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The Menino/Johnson Plan: The *Unintended* Consequence of Disruption and Harm

by **Richard Stutman**
BTU President

With the blessing of School Superintendent **Carol Johnson**, the mayor has filed legislation that would take our 40+ level 3 schools and turn them into Level 4 (Turnaround) Schools. The stated reason: Both the mayor and the superintendent want to extend the school day so as to 1) improve our schools by providing more learning time; 2) allow them to compete better with charter schools. All of this could have been accomplished through the negotiations process just concluded. But it was not. Why? On the one hand, our membership wants to be compensated for an extended day, and the degree of (non) compensation could not be worked out with the city and the school district. On the other hand, the school superintendent did not have any idea as to how much or how little of an extended day she wanted. Nor did the superintendent offer any plan for the use of the time.

If the mayor/superintendent's plan, which affects the entire state, ultimately becomes law, then school officials would have the unilateral authority to dictate the length of the school day as well as the compensation, if any, for the extended time.

A lot of time and energy has been focused on the above and how it played out during negotiations. While both sides spent many hours on this topic, there were so many loose ends on the scope of the superintendent's proposal that we could not get to agreement. The amount of extended time, the schools to be affected, what would actually be done with the time—these were all loose ends. By now, everyone knows that the plans offered by the district called for an extended day of anywhere from 30 minutes to three hours and everything in between, before settling at the last minute on a proposal for a 45 minutes extension. By going to 45 minutes at the last hour, the school district knew it was throwing a monkey wrench into the process: The money the district had to offer was probably doable for 30 minutes—but not for 45 minutes—and this ultimately insured the inability to reach agreement.

But let's switch gears to what will be an unintended (*unintended*, we hope) consequence of the mayor/superintendent proposal should it be passed. What will happen to the displaced staff currently in the level 3 schools? This concern ought to be of far greater consequence to school

department officials than the issue of the extended day. First a little history.

With Turnaround status comes a range of authorities for school administrators far beyond the ability to set the length and compensation of an extended school day. Chief among these new authorities is the ability to excess or evict those unwanted at their current assignment. So how might this play out?

When the first batch of 12 Turnaround Schools (now 11 as the Agassiz has been closed) were created almost three years ago, hundreds of teachers either didn't want to stay or weren't invited to stay, resulting in a mammoth exodus of staff from the 12 Turnaround schools. Hundreds of teachers left their schools and had to find new positions, most of which were to be found in our level 3 schools, the most prevalent type in the BPS. Should the mayor/superintendent's proposal go forward as planned, this scenario will play out again—only magnified. And it gets worse.

Consider that the ability to move to these level 3 schools, which are now 'Turnaround,' might no longer be an option for those seeking vacancies. Now add to that list of other schools that are an option

but also have the autonomy to say no to any applicant. These would be current Turnaround, Innovation, Horace Mann charters, and pilot schools. It's easy to see that vacancies for excessed teachers might well be very tight or even nonexistent.

On the supply side of the equation there'd be even more teachers from the newly-created Turnaround schools competing for even fewer assignments. This all adds up to a logistical nightmare as well as a disruption and harm to countless schools and hundreds—if not thousands—of teachers.

From a policy standpoint, one has to ask whether this disruption is worth the effort to get an extended day. Regrettably, it appears that the superintendent wants the extra time even if it means resultant chaos and school disruption. She certainly has the right to plow ahead on this ill-advised course. But the superintendent also should be held accountable for her failure to develop even a rudimentary plan



Richard Stutman
BTU President

for the size and scope of her proposal. How much time do our schools need? What schools would be affected? Most importantly, what would the time be used for? These are questions that ought to have been answered well before the legislation was filed. Bluntly, we are not sure that they can be answered even today.

As of this writing we have reached out to our friends at the MTA and our parent union, the AFTMA, to get the help we need in pushing back on this legislation, which affects all MA districts— all urban or gateway cities—that have level 3 schools. We'll insist that our district leadership be held accountable for proposing a 'solution' that will create disruption more than anything else in its quest to solve a problem of its own creation. We will need your help in contacting our legislators and reaching out to community partners and allies as this ill-advised proposal goes forward.

Bob Ryan: The Changing Nature of Sport

by **Michael J. Maguire**

On Wednesday, February 13, **Bob Ryan** came to the Boston Teachers Union hall as part of an ongoing guest lecture series. Mr. Ryan's topic was the changing nature of sport.

Mr. Ryan began with stories of how sport changed from a regional fascination to a national pastime with the rise first of Sport Magazine and later on with Sport Illustrated. Eventually New York

City's WFAN sports talk radio led the way for others to follow in a never-ending conversation. ESPN started out as a local Connecticut station and then slowly and steadily took over the nation and world. Ryan quipped that Disney purchased ABC just to acquire ESPN.

Today "talk" is the dominant format on the radio. Sports talk is everywhere. But Ryan doubts that 24/7 sports is a healthy thing. Mr. Ryan lamented that the obsession with fantasy sports has run amuck.

"Are we now forgetting about the aesthetics (of sports)?" he asked the audience. "All this focus on numbers, numbers, numbers. The numbers should never be the point."

Mr. Ryan then moved into a question-and-answer session ranging from the rising popularity of basketball around the world to concussions in youth sports. Commenting upon his own profession, Mr. Ryan lamented



Sportswriter Bob Ryan prepares to speak at the recent guest lecture at BTU Hall.

—Photos by Michael J. Maguire

the impact that performance-enhancing drugs (PEDs) is having on the baseball Hall of Fame.

"I don't want sports writers to be judge, jury and executioner of (Baseball) Hall of Fame candidates," he explained. The Hall should just come out and say, "In this time period PEDs were used" and then let writers vote for the best candidates.



The audience enjoyed Bob Ryan's talk after the BTU Membership Meeting in February.

Commentary: **Dave Russell**

Why Do I Teach?

“Why don’t you quit, Mr. Russell?” Henry asked me in exasperation some time ago. In my teaching since 1986 I’ve never really considered it.

About half of new teachers quit within five years, and my school might seem to be one where quitting could be epidemic. McKinley South End Academy is a special public school in Boston for students with behavior problems. They enter through a metal detector. A large percentage have psychological diagnoses and have had related hospitalizations. Most students have experienced some kind of trauma. Many run afoul of the law. I do not know of a former student who has graduated from college, but I do know a number who have been killed.

Our MCAS scores, despite hard-won improvements, are low. Well, it may be argued, shouldn’t we be declared a “turn-around school” and there be a cleaning of house of these underperforming teachers?

An analogy is illustrative. Imagine a sports league that wants to expand. Each current team releases its weakest players, and a new team is formed of these castoffs. How do you expect it would fare in competition against the original franchises? Well, this is almost exactly our situation. But we do win some contests.

At McKinley people do not quit. I do not quit because I’m surrounded by a mission-driven, highly skilled, and supportive community of colleagues. Our students come to us with serious difficulties, but it is a rare student that we do not make progress with. In *Waiting For Superman* there is no evidence of the quality public education that I am part of everyday. In the editorial pages we are urged to support the escape route of charter schools, but I am proud to put my heart and soul into the noble work done at our continually improving public school.

I teach because it challenges the whole of me. Intellectually: How do you get students who seem to have never voluntarily picked up a book to become fired up about reading? Morally: How do I come to terms with the yawning gulf between my suburban comfort and the lives of students who

sometimes snatch extra lunches to be sure to have a meal at night? Physically: How do I stay healthy and energetic grueling day after grueling day? Emotionally: How do I keep from succumbing to despair when a student who had been making progress curses me out again? Organizationally: My to-do list is so long; how can I best use the precious period when I am not on stage to record keep, plan, clean, and communicate? Not on my 25 minute lunch!

