**President Obama Visits Tech Boston Academy**

Sincere solutions come from the ability to look someone in the eye and speak the truth.

By Andrea Doremus-Cuetara

The occasion of President Barack Obama’s visit to the Dorchester Education Complex on March 8th was pregnant with significance for our most challenged, so-called “failing” public schools throughout the country. If our system has been able to create a shining Tech Boston (and hearty congratulations to them, they deserve it!!! …it is our whole system that has produced her Cinderella, half-sister “Dorchester Academy,” the other school in the building, closed for classes, our students sent home in the middle of the day, hidden away in the attic.

It is our whole system - a plurality of factors - that has produced the inequity, this striking contrast in school realities. Most certainly NOT just because of bad teachers and “the Unions,” as Arne Duncan claimed “reformers” from NYC, to Los Angeles, to Providence and Wisconsin continually portray and spin it. There needs to be equal responsibility taken for what we have done to the country are experiencing. It’s a smoke and mirrors propaganda blame game that is just dishonest and unfair.

The solution for Tuesday seemed ripe for a PR backlash highlighting the veritable “apartheid” within just one building. If there were a will to tell the truth, to actually care about all public school students, a powerful media story could have been told. It is collective poor decision-making, in many U.S. cities, and “lack-of-funding” funded-allocation by many sectors and players (including the U.S. Congress) that is not addressing the problem.

Our staff at DA was actually directed to not discuss the President’s visit even with each other, and to refer any media inquiries to the BPS Office of Communications. Most likely everyone was counting on what will actually happen…NOTHING.

Our staff at DA, our students, our neighborhood community, will just be quiet and go about our hard-working business.

We are a marginalized, disenfranchised community, we are being treated that way, and we will comply and simply act that way, as well. But surely there is a STORY here, a whole documentary film in fact, even if the Boston Globe and the NY Times and the education establishment ignore it, as they all chose to do on that day, Frankly, it’s a painful travesty. Current U.S. Congressperson (CA-15) and former principal, teacher, and school board member of 30 years Michael Honda identified some key concerns in the most recent issue of American Educator (Spring, 2011): “When public education is inadequate, the foundation of our democratic society is compromised.” He reiterated grave concerns about the U.S. falling behind in competitiveness relative to other countries in the global economy. He reported that in overall social spending, “the United States ranks dead last among developed nations.”

Congressman Honda proposed a solution: “Only by addressing the individual needs of each child, regardless of cost per pupil, can we attain equity. This will require precision in the way we finance public education and the way we calculate the level of resources we direct toward each child.” Clearly, that means a lot more of what BPS staff already does so well: knowing and caring and putting attention to each child in our schools.

Having spent seven years in this building, I have come to understand that problems we have are NOT really about money (though having it definitely helps). Along with creatively and carefully planned, scaffolded, differentiated, student-centered, authentic, project-based, workshop model curriculum, the most important ingredient to create a school where students can experience academic and personal success is this: good, strong, honed “one-on-one attention to each child” in our schools.

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What our students need most of all are consistent relationships with adults who know THEM and believe in THEM to live up to high expectations. Adults who create, understand and enforce the stated agreements, and do what they say they are going to do (just like a successful family, I guess). And due to a multiplicity of causes (a small part of those being Union rules, but mostly administration/Court Street-driven staff-catering and program-smashing, paranoia-engendering especially for Principals, who no real Union directives, as well as clearly inadequate-for-the-obviously-need student support services and early identification psycho-social safety nets), we have just NOT had that community in this building, on a regular basis, for the seven years that I have been here. And THAT is the major obstacle for our struggling school.

