Black and Hispanic Teachers Bear Disproportionate Impact of New “Objective” Evaluation System

Performance Evaluation May Be a Lot of Things, But is it Objective?

(Note: The following report appeared in the BTU e-bulletin on March 23 (http://www.btu.org/btu-publications/ebulletins/2012-13/20120324-BTUAnalysisPerformanceEvaluationStory.html) and the Globe followed up with a report on March 24 (http://www.bostonglobe.com/metro/2013/03/24/boston-union-officials-black-and-hispanic-teachers-disproportionately-targeted-under-new-evaluation-system/2Cp0nHbIsbMbSZ5pPryM/story.html). The readership of the e-bulletin that day was the highest ever recorded for an e-bulletin in the e-bulletin’s 10-year existence. The school department then put out a survey the same day (https://s.zoomerang.com/s/1QP6STEE) seeking feedback on the performance evaluation system. Why is the BPS suddenly interested in surveying people about the performance evaluation process? Where there’s smoke, there’s fire.

There are a great many people who feel that the current PE system is anything but ‘objective.’ While more sophisticated (complicated) than the old system, the new system still lends itself to the potential bias of the observer, despite the district’s position that the system is objective, even bordering on science. More like pseudoscience is the position of many of our members.)

Black and Hispanic Teachers Bear Disproportionate Impact of New “Objective” Evaluation System

A BTU analysis of the impact of the new performance evaluation system has revealed that Black teachers are more than times as likely as white teachers to be placed on either a Directed Growth Plan or Improvement Plan, both of which convey negative ratings that could lead ultimately to an intention to dismiss. Hispanic teachers are one and one-half times as likely as white teachers to be similarly situated.

School Department: Evaluation Rubric is Fair

The district claims that it is adhering to the state-designed performance evaluation system that is in place in more than 60 other districts statewide. There is no evidence that any other district has shown the same disturbing patterns that Boston has. The above patterns were brought to the attention of the school department on April 3 at a meeting between the parties. We have received no response to our claim that the implementation of the performance evaluation system appears to be skewed along racial lines.

Extending Disparities Found at Mattahunt

W hat’s more, it’s our contention that the new system has been used selectively to “make a point,” furthering a claim that the system is anything but objective. Consider what’s going on now at the Mattahunt Elementary School. The Mattahunt Elementary School has been designated for Turnaround status by the state, after years of indifference and neglect by the school district. It will become a Turnaround school this fall. The school department has suddenly uncovered at least 12 less-than-satisfactory permanent teachers at the Mattahunt who have been placed on either a Directed Growth Plan or an Improvement Plan, at a rate that is almost 9 times the rate found citywide. As has been seen elsewhere, the teachers chosen are disproportionately Black teachers.

Instead of admitting its own failed leadership at the Mattahunt, the school district has looked for scapegoats. Its weapon of choice: performance evaluation. BTU: Converse Outside Group to Examine Unequal Practices

We look forward to the school department’s explanation of all of the above as well as what corrective measures it will take. One good place for the department to begin would be to converse a group of outside experts to examine district practices. It is very clear that the system as constructed—rubrics and all—is anything but objective or fair.

Two Ways to Vote in Union Election: In Person or Mail-In

by Kristen Pinto, BTU Election Committee Chairperson

The BTU Election Committee will be conducting our 2013 Biennial Election this spring with a new absentee ballot option which resulted from the passage of a by-law change voted by the membership. The rationale for this move is hopefully to increase election participation. We have hired the American Arbitration Association to work with us this year in order to ensure a smooth election. The proposed timeline for this new election process is as follows:

Final Election - June

Week of 5/6 – BTU will mail out Absentee Ballot Request forms with a business reply envelope
5/16 – Deadline for Receipt of Absentee Ballot Request
5/20 – Deadline for Mailing of Absentee Ballot to voters
6/4 – Deadline for Receipt of Absentee Ballots
6/5 – In-person polling at BTU

Only absentee ballot requests on the official form will be accepted since there are several pieces of information that must be verified in order to certify qualified voters. Please note that Retirees had to be signed up with the Retired Teachers’ Chapter by April 1, 2013 in order to vote in this year’s election.

Non-Profit Org. U.S. Postage PAID Boston, MA Permit No. 52088
Where our children learn and our teachers teach, matters. Especially in Boston where our school children have some of the highest asthma rates in the state—it is critical that we keep our school infrastructure in good shape and ensure schools are healthy places to be throughout the day. If we can keep students and teachers healthy—out of the hospital and in school—we will be more successful in advancing students healthy development in school— we will be more successful in meeting current health, safety and educational standards. With budget shortfalls in Boston, our school buildings are no exception.