I am buoyed by my students’ hope and resilience. This fall one boy, who uses his fingers to count, would walk out of class when Math started. Recently he has started writing “I love Math” on his homework. With our assistance he has begun to see that he doesn’t have to be stuck in innumeracy. We are in the midst right now of our annual writing for the Max Warburg Courage Essay Contest. I am moved as I observe my students pouring out their stories of loss and trauma, and how they have persevered.

In the morning my steps hasten as I walk from the train station to my school, music pumping from my iPod. I have a few favorite images that I work with for motivation. Three years in a row I applied for National Board certification, worked harder than I ever have for anything in my life, and was rejected each time. I counter: So I wasn’t good enough, you say? Watch me today! On other days I think of my parents, educators themselves, and how I treasure what they gave me, who they were, and how I want to make them – now deceased – proud.

But my favorite is a sports image. It’s game seven of the championship series! It’s the Super Bowl! In the run-up to these athletic contests the hype is omnipresent: The pending clash is described in epic terms. Ah, a much weightier outcome hinges on the outcome of the battle I will soon be joining in my classroom. I am going to overpower the young people who enter my room, often discouraged or distracted, restless or resistant, with positive energy and purposeful activities. They don’t have a chance. Or, more to the point, they do.

(Dave Russell teaches at the McKinley South End Academy.)

Commentary: **Melanie Allen**

Uploading Artifacts – Waste of Nothing, Especially Paper, Time, and Space

I am not one generally to hop on board with new district policies. Neither, however, am I one to decry a policy simply because it didn’t come from teachers. I am reminded of a quote from JFK, one my colleague keeps posted on the door to his classroom, “Let us not seek the Republican answer or the Democratic answer, but the right answer.” I could easily rewrite this to be about “not the district answer or the teacher answer, but the right answer.”

So it is with consideration that I actually support the new evaluation system in place for teachers. Of course we should complete a self-evaluation – no one knows our teaching better than ourselves. And of course we should set our own goals, keeping them lofty but *achievable*. (Unlike our administrators, who often expected the moon and stars, but never gave us the rocket ship to get there – and often didn’t even give us enough paper!)

I am in favor of uploading artifacts to demonstrate the good work we are doing in classrooms each day. No administrator can get a full sense of what we do from a

brief snapshot observations. We know best how to show our painstaking planning, how to explain the gains in our students’ understanding, even if their test scores are still below the benchmark.

Most of all, I want to conserve the resources most precious in my teaching. As our budgets get tighter and tighter, simple resources like paper have become as precious as gold. I don’t want to make copies unless I have to. I also don’t want to spend my planning period or time before and after school standing in line at the copier.

I want to upload artifacts rather than printing them out (wasting ink and paper), making a copy for my administrator (wasting time and paper), and creating a file into which I place them (wasting space in my classroom). I was able to upload all the artifacts for my upcoming formative evaluation on a Sunday morning in my pajamas while my son played at my feet with his trains. That may not have been the district’s idea, or every teacher’s idea, but it sure felt right to me.

(Melanie Allen teaches at the Rafael Hernandez School.)

Book Review: **Michael J. Maguire**

Talking Back to Facebook: The Common Sense Guide to Raising Kids in the Digital Age

In 2012 **James P. Steyer**, a former elementary teacher, wrote *Talking Back to Facebook*. Now a professor at Stanford, Steyer is concerned about the addiction to the Internet that many of his students display. Professor Steyer wrote the book using data from Common Sense Media (which he founded) and features an introduction from **Chelsea Clinton**.

In under 200 pages, Steyer tells his story in two parts: an historical overview of where we are in terms of electronic media in America, and advice to parents. The book is full of data, analysis, and resources for parents (most of which tells the reader to turn to commonsensemedia.org for up-to-date information).

Steyer begins by telling us “kids use social networks differently from adults.” Adults tend to use Facebook to keep in touch with people they already know, whereas kids “meet” people online. The concern with the youngsters is that Facebook lacks important social cues like tone and facial expression. The result may be that we are raising a generation which has less empathy and reduced impulse control.

While the 21st century finds us more “connected” than ever before, we are also more isolated. People, especially teens, use electronics as a way to “chat” with other people who are not physically near them.

Steyer also raises great concern over female body image and cyber-bullying on Facebook. He does not blame media companies for the bullying and social ills, but he does ask that the media companies take more responsibility for the medium they offer. If they won’t voluntarily reign themselves in, as some online video games are doing, then outside entities (e.g. parents) should.

Specifically professor Steyer calls for a national discussion on using social media. Facebook *et al.* won’t go away, but children need guidance. The caution, or outright danger, with social media is that the prefrontal cortex (or logic center of the brain) does not fully develop until 23 years of age. Social media, however, stimulates the impulse center of the brain. The underdevelopment of the former plus the over stimulation of the latter can equal trouble for children.

Even more troubling, about a third of teens use social media after “lights out” resulting in sleep deprivation, especially since social media is a stimulation when the human mind needs relaxation at night.

Steyer goes on to expose multitasking as a dangerous myth. “Humans can’t effectively process two streams of information at once.”² When students have Facebook open while doing their homework, they are only concentrating on one item at a time. Worse is distracted driving, with texting being a leading cause of teenage accidents.

The problem with so-called multitasking, Steyer explains, is that our short-term memory becomes overloaded with information. Our short-term memory holds only so much information, when it is full it tosses out the oldest items. Electronics have sped up the process like a conveyor belt turned up too high. The result is poorer transference to our long-term memories resulting in poorer grades for teenagers.

As both parents (and teachers) we need to be role models for our children by putting away our media devices for long stretches of time.

A major focus of *Talking Back to Facebook* is privacy or the lack thereof. Once materials are posted on the Internet, they can live on forever. Thus even one regrettable action online can haunt a person forever. While adults understand that actions have consequences, children do not. Moreover, we as a society are not allowing our adolescents a clean slate once they mature. The ramifications of a permanent digital record may be too high a cost for today’s convenience.

Steyer criticizes our elected leaders for not doing more to protect our privacy, especially that of the young. He argues that campaign donations from large technology companies are influencing legislative inaction. Remember, social media outlets get their money from advertisers. And advertisers pay richly for the data gathered by social media providers.

“Why is the privacy of millions of kids and many adults put at risk with so little public discussion and outcry?” asks Steyer rhetorically.³

Steyer points out that the last major legislation aimed at protecting children’s privacy – The Children’s Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA) – was in 1998 before the existence of Facebook, Twitter, and Google. Additionally COPPA only protects children under 13 years of age. Thus today we have the leading media gathering information via cookies on our teens and selling that information to businesses.

Common Sense Media is lobbying for the passage of the *Do Not Track Kids bill*⁴ which would exempt all minors from “behavioral marketing” and would call for the creation of an “eraser button” to obliterate digital data and images. Steyer argues that the technology exists or could be engineered and that it must occur in order to safeguard the privacy of our minors.

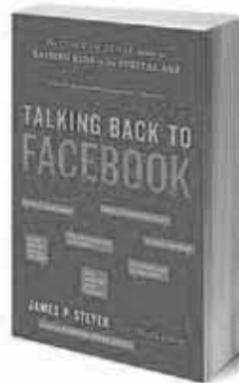
Sex and violence dominate our culture and the Internet is no exception. Movies have ratings and televisions have a V-chip, yet video games and the Internet are largely unregulated. We are living in a digital wild west.

