Hello and good evening. I am Richard Stutman, President of the Boston Teachers Union. I am glad to be here, and as president of a 7,000 member public labor union I am used to catching media flak, especially in this climate. But there are always a few sides to any story, so let me tell you a bit of the public education story you probably don’t read or hear every day…

My daughter is a student in the BPS, she has attended four schools at five sites, pilot, traditional, and choice. I know what it is to be a parent. My daughter has received a good education. Not perfect – but very good. Next year she will be off to college. That’s a hope our organization has for each student in the BPS; good education leading to a journey to college.

We represent 7,000 members, most of whom live in the city. We have a negotiating team and a staff of 15 who have had 21 children and grandchildren in our public schools. This is a choice we have made for our own children. It has not been an obligation, and we have had other options. It has not been a burden. We are pleased with the choice within the Boston public schools, and we are pleased with the education our children have received. Unlike some of the more knowledgeable school observers who pay upwards of $40,000 in private school tuition to avoid public schools, the leadership of the Boston Teachers Union believes in public education. And we have a stake in improving it – not destroying it.

You hear a lot about our schools. It goes like this: the schools are mediocre at best, the teachers and their unions are selfish and do little good except drain the public coffers. You hear that line every day from many quarters, especially from those observers who don’t use our schools.

Here’s the other side I want to share: public school teachers do a reasonably good job, although our schools are imperfect. They and their unions recognize their obligation to the public good and welfare, and they expect to be held accountable. We recognize our obligation to do the best we can and to make some changes. But the changes must be sensible. Making change for the sake of change may not improve our schools at all.

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Commentary: Garret Virchick

I’m Mad as Hell and I’m Not Going to Take This Anymore!

Okay. Now that you have your attention I need to assure you that I am not going insane. At least not as insane as Peter Finch’s character, news anchor Howard Beale in the 1976 Oscar-winning movie *Network*. Those of you who remember 1976 might recall the double-digit inflation, rising unemployment, pollution, and Middle East conflicts. Fast forward to 2010. And today things are even worse.

While we aren’t experiencing double-digit inflation there is the fear of deflation, and the prospect of years of economic misery. Official unemployment is approaching 10%, much higher than the unemployment of the 1970s. Catastrophically high for African-Americans and Latinos. Much of our pollution has gone overseas, as has our manufacturing base. But the threat of ecological disaster in the form of global warming is increasing. And there is STILL war in the Middle East and Afghanistan.

So I’m mad as hell and I’m not going to take this anymore!

So what else am I mad at?

I’m mad as hell at so-called education reformers, none of who seem to be teachers.

I’m worried as hell that fear will win out. That too few of us will stand up and say enough is enough.

They are business leaders, mega-foundation leaders, and corporate media leaders, all claiming to know what is best for public schools. They rant and they rave. They blame our union as if we are the ones who have systematically underfunded public schools for decades, robbing generation after generation of children their right to a quality education. And I don’t want to take this anymore!

I’m mad as hell at the Republican party who use racism and fear to keep people apart. I’m mad at the Democratic party for too easily giving in to insurance companies and pharmaceutical lobbyists while more and more Americans lose their health insurance or can’t afford to keep the insurance they have. And I don’t want to take this anymore!

I’m mad as hell at Wall Street bankers who claimed that their banks were too big to fail, we spent trillions of dollars of OUR money and who still gave themselves bonuses. They sit high on their thrones as masters of the universe while more and more people lose their jobs and fall into poverty. And I don’t want to take this anymore!

I’m mad as hell at the leaders who want to run the schools? Apparently in some places, including Boston, the leaders do not. On June 30, 2010, Louisiana governor Bobby Jindal signed into legislation House Bill 1386, called *The Red Tape Reduction and Local Empowerment Act*. As is often the case, the name is a misnomer. After all, who’s for red tape? Who’s in favor of yielding control to a distant, central authority? Gov. Jindal said the new law will “especially benefit struggling schools, giving them the ability to scale up reforms needed to dramatically improve student achievement and avoid state takeover.”

Gov. Jindal touted the flexibility this new law gives school: “Specifically, HB 1386 authorizes an optional program for local school districts that would allow them to apply for a four-year waiver of state laws and Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) policies, with some exceptions. Any public school may apply for a waiver through its local school board upon receiving a favorable vote of a majority of the school’s classroom teachers.” On July 1, 2010 the Louisiana Federation of Teachers (LFT) filed a lawsuit in the state courts seeking to restrain implementation of HB 1386. “As we argued before every committee that heard the bill, we believe that this act is an unconstitutional delegation of legislative authority,” LFT President Steve Monaghan said. “The legislature simply does not have the right to hand off responsibility to another branch of government.”

At issue is the legislative branch’s abdication of its constitutional responsibility. As we have seen earlier this year, when the legislature votes in a law detrimental to our students, the governor’s office enacts that law. The governor’s office then assigns the office of state superintendent of education to implement the new law. In Louisiana, that office is run by Antonio Paysse, who has no expertise in education.

We in Boston are not immune to the Louisiana shenanigans. On the same day that LA Gov. Jindal signed the Red Tape Reduction Act into law, Superintendent Carol Johnson proposed to the Boston School Committee that it consider allowing a competing school to run one of Boston’s middle schools. While charter schools are supposed to be accountable to the public they serve, they are not. While the charter school movement was at least supposed to help our students achieve better results, it has become a means of gentrification and to change the character of neighborhoods. With school closures, Boston has lost 14 public schools in the past decade.

So I’m mad as hell at the post of education policy, and I’m not going to take this anymore!

Commentary: Michael J. Maguire

A Matter of School Leadership

Who wants to run the schools? Apparently in some places, including Boston, the leaders do not. On June 30, 2010, Louisiana Governor Bobby Jindal signed into legislation House Bill 1386, called *The Red Tape Reduction and Local Empowerment Act*. As is often the case, the name is a misnomer. After all, who’s for red tape? Who’s in favor of yielding control to a distant, central authority? Gov. Jindal said the new law will “especially benefit struggling schools, giving them the ability to scale up reforms needed to dramatically improve student achievement and avoid state takeover.”