In the past, the Trotter School, on the edge of Dorchester and Roxbury, has been one of the highest student asthma rates in the district. School leaders came together in 2002 to address school environmental conditions that affect health and learning. The Healthy Schools Taskforce (HST), which was established in 2002 to address school environmental conditions that affect health and learning. The HST is open to the public and is made up of members of BPS Facilities and Health & Wellness Departments, the Boston Public Health Commission, Custodial and Teacher Unions, and a community coalition - the Healthy Homes, Healthy Schools Collaborative. Over the years, this group has initiated several environmental policies and procedures (Green Cleaning, Integrated Pest Management (IPM), Environmental Inspection/Audit programs) that have had significant impacts on improving indoor air quality and school building conditions across Boston schools.

Healthy School Highlight: Trotter School

The Trotter School, on the edge of Dorchester and Roxbury, has one of the highest student asthma rates in the district. School leaders came together in an Environmental Committee to address this issue. They focused on the results of the Annual Environmental Inspection/Audit, which was completed by BPHC and BPS Facilities Department, and working with MacCOSH as a technical advisor, the Trotter has made significant advances in reducing asthma triggers over the past two years. As a result of these great accomplishments, the Trotter’s Environmental Committee (TEC) applied for the “Building Connections” Health & Wellness Award which will be announced at the 6th annual Health & Wellness Summit. Much of the success in the school has been a result of leadership and proactive efforts by the school nurse, Margaret VanCleve-Rocchio and members of the TEC. When I arrived at the Trotter a few years ago, I didn’t know there was a committee and was not even aware there was a problem with the environment,” said Margaret. “I was overwhelmed by the number of children with asthma even though parents said that their children were fine when they were at home. The committee helped me make the connections between conditions in the school and the large number of asthma exacerbations.

Working through the committee and the TEC, the staff three to four years ago, BPS Facilities Management conducted a major clean-out of clutter throughout the school building. This clutter cleanout allowed the school and Facilities Management to enhance the Trotter’s Integrated Pest Management program by allowing more thorough IPM inspections and treatments.

This school year the TEC recruited the senior custodian and the recycling team to participate in the Committee in an effort to improve communication and progress with some of the initiatives. The custodians know the building best, and there was a need to closely coordinate with the new single streams recycling program, which greatly reduces excess paper, clutter and dust in the classrooms. In addition, this year the TEC has engaged students across the school in simple efforts to foster a greater respect for the school environment, to become good recyclers and play an active part in keeping the school clean and pest free. BPS has shown a further commitment to reducing the asthma triggers at the Trotter School by weatherizing the building, fixing leaks, walls and the roof.

The good news is that these efforts are paying off! The rates of chronic absenteeism have decreased at the Trotter as a result of these concerted efforts involving the TEC, the classroom teachers, City Year corps members, and attendance buddies. School staff members have also noted that there are fewer pest sightings due to aggressive reporting and monitoring of needed repairs, such as door sweeps to keep the mice out.

(Submitted by Phoebe Beierle, Green Schools Fellow, Boston Public Schools and Toile Graham, Labor Environment Coordinator, MacCOSH (MA Coalition for Occupational Safety and Health) a member of the Boston Healthy Homes and Schools Collaborative and BPS Healthy Schools Taskforce (HST), has partnered with BPS to develop and foster healthy school models to address school building conditions that affect health and learning for over twelve years.)
What is the New Process for Scheduling the 18 Professional Development Hours?

The new contract language for Article V, Section E (a) 8 reads: “The building administrator may establish the professional development schedule provided that the meeting shall begin no earlier than 9 a.m. and end no later than 3 p.m., except during the first week of the school year when the meeting shall begin no later than 8 a.m. and end no later than 3 p.m.”

Contingency Plan no later than September 21 each school year.

Evacuation procedures:
1) Call 911
2) Assemble staff in designated assembly point
3) If the threat of an explosion, hazardous spill inside, hostage, bomb threat, gas leak.

What are the Rules for Scheduling the 18 Professional Development Hours?

