Expansion in Charters Leads to Loss of Revenue and School Closings

‘Reform’ Tied to Mayor, Superintendent, and School Committee

By Richard Stutman
BTU President

The mayor appointed school committee voted last month to close or merge more than a dozen Boston school schools. The vote was unanimous – not surprisingly, as most school committee votes are unanimous. What was surprising was that the mayor took the occasion of his annual speech before the Boston Chamber of Commerce two days earlier to send a warning to all seven school committee members to approve the closings or else. The vote was never in doubt, but the mayor knew that the committee had just sat through more than 20 hours of opposing testimony at four school committee hearings, and he might have had just a little doubt. Just a very little. The committee, most of which will be absorbed by the hiring of fewer new teachers. Because of the high turnover of staff, the district hires approximately 500 new teachers annually, roughly 10% of the teaching force. Next year the number of new hires will be substantially less, resulting in fewer teaching and staff positions for the upcoming school year, most of which will be absorbed by the hiring of fewer new teachers. Because of the high turnover of staff, the district hires approximately 500 new teachers annually, roughly 10% of the teaching force. Next year the number of the chairman of the school committee, Rev. Gregory Groover, all of whom were out in front of the cheerleading effort at the state house last winter urging passage of the legislation. These are the same folks who are empowered now to find ways to compensate for the loss of those same funds. These are also the same three leaders who are in the forefront of the effort to sharply curtail our health insurance coverage. The mayor has filed home rule legislation that the city estimates would cost each city family health subscriber $1500 per year ($5500 single coverage) in added out-of-pocket health costs. The superintendent’s negotiating team has proposed the same plan at the negotiation table, as have other department managers throughout the city. And Reverend Groover is on the Board of the Boston Foundation, which has issued two separate ‘position’ papers seeking the same cutbacks in our health insurance coverage. (The Boston Foundation routinely issues position papers ‘for the civic good.’)

[Continued on page 7]

A painful reminder.
The Relentless Attack on the Public Sector: A Story of Money, Power & Influence

In Boston, the attacks usually run like this. The Boston Globe runs a sensationalized news story about the public sector. A Boston Foundation-funded study shows up in the next couple of days. An op-ed columnist produces a slanted view citing some business alliance. And the issue is capped off with an editorial aimed at scaring the taxpayer public. The editorial calls for this or that cure for the ills of society, with the cure generally being either to limit the services the public sector provides or to privatize those services.

Occasionally other voices are let in. Sometimes in the middle of the article. An occasional letter to the editor. And ever so sporadically an opinion piece that upholds the importance of the public sector in civil society. The truth paints a different picture. A recent article by Mark Brenner in the journal Labor Notes speaks truth to power. The public sector is not overpaid. Even when our good benefits are added in the average public sector worker makes 4% less than her or his private sector counterpart. This is even though a larger percentage of public workers have earned advanced degrees. So says the Economic Policy Institute.

The Federal deficit is out of control and we just can’t afford to spend money. This myth has many sides. While it is true that it is the highest since World War II, if it wasn’t for government spending we would be in the middle of a second great depression. But we don’t have to address the deficit with cutbacks to human services. A bloated military and private sector health care consume over 40% of all spending. We already have a military that is as large as all the armies in the world combined. And a health care system that rewards greedy doctors, insurance companies and the pharmaceutical industry can and should be replaced with one that values human life instead of profiting from human misery.

But taxes are too high already! This is only true for those of us without money, power, or influence. At the end of WWII corporations accounted for 30% of the tax base. As more and more of the tax burden has been shifted onto working people these same corporations now pay just 10% of the taxes collected. With the country mired in a Great Recession profits are still high. But money, power, and influence just bought continued tax breaks for the wealthy.

Claims of the efficiency of the private sector over a fraud filled and wasteful public sector ring hollow. One only has to examine a corrupt Wall Street, who brought our country to the brink of disaster. And too many hard working people have been pushed over that brink. While those with money, power, and influence congratulate themselves, having bilked the country through tax payer funded mortgages, preferring to swell the private sector that refuses to hire people beaten down by the private sector. A dime. All as we come to work every day trying to meet the needs of that section of the public who are increasingly being beaten down by the private sector. A private sector that refuses to hire people at decent wages or to alter terms of predatory mortgages, preferring to swell the ranks of the homeless while those with money, power and influence vacation in their second homes.