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So I’m mad as hell at Arne Duncan, Secretary of Education. He refused to call himself superintendent when he got his start in the Chicago Public Schools, preferring to be called CEO instead. His business model privatized and charter schools in Chicago. Little of his plans for Chicago included input from the communities it affected, and only a concerted protest by parents and community leaders kept him from closing 20 of their schools in a cynical move to create a gentrified area for business development.

Now, as Secretary of Education in the Obama administration he has blackmailed cash strapped states to pass anti-teacher legislation as they beg for Race to the Top funds. And I don’t want to take this anymore!

So I’m mad as hell at the powerful and violent students have to live with everyday.

(continued on page 3)
A Matter of School Leadership... (continued from page 2)

fully shitting its responsibility to educate the children of Boston.

What a telling tale it is when those who run the schools are now running away from them. If they don't want to govern the schools, then it's time to let someone else govern them. It's time to let teachers govern.

The teachers are the ones who know best the problems in our schools. The teachers should be allowed to make policy changes that would indeed positively impact the students and the schools. Although the Louisiana law may violate its state's constitution, it does in fact contain a provision that allows to make policy changes that would indeed positively impact the students and the schools.

Specifically in Boston, we ought to change the law so that teachers can join the School Committee in order to bring a classroom perspective to decision making. Presently not one member of the Boston School Committee has K-12 classroom experience yet they set the rules for the K-12 schools.

Other interest groups are represented on that committee to work with these self-selecting permanent teachers in order to assist them in their quest to be their very best.

Of same.

What are career awards and how do I receive one?

After a teacher has reached the maximum pay step which occurs on the year after they have reached the ninth salary step (either after the teacher has taught for 9 years in the BPS or after they have reached that equivalent based on the salary step they entered the BPS with – determined by how many outside years of service were applied to their salary step at that time) the teacher is then eligible for a career award. Career awards are designed to give teachers who have no more steps to climb up for a PA can't hurt, and it may help – so it is highly recommended to apply post haste!

Why is filing a class size grievance important and how is it done?

Data shows that the lower the class sizes the better when it comes to meeting student’s needs. As soon as class size maxima have been exceeded in your class, file the information immediately by going to the gate btu.org website and filling out the 'class size grievance' form on line for each class that is over the class size. Refer to the grade and type of class you teach (elementary, middle, high, regular ed., SPED, gym, SEI, etc.) in the BTU contract or online to determine the appropriate number for your respective class. You should file a class size grievance once the number of children reporting to your class is in excess of the contractual maxima – it can’t just be the number on your class list, the students must have physically attended school at least once and then not have been officially discharged.

Filing the grievance puts pressure on the BPS to deal with the issue as quickly as possible or compensate the teacher for this contract violation. Money is a motivator for them to solve the problem. The teacher only gets credit from the day they file the grievance until the day it is resolved if it exceeds 15 school days. Let’s focus on children with the smallest class size possible. We bought for it – let’s maintain it.

When are School Site Council Elections & meetings held?

The School Site Council is the central governing body of the school under the school-based management/shared decision making model. Elections for open SSC BTU members should be held by October 15th. The SSC from the previous year serves until the new one is elected. The contract stipulates (pages 14-26); "Elections for new SSC members shall be conducted as early as in the school year preceding the one in which the SSC membership shall be held no later than October 31st." At the first meeting, a monthly calendar should be agreed upon by the SSC members for the entire school year and be made public through distribution to all staff and parents. Any change must be approved by the SSC with at least one week’s notice to all staff and parents. SSC Meetings should be at times convenient for all members & times may alternate to meet this goal. Trainings for SSC will be held this SY, please look for announcements & times. Contact careers@btu.org with any specific questions concerning School Site Councils.

What should a teacher who’s received an unsatisfactory formal performance evaluation do?

Immediately get a copy of said 'Does Not Meet Standards' (DNMS) formal Interim or Year End performance evaluation to their appropriate BTU Field Representative in order to have it scrutinized for any grievable technical process violations. It is imperative that this is done right away in that contractually we have only 30 school days in which to submit said Step 1 grievance. Interim evaluations have equivalent weight, so do not treat them lightly.

Every teacher has a DNMS evaluation that has been generated based on the evaluation to determine if it is appropriate to explain, elaborate, and refute portions of the evaluation by writing and including said write-up in the “Teacher Comments” portion of the evaluation. There is no timeline in which to submit the teachers comment section. Such sections should be written in a professional, non-personalized manner, reliant on factual observations and data in order to bolster their point of view. This written portion will be included in the teacher’s personnel file at BPS HR, so they will want it to be a positive reflection of their professionalism going forward. BTU attorneys have stated that if a teacher does not respond in writing in the teacher’s comment section, it appears as if the teacher tacitly agrees with the evaluator’s depiction in the evaluation.

Prescriptions written must be immediately addressed and implemented. Teachers need to make sure they document their efforts in this regard as proof of having done so. If sufficient progress towards meeting the prescriptions is not made by the time the evaluator again observes, then the teacher in question could garner another DNMS evaluation and thus be on a rapid road to potential dismissal based upon unsatisfactory performance as reflected in their evaluations. "Sufficient" is a subjective term, which increases the need for the teacher to accurately document their prescription action plan and implementation of same.

Permanent teachers who receive a DNMS formal evaluation should immediately apply for a Peer Assistant on the BPS website under employmentplan. Peer Assistants are BPS teachers who have been vetted by a joint labor/management committee to work with these self-selecting permanent teachers in order to assist them in their quest to be their very best. Since PAs are teachers, their input is non-evaluative. Do not wait until after the second DNMS evaluation to do so. Signing up for a PA can’t hurt, and it may help – so it is highly recommended to apply post haste!

