Senate Proposes Cut in Pensions

A few weeks back the state senate proposed cutting pensions for all new employees and forcing them to work longer and harder for less money. The proposal would mandate that a five-year average—not the current three-year average—be instituted for all new employees. What’s more, new employees will have to work longer and later, as both the maximum pension age and the vesting age will be pushed further out. The news isn’t all bad, to be sure. Some slight favorable pension changes, too, will be enacted. Retirees will now see a $30 boost per year in their pensions. That’s 88¢ per day.

But the news is overwhelmingly unfavorable, at least in the senate’s proposed pension reform version, and in watching this huge step backward—the first one in more than half a century—one has to think that ever so slightly of Wisconsin. After all, Wisconsin was just another step though a significant step in the growing legislative movement to eat away at employee rights and benefits. And if we think the attacks against Massachusetts public employees are not related to the assault in Wisconsin, we’re fooling ourselves. Ditto on attacks on our health insurance.

Legislature Cuts Health Insurance

Last summer the legislature, with the blessing of the governor, dramatically altered our collective bargaining rights on health insurance. Fortunately, Boston city unions had previously agreed to a 4-year deal that protects our health coverage with minor changes. But at the end of the 4 years, in July 2015, the protection ends, and we will face a certain reduction in benefits and an increased cost. No, this is not Wisconsin, but it is getting closer.

Legislature ‘Reforms’ Our Schools

And then there was Ed Reform. Granted, the assault on teacher unions was not quite Wisconsin-like in breadth or severity. And it did take place before Wisconsin. But somehow I do not feel relieved. Let’s look at some of the reforms… double the out-of-district charter schools in Boston and others places, a move that will cost city schools an estimated $50 million per year and an estimated 500 teaching positions, and the forced implementation of Turnaround Schools (the 12th, the Agassiz, was closed) that protects our health coverage with minor changes. But at the end of the 4 years, in July 2015, the protection ends, and we will face a certain reduction in benefits and an increased cost. No, this is not Wisconsin, but it is getting closer.

No matter how one looks at it, the teachers at the 11 Turnaround Schools (the 12th, the Agassiz, was closed) have lost many of their collective bargaining rights. BTU staff now work under an imposed agreement sanctioned by the state that gives administrators superpowers, while removing many items and the authority to negotiate over teaching conditions from the process of collective bargaining. (The current law has ‘room’ for 35 more

(continued on page 2)
How many personal days do teachers get and how do we take them?

Turnaround Schools 11 or 12 of which could be in Boston.) No, it’s not Wisconsin, but it’s not far removed.

Let’s Get Rid of the Wisconsin Rationalization

It’s easy to say to excuse a bad happening or a bad circumstance saying that things will always be worse. ‘Wisconsin’ could be worse’ is supposed to make us feel better. Or so we are told. But we ought to rid ourselves of that notion. Let’s not rationalize what our legislature or governor have done to us as ‘not quite Wisconsin.’

On pensions, current employees pay just about all of their share of the pension contributions, roughly 91-92%. True, there is an unfunded liability created decades ago when the contribution rates were much lower, and the state didn’t kick in its fair share. But the current liability is still on pace to be paid off before 2040 – well before those whose rates have been adjusted. Benefits. Changes the benefits for those who have not yet entered the system doesn’t hasten the payoffs. But the current system of benefits for those who have not yet entered the system doesn’t hasten the payoffs. But the current system of benefits for those who have not yet entered the system doesn’t hasten the payoffs.

Since we, as teachers and related service providers, are charged with appropriate placement to the parent. If a parent is unable to attend, a home conference can be held. The team shall respond to the appeal within two weeks. If, upon reconsideration, the team finds the placement inappropriate, it shall present an IEP which contains an appropriate placement to the parent. Since we, as teachers and related service providers, are charged with appropriate placement to the parent.

There are specific provisions for bereavement in addition to these days. Requests to take personal days should be submitted to the building administrator as early as possible prior to the day requested off. Exceed the discretion of the building administrator (such as a school emergency), not more than 5% of teachers are eligible for a personal day at one time. No teacher may take a personal day on both the day before and the day after a school vacation, including the Thanksgiving recess. Personal days not used each year are rolled into your accumulated sick days.

How long is a Secondary teacher required to work without a break and how much P&D time do they get?

