Tentative School Day Extension Reached; 55 Schools Affected, with Phase-In Over Next Three Years

Reasonable Compensation Comes With 75 Minutes of Additional P&D, Real Input Into Planning of Extended Time

President’s Corner
by Richard Stutman

Although the negotiations on ELT have actually been far from our minds since September 12, 2012, when we signed the current collective bargaining agreement, you may remember we could not reach agreement on the school year with the previous city and school administration on the length, scope, rationale, and compensation of the then-live ELT proposal. In this agreement, we have collectively agreed on all such components, and for that we appreciate the collaborative process that brought about this agreement.

We see the extension of the school day as a part of what we need to make our schools more attractive and competitive. We have approached this extension with the following principles in mind:

- We have a shared focus on improving student learning and achievement by providing students with a wider variety of academic and enrichment options within their school day.
- We agree that in expanding instructional and student learning time, the quality of extended daily learning and teaching time is as important as the quantity thereof.
- We agree that collaboration within the school community is the key to the parties’ success in achieving a quality ELT program. Here are the highlights of the TA:

  - All Schedule A schools will have their teacher and paraprofessional work day extended 40 minutes.
  - The time will be used for the teaching of academic subjects and other subjects such as arts, drama, foreign language, and so on.
  - There will be real, collaborative discussions at the school level to design the time appropriately.
  - Paras will receive their current hourly wage for the extension.
  - Teachers will receive $4,464 ($37.20 per hour) added to their base salary, which will be known as a Schedule A grid. The new salary will be retirement-worthy and sentence-worthy. This additional base salary shall also be subject to the yearly COLA.
  - Teachers who participate will receive an annual supply budget of $200 to help implement the school day extension.
  - Teachers will receive two additional weekly blocks of planning time:
    1) A 40-minute block of teacher-led and teacher-facilitated planning time to be used to help plan the ELT. Should this 40-minute block of time not materialize in a given week, the teacher shall be compensated $28.30 for the lost time.
    2) An additional weekly 35-minute block of planning time.
  - Itinerant teachers will be able to meet with their ‘core’ colleagues with six hours of substitute coverage per year to help plan and coordinate the implementation of the ELT.
  - Itinerant teachers assigned to Schedule A schools shall work the extended day and shall be compensated on a pro-rata basis.
  - All itinerant staff shall be given their schedule for a given school year on or before August 15.
  - Schools currently in schedule A are grandfathered into this new schedule and salary grid in the event they either voluntarily or involuntarily leave that status. What does this mean in practical terms?

For example: Let’s say the Smith School, currently a Schedule A school, elects to become an Innovation or a Pilot School and adopts the typical Innovation or Pilot School schedule, which calls for a school day extension of 145 hours. A Pilot or Innovation School teacher is by contract compensated $2,350 for the same 145 hours.

Under the terms of the TA, however, the Smith School is ‘grandfathered’ as a Schedule A school, and its salary for the same 145 hours would be $4,464 or an additional $2,114 per teacher per year.

One more example: Let’s say the Jones school, currently in Schedule A, falls into Turnaround status and becomes the Jones Turnaround School. Currently under the rules imposed by the state, a typical Turnaround School gets paid $4,100 for 190 hours of extra work. Under our TA, the Jones Turnaround School staff would receive $5,975, an additional $1,875 for the same 190 hours.

There is one additional offset to the above. A school currently not in schedule A but otherwise eligible (e.g., Charter, Charter, Winthrop) will—once it leaves Turnaround Status—receive instantaneously to Schedule A BEFORE going to any other status, thereby insuring that it is locked into a better compensation model than where it might be headed.

We have tried to get traction to help move earlier the start and end time of Tier 3 schools, those which today end their student day at 3:30 p.m. There is strong will on all sides to get this accomplished, and the negotiating teams spent hours discussing this, examining alternate bus schedules, and the shifting and re-shifting of school starting times. In the end it was not to be.