United we stand – divided we beg. Let’s stand up together! BTUnity!
We believe that schools will improve if employees are treated fairly. That’s the carrot. Now the stick: we do not believe that punishing our employees will improve our schools.

I understand that for many in the audience it may be a big assumption for you to accept that the union wants better schools. You hear the opposite routinely.

You probably hear that all we do is represent teachers and their best interests – that’s all we care about.

Some of our benefits are rich, and we underspend our work in these tight economic times, some of our benefits – like health coverage – are easy to poke at. We understand that we have good health coverage, we understand that taxes pay the freight for these benefits. We do.

We also want you to know that we have worked with the city to ameliorate some of the health care costs. We haven’t gone as far as the city wants in one respect – that is, to join the GIC, but we have taken the leadership on the other huge cost containment issue, Medicare, and in that regard, we are ahead of the city.

But we do represent employees, and we work on behalf of our members. I plead guilty. But I do so respectfully. And if that were all we did – just to do what is best for our members – our public posture would be much more closeted.

In reading, in the same districts, we came in 5th from the top. You may have heard in fact the entire state does well on the NAEP scores, and we do compare pretty much in all testing areas for the last five years. I heard the governor take credit for this the other day – in fact I think he has a TV ad – but consider this. Each of these results, each of these scores, going back years, preceded Ed Reform. Boston also won the Broad prize a few years back for the best urban district in America.

I could go on, some would believe me, and they may.It is far more complicated than that. In this: Our schools, for an urban area, do well.

We do not do as well as the suburbs, to be sure. But we do well, whether it is advertised or not. Now, I want to be careful here, I am not saying that we ought to be complacent about being fourth or fifth in the country, nor am I saying that we ought to take a back seat to the suburbs – but do want to give a fair comparison, apples to apples. And no, we are not saying that there ought to be an urban ceiling, a limit as to how well urban areas are expected to do. Bottom line, is we do a better than average job, we want that freedom charters have to do.

On charter schools – they cream off students that with severe needs. Even fewer charters educate English language learning students. A small number of charter schools do a little of both, and they deserve some praise – they do what we do – but they’re in the minority.

On last point on charters – why we oppose the funding formula – the formula for reimbursement has been tweaked over the years to be sure. There’s no agreement on its fairness – either to charities or to municipalities, which pay the freight. Despite the disagreement, there has always been a underlying assumption that the concept – if not the actual formula – is fair because the loss of dollars follows the loss of kids. Boston, for example, this year is expected to lose $80 million towards charter school tuition payments. This figure will approach $110 million per year over the next three years. The thought is, well the kids leave, so the dollars should follow the kids.

There’s no harm & no foul. But here’s the difference: charter schools have good number of the kids who show up in charters and whose tuition is paid from the school department’s budget DO NOT come from our public schools – they come directly from private and parochial schools and go right into charters. They’ve never been in our schools, so there is no proportional loss of expense. How much of a disparity is this? Forty percent of the kids going to the charter school in Gloucester will enter from private and parochial schools – not the Gloucester schools. The Gloucester schools will lose a lot more money proportionately than they do kids. Now we don’t have these numbers for Boston – the charters will not release them – but the numbers in Gloucester are indicative of what happens here as well – only on a larger scale. The charters offer a tuition-free education to kids who by and large enter from a private or parochial school. In other words, your tax dollars are going to subsidize private school tuitions.

So, yes, we criticize charters, and we have good reason. When the charts begin to offer programs for all students and when their matriculating population shows the same demographic as our public school system – then we can begin to make a fair comparison. By the way, the public schools do not seek the freedom charters have to exclude students... and I use the word ‘freedom’ guardedly. The public schools do not want that freedom. We welcome all students and we accept that responsibility gladly.

Let me spend a little time on where we are trying to go in negotiations, even at the risk if going a little too deeply into the weeds.

We just finished a round of negotiations on Turnaround Schools. We had a healthy discussion of what would make schools better... Just as we are having a healthy discussion in the master bargain, going on right now, of what would make schools better. We have asked that the district introduce a reading intervention program – we don’t teach reading anymore in the schools. And we have also asked that each school set up a social service safety net for children at risk. And a physical education or movement program to give students a balance and other activities. These improvements and programs are not selfish, they’re not made easier for us – they are designed only to improve our schools and help our students. You probably won’t read about these.

Both sides are discussing an increase to the school day, though we disagree over the compensation piece. Both sides want to fix the evaluation process, make it less subjective, and more helpful. We have already agreed on whole school-based merit pay for Turnaround schools and I suppose we’ll agree on a similar version for traditional schools. You probably will not read about these either.

Let me go into the question of the extended school day a little deeper, as it is destined to become a key issue in the upcoming bargain, and it has gathered the most attention in the last month.

The superintendent has proposed extending the school day by 30 and adding another 100 hours of PD. Fine. We have already agreed informally. We don’t know if 30 is ideal. And we don’t know if the 100 hours will be worthwhile and productive. We don’t mind trying it out to see if it works, provided the compensation is fair. No one really has the answers to this. We do know that our school days do not coincide with the parent work day – in Boston or anywhere else – that’s why extended time is so popular with parents.

We currently have 25 or so schools that work an extended day and probably 50 more elementary or other schools that have an extensive after-school program with an outside provider, like the YMCA. If the formal day is adjusted, we feel our compensation, too, ought to be adjusted. We feel this is a justifiable position, and
I'm Mad as Hell and I'm Not Going to Take This Anymore!...