Truth be damned! Because the truth paints a different picture. A recent article by Mark Brenner in the journal Labor Notes speaks truth to power. The public sector is not overpaid. Even when our good benefits are added in the average public sector worker makes 4% less than her or his private sector counterpart. This is even though a larger percentage of public workers have earned advanced degrees. So says the Economic Policy Institute.

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The Relentless Attack on the Public Sector:
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(continued from page 2)

bailouts and promptly rewarding themselves with continued bonuses. In 2003, the Boston Teachers Union made a united effort to support the Haiti through the creation of “Ray of Hope Children Services, Inc.” The organization was initiated long before the earthquake. This endeavor has consumed most of Paula’s time and energy, and the survival of her nation will not happen without continued support.

The Boston Teachers Union made a united effort to support the Haiti through the creation of “Ray of Hope Children Services, Inc.” She received help from those who work with her every day and those who saw the effort as important and needed. We need to apply what we have learned and use it to support an effort that delivered much-needed goods to people left with only hope! We try to recognize our members trying to make a difference! Paula stepped up to the plate to support Haiti, it was important for us collectively help her be successful!

Since the natural disaster Haiti has been promised a substantial amount of money, food, shelter, and clothing. Sadly, that cash-strapped nation is still waiting for aid, especially water. We recently saw the progress, or lack of it, when a hurricane that passed by Haiti dumped up to twelve inches of water on an area that is devoid of foliage and incapable of absorbing runoff. People living in those homes were only able to stay there because the water was not very deep. We could see that there were no alternatives or proper facilities for sanitation with a cholera outbreak spreading. This is a time of thanks giving for all of us. How often have we promised to help and come up short?

As we start 2011, the worldwide economic collapse further hinders Haiti’s recovery. Only a few of the world organizations are trying to help them get back on their feet. We as a union have done our part in the past but we also need to continue to do our part to help our Haitian colleagues. We can make multiple contributions with just small acts, like donating food, blanket, or extra clothing.

Truly these are difficult times and it is not easy for me to ask you to assist again. But the Haitian community is reluctant to ask for help, though “Ray of Hope Children Services, Inc.” on Facebook.

Paula is from Haiti. She, like many Haitians in America, reacted to the devastation of her Homeland. What you many not know is this natural disaster has hindered her in building an orphanage-school. The Ray of Hope Children Service, Inc. was initiated long before the earthquake. This endeavor has consumed most of Paula’s time and energy, and the survival of her nation will not happen without continued support.

When do programming preference sheets come out?

The contract states, “No later than February 1”, programming preference sheets shall be distributed to all teachers. For High and Middle School teachers it reads, “Programming preference will be honored to the extent consistent with the provisions of this Agreement [contract]. All preference sheets shall be returned by March 1.” This means that a ‘preference’ is just that, it does not mean that the teacher is guaranteed their choice as submitted.

The contract also details, “On or before February 1, a list of all non-teaching assignments for which administrative periods are given in a teachers’ program shall be posted in each school. These assignments may be applied for in the teacher’s program preference sheet as herein [within the contract] provided.” An applicant for such a non-teaching assignment who does not receive the assignment shall, upon his/her request, be given the reasons for not having been selected by the Principal or Headmaster.”

What is the role of an academic coach in my class?

Academic coaches (math, literacy, history, science, ELL, etc.) are BTU members and as such must not perform any role in the evaluative process of other BTU members – most notably, classroom teachers. Academic coaches are there to assist or instruct classroom teachers in the implementation of the BPS mandated curriculum models in their respective disciplines.

The assumption appears to be that by having a fellow educator/coach in classrooms; it should be easier to establish a trusting relationship than it would be if the coach were an administrator. The implied anticipated result would be that the classroom teacher would hopefully be working collaboratively with each other to achieve the goals at hand without concern that the coach was evaluating the classroom teacher or contributing to that process. This collaboration without fear of evaluation is integral to the relationship otherwise coaches may undermine their professional effectiveness overall if trust was not established with their fellow educators in whose classrooms they coach.