The Superintendent’s Circular “School Safety Contingency Plans” FSE-3 details in Circular 80 “Evacuation procedures” that the evacuation procedures are circular in total. There are three tiers defining the appropriate response for. A response of containment would be implemented if the situation presents a threat of illness, injury or death to persons moving in, around, or about the campus. A response of evacuation would be implemented if the situation presents a threat of illness, injury or death to persons present in the building and it is determined that evacuation will provide a greater level of safety for those persons. The appropriate responses for emergencies are:

- Bomb threat, gas leak.
- Evacuation:
  - Teachers, administrators, and other school employees, community members and the like shall be responsible for their own class. The Safety Coordinator will inform staff that teachers should assemble their class at the proper site and maintain communication with the Safety Coordinator.

- Bomb threat, gas leak.
- Evacuation:
  - Teachers, administrators, and other school employees, community members and the like shall be responsible for their own class. The Safety Coordinator will inform staff that teachers should assemble their class at the proper site and maintain communication with the Safety Coordinator.

Who Are the People Coming Into My Classroom?

Our contract language states that, “All visitors to a classroom shall knock on the door and, if invited to do so, will introduce themselves.” This is significant in that it means you, as the teacher in the classroom have the right and duty to request the person entering your class to identify who they are and what organization they represent. If they are an administrator in the building, are a parent, or a member of the Department of Education, we must let them enter. If, however, they are an intern at a University, a parent, or announced, or some other random individual, we do not have to allow them access. It is not just your right to ask who they are, but in this day and age it is a matter of safety that we request their identity. If we do not request this, they are not obligated to tell us. If something unusual occurs, and we are then asked who the person was who entered and our response is, that we do not know, we just let them in unquestioned, then we are allowing ourselves and more importantly, our children to be vulnerable to anyone who happens to make the way into the school. People who are not BPS employees, elected officials, or DESE employees; do not have a right into our classes without our express permission.

How Many Bereavement Days Are Teachers Entitled To?

The BPS contract guarantees that “in the immediate family, including mother-in-law, father-in-law or anyone residing in the same household with the teacher, up to five (5) days of bereavement leave shall be provided. Days are consecutive school days immediately preceding, following or including the day of death. Holidays, vacations or suspended school days shall be considered school days under this provision. One (1) day without loss of pay shall be provided for a niece, nephew, uncle, aunt, in-law or step child above. Three (3) days without loss of pay shall be provided for a grandchild/parent.”

Is There Any Life Insurance Through the BPS for Teachers?

The BTU/BPS labor management agreement details; “The employer (City of Boston) contribution to the life insurance portion of the group insurance plan ($5,000 policy) shall be 50% with a provision for 50% of Boston contribution to the life insurance portion of the group insurance plan ($5,000 policy) shall be 50% with a provision for 50%.”

BOSTON UNION TEACHER

Published by the Boston Teachers Union Art Local 66, AFL-CIO

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RICHARD F. STUTMAN
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EDITORIAL NOTE:
The opinions expressed in the Boston Union Teacher do not necessarily represent the views of the Boston Teachers Union, or its three members.

WHEN WRITING:
Please use the Site Incident Coordinator to obtain an informed staff. A plan without a crisis is meaningless. The Superintendent’s Circular speaks to the section under SSC 2.1.6.3, which calls for PD and must be at least two hours in length.

The Superintendent’s Circular p 8 states: “All employees; do not have a right into our classes without our express permission.

THE SUPERINTENDENT’S CIRCULAR (School Site Council) which calls for PD time if proposed by administration to be a required part of their schedule.

The Superintendent’s Circular, “Sexual Harassment and Discrimination” states: “The general core of the legal principles which are applicable to sexual harassment in the workplace are contained in the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission’s (EEOC) and the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission’s (EEOC) regulations implementing Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.”

The Circular highlights general principles that should be followed including: “Teachers, administrators and other school employees who have at acting in their official capacities are acting as agents of the state, must not encourage, discourage or participate in prayer or other religious expression. Although the First Amendment forbids religious activity that is sponsored by the government, it protects religious activity initiated by private individuals that is non-disruptive, including student prayer before meals or during non-instructional time. Such non-disruptive religious activity may also include speakers at student assemblies, extracurricular events or graduation ceremonies who are selected on the basis of general neutral, non-(elemended criteria, who retain control over the content of their expression. Under such circumstances, school officials may make neutral deamissions that the speech is the speaker’s and not of the school. School officials may not compel students to participate in prayer or other religious activities.”

What is the Policy on Religious Expression in Public Schools?

