



Firefighter Andrew Lee (left) is pictured here being commended by Mayor Thomas M. Menino and Fire Commissioner Roderick Fraser (right) after his heroic efforts on Saturday, Feb. 10, when Lee saved the lives of three children in Roxbury. Lee responded to the fire with Engine 24, Ladder 23 from Grove Hall. A resident of South Boston, Lee has been a firefighter for three months and has served as a Marine in Iraq. (Photo courtesy of the Mayor's Office)

Sherley ends hunger strike, but no offer of tenure

Kenneth J. Cooper

The Massachusetts Institute of Technology is reviewing its faculty hiring and promotion practices after a black professor protested he was denied tenure because of his race.

James L. Sherley, a professor of biological engineering who conducts

research on human stem cells, went as far as launching a hunger strike to call public attention to what he has described as racial considerations and procedural irregularities in the 2005 decision to deny him tenure.

But MIT faculty reviewed the decision three times and concluded he was treated fairly.

Sherley's protest leveled a charge of racism not only at MIT, but at historically white colleges in general.

"People say to me, 'Well, why don't you just go to another university?'" he said. "And I say, 'Which one? Which one will I go to where I won't encounter this problem?'"

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No Child law leaves behind black history

Hazel Trice Edney

WASHINGTON — One hundred and forty-one years after the 13th Amendment abolished slavery, black history scholars and education experts say that elementary and high school students across America

have few or no textbooks that fully incorporate black history.

"Clearly, there's not enough being done on a curriculum to incorporate African American topics into the day to day learning of students in schools," said Daryl Scott, chair-

man of the department of history at Howard University and vice president of the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH). "But, when we look out and say African American students are not getting enough black history, we

could also say African American students are not getting enough history of any sort."

According to Scott, the No Child Left Behind Act, the centerpiece of President Bush's education initiatives, has left history behind.

The act, signed into law by Bush on Jan. 8, 2002, calls for "strong standards in each state for what every child should know and learn in reading and math in grades 3-8," a White House citation describes. "Schools will be held accountable for improving performance of all student groups, so every school will be performing at proficient levels within 12 years."

Scott says the act could have a detrimental effect on the emphasis of history in America's schools. "The only history that many kids

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— **Daryl Scott**



Traffic proceeded in a single-file line on Valentine's Day through a flooded tunnel at Logan International Airport in Boston. The flood came as a result of snow turning into sleet and rain that afternoon in the Boston area. (AP photo/Michael Dwyer)

are going to get — white or black — is coming out of their community. And so, this is the larger problem," Scott said. "Ultimately, you're not going to understand African American history if you do not understand

American history, just like we also say you can't understand American history if you're not understanding African American history."

To help increase that understanding, ASALH has started a special proj-

ect with Holt, Rinehart and Winston, a leading publisher of textbooks and educational materials for grades six through 12.

ASALH Executive Director Sylvia *History, continued to page 25*

Teachers still at the table — for now

Serghino René

The Boston Teachers Union (BTU) recently voted to postpone a planned strike and continue negotiations with Boston Public Schools.

"We believe there is ample time to get the details of the contract settled," said Steve Crawford, spokesperson for the BTU, which represents about 8,000 teachers and staff members in the Boston Public Schools (BPS). "It's time for the school committee to get serious about a settlement ... we've clearly demonstrated our flexibility and it's time for them to demonstrate theirs."

The "details" in contention are salaries and health care costs. The union wants a nearly 22 percent raise over the next four years, but at this time the city is only offering a 10 percent increase.

Union officials held daylong negotiation sessions every day last week in hopes of settling the score. BPS teachers have been working without a contract since August.

Last Wednesday, an agreement was reached, with BPS agreeing to drop a proposal that BTU argued would have increased class sizes.

BPS Superintendent Michael G. Contompasis proposed a compro-

mise in order to accelerate contract talks. He suggested that if the union agrees to key education reforms — most notably greater flexibility to help transform the 20 lowest performing schools — he would withdraw the district's controversial class size proposal.

Given last week's threats of a strike, that agreement was met with optimism.

"I am very pleased to learn that the Boston School Department

According to state law, public employee unions are prohibited from "inducing, encouraging or condoning" any work stoppage or withholding of services.

and the Boston Teachers Union have reached an agreement on the critical issue of class size for the benefit of our children's educational future," said City Council President Maureen E. Feeney.

"This is an important milestone, but I know that more negotiation remains."

In the meantime, Boston school officials are questioning why the union is still moving forward with plans to strike. According to state law, public employee unions are prohibited from "inducing, encouraging or condoning" any work stoppage or withholding of services.

"It is illegal for public employees to strike in Massachusetts, period," said Contompasis. "You are forbid-

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