As BTU members, we should communicate with each other openly about our concerns and support each other in our respective roles when we excel as well as when we are struggling. The practice of having coaches come into classes to model lessons, assist in lesson planning, pacing, and the like - particularly when the instructional materials/approaches are new to the teacher, often requiring an enormous paradigm shift in the manner of instruction with minimum training to do so, can be valuable only when there is teamwork to achieve those ends. The good old ‘Golden Rule’ is applicable in this ‘relationship of equals’. If a coach observes a teacher, it should be between the two BTU members, not shared or discussed with administration. If this type of “sharing” is desired, arrangements can be made for evaluation of the coaches.

Coaches cannot require teachers to meet with them during the teacher’s P&D, lunch or before/afer school. Doing so is a contractual violation. Any teacher who is being doing this is in violation of this contract. Coaches should, schedule sessions in order to coincide with teachers’ administrative periods, during the 18 hours of professional development or at a time mutually agreed upon by both parties. BTU members/coaches have no authority to order other BTU members/teachers to perform any function. They must seek the assistance in their respective roles by utilizing the BTU’s communication channel in order to meet State Standards, etc. It is important to talk to each other as professionals to work in a manner that meets both individuals’ needs and serves the kids best.
### Statements of Financial Position

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASSETS</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CURRENT ASSETS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cash (Note 6)</td>
<td>$1,675,573</td>
<td>$2,294,216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investments (Notes 2, 3 and 4)</td>
<td>2,977,906</td>
<td>2,220,014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accounts Receivable</td>
<td>35,637</td>
<td>228,911</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepaid Expenses</td>
<td>158,136</td>
<td>107,020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS</td>
<td>6,427,604</td>
<td>5,641,561</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| PROPERTY AND EQUIPMENT (Note 1) | | |
| FImplicit and Equipment | 467,624 | 461,882 |
| Leasehold Improvements | 215,287 | 215,287 |
| Less – Accumulated Depreciation and Amortization | 628,353 | 593,187 |
| TOTAL ASSETS | $6,481,578 | $5,725,543 |

| LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS | 2010 | 2009 |
| CURRENT LIABILITIES | | |
| Accounts Payable | $369,932 | $311,485 |
| TOTAL NET LIABILITIES | 6,112,446 | $5,915,088 |
| TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS | $6,481,578 | $5,725,543 |

### Statements of Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUPPORT</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Union Dues</td>
<td>$6,589,337</td>
<td>$6,731,390</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest</td>
<td>7,776</td>
<td>7,140</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dividend Income (Note 2)</td>
<td>120,799</td>
<td>97,011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unrealized Gain (Loss) on Investments (Note 2)</td>
<td>126,132</td>
<td>194,191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AFT Salary Assistance Program</td>
<td>21,600</td>
<td>21,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL EXPENSES</td>
<td>6,875,604</td>
<td>7,051,392</td>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EXPENSES (Schedule I)</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unpaid Salaries</td>
<td>$96,587</td>
<td>$89,784</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retirement Plan Contribution</td>
<td>121,888</td>
<td>120,592</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Union Issues</td>
<td>937,956</td>
<td>698,624</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal Services</td>
<td>10,650</td>
<td>25,624</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-House Legal</td>
<td>3,917</td>
<td>4,256</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mailing and Machine Room</td>
<td>27,015</td>
<td>21,691</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office</td>
<td>26,086</td>
<td>25,205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Payroll Service</td>
<td>5,844</td>
<td>5,844</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pension Plan</td>
<td>101,166</td>
<td>96,114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Fees</td>
<td>9,000</td>
<td>24,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rent</td>
<td>36,500</td>
<td>20,074</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conference Rooms and Meeting Hall</td>
<td>100,526</td>
<td>104,593</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retirement Plan Contribution</td>
<td>121,888</td>
<td>120,592</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per Capita Payments</td>
<td>126,310</td>
<td>120,518</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Statements of Cash Flows