What I really want to say is this: My hunch is that it’s the same lack of, one-on-one attention to kids in crisis (dealing with so much more than we can imagine, and on such a daily basis) that is causing all the problems in so-called “failing” schools across the country. I know for sure that high-stakes-testing, simply longer in-class hours and punitive, adversarial, manipulative, distorting, self-serving, seemingly arbitrary, inhumane, disrespectful, oppositional attitudes and actions between teachers and any administrative system (from central office to school site) (in both directions) are definitely not the solution. Ugly, bad behavior by adults does not teach good behavior to young people. And our young people notice everything. Creating schools that work is about building a strong, trustworthy community… which Tech Boston Academy seems to have (along with their “autonomy” from Court Street [a big deal] and all that Melinda/Bill Gates technology funding).

So, just to use my lived experience as one example: Why does one group of students in a building, who are basically all the SAME students, granted, get so much?!! (by the luck of the draw — they had someone who encouraged them to apply to Tech Boston), and ANOTHER group of students go through what I will now detail in a tedious litany. (see box) (Andrea Doremus-Cuetara teaches History at Dorchester Academy.)

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**“A Litany of Obstacles to Success at the Dorchester Education Complex”**

Four Principals in six years; have many of their best teachers and cherished/much-needed support-staff shipped off to other schools (over and over again… it has been very painful); have guidance and “school climate” (aka discipline) staff for almost the same number of students be cut from eight positions to four, and have to lose 15% of those individual people over seven years; not have adequate technology to even have regular ACCESS to a student computer lab (much less a personal, individual computer for each student??); have the In-Focus that was in my room for three years to be removed, and a ceiling-hung mounting-site built over the summer for a promised projector, but it is the end of March and I still haven't received one (1/2 our teachers did get them) so I cannot deliver the curriculum I am required and excited to provide (this situation is starting to dramatically improve in the right direction); have each teacher’s individual classroom printer be removed 9/10, and not have access to any functioning printers on MANY occasions (due to budget concerns) (we can now finally print to a central printer at the end of the hall); some teachers don’t even have a working computer in their classroom (a minority, but for several months); not enough textbooks for every student in a whole number of classes (this is...
Our Problems and Our Struggles are International in Scope

No comfort, but brightens determination and resolve

By Richard Stutman
BTU President

A few times a year, the AFT (American Federation of Teachers) gathers union presidents and state federation leaders from around the country to receive an update, nationally, of the major educational issues of the day. Roughly 60 or 70 union leaders representing most of the major US cities attend, share stories, tales of hardship, and possible solutions of the issues and problems we face daily. Regrettably, our concerns do not vary much from city to city.

The meetings are, well, depressing — or better said, a steady reminder that the issues facing Boston teachers are commonplace and felt elsewhere to one extent or another. That is to say, the issues we talk about daily with our colleagues are national. Issues from top-down administration and the overabundance of national union federations, both union and state and from 15 other countries. It was a helpful gathering of leaders from around the world, and we were honored to be invited as observers. As one among hundreds, I came away with an even broader outlook than I have when talking with fellow union presidents from around this country: Our problems are international, not just national.

The 15 national teacher unions invited from different parts of the world were asked to list their priorities going into the session. Their priorities excerpted below will probably be an eye-opener to many readers, though you will notice many similarities to our own issues and concerns. The priorities below are listed verbatim.

### From the European Trade Union committee for education

1. Teachers in Serbia face increased working hours, larger class sizes, low salary, pensions, and social benefits
2. School leaders call for the protection of school budgets and workers rights
3. Approval of the ETU CE action plan on violence and harassment in education

### From Brazil

1. 2008 law sets a national professional wage floor for teaching in basic public education and a minimum of 950 Brazilian Reais per month
2. Espionage: union officials discovered the camera was recording all the discussions held in the union office and the local police, admitted to spying

### From Canada

1. Lack of implementation in promoting the harmonious integration of struggling students into regular classes
2. With the decline of public funding for public education, schools have to resort to private funding campaigns to confront the most pressing expenses
3. Violence in schools and the lack of implementation of anti-volence campaigns/programs
4. Safe and healthy school environment free from violence and bullying
5. Teaching and learning conditions, particularly class size and composition and the focus of government on testing and accountability
6. Privatization and commercialization of public education
7. Improvement of Aboriginal education

