

June 2012

Boston Elected Officials Advocate for Reform in Teachers' Contract

Members of the Boston Legislative Delegation and City Council sign letters urging reform

The concern that a reform contract between the Boston Public Schools (BPS) and Boston Teachers Union (BTU) has not materialized after 22 months of negotiations has expanded beyond the BPS students and parents and the Boston United for Students Coalition to several of Boston's elected officials. This expression of concern was manifested in two separate letters to BPS Superintendent Carol Johnson and BTU President Richard Stutman signed by members of the Boston Legislative Delegation and the Boston City Council at the time that the BPS and BTU started their first mediation session on June 6, 2012.

Both letters backed a new contract that provides for systemic reform that supports effective teaching and improves student achievement. The letters expressed the signatories disappointment that the two parties could not reach agreement after almost two years of negotiations and their hope that the parties' decision to engaged in mediation would lead to a timely resolution. The Boston Delegation members and City Councilors identified reform features they felt should be included in a new contract. They are:

- A new effective teacher evaluation system tied to a targeted professional development process
- Greater flexibility in teacher hiring and reassignment in all schools
- Extended days which offer students time for enrichment activities and academic support
- Increased and strengthened parent and student voices in school decision-making

Finally, both letters concluded with statements encouraging the two parties to engage in a determined and sustained effort in mediation to reach agreement in a reasonable time. The letters expressed confidence that the parties could

achieve an equitable reform agreement that is financially sustainable.

Boston Delegation

The [Boston Delegation letter](#) was initiated by Representative Marty Walz (8th Suffolk District) who is the Assistant Vice Chair of the House Committee on Ways and Means. The letter was signed by State Representatives Marty Walz, Kevin Honan, Jeffrey Sanchez, Linda Dorcena Forry, Carol Henriquez, Russell Holmes and Elizabeth Malia.

City Council

The [Boston City Council Letter](#) was initiated by At-Large City Councilor John R. Connolly, Chairman of the Council's Committee on Education. The letter was signed by the four At Large Councilors: Council President Steve Murphy, Felix Arroyo, John Connolly and Ayanna Pressley. The eight District Councilors signing the letter were Sal LaMattina, Bill Linehan, Frank Baker, Rob Consalvo, Matt O'Malley, Tito Jackson, Michael Ross and Mark Ciommo.

Mediation Process

Having reached an impasse, the BPS and BTU entered into mediation with the first session held on Wednesday, June 6. Two other sessions have been held and only three more meetings are scheduled before the first day of school on September 6, 2012. The remaining meetings are:

- Tuesday, July 24
- Tuesday, August 14
- Wednesday, August 15

The Research Bureau, in its most recent [Special Report](#), called on both parties to reach final agreement before the start of school.