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increase in Net Assets</td>
<td>$698,986</td>
<td>$1,003,717</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjustments to reconcile increase in Net Assets to Net Cash Provided by Operating Activities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>by Operating Activities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depreciation</td>
<td>35,195</td>
<td>42,777</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase (Decrease) in Accounts Receivable</td>
<td>129,374</td>
<td>62,884</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepaid Expenses</td>
<td>(30,613)</td>
<td>(95,789)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase (Decrease) in Accounts Payable</td>
<td>(57,447)</td>
<td>(8,781)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NET CASH FLOWS PROVIDED BY OPERATING ACTIVITIES</td>
<td>593,391</td>
<td>1,007,808</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acquisition of Investments (Notes 2, 3 and 4)</td>
<td>(130,799)</td>
<td>(97,011)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acquisition of Property and Equipment</td>
<td>(6,513)</td>
<td>(6,884)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unrealized Gain on Investments (Note 2)</td>
<td>(126,132)</td>
<td>(194,191)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NET CASH FLOWS USED BY INVESTING ACTIVITIES</td>
<td>(262,634)</td>
<td>(296,007)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| NET INCREASE IN CASH | 691,357 | 711,801 |
| CASH, BEGINNING | 2,984,216 | 2,272,415 |
| CASH, ENDING | $3,675,573 | $2,984,216 |

The Independent Auditor's Report and Accompanying Notes are an Integral Part of these Financial Statements.
Notes to Financial Statements   August 31, 2010 and 2009

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 Presentation
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, 2010 and 2009, 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
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.

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 $2,577,806 and $2,320,914 at August 31, 2010 and 2009, respectively, in mortgage-backed securities, government bonds and cash through Putnam Investments. The fair market value of the investments at August 31, 2010 and 2009 was $2,577,806 and $2,320,914, respectively. The following schedule summarizes the investment return for the years ended August 31, 2010 and 2009:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dividend Income</td>
<td>$ 130,759</td>
<td>$ 97,011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net Unrealized Gain</td>
<td>$ 126,132</td>
<td>$ 194,191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL INVESTMENT RETURN</td>
<td>$ 256,891</td>
<td>$ 291,202</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Fair Value Measurement

Fair values of assets measured on a recurring basis at August 31, 2010 are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Fair Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Putnam U.S. Gov’t Income Trust – A</td>
<td>$ 2,577,806</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fair values of investments are 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 financial statements.

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 1 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 was 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 $199,856 and $103,383, respectively, for the years ended August 31, 2010 and 2009.

In addition, the Boston Teachers Union pays $15 per day for conference room set-up fees to the B.T.U.H.W.F. Building Corp. under the agreement which ended June 30, 2007. As of November 8, 2010, the agreement has not been modified and continues under the initial terms. Fees paid under this agreement for the fiscal year ended August 31, 2010 and 2009 totaled $670 and $1,200, respectively.

6. Retired Teachers’ Benefits

Effective July 31, 1987, dues paid to the Union by retired teachers and retired parapro-fessors 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 $721,888 and $120,592 respectively, for the years ended August 31, 2010 and 2009.

8. Concentration of Credit Risk

The Union has loans with Federal Home Loan Bank, an FHA insured mortgage broker, Fannie Mae, and Freddie Mac. While the nature of these loans is not considered credit risk, at the time of the year end, the Union considered the loans to be safe from any loss due to any of the above lending institutions.

9. Advertising

Advertising costs are charged to operations when incurred. Advertising expense was $96,587 and $89,784 for the years ended August 31, 2010 and 2009, respectively.

10. 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. Quarterly per capita for membership is billed and paid quarterly. For the fiscal year ended August 31, 2010, the Union paid $13,333 in per capita to Working Massachusetts.

11. Evaluation of Subsequent Events

The Union has evaluated subsequent events through November 8, 2010, the date which the financial statements were available to be issued.
A banner in the auditorium of English High School.

Ann O’Halloran (ret.) of the Citizens for Public Schools.

BEAM member Bob Marshall (ret.) addressing the School Committee.

Christine Langhoff (ret.) called for a repeal of the 1830’s law exempting non-profits from paying property tax.

BTU President Richard Stutman tells the School Committee that they have failed in their responsibility.

