

April 2011

Boston United for Students Hosts Teacher Contract Forum

BPS and BTU hold first public discussion on current contract negotiations

For the first time in eleven months, Boston Public Schools (BPS) Superintendent Carol Johnson and Boston Teachers Union (BTU) President Richard Stutman publicly discussed their expectations for the BPS-BTU contract and the current status of the negotiations. The discussion was cordial and as such concealed the fact that the Superintendent's aggressive push for change in teacher evaluations, a new salary schedule, extended time, and greater teacher assignment flexibility has not resulted in any meaningful agreement from the union leadership.

The Boston United for Students Coalition sponsored the April 6th forum at the Twelfth Baptist Church in Roxbury. A crowd of over 350 parents, students, teachers, BPS administrators, and community members attended and several joined the discussion.

The Director of Community Organizing for [Sociedad Latina](#) and a BPS student active in the organization served as moderators for this forum. Sociedad Latina provides programs and new innovative solutions to the most pressing issues facing Latino youth today and is one of the 47 organizations that are [members](#) of the Coalition.

The Superintendent and BTU President spoke about their expectations for a new contract. The two moderators then stated the four priorities of the Coalition and asked where the Superintendent and BTU President

stood on each priority. The four priorities are:

- Timely and effective teacher evaluations
- Greater flexibility in teacher assignments and transfers
- A stronger voice for parents and teachers in teacher evaluations and school based decision-making
- Extended school day to engage students and increase teacher planning and professional development opportunities

Although both the Superintendent and Mr. Stutman stated support the four priorities, specific details on how to achieve outcomes and the price of reform were not discussed. Mr. Stutman noted some caveats in his support, including additional teacher pay for an extended school day, and that the MCAS should not be used to measure teacher performance.

As of April 29th, the BPS and BTU have held 21 negotiating sessions over a period of 11 months. The 2006-2010 BPS-BTU contract was negotiated within 10 months. The Coalition will continue its education and outreach campaign until the 2010-2014 contract is settled. The Research Bureau is involved with the 46 other organizations in these efforts because we believe there is an urgent need for fundamental reform through changes in the teachers' contract.