Happy Summer.

At the end of a school year, it is appropriate to take a look back at where we stand on a few key issues, where we’re going on others, what we’ve accomplished, and what we hope to improve.

The school year ended with much in limbo, and as we write this in early July, limbo is a defining word for the following: PTPP, Madison Park, Mildred Ave., Commonwealth charter expansion, and the Ed Reform legislation. By the time you will have read this piece, we may long for the days of ‘limbo.’ Or we may not.

As the school year ended, we had 196 permanent teachers without an assignment for September. While the number of unplaced teachers is unacceptable, it was 150 or so unplaced teachers. For September. While the number of unplaced permanent teachers without an assignment may not.

The school year ended with a terrific Day of Professional Learning at the BTU with more than 130 educators in attendance. We are quite proud of the activity held with the effort of many of our members, and organized developed by the BTU-BPS head of Professional Learning, Paul Tritter. Thank you, Paul. The union that helped provide this effort is the same union that is trying to help the 196 teachers in the preceding paragraph. The role of the union is multi-fold, and we want to be successful in both types of activities.

Another event also was held under the radar at the end of the school year in coordination with the AFTMA’s Dan Murphy: The BTU welcomed educators from various AFT local unions from Connecticut and Rhode Island to our office to partake in the AFT’s Educational Research and Development program. The event took place over three days and was a wonderful opportunity for BTU teacher-leaders to participate in the best of what the AFT has to offer. (The AFT, the American Federation of Teachers, is our national organization, and we are represented statewide by the AFTMass or AFTMA. BTU members belong to both ‘parent’ organizations as a result of their membership in the BTU.)

Meanwhile as most of us, excluding the 196 above, head off to summer knowing where we will work in September, another large group of folks at Madison Park enter summer without knowing much at all about the direction the recently-intervened-with Madison Park will head in. The BTU wants this school very much to succeed. With the recent changes of school structure (Traditional school to Innovation to Intervention) there is much unknown about the direction the school will be heading in. The work that needs to be done at Madison is matched by the strong desire of the people there for the school to reach its potential. At Mildred Ave., an Intervention began last winter has not yet been completed, and BTU staff are left with uncertainty as well as a strong will to help turn the school around.

New, on the legislative front... One of the larger unknowns is the degree, if any, to which Commonwealth charters will expand in the legislative season. Slowly, without an end in sight, Commonwealth charters are becoming their own mini-school system.

Charter operators MATCH, EXCEL, City on a Hill and Edward Brooke have extended their franchise operations to multiple sites. MATCH has three sites (two in JP, one near BU), EXCEL has three sites (two in EB, one in Chelsea), City on a Hill has two sites (both in Roslindale) and The Edward Brooke has three sites (Roslindale, EB, and Mattapan). Add to that nine other single Commonwealth Charter campuses and we have a burgeoning network of mini-charter school systems.

While charters have developed a sophisticated and persistent ad campaign touting their willingness to enroll, educate and retain a less selective student enrollment, the fact remains that their schools, on average, educate one third the percentage of English Language learners as Boston and three-fourths the percentage of children with special needs as our own BPS do. What’s more, to the extent Commonwealth charters enroll students with Special Needs, charters enroll those students who are on the less challenging, least expensive end of the spectrum.

I'm the Good, the Bad, and the Ugly

PTPP... And what we hope to improve.

...on others, what we’ve accomplished, and stand on a few key issues, where we’re going...
**Commentary**  
by Michael J. Maguire

**Unsung Heroes of the BPS**

**The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly…**

This year there were no Educator of the Year awards. In its place I offer my own list of unsung heroes.

**Cafeteria Workers**

This past school year, the BPS proudly announced that all BPS students would receive free breakfast and lunch at school. A grant from the US Department of Agriculture paid for the program. Many students were pleased and the program was lauded in the local media. From my first-hand observations at Boston Latin Academy, many more students received school lunch in SY 13-14 than in SY 12-13. My estimate is a 40% increase. I could be wrong, but undeniably the lines were longer and the cafeteria workers hustled each and every day.