Secondary teachers (grades 6 – 12) in traditional schools, are not required to teach a total of 160 minutes in a row. However, teachers must get a minimum of 240 minutes of P&D time on the secondary level is 240 minutes per day. Teachers will have planning and development time each day and will be scheduled in blocks/periods and at least 10 minutes per day. Teachers must get a minimum of 240 minutes of P&D time during 9/1 – 1/31 and 2/1 – 6/30 to BPS Payroll Department, 26 Court Street 2nd Floor. Turnaround School Charters and Innovation Schools must refer to the language in their Election to Work Agreements concerning these work conditions.

Do I have to accept an intern or student teacher?

No. The contract clearly states, “Any teacher requested to accept internship shall have at least one week’s notice of advance, and may refuse.” If a teacher does become a cooperating teacher, the contract outlines the following. “Each cooperating teacher shall be given two days of leave with pay, with out loss of benefits. Such days shall be taken as mutually agreed upon by the teacher and the administrative head during the last two weeks of the student teacher training period. In cases of conflict, seniority shall prevail in the selection of days.”

How do performing arts teachers get compensated for putting on productions?

The contract does provide for compensation if it meets the following parameters. “Effective September 1, 2005, performing arts teachers, including theater, music, dance, drama, and chorus group teachers, who conduct regular after school rehearsals and practices culminating in final productions or for festivals shall be compensated for such after school time with a stipend of $1,600.00 per year.”

What is the policy on scheduling individual parent/teacher conferences?

According to the collective bargaining agreement, better known as the contract, individual parent/teacher conferences shall be held at the school at a time that is mutually agreed upon by the parent and the teacher. If a parent is unable to attend a conference at the school, the teacher/parent conference regarding the child’s school performance shall be conducted by telephone.

United we stand – divided we fall. Let’s stand together! BTUonly!
Pension reform has been the hot topic in Massachusetts during this legislative session. Today’s State Senate (D-Arlington), Ken Donnelly (D-Dedham), John Keenan (D-Dedham), among others, worked tirelessly to defeat the bill. As previously noted, the bill passed by a margin of 24-10. A special thank you to the ten state senators who voted against this bill.

As of September 18, 2011, the bill is in the hands of the House Ways and Means Committee prior to its being debated on the House floor. The coalition is reportedly meeting on a daily basis as unions mobilize and lobby to have the pension reform bill defeated in the House of Representatives. All BTU members are urged to contact their state representatives and ask that this bill be defeated. Refer to the BTU website for detailed information as to how to contact your representative and contest Angela Cristiani at 617-720-3000 for assistance. A collective effort to defeat this bill is essential for all the reasons outlined in the above letter.

Pension Reform $2010 Roll Call Votes: Yea/Nay
(Yea = supported the pension bill; Nay = opposed the pension bill)

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For these reasons, we ask that you oppose the pension bill as currently drafted, and we hope that you will support amendments that would help our future public employees, rather than punish them for past mistakes by the Commonwealth and by municipalities.

The Joint Public Service Committee released the bill on Monday, September 12, 2011, which allowed for only two days for filing amendments. Senator Ken Donnelly (D-Arlington), John Keenan (D-Dedham), Steven Tolman (D-Brighton) and others worked tirelessly to defeat the bill. As previously noted, the bill passed by a margin of 24-10. A special thank you to the ten state senators who voted against this bill.

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Welcome back.