Moving the late schools even 15 minutes earlier causes a ripple effect that does one of two things:

1) forces early schools to start at 7:15 a.m., which places some students on a bus at 6:00 a.m., or
2) adds dozens of new bus runs, which will cost $2.4 Million. The long and continued on page 3
The last membership meeting had a lot of up-front work done by the bylaw change. As this timeline will show there was really no need for any confusion. There was much said about this motion being tabled before the facts were otherwise. At the September membership meeting President Richard Stutman informed mem-
bers that this was a change that was needed for a bylaw change regarding election of field representatives. Currently the secondary field rep represents some elementary school teaching committees, which is too many for some middle school teachers. Since this con-
tradicts our bylaws we were informed there needed to be a change.

There was discussion at the September meeting over how best to do this. There was disagreement. Some preferred the status quo. Others felt that this was an opportunity to restructure the position to better reflect the nature of our schools and the challenges we face.

There were some who claimed at the membership meeting that this was a change that was not thought out. Again ... a look at the facts tells otherwise. A draft was written up and presented to the executive board two weeks prior to the October executive board meeting. An email was sent to the executive board at that time asking for thoughts and comments. Members who received the email were completely silent as well. Off of these discussions the first draft was modified and presented to the board in October. Each line in bylaws that might be affected by the change was scrutinized. Exist-
ing language to be changed was included but crossed out to show the change. And new language (field rep represents ... this color was not included for the membership meeting).

At the October membership meeting the bylaw change was presented to the executive board. Questions were asked and answered. Board members shared their thoughts. Before a vote could be taken on whether or not this bylaw change should be presented to the membership for consider-
ation at the November membership meeting there was extensive procedural motion made to enable the discussion. A vote to table was taken and approved. Questions about the procedure were raised and a request for a parliament-
ian ruling was made. This was to be done prior to the membership meeting. The ruling by the parliamentarian was not presented to the executive board until 1 hour before the executive board meeting.

Although our bylaws are silent on the vot-
ing rights of retirees it has always been the practice of the BTU to table any motion to the bylaw change. There was no intent to restrict that in the bylaw change. The chair of the Retired Teacher Chapter was told prior to the rul-
ing of the parliamentarian that the meeting of the lawyer for the BTU told us the way the change was written would indeed restrict retiree vot-
ting. The parliamentarian was asked if it was proper at this point to change the wording to reflect the intention of the maker of the motion. The parliamentarian ruled that indeed it was proper and the appropriate change was made. Everyone who attended that meeting knew this to be the case. The parliamentarian also ruled that it was improper to include the current language of the proposal and that was excluded in the final draft that was presented to the membership.

The following statement was written in anticipation of possible debate over a pro-
posal to change our bylaws that was written at our November membership meeting. While the motion and debate was tabled until Janu-
ary, I wanted to share these thoughts, which I believe are still relevant.

Public education and our profession are under attack. Over the last ten years, I have seen and felt the change of the whole and the tremendous pressures that our mem-
bers are increasingly facing. I know our mem-
bership is being overwhelmed by the word “overwhelmed” all the time. But because we are overwhelmed is why we must organize and fight back, and that is why we have to start thinking about how we can better structure our staff to serve our membership and organize with families, com-
munities, and allies to advocate for the teach-
ing, learning, and working conditions to best serve our students.

A lot has been said about organizing, which is why I feel obligated to speak. Orga-
nizing is the only way to take a few seconds to define organizing – in essence it is bringing together and unifying individuals around a common cause and creating a plan to achieve those goals – these causes could concern a professional issue, contractual issue, or other issue that is impor-
tant to our members.

The organizing can take many forms, but ultimately, it has to start at our school sites if we are to have the greatest impact. One person or one person does it alone. All of us in the office are working tirelessly, and while the Field Reps already engage in both contract enforcement and organizing, we should formally create a job description that more clearly defines the work they, and we, are already doing and provide some relief to them and increased support for our Building Representative Field Reps.

Also, while adding field reps and organ-
izers are a step in the right direction, that alone will not change the fact that we need to add organizers. That’s a great idea that I also welcome, but the end of the day we could have ten new organizers and still not be effective if we are not all working together. Our power comes from unity and we have to be all working towards the same col-
lective vision and goals to be effective. That work – our priorities and goals should be informed by our members. We need to create the structures to do so, and I do believe that this motion is a step in that direction.