### From Denmark

1. Massive job cuts in the public schools
2. School safety and bullying

### From Estonia

1. The fight for an increase in minimum rates of remuneration of teachers

### From Finland

1. Better working environment for teachers, students and pupils
2. Support and resources for children and students with special needs
3. Regular in-service training system for teachers
4. Keeping education is a priority for the government and teachers unions

### From Hong Kong

1. March 6 march to oppose new finance budget bill
2. Subsidized integration of pre-school into a regular school environment

### From Japan

1. The establishment of a framework for social dialogue between the government and teachers unions

### From The Netherlands

1. Budget cuts in vocational and adult education sector
2. Teacher shortage due to low wages
3. Introduction of performance pay
4. Sufficient resources for an appropriate education

### From Norway

1. Standardized testing
2. Accountability
3. Performance pay
4. Dropout rate

### From Poland

1. School violence, social partnership in collective agreements
2. Increase GDP share for education
3. Adoption of national culture program
4. Salaries which will be comparable with the social role of teachers, researchers, guardians of cultural heritage and other expert staff

### From the United Kingdom

1. Resolutions against conversion of (public) schools, two Academy status (privatization)
2. Violence in schools. Particularly cyber harassment
3. Reform of teacher assessment
4. March on the 26th in London to support alternative proposals (against budget cuts)
5. Oppose the government’s decision to change the inflation link for pensions

Of course, it is difficult to compare apples to oranges, but one thing is clear even in the translation from country to country: We are not alone in our concerns. And while a global solution may seem elusive, we should also take some comfort that our concerns are not outlying. They are real and well-founded — and unfortunately too common.

Daphne and Apollo: the True Story

The sun whispers to mother nature, you’re not asleep are you? She blushes like a young bride and opens her eyes — filling the trees with leaves.

By Carl Ploss

Carl Ploss teaches at Boston Latin Academy. Apollo and Daphne is a baroque, life-sized marble sculpture by Italian Gian Lorenzo Bernini, housed in the Galleria Borghese in Rome.

It was inspired by one of the stories included in Ovid’s Metamorphoses.
What is the True Cost of Today’s Educational Reform?

The Boston Public School system’s資訊wisdom has closed schools for financia reasons. The School Committee insists that they will save money to weaken this present economic decline. The question is asked what about next year and the years to come. Only the federal government, the state, and now the city are busy redistributing money. Schools in the red, those in the green; how much will be left for the existing school system? The mayor and his school committee will certainly be wringing their hands again next year looking for more from less.

Our economic crisis – created by our financial institutions – has exhausted the quality of life for most of us and markedly altered how we maintain our basic physical and emotional well-being. It is impacting our behavior and our lives. The weakening of our economic system has put the unemployment rate up. The central fear is that this will impact the personal lives of our children. When the cost of living outpaces our declining income, survival becomes even more imperative. We will be putting our children’s education on the back burner. When that happens, the present state of education suffers further.

Nationally, the federal government has dangled monies in front of the states in an effort to change the quality of education. This is a short-term approach that is not sustainable. The Bush administration is focusing directly on the federal government’s accountability of our children. We are embroiled in a time that is pulling at the social fabric of our families.

Our nation has traditionally been one of businesses that produce products that are needed internationally. Those businesses have now relocated in the world. When the cost of living outpaces our declining income, survival becomes even more imperative. We will be putting our children’s education on the back burner. When that happens, the present state of education suffers further.

The present state of education is being driven by market forces. The market forces are on the local level and in the public sector. This is a market-driven approach. There is a new level of accountability for the educational system. The present state of education is being driven by market forces. The market forces are on the local level and in the public sector. This is a market-driven approach. There is a new level of accountability for the educational system.