I hope you will forgive the one liner openings. Sometimes, simplicity is best. And what better way to get the attention of our current readers than pointing out that it is time to get the gloves off? As a teacher, reader, and moderator of the Boston Public Schools (BPS) Teacher Forum over the past few weeks, posting comments and making suggestions. Kati from Cambridge, Tom from Brighton, Ted from the Edwards, Jenn from the Elliot, Neema from the Dever-McCormack and Charlie from the Peer Assistance program. You all have been a great start. Writing publicly is a risk and we welcome conversations that get at ties to professionally collaborate and grow, and we welcome conversations that get at opportunities that conversation can unfold. It’s easy to get completely untethered. America has been trying to exhaust energy. America has been trying to exhaust energy for fifty years ago has culminated as a health problem and a nutrition problem. What’s up with that? As you read this excerpt, consider: How much credo you can get from the historical growth of teaching as a women’s profession? Teaching is one of the most critical jobs in America. What’s up with that? As you read this excerpt, consider: How much credo you can get from the historical growth of teaching as a women’s profession? Teaching is one of the most critical jobs in America. What’s up with that? As you read this excerpt, consider: How much credo you can get from the historical growth of teaching as a women’s profession? Teaching is one of the most critical jobs in America. What’s up with that? As you read this excerpt, consider: How much credo you can get from the historical growth of teaching as a women’s profession? Teaching is one of the most critical jobs in America. What’s up with that? As you read this excerpt, consider: How much credo you can get from the historical growth of teaching as a women’s profession? Teaching is one of the most critical jobs in America. What’s up with that? As you read this excerpt, consider: How much credo you can get from the historical growth of teaching as a women’s profession? Teaching is one of the most critical jobs in America. What’s up with that? As you read this excerpt, consider: How much credo you can get from the historical growth of teaching as a women’s profession? Teaching is one of the most critical jobs in America. What’s up with that? As you read this excerpt, consider: How much credo you can get from the historical growth of teaching as a women’s profession? Teaching is one of the most critical jobs in America. What’s up with that? As you read this excerpt, consider: How much credo you can get from the historical growth of teaching as a women’s profession? Teaching is one of the most critical jobs in America. What’s up with that? As you read this excerpt, consider: How much credo you can get from the historical growth of teaching as a women’s profession? Teaching is one of the most critical jobs in America. What’s up with that? As you read this excerpt, consider: How much credo you can get from the historical growth of teaching as a women’s profession? Teaching is one of the most critical jobs in America. What’s up with that? As you read this excerpt, consider: How much credo you can get from the historical growth of teaching as a women’s profession? Teaching is one of the most critical jobs in America. What’s up with that? As you read this excerpt, consider: How much credo you can get from the historical growth of teaching as a women’s profession? Teaching is one of the most critical jobs in America. What’s up with that? As you read this excerpt, consider: How much credo you can get from the historical growth of teaching as a women’s profession? Teaching is one of the most critical jobs in America. What’s up with that? As you read this excerpt, consider: How much credo you can get from the historical growth of teaching as a women’s profession? Teaching is one of the most critical jobs in America. What’s up with that? As you read this excerpt, consider: How much credo you can get from the historical growth of teaching as a women’s profession? Teaching is one of the most critical jobs in America. What’s up with that? As you read this excerpt, consider: How much credo you can get from the historical growth of teaching as a women’s profession? Teaching is one of the most critical jobs in America. What’s up with that?
A benefit plan that allows eligible employees to set aside up to $5,000 in pre-tax income per calendar year to pay for certain medical expenses is now in effect. To be eligible for the plan, employees must work at least 20 hours per week (half-time or more) on a regular basis.

For further information on eligibility, please call 1-800-544-2540.

Under the Flexible Spending Account (FSA) employees who opt for inclusion will be reimbursed for a variety of out-of-pocket medical expenses (such as doctor/dentist co-pays, prescriptions, and chiropractic, acupuncture, as examples) with pre-tax dollars which are exempt from federal, state and FICA taxation. A typical teacher who joins the plan can save up to 33% of $5,000 of out-of-pocket medical expenses per year. Retirement contributions are not affected.

The plan can save up to 33% of $5,000 of prescriptions, and chiropractic, acupuncture, and other medical expenses is now in effect. To be eligible for the plan, employees must work at least 20 hours per week (half-time or more) on a regular basis.

To be eligible for the plan, employees must work at least 20 hours per week (half-time or more) on a regular basis. The plan essentially parallels the Dependent Care Plan (DCAP), which allows pre-tax dollars to be used for dependent care, such as day care or elder care. Over 600 city employees have joined the plan, of which 500 are teachers, with the other 100 being classified employees. The plan is relatively straightforward and provides a great tax benefit, but employees have to be cautious when participating in such an arrangement as there may be significant tax consequences.

For example, when Mr. Jones (in his employed status for the current reimbursement year) has $3,000 of unused reimbursement money in his account to be used for out-of-pocket dental expenses, and claims that, for the current reimbursement year, he has $3,000 of expenses in excess of his $1,000 reimbursement limit, the $2,000 remaining in his account will be available to use in the next reimbursement year for out-of-pocket dental expenses as well.

The plan also allows people to set aside pre-tax dollars for some parking expenses ($230 per month) and mass transit expenses (also up to $550 per month). For more information on all of the above, please see www.cpa125.com or call 1-800-544-2540.

New employees can sign up for either program within 30 days of hire or during the Open Enrollment Period, subject to the eligibility requirement mentioned above. Eligible employees can also sign up within 30 days of some qualifying life event (such as a marriage, birth, adoption, or birth) change. A complete explanation can be found in the brochure published by CPA.