What did not increase were the number of workers assigned to BPS cafeterias. Perhaps in the entire system there were actually more employees this year than last. But to my knowledge, the USDA’s grant did not cover the hiring of extra workers. BLA could have used a 40% increase in workers just to hand out the food to the students, let alone to prepare it.

This year, I salute all cafeteria workers who pushed themselves to the limits so that our students could be fed.

**The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly…**

continued from page 1

**This was also a year of change for a number of our schools that were or are about to be “transitional” by the state into a new structure. The Dever and the Holland were placed into state receivership, in effect moving out of Level 4 status to Turnaround to Level 5.** Receivership status. These moves came with many layoffs and reduction in force at staff and parents at both schools.

The Dever was handed over to Education Management Organization (EMO) Blueprint and the Dever to Up Academy, which now has three schools in Boston – two Horace Mann Charters (formerly the Givin and the Marshall) and the Holland. While most of the teachers and paras at the Dever and the Holland will be BTU members under the state’s receivership, both schools operate like Commonwealth charters rather than BPS schools. How so? All you need to know is that the staff at the Dever and Holland schools will work in excess of 700 uncompensated hours next year. And in year two of this forced receivership, staff at both schools will be taken off the salary grid. That really is all you need to know. Little wonder no more than two or three teachers are staying at either school next year. This is Ed Reform in the new age.

In addition to the above transitions, we had schools leaving Level 4 (Turnaround for higher levels). Orchard and the Trotter moved from Turnaround to Level 1; The Blackstone, J.F. Kennedy and Harbor, from Turnaround to Level 3. We congratulate these schools for their great efforts even as we decry the unfair system that placed them into Turnaround in the first place.

And we also have schools that are between levels, whatever that means. English HS and the E. Greenwood are both Turnaround Schools but have been forced to hire Blueprint – at the urging of the State ED Commissioner, Mitchell Chester – as an EMO to provide both tutoring and management expertise. How Blueprint, itself without any experience, can provide expertise to two Boston public Schools is beyond our comprehension!! Comprehensive staff surveys at both schools taken last year bear that out. Staff nearly universally had little or no confidence in Blueprint’s ability to help their school. That, however, didn’t stop the state from handing over the Dever to Blueprint. Nor did it encourage the school district to question.

Kudos to the staffs at English HS and the E. Greenwood for speaking out about Blueprint’s ineffectiveness. Blueprint, shame to the state for pushing back on the imposition of Blueprint in what looks to many like a sweetheart deal by the office of the commissioner.

Finally, while much of the above is certainly not good, the BTU had many good things happening. Here are a few:

We made inroads in developing better relationships with parents and community groups and shored up our Building Rep. networks. We also provided ongoing training to our Building Reps., and we will continue that expansion next year. Thank you Brenda, Caren, Jessica, Joselina, and Michael. Brenda Chaney managed another successful year with our Homework Helper program; Caren Carew ran our School Site Trainings and programs, in addition to her other duties; Jessica Tang reached out to countless parent groups that helped connect our membership on a variety of levels; Joselina Lascano hit the ground running and did a great job and ran a wonderful Para conference; and Michael McLaughlin, in addition to his service as a field rep, worked as a member of the Retirement Board on a host of needed issues for our membership.

We held more politically-based discussions or meet and greets with local reps and senators than ever before, and were far more visible on Beacon Hill. Thank you, Angela Cristiani.

We also held multiple series of workshops that seek to help our members improve their craft and to understand better what is needed to cope with the new performance evaluation process. Thank you, Patrick. Patrick Connolly has also been our go-to person on working with teachers facing termination and Madison Park – both thankless tasks – and we appreciate his leadership on both.

Along the same lines, we have worked with hundreds of members in about-to-be closed schools in shoring up their resumes. Many of our members haven’t had to do this in years, and we worked very hard to try to meet our members’ needs. Thank you, Paul and Charles, for taking care of this. Charles Johnson also has served as our chief representative on the city unions’ task force on health insurance.

