6:30 p.m., Friday 8:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

What does COBRA mean?

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

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

Do Instructional Leadership Teams (ILT’s) have parents as members?

No. The contract states, The ILT “shall be a representative body of the professional staff at the school. It shall be composed of administrators and teachers from the various grade levels, disciplines, and programs of the school.” The ILT is “an advisory board to the principal on issues related to teaching, learning, assessment and professional development.” The principal must give a report on the ILT’s activities to the SSC each month.

“All recommendations of the ILT that alters the Whole School Improvement Plan or may have a major effect on the school community and which is supported by the principal shall be subject to the approval of the School Site Council before being implemented.” This is the check and balance of the non-elected ILT as a subcommittee of the elected SSC.

Where does a City of Boston Employee turn when things seem unbearable?

The City of Boston provides a ‘free and confidential’ program for its employees and their immediate families called the Employees Assistance Program (EAP). This service is there to help individuals with challenges they may be dealing with including substance abuse issues, job loss, depression, grief, being stressed out, and the like.

To speak with an EAP clinician call 617-635-2200, Monday through Friday, 7:00 a.m.- 5:00 p.m. If in crisis mode, call 617-635-4500 to page an EAP clinician who is on call. EAP will continue to work with affected individuals as long as necessary.

Know Your Rights

by Caren Carew

What kind of a vote do we want to change the school’s class schedule for next year?

T he contract reads; ‘Whatever master schedule (e.g., six period day, seven period day, block schedule) is in effect in a middle school shall remain in effect for subsequent years unless a new type of schedule is approved through the waiver provisions under school-based management by a vote of 55% of the BTU staff.’

If there will be a change in ‘work conditions’ such as exceeding the maximum teaching time at the secondary level of 240 minutes per day, requiring teachers to teach more than 160 minutes in a row without a lunch break, planning and development period, or an administrative duty, or not providing a minimum of 240 minutes of planning and development time each week (in a ‘traditional school’), then the waiver process under School Site Council (contract pages 12 – 16) needs to be followed. The BTU allows portions of the school staff and union to utilize this very specific process. Waiving provisions as providing direct instructional impact are NOT eligible to collect Unemployment Compensation (RA), they are NOT eligible to collect Unemployment because they have been reasonably assured of a job in the upcoming academic year. If a professional teacher has been granted a letter of Reasonable Assurance (RA), and has received a termination letter from the BPS, they ARE eligible to collect Unemployment Compensation.

If a teacher has been terminated due to just cause and has done so via a settlement agreement drawn up with the BPS Labor Relations Department, then they must refer to the terms of said settlement in relation to filing for Unemployment Compensation when applicable.

To obtain more information, call the Massachusetts Division of Employment via the web www.dmwu.gov/ or phone TeleCalms at 1-877-626-6800 or 617-626-6800. Hours are Monday through Thursday 8:30 a.m.-6:30 p.m., Friday 8:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

What does COBRA mean?

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

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

Do Instructional Leadership Teams (ILT’s) have parents as members?

No. The contract states, The ILT “shall be a representative body of the professional staff at the school. It shall be composed of administrators and teachers from the various grade levels, disciplines, and programs of the school.” The ILT is “an advisory board to the principal on issues related to teaching, learning, assessment and professional development.” The principal must give a report on the ILT’s activities to the SSC each month.

“All recommendations of the ILT that alters the Whole School Improvement Plan or may have a major effect on the school community and which is supported by the principal shall be subject to the approval of the School Site Council before being implemented.” This is the check and balance of the non-elected ILT as a subcommittee of the elected SSC.

Where does a City of Boston Employee turn when things seem unbearable?

The City of Boston provides a ‘free and confidential’ program for its employees and their immediate families called the Employees Assistance Program (EAP). This service is there to help individuals with challenges they may be dealing with including substance abuse issues, job loss, depression, grief, being stressed out, and the like.

To speak with an EAP clinician call 617-635-2200, Monday through Friday, 7:00 a.m.- 5:00 p.m. If in crisis mode, call 617-635-4500 to page an EAP clinician who is on call. EAP will continue to work with affected individuals as long as necessary.
Reclaiming a Sixty-Year-Old Promise

by Michael J. Maguire

On May 17, 1954 the US Supreme Court unanimously decided in Oliver Brown et al. versus the Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas that segregating students on the basis of race is unconstitutional. On May 17, 2014 the Boston Teachers Union in conjunction with others, marked the 60th anniversary of Brown v Board with a ceremony at the Salvation Army’s Kroc Center in Roxbury.