Steyer does go on at great length explaining that companies have the right to

(continued on page 4)



Michael J. Maguire



Phone Numbers

Office	617-288-2000
Health & Welfare	617-288-0500
AFT Massachusetts	617-423-3342
Function Office	617-288-3322
Lounge Office	617-288-3322
Vision Center	617-288-5540
Tremont Credit Union	781-843-5626

What is the Role of the School Site Council's Personnel Subcommittee in Hiring?

The role of the Personnel Subcommittee of the SSC is to:

- 1.) approve the hiring of new BTU teachers' bargaining unit staff, the in-transfer of BTU teachers' bargaining unit staff from other schools in the system through the transfer and Open Posting lists, as well as teachers applying through the Post Transfer Placement Process (PTPP) formerly comprised of teachers who would participate in the excess pools process.
- 2.) approve the selection of Lead Teachers, [school-based] New Teacher Developers, and new athletic coaches; and
- 3.) determine the schedules and procedures for reviewing candidates for positions.

The Personnel Subcommittee is comprised of the Principal/Headmaster, two teachers and one parent as well as one student on the high school level [who are elected members of the SSC]. Decisions are urged to be made by consensus. Decisions need to be formalized by majority vote with the Principal/Headmaster voting with the majority. The decisions of the Personnel subcommittee are not subject to the approval of the School Site Council as a whole. The Personnel Subcommittee is required to meet for all hires made from the beginning of one school year through the last day of the same school year.

There is a way to involve others on the Personnel Subcommittee who possess more expertise in a particular position to be filled. Teacher and parent representatives on the SSC may designate temporary replacement representatives on the Personnel Subcommittee according to the positions being filled. These temporary replacements do not need to be members of the SSC. For example, a special education teacher may replace a teacher on the Personnel Subcommittee when a special education position is being filled, only if the elected SSC BTU members [or parents] choose to do so. The administrator can *not* appoint people that they choose. It is up to the BTU elected SSC members to caucus on their own to elect the two that will be the

BTU Personnel Subcommittee members. It is prudent to also elect an alternate in case one of the two selected is unable to participate on a particular day/time. BTU members are not obligated to select someone that possesses a particular expertise that is a BTU member to serve on the Personnel Subcommittee. It is entirely up to the BTU SSC members as a whole to decide this option on their own. They cannot be compelled to do so by the administration. The same is true of the parent members. SSC parents select their own member to serve on the Personnel Subcommittee as their representative by caucusing on their own to do so. On the high school level, the two elected SSC student members also select which one of them will serve as a member of the Personnel Subcommittee.

The BTU SSC members shall select the BTU representatives to serve on any screening committee convened to make recommendations for permanent appointments to administrative positions within the school consistent with screening committee guidelines and policies distributed by the school department.

What is the Difference Between the Transfer List, the Open Posting List and Rolling Postings?

The Transfer and Open Posting lists are posted on the same date. My shorthand for the differences in these lists is as follows. The transfer list is for BPS permanent BTU teacher bargaining unit members only. They are what I call 'traditional positions in traditional schools'. Eligible BTU members may apply for **UP TO FIVE (5)** positions. The transfer list is the first list of positions known to be available for the upcoming year which will be posted for internal BPS permanent candidates in the teachers' bargaining unit only. The transfer list is posted on the School Department's website for 10 school days. "All applications for vacant positions must be submitted no later than 10 school days after posting on the website." This school year, the transfer list is scheduled to be posted

in early-mid March (date listed is March 15th, but it may be subject to postponement). The Personnel Subcommittee of each school's SSC shall screen, interview, and select the candidate for each position on the transfer list and submit same to Human Resources for processing.

Open Postings are posted on the same date that the transfer list is put up. These positions are open to the entire world to apply to and internal BPS candidates are not given preference in hiring. This is an opportunity for permanent, provisionals, substitutes as well as those outside of the district to apply for jobs within the BPS. The Open Postings and transfer positions are clearly labeled at the top of each position posting to identify which type of job they are. I characterize Open Posted positions as 'positions in non-traditional schools' such as; Turnaround, pilot, innovation, in-district charter, and some alternative programs like the McKinley schools. Positions in the pilot, innovation, and in-district charter schools are governed by individual schools' election to work (EWA) agreements which dictate that particular school's length of school day, year, additional duties, class size, type of curriculum, and the like. One should familiarize oneself concerning these EWA's as if one agrees to accept a position at that type of school, they are agreeing to the tenets as outlined in each different school's work agreement. Turnaround schools also have specific mandatory additional hours during which teachers both provide direct student instruction as well as for additional professional development.

The Open Posted positions may also be what I call, 'untraditional positions at traditional schools'. These would include positions requiring exotic or unique qualifications and or a stipend of no less than \$1250 for additional mandatory work time and or duties in what I describe as 'traditional' schools. Please read these position descriptions carefully when applying. It is always best to download hard copies of what you have applied to in order to keep track of them and their descriptions.

Open Posted positions are posted for as long as it takes to fill the position. As a result, they may be up for a short period of time if what the school considers a good fit applies and is hired. The positions could also be up until the end of the school year while the school seeks their 'ideal' candidate. Candidates are able to apply for as many positions as they are qualified for, there is no limit on the number of applications one can submit on the Open Posting list as there is on the transfer list.

The contract reads, *Rolling Postings' lists appear in an ongoing basis reflecting the current positions available to apply for as they become open. These positions are open to any applicants from the BPS website, internal candidates are not given preference.*

What is the Online Tool, Share My Lesson by Teachers, for Teachers?

The American Federation of Teachers (AFT), the BTU's national organization which we are members of, has developed an online teacher resource platform found at www.sharemylesson.com. *Share My Lesson* pledges that AFT members can download and share user-generated resources free-of-charge forever. They are committed to protecting the privacy of their member's personal data and promise never to sell or share it with any third party. *Share My Lesson* states that it, "is



Caren Carew

a place where educators can come together to create and share their very best teaching resources. Developed by teachers for teachers, this free platform gives access to high-quality teaching resources and provides an online community where teachers can collaborate with, encourage and inspire each other. It has a significant resource bank for Common Core State Standards, covering all aspects of the standards, from advice and guides to help with dedicated resources that support the standards. It was developed by the AFT and TES Connect, the largest network of teachers in the world."

Share My Lesson provides free resources where thousands of educators connect inspire and share. Some featured content on the site are: Reading Across America: celebrate and nurture a love of reading with guided reading groups; Character Analysis: students participate in the process of inventing a multidimensional character. There are more than 259,960 total teaching resources available on a wide range of subjects and levels.

What is the Current 'Contractual Hourly Rate' for Teachers?

The current contractual hourly rate for teachers is **\$42.49**.

During the standard school day, individual teachers are paid at their own rate based on the amount of years teaching (step level) and the amount of educational degrees obtained and graduate credit earned (salary lanes) applied for, approved, and on file at BPS Human Resources.

Do I Get Time Off to Go to Court?

The contract states, "The Boston School Department will provide release time without loss of pay for court appearances on school business, including cases involving job-related teacher assaults."

If you are being brought to court by or are bringing a student to court, you get release time. If you have jury duty, you must give a copy of the jury duty letter to your school's secretary. Once you have successfully completed the jury duty service, give a copy of the certificate/letter you receive from the court indicating same. You will then have that time properly coded by the school secretary so it will not be deducted from your sick/personal days. Make sure you carefully scrutinize your pay stub to determine if that has occurred.

If you are subpoenaed to court by someone non-related to school business, or if you are appearing at court for an appeal of a moving violation, and the like, that is not covered under court leave and will be deducted from your sick/personal days.

When Does the Principal Make Recommendations to Grant Permanent Status to Provisional Teachers?

According to the contract, "Principals will be required to make recommendations as to which provisional teachers they want to make permanent teachers by February 1st of each year. Principals will be notified by February 15th if their recommendations have been approved. The Superintendent shall make permanent appointment of provisional teachers by March 27th."