In the Superintendent’s Circular “Sexual Harassment and Discrimination” states: “The general core of the legal principles which are applicable to sexual harassment in the workplace are contained in the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission’s (EEOC) and the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission’s (EEOC) regulations implementing Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.”
The Ballot

President
1. Richard Stutman ..........................O’Bryant/BTU
2. Patrick J. Connolly ........................Madison Park TVHS/BTU
Secretary-Treasurer
3. Charles R. Johnson ........................Madison Park TVHS/BTU
Political Director
4. Angela Cristiani .............................Psychological Services/BTU
Secondary Field Representative
5. Carmen Carre ..............................King/MBTU
Elementary Field Representative
6. Michael W. McLainigham .................Murphy K-8/BTU
Paraprofessional/Substitute Field Representative
7. Debra Brown ...............................Summer ES
8. Josefina Lascano ..........................Edison K-8
Executive Board
9. Michael J. Maguire ........................Boston Latin Academy
10. Robert P. Carroll ............................Summer ES
12. Sherry Pedone .............................Mildred A. Ke
13. Garret Virchick .............................Brighton HS
14. John Allocca ...............................Alternative Ed
15. Erik Berg .................................Phillips Ex
16. Jessica Tang .................................Young Achievers K-8
17. Christine Chonkus ........................McKay K-8
18. Alice M. Yong .................................Mildred A. Ke
19. Laura Lee Johnson ..............................Occupational Therapist
20. Cheryl L. Kelly, R.N ..........................Edwards MS
22. Allison Doherty ..............................Urban Science Academy
23. Odessa Philip ...............................Urban Science Academy
24. Mary Ann Urban .............................Retired
Paraprofessional Council
25. Donna Adame ...............................West Roxbury Academy
26. Christine Bugnarti ..........................Umana Academy K-8
27. Connie Contriga Campa ..................Charlestown HS
28. Arletta Faulkner ............................Winter HS
29. Cynthia Ferris ..............................Essex F
30. Shannon Foster ..............................Charlestown HS
31. Irma Ortega Hernandez ........................Condon ES
32. Constance Alvarado ........................Elsworth ES
33. Josefina Lascano ..........................Edison K-8
34. Donna Lashus ..............................Malden HS
35. Sharon Butler O’Dwyer ........................Condon ES
36. Patricia L. Morgan ..........................Young Achievers K-8
37. Sheila Yetman ...............................Young Achievers K-8
Delegates to All Affiliated Bodies
38. Alice M. Yong .................................Mildred A. Ke
39. Colleen White ...............................Gateway ES
40. David Winslow ..............................BTU Pilot School
41. Brenda Webster ..............................Retired
42. Garret Virchick .............................Brighton HS
43. Mary Ann Urban .............................Retired
44. Paul R. Trimmer ...............................Snowden HS
45. Paul Seymour ...............................Condon ES
46. Jessica Tang .................................Young Achievers K-8
47. Richard Stutman ............................O’Bryant/BTU
48. Linda O. Simonetti ..........................Retired
49. John Simonetti ...............................Retired
50. Inesbio Santos Rodriguez ..................Boston Latin Academy
51. CasSandra Samuel ..........................Young Achievers K-8
52. Gilberto Rivera .............................Edison K-8
53. Declan Power ...............................Counseling & Intervention Ctr
54. Kristen W. Pinto ............................Umana Academy K-8
55. James (Jim) Philip ..........................Retired
56. Seth Peterson ...............................Snowden HS
57. Sherry Pedone .............................Mildred A. Ke
58. John Philpott ...............................Retired
59. Nakhrun Wognahta (Nong) ............Madison Park TVHS
60. Leonard Miraglia .............................Retired
61. Dr. Kathleen Peters ..........................Madison Park TVHS
62. Emily M. Neaval ............................Phillips Ex
63. Michael W. McLainigham ..................Murphy K-8/BTU
64. Johnny Mccoy ..................BTU Pilot School
65. Karen L. McCarthy ...........................Brighton HS
66. Lilie Marshall ...............................Boston Latin Academy
67. Gayle Marrow ..............................Mildred A. Ke
68. Martha J. Marion .............................Retired
69. Michael J. Maguire ........................Boston Latin Academy
70. Josefina Lascano ..........................Edison K-8
72. Ross Kochman ..............................Harbor MS
73. Karen Kilmainn-Patton ........................Summer ES
74. Cheryl L. Kelly, RN ..........................Edwards MS
75. Adrianne Jordan ...........................Chittick ES
76. Maria Johnson-Falade ........................Roosevelt K-8
77. Laura Lee Johnson ..............................Occupational Therapist
78. Charles R. Johnson ........................Madison Park TVHS/BTU
79. Carla M. Johnson ............................Ellison/Parks ES
80. Debra Lapp .................................Mother ES
81. Karen Weeks ...............................Umana Academy K-8
82. Karen Wood Hocker ........................Hollins MS
83. Tom Hocker .................................Boston Latin Academy
84. Gacee Varrell ...............................Hollins MS
85. Keith Goyette ...............................Dexter Academy
86. Thomas J. Goulson ..........................Boston Latin Academy
87. Heather L. Gorman .....................Blackstone ES
88. Lynn McAllister ............................BTU Pilot School
89. Mary Ganghan ..............................Retired
90. Janey Frank .................................Retired
91. Dania Fitzgerald .............................Retired
92. John Eyring ...............................Madison Park TVHS
93. Betty Drinan ...............................BTU Pilot School
94. David J. Donossan ..........................Retired
95. Edward J. Doherty ..........................MA Teachers
96. Allison Doherty ..............................Urban Science Academy
97. Marie Crosby ...............................Occupational Therapist
98. Angela J. Cristiani ........................Psychological Services/BTU
99. Mike Crain .................................Career & Technical Ed
100. Martha Cotton .............................Retired
101. Brenda Chaney ..............................O’Bryant
102. Brenda Chaney ..............................O’Bryant
103. Roman Perez ...............................Retired
104. Robert P. Carroll ............................Summer ES
105. Carmen Garew ..............................King MS
106. Comella “Connie” Callahan ................Retired
107. Christine Bugnarti ..........................Umana Academy K-8
108. Na A. Burke ...............................Chittick ES
109. Debra Brown ..............................Summer ES
110. Ann Bender .................................Retired
111. Berta Bertuz ...............................BTU Pilot School
112. Erik Berg .................................Phillips Ex
113. Sandra Haber Segal .......................Retired
114. Roslyn “Roz” Avant .........................Retired
115. Christine Arnold ..........................Summer ES
116. Rosaline Assimos .......................Massachusetts Academy
117. John Allocca ...............................Alternative Ed
118. Maritza Agraci .............................Occupational Therapist
119. Donna Adame ...............................West Roxbury Academy
120. Charles R. Johnson ........................Madison Park TVHS/BTU
121. Josephine Lascaso ........................Edison K-8
122. Adrianne Jordan, Chittick ES ........................20 votes
123. Charles R. Johnson ........................Madison Park TVHS/BTU
124. Robert P. Carroll ............................Summer ES
125. Donna Adame ...............................West Roxbury Academy
Secondary Field Representative