(continued from page 2)

in the richest country in the world. Their lives are always on the edge because the rich have bought politicians over the years so they can keep from paying their fair share of taxes, prefering to push much of the tax burden onto the middle class. Taxes that could be used to improve the lives of millions of Americans. The richest 1% have seen their tax rates fall from 90% under Dwight Eisenhower in the 1950's, to 70% in the 1970's, to 50% under Ronald Reagan, to 28% under George H.W. Bush. Under Bill Clinton the tax rates for the richest Americans went up to 39%, only to be cut again to 35% under George W. Bush. Then they have the nerve to tell us that social programs have to be cut instead so they can maintain their decades-old privilege. And I don't want to take this anymore!

I'm mad as hell at the Gates Foundation, the Broad Foundation, and the Walton Foundation who have benefited from this unjust tax policy to reap billions of dollars of wealth. They now use this wealth to influence the future of public education, demanding we hand over our public schools to private for-profit concerns, and use our students as guinea pigs in their social engineering projects. They prefer standardized bubble sheet education to critical learning, a goal more in line with producing compliant employees rather than ones that might question their logic about how the world should be. And I don't want to take this anymore!

I'm worried as hell that fear will win out. The so-called vacation days I spent correcting 10-to-15-page lab reports the next day – unpaid? The so-called vacation days I spent preparing the prepped papers, my classrooms, planning lessons and so on – and we do the same. The typical teacher spends an hour or two every day, usually more, in and out of school, on preparation – correcting papers, calling parents, planning lessons and so on, or he or she gets paid for the additional work. As so should we. That's what we are saying: by extending the school day you are giving us new students to teach, another class to prepare, additional responsibilities to correct, new parents to contact and so on – so we think additional compensation is reasonable. Our position is sensible. It isn't affordable, then we ought to have a conversation about that aspect, and we can both go looking for the money. We feel this is a reasonable position.

Of course, the extended day is but a small part of what we are discussing. Other issues – whether to test or correct, new teachers union that I's and their unions are rights, and their criticism of individual merit pay is not obstructionist after all. Maybe the criticism makes sense. So please understand the following: Not all new or “bold” educational reform ideas are good or innovative -- whether these ideas come from President Obama, the Nashville School Board, or even the Boston Foundation. And opposition to these ideas – even from the Boston Teachers Union – is not always obstruc
tionist. It might even be sensible and cost effective.

I want to leave you with these thoughts. Teacher unions are not the enemy of public education, and public employee unions are not the enemy of good, effective government. We have a job to do in representing our members. We try to do it well. We also want to improve our schools, and we’d like to open up the debate for real and effective school reform. Thank you for attending. And thanks to NU for contributing to the public discourse.

Garrett Virchick

Join the Professional Issues Committee of the Boston Teachers Union.

Looking to share your ideas about good teaching and learning?

Join the Professional Issues Committee of the Boston Teachers Union.

Check the E-bulletin for meeting time announcements or email committee co-chairs

Ted Chambers (edwardchambers@hotmail.com) and Kathy Aldred (kaldred@boston.k12.ma.us).
Not every school welcomes visitors with cameras in hand on a Friday afternoon at the beginning of the school year! The Rafael Hernandez K-8 administrators and staff gave me a warm welcome along with their official visitor’s pass. I walked in and out of classrooms trying to be as unobtrusive as possible while taking photos of students engaged in their schoolwork.

In the auditorium, Rosalba Solis was teaching a group of first graders a dance involving changes in direction and partners. I was impressed by the focus and joy expressed in the children’s faces as they managed these complicated movements. Her advice to readers of this column was to “love teaching and have FUN!” In another class, students were eagerly examining and drawing flowers under the guidance of their science teacher. Upstairs, middle school students were quiet and intent while responding to the first of a series of writing prompts, in both English and Spanish!

I was curious as to how the Hernandez managed such a smooth opening. Certainly it helps to have administrative and staffing consistency over time, something that feels like a luxury in BPS these days! Third grade teacher Magda Rodriguez stressed the importance of establishing routines, saying that the beginning of the day is “critical” and explaining how she modeled and had students practice walking in and saying, “Good morning!” from the minute they entered her classroom. Erin Sudduth credits the “looping” she does, keeping students from fourth through fifth grade, as a way to ease back-to-school anxiety. Blanca Burgos, a Humanities teacher for grades 6-8, thinks ongoing communication and the staff’s annual week-long Summer Institute, which provides extended time for teachers to plan within grade-level teams, is crucial. All of these, of course, are effective ways to create a smooth beginning to the school year. Here’s hoping your school, too, is off to a good start!

I was writing a story in Humanities class. I’m learning how to be more organized. I want my beginnings to grab attention so people will want to read more.

Stephanie Flores, Grade 6

We were solving mathematical problems with Erin. We’re learning about prime numbers and trying to find the longest multiplication equation for a given product using just prime numbers.

Bolivar Soto, Justin Reyes & Alejandro Medina, Grade 5

Jessie was helping us sort things from the cafeteria for recycling. In this picture we were looking for the little triangle with a number inside. We’ve learned that plastic and metal are OK to recycle.

Edgardo Velásquez & Britani Garcia, Grade 1

We are listening to Maggie read aloud Los Animales y Sus Crías. We learned that animals teach their babies how to get food. When the baby wolves and foxes are playing, they’re learning to be good hunters.

Leishka DeLeón, Maiky Marte, & Miranda Mehta, Grade 3

The “Word Wall” in this middle school science classroom not only serves as a reference for students, it can also be easily changed as new terms are introduced.
Cancer Fundraiser & Welcome Back Party
Friday, September 24th • BTU Hall

Brenda Chaney, Marnie Colantuoni, and Gayle Marrow

(Top Row)
Kimberly Phelan, Nicole Davis, Rossie Apt, and Kerry Bisbee
(Bottom Row)
Joanne McKay Lawrence, Holly Fraser, Megan Struckel, Molly Buckley and Christine Gottshall

Donna Adame and Brenda Chaney

Colleen Considine, Aadina Balti, Maria Mendes, Brian Lobue, Ducu Goncalves, Josephine Tavares, all of the Mason Pilot School

Photos by Michael J. Maguire

Spouses Ticco Robinson, ACC and Ingrid Roche, BLA

(L to R)
Kat Paulding, Takeese Wise, and Mia Webber, all from McKinley SEA
Winthrop Teachers Association Rallies for a Fair Contract: Some Facts and Thoughts

By Marjie Crosby

On Sept 1 outside of the Cummings School in Winthrop, there was a sea of red clothing, as members of the Winthrop Teachers Association (WTA) rallied and marched. As this school year begins Winthrop teachers, educational support staff, nurses and secretaries are entering their third year working under an expired contract. 220 WTA members (over 90% of the membership) gathered early in the morning before the start of the first day of their school year. Their message was clear—it is time for the Winthrop School Committee to resume bargaining and start dealing seriously with the issues on the table.