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WHEN WRITING:

All correspondence to the *Boston Union Teacher* must be typewritten and include the author's name and school or department if not school-based.

All articles must be appropriate to the publication, and in good taste.

Letters to the Editor should be sent to letters@btu.org.

DEADLINE:

The deadline for submitting articles for the next issue of the *Boston Union Teacher* is March 15th.

All copy should be e-mailed to gvirchick@btu.org and mmaguire@btu.org. This deadline will be strictly adhered to.

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OUR WORKING CONDITIONS ARE THE STUDENT'S LEARNING CONDITIONS



With all the talk about accountability and teacher quality and closing the achievement gap and all the other rhetoric that often obscures many of the fundamental problems facing urban public schools we should not forget the many simple things that the district could fix that would increase student learning.

In that spirit we urge members to submit pictures with a short explanation for a new column called "Our Working Conditions Are the Student's Learning Conditions". We will not publish the school or the teacher's name. If the school committee or school department wishes to fix the problem we urge them to contact the Boston Union Teacher and we will gladly include their cooperation in future columns.

★★★★★

The picture to the left was submitted to the *Boston Union Teacher*. The teacher has requested a shade for their south facing window. The school secretary, while sympathetic to the teacher, informed the teacher that she would submit the request, but the chances of anyone coming to install a shade was remote.

During the school day the sun shines directly in the student's eyes making it difficult to concentrate on the work. The teacher had an extra roll of bulletin board paper (purchased with their own money) and risked bodily injury to climb a wobbly ladder to try and install the makeshift shade on a window that was in the corner of the room. It was difficult given the position of the window, the angle of the ladder, and the 12-foot ceiling. Reaching into the corner to tape the paper was treacherous.

Alas, the makeshift shade only lasted two weeks. A combination of the dry heat and the tape on the wooden frame did not work. But for two weeks the students did not complain about the sun in their eyes. And with the many cloudy days we've had recently, since the paper shade fell down, things have not been so bad.



Nicole Talbot, new NBCT and teacher at EBHS, is pictured with Headmaster Michael Rubin and students Linda Ogiemwonyi, Dysi Pacheco and and Glaribel Lora.

Book Review: *Talking Back to Facebook: The Common Sense Guide to Raising Kids in the Digital Age...*

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make whatever they want, but he objects to their selling/marketing materials to minors. Bullying originated long before electricity was harnessed, but today's media make bullying and sexting too easy for today's youth. Steyer argues that companies cannot be excused for their participation in these matters.

Talking Back to Facebook then takes a brief divergence into the positive aspects of social media for schools and society. Some classrooms have invitation-only pages on Facebook where students and parents can learn more about what that the class is doing. The goal now for educators is to teach children the pros and cons of technology. Additionally, social media can be a powerful tool for social change. The 2012 Arab Spring could not have happened without Twitter and Facebook.

The book then shifts to practical approaches to social media for children of various ages. Steyer makes seven divisions of youth from birth to fifteen years old. They very young should not be exposed to electronics at all as their development needs three dimensions and feedback. Most preschool "apps" are not really good educational tools and are in fact advertisements for commercial products.

For elementary ages, Professor Steyer recommends the best thing parents can do is be positive role models for their children. At this age children are enticed by "virtual worlds" and need to be reminded not so share personal information with strangers. Keeping a constant open dialogue with kids this age about the dos-and-don'ts of social media is crucial. Setting boundaries (like a time limit) is imperative.

As children start to do homework online, parents ought to investigate the intended sites first. Placing the computer in a public room is a good idea. Checking the computers search history is not snooping, it's parenting. When improper material is found, Steyer suggests an instructive conversation with the child instead of a scolding.

The tween years are tricky because children at this stage lack impulse control. Legally tweens can't join Facebook (13 is the youngest age). Sadly many parents allow their children to lie about their age. Steyer warns that such identity fraud will lead to bigger problems later in life, like fake IDs and the fostering of the concept that rules really don't apply.

Teens face enormous problems with Facebook. Cyber-bullying is an issue, isolation and depression is but another. Facebook "friends" are no substitute for real human interaction. Disturbingly, about 4% of teens develop a dependency to their computer life where relationships are easier and anonymous.

Lastly, Steyer points out that most parents would never think of purchasing an X-rated movie for their teenager, but buying M-rated videogames is just as bad and shockingly quite common.

Professor Steyer at the end stressed that name of the book is "talking back" to facebook, not banning it. He implores us to teach our children how to use social media wisely, especially around the areas of privacy.

Interestingly, he points out that no executives of social media post pictures of their young children online and that no one can "friend" **Mark Zuckerberg**. Something to think about.

BTU DEPENDENT SCHOLARSHIPS

This year there will be 16 scholarships in the amount of \$1,000 awarded to high school seniors who are dependents of BTU members. To apply, please obtain an application from Jeanne Turner in the Union office or download the form from the BTU website and return with: a transcript of the dependent's last two years of academic work; 2) evidence of acceptance by an accredited college, junior college, vocational school or equivalent institution; 3) member's notarized federal tax return for the year 2012; and 4) a one-page statement of the dependent's professional goals. The application and the four supporting documents **must be received in the Union office no later than Monday, April 22, 2013**. The recipients of the scholarships will be notified by May 20, 2012.

RETIRED TEACHERS CHAPTER SCHOLARSHIPS

Each year the Retired Teachers Chapter of the Boston Teachers Union awards three scholarships to deserving high school seniors who are children, grandchildren, nieces, nephews, grandnieces, grandnephews of RTC members. One of these scholarships is earmarked for a student who might choose to attend a vocational school or equivalent institution.

Applications for these scholarships may be picked up at the RTC/BTU offices at 180 Mt. Vernon Street, Dorchester, MA 02125 or they can be downloaded from the BTU website. **The deadline to apply is April 22, 2013**. Envelopes must be postmarked by this date.

National Board Program News

by Karene-Sean Hines

At the January 30, 2013 Boston School Committee meeting, a record number of outstanding teachers were officially recognized as Boston Public Schools' newest National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs), and veterans who renewed their certification. The recognition was presided over by **Dr. Carol Johnson**, and **Mr. Michael D. O'Neil**, Chairman of the Boston School Committee, with special guest, **Mr. Richard Stutman**, President of the BTU. The nine new NBCTs were **Erin Borthwick, Nicole Tabolt, Mary Jacques, Delores Martinez, Lisa Nguyen, Aaron Osowiecki, Marie Levey-Pabst, Thiero Tall, and Carla Zils**.

The three NBCTs who renewed their certification were veterans **Ellen Dunn, Thomas Hocker, and Lisa MacGeorge**.

At this year's ceremony, we emphasized the reality that no NBCT could complete the rigorous process alone. It took a team of supporters, including spouses, significant others, administrators, colleagues, students and our BPS-BTU NBPTS Candidate Support Program to achieve Certification.

The BPS-BTU NBPTS Candidate Support Program assists teachers to improve their practice and navigate the rigors of the National Board programs. Another reason for the program's growing popularity is that both the Take One! option and full Board Certification offer teachers the opportunity to meet multiple indicators on the new teacher evaluation rubric.

While Full Board Certification meets virtually all of the standards, I-IV, the Take One! option focuses on activities and products that meet most indicators in Standards 1 and II. For example, teachers who successfully complete Take One! are required to demonstrate content knowledge, create and deliver well-structured, rigorous lessons that are developmentally appropriate for their students. The teachers also provide evidence of their ability to modify content to teach all students, including LEPs and those on IEPs, and assess them through a variety of methods. Finally, teachers are required to reflect on their practice, and share conclusions with colleagues and students.