All of the above efforts have been hard efforts. And from me, thank you to our team, and thanks to all of your efforts have been hard efforts. And from me, thank you to our team, and thanks to all of our members for working with us through these difficult times. I can assure you that our colleagues in cities throughout the country are facing the same challenges as we are. Layoffs, school closings, “surplus” staff, school takeovers, expanding charter school flaws, flawed performance evaluation, budget cutsbacks, increased standardized testing – each of these developments affects our colleagues throughout the country.

That’s the bad news. The good news is that there are strong signs of pushback, signs of rebellion, and signs of hope. Have a good break, and be well.
If I Become a National Board Certified Teacher, Do I Get a Raise?

Yes. The BTU-BPS contract states, “All National Board Certified Teachers shall receive additional compensation in the amount of 4% of their annual base salary as long as they hold National Board Certification.” This paragraph will be part of the teacher’s annualized salary for retirement purposes.

Teachers who successfully complete the certification process of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) shall be reimbursed by the BPS for the costs of the application fee. Following receipt of a requirement, successful completion of the NBPTS certification requirements may be considered at a special qualification for least teacher eligibility. Teachers who receive reimbursement for the NBPTS certification process shall commit to remain in the BPS system for at least two years after receipt of such reimbursement.

Over 100,000 teachers nationwide have attained this “highest mark of professional accomplishment” which according to the NB website, “…allows teachers to hone their craft, improve their practice, showcase their talent in the classroom, and demonstrate their dedication to their students and their profession.” During this process the teacher collects standards based evidence of achievement of core competencies across the following four components: (1) content knowledge (2) differentiation of instruction (3) planning/assessment (4) student classroom environment (5) being an effective & reflective practitioner. The site also states that attainment of this status provides NBC membership in a nationwide network of accomplished teachers, an opportunity to shape the profession, reflect on best practices, and to find and implement classroom applications of what they’ve learned in the process.

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Organizing News & Notes by Jessica Tang

A Call to Action: Understanding Advocacy on the Accountability System and the Impact of the Charter Cap

In the past month, Commonwealth’s charter school advocates have been sending out e-mails to their listserves and allies with a lot of misleading information, including vilifying the Boston Teachers Union and its members for advocating for a more fair accountability system. This is an adapted version of a letter written in response to much of the misinformation that was being disseminated for parents, teachers, and others who may have received the e-mails from them, with an additional section on the need for teacher advocacy and organizing.

(Note to charity or teachers or parents who send their children to charter schools: Please know this is not an attack on you, your students or families. You know we work hard and do great work, too, and we know that each parent has to make choices that they think are best for their students. This is not a judgment of any of those choices - this is about addressing equity and looking at the big picture in a way that promotes access to equity and quality across the board, together, for all students.)

Vote Number 1: The “Accountability Formula” and BESE

First, there was the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education’s vote to change the state’s accountability system formula. This is the formula used to identify level 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 schools. The vote was to increase the percentage of the formula that accounts for growth.

The Massachusetts Charter School Association (whose allies sent over 1000 e-mails to BESE members) in a week, 30% to 25%. However, under heavy lobbying and pressure from the Massachusetts Charter School Association (whose allies sent over 1000 e-mails to BESE members) in a week, the suggesting percentage was lowered from 30% to 25%

We had advocated for 50% or greater growth be considered in the calculations, but the good news was that it was still increased a small amount. Thank you to all of the members who responded to the E-Bulletin call to action and took the time to write BESE members!

Vote Number 2: Keeping the Cap on Commonwealth Charter Schools

A second vote that took place this past weekend included legislation to raise the cap on charter schools. Unfortunately, legislation did pass the House of Representatives without any of the amendments that would have addressed inequities, and at the time of press, a bill was released from the Senate Ways and Means Committee and was likely to be voted on. We asked our members to call legislators and urge them NOT to raise the cap on Commonwealth Charter Schools.