Yearly re-enrollment must be done by the end of the calendar year, so you must be very careful in setting up your annual allowance. Do not overestimate the amount you will need for the current plan year; at the end of the calendar year, you will have 90 days to submit a claim for reimbursement for expenses that were incurred in the previous plan year. While the tax savings are in either case, you are not required to take advantage of both plans. However, you must be careful in estimating your tax credit for expenses in the other accounts. The mechanics of all plans are essentially the same, except for the issue of timing and dollar amounts. In addition to a Medical Flexible Spending Account and Dependent Care Plan you must provide a great tax benefit, but employees have to be cautious when participating in such an arrangement as there may be significant tax consequences.

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On the second day of the school year, a beautiful Friday morning, I visited the Higginson-Lewis K-8 School in Roxbury at the invitation of Principal Joy Salesman-Oliver. When I arrived, the entire school population was gathered outside, while firemen dealt with smoke in the basement, waiting patiently and talking quietly with one another.

I was impressed with the calm way students settled into their schoolwork when they returned to their classrooms. As in most schools during the first week of school, teachers were introducing rules and procedures, and getting to know the young people in their charge. When I returned the following week to interview students, kindergarten classes had begun and their hallway hummed with excited voices and activity. It always feels so GOOD to be in a school full of learners!

The two first grade classes have been separated by gender this year. The boys told me they really liked being together because “Girls talk too much!” I can’t help wondering what the girls would say! I loved visiting Erik Hess’s eighth grade science class. He had students lined up at the back tables “launching” large rubber bands toward a target while classmates watched. Each student had to adjust the pull on the rubber band as well as the angle at which it would be sent soaring, recording the data after each launch. This is an experienced teacher who understands how to fully engage his students and who told me that he appreciates the administrative trust that allows him to try new things.

Although many teachers have been shuffled around the district due to school closings/consolidations, most of us begin the school year with energy and a renewed commitment to making a positive difference in the lives of our students. I wish you all respectful administrators, collaborative peers, supportive partnerships with families, and enthusiastic students to sustain you! This column is dedicated to celebrating the learning going on every day in Boston’s public schools. Please invite me to visit yours!

-Amika Kemmler Ernst, Ed.D.

Ms. Nguyen is helping me count by fives on my hundred chart. I’m learning the names of new shapes, like the rhombus and trapezoid.

– Noah Brown

We were launching rubber bands and collecting data about the force and slope used to reach the target. We’ve learned that hands-on science can be very fun!

– Elhan Jama, Joshua Martins & Jermaine Wilson, Jr.

I was writing a sentence on the board. I’ve learned that lemurs live in the zoo.

– Jolynette Centeno

We were listening to Ms. Simmons read a book about animals. We’re learning to sound out words so we can read books and poems by ourselves.

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

Lisbeth and I were solving a problem in math class. We’ve learned how to identify multiples and factors.

– Francisca Barros

Mr. Pierce was helping me with my math. This year I’m learning how to make graphs from a data table.

– Tenaj Burleigh

We were finding the date on the September calendar. We’re learning how to write letters and numbers. We’re also learning how to share and raise our hands when we want to say something in class.

– Geraldine Aziz’s 1st Graders

Ms. Clark was testing us on our addition facts. Now we’re learning how to subtract.

– Rotimi Osinubi, Noah White & James Flynn

I was doing my work. I’m learning how to add and subtract in math class.

– Nayib Parris
Pedagogy, Policy, and the Privatized City: Stories of Dispossession and Defiance from New Orleans
by Kirsten L. Buras with Jim Randels, Kalamu Ya Salaam and the Students at the Center

While attending the Teach Conference in Washington D.C. I happened upon this book and the book is a must read for activists at the conference. It is an impressive book about the devastation visited upon the great city of New Orleans. I am not talking about Hurricane Katrina, but obvi- ously, but I am talking about the role that city and state government played in the destruction of whole communities, schools, housing and jobs.

This devastation was man-made and punished people of color primarily and exclusively. It is a time in our society where low income people are playing out in our nation are all here – the charter schools replacing schools which were supported by the community. To demolishing public housing and moving people out of the city, to a school closed up after Katrina by the state officials in the destruction of whole communities. Nevertheless, I am talking about the role played upon this book in the bookstore for not talking about Hurricane Katrina nec- essarily, but I am talking about the role played upon this book in the bookstore for not talking about Hurricane Katrina nec-