Karen M. Carew  May 8, 2013

You can count on me as your Secondary Field Representative, to provide proactive, experienced leadership and tenacious, tireless advocacy in these challenging times. Working with and for you, listening to your concerns and expediency addressing them, I've developed a wealth of first-hand, in-depth knowledge to get the job done while fighting for the respect we deserve. I have fought for over twenty years, five subjects daily in under-resourced schools. I appreciate how necessary it is to support great teaching. I love our kids and want them to reach their potential. I know you do, too. Let's get together in support of the union and our kids. To that end, I speak up on behalf of our membership while effectively dealing with administrators, prosecute grievances, testify at arbitrations, provide representation at hearings, negotiate with management, promptly respond to your calls, and handle grievances. I provide FREE consultation at times. I will work in concert with our members, resolve conflicts, provide support concerning evaluation/performance issues, meet with members at schools, and am able to problem-solve by thinking outside the box.

As the last decade has continued to change, we must work together as colleagues side-by-side with parents strengthening community/political partnerships supporting Boston teachers to make our schools what they are meant to be. In doing so, we'll reinforce our ranks through internal organizing/professional development, promoting our agenda through increased external outreach and communicating more effectively that there aren't 'adult' vs. 'student' or 'teacher' vs. 'principals.' I am running for the position of the Elementary Field Representative.

Thank you for your consideration and vote.

Elementary Field Representative

Michael W. McLaughlin  May 8, 2013

It's been an honor serving the membership as Us the Elementary Field Representative. Once again, I am seeking re-election to serve as your advocate. Each day in this position brings new challenges, especially in these trying times. The last ten years have seen an expansion of the role and responsibilities of our leaders and the advent of such issues as due process and pension law revisions. As your advocate, I will face the new challenges head-on and apply the knowledge and experience of this office in order to stand strong to represent you as the Elementary Field Representative. My record of dedication, availability and accessibility speaks for itself. If re-elected, I will continue to be a resource for you concerning your representation needs. I will address your questions and concerns in a prompt and timely manner.