What you should know: Expanding charters creates questionable options or opportunities in our city. However, we also need more inequity or discriminatory practices in our city. We also have to remain focused on the fact that

- Charter school advocates point to their long waiting lists. However, BPS also has a waiting list for schools of 14,266 students.
- BPS has schools that are working, too—let’s expand them and support schools to be better.
- Charter school advocates are making their schools better and get students who need help.
- Charters before the inequities are addressed will hurt more students overall. Oftentimes, charter school advocates point to their long “waiting lists.” However, BPS also has a waiting list for schools of 14,266 students.
- The Board of Elementary and Secondary Education did in fact vote to increase the growth percentage from 20% to 25%, but you should also know that originally, the Board was considering increasing the growth to 30%. However, under heavy lobbying and pressure from the Massachusetts Charter School Association (whose allies sent over 1000 e-mails to BESE members) in a week, the suggesting percentage was lowered from 30% to 25%.

And this is all DESPITE the fact that overall, they do NOT serve English Language Learners or Students with Disabilities—especially severe disabilities—anywhere close to the rate of BPS. (You can see the BTU ad that compares these averages.)

To be fair, not all charters discriminate—just as there are good charters and bad charters, there are good BPS schools and BPS schools that have a lot more room to grow. However, at the end of the day BPS schools serve the majority of students in Boston and are not getting what they need to get better because of the very unfair funding practices and accountability formulas. Expanding charters before the inequities are addressed will hurt more students overall. Oftentimes, charter school advocates point to their long “waiting lists.” However, BPS also has a waiting list for schools of 14,266 students.

The Bottom Line: Teacher Leadership=Teacher Advocacy

We know that what parents and students (and teachers!) need is more investment and supports for our schools so that we can make our schools better and get students what they need. We are doing what we can each year with less and less while we try to serve ALL student populations. We DO NOT need more inequity or discriminatory practices in our city. However, we also MUST ADVOCATE TO MAKE CHANGE. This means taking 30 seconds to send and e-mail or make a call to our legislators, and this also means keeping informed about the policy changes that may hurt us, and coming up with ideas to advocate for that will help us.

Our union—our members—6,000 strong have the power to make the changes we need.

continued on page 9

* Commonwealth Charter Schools are different from “In-District” or “Horace Mann Charter schools that are a part of the BPS system. We have BTU members in the “In-District” charters like Boston Day and Evening Academy, UP schools, Dudley Neighborhood Charter School. Commonwealth charters are considered independent districts and their teachers are not in the BTU.

T Taken from an e-mail from the Mass Charter School Association on June 13th with the subject “5 DAYS LEFT BEFORE BOARD OF ED VOTE.” Teachers Union mobilizes.

Charts are courtesy of John Lerner, a BPS parent advocate.
First Annual Professional Learning Conference

By Paul Tritter

On Bunker Hill Day, June 17th, More than 130 people attended the first annual Professional Learning Conference at the BTU. Members talked shop, engaged with big ideas, and shared their learning journeys and stories with one another. All of the morning workshops were hosted by In the afternoon, we heard from Susan Moore Johnson about how to grow opportunities for teacher leadership and about how some districts across the country are trying new ways of growing the profession. We closed with members sharing their reflections and learning at the open-mic. Many attendees left inspired, and optimistic about the future of our union as we seek to deepen our long standing commitment to representing the best of the teaching profession. It was a terrific day and the beginning of a great new tradition for the BTU.

If you were unable to attend and would like to learn more about the work presented, you can read the work of the Professional Learning Grant winners on the BTU website (btu.org).

A full house at the BTU for the lunch time TableTalks, where members held informal conversations about issues in education.

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Know Your Rights…

What Does ‘Buying Back’ Time for Retirement Mean?

Buying back time for retirement credible service applies to people who were laid off or resigned from BPS and took money out of their retirement account to live on while laid off and now have to pay it back or must work the extra years in order to have it credited towards their retirement. It also applies to people who worked eligible jobs, subbed, and the like who may need to pay into the retirement system to have that time/money credited towards their retirement. You cannot pay for time not worked in this manner in order to accelerate your eligibility for retirement (alas!)

In order to determine what credible service time towards retirement you currently have and how much time you may be eligible to buy back, you must make a written request to the Boston Retirement Office, Room 816 in Boston City Hall. Get a time/date stamped copy of your request when you submit it for your records. You then will need to work out an individualized payment plan with the Retirement Office once your case has been reviewed and the amount of time and its corresponding dollar amount has been arrived at.
BTU Members Arrive in L.A. for the AFT Convention...