There are also concerns about how this may or may not disenfranchise anyone. I want to be very clear that from the way I understand this motion, this would actually increase vot-
ing opportunities – instead of voting for just one rep, though a elementary and sec-
ary zoning system that no longer reflects the diversity of our schools, all members, includ-
ing retirees would be able to vote for three field reps. This would enable us to work more collaboratively citywide to address issues that are not unique to just one person or school, but will be across the districts.

I want to be clear that I would never be in favor of any motion that disenfranchises any group and believe in quite the opposite – More than ever, we need our retirees, para-
professionals and all of our members – active teachers, nurses, itinerates, everyone – to be unified and collectively working together to face the mounting attacks on public education and our professions.

Lastly, if we are to successfully counter the attacks on public education and there will be many battles ahead – for example, a deep-pocketed charter lobby group called Families for Excellent schools that launched a 6 million dollar attack cam-
paign on Mayor DiBlasio in New York has set up shop in Boston and has their first rally tomorrow morning (it was held Thursday, November 13). It is likely we will have a ballot initiative battle in the next year and we have a new Republican Governor that is no friend to public education.

I know there are concerns about funding and staff sizes, so I would like to give some nat-
ional context: Vermont, like us (we have over 11,000 members), has 10,000 members and their union has seven Field reps and two organizers. Smaller locals such as Pittsburg that only have 3,000 members and are less than 1/3 our size have three organizers and two Field Reps. On the other side, Chicago, perhaps the most successful example of an organizing union has 29,000 members and has 14 field reps and seven organizers. And perhaps generally considering combining their field rep and organizing departments because the work is and should be very interconnected.

So I am speaking on the back of the previous motion to the floor of the membership today. I think both sides, as described in the BTU paper have merits, and that is not an either/or, but both/and.

Organizing needs to be the priority of our whole union, not just one or two people – and we have so much work to do. Ultimately, though, I think this type of open debate and dialogue about how our union can adapt to the changing needs of our membership itself is important, and our mem-
bers should have the opportunity to decide next month whether this motion, or others would best serve them.

In lieu of debate at the next membership meeting the BTU is holding two forums to dis-
cuss the motion that was proposed in Novem-
ber as well as other ideas. Those forums will be held on Thursday, December 4 and Tuesday, December 16 from 4:00-6:00 p.m. at the Boston Teachers Union. I hope that BTU members may attend this forum so that we can come together to have productive conver-
sation and dialogue about how our union can continue to best serve our members, schools, and communities.

Submitted by Jessica Tang, BTU Director of Organizing.

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ELL Students Deserve Equal Opportunity

Boston Public Schools’ annual administra-
tion of the Independent School Entrance Exam, better known as the ISEE, took place on Saturday, November 8. Students around the city were prepared for the big event; after all, it could be a life-changing exam. Accom-
panied by a high GPA, it can gain our 6th or 8th-graders admission to our city’s three elite exam schools, including one of the nation’s most prestigious, Boston Latin. Dream col-
leges, here come our scholars.

Until now, of course, English is not their first lan-
guage. The ISEE is created by an organiza-
tion called the Educational Records Bureau (ERB), which is an educational assessment organization that allows all of Boston’s students to compete for their futures.

As such, Boston Public is commit-
ted to administering the exam following all ERB’s guidelines, including its policy that they provide no accommodations and is not open for negotia-
tion, though they provide no justification for these decisions.

On the Boston Public Schools’ website, it pro-
claims, “Boston is a city of immigrants. More than 40% of our students speak a lan-
guage other than English. As the city’s largest school district we have a responsibility to make sure all of our city’s young scholars, including English Language Learners, an equal playing field on which to compete for their futures.

Submitted by Dan Rosenfeld, 6th Grade ESL Teacher, UP Academy.

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Happy holidays from the Boston Teachers Union!
What Can Be Done if Someone is Being Harassed in the BPS?