This book is so timely that 3 days after the devastation was man-made and punished people of color primarily and exclusively. It is a time in our society where low income people are playing out in our nation are all here – the charter schools replacing schools which were supported by the community. To demolishing public housing and moving people out of the city, to a school closed up after Katrina by the state officials in the destruction of whole communities. Nevertheless, I am talking about the role played upon this book in the bookstore for not talking about Hurricane Katrina nec-

This book contains many excellent es-
says by the students at the Center which effectively demolish the arguments for decentralization, charter schools, market based educational reform, and more. The book is a must read for anyone interested in urban renewal, charter school, urban poor removal and dispersal of power from its citizens because the status quo was to demolish all of the cities housing projects and gentrify this offering to get optimum results. Cur-

Letter to the Editor

Dear (God, Allah, Supreme Being, Jesus, Buddha, or whatever floats your boat), I praise Thee and all those whose words have inspired me. In so doing, I hope that the reader will forgive the writing style of this letter. I have never written a letter to the editor before, but I feel that now is the time to do so.

I am writing this letter because I believe that the public schools in our city are in crisis, and I feel that this crisis is one that we, as a community, need to address.

Over the past few years, I have seen the quality of education in our public schools decline. The teachers are overworked and understaffed, and the facilities are in disrepair. The curriculum is outdated, and the textbooks are out of date. The students are disengaged and apathetic, and the dropout rate is high. The need for change is evident, and it is time for us to work together to make the necessary changes.

We need to invest in our public schools and provide them with the resources they need to succeed. We need to hire more teachers, improve the facilities, and update the curriculum. We also need to support our students and help them stay in school.

I urge all of my fellow citizens to take action and help our public schools. Together, we can make a difference.

Salaam,
[Your Name]
**Letter to the Editor**

I was heartening to see in the September, 2011 issue of Boston Union Teacher the long list of benefits the union has secured over the course of its collective bargaining agreements and the positive impact they have come a long way. Without it new teachers entering our city’s schools would face 40 students in a class, a 10 hour work day, poorly equipped classrooms and the prospect of being fired for looking cross-eyed at the principal. On countless occasions union leadership has stood up to forces within the School Department and to the city’s political structure to improve the working conditions of its teachers.

Perhaps the most significant gains in benefits and due process rights our union has recently enlarged the scope of the collective bargaining process to address issues of professional development, teaching and learning, and school improvement. However, given the drawn out nature of the negotiation process and the rapid expansion of Boston-based state charter schools, a question must be asked. Is it possible for a collective bargaining agreement to do teaching and learning to life in more schools? If so, how?

Over the three decades I spent teaching and learning in the city, I have had the opportunity to observe and read about many others. I have found two things to be true. First, when those who work in schools are told how to solve a problem by those who work outside of schools, the solution never works. Second, in each school building there is only one person who has the knowledge and trust of their peers to make the changes that will enliven their particular school. Genuine school reform can only happen when teachers, who have created school-based teams, are empowered to solve problems as they see them.

A union contract, no matter how much it is negotiated, is a contract. In the field, is still part of a top-down reform model which assumes, like many other state and School Department initiatives, that the school for one school is good for all schools. Closing the achievement gap, improving school climate, performance evaluations and enhancing professional development are all important educational issues but the best place to address them is in the staff meetings of each and every school.

A collective bargaining agreement between the BTU and the School Department can redress this imbalance and learn in our schools if it removes many of the regulations that govern the details of school life and allows its extraordinary teachers and administrators to think for themselves. A collective bargaining agreement in the early 1990’s established School Based Management and Shared Decision Making as a vehicle for just this type of inside school reform. However, allowing all schools in the system this much latitude requires our union and the School Department to play different roles.

Now, instead of just ensuring that these school-based groups are empowered to solve problems as they see them. A union contract, no matter how much it is negotiated, is a contract. In the field, is still part of a top-down reform model which assumes, like many other state and School Department initiatives, that the school for one school is good for all schools. Closing the achievement gap, improving school climate, performance evaluations and enhancing professional development are all important educational issues but the best place to address them is in the staff meetings of each and every school.

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The Save Our Schools Rally and March: Reflections of a Retired Teacher

by Paul Tenney

On a steamy day, with the temperature hovering in the low triple figures, some 4,000 teachers from all over America, from both NEA and AFT, as well as supporters of public education gathered at the Ellipse (South of the White House) in Washington, DC, to protest the grotesque Race to Top Education Law that The Obama administration has foisted on the nation’s schools. The law is viewed in the popular imagination as the Blame the Teacher Act and the reason that precisely what it does. To paraphrase, the late great Thomas Paine, “there are the times that a person’s soul”. There were passions a plenty on that sun parched plain just off 17th and Constitution Avenue, with teachers chanting after speaker denounced Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, who vows to do the nation what he did to the city of Chicago - “I’m going to lay it waste with charter schools for the privileged and warehouses for the special needs and ESL and other ‘difficult’ (or for us we say more expensive to educate) students.”