To learn more about our program and meet some of the outstanding educators whose practice met the standard, plan to attend our annual NBCT Recognition Event. It will be held on Thursday, May 16, 2013, from 4:30-6:30 p.m., at BTU Hall. For more information, please contact **Karene-Sean Hines**, NBCT. She can be reached at karenehines@gmail.com or khines@boston.k12.ma.us. You can also reach our Program Director, **Mrs. Ryan-Miller** at lryan2@boston.k12.ma.us.

(Karene-Sean Hines is the BPS-BTU NBPTS Lead Candidate Support Provider.)



BTU Paraprofessional/Substitute Teacher Field Rep. Jenna Fitzgerald surprised all with her announcement to retire after 34 years. The audience in the photo below honored her with a standing ovation.

Jenna to Retire

At the February membership meeting, **Jenna Fitzgerald** made a surprise announcement. Jenna said:

"I have made a decision that I want to share with you. After 34 years with the BTU as Para/Sub Field Rep I have decided I will not seek re-election to the position. It's time to smell the roses. Also, you know, I am a contemporary of the Pope; and if he can retire, so can I."

The room erupted into a standing ovation. We wish Jenna good luck on her future endeavors.

— Michael J. Maguire
Garret Virchick



Commentary: **Cheryl Kelly**

Councilor Baker Seeks Hybrid School Committee

At the City Council meeting last month, **Frank Baker** (District 3) filed a Home Rule Petition (docket #0155) seeking to change the Boston School Committee to a hybrid of mayoral appointees and elected representatives. Here are reactions of other city councilors and some civic leaders.

Mike Ross (District 8) is undecided, but he seems to be leaning towards the hybrid model. Mr. Ross requested more information on the matter. Councilor Ross did point out, however, that the School Committee has voted in favor of a superintendent's policies and initiatives 98% of the time since 1993.

John Connolly (At-Large and a mayoral candidate) will support either an appointed or an elected school committee. In his words, he'll support "whatever's best for the city."

Charles Yancey (District 4) says it's an insult to the citizens of Boston that they can't elect school committee members as all other cities and towns in Massachusetts do.

Tito Jackson (District 7), in his support of the hybrid model, mentioned the Latin Academy/Hyde Park High fiasco and the school committee's ineffectiveness in managing the situation.

Felix Arroyo (At-Large) sees the benefits of an appointed committee, and had questions about the process of electing member.

Bill Linehan (District 2) favors an appointed committee.

Mike Contompasis, former BPS superintendent, stated that the present format should be switched to a hybrid.

Professor **Kenneth Long** of Brown University offered a power point presentation. It was difficult to see, but it can be seen along with the entire meeting on Boston Neighborhood Network. (www.bnntu.org)

Mike Ruben, 30-year headmaster of East Boston High School, heavily favors an appointed school committee. Mr. Ruben cited several instances where the school committee interfered with the school's operations. He fears an elected committee would be more intrusive.

Marchelle Raynor, former school committee member, heavily favors keeping the current appointed school committee. Ms. Raynor sees nothing wrong with the way business is presently being conducted.

Angela Cristiani, BTU Political Director, participated in a panel discussing the pros and cons of a hybrid model.

In parting, let me stress to all reading this newspaper that we BPS employees are governed by the Boston School Committee. The type of school committee we have is an extremely important issue for all of us. Please tell your friends and families about Councilor Baker's proposal.

(Cheryl Kelly is a nurse at the Edwards Middle School.)

Arts Faculty Dinner Party

by Denise Berkley

The second annual Arts Dinner Party will take place on March 20th starting at 5:30 p.m. This dinner party is a wonderful opportunity to reconnect and re-energize with other arts educators. The evening will feature musicians, dancers, visual artists and actors. The evening will include a full

course dinner and jazz music by Different Shades Trio Plus One.

We had a terrific time last year and we appreciate that the BTU sponsors this event to foster our collegiality and enthusiasm for arts in our public schools.

Please see the accompanying flyer for details.



BTU Arts Teachers and Retired Arts Teachers may attend free. Send a check for \$10.00 payable to the BTU for the Arts Faculty Revival Dinner (to reserve a seat). (BTU Arts Faculty and Retired Arts Faculty checks will be returned at check-in.) Guests and public pay \$25.00 per person for the Arts Revival Dinner.

Name _____

Number of Guests _____

Send to Boston Teachers Union, 180 Mt. Vernon Street, Boston, MA 02125
Tel.: 617-288-2000 Attn.: Michael McLaughlin

**THE BOSTON TEACHERS UNION
WOMEN'S RIGHTS BREAKFAST
2013**




THE GLASS CEILING AWARD
HONORING STATE REPRESENTATIVE MARJORIE DECKER
SATURDAY, MARCH 30, 2013
FLORIAN HALL DORCHESTER
9:30-11:30 A.M.
TICKETS \$25.00 WRCBTU@GMAIL.COM

"HOW IMPORTANT IT IS TO RECOGNIZE AND CELEBRATE OUR HEROES AND SHE-ROES."
— MAYA ANGELOU



BTU SECRETARY-TREASURER'S REPORT – Charles R. Johnson

Dear Union Member,

The CPA firm of Joseph B. Cohan and Associates has examined the balance sheet of the Boston Teachers Union and the related statement of revenues, expenses, and fund balances for the fiscal year ending August 31, 2012. The audit was conducted in accordance with the auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America. Those standards require that the auditors plan and perform the audits to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free of material misstatements. The audit gives a financial position of the Boston Teachers Union at August 31, 2012 and 2011 and the changes in its net assets and its cash flows for the year. This statement is reprinted below to explain in detail your Union's financial status. With this report as background, the proposed budget for fiscal year 2013 will be before you at April 2013 membership meeting.

Respectfully submitted,
Charles R. Johnson,
Secretary-Treasurer, Boston Teachers Union

Independent Auditor's Report

We have audited the accompanying statements of financial position of Boston Teachers Union (the Union), a not-for-profit organization, as of August 31, 2012 and 2011; and the related statements of activities and cash flows for the years then ended. These financial statements are the responsibility of the Union's management. Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audits.

We conducted our audits in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement. An audit includes examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. An audit also includes assessing the accounting principles used and significant estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall financial statement presentation. We believe that our audits provide a reasonable basis for our opinion.

In our opinion, the financial statements referred to above present fairly in all material respects; the financial position of Boston Teachers Union at August 31, 2012 and 2011 and the changes in its net assets and its cash flows for the years then ended in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles.

Our audits were made for the purpose of forming an opinion on the basic financial statements taken as a whole. The accompanying data presented in Schedule I is presented for purposes of additional analysis and is not a required part of the basic financial statements. Such data has been subjected to the procedures applied in the audits of the basic financial statements and; in our opinion, is fairly stated in all material respects in relation to the basic financial statements taken as a whole.

