

PRESS RELEASE

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BTU to “Hit the Books” with Library Community Meeting Series

Every branch (*) to be involved in city-wide outreach program

BOSTON – As part of their continuing effort to reach out to and engage the community, members of the Boston Teachers Union will host meetings in every neighborhood library branch (*) throughout the first two weeks of February. All meetings will take place during the weeks of February 6, 2012 and February 13, 2012, from 6:00 - 7:30 PM.

All of the meetings are open to community residents, parents and other interested parties. At the meetings, BTU members will lead discussions regarding ways to improve the relationship between parents and teachers. They will also respond to questions about the ongoing negotiations between the Boston Public Schools and the Boston Teachers Union.

“The purpose of these events is two-fold,” said BTU Community Outreach Coordinator Brenda Chaney, “to explain what our position is on the various key issues in collective bargaining and to listen to what questions the broader community has about our schools and how we can improve them.”

Through the series of 24 meetings, the BTU hopes to inform its constituents and the rest of the community about the current state of its contract negotiations and what it hopes will result from the discussions. BTU members who are familiar with the recent collective bargaining history will be present at each of the meetings.

After a successful rally at the headquarters of the Boston Public Schools, BTU members are very encouraged by the level of community support for their cause. “We are all strengthened by our widespread participation,” Chaney said.

Among the successful initiatives BTU has developed in recent years that they hope to showcase and discuss at the meetings is the *Homework Helper Program*, which pairs BPS employees with BPS students who need extra support at regular meetings at the student’s local library branch. “The program was designed to help students from kindergarten through middle school,” Chaney explains, “no matter what school they attend.”

As the partnership between BTU and the BPL has proven so fruitful for all involved, the Union is looking forward to strengthening its bond with each library and with the community through these meetings.

“We are looking forward very much to these community forums,” Chaney says.

The Boston Teachers Union represents 5,500 teachers and other professionals including nurses, psychologists, and guidance counselors. In addition, it represents approximately 1,000 paraprofessionals, and close to 500 substitute teachers. It is the largest public sector labor local in New England.

(*) All but two neighborhood libraries have available space for these meetings