There were celebrities like Matt Damon, introduced by his mother Nancy Carlsson-Paige, and actor and actress Leslie at Lesley College. Damon gave a stirring speech in support of the public schools he attended in Cambridge, Mass. He averred that the skills that helped him to be a success cannot be tested. He further pointed out that the individual attention and caring that he received in the classroom teachers helped him to be a lifelong learner. The crowd loved it and gave him a standing “O”.

There were other speakers before him including a school superintendent clad in a t-shirt from Paris, Texas who spoke in both Spanish and English in support of the students whose families were being put under strain because of the inane and simplistic reliance on one size fits all testing and high stakes that push out the rest of the curriculum.

There was Diane Ravitch, who in an earlier incarnation had campaigned vigorously in favor of the above mentioned abominations, but now has made a 180 degree turn. Unlike other she has the intellectual courage and where with to admit she was horribly wrong and now follows where the latest credible evidence takes her. After all Dr. Ravitch has always been a scientist and not a practitioner of education voodoo.

There was also Linda Darling-Hammond, ever moderate in the education wars but forthright in her support of evidence based evaluation and against education wars but forthright in her support for the Children’s Defense Fund and the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). She was Jonathan Kozol, now in his sunset years. Kozol was a great writer who spoke in the BTU banner and was well received.

For the media, who have the skills to spew forth, the reaction of the Coolidge–Hoover years. To add insult to injury Verizon continued its efforts to negotiate a fair contract. Leafletting continues at Verizon Wireless stores near you. We can help support our brothers and sisters at Verizon go to UniforVerizon.com.

Verizon Workers Continue the Struggle Against Corporate Greed

By Mary Glynn

O n August 7th, 45,000 Verizon workers, members of the Communications Workers of America (CWA) and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW), walked the picket lines in a strike to contest Verizon’s refusal to negotiate in good faith. In the process of negotiating a new contract Verizon put 100 demands for takebacks on the table on July 1 and consequently refused to compromise on any of its demands. The demands included:

- Freezing pensions for active employees and eliminating them for new workers;
- Eliminating paid sick days for workers with less than 2 years of service;
- Cutting disability benefits for workers injured on the job;
- Cutting paid holidays from 11 to 7 including Veterans Day;
- Imposing health care payments of up to $6,800 on active employees; and
- Imposing health care payments of up to $6,700 on retired employees whose average annual pension is $32,000;
- Making pay increases based on merit with no guaranteed raises;
- Eliminating all job security language;
- Continuing outsourcing of work to non-union contractors, including workers in India, Philippines and Mexico.

To add insult to injury Verizon continues to make huge profits. Verizon has made $22.4 billion in profits this summer of despair and discontent. We are very grateful to them for fighting for what is fair. It’s time to realize that it is not the workers in this country that are greedy but the corporations.

We need to continue to support their efforts to negotiate a fair contract. Leafletting continues at Verizon Wireless stores near you. We can help support our brothers and sisters at Verizon go to UniforVerizon.com.

Citizens for Public Schools saved October 15, 2011 CPS Fall Issues Conference

Public Schools Under Attack: Organizing to Fight Back!

Join parents, teachers, and concerned citizens on Saturday, Oct. 15 at the Bayside Expo Center in Boston to share ideas, strategize and organize to achieve our goal: quality public schools for every child.

The conference will feature:

- An exciting morning panel on MCAS reform, the struggle to preserve Boston schools, organizing parents across America, and exposing “Astroturf” (i.e., fake grass roots) education groups.
- Morning and afternoon workshops on high-stakes testing, charter schools, threats to unions, public schools, education policy, investing in public schools to stop the tea party madness that threatens school reform, community organizing, nationwide civil rights and labor union movement for positive change. We have to stop the tea party madness that threatens our democracy.
- Continuing panel on MCAS reform with national expert, Steve Perry. The conference will continue the reaction of the Coolidge–Hoo ver years. Let us resolve to begin that effort now in this summer of despair and discontent.

**Online registration and more information, including directions, now available.**

Go to http://www.citizensforpublicschools.org.

Saturday, October 15, 2011, Bayside Expo Center, 200 Mount Vernon St., Boston, MA, 02128. Conference begins at 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. For more information, call 617-227-3000 or email office@citizensforpublicschools.org.