The WTA rallied last year on day one as well. But this year the rally was bigger and more powerful. As their president Jennifer O’Connell explained, “We had never asked other unions to join us before. We found out if you ask, you shall receive.” Teachers from Boston, Quincy, Arlington, Saugus, along with members of the Mass Teachers Association staff, Steelworkers, UAW, Lynn Police, North Shore and Greater Boston Labor Councils, and Jobs With Justice added 40–50 more voices to the chants for a Fair Contract Now. “It felt so good to be supported by other teachers and union members.” Echoing this sentiment was Lorraine Polo, a veteran teacher and Winthrop resident, “It was great that so many people found their way over to our little island”.

The first bargaining session between the WTA and the Winthrop School Committee were held in February 2008. The contract expired on August 31, 2008 without any agreement. Last year the teachers union, fed up with lack of progress filed for mediation. Despite repeated requests by the WTA no mediation or bargaining sessions were held all summer.

This past June, two school committee members resigned and replacements were appointed by the school committee and town council. In July the superintendent announced he would be resigning. Despite these changes the school committee met in July, conducted business, but did nothing to address the contract. Also this summer the town committee, whose president John Turco, sits on the school committee, cut $240,000 from school budget. This felt like a slap in the face to the teachers.

Winthrop has four schools, broken down into early childhood, elementary, middle and high school. Student enrollment is at approximately 2000. This year for the first time a full day K2 program is being offered free of charge. As the school year is starting union members are conducting themselves as professionals in their classrooms and buildings, but the morale is the lowest it has been since the 1960s.

Jennifer O’Connell explained that they have agreed not to discuss specifics about contract negotiations. But there is plenty to say about the concerns of union members.

- **No salary increase for over two years.** With the cost of living increasing over 2.1% /year that amounts to a pay cut of over 4%. In the current contract the salary scale for Winthrop teachers is $35,153- $68,933. Of the 46 districts in Eastern Massachusetts, represented by the Massachusetts Teachers Association, Winthrop salaries are the 44th lowest. Last year, 12 teachers left the system. It is demoralizing to have teachers start their careers in Winthrop, gain experience and skill and then leave to find higher paying jobs in other towns.

- **Medical Insurance – Three years ago the WTA members joined the GIC in good faith because they were told it would save the town millions of dollars and save employees as well on their medical costs. They believed that school employees would be appreciated for this. Initially premiums went down, and co-pays went up. So people with few medical needs at first did see some savings. But last year premiums for Harvard, the most common provider went up 26% (65/15 split with city). Prescription costs and deductible increased and co-pays went up dramatically. And when teachers went to negotiate raises they were told there was no money. What happened to that millions of saved dollars?**

- **Class size – In the current contract language states that every effort will be made to keep elementary school class size down to 25 or fewer. But apparently efforts are not enough since class size is “through the roof.” Some classes are in the high 20’s and a few may go up to 30.**

- **Lack of resources to make improvements in the schools. This is the fifth year that the older grades and second year that the younger grades have not made annual yearly progress. New math and reading curriculums have been introduced this year without previous consultation with the teachers.**

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Winthrop Teachers Association Rallies for a Fair Contract: Some Facts and Thoughts...

(continued from page 8)

who will be using it and without providing professional development or the full supply of needed textbooks and other materials. Sound familiar? Teachers have been instructed to develop a web page for each class, but again with no training and a side effect classroom demands leave little time for this. In fact, despite state requirements, Winthrop does not have a budget for professional development. Many teachers, of course, pay for their own professional development.

The members of the Winthrop Teachers Association remain determined to win a fair contract. After repeated requests a mediation session has been set for October 4th. Union members are following the rules of the current contract to the letter (work to rule) as a way of continuing the pressure on the school committee to settle this contract.

On Sept 16 the Boston Globe quoted the acting superintendent of the Winthrop schools as saying that the last thing he wants is for teachers and other staff, “a group of sensitive people” to feel unappreciated. A contract offer that compensates for the past two years without a raise and increased cost of medical insurance, and provides mean ingful professional development and resources, and addresses class size in a meaningful way, might help. Until that contract has been offered and accepted the members of the Winthrop Teachers Association can count on the support of members of the Boston Teachers Union and other union members.

This article was written after interviewing two members of the Winthrop Teachers Association. I asked them each what had made them become active in their union. Lorraine Polo’s children went through the Winthrop Public Schools. She is a second grade teacher who has been active in her union for 25 years and teaching for many more. When Lorraine’s schoolchildren got older she felt she had the time to take her turn at serving her union -- which she has done now as a building rep, vice president and on the negotiating committee. The last time she helped negotiate a contract she promised herself she would never do that again. But duty called and she is committed to seeing it through. But after this contract she feels it will be time for some of the younger members to step up. Jennifer O’Connell is the current president of the Winthrop local. Her father worked for GE in Lynn and her mother still works for the Lynn Public Schools, “So I grew up in a union family”. She remembers bringing coffee and donuts to her father and others as they stood on a picket line in the 1980’s. When she began working as a speech therapist in Winthrop there was a picket line outside her building. The union president asked where I was going. She thought she was going home but then she was handed a picket sign and has been active in the union ever since.