– Joseph B. Cohan & Associates, Dedham, Massachusetts, January 15, 2013

BOSTON TEACHERS UNION STATEMENTS OF FINANCIAL POSITION AUGUST 31, 2012 AND 2011		
	2012	2011
ASSETS		
CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash	\$ 4,930,538	\$ 4,317,839
Investments (Notes 2, 3 and 4)	2,804,643	2,730,411
Accounts Receivable	32,049	312,183
Prepaid Expenses	170,216	121,182
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	7,937,446	7,481,615
PROPERTY AND EQUIPMENT (NOTE 1)		
Furniture, Fixtures & Equipment	495,869	475,475
Leasehold Improvements	231,542	215,287
	727,411	690,762
Less - Accumulated Depreciation and Amortization	680,578	658,878
	46,833	31,884
TOTAL ASSETS	\$ 7,984,279	\$ 7,513,499
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Accounts Payable	\$475,721	\$422,612
TOTAL NET ASSETS - UNRESTRICTED (Note 1)	7,508,558	7,090,887
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	\$ 7,984,279	\$ 7,513,499

BOSTON TEACHERS UNION STATEMENTS OF CASH FLOWS FOR THE YEARS ENDED AUGUST 31, 2012 AND 2011		
	2012	2011
CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES		
Increase in Net Assets	\$ 417,671	\$ 978,241
Adjustments to Reconcile Increase in Net Assets to Net		
Cash Provided by Operating Activities		
Depreciation	21,701	30,496
(Increase) Decrease In Accounts Receivable	280,134	(276,646)
Prepaid Expenses	(49,034)	16,951
Increase (Decrease) In Accounts Payable	53,109	53,680
NET CASH FLOWS PROVIDED BY OPERATING ACTIVITIES	723,581	802,722
CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES		
Acquisition of Investments	(207,982)	(269,653)
Acquisition of Property and Equipment	(36,650)	(7,851)
Unrealized (Gain) Loss on Investments	133,750	117,048
NET CASH FLOWS USED BY INVESTING ACTIVITIES	(110,882)	(160,456)
NET INCREASE IN CASH	612,699	642,266
CASH, BEGINNING	4,317,839	3,675,573
CASH, ENDING	\$ 4,930,538	\$ 4,317,839

SCHEDULE I BOSTON TEACHERS UNION STATEMENTS OF EXPENSES FOR THE YEARS ENDED AUGUST 31, 2012 AND 2011 (continued)		
	2012	2011
Grant- Boston Educational Development Foundation	195,052	50,000
Insurance		
Group Health	264,266	281,059
Teachers' Liability	33,339	33,488
General	13,130	12,127
Retired Teachers' Benefits	21,536	32,753
Legal		
General Union Issues	818,904	595,943
Teacher Assault Cases	9,600	13,100
Transcripts and Other Costs	49,761	40,032
Mailing and Machine Room	39,594	38,215
Office	45,002	26,064
Payroll Service	7,326	4,471
Payroll Taxes	99,333	96,772
Per Capita Payments		
American Federation of Teachers	1,236,942	1,209,273
AFT Massachusetts	1,002,183	985,688
State Labor Council AFL-CIO	70,848	70,609
Greater Boston Labor Council	17,400	17,400
Working Massachusetts	5,000	5,000
Postage and Delivery	53,039	62,295
Printing and Bulletins	89,100	65,075
Professional Fees	7,575	7,525
Rent		
Conference Rooms and Meeting Hall	28,315	28,560
Office	104,673	101,189
Retirement Plan Contribution	127,939	123,740
Salaries		
President	147,889	147,889
Executive Vice President	140,495	140,495
Secretary/Treasurer	133,101	133,101
Field Representative - Elementary	125,706	125,706
Field Representative - Secondary	125,706	125,706
Field Representative - Paraprofessionals	125,706	125,706
Political Analyst	125,706	125,706
Political Analyst - Severance Pay	24,627	24,627
Community Liaison Representative	41,860	41,860
Retired Teachers Coordinator	12,571	12,571
Assistant Retired Teachers Coordinator	9,428	9,428
Facilitators	16,616	-
Building Representatives	116,400	127,000
Negotiations	21,515	23,527
Editor	36,726	35,700
Office	307,947	307,887
Homework Helpers	50,158	38,731
Telephone Workers	750	15,400
Scholarships	50,000	62,500
Subscriptions	3,620	3,723
Telephone	28,293	25,764
	\$ 6,664,127	\$ 6,195,538

BOSTON TEACHERS UNION STATEMENTS OF ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEARS ENDED AUGUST 31, 2012 AND 2011		
	2012	2011
SUPPORT		
Union Dues	\$ 6,786,500	\$ 6,944,602
Interest	4,414	4,972
Dividend Income (Note 2)	148,432	141,159
Realized Short-Term Capital Gains (Note 2)	5,187	88,599
Realized Long-Term Capital Gains (Note 2)	54,363	39,895
Unrealized Gain (Loss) on Investments (Note 2)	(133,750)	(117,048)
AFT Innovation Fund Grant (Note 10)	195,052	50,000
AFT Salary Assistance Program	21,600	21,600
	7,081,798	7,173,779
EXPENSES (Schedule I)	6,664,127	6,195,538
INCREASE IN NET ASSETS	417,671	978,241
NET ASSETS AT BEGINNING OF YEAR	7,090,887	6,112,646
NET ASSETS AT END OF YEAR	\$ 7,508,558	\$ 7,090,887

SCHEDULE I BOSTON TEACHERS UNION STATEMENTS OF EXPENSES FOR THE YEARS ENDED AUGUST 31, 2012 AND 2011		
	2012	2011
Advertising	66,636	34,762
Arbitration Fees	49,567	78,536
Audit	29,620	28,795
Communications (Non-Telephone)	1,253	1,183
Computer	69,209	53,812
Conferences, Conventions and Meetings	367,138	329,968
Depreciation	21,701	30,496
Donations	32,731	36,309
Election	-	7,784
Expense Reimbursements		
President	5,854	6,410
Executive Vice-President	6,024	5,280
Secretary/Treasurer	5,291	4,800
Field Representatives	14,400	14,400
Political Analyst	4,800	4,800
Committees and Others	5,226	4,798

The Accompanying Notes are an Integral Part of these Financial Statements.

BOSTON TEACHERS UNION NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AUGUST 31, 2012 AND 2011

1. Summary of Significant Accounting Policies

Organization and Nature of Activities

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

Method Of Accounting

The financial statements of Boston Teachers Union have been prepared on the accrual method of accounting.

Financial Statement Preparation

The Union has presented its financial statements in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles for not-for-profit organizations. Under this guidance, the Union is required to report information regarding financial position and activities according to three classes of net assets: unrestricted net assets, temporarily restricted net assets, and permanently restricted net assets. In addition, the Union is required to present a statement of cash flows.

Contributions

Under generally accepted accounting principles for not-for-profit organizations, contributions received are recorded as unrestricted; temporarily restricted; or permanently restricted support depending on the existence and/or nature of any donor restrictions. For the years ended August 31, 2012 and 2011, Boston Teachers Union did not receive any contributions with donor-imposed restrictions that would result in temporarily or permanently restricted net assets.

Property and Equipment and Depreciation

Property and equipment are recorded at cost. Depreciation is provided on the straight-line method over the estimated useful lives of the assets.

Income Tax

The Union is a not-for-profit organization that is exempt from both federal and state income taxes under Section 501 (c) (5) of the Internal Revenue Code.

The Union's policy is to record interest expense and penalties in administrative expenses. For the years ended August 31, 2012 and 2011, there was no interest and penalties expense recorded on the Union's books and no accrued interest and penalties.

The Union's Form 990, Return of Organization Exempt from Income Tax, for the years ending August 31, 2009, 2010, 2011 and 2012 are subject to examination by the IRS, generally for three years after they were filed.

Use of Estimates

The preparation of financial statements in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amounts of assets and liabilities and disclosure of contingent assets and liabilities at the date of the financial statements and the reported amounts of revenues and expenses during the reporting period. Actual results could differ from those estimates.