Boston Union Teacher © October, 2011 9
The Importance of School Nurses

Doug Horan

School nurses are the primary point of contact with health care services for all school-age children, providing a variety of services, including immunizations, screenings, health assessments, and treatment for minor injuries. They are responsible for monitoring students with chronic illnesses such as asthma, diabetes, and food allergies, and ensuring that these students receive necessary medications and treatments. School nurses also work closely with parents, teachers, and other health care professionals to coordinate care and prevent exacerbations of chronic conditions. In addition, they provide health education to students and staff on various topics, including nutrition, substance abuse prevention, and mental health. Overall, school nurses play a critical role in promoting the health and well-being of all students in the school setting.
Commentary

There’s been keep up on the debate around the direction of public education, you know by now that the “failure of American’s public schools” is because of me. The FrontPage of Boston Globe highlights my contributions to the effort as Left Behind:Who’s Blaming Whom, as the self-titled book by Michael McLaughlin and Ralph White, and a host of others. The book, which has become a bestseller, is a collection of essays that explore the reasons for the decline of American public schools. It includes contributions from a range of experts, including teachers, administrators, and policymakers, who offer their perspectives on the current state of education in the United States.

The book’s title, “The Failure of American’s Public Schools,” is a direct reference to the attacks that have been directed at me, and other educators, for the problems that our schools face. The authors argue that the blame for these problems cannot be placed solely on the shoulders of teachers or administrators, but rather on a range of factors, including budget cuts, standardized testing, and the pressures of accountability that have been placed on schools.

The book’s essays are a call to action, urging readers to engage with the issues and work to improve our schools. It is a powerful reminder of the need for a collective effort to address the challenges that our schools face, and the importance of supporting educators and students in their work.

I am to Blame for the Failure of Schools

The truth that Superman fails to portray is that there are thousands of other teachers like me working in districts across the country to build partnerships with students, parent, and community groups in our community to improve a meaningful, public education system. We work day in and day out in hopes that we may provide all children the equitable education, and hope that one day we may feel truly supported to teach all children.

To anyone who truly wants to see a change in this country, I encourage you to stop “waiting” and start ACTING. Join in the conversation by coming to a country of An Inconvenient Truth Behind Waiting for Superman or Teachers Talking, is the Nation Listening at the union hall. Help us to organize future screenings and outreach to our membership and the larger community.

Professional Issues Committee, Social Committee, recently created Community Advisory Group. There are many ways to get involved in real change. However, there is never going to be a hero that sweeps us away into the clouds. There will just be the collective power of millions of us moving toward the transformation of the future of public education.

I’m ready. How about you?

(Submitted by Young Achievers 6th Grade Humanities Teacher, Executive Board, Boston Teachers Union; Founding Member, Teacher activist Group-Boston Member and Teacher Activist Group National Network’s Jessica Tang; and co-authored with Philadelphia High School Teacher; Member, Teacher Action Group Philadelphia Member and Teacher Activist Groups National Network’s Anissa Weintraub.)

RTC Executive Board Minutes • June 13, 2011

Members present: Anne-Marie Adduci, Annette Broder, Treasurer, Sandy Carle, Mary Cahalan, Larry Connolly, Dave Donovan, Chairman, Phil Fasano, Annen Ganley, Donna Cooley-Hilton, Ruthanne Kennedy, Marilyn Marion, Secretary, Leonard Miraglia, Vice Chairman, Mary Jo Murphy and Paul Tenney.

Meeting began at 10:35 a.m. by the Vice Chairman.

Officers

Secretary: Secretary’s report was read and accepted.

Treasurer: CDs were renewed, and there was very little activity. More activity will take place in June’s report.

Chairman: An Edible Arrangement was sent to a board member. Chairman stated that he had received a call from a member who wanted special glasses. The chairman explained to the member why the glasses were not covered by our plan. The chairman also stated that Delta Dental made a contribution to the golf tournament which was accepted.

Vice Chairman: We have 13 new application for Delta Dental. As of May 28, 2011, there are 970 total applicants, and a total of 1882 members. More activity is expected in January when COBRA ends for many members.

Committees

Benefits: The following motion was made by Phil Fasano, Benefits Chair: That the RTC hire the consulting firm of Siegel Associates to assist in 2012 Delta negotiations. Motion was unanimously accepted.

Remembrance: No report. Secretary will call the Remembrance chair to express the Executive Board’s condolences to family and friends.