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BTU Members Join Others in Rallying to Support Wisconsin Workers at the Massachusetts State House

Photos by Caren Carew

Attendees at the AFT Massachusetts Statewide Conference.

(Left to Right) Berta Berriz, Erik Berg, Roberta Kelly and Betsy Drinan receive an update from AFT President Randi Weingarten.

BTU President Richard Stutman addresses the luncheon welcoming AFT President Randi Weingarten.

A statewide gathering of union leaders at Bayside Mall.

Students observe the media with Betsy Drinan (right).

Ted Chambers of the Edwards Middle School.
The end of March was a busy time for the local, state, and national affiliations of our union. On Saturday, March 26th AFT Massachusetts held a conference for the leaders of the various locals to discuss in detail the two items foremost in Massachusetts’ Education Reform: health care and teacher evaluations. Then on Thursday, March 31st, AFT president Randi Weingarten visited two BPS schools, the Edwards Middle School in Charlestown and the Boston Teachers Union School in Jamaica Plain.

In both instances the BTU and its affiliates stressed that cooperation is far more important than confrontation. Despite what some media outlets report, the BTU is keenly sensitive to the rising costs of health care and the need for better teacher evaluation tools. Our union continues to lobby the elected and appointed leaders of our schools. Our mission is as simple as it is powerful: If you want to know how to improve education, just ask the teachers.

Two prime examples of the power of teamwork were on display at the Edwards and BTU schools. In both schools the union, on both a nation and local level, plays a key role in shaping the curriculum. Both schools are a success because the energy of the staff is channeled into teaching and not confrontation. Cooperation may not be front-page news in the local newspapers, but is has become the lead story in the lives of hundreds of students and their parents.
The Current Little Plight of Collective Jargoning

By John Enright

As one of life’s great inequities let’s start with the story of a system of the thematic or literary device. Like someone thanking people after accepting an award, this device isn’t perhaps what you’d expect; but if we look at some of the more commonly used ones we can see that there is a gross imbalance between them. Although it’s perfectly acceptable that writers tend to use some more than the others it is alarming when we reflect on the discrepancy between each device. I realize that it’s not a perfect world and some are easier to use than others. Many of these literary tools are too complex and hard to pronounce (before trying to say it’s not a perfect world and some are easier to use than others). The literary devices are either to impress you or make you barf. However, given these built-in limitations are employed by fanatics whose intentions are other than simple to the audience. It can’t be done.

Hyperbole: This is one area where I wish I bought the stock although I didn’t. It’s so common that it transcends the heavy popularity of the D-E the euphemism has been outcompeted and displaced by the double-entendre. Due to the heavy popularity of the D-E the euphemism has been outcompeted and could face extinction. In fact E.A.A. scientists predict the last use of a euphemism could occur sometime in 2068.

Irony: Irony usually reveals itself around some sort of program or club. As the yin to the yang or a thematic seesaw it tends to thrive on discord. Since everything in this world is relative and we see opposite irony is in good shape and won’t be going anywhere. The only problem it suffers is when people like me misuse or misname it. For example, there is a term that stupidly says tax revenue that private educational intuitions refrain from paying would have been earmarked for public schools you might say “that’s ironic” while I tend to yell “those bastards!”

Omotopoeia: This one’s a mystery. It would definitely be my pick for cutest for lack of a better word. Except for its name. Who came up with this? I know that I’ve omitted some of your favorites. Where’s Epiphany, Imagination, and Personification? The answer is the list goes on. You can see how the whims and fads of the greater public have had a large impact on their language. Perhaps some personal eccentricities have warped the thematic devices into their current forms and stifled competition and Dispelling within their ranks have caused some to go away. I’m almost completely sure that we won’t be able to allow the double entendre to completely overwhelm the euphemism then what does its significance to a society? Where’s the ACU?, PETA, for that matter the EPA?