-- Marjie Crosby

William Keating, Candidate for U.S. Congress

Keating’s efforts on youth suicide, his work with educators, hospital specialists, and area service organizations on how to assist at-risk students, a manual resulted which, in turn, became the model for the subsequent statewide resource manual. Senator Mitt Romney produced. Through the Norfolk School Partnership, a network of school health and prevention professionals throughout Norfolk County, issues of underage drinking, substance abuse prevention, teen dating violence, bullying, and school safety are addressed. The Norfolk School Partnership is supported by School Safety Forums where a myriad of professionals, including school-based professionals, work together to maintain school safety through early intervention strategies with appropriate services.

Students throughout Norfolk County have seen the play “Consent,” written by a local playwright and produced by a local theatre, focusing on how “situations,” teen age drinking, in particular, can become criminal. Keating used monies confiscated from the classroom and other schools as saying that the last thing he wants is for the classroom to be used as a kickback for the idea of men leading teacher-run schools. The current organizational model is a sexist, child-rearing and women taking care of children. Men have no role in child-rearing and women taking care of children.

The morning focused on setting the context for conversation and on the $100,000 Ford Foundation Grant’s deliverables, which is moving TURN forward. "As a full-time president of the Boston Teachers Union, I have seen the need for a comprehensive anti-bullying program focusing on bystander intervention. Keating’s anti-bullying effort has long included cyber-bullying. As for the members of the Winthrop Teachers Association can count on the support of members of the Boston Teachers Union and other union members.

(Boston Teacher Reform Network (TURN) is a network of more than 50 AFT and NEA union locals promoting progressive reforms in education and in teacher unions to improve student achievement, increase teacher connectivity, and elevate teachers’ voices in the policy making process. TURN is an affiliate of the Teachers Union Reform Network (TURN) supported by the U.S. Department of Education as part of the Teacher Education and Development to Meet the Nation’s Educational Challenge (TEDS-M) Program. The mission of the Teacher Education and Development to Meet the Nation’s Educational Challenge (TEDS-M) Program is to improve the quality of teachers and teaching through improving the preparation, induction, and professional development of teachers.

William Keating (D), Norfolk County District Attorney and former State Senator, and Jeff Perry (R), currently a fourth term State Representative for the 5th Barnstable District. Election Day is November 2nd.

The Boston Teachers Union has endorsed William Keating for his excellent voting record on educational issues. For purposes of this article, education is the primary focus.

While in the Senate, Keating consistently supported legislation Chapter 70 state aid to keep class size down and supported maximizing Chapter 70 state aid to keep class size down and supported maximizing Chapter 70 state aid to keep class size down and supported maximizing Chapter 70 state aid to keep class size down and supported maximizing Chapter 70 state aid to keep class size down and supported maximizing Chapter 70 state aid to keep class size down.

Keating’s work on bullying dates back to 2002 when he implemented an effective anti-bullying program focusing on bystander intervention. Keating’s anti-bullying effort has long included cyber-bullying. As for the teachers and other staff, “a group of sensitive people” to feel unappreciated. A contract offer that compensates for the past two years without a raise and increased cost of medical insurance, and provides meaningful professional development and resources, and addresses class size in a meaningful way, might help. Until that contract has been offered and accepted the members of the Winthrop Teachers Association can count on the support of members of the Boston Teachers Union and other union members.

Mary McDonald, Great Lakes TURN Co-Director, identified the goal of narrowing our focus as a network, and the current interest on teacher-run schools, including the Boston Teachers Union School. I spoke about the Boston Teachers Union's partnership with Simmons College, and leadership structure. Representatives from the Providence Teachers Union President and the Portland, ME school system, we are closely working with our school union and are in the process of forming their own teacher-run schools, followed-up with additional questions and comments.

After the presentation on teacher-run schools, a lively conversation ensued. The DOE's Jo Anderson suggested a research component studying teacher-run schools, allowing the movement to gain more leverage and quality for additional funding. BC Professor Dennis Shirley captured the sentiment behind teacher-run schools as moving from “the fear factor to the peer factor” and Portland Superintendent James C. Morse noted that the current organizational model is a sexist kickback to the idea of men leading and women taking care of children. We need to move from a dated, sexist system to one based on competence.

The Choice Is Clear.

Vote ~ William Keating for Congress!
Community Service, Community Service Learning, Pears and the Dorchester Historical Society

By Sandra Gorton Leonard

Have you ever seen it? It’s a sculpture of a gigantically huge pear in Edward Everett Square! It has been there since 1967, but last spring my curiosity finally got the best of me and I stopped to really look at it. Inscribed on the base of the sculpture are the words: DORCHESTER’S CLAPP PEAR FIRST GROWN HERE 1840’s

But truthfully, I still did not understand why a pear sculpture was in the middle of this very busy Dorchester intersection! What follows here is an attempt to explain 1) the logic behind choosing the Clapp Pear sculpture for the revitalization of Edward Everett Square; 2) the key role of the Dorchester Historical Society was the worst. 300 employees of T Square; 2) the key role of the Dorchester Historical Society followed here is an attempt to explain 1) the founding family. In this context, the Clapp family – more than five generations of the descendants of Roger Clap who arrived at Nantasket aboard the Mary and John in 1630. Fortunately, however, tucked away on a corner lot a hundred or so yards north of the Clapp Pear sculpture, four historic buildings remain: the Capt. Lemuel Clap House which was built ca. 1787, a carriage house, the William Clapp House (1808) and the Clapp Family Barn (c. 1850). Fast-forwarded to 1840 and Dorchester is, indeed, agricultural! In fact, because of the Dorchester Historical Society we know that the Clapp family developed and marketed acres of pears, cherries, plums, and gooseberries where cars now whiz by on Mass. Ave. and Columbia Road.