2. Investments

The Union held \$2,804,643 and \$2,730,411 at August 31, 2012 and 2011, respectively, in mutual funds invested in bonds that are obligations of the U.S. government, its agencies and instrumentalities, and

(continued on page 7)

BOSTON TEACHERS UNION
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS – AUGUST 31, 2012 AND 2011 (continued)

are backed by the full faith and credit of the United States and have short to long term maturities through Putnam Investments. The fair market value of the investments at August 31, 2012 and 2011 was \$2,804,643 and \$2,730,411, respectively. The following schedule summarizes the investment return and their classification in the statement of activities for the years ended August 31, 2012 and 2011:

	<u>2012</u>	<u>2011</u>
Dividend Income	\$148,432	\$141,159
Realized Short-Term Gains	5,187	88,599
Realized Long-Term Gains	54,363	39,895
Net Unrealized Gain (Loss)	<u>(133,750)</u>	<u>(117,048)</u>
TOTAL INVESTMENT RETURN	\$74,232	\$152,605

3. Fair Value Measurement

The fair value measurements and levels within the fair value hierarchy of those measurements for the assets reported at fair value on a recurring basis at August 31, 2012 are as follows:

<u>Description</u>	<u>Quoted Prices In Active Market for Identical Assets</u>	
	<u>Fair Value</u>	<u>(Level 1)</u>
Putnam U.S. Gov't Income Trust – A	\$2,804,643	\$2,804,643

The fair value measurements and levels within the fair value hierarchy of those measurements for the assets reported at fair value on a recurring basis at August 31, 2011 are as follows:

<u>Description</u>	<u>Quoted Prices In Active Market for Identical Assets</u>	
	<u>Fair Value</u>	<u>(Level 1)</u>
Putnam U.S. Gov't Income Trust – A	\$2,730,411	\$2,730,411

The Union recognizes transfers of assets into and out of levels as of the date of an event or change in circumstances causes the transfer. There were no transfers between levels in the years ended August 31, 2012 and 2011.

Investments are reported at fair value on a recurring basis determined by reference to quoted market prices and other relevant information generated by market transactions.

4. Risks and Uncertainties

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

5. Transactions with Related Entities

The Union rents office and conference room space from a related entity, B.T.U.H.W.F. Building Corp. on a tenant-at-will basis under the terms of a lease which ended September 1, 2005. The yearly base rent is adjusted annually on September 1st to correspond to the change in the "Consumer Price Index for all Urban Consumers for Boston, MA, All Items" during the twelve-month period which ended in the previous July. B.T.U.H.W.F. Building Corporation is responsible for all utilities, including water and sewer, and repairs to the rented space. Payments to B.T.U.H.W.F. Building Corporation totaled \$104,673 and \$101,189, respectively, for the years ended August 31, 2012 and 2011.

In addition, the Boston Teachers Union pays \$15 per day for conference room set-up fees to B.T.U.H.W.F. Building Corp. under an agreement which ended June 30, 2007. As of December 21, 2012, the agreement has not been modified and continues under the initial terms. Fees paid under this agreement for the fiscal year ended August 31, 2012 and 2011 totaled \$240 and \$315, respectively.

6. Retired Teachers' Benefits

Effective July 31, 1987, dues paid to the Union by retired teachers and retired paraprofessionals for two consecutive years qualify them to participate in eye care benefits. Eyeglasses will be provided not more frequently than once in any 24-month period. Full details of benefits and limitations are described in "Guidelines for Retirees Eyeglass Benefit."

7. Retirement Plan Contribution

The employees of the Union participate in a defined contribution retirement plan. The Union's contributions are equal to 10% of the annual salary of participating employees plus administration fees. The Union's contributions to the plan totaled \$127,939 and \$123,740 respectively, for the years ended August 31, 2012 and 2011.

8. Advertising

Advertising costs are charged to expense when incurred. Advertising expense was \$66,636 and \$34,762 for the years ended August 31, 2012 and 2011, respectively.

9. Per Capita – Working Massachusetts

On September 20, 2009, the Executive Board voted to join Working Massachusetts, a Massachusetts labor organization which performs public relations, research and communications work on behalf of public sector employees, and to allocate up to \$10,000 to join Working Massachusetts. Per capita for membership is billed and paid quarterly. For the fiscal years ended August 31, 2012 and 2011, the Union paid \$5,000 in each fiscal year in per capita to Working Massachusetts.

10. AFT Innovation Fund Grant / Grant – Boston Educational Development Foundation, Inc.

Boston Teachers Union received an AFT Innovation Fund grant in September 2010 in the amount of \$50,000 to "increase students' engagement in lessons by creating prototypes of high-quality instructional units that can be distributed online." In September 2010, Boston Teachers Union turned the grant over to Boston Educational Development Foundation, Inc. to administer the funds for this purpose. Boston Educational Development Foundation, Inc. is a tax-exempt organization that "acts as a fiscal agent for programs within the Boston Public Schools that improve the quality of learning, teaching and administration within the Boston Public Schools." In October 2011 and February 2012, Boston Teachers Union received AFT Innovation Fund grants of \$95,000 and \$100,052, respectively, and these grants, totaling \$195,052 were disbursed to Boston Educational Development Foundation, Inc. in October 2011 and February 2012.

11. Evaluation of Subsequent Events

The Union has evaluated subsequent events through January 15, 2013, the date which the financial statements were available to be issued. On October 10, 2012, the membership of Boston Teachers Union ratified the tentative contract settlement reached by Boston Teachers Union and the Boston School Committee on September 24, 2012. The settlement is comprised of two separate memorandums of agreement, with the first memorandum effective for the period September 1, 2010 through August 31, 2013 and the second memorandum effective for the period September 1, 2013 through August 31, 2016.

The memorandums extend the terms and provisions of the collective bargaining agreement in effect from September 1, 2006 through August 31, 2010, except as modified by the memorandums of agreement. The memorandum of agreement for the period September 1, 2010 through August 31, 2013 calls for retroactive salary increases of 1% effective November 1, 2011 which have not been paid as of the date of the Independent Auditor's Report. The estimated amount of this retroactive salary increase is considered immaterial to these financial statements.

Overview of Proposed Changes to Retiree Health Insurance as of February 13, 2013

Background

The Special Commission to Study Retiree Healthcare and Other Non-Pension Benefits was established in 2011 and charged with analyzing actuarial data and recommending changes in non-pension benefits (referred to as Other Post-Employment Benefits, or OPEB), the most expensive of which by far is retiree health insurance. The report recommends changes in retiree health benefits that more closely tie years of service to the level of benefits received, as is done with the pension system.



AFT Massachusetts' Andrew Powell

Members of the Special Commission were **Al Gordon**, representing State Treasurer Steve Grossman; Assistant Senate Majority Leader **Jack Hart**; Representative **John Scibak**; Senator **Michael Knapik**; Representative **Jay Barrows**; GIC Executive Director **Dolores Mitchell**; Assistant Secretary of Administration and Finance **Greg Mennis**; **Henry Dormitzer**, co-chair of the commission; former MTA President **Anne Wass**, co-chair of the commission; **Shawn Duhamel** of the Massachusetts Retirees Association; **Andrew Powell** of AFT Massachusetts, representing the Massachusetts AFL-CIO, and Shrewsbury Town Manager **Dan Morgado**, representing the Massachusetts Municipal Association.

The Massachusetts AFL-CIO and the Retired State, County, Municipal Retirees Association representatives sided with the majority 11-1 vote on a final set recommendations contained in a report filed on December 20, 2012. It is expected that legislation substantially mirroring these recommendations will be filed shortly and may become law as early as July 1, 2013.

Outline of Commission Recommendations

Years of Service w/Age Requirement

Future public employee retirees, including all new hires, shall be required to complete twenty (20) years of service and have reached the age of 60 (group 1), 55 (group 2), and 50 (group 4) in order to qualify for retiree health insurance.