Voting with their feet. This is the auditorium of English High School minutes after the unanimous vote to close schools.

BPS parent Mike Russell was the focus of School Committee member Claudio Martinez’s outburst.

“You’re robbing us of our future!” exclaimed a West Roxbury Educational Complex student.

School Committee Unanimously Votes to Close Schools Despite Loud Protests!

Photos by Michael J. Maguire

Ann O’Halloran (ret.) of the Citizens for Public Schools.
Expansion in Charters Leads to Loss of Revenue and School Closings…
(continued from page 1)

just hired Tyler to do a ‘report’ on teacher salaries in Boston. One can guess at the outcome of that report.

So, where does this leave us? We have a school committee, a mayor, and a superintendent who have increasingly shown that they are willing to sacrifice our programs and schools as a first step to save funds, not as a last resort.

The superintendent and the school committee, for example, could have asked the major for more money. Granted, this is a tough economy and state aid is down – but our city is doing well. The city ended the last fiscal year with a surplus and there is much untapped revenue that could be realized, even if it took a few years. The city recently convened a task force to look at what non-profits ought to be – but are not – paying as their fair share for essential services (police, fire, snow removal). According to the report, “these services are provided to both taxable and non-taxable properties, yet it is the taxable property owners who must bear the cost of funding these services.” These essential services amount to an estimated 25% of the city’s budget. So the city’s task force went through an exercise to figure out how much the Harvards, Northeasterns, and Mass. Generals ought to pay the city as their fair share in lieu of taxes. The task force gave these institutions ample credit for services already provided and allowed all sorts of offsets for contributions in kind. The bottom line: with ALL of the niceties thrown in, with all of the exemptions, the 20 or so largest nonprofits ought to be paying the city $38 million per year. Instead they pay $13 million, a shortfall of $25 Million. Remember that the heads of BU, Wentworth and Partners were on the Task Force, so it is fair to say that the $25 Million annual shortfall due is on the low side.

Of course we understand that the non-profits are entrenched and powerful, and further, that the law giving them the property tax exemption is 181 years old. So we understand this is not going to change overnight. But at the same time, every 10-20 years or so, the city makes a half-hearted effort to get the law to change. Perhaps this time some real leadership on this issue from our elected and appointed officials will emerge.

That’s only half of the revenue equation. Our schools would have more revenue if the charter school funding formula were more equitable. Our leaders would be doing our schools a service if they filed legislation to further that goal. Why should charter schools get revenue from the city when they refuse to educate SPED and ELL students. We have heard for years that charters are supposed to do just that; educate all. But they don’t – in fact they make no effort – even though the new law made some changes. Or does it? A report in the Globe in December said: “Nearly all the proposals for new charter schools statewide fall short in one key area – a strong commitment to serve students who lack fluency in English…” We are waiting for the mayor, the superintendent, and the chairman of the school committee to step forward on this issue.

It is worth repeating: Closing good schools ought not to be the first place to save revenue. For our schools to survive and thrive we, too, need cheerleaders.

** http://www.cityofboston.gov/assessing/PILOT.asp
*** http://www.boston.com/news/education/k_12/articles/2010/12/20/charter_proposals_are_found_lacking/
This month, I had the pleasure of visiting the Ellis Elementary School, located right next to the Museum of African American History in Roxbury. One of the first things I noticed were large Perfect Attendance banners on many classroom doors, one way to focus on positive achievement of a school-wide goal. There is a large “thermometer” in the front hallway where students can see their progress, and small gifts are given to those who achieve perfect attendance each month.

Serving 300+ students, including a LAB cluster for children with severe emotional/behavioral problems, the Ellis felt like a place where learning is valued and supported. Students were engaged in a variety of activities: practicing with instruments for a school performance, doing exercises in gym class, reinforcing math concepts in the computer lab, and writing letters, stories or responses to their reading. I was happy to see that MCAS pressure has not stopped kindergarteners from having time to freely explore blocks and sand as well as to practice writing letters and numbers during the school day!