As the elementary field representative, I will continue to uphold your rights, enforce the contract and assist you with your pension issues. I will also continue my long tradition of being a presence in the schools. I will do my best to keep the lines of communication open between the BTU and its members.

As a BTU representative, I am member of several committees: The Peer Assistance Committee, the negotiating team and the State-Boston Retirement Board, to name a few. My priority on these committees is to be your voice, your representative and your advocate. I will continue to work in concert with all to make our schools better and work toward a positive outcome for you, the teacher.

Gracias por su apoyo, ven a votar el 5 de junio. Tu voto es importante.

Thank you for your continued support.

My name is Debra Brown and I am writing to thank you for your support in the Primary Election. Your support allowed me to continue on with the final election. I understand the challenges before me and it also confirms and I share a vision of the future. I am running for the position of Paraprofessional/Substitute Field Representative as a voice for you, the teacher. I have been a paraprofessional for 24 years; 24 of those years as a building rep. I have been active as a Paraprofessional Representative on the American Federation of Teachers, the AFT-Massachusetts, as well as serving on many union committees.

I will continue to fight for you, for wages, decent working conditions and the respect that we all have earned and deserve.

I would like to continue this work. I ask for your vote on June 5th. I thank you for your consideration and for all you do to make teaching a noble profession.

Robert P. Carroll  Summer 13

As urban educators, the Boston Teacher and Teacher Union Teachers face an unprecedented challenge as we begin to implement the educational agenda of the nation, state and city, the teacher must deal with a number of social, economic and political complexities. Over the last decade teachers have been under attack by government, the corporate world and private interest groups, in an attempt to dismantle public education.

Election and unions have been responsible for the growth of the American Federation of Teachers, the AFT-Massachusetts, as well as serving on many union committees.

I am fighting for you. Let's stand together in BTUnity!

Thank you for your consideration and vote.

Paraprofessional/Substitute Field Representative

Debra Brown  Summer 13

My name is Debra Brown and I am writing to thank you for your support in the Primary Election. Your support allowed me to continue on with the final election. I understand the challenges before me and it also confirms and I share a vision of the future. I am running for the position of Paraprofessional/Substitute Field Representative as a voice for you, the teacher. I have been a paraprofessional for 24 years; 24 of those years as a building rep. I have been active as a Paraprofessional Representative on the American Federation of Teachers, the AFT-Massachusetts, as well as serving on many union committees.

I will continue to fight for you, for wages, decent working conditions and the respect that we all have earned and deserve.

I would like to continue this work. I ask for your vote on June 5th. I thank you for your continued support.

J rosario Lascina  Edna 8 School

First of all my most sincere thanks to all the Paraprofessionals and Substitute teachers that supported me with their vote on May 1st in the primary election for the position of Paraprofessional/Substitute Teachers Field Representative.

I am asking for you to come back on June 5th, and continue supporting me with your vote. I am a strong believer that in order to succeed you need to be a good listener, be truthful, honest, respect everyone and be prepared at all times.

I elected for this position one of my goals is to visit all the schools, meet with the paraprofessionals and substitutes and get to know all of you. I will listen to your concerns, questions and help you to the best of my abilities. I will stand strong in order to succeed you need to be a good listener, be truthful, honest, respect everyone and be prepared at all times.

I'm running for this position of Paraprofessional/Substitute teachers field representative because I want to make sure the Paraprofessionals need and deserve from the BPS as well as the Boston Teachers Union. I will not let the corporates come on the paraprofessionals and substitute teachers be forgotten in the BPS. It is a whole new ball game out there that needs to be fought for.

I thank you for your consideration and for all you do to make teaching a noble profession.
Executive Board

(Continued from page 51)

John Allocca continued

of our students and their communities, especially around the need for decent, affordable housing and universal access to quality health care.

For the last 17 years I have served as delegate to the 2006-2012 AFT national conventions and the 2008-2012 AFT Massachusetts conventions. I have also been a member of the Committee on Political Education since 2009 and a member of the BTU Community Committee.

I would appreciate your vote for me for BTU Executive Board and Delegate in the election on June 5, either in person, by absentee ballot, or by absence ballot. If you have any further questions, please don’t hesitate to contact me at johnallocca@hotmail.net.