Dr. John Jackson from the Schott Foundation for Public Education noted that all humans are 99% biologically the same but it is our nation’s policies and practices that separate us. “If tests can predict (economic) outcomes by race, it is by design,” he said. “What if a kid showed up at a well funded school and said, ‘I want to go here.’”

He asked Dr. Johnson challenged the audience to change laws if they are unjust. “Our public education system works, we just got to make sure it works for all students.”

Dr. Johnson ended her remarks by reminding us that those who came before us, like Oliver Brown, has fewer resources than we do today. “We have enough and we can do enough to proclaim the promise of public education.”

The next speaker, Ayele Shakur, Educator, President, Francine Lawrence. She was the President and CEO of the Schott Foundation, touched upon Boston’s own dealings with segregation in 1974. Bussing was a huge issue then and a concern today. Worse than 7th and 8th graders not getting yellow bus service next school year is the fact that parents were not part of the discussion. Ms. Shakur echoed Boston NAACP president Michael Curry’s words when she said “If you are not at the table, you are on the table.”

Shakur pointed out “the most important number that determines if a child will go to college is not his SAT but his zip code.” She urged us all to do more for those who both need the help the most and are least empowered to help themselves.

Ayele McInnis, a teacher at the BTU Pilot School and President of the Black Educators’ Alliance of Massachusetts, also spoke. He reminded the audience that it was not just Oliver Brown who took on segregation. The et al. were other parents and were the community organizers who worked for years to do enough to make the audience that it was not just Oliver Brown who took on segregation. The et al. were other parents and were the community organizers who worked for years to do enough to make the audience that it was not just Oliver Brown who took on segregation. The et al. were other parents and were the community organizers who worked for years to do enough to make the audience that it was not just Oliver Brown who took on segregation.

McInnis urged us all to be just as active in our community as the et al. were in theirs. Our job, he said, as unionists is to rally the troops.

Closing out the event was American Federation of Teachers Vice President Francine Lawrence. Lawrence stated that we cannot simply count on the Supreme Court to improve social justice in America. She urged local citizens to band together with their local unions and community organizations to fight to improve education. Lawrence also cautioned us not to despair when those organizations with deeper pockets attempt to privatize education. Our task is to educate those around us. Our task is to mobilize at a grassroots level just like Oliver Brown et al. did 60 years ago.

Jessica Tang, BTU’s Director of Organization offered the following introductions of Dr. Jackson and VP Lawrence at the event.

I am very pleased to be here today to celebrate and reflect on the legacy of the Brown v Board decision. Oftentimes, when we think of the decision, we think in terms of just black and white. However, as an Asian American, I know that all of us are impacted - white, Latino, Black, Asian, everyone. I remember once hearing an Asian American State Rep from Texas explain how she ended up in Houston - As a child in Louisiana, she was sent to the “colored schools” and so her parents moved her to Houston where they were able to attend the “white schools.” These are not the types of choices parents should have to make - “all students should have access to quality public education, regardless of race, gender, income or any other factor.”

With this in mind, it is my great pleasure to introduce someone who has been a leader in this work. Dr. John H. Jackson has been the President and CEO of the Schott Foundation for Public Education since 2007. Previously, Dr. Jackson held leadership positions at the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. He served as the NAACP Chief Policy Officer and prior to that as the NAACP’s National Director of Education.

Dr. Jackson also served as an Adjunct Professor of Race, Gender, and Public Policy at the Georgetown Public Policy Institute. In 1999, President William Jefferson Clinton appointed Dr. Jackson to serve in his administration as Senior Policy Advisor in the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) at the U.S. Department of Education.

Dr. Jackson possesses a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from Xavier University of Louisiana; a Master of Education in Educational Policy from the University of Illinois’ College of Education; and a Juris Doctorate from the University of Illinois’ College of Law. In addition, Dr. Jackson received a Master of Education and Doctorate of Education in Administration, Planning, and Social Policy from Harvard Graduate School of Education.

Dr. Jackson served on the Obama-Biden transition team as a member of the President’s 13-member Education Policy Transition Work Group.

Please give a warm welcome to Dr. Jackson!

Jessica Tang

As an educator, I know that we have an important role to play in advocating for the needs of our students and schools—individually and collectively, through our unions and activism. We have the opportunity, and obligation, to lead our field and make decisions that will promote the success of our students and schools.

One union leader who has paved a path for such advocacy is the American Federation of Teachers, AFL CIO Executive Vice President, Francine Lawrence. She was elected unanimously to office in September of 2011.