The William Clapp House, located on the corner lot mentioned above, is at 195 Boston Street. It is now the Headquarters of the Dorchester Historical Society and there family portraits, photographs of the family residences, Dorchester pottery, a cellar kitchen and beautiful hand-hewn floorboards are just a small part of the treasures to be found.

The Clapp Family Barn, now 160 years old, is one of the few remaining barns of that era in Suffolk County! A good look at the tools used for farming back then makes one acutely aware of today’s disconnect between our food sources and ourselves. One marvels at the tenacity and ingenuity of this founding family. In this context, the Clapp Pear sculpture is a potent reminder of Dorchester’s agricultural past and a symbol of today’s urban agricultural movement. The sculpture is scheduled for completion in October with the addition of 10 smaller works.

By the time this article goes to press, The Dorchester Historical Society will have hosted its gala dinner/dance fundraiser on September 24th. It will have been fun and educational but raising $300,000 in one evening would be a miracle. Most likely, the effort to restore the barn will be ongoing. So, when your curiosity takes you (as it did me) past the Dunkin’ Donuts, down Boston Street to visit DHS you will be prepared to see an historic barn in need of restoration and also three other historic buildings that need attention. In the months since my first visit, a beautiful new fence has been installed, landscaping done, railings repaired and there are new doors are on the carriage house, but there is still much work to do - all of which will cost money above and beyond what is needed to save the barn.

When I first met Earl Taylor, the President of the Dorchester Historical Society, he was very patient with my questions and while we were talking I thought of Barbara Locurto’s Community Service/Learning mini-grants of years gone by and current efforts by the Obama Administration (and others before it) to involve teachers, students, professionals and retirees in service/learning. I thought about the energy and many talents of EPS teachers I have known over the years. I thought, “What if 10, 20, 100 Boston Public School teachers and retirees could give one Saturday afternoon back? What if we could scrape and paint?” (“If there is lead paint,” was told, “it would have to be done professionally.”) What if each donated $10 to the cause? Together (over 5,500 of us) we could make a huge difference! $50,000+ from active and retired teachers would go a long way! And then, thinking about how classy Boston can be, I thought what if the BTU and the RTC issued a fundraising challenge to every union in Suffolk County! All together – the firefighters, the patrolmen, the ironworkers and electrical workers (to mention a few) – $10 at a time!

The long term plan DHS has developed already includes addressing energy efficiency issues, transforming the carriage house into a Visitor’s Center, upgrading indoor exhibitions and creating outdoor learning galleries. I’ll bet that a City-Wide Union Give Back drive would raise half a million dollars and together we could provide the means to restore four very precious elements of Boston’s history and add another link to healthy urban living – $10 at a time!

So, while the Dorchester Historical Society has vision, an active and thorough Board of Directors and a growing membership, it can always use help! Collectively, the BTU and the RTC can help and there are many ways to do so. Please contact the Dorchester Historical Society at 195 Boston Street, Dorchester, MA 02125 or log onto www.dorchesterhistoricalsociety.org. If you have already volunteered or made a donation, thank you!

The Clapp Pear in Dorchester.

We Could All Be Peppers, too!

Their ingredients may be made from the best stuff on earth, but their treatment of the workers and their families suffered great mistreatment. Meanwhile Mott’s recorded historic profits of $550 million last year. The Williamsson apple sauce plant was not losing money. Mott’s was simply taking advantage of the poor economy of central New York state when it attempted to cut costs by minimizing the compensation of its employees.

Unemployment in the region is near 10%. Replacement workers were being paid nearly half as much as the regular workers and were receiving no benefits. The difference was $9/hr versus $14/hr. $5/hr is a drop in the bucket for a multi-billion dollar company but meant everything for the local families being mistreated.

This was the longest strike in upper New York state in recent memory. Despite the fact that RWDSU Local 220 “won” the strike, the workers and their families suffered great financial hardship.

Yet Stuart Appelbaum, president of the RWDSU, had this message of hope: “The RWDSU members at Mott’s have a message for working people everywhere: Stand up for what you believe in, and stay united.”

(Sandra Gorton Leonard is a retired Boston Public School teacher and now a member of the Dorchester Historical Society. She taught at the Grover Cleveland Middle School in Dorchester and at Madison Park Technical Vocational High School in Roxbury. Over the years she received several Community Service/Learning grants, an Earthwatch Grant for archeology in Chile, and a group of her students won the EPA’s President’s Youth Environmental Award/NE Region for their work on habitat restoration in Fields Corner. Sandy can be reached at sgleonard1@gmail.com and welcomes your comments and ideas.)
Attention Middle School Math Teachers: 
**Looking for Lesson Designers for AFT Innovation Fund Grant**

**Type of Position:** Part-time  
**Compensation:** Stipend $7,500 - $10,000  
**Start Date:** Early to mid-October

The Boston Teachers Union and the Boston Public Schools have received a planning grant from the AFT Innovation Fund to create world-class lessons that will engage today’s students and can be distributed online. We are currently recruiting exemplary math lesson designers with middle school experience to help create a unit of high quality, multi-media based lessons.

This is an exciting opportunity to be a part of an innovative new project that brings great teachers together to create these exemplary lessons that will be available to other teachers for free.

Preference for candidates who meet the following criteria:  
- Strong middle school math experience.  
- Experience teaching with PowerPoint.  
- Experience designing lessons with PowerPoint.  
- Flexibility, ability to work in teams, and accept feedback.  
- Must be available for approximately six to eight weekend and/or vacation days during the school year, as well as two to three weeks during summer of 2011.

Email your resume or a letter detailing your qualifications to Tracy Young at tyoung3@bostonpublicschools.org.

Any questions, email Tracy or call her at: 781-724-3710.

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### 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 Teachers Chapter (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**

(Elleen Ganley is RTC Membership Chairperson.)