Erik Berg

[Signature]

I am running for re-election to the BTU Executive Board because I believe strongly that teachers must have a voice in our profession, and that our union is the most effective place for teachers to speak up. I have never been one to shy away from a meeting or a debate. I have talked with teachers, parents, and students, and I have been an active member of the BTU for the last 30 years. I have attended many conferences and meetings, and many competing voices in education policy today are related, and policy and leadership are often in the hands of people who have never taught with students in the classroom. We have to make sure our voices are heard every day. Through our union, we can make better decisions for better education, and make it possible for all students, including kids who have been denied the opportunity to qualify for school, to have a fair chance.

I am a second grade teacher at the Philbrick School, and last year attained National Board Certification. As an Executive Board member I would represent the voice of all teachers, including special education students and the professionals that work with them.

I am a recipient of a Building Representative of the Year Award. My involvement in the BTU has awarded me with the tools, skills, resources, and valuable experience that I need to continue the fight against our union and all teachers. With all of us joining together we can get the respect that we deserve. I have the experience and commitment to continue the fight against our union and all teachers.

Christine Choukas

[Signature]

I am a second grade teacher at the Philbrick School, and last year attained National Board Certification. As an Executive Board member I would represent the voice of all teachers, including special education students and the professionals that work with them.

I am a recipient of a Building Representative of the Year Award. My involvement in the BTU has awarded me with the tools, skills, resources, and valuable experience that I need to continue the fight against our union and all teachers. With all of us joining together we can get the respect that we deserve. I have the experience and commitment to continue the fight against our union and all teachers.

Christine Choukas

[Signature]

Alice Yang

[Signature]

Christine Choukas

[Signature]

Alice Yang

[Signature]

Christine Choukas

[Signature]

Laura Lee Johnson

[Signature]

Lauren Lee Johnson

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As a special education service provider I have had an opportunity to work closely with teachers, administrators, and other support staff. It is a unique environment within a diversity of settings. I have been a union representative for the occupational therapists since 2009. As an BTU union representative on the COPE committee, the Legislative Committee, the Rapid Response Team, as well as a Joint Union Management Team with other interunion representatives. I am also a facilitator/member for the Union sponsored Teacher Evaluation Workshops.

Last year you may have also seen me helping to hand out thousands of BTU shirts at the BTU Unity and the AFThA rally. I am currently serving on the Executive Board.

I believe special educators and interiner providers deserve strong representation from our union. Our voices should be present on the Executive Board in order to make our unique contributions. Our goals and SOPs are specific to those who work within SPED, and our needs are to be a part of any conversation that affects our profession. I have the voice of all of our members, and I will use that voice to help advance the rights, rights, and salaries of all teachers.

Christine Choukas

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Brenda Chaney

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The other hill I wear is one of Pre-Paid Legal Services trustee since 2004. Our responsibilities include maintaining surveillance of the fund’s financial statements, continuation value, ensuring the ability to provide legal services, and ensuring that all members including the Retired Teachers Chapter who consistently continue to energize our efforts with parents, students, and community leaders are often unwilling to listen to those of us who work with students each and every day. Through our union, we can make better decisions for better education, and make it possible for all students, including kids who have been denied the opportunity to qualify for school, to have a fair chance.

I am a second grade teacher at the Philbrick School, and last year attained National Board Certification. As an Executive Board member I would represent the voice of all teachers, including special education students and the professionals that work with them.

I am a recipient of a Building Representative of the Year Award. My involvement in the BTU has awarded me with the tools, skills, resources, and valuable experience that I need to continue the fight against our union and all teachers. With all of us joining together we can get the respect that we deserve. I have the experience and commitment to continue the fight against our union and all teachers.

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Alice Yang

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Members present: Anne-Marie Adduici, Anne Broder; Marie Broderick; Sandy Carlisle; Marlyne Cushatry; Larry Connolly; David Donovan, Chairman; Eileen Ganley; Ruthanne Kennedy; Marilyn Marion, Secretary; Leonard Miranda, Vice Chairman; Mark Murphy, Executive Director.


Chairman opened the meeting at 10:20 a.m.

Officers
Secretary's Report: Report read and accepted.
Treasurer's Report: Report read and accepted.

Chairman's Report: The mailing for travel has been sent; the role of the Legislative Committee and Angela Cristiani; focus on RTC's state and legislative letter sent. Report accepted.
Co-Chairman's Report: There are 2600+ members with others pending. Report accepted.
Meeting suspended at 10:50 a.m. for Michael McGrath, representative from the Boston Retirement Board.
Meeting resumed at 11:25 a.m.

Committees
Remembrance: No Report.
Scholarships: Date is incorrect. Applications are due the March 17. Report accepted.
Social: Motion to allow RTC crafters to participate at the spring luncheon if there are

Pension COLA Update
By Sandra M. Carle and Lawrence J. Connolly.