The Boston Teachers Union (BTU) represents teachers within the Boston Public Schools (BPS). This gives us the ability to address situations of wrongdoing and ensure that the rights of all employees are upheld. Unfortunately, when we have been approached about incidents of harassment, some employees have voiced concerns about the lack of information on how to report such issues or about the process of addressing and resolving them. We have been hearing from teachers that they feel they do not have the necessary tools or guidance to prevent or address harassment.

The BTU believes that the rights of all employees, including teachers, must be respected and that any form of discrimination or harassment is unacceptable. The BTU encourages employees to come forward with any concerns or reports of harassment, and we are committed to working with the BPS Office of Human Capital and other relevant parties to address these issues.

If you have any concerns or reports of harassment, you should contact the BPS Office of Human Capital, at 617-635-9670, or the United States Equal Opportunity Commission, at 1-800-649-9457. Employees can also file complaints concerning discrimination or harassment through the Superintendent’s Circular #EQT-4.

For additional information on how to file complaints, contact the BPS Equity Office at 617-635-9690 or visit their website at http://bostonpublicschools.org/equity.

Know Your Rights

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This circular is published eleven times a year by the Editorial Board of the Boston Union Teacher under the direction of the Boston Teachers Union, or those of its members.

EDITORIAL NOTE:

All letters to the editor are decided on a case by case basis and may be published at the discretion of the Boston teachers Union.

All copy should be e-mailed to letters@btu.org

DEADLINE:

The deadline for submitting articles for the Boston Union Teacher is January 15th. All articles must be appropriate for the publication. The deadline for submitting letters to the editor is the 15th of each month.

All correspondence should be sent to:

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Community Walks-In to Support Dearborn School Students and Teachers in Fight to Become STEM Community School

A crowd close to 50 people gathered on the steps of the Dearborn School’s temporary location at the Burke High School early last Thursday morning, November 20th on Universal Children’s Day for a “Walk-In.” Parents, community members, faith leaders and politicians organized a rally in support of fulfilling the Dearborn community’s plans to become a 6-12 STEM Academy as a sustainable Boston Public School and Community School. After rallying as the students entered school in the morning, the community toured the school inviting students to an achievement awards celebration next week to honor their hard work.

The action was organized by the Boston Education Justice Alliance, a coalition of students, parents, educators and labor made up of over 15 organizations. They were joined by representatives from the Greater Boston Interfaith Organization, Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative and city council member Tito Jackson. Carlos Rojas of Youth on Board emceed the event and Richard Stutman, President of the Boston Teachers Union spoke on behalf of the 11,000 members that are standing with the Dearborn community.

Photos by Jessica Tang
Social Events Bring Together Members

Photos from S. Dorchester/Mattapan Meet & Greet at Sweet Life, Hyde Park Meet & Greet at the Fairmount Grille and New Educator Underground Event at Milky Way Lounge

Photos by Jessica Tang
WE'RE LEARNING HERE
A project by Amika Kemmler Ernst, Ed.D.

Haley Pilot School

On a beautiful June day several years ago I went for a walk around Jamaica Pond and found Haley School fifth graders launching the boats they’d built during the year with John Rowse – a former BPS teacher and the founder of Community Boat Building. This year I finally got to visit!

Located on American Legion Highway near the Boston Nature Center, the Haley serves approximately 300 students. A turtle, a lizard, a fish, crickets, and a dove greet you as you walk into the large entrance area – maintained by a parent volunteer! A new wing of modular classrooms will hopefully be completed by the holidays; in the meantime, 6th and 7th grade students are shuttled to and from the Rogers Middle School each day, where they occupy several rooms on the third floor.

The Haley is a full inclusion pilot school that uses its budget autonomy to make sure there are two teachers in every classroom. Highlights of my visit included watching Ernsie Noel’s kindergarteners trying to identify smells as part of their “Five Senses” unit; a young girl working with Becky Kase, her physical therapist; and students in Amy Wedge’s art class sharing and getting feedback on their work. The cafeteria was being used for health and physical education classes: third graders practicing yoga positions with Angel Scott and playing “Partner Knee Tag” with Teresa Starble. Science is taught by classroom teachers: second graders in Janine Casapulla and Suzanne Brown’s class are observing insects, while the students in Anne Patrick and Bridget Galvin’s fifth grade classroom are building a river.