“A simile is a metaphor, but not all metaphors are similes.” What does it say about us as a society? It is obvious. For five years I have been resorting to this device and have decided to sit this one out. The United Nations has obviously decided to sit this one out. The simulation Action Committee (SAC) has got them wrapped around their finger. Regrettably, there is little being done by anyone else right now. So, they might be able to hustle us up to us. Yet the thought of it doesn’t make us as mad as an hornet or angry hellhounds.

(Taken from page 1)

There will always be kids who have special needs. There needs to be a place for them, and WE COULD BE THAT PLACE. But then plan, and design, and staff, and fund, and structure a school in a common sense way that will truly provide these students with the clear and appropriate support resources that are needed. I reiterate. There will be no compromise. People know what this entails and what is necessary to ensure this to happen. My understanding is our school is now changing and being restructured to meet some of these needs! Start by not going through eight guidance counselors in seven years, and just as many (eight) “cleans of discipline” (whatever is the current title they give them).

The contrast between our two schools is so stark and therefore obvious. For five years I have been resorting to hyperbole and calling it “apartheid.” It has been obvious apart- heid in our building for many years now and, the President of our country has come here…

I don’t blame any one individual or even group for what is happening in our building. It is clear that it is a collective, systemic failure that is being repeated in all public school systems.

“Why is there such a difference between our two schools? What does it take to build a successful school? And what does it take to be a place for them, and WE COULD BE THAT PLACE?”

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CLD/BTU Announces 2010 BPS National Board Certified Teachers

by Margaret Hoyt

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards awarded National Board Certified Teacher status to the following Boston Public School Teachers in the 2009-10 Cycle. At a December 14th, BTU-hosted “Pinning” ceremony, Superintendent Carol Johnson, BTU President Richard Stutman and Secondary Rep. Karen Carew acknowledged eight new NBCT’s and one renewed NBCT. Candidate Provider and Lead Teacher Karena Hines and Director of Teacher Development and Advancement, Lesley Ryan, CLD facilitated this festive gathering for these new and renewed National Board Certified Boston teachers along with family, friends, administrators and colleagues of the teachers in attendance.

Newly National Board Certified Teachers 2010

Angela D’Prizio
Otis Elementary, Grade 4
NBCT Middle Childhood Generalist

Carol Johnson
Excel High School, History

Cara Fenner
High School, ELA

Kelly Garofalo
Brighton High School, ELA

Karen McCarthy
Brighton High School, ELA

Lester W.
English Language Arts, Adolescence and Young Adulthood

Carla McCormack
Edwards Middle School, Mathematics

Adam Moore
Formerly Perkins Elementary School
Generalist, Middle Childhood

Robert Remetti
Brighton High School, ELA

Jeffrey A. Timberlake
Boston Teachers Union School, Grade 3
Generalist, Middle Childhood

Renewed National Board Certification

Whitney Weeder
East Boston Early Education Center
Generalist, Early Childhood

Boston NBCTs are entitled to the BTU contractual four-percent pay raise, along with a reimbursement of their application fees. They also have earned the opportunity to receive nine graduate credits at a locally accredited college with transcript fees only. The Center for Leadership Development in collaboration with the Boston Teachers Union is pleased with the increased number of teachers attempting National Certification and the high rate of success in the BPS. Compared to the national pass rate of 38%, Boston is passing at about 78%. The number is approaching growth with a goal to double the NBCTs over the next five years. The BPS CLD/BTU leadership salutes their accomplishment and looks forward to their leadership in the Boston Public Schools. Teachers formed NBPTS in 1987 to advance the quality of teaching and learning by developing professional standards for accomplished teaching, creating a voluntary system to certify teachers who meet those standards and integrating certified teachers into educational reform efforts.

Follow in their steps to earn this prestigious recognition of accomplishments. If you would like more information on how to apply, contact Maggie Hoyt at maggie.hoyt@boston.k12.ma.us. (Margaret Hoyt is a BTU Lead Teacher and NBCT Candidate Provider.)

