

8/27/21 Silent Rep Summaries

Today's contract bargaining meeting focused on a safe reopening for SY21_22. Sessions for the master contract bargaining team will resume once we have an agreement for a safe reopening. At this meeting were members of the Negotiating Team, the BTU attorney BTU Officers and Staff, and rank-and-file Silent Representatives were in the discussion to hear BPS' proposal for a safe reopening.

This meeting was scheduled from 2:30pm - 5:00 pm. At the start of the meeting, at the request of BPS, the BTU and BPS caucused from 2:30 - 3:30pm. At 3:30, BPS was ready to meet to negotiate. Erik Berg, BTU Vice President, led the BTU negotiation team today as Jessica had a meeting with the mayor.

Bargaining began with reviewing points that BPS did not address in the previous day, with a focus on nurses and the needs of school-based nurses offices. The BTU has asked that each school continue to have a dedicated medical waiting room/isolation room at each school; BPS shared their concerns of space within some buildings and stated that dedicated rooms may not be possible given the full return to in-person learning. Both sides understand that some of our schools have space constraints and are willing to work together to identify spaces and creative ideas in the buildings that lack space. Through conversation and creative planning, BTU and BPS believe they will soon reach a safe agreement through further negotiation.

BTU and BPS came to a tentative agreement (TA) on having all supplies of PPE for staff and students as needed in every school. TA on temperature monitoring, also a TA for access to pool surveillance testing for all BTU members.

Negotiations continued about paid administrative leave for staff who contract COVID at work.

If you want to participate as a silent representative, you can still sign up to join in the negotiations process and represent your union [here](#).

8/26/21 Silent Rep Summaries

Today's contract bargaining meeting focused on a safe reopening for SY21_22. Sessions for the contract bargaining team will resume once we have an agreement for a safe reopening. At this meeting were contract negotiations, members of the Negotiating Team, BTU Officers and Staff, and rank-and-file Silent Representatives were in the discussion to hear BPS' proposal for a safe reopening.

Past meetings have started at 2 pm. However, negotiations did not occur until 2:40 pm at the request of BPS. BTU caucused from 2:00 until 2:40. BPS agreed, in conversation, to several points BTU presented Tuesday, August 23rd. Some of these included:

- space for students who have COVID symptoms
- BPS will provide PPE for DESE specialized groups
- air quality data in classrooms
- temperatures according to state law for housing
- contract tracing conducted by CIC
- vaccination verification

Jessica noted that BPS excluded or rejected points from BTU's proposal and asked for their reasoning. Some of their issues are outlined below:

- having a 90-day supply of masks, gowns, or PPE
- breakfast and lunch not adequately addressed
- identifying bathrooms without exhaust fans
- adequate number of air purifiers in classrooms and spaces not easily identified
- language and clarification regarding test and stay
- nurses conducting BINAX testing
- building substitute teachers adequately compensated
- 10 days paid administrative leave for COVID

Some of the take-aways from this negotiating meeting were that BPS is reluctant to write some points they made in conversation into a proposal. Their claim is they have demonstrated over the past year that they will do what they say. Also, issues in the BTU's proposal are (and have been) working and will continue to work [because BPS says so].

Jessica's pushback on essential items, such as an argument that COVID is similar to the flu; therefore, paid administrative leave is unnecessary or BPS' reluctance to write what they say, is about transparency. BTU is committed to building trust and confidence among members, between families, communities, and BPS through communication and transparency.

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8/12/21 Silent Rep Summaries

At the first official session of contract bargaining, members of the Negotiating Team, BTU Officers and Staff, and rank-and-file Silent Representatives were in the meeting to present BTU members' proposals. This session was an exciting start to the BTU's expansion of open bargaining through the addition of **rank and file members, showing the power and diversity of BTU membership.**

José Valenzuela, Boston Latin Academy history teacher, Negotiating Team member, and current parent, kicked off the proposals by presenting on Facilities, centering the idea that **teaching conditions are learning conditions.** José talked about how our school buildings have been systematically underfunded for generations, leaving many buildings unsafe, and unsatisfactory for learning and working. José highlighted proposals for air quality standards, access to usable green spaces, and timely completion of maintenance work orders.

Nicole Mullen, Boston Arts Academy inclusion teacher and Negotiating Team member, presented the BTU proposals on Inclusion and Special Education. She emphasized the **need to support students with disabilities with adequate staffing in classrooms,** including the need for multiple teachers to meet different student needs instead of having one dual- or triple-certified teacher. These included demands on prep time, class size and staffing ratios, and expanded availability of reading specialists for students.

Katie Yue-Sum Li, Ethnic Studies Coordinator and Instructional Coach, presented the BTU demands on the **continual and expanded funding for ethnic studies.** She shared from her own experiences as a student and how she yearned for a space in the classroom to learn about her own cultural history and the ways race and ethnicity impact the lives and learning experiences of students of color. She highlighted the need for continual development, support, and training for staff, adequate access to materials, and the ongoing funding for the development of Boston-specific ethnic studies curriculum.

And, finally, Shakeeda Bartee, UP Academy Boston English teacher, former BPS student, and current BPS parent, powerfully introduced the BTU demands around housing and homelessness. Shakeeda shared, “not only are teaching conditions learning conditions, but **housing conditions are learning conditions.**” Speaking from her past experience as a high school student and, simultaneously, mother of a kindergartener in BPS, Shakeeda shared how living with unstable housing threatened her lifelong commitment to education for herself and her child. Now, as a teacher, she sees how unstable housing impacts her students' mental health and success in the classroom, centering it as a key priority for ensuring student success. Among

BTU's proposals, Shakeeda suggested that the city identify unused city owned spaces to be converted into public housing for families of Boston Public Schools students.

BTU lead negotiators have requested a standing meeting time for the upcoming months, but BPS has not yet committed. Within the session, BPS did respond to the proposals on facilities with a few clarifying questions including: specific questions on which nurses offices do not have adequate sink access, how to prioritize facilities work orders based on risk level, and what the BTU means when asking for increased access to usable green spaces on or nearby school campuses. They caucused on the other topics and will bring their questions to the next meeting.

Following sessions will include discussion of social-emotional learning and mental health, hiring and retaining diverse staff, as well as time to listen to BPS questions on other topics presented and continue negotiations around session scheduling.

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