From 1997 to 2011, Lawrence was president of the 3,000-member Toledo (Ohio) Federation of Teachers where she led contract negotiations that focused on what matters most: student achievement. The resulting contract provisions addressed how to attract and retain good teachers, defined expectations for teachers’ subject matter knowledge and skills, and provided for high-quality, teacher-driven professional development.

Lawrence co-chaired the union and district’s Intern Board of Review, which oversees Toledo’s peer assistance and review plans; the Toledo plan serves as an example of a school reform that works. The Peer Assistance and Review plan in Toledo has become a model used nationwide, and a model that the Boston Teachers Union is exploring and pursuing as well.

Let’s not forget that Ms. Lawrence began in the classroom. An experienced educator, Lawrence was a speech-language pathologist in the Toledo Public Schools for many years. She holds a Bachelor of Science in speech and hearing therapy, and a Master of Arts in speech pathology, both from Bowling Green State University. Active in her community, Lawrence currently serves on the board of advisers of the Lovell Foundation, which funds programs in mental illness, integrative medicine, cultural enrichment and philanthropic education.

Please give a warm welcome to the AFT Executive Vice-President Francine Lawrence!
Teacher Appreciation Event at the Haley House on Friday, May 9th

The Haley House and Boston Teachers Union held a Teacher Appreciation Event that was attended by over fifty educators! Participants were appreciated with cookies, appetizers, and a raffle for Amazon Gift Cards and BTU sweatshirts! Winners included:

- Priscilla Joseph, Mather Elementary School
- Rachel Jean Marie, Boston Day and Evening Academy
- David Hershey, McCormack Middle School
- Andrea Kunst, Boston Day and Evening Academy
- Denise Washington, ELC-West
- Connie Boram, Boston Day and Evening Academy
- Robyn Johnson, Visual Arts Specialist

Congratulations to these members, and much thanks to ALL of our members for your hard work and commitment throughout the year! Photos by Jessica Tang

Teacher Leader Program Showcase on Saturday, May 31st

On Saturday, May 31st, members of the inaugural BTU/AFT Teacher Leader Program presented their action research projects for the year. The fellows have been meeting throughout the school year to learn about education policy, activism, and advocacy. The year culminated in research projects where fellows identified a problem of practice and then conducted research to determine policy implications and recommendations to address the problem. Applications for the next year’s Teacher Leader Program will be open announced at the end of this summer!

– Garret Virchick

Meet and Greet in West Roxbury, Friday, May 30th

Members gathered together at the West on Centre Restaurant for the last Regional Meet and Greet of the year. Each month, the BTU staff has been holding these gatherings in different neighborhoods of Boston to hear from members and address member concerns. It has been a great opportunity to facilitate communication amongst our members and we are excited about continuing these gatherings in the fall! Photos by Jessica Tang
It’s time to arm the villagers with pitchforks and torches. On Wednesday, May 21, 2014 the Massachusetts Senate sent a charter school bill to the governor. When the Senate voted 114-35 in favor of lifting the cap on charter schools. Let’s let that sink in for a bit. 114-35 was the vote against inclusive public education in an overwhelmingly Democratic state.

The votes for charter schools typically follow either “urban/suburban” areas. Notice too that charter schools do not typically open in suburban areas. Talk about a tyranny of the majority. I wonder why John Adams, the father of the Massachusetts constitution and a champion of public education itself, would think if this sorry state of affairs.

Negotiate No Child Left Behind? Remember how at the turn of the century we laughed at the 2014 goal for having all American students above average? When these urban areas failed to meet Adequate Yearly Progress, teachers and their unions were blamed.

It wasn’t until the later years when suburban districts failed AYP that the media and politicians examined the flaws in NCLB. Curious, is it not?

Now the Emperor’s clothes are made by Charter School Tailors Association. When the Emperor marched through Dover, state representative Denise Garlick pranced the new clothes. (Dover’s median family income is north of $200,000, yet, Rep. Garlick voted “Yes” on lifting the charter school cap on 5/21/14.)

The Committee thanks all who sent in letters. Report Accepted.

Members present: Anne Broder, Marie Broderick; Mary Cahalane; Donna Cooley-Hilton; Martha Cotton; Larry Connelly; David Donovan, Chairman; Ruthanne Kennedy; Marilyn Marion, Secretary; Leonard Miraglia, Vice Chairman; Mary Jo Murphy; Linda McNamee; and Paul Tenney.