Pro-Rating Contributions

Future public employee retirees shall receive a health plan employer contribution based on a pro-rated scale based on completed years of service upon retirement as follows:

<u>Years of Service</u>	<u>Premium Contribution</u>	<u>City of Boston Conversion to %</u>
20 – 22	50% of Premium	50% of Premium
23 – 26	1/3 above 50% to MAB	58.3% of Premium
27 – 29	2/3 above 50% to MAB	66.7% of Premium
@ 30	100% to MAB	75% of Premium (current MAB)

* Maximum Available Benefit

Exempted Employees and Retirees (Grandfather)

The following current employees and currently retired shall be exempt from the aforementioned age, years of service requirement, and pro-rating of contributions **as of the effective date** of any so-called Reform Law:

- Any retired public employee who is retired will not be impacted by OPEB Reform.
- Any employee within 5 years of retirement age, by pension group, and who has completed 20 years of service are exempt from the OPEB Reform.
- Group 1 – 50 or older and 20 years of service
- Group 2 – 45 or older and 20 years of service
- Group 4 – 40 or older and 20 years of service
- Any current Teacher participating in Retirement Plus and, who retires at full pension benefit (80%), and is age 57 and above, shall be entitled to 100% of MAB regardless of retirement age is exempt from the OPEB Reform. This includes all compulsory participants hired after July 1, 2001.
- Any employee who within 5 years of the current Medicare Eligible age (60) and, within twelve months of vesting is exempt from the OPEB Reform.
- All Accidental Disability Retirements.

Partially Exempted Employees

The following current employees and currently retired shall be partially exempt from the aforementioned age, years of service requirement, and pro-rating of contributions **as of the effective date** of any so-called Reform Law:

- Any current employee who is age 50 and has completed 15 years of service shall be eligible to receive a 50% premium contribution. Pro-rating applies at 20 years and beyond.
- Any current employee who is age 55 and has completed 10 years of service shall be eligible to receive a 50% premium contribution. Pro-rating applies at 20 years and beyond.

Employee and Retiree Protections

The following economic protections are necessary as any reform is implemented: Municipal retiree contributions are "frozen" at levels as of 1/1/2013 for a period of 3 years from the effective date of the OPEB Reform Law, provided that changes adopted locally before 1/1/2013, shall be honored. Following the moratorium, the ability to reduce contributions shall be returned to local option given, however, that any municipality that exercises this right shall hold harmless (grandfather) existing retirees at their current level of contribution at the time of implementation.

All surviving spouses (both existing, and if enrolled in the municipal health plan & prospective) in municipalities be entitled to a minimum 50% employer premium contribution.

Ordinary disabilities are exempt from any Reform Law until such time that the 2014 ACA Exchange is available. At that time, ordinary Disability Retirees shall receive a 50% premium contribution from 10-20 years of service. Beyond 20 years of service, proration shall apply.

The Commission report will make note that the recommendations are consistent with the Commonwealth's recent practice of applying changes to new retirees only.

The 2014 ACA Exchange shall not exclude any public employee retiree from participating and the Commission recommends that in the future, retirees are provided with the information necessary to determine if coverage under the ACA exchange may be of comparable quality at a lower price.

Roger Clap Innovation School

The Roger Clap Innovation School has fewer than 150 students. It sits on a tiny one-way street just off Dorchester Avenue. Just two years ago the school was slated for closure when a group of parents proposed reopening with “innovation” status – the state’s “pilot” school program. Teachers had to reapply for their positions and only one was rehired.

I spoke with veteran teacher **Donna Harris** about the changes she thinks have been of most value. She said that the added half hour/day helped, as well as initiatives such as weekly reports and mid-year conferences to increase family involvement. Engaging families as true partners in their children’s school progress is something I know can make a huge difference, and it’s an area in which most schools need to improve.

The first thing I noticed when I walked into the building was that the entrance hallways were painted with whiteboard paint and covered with quotes about the value of reading – even Lemony Snicket had something to say! Later I saw the same paint used on doors and even desks, in a first grade classroom where students practiced writing their spelling words with markers.

I was invited to visit the Clap by P.E. teacher, **Angel Scott**. Her auditorium classroom was filled with young children enthusiastically doing yoga exercises. I loved seeing charts posted with feeling words and learned that students begin each class by writing about how they and their bodies are feeling. All specialists teach on Thursdays, so I got to visit Chinese and Visual Arts and Science classes as well. Art teacher **Connie Cummings** was helping K1 students imagine all the things you could draw with a circle, while science teacher **Amanda Schrekengaust** led her K2 class as they sang and danced to the “Bones” song.

Clearly there is an intense focus on MCAS achievement at the Clap, since goals are posted on large charts in upper elementary classrooms. When I spoke to a group of fourth grade students, I discovered their main purpose for reading was being able to answer reading response questions; only a few said they ever read for pleasure. Sadly, I suspect this may be increasingly true in many BPS classrooms, with the implementation of a prescribed reading program and the pressure of performing well on high-stakes standardized tests. Nevertheless, there is a spirit of confidence and determination among students at the Clap that can only serve them well throughout their schooling. As always, I was inspired by the commitment of teachers giving their hearts to this work.



I was drawing a picture to go with my story about unicorns. I am learning to write words that I know. – Hallie, Grade 1



This was in art class with Ms. Cummings. We were doing the 10 Dots activity, thinking of all the things you can do with a dot. We made people and flowers and hearts and bicycles and more! We're learning about shapes like circles and triangles. Wavy lines and straight lines, too! – Ms. Park-Carter's K2 Students



We were making a skeleton on a piece of paper in science class with Ms. Schrekengaust. We've been learning about the systems in our bodies. I've learned that our respiratory system helps us breathe. – Lily Murphy, Grade 2



We were reading Mrs. Frisby and the Rats of Nym and looking for important parts in the text. Ms. Roddy was recording our notes on the board. We're learning how to respond to reading response questions by finding evidence in the text. – Grade 4 Students Elias, Gabriela, Brandon, Carmen, Samya, & Dylan



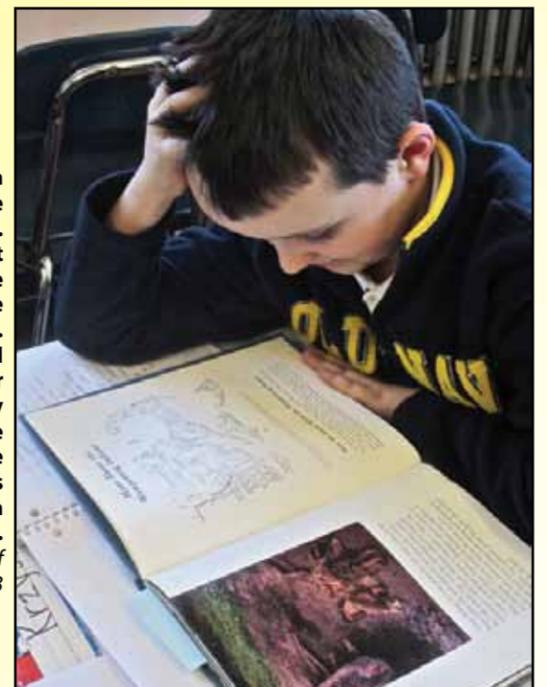
I was making number lines in math class. We're learning how to multiply and divide decimals this year. – Amber Greenway-Henderson, Grade 5

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I was writing spelling words on my desk. Pyramid was a bonus. I like having a whiteboard at my desk..... we are learning how to make plurals with the letter s or es at the end. – Andy Tran, Grade 1



I was looking in a book about the Wampanoag. I've learned that they used to live in a wetu made from tree bark. They used animal furs from deer and other fuzzy animals in the winter. They were the first Americans who lived here on the east coast. – Krzysztof Strycharz, Grade 3

(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.)