See AFT Convention story on page 8.

...at the Los Angeles Convention Center

Photos by Michael J. Maguire
BTU Joins the Staples Boycott
Outside Staples Center

Photos by Michael J. Maguire
AFT convention delegates on July 13 unanimously passed a special order of business – recommended by the executive council – to fight back against attacks on unions and teachers like Vergara v. California and Harris v. Quinn, and to fight forward to reclaim the promise of America.

The special order characterizes these lawsuits as “contributing to an escalating and engineered imbalance in our democracy.”

Amended from the floor, the order – originally drafted by the executive council – was revised to include strong language on Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, who publicly supported the Vergara decision. It derides his promotion of “misguided and ineffective policies on deprofessionalization, privatization and test obsession.”

The order calls on the president of the United States to “implement a secretary improvement plan which will be based upon standing up for public education, supporting teachers and all school workers, inspiring parents and the public to join us in creating the public schools we want and deserve, and leading with us in reclaiming the promise of public education.”

And when they fall short, they should have a chance to improve. And that’s what this special order represents. Make no mistake about it: There’s a lot of hurt that has been expressed from the floor – the feeling that the secretary of education doesn’t walk in the shoes of public educators or provide the support and resources necessary to ensure all children have a high-quality public education.”

AFT President Randi Weingarten and thousands of AFT convention delegates joined members of the American Postal Workers Union and other community members July 12 in a rally telling the United States Postal Service and the Staples corporation that the “U.S. Mail Is Not for Sale.” They demanded an end to the United States Postal Service’s plan to let Staples employees operate postal counters inside 1,500 stores, ultimately putting 80,000 postal service jobs in jeopardy.

The action is a continuation of the AFT’s effort to reclaim the promise of America where consumers are safe, workers are valued and well-trained, and middle-class jobs are protected.

“Postal workers are the most amazing public servants,” said Weingarten. “Who does Staples really want and need to come into its stores every single day? Teachers. The best way we can help is if we say to Staples: ‘You do this to the postal workers, and we aren’t buying supplies in your stores.’”

APWU President Mark Dimondstein addressed the importance of America’s middle class standing together against the effort to privatize and demonize U.S. postal workers. He said, “We too are in the public sector, we too are meeting the needs of people. We’re facing some of the same problems you are – I call it divert, defund, demonize, dismantle.”

The AFT also passed a resolution in support of APWU’s boycott against Staples Inc. It resolves “that members of the AFT, along with friends, colleagues and family members, are urged to no longer shop at Staples stores until further notice.”

Enjoying Baseball On The Left Coast!

Photos by Michael J. Maguire

Watching a Game at Dodger Stadium

BOSTON UNION TEACHER | July-August, 2014
in our schools to improve them. I know that teaching is overwhelming these days—that’s the most common word I heard this year talking to members in our schools. But it is not a coincidence that this is happening and because we are overwhelmed is exactly why we need to start speaking up and coming together to collectively fight back to achieve the teaching and learning conditions we need to succeed with our students.

In addition to our president’s E-bulletins, our union meetings at the school and union hall are places to go to stay informed and take action. Teacher leadership includes advocacy for our profession and for our students and community. This means finding the time to send an e-mail, make a call, attend events with policy makers and legislators. Our union meetings can also be a place where we come up with ideas for what to advocate FOR. We cannot defend the status quo, we must be proactive about advocating for the supports and policies that will help us to do better. We can come together to do this.

There are also groups, such as the Boston Truth Coalition for Educational Justice that the BTU is a part of that are organizing in our neighborhoods to bring together parents, students, and teachers to make all of our schools stronger. Parents, students, and community members are our natural allies. We don’t have to—and can’t—do this work alone. Please consider hearing from them or joining them, too. This is why we now have a Family and Community Engagement Committee at the BTU.

If we don’t speak up and speak out on behalf of our students and schools, who will? If we join together with parents, students, and community members, are voices will be that much stronger. This is what we have learned from places like Chicago and St. Paul that have been able to successfully fight back against harmful policies, and advocate FOR the policies we know will actually help our schools improve.