Retired Boston Teacher Inducted Into West Virginia University Tech Hall of Fame

West Virginia University Tech announces that it has inducted into its Athletics Hall of Fame, Priscilla Alden Lester for her athletic and academic achievements during her undergraduate days at Boston Tech from 1962-1966. The ceremony took place on October 25th with a goal to double the NBCTs over the next five years. The BPS CLD/BTU leadership salutes their accomplishment and looks forward to their leadership in the Boston Public Schools. Teachers formed NBPTS in 1987 to advance the quality of teaching and learning by developing professional standards for accomplished teaching, creating a voluntary system to certify teachers who meet those standards and integrating certified teachers into educational reform efforts.

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Know Your Rights…

(continued from page 3)

If your injury requires emergency services you should go to the nearest emergency care facility, make sure someone completes the accident form mentioned above for you or contacts the Workers’ Compensation Department within 24 hours. Do not assume this has been done when you return to work, follow-up on it when able. The written report must be hand delivered or mailed to the address listed above or faxed to 617-635-3119. If some of the info asked for on the form is unknown to the person filling it out for you, it should be left blank and the form should still be sent in to Workers’ Comp. A supervisor’s signature is required on this form only to inform them that the injury occurred and does not mean that they either agree with the contents of said form or that they witnessed the accident. Always keep copies of everything for your own records.

Your first follow up appointment after the emergency care must be with one of the City’s preferred provider medical vendors. The list of these sites is in Superintendent’s Circular HRS-PP7. You will be contacted by a Workers’ Comp. representative as a follow-up to the report you filed, to explain the process, and to make sure you are getting the necessary medical treatment. If you are not contacted, call the number listed above to insure they are in receipt of your accident report. Always make sure you write down the date, time, to whom you spoke and what they said. Failure to do so lessens the efficacy of follow through later should a dispute arise. This is also the case when dealing with Court Street. If your accident is not an emergency, your first scheduled appointment must be with one of their preferred providers as listed in the circular HRS-PP7. If you do not do so, you may then be charged for the service. Please see page 4 on reporting suspected or actual sexual assault.

What is the procedure for teachers in reporting suspected or actual sexual assault?

All employees must review the Superintendent’s Circular #LGL-13 Sexual Assault Policy to familiarize themselves with the procedures contained within. There is a comprehensive Q&A section in this circular to assist in appropriately responding to a variety of circumstances related to this issue. An employee who has been a victim of sexual assault reports the incident to the building administrator, the academic superintendents, or the chief operating officer. The employee who has been an adult victim has the right to contact the Sexual Assault Unit of the Boston Police 617-343-4400 as well as request a return to work release from Sup. Cir. #HRS-2 Employee Grievances of Discrimination. A student who has been a victim of sexual assault may report to any school official (nurse, teacher, Para, etc.). The person who receives said report must immediately notify the building administrator (best in writing and keep a copy for your own documentation). The person handling the report should do all mandatory reporting and refer the report to the building administration. When there is reasonable cause to believe a child under the age of 18 is suffering physical or emotional injury resulting from abuse which causes harm or a substantial risk of harm to the child’s health or welfare. Refer to Sup. Cir. #SST-17 Child Abuse & Neglect for further information. BTU members have been investigated & disciplined for not immediately reporting suspected or known inappropriate incidents of this nature. Please review these policies available in your main office or on the BPS website.

INFORMATION FOR NEW RETIREES

When you retire, you are no longer a member of the Union because you no longer pay dues. And, you are no longer a member of the Health and Welfare Fund, which means you no longer have dental coverage and eyeglass coverage. If you wish to continue your connection to the Union, you can join the Retired Workers’ Council (RTC). The dues will be taken from your retirement check each month ($5 for teachers, $2.50 for paras). The RTC offers a dental insurance benefit to its members for a fee each month. Our Dental Plan covers members only and their spouse. You can also avail yourself of COBRA coverage through Health and Welfare for 18 months after retiring. For info on COBRA, call 1-617-288-0500.