Sixth graders were working at different “stations” around the room, one group discussing BPS student essays about courage with humanities teacher Amy Higginbotham in preparation for writing their own. She told me, “I try and do station teaching at least two times a week; the students really enjoy getting up and moving, and I can have more quality time with them.” Across the hall a computer game design team from UMass was working with students who are providing feedback on an interactive career awareness game they are developing.

Although I didn’t get to visit Community Boat Building’s new site downtown, they are still very much involved with the Haley. A full-size “rowing skiff” is on display at the school’s entrance and a couple of fifth graders told me they’d just begun their scheduled time (Monday-Thursday afternoons for about three weeks) to work on this collaborative project. I wish every school had access to such rich, interdisciplinary learning experiences!

Amika Kemmler Ernst, Ed.D.
Amika45@comcast.net

(Amika Kemmler Ernst is a recently 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.)

I am with Becky. We are doing exercises and playing games. In my classroom I am learning songs and how to spell my name.

Eva Dixon, K1

I just started painting a forest with a beetle insect that was hiding in the leaves so it can be camouflaged. This year I’m learning the letters of the alphabet.

Finn Rosenbaum, K1

I was reading a book with Ms. Nelcy. I’ve learned new words and a jumping game for counting!

Lily Burton, Grade 2

This was during science class. I was trying to sign into my Google account to see if the Internet connection was working. We are helping a design team [from UMass] that created a game to help you figure out what you want to do when you grow up. It’s called “Future Quest Island.” In science I created a comic strip to explain how the digestive system works as my end-of-unit project. The most interesting things I learned are that some things have more nutrients than others, and that fruits have healthy sugars.

Anna Balzano, Grade 6

We were working on drawing and measuring a diagram of a boat before building it. Captain John and Shane are holding the board down so Hadassah can draw the diagram. We’re learning how to use tools like a hammer, drill and screwdriver. We’ve also learned to wear goggles to protect our eyes!

Hadassah Byrnon & Shane Bradley, Grade 5

We’re doing the “cobra” position in health class. We’re learning how to reduce our stress with yoga. In math we’re learning how to subtract big numbers in the thousands!

Kevin Carroll & Amari Farquarson, Grade 3

I’m working on my final draft of a poem I’m writing about the encounter between Christopher Columbus and the Taino people. I’m also learning about memoirs and how to use figurative language like similes and metaphors.

Sincere Oliver, Grade 5
Teacher Prep Regulations Reinforce Test-and-Punish Model

There’s no evidence that new teacher preparation regulations released Nov. 25 by the U.S. Department of Education will lead to improvement and plenty of reason to believe they will cause harm, AFT President Randi Weingarten says.

“With these proposed regulations, the administration is moving to rate teacher preparation programs based partly on the test scores of the K-12 students of the graduates of the programs in question,” she says. “By replicating the K-12 test-and-punish model—which was spawned by No Child Left Behind—this reminds us that there is still much work to be done to achieve racial justice in America, AFT President Randi Weingarten and Secretary-Treasurer Lorretta Johnson said in a joint statement.

“The fact remains that on Aug. 9, an unarmed black teenager was shot and killed,” they say. “Given that we are a nation of laws, one can only hope that the lack of an indictment isn’t tantamount to any lack of zeal on the part of the prosecutor to do the job he was supposed to do to enable the grand jury to arrive at an impartial and fact-based decision. Having said that, tonight’s decision isn’t the last word in seeking justice for Michael Brown, as the Justice Department is still pursuing its investigation. We echo the calls of the Brown family, clergy and Gov. Nixon for peace, restraint and protection for peaceful protesters.

“This case once again reminds us that there is still much work to be done to achieve racial justice in America. It tells us that our moral compass and legal systems do not always align.

“In moments like these, we should redouble our efforts to ensure all children grow up in safe communities with high-quality neighborhood schools and a local economy rich with jobs — no matter their ZIP code, race, ethnicity or sexual orientation.”