**Upcoming Dates:**

**Prospective Rep Building Rep Info Sessions in August!**

Are you looking for a teacher-leader role? Are you interested in learning more about what the role of a Building Rep is? Are you interested in running for a building rep position at your school? If you answered “yes” to any of these questions, please come to a Prospective Building Rep info session in August to learn more!

Please RSVP to Jessica at jtan@btu.org.

**Dates:**
August 12, 10 am-11 am
August 20, 4-5 pm
August 26, 5-6 pm

**SAVE THE DATES:**

**First Membership Meeting of the Year**
(Second Wednesdays of every month)
September 10, 4:15 pm

**Building Rep Conference**
October 24-26
(Friday evening to Sunday morning)
Although good teachers are constantly engaged in self-reflection it’s the sum- mermonths, a time without a hundred pressing issues, when we are truly at home in the year that has passed to better prepare our- selves for the next.

When reflecting on one’s practice it is important to begin by looking at the positives. I work hard. If I had to quantify how hard I would say on average I work a 55-60 hour week. But I decided that this year I would do absolutely no work on Saturday. It’s impor- tant to work hard, but equally important to take care of oneself.

Probably the longest day was the one where I worked until 11 pm liquefying 12 different kinds of food including chocolate chip cookies, cauliflower, and almonds in my Cuisinart. The work I did made the nutrient testing lab go much more smoothly than in previous years. But my goal is to create an inquiry based course. So I think next year I will go back to giving each student a mortar and pestle and cheese cloth filters. It’s messy. But that’s science.

I started this year with the goal of having students keep a binder that included all the handouts for each unit. Science is a chal- lenge for many of our students. It is another language. And for many of our students who are still struggling to learn in English it can be overwhelming. My feeling was that keeping their work in an orderly binder might provide them with a structure to better learn the mate- rial.

For those who came every day this worked well. But for those that were absent it became one more hurdle in their mind. I did set up stations where students could pick up the work from the previous days. Unfortunately many did not take advantage of this. Over the summer I will be working on reining those lessons and putting them into unit booklets. Each student will start each quarter off with all of the required work pre-assembled. This is not a magic bullet that will solve the prob- lem of absenteeism. But it does remove one obstacle that may not seem like one to us, but for too many of our students is an obstacle that reinforces what can only be called learned helplessness.

Learned helplessness on the part of stu- dents in our high schools is a problem that has been fueled by this war on public education in all of the required work pre-assembled. This is not a magic bullet that will solve the prob- lem of absenteeism. But it does remove one obstacle that may not seem like one to us, but for too many of our students is an obstacle that reinforces what can only be called learned helplessness.

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News from the BTU Retired Teachers Chapter

RTC Spring Luncheon A Huge Success

Over two hundred RTC members attended this year’s annual spring luncheon held on Tuesday, May 20. Two Retired Teacher Chapter board members were honored for their dedication and hard work on behalf of the retired teachers’ chapter of the BTU. Travel Committee chairs, Ruthanne Kennedy and Mary Cahalane, were recognized for their tireless work and successful trips for members, their families and friends. This fiscal year was especially fruitful as they planned and attended trips to Cape Cod, Quabbin Reserve, Blithewold Mansion, Nashville and Mt. Washington. On Monday, June 23, a trip down memory lane will take place at Lantana’s in Randolph for a Doo Wop Concert. Congratulations, ladies, for a job well done.

Down to the final as the McKinley and the Boston Tech Academy faced off in the championship on a scorching hot day. It was close for the first three innings when Tech Academy pulled ahead with six runs to make it 8 to 2. Tech Academy scored a couple of more to make it 11 to 3 going into the seventh when the McKinley came roaring back to score six runs before Tech Academy finally got them out.

All in all, the season was a success as the teams in the league enjoyed the chance to get together relax and have some fun away from the classroom.

– Tom Menassy
League Commissioner

For membership, call the RTC (617-288-2000) office on Wednesdays or Thursdays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. for an application. Once you have received your retirement number, you can submit your application. We’d love to have your involvement. Being part of RTC means you can stay involved with longtime colleagues for social activities; receive dental and eyeglass benefits and play a role in the educational and political policies for both active and retired teachers.