FILL IN THE COUPON AND RETURN TO THE RTC TO RECEIVE A PACKET OF INFORMATION ON THE RTC, Hopefully, after reading the info, you will fill in the blue card and return it to us.

(Eileen Ganley is RTC Membership Chairperson.)

Complete the information below and we will send you the application form.

First Name__________________________________________________________

Last Name__________________________________________________________

Address_______________________________________________________________

City/Town/State/Zip___________________________________________________

Telephone___________________________________________________________

Check your previous position (Teacher, Para, Professional, Other)

send this form to: BTU-RTC, 180-184 Morton Street, Dorchester, MA 02125

BOSTON UNION TEACHER  April, 2011  7
BROOK FARM ACADEMY

Entering the West Roxbury Educational Complex, which currently houses four small schools, is always an adventure. I walked to the back of the building, through a long corridor blocked off by partitions, past a courtyard filled with piles of dirt, around a corner, and through a set of double doors. What a delight to emerge into Brook Farm Academy’s “Hall of Flags,” to find students conversing at round tables and shopping at a store run by seniors.

I was invited to visit Brook Farm by Madeline Richmond, a teacher in the Model Autism Program. She was thrilled with the administrative support and collegiality here, where she has been able to arrange weekly meetings to coordinate services among the various specialists who work with her students. Adaptive technology, off-site work opportunities, and extensive 1:1 attention are features of this model program, which was started in response to a single parent’s persistent advocacy for meeting her son’s special needs. What a testament to the power of working with families to get the resources ALL our children deserve!

Several other teachers volunteered to have me visit their classes as well. I watched a speech therapist interact with students who struggle with communicating basic greetings, a science teacher explaining the difference between physical and chemical reactions, and an ESL teacher whose students were completing a survey to determine left/right-brain dominance. I learn something new every time I visit a classroom! We get plenty of evaluative visits from administrators; here’s hoping you have opportunities to observe and learn from your colleagues as well.

I was writing about the fifth amendment on the computer in history class with Ms. McNamara. This year I’ve learned more about the Bill of Rights. I think the first amendment is the most important because it gives you the freedom to say whatever you need to say.

– Danny Boggie

This picture shows Beacon’s Market in our Hall of Flags. Seniors run this school store for our entrepreneur class every morning. We’ve learned about supply and demand, the importance of customer service, taking inventory, and how to make a profit.

– Jamiera Bing, Stephanie Cassius & Anntoinette Francis

(Amika Kemmler Ernst is a recently retired BPS New Teacher Developer with extensive experience as a classroom teacher, curriculum developer, and graphic artist. Her “We’re Learning Here” Project features images of everyday learning in our public schools, along with the words of the students pictured.)

I was working with Michael Duggan, who is learning to use visual symbols to construct his daily schedule. This activity provides a predictable structure to the day and enhances communication skills.

– Madeline Richmond 
Teacher, Model Autism Program

We were writing about our own positive and negative habits during a lesson on The Seven Habits of Highly Effective Teens. Everyone in our class is now publishing novels we wrote earlier in the year, using our own writings to learn how to use correct punctuation and grammar.

– Nikkel Stotts, Luis Lopez, David Simms, & Pedro Rios

We were taking notes and asking Ms. Aloe for help understanding something in our history text. We’re learning about Mexican immigration to the United States in the 1800s. This has helped us understand our own family backgrounds and appreciate how difficult life is for immigrants even now.

– Chantae Cabrera & Edilly Arias

I was working about the fifth amendment on the computer in history class with Ms. McNamara. This year I’ve learned more about the Bill of Rights. I think the first amendment is the most important because it gives you the freedom to say whatever you need to say.

– Danny Boggie