“The teaching profession needs to become more aligned with medical and legal models and less attached to the factory model. But for teacher preparation programs, due to the focus on K-12 test scores, the very programs preparing diverse teachers for our increasingly diverse classrooms will be penalized. That is why the AFT continues to push for the profession to reconsider placing their graduates in schools that serve our most vulnerable students. And aspiring teachers who come from disadvantaged back-grounds will find their opportunities closed down as accountability pressures rise without increased support.

“Paradoxically, at the same time these regulations are being promulgated, the department is going in the opposite direction with for-profit colleges, backing off of a strong gazillion employee regulation that would have kept students were being prepared for good jobs while warding off fraud and abuse at for-profits.

“Every child deserves well-prepared teachers. There is no quick fix when it comes to professionalizing teaching. Just look at countries that outperform us in education, like Finland and Singapore. They have a high bar of entry into the profession, and they provide the supports needed so every teacher is ready to teach on day one.”

“In our ‘Raising the Bar’ report, we called for a universal and rigorous bar for entry into the profession with more comprehensive course work, real-world clinical experience and demonstration of teaching competency. It’s gratifying to see more organizations supporting our call. A strong teaching profession, not harmful regulations, is the sustainable solution we need every classroom has a well-prepared teacher.”

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RTC Executive Board Minutes

October 6, 2014

Members Present: Anne Broder, Treasurer; Marie Broderick; Mary Calahan; Sandy Carle; Donna Cooley-Hilton; Larry Connolly; Martha Cotton, David Donovan, Chairman; Marlyn Marion, Secretary; Leonardo Miraglia, Vice Chairman; Mary Jo Murphy, and Walter Wood.

Meeting was opened by the Chairman at 10:15 a.m.

Duez: Linda McNaughton, Anne Marie Auld, Ruthanne Kennedy, and Paul Tenney.

Meeting was traditionally after the November election; the only date available in November was the 20th. Report Accept’d.

Travel: The following four trips remain for consideration:

• The Lake Winnipesaukee is sold out.
• Freedom Trail and Venezia’s Winery — November 18.
• Christmas Memories at Lunata — November 24.
• Mt. Washington — December 9-11.
• The Collette Trip for 2015 will be to Canyon Country featuring Arizona, Utah and ending in Las Vegas, Nevada September 17-25, 2015

Report Accept’d.

Legislative: The Committee received updated figures on pension payment, investment returns and PRT and CEF fund asset base. They will analyze those figures and determine their implication for our pension and COLA. Report Accept’d.

Membership: We have over 3,000 members. Report Accept’d.

Data Processing: The old files are being cleared to make room for additional and updated information. Retired computer teacher, Raymond Lee, volunteered to help us with data processing. The following motion was made: That Raymond Lee is invited to serve on our Data Processing Committee. The motion was unanimously accepted. Report Accept’d.

Old Business: None.

New Business: Since November is National Alzheimer’s month, the secretary suggested that information on this disease be available at the fall luncheon.

Meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

Next meeting: Monday, November 3. Respectfully submitted, Marilyn P. Marion, Secretary

BOSTON UNION TEACHER December, 2014 7
Recently, I volunteered for the Parent 2 Parent Conference at Madison Park High School. I had two roles that day.

My first role was to make sure a room was set up for one of the presenters. I helped set up the room and stayed to hear the presenter speak on special education. The presenter was from the Associated Advocacy Center in Jamaica Plain, Boston. She spoke about the Individualized Education Plan and the Individuals with Disabilities Act of 2004. Her presentation lasted two hours and it was the best presentation about special education I had ever attended.

As a parent of a college student with LD and a teacher with many special education students in my inclusion classroom, the presenter suggested many ideas to help further support my students. For example, she reminded me how important it is to support my students with executive functioning difficulties.

My second role was the presentation I gave on how to support a child’s competency in their math class. A small group of parents attended. As a group, we discussed their concerns and I commented what I thought would help that child. I made other global suggestions that I think all parents could benefit knowing.

I truly hope the BTU will hold the Parent 2 Parent Conference again next year. There is so much to be gained by both parents and teachers at this event. Without committed and involved parents and teachers, our children will not get the education they need.

(Submitted by Benadette Manning, Fenway High School.)