Scholarship: There were 3 scholarship awards honored at the banquet. Discussion regarding the scholarship letter was tabled until next meeting. Report accepted.

Social: Luncheon report of money received and paid was submitted. Report accepted.

Next Steps: The next day trip will be to Wobolcho, New Hampshire, on Tuesday, June 21. However, they need 7 more reservations or the trip will be cancelled. Report accepted.

The Committee will be seeking permission for a mailing with the fall trip flyers. The committee will speak with Elaine with the hope that a mailing be out by mid July.


Legislative: Health insurance is an important benefit that the need to keep a watch on and monitor the changes proposed. The House and Senate versions are now available and reservations are being accepted. No conclusions have been reached at this date.

The Committee plans to reach out to other organizations – BPE, MTA, MMB. Ralph White’s Group to coordinate activities on pending legislation that might affect retirees.

The Committee will organize a Rapid Response Team of our retirees for future activities at the State or City levels.

The Committee submitted Mary Glynn’s name to be added to this committee. She has, in the past, photographed events and would be a welcome addition to the Legislative Committee. Report accepted.

Legislative Committee made the following motion: that we request that Michael McLaughlin give us a report in September, January and May. Motion accepted.

Data Processing: The Committee continues to work with Jonathan, the IT person. Report accepted.

Membership: We have 2,800 members. Report accepted.

Election: BTU Election: 1,341 BTU members, of which 343 were retirees. New Business: November 1 is the date of the fall luncheon. The business meeting will be September 27. The next RTC Executive Board meeting will be September 12. The October meeting is October 11.

New Business: Medicare with carve-out discussions will be on the agenda for the business meeting. Workshops will also be planned regarding the Massachusetts Senate Health Insurance bill.

Old Business: None.

Meeting adjourned at 12:18 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Marilyn Marion, Secretary, RTC

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 ($5 for teachers, $2.50 for paras). The RTC will also be planning to offer Medicare with carve-out discussions on the agenda for the business meeting. Workshops will also be planned regarding the Massachusetts Senate Health Insurance bill.

To anyone who truly wants to see a change in this country, I encourage you to stop “waiting” and start ACTING. Join in the conversation by coming to a country of An Inconvenient Truth Behind Waiting for Superman or Teachers Talking, is the Nation Listening at the union hall. Help us to organize future screenings and outreach to our membership and the larger community.

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Old Business: None.

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Respectfully submitted,

Marilyn Marion, Secretary, RTC

FILL IN THE COUPON AND RETURN TO THE RTC TO RECEIVE A PACKET OF INFORMATION ON THE RTC, Hopefully, after reading the info, you will fill out the new card and return.

(eileen ganley is RTC Membership Chairperson)
BTU Says Welcome Back with a Fundraiser for the Making Strides Against Breast Cancer Walk

Photos by Michael J. Maguire

(Boston Latin School and Boston Latin Academy staff members gather for a fundraiser for the Making Strides Against Breast Cancer walk.

(L-R standing) Catherine Foley, Meg Miller, Beth Moguel. (L-R sitting) Sai Bartoloma and Dustin Brownell - all of Boston Latin School.

Valerie Hampton and Janet Cadogan.

LaTonya Burnett and Allison Doherty LaCasse, both of Urban Science Academy.

Cassandra Morgan of the Mildred Avenue and Filiberto Santiago-Litardi of the Timilty.

Blue raffle tickets were for the door prize, a flat screen TV (pictured lower left).

Brenda Chaney prepares to draw raffle tickets.

BTU members putting a move on the dance floor.

Raffle tickets raised $1,800 at the Welcome Back Party to raise money for the Making Strides Against Breast Cancer walk.

Kelly Houser, Michael Maguire, Dick Freed, Eyton Wurman, Elvira DeLuca, Cathy O’Flaherty, Lillie Marshall, Ingrid Roche and Angela Gentile, all of Boston Latin Academy. - Photo by Sheri Hausey

Monica Gribaudo, Ellen Moy-Maneikis and Margaret Greaves - all of Boston Latin School.

Clara Webb and Johanna Mendillo of the O’Bryant and Erin Hashimoto-Martell of the Nathan Hale.

Boston Latin Academy’s Dick Freed talks with Beth Moguel and Sheri Hausey of Boston Latin School.

Carol East-José and Ulises Rodriguez.

Valerie Hampton and Janet Cadogan.

LaTonya Burnett and Allison Doherty LaCasse, both of Urban Science Academy.

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