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While our committee’s focus over the past several months has been to ensure health insurance benefits for current retirees were not reduced and premiums or co-pays substantially increased, we also have kept a focus on the need to increase the COLA. Thanks to the hard work of Andy Powell of AFTMA and Dina Shade

of the State, County, and Municipal Retirees Association of Massachusetts and the Retirement Board. Our thanks to the Executive Committee, Delegate to Local and National Conventions and as a Building Representative.

I have received the AFT Distinguished Service award, Paraprofessional of the Year, AFT Everyday Heroes, and as an AFT ER & MSRESS-Strand-Train. Thank you for your consideration and don’t forget to vote on June 5th.

Donna Lashus

My name is Donna Lashus, I am asking for your vote to be a seat on the Paraprofessional Council. I am a graduate of the Boston Public Schools and all seven of my children and grandchildren have attended or are attending the Boston Public School. I have over 20 years of experience in education, and my work experience ranges from working with families as a CFC, teaching and supporting pre-K to middle school students in the Reg. Ed., Title I and Special Education, and Math Intervention and as a Library Paraprofessional. As a union member and BTU Rep. Have been committed to raising issues and concerns that impact the lives and work of our members and the children we serve. In times of serious economic problems in our country and the move to change the face of public education it is even more important for educators to be united. I have been a committed advocate for the rights and services we need on the local, state, and national level and I will do my best to ensure that the voice of all members of the City’s Retirement Board. The board meets every month on the second Wednesday of each month at 10 AM in City Hall. We will keep the status report on the legislature’s weekly e-bulletin, etc. Hopefully with your support we can get the COLA you deserve.
It would not hurt for you to call the Mayor’s Office 617-635-4500, your City Councillors at 617-635-3040 or the Retirement Board at 617-635-4385 and ask that the raise the COLA to $16,000 as allowed by law.

… and a Letter to Mayor Menino

It is our understanding that the Retirement Committee will consider an increase in the COLA base at its April 10, 2013 meeting. We hope that it will establish the full $16,000 as allowed under legislation passed by the General Court which would mean $90 more per year for our retirees.

Many municipal and county retirement boards have established the higher base, some even exceeding it, since it was passed two years ago. While we are appreciative of the $5,000 increase in the base passed last year, this means $30 more per year to the retiree or a little over 50 cents per week before taxes.

While we are cognizant of the unfunded pension liability, both PRIT and the City’s Retirement Board. The board meets every month on the second Wednesday of each month at 10 AM in City Hall. We will keep the status report on the legislature’s weekly e-bulletin, etc. Hopefully with your support we can get the COLA you deserve.

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Sincerely,
Sandra M. Carle and Lawrence J. Connolly
Legislative Committee Chair

BOSTON UNION TEACHER • May 2013 • 7
The Patrick J. Kennedy Elementary School is a small elementary school in East Boston, established in 1893, where 97% of students walk to school. This has been a clear advantage in establishing relationships with the mostly Hispanic families who live in this tight-knit neighborhood. Each student has a spiral-bound “agenda” that goes back and forth between home and school every day, in which parents regularly sign off on homework assignments and communicate with teachers.

I found a space to park next to the school playground, where a group of children were just finishing up their gym class. Inside, Community Field Coordinator Jessica Vasquez welcomed me to the school. Among other things, she organizes student field trips and volunteers from the local Kiwanis Club to read aloud in primary classrooms every month.

Doors and bulletin boards were decorated to celebrate Dr. Seuss’s birthday, and students throughout the building were engaged in a variety of language activities inspired by his books. Sal DiMino was teaching dance to fourth graders, who showed off their moves for me when I visited their classroom. When I asked about the beautiful solar system rug in the first grade classroom, Anna King eagerly told me how she’d recently received a grant from “Adopt-a-Classroom” which went toward the rug, a listening center, and a projection screen. Cynthia Grant-Carter proudly shared the news that fifth grade student Dianna Guerra was chosen to attend the America Scores Poetry Slam in NYC in April, representing all of New England’s participating schools. PJK students participate in soccer and poetry classes before school every day.

When I dropped by the teachers’ room, I was invited to share in a weekly luncheon potluck – what a lovely treat! This felt like a school with a clear sense of camaraderie among staff members; I wish the same for you!

We’re Learning Here

Patrick J. Kennedy Elementary School

A project by Amika Kemmler Ernst, Ed.D.