

October 2016

## Push for Teacher Contract Reform Is Stalled

*A solid reform contract should be the #1 priority for BPS and BTU*

The negotiating teams for the Boston School Committee and Boston Teachers Union (BTU) met for six full days in late August with the objective of finalizing contract negotiations that had been underway for several months. Now in late October a new teachers' contract is still not settled. Meanwhile, Question 2 on the state ballot that would lift the charter school cap looms with the November 8 election. Passage of Question 2 will change the financial equation for the City and what it can offer. Nevertheless, a solid reform contract is more important to Boston and the BPS' long-term future than a lesser contract settled sooner to meet a deadline.

On August 22 the Research Bureau issued a [Special Report](#) recommending the reforms below that it felt are necessary to help the Boston Public Schools (BPS) be a more high quality option for Boston students and be more competitive with Commonwealth charter schools in improving student achievement. The cost of these reforms must be fiscally responsible and sustainable.

### Needed Teacher Contract Reforms

- Base teacher compensation performance
- Reinforce early hiring and mutual consent
- Extended time for more time on learning
- Excess procedure to protect quality teachers
- Improve teacher evaluation process
- Better evaluation and professional development for [SPC teachers](#)
- SPC teachers can be dismissed if not hired in a year or do not apply for a position

### Financial Considerations

The importance of strong reform in the teachers' contract is tied to making the BPS a quality choice for Boston students and the finances of the School Department. Making the BPS more competitive will retain more students and reduce the loss of Chapter 70 funds to charter schools. This contract can be the vehicle to put the BPS on a more level playing field by increasing teacher quality and extending learning time.

### Urgency for Improvement

The importance of bold reform now is exemplified by the recent state [ratings](#) of 103 BPS schools based on student performance. The new ratings show some improvement, but this year 57 BPS rated schools (55%) are classified as low or under-performing (Level 3 or below). Attending these schools are 27,314 students who deserve a better educational experience assisted by a reform contract.

### The Importance of Teacher Quality

Improving teacher quality is the single most important strategy to increasing student achievement. That means a performance compensation system, protecting each school's ability to select its own teachers from inside or outside the BPS, protecting quality teachers from excessing procedures, facilitating the dismissal of SPC teachers after a year, and extending learning time.

These reform changes will be necessary irrespective of the outcome of