Several teachers commented on strong grade-level teams and staff relationships in general. Colleen Kavanagh, a first-year teacher, said she feels comfortable going to her colleagues with any question. K-2 teacher Kathy Brown told me about monthly assemblies organized by teachers, when different classes present work they’ve done related to positive character traits. Although both the principal and school secretary were out sick for an extended period of time, the atmosphere remained calm and focused on learning. I can only hope that teachers in the many schools in BPS who are going through the trauma of consolidation or closing will find ways to support one another, as well as their students during this difficult time.
**BTU/RTC Scholarships Awarded**

by Marie Broderick and Donna Cooley-Hilton

Co-chairs, RTC Scholarship Committee

On June 19, 2010 at the Boston Teachers’ Union Scholarship breakfast, the Retired Teachers’ Chapter presented scholarships to three high school seniors. Of the many qualified candidates the following individuals were selected to receive these scholarships.

**Stephanie Harris** of Milton, granddaughter of RTC member Julia Harris, is attending Harvard University this year. She is interested in a career as a pediatrician. Stephanie is a graduate of Milton Academy.

**George Sessoms** of Peabody, son of RTC member Fitzallen Sessoms, is attending Holy Cross College. He plans to work in the medical field. George graduated from St. John’s Prep in Danvers.

**Kelsey-Lynn Vaccaro** of Braintree, granddaughter of RTC member Edith Vaccaro, is attending Emmanuel College. She is interested in studying psychology. Kelsey-Lynn plans to enter the field of Human Resources. She graduated from Braintree High School.

The RTC wishes these three students, and all the other applicants, success in their new endeavors.

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**RTC Executive Board Minutes**

**November 1, 2010**

**Members present:** Anne Marie Adduci; Anne Broder, Treasurer; Marie Broderick; Mary Cahalane; Larry Connolly; Dave Donovan, Chairman; Phil Fasano; Eileen Ganley; Donna Cooley-Hilton; Ruthanne Kennedy; Linda McNamee; Marilyn Marion; Secretary; Leonard Miraglia, Vice Chairman; Mary Jo Murphy and Paul Temney. **Excused:** Sandy Carle and Bonnie Mitten.

Meeting was called to order by the Chairman at 10:20 a.m.

**Reports**

Treasurer: Report was read and accepted.

Secretary: Report was read and accepted.

Chairman: Chairman introduced Richard Stutman who was scheduled to meet with Board. Richard introduced a plan for improving eye-care benefits for retirees. Surplus revenue from the RTC has enabled members who have not had prescription change to receive new eyeglasses. Richard presented a letter to the board that will be sent out to the membership. This information will also be on the RTC link on the BTU website.

The RTC link on the BTU website for potential members to sign-up for membership to the RTC has been going very well.

Chairman informed the Board that he has been appointed by the AFT to the Conference for Retirees. Report Accepted.

Vice Chairman: Membership will be requested of Delta about the state increase. He will call Delta to inform them that we have 700 members who plan to attend the fall luncheon. Report Accepted.

Travel: The last trip was to Amish Country and Gettysburg was fantastic. Committee chairs were very pleased with Yankee Travel as they went above and beyond. Reservations are still open for Mansfield-Stockbridge and the White Mountains. Report Accepted.

Legislative: No report. However, they received a call from Marie Arlito regarding COLA. Report Accepted.

Data Processing: Committee chair stated that he meets with the IT person the first Thursday of each month. Improvements have been made to the RTC link on the BTU website. The chairman is researching Mailchimp, a free e-mail marketing company. Mailchimp is free to use as long as membership is under 3000. More information is forthcoming. The chairman is preparing for the influx of new retirees who are computer savvy. Report Accepted.

Membership: We have 2,658 members, and there are 100 new applications pending. Report Accepted.

**New Business**

Anne Broder has contacted AAA about rescheduling another driver refresher course for December 7. Information will be available at the fall luncheon.

**Old Business**

- Discussion on Harvard Pilgrim plan and Medicare.
- Golf Tournament – 24 golfers. The Jimmy Fund received about $3,000 from the event.
- RTC caps will be sold at the luncheon for $20.
- Possible charity for autism next year. Discussion tabled until next meeting.

Next Executive Board meeting scheduled for December 13, 2010. Meeting adjourned at 12:00 noon.