Have a great summer.

– Marilyn F. Marion, Secretary

Maureen Jelloe, Board Director of the Rollins Griffith Teacher Center, displays a handmade Rollins Griffith quilt.

Tech Boston Academy

McKinley School
The 2014 BTU Middle School Building Rep of the Year is Mr. Darren T. Wells from the Timilty Middle School who has been an outstanding Building Rep for many years serving his colleagues as part of a strong BTU Rep team at the Tim. Darren has his finger on the pulse of his colleagues, and has a keen sense of what their issues are as they perculate. This skill enables him to preemptively be part of the solution to BTU members concerns whenever possible. Making sure his BTU colleagues and his students’ rights and responsibilities are known and upheld are organically a part of him. His professionalism, knowledge, sense of purpose, humor and fashion sense combine to make him a compelling force to be reckoned with in all aspects. Darren walks in his own power with a confident sense of self as an educator, as a colleague, and as a person in the world with a sense of social justice in the process of improving the circumstances around him. In addition to this recognition, Mr. Wells has won many awards for his science teaching as well as for other professional and community involvements. He believes passionately in what is right and just for all people which is part of what makes him as effective as he is as an urban school educator and as a strong BTU Representative. Mr. Darren Wells exemplifies the assertion that as AFT members, we are a union of professionals.

The 2014 High School BTU Reps are the inseparable and incomparable team of Mr. Bruce E. Collotta and Sergeant Major James W. Kelly from the Community Academy of Science & Health, better known as CASH. This complimentary couple have been a BTU Rep team beginning in Hyde Park High School, then continued as HP comprehensive high school was broken into 3 small schools including CASH located at the same building then called the Hyde Park Education Complex, and continued when the other two small high schools in the HPEC were closed and CASH was relocated to share the Cleveland School building in Fields Corner with the Harbor Pilot School. This go-to team rode the rapids during and after the difficult break up of their high school into three separate entities and served ably throughout this arduous, painful, and sometimes chaotic process, supporting their colleagues, seeking out info, navigating the changing terrain, and adeptly forging and maintaining working relationships with three different headmasters and their supporting cast of second tier administrators. In this phase, Bruce and Sergeant Major Kelly were called complex wide BTU Reps as they were elected from the aggregated group of eligible BTU members from the entire HPEC. They were sought out by BTU members in the three different schools to deal with varied BTU and work concerns. By knowing the parameters of the contract as well as having good interpersonal skills working with both labor and management, they have frequently been able to successfully get a good read on the situation upfront and then work through the process in the most advantageous way for their colleagues. Bruce and Jim often seek out targeted info from the BTU in order to best serve their colleagues, upholding their collective bargaining rights. These guys can cut to the heart of the matter, assess the situation, figure out the best strategy to deal with it, and effectively execute the action plan. Together, Bruce and Jim are a stealth team, flying under the radar, not needing to take credit, and thus getting the job done. The kids’ and their colleagues’ rights are always their priority, making Sergeant Major Kelly and Bruce Collotta an incredibly effective BTU Rep combo!

The BTU would like to recognize and honor the two Paraprofessional Building Reps of the Year. Arletta Faulkner from the Curley K-8 is very dedicated to the work she does. Her dedication to represent everyone at the school is amazing. She is also very involved in many other school activities. Karen Perakis from the J.F. Kennedy School works hard to include all of the JFK’s staff making sure that the contract is honored. Karen, too, is remarkable.

Congratulations to the 2014 Elementary Building Reps of the Year, Alvin Cooper and Colum Whyte. Alvin and Colum are part of the Lee Elementary School team of building reps. Both have worked together tirelessly with their faculty, two other reps, their administration, and the BTU office in continuing the great Lee School tradition of union activism. In addition to effective representation and advocacy on behalf of the Lee staff, Alvin and Colum stepped up and took on extra responsibilities on behalf of the entire membership. The BTU appreciates their time and efforts in awarding Alvin Cooper and Colum Whyte the 2014 Building Reps of the Year.

Michael McLaughlin, BTU Elementary Field Rep.