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**BTU Retired Teachers Chapter**

**News**

**RTC Executive Board Minutes • June 14, 2010**

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

Meeting was called to order by the Chairman at 10:17 a.m.

**Reports**

Secretary: Minutes from the May meeting were read and accepted with changes noted. Report Accepted.

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**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

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**Attention Middle School Math Teachers:**

Looking for Lesson Designers for AFT Innovation Fund Grant

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**Committees**

**Travel Committee:** Chairs discussed the Chairman’s informal survey. As a result, the following motion was made:

No member of this (RTC) Board elected or appointed, will engage in conferences or negotiations with any individual or group without the first having brought the issue to this (RTC) Board. The first discussions will be only on an inquiry phase until such material garnered be presented to this (RTC) Board for its discussion. After and only after such procedure is followed will this (RTC) Board take a vote. Furthermore, no individuals or groups of individuals shall have the suggestion made to them, that there is a job here for them. The final determination for a vote is in the purview of this (RTC) Board. Discussion of this motion took place. Motion Accepted.

**Vice Chairman:** There are 1,797 Delta members.

**Benefits:** Motion: to hire Segal to help in negotiations was made and accepted. The Benefits Chair compared the cost of the 2009 benefits to that of 2010 and found that each year has been consistent. In some instances, costs went down. Report Accepted.

**Remembrance:** Cards were sent to 3 members’ families. Report Accepted.

**Scholarship:** Three members’ children received scholarships. Scholarship breakfast will be June 19. Report Accepted.

**Social:** Report on the spring luncheon and amount of books sold. Report Accepted.

**Travel:** Committee’s chair, Ruthanne Kennedy, was thanked for her hard work and successful trips.

Legislative: Chairs encourage the membership to contact their senators regarding the exclusion of collective bargaining. Committee discussed the Health Care bill and the cost increase for health care benefits.

Motion: to ask President Richard Stutman to write a letter to all members regarding the Health Care bill, encouraging the membership to call their senators. Motion Accepted.

**Data Processing:** Committee continues to monitor the security of the website. Report Accepted.

**Membership:** There are 2,641 RTC members in our database. Eileen Ganley will send letters to prospective retirees to recruit members to the RTC. Report Accepted.

**Old Business:** None

**New Business:** Board received a card from Sylvia Goldman thanking us for her recognition at the spring luncheon.

Meeting adjourned at 12:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Marilyn F. Marion, Secretary, RTC
90th Anniversary of the 19th Amendment: Granting Women the Right to Vote

Section 1. The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex.

Section 2. Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

by Angelo J. Cristiani
Psychological Services

Congress passed the 19th Amendment on June 4, 1919 and on August 26, 1920, it became the law of the land. The 19th Amendment was the end result of 70 years of struggle by women Suffragists.

The Women’s Suffrage Movement was born in the mid-nineteenth century. In July 1848, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott, two prominent political activists in the temperance movement, led 200 women at a convention in Seneca Falls, NY to discuss women’s rights. It was in Seneca Falls that the women proclaimed their right to education and employment opportunities and further passed a resolution declaring “it is the duty of the women in this country to secure themselves their sacred right to the elective franchise.” That 1848 convention catalyzed the Women’s Suffrage Movement into the political forefront with a ripple effect that underscored the entire movement and that still resonates today.

In 1850, the first National Women’s Rights Convention was held in Worcester, MA. One thousand women reportedly attended. That first convention became an annual event, enabling the growth of the Women’s Suffrage Movement. In 1869, the 15th Amendment was proposed stating, “Section 1. The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude. Section 2. The Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.” In 1870, it was ratified. Congress, however, declined to include gender within its purview.

The gender exclusion resulted in the establishment of the National Woman Suffrage Association by Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton in 1869. Their specific goal was to advocate for a woman’s suffrage amendment to the US Constitution. During the same time period, Lucy Stone formed and led the American Women Suffrage Association that worked through various state legislatures. In 1890 the two organizations joined forces and became the National American Woman Suffrage Association. The Suffragists’ determination, organization, and persistence resulted in the State of Wyoming becoming the first state granting women the right to vote that same year. By 1912, nine states had adopted the women’s suffrage legislation.

The National Woman’s Party, established in 1913 as the result of the National Convention, upheld the ante. Straying from traditional methods of lobbying, women suffragists marched, engaged in acts of civil disobedience, and picketed the White House. In addition to lobbying, marching, and acts of civil disobedience, women activists continuously wrote and lectured, not to mention engage in silent vigils and hunger strikes, in order to help facilitate the desired constitutional change.

Finally, due largely to women’s increased involvement in various aspects of World War I, resistance to women’s suffrage started to crumble. Women’s suffrage became more “acceptable.” When the State of New York adopted women’s suffrage in 1917, President Woodrow Wilson is said to have changed his position on the issue and began to support the amendment.

On May 21, 1919, the House passed the 19th Amendment. Two short weeks later, the Senate followed suit. On August 18, 1920, Tennessee became the 36th state to ratify the amendment. With Tennessee’s ratification, the amendment met the three-fourths state requirement necessary to make it Constitutional law. Secretary of State Bainbridge Colby certified the ratification on August 26, 1920. Unfortunately, many early suffragists didn’t live to see the results work.

In our own backyard, in nearby Newport, RI you can learn of the Suffrage Movement first hand. During Newport’s infamous Gilded Age, surrounded by nature’s beauty, ocean, beaches, and wildlife, women organized amidst societal glamour. Socialite and debutante Alva Vanderbilt Belmont, whose style was characterized by unique, independent spirit, evolved from “socialite” to “reformer” using her societal position, networking, money, and “summer cottage,” the Marble House, as the setting for suffrage rallies in the early 20th Century. In 1999, a suffrage rally was reportedly held on the lawn of the Marble House right on Bellevue Avenue.

In 1850, the first National Women’s Rights Convention was held in Worcester, Massachusetts.