Excused: Sandy Carl, Anne-Mate Adduci

The meeting was opened by the Chairman at 10:25 a.m.

Secretary: March minutes were read and accepted.

The Committee agreed with her suggestion. A new application will be printed by the June meeting.

The following trip has been sold out.

Members present: Anne Marie Adduci; Marie Broderick; Mary Cahalane; Sandy Carl; Martha Cotton; David Donovan, Chairman; Ruthanne Kennedy; Marilyn Marion, Secretary; Leonard Miraglia, Vice Chairman; Mary Jo Murphy; and Paul Tenney.

The Committee sent an email to the membership discussing the charters.

The Committee will also contact John McLaughlin at the City Treasurer’s department regarding COLA. They will be

Chairman: The Committee is working on the COLA issue. They will be

The next trip to Cape Cod Canal with Hy-Line Cruises has been changed from May 14th to June 9th because the boat company will not be in service until Memorial Day. Flyers will be available at the business meeting.

Legislative: The Committee met with Rich Rogers of the Greater Boston Labor Council (AFL-CIO) to discuss the organization in our efforts to increase the COLA base. The Committee wants the increased COLA to be made a “Labor Issue” for the AFL-CIO. The Committee also met with the Boston Police Retiree group on the COLA issue. Letters from our members are being sent to the Mayor and all City Councilors and all members of the Retirement Board along with a cover letter and a fact sheet from the Legislative Chairs.

The Committee thanks all who sent in letters. Report Accepted.

Data Processing: The Committee continues to work with the City to make sure that their retiree numbers are consistent with ours. Report Accepted.

Membership: We are close to 3,000 members. Report Accepted.

Respectfully submitted, Marilyn F. Marson, Secretary BTU Retired Teachers Chapter

News from the

The Committee is working on the COLA issue. They will be

The Committee is working on the COLA issue. They will be

The Committee is working on the COLA issue. They will be

The Committee is working on the COLA issue. They will be

The Committee is working on the COLA issue. They will be

The Committee is working on the COLA issue. They will be
The Ellison-Parks Early Learning School, just one block from busy Mattapan Square, sits on a quiet tree-lined street with plenty of room to park! A compact brick building dedicated in 1998, it houses just twelve classrooms – one SEI and one inclusion class at each grade-level, K0-3.

A daily message greets all who enter, letting visitors know that Peter Reynolds, author of “The Dot,” will be visiting the school soon. Like many early learning centers, the Ellison-Parks has morning and afternoon paraprofessionals who provide extended day as well as classroom support. K1 Inclusion teacher Carolyn Russi does a great job of communicating with families and visitors: posted on the walls near her classroom door were a weekly schedule, a monthly newsletter, and a recent letter to parents about a special outdoor “Letter Hunt” activity.

STEAM teacher, Tina Greene, was working with second grade students when I arrived. Engaged in a small group “turn and talk” activity, they were comparing the functions of machines with how we use parts of our bodies. In a K2 class, music teacher Aytul Farquharson helped students learn about tempo by comparing turtles and racecars! Trinh Tu’s K0 students were studying insects and spiders, meeting as a class under a giant yarn web hanging above their rug area.

Latency was the morning focus in many classrooms – with children enjoying books in cozy nooks, on colorful rugs, at their desks, and in guided reading groups. In Julia Centonio’s K1 SEI class, signs around the room labeled pictures of classroom objects with words in English, Spanish, French, and a language I couldn’t identify...Vietnamese, perhaps?

It was a joy to watch Ellison-Parks kindergarteners engaged in active play: children building cars and houses with Legos, two boys gleefully exploring the properties of what looked like shaving cream, a blue-smocked girl standing at an easel selecting just the right paint to use. Learning takes many forms, but sometimes I think Robert Fulghum may have said it best in his famous “All I need to know I learned in Kindergarten” poem!

I wish you all a well-deserved summer vacation with plenty of time to relax and rejuvenate – to play! Please invite me to visit your school next year.

Amika Kemmler Ernst, Ed.D.

We are reading books we like. We are learning to read and write. We are learning a lot of things!

– Lillian Ekechakwu & Kalydah Michel

This was in science class with Ms. Greene. I was thinking about how machines move. I’ve learned how to make a robot! I’ve also learned how simple machines like levers, pulleys, wheels and axles work.

– Chances Fox, Grade 2
BTU NIGHT AT FENWAY PARK, MAY 20TH
BOSTON RED SOX vs. TORONTO BLUE JAYS

Boston’s new National Board Certified Teachers were honored at a pre-game ceremony.