Respectfully submitted, Marilyn Marion, Secretary

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**INFORMATION FOR NEW RETIREEES**

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 Teachers Chapter (RTC). The dues will be taken from your retirement check each month ($5 for teachers, $2.50 for paraps).

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:**

**When you fill in the code card and return it to us.**

(The Eileen Ganley is RTC Membership Chairperson)

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**Edith Vaccaro, center, accepts a BTU/RTC Scholarship on behalf of her granddaughter Kelsey-Lynn Vaccaro from BTU Vice President Pat Connolly and Secondary Field Representative Caren Carew.**

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**Stephanie Harris, center, gratefully accepts a BTU/RTC Scholarship from BTU Vice President Pat Connolly and Secondary Field Representative Caren Carew.**

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**George Sessoms, center, receives a BTU/RTC Scholarship from BTU Vice President Pat Connolly and Secondary Field Representative Caren Carew.**

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**BTU/RTC Scholarship Committee**

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**BTU Retired Teachers Chapter**

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**BTU Retired Teachers Chapter**
Boston Public School Nurses Association Celebrates the Holidays

BPSNA Committee: Roselaine Koech, Carlene Louis-Letang, Sandra Hurwitch, and Mary Rowan organized the school nurse’s holiday celebration at Phillips Old Colony. Fun was had by all and a generous contribution of winter accessories was made to the Elizabeth Stone House.

– Mary Rowan, R.N., Harbor Pilot Middle School

“Injustice Anywhere is a Threat to Justice Everywhere.”

– Martin Luther King, Jr., Letter from a Birmingham Jail, April 16, 1963

Nomination papers for this year’s BTU elections will be available for pick up as of the January 12, 2011 Membership Meeting.

Does someone you know work at a charter school? AFT Massachusetts needs your help reaching out to employees of Massachusetts charter schools in order to share with them important information regarding:

- A voice in decision making
- Quality professional development opportunities
- Job security
- Competitive salaries and benefits
- Classroom resources

For more information, contact Dan Justice at justice65@gmail.com or call 802-324-5886.

Learn more about AFT’s Alliance of Charter Teachers and Staff by visiting: www.aftacts.org

The children had a festive crowd

Photos by Michael J. Maguire

Feliz Navidad

A Vulcan change-up

Santa and one of his elves get a bit of customer feedback

An elf making twisty hats

If you don’t get time and a half for the 24th, call me!

Got ‘em all!
ball at the BTU Children’s Holiday Party

A mesmerized audience

Pick a card, any card!

The bouncy house was very popular

I love my snowman!

I know the answer!

Do the Red Sox know about this kid?

Preparing to be a CEO

My first Christmas

The magic rings thrilled the kids!

This season’s must haves – Santa Balloon Hats

A visit from Santa

The kids enjoyed having their faces painted

I know the answer!
A Good Time Was Had by All at the BTU Annual Holiday Party

Getting in the holiday spirit were the contingent from the Blackstone School. Back row, L to R, Iris Polanco, Michael Crain, Maria Cruz, Angela Cristiani and Felicita Ruiz. Front row, L to R, Anna Munoz, Ninfa, Gisette Wall and Carmen Torres.

Allison Doherty-LaCasse and Siobhan Mulligan of the Urban Science Academy.

A jolly group from the Sumner Elementary School. Christine Arnold, Julie Anne Shoes and Carmen Guerrios Doherty.

Dianne Hays of the Henry Grew School.

Building Rep. of the Year Shirley Tammick and her husband William Tammick, both of Brighton High School.

Lovebirds Al and Nicole from Charlestown High School.

In lieu of a cover charge, BTU members were asked to drop off new, unwrapped toys for needy children.

Josephine Tavares, Aadina Balti and Maria Pontes of the Mason Elementary School.

The Condon’s Andrea Greedridge, NeddyBean-Aimee and Monique Byne.

Monument High School’s Megan Alloway and Boston Latin Academy’s Ingrid Roche.

The Condon’s Andrea Greedridge, NeddyBean-Aimee and Monique Byne.

A Good Time Was Had by All at the BTU Annual Holiday Party

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