

Vision for Contract Negotiations With the Boston Teachers Union

Universal access to a quality education must not be compromised, even in a challenging economy. The decisions we make today must ensure a meaningful investment in our children's futures.

Guiding principles

- Our teachers motivate, educate and inspire our students. The collective bargaining agreement with the Boston Teachers Union must create an environment that supports teachers' professional growth, while giving them the support they need to focus on children.
- Parents have choices, and BPS faces an increasingly competitive environment. Every one of our schools must become one that any parent would choose for his or her own child.
- We are committed to the immediate turnaround of underperforming schools, and we will work to identify and replicate areas where we are succeeding.
- Unlike many other districts, we are protecting our teachers from layoffs and wage cuts. Moving forward, we must focus our resources on targeted outcomes that are tied to student achievement, and on the meaningful measurement of teacher performance.

More classroom and instructional time

The current contract calls for a six-and-a-half hour work day for Boston's teachers. Only two percent of elementary school students in the nation spend less time in class than our children do. In order to compete with charter schools and our suburban neighbors, the Boston Public Schools must expand the classroom day while giving our teachers more time for professional development and class preparation.

- *Research shows a direct link between increased classroom time and student learning. We also know that instruction is more effective when teachers are given time to prepare lessons.*
- *This expanded time would allow our teachers to coordinate instructional plans and together, tailor strategies to the needs of individual students.*
- *Our teachers have the highest lifetime earning potential in the state, yet our school day is among the shortest of any district in the nation.*

Recognizing exceptional work

A new pay-for-excellence plan will allow us to recognize exceptional teams of teachers by granting them "group rewards" for significant gains in student achievement. Teachers at successful schools would decide how to distribute the awards. For example, the money could be split among staff, or it could be used to purchase extra classroom equipment.

Measuring performance in a helpful way

The current teacher evaluation system is far too cumbersome. We believe the collective bargaining agreement's rigid procedures have become a shield for underperforming teachers.

- *We will ask the Boston Teachers Union to help us develop a meaningful evaluation tool that considers measurable student growth and achievement. This tool must not be limited to data alone. We need to develop a "full picture" of how our teachers engage with their students.*
- *By linking salary increases to performance reviews, we can ensure the reviews will be completed in a useful way. We will provide step increases to teachers who receive a "satisfactory" rating or higher on their evaluations.*
- *We pledge that our principals will thoughtfully evaluate every teacher. If they identify areas for improvement, we will offer authentic assistance focused on boosting student achievement.*

Staffing and schedule flexibility

Principals should be allowed to decide which teachers and school-day schedules are the best fit for their students. Collective bargaining agreements now require a vote before any changes can be made. The entire faculty should not have to approve programs such as those for English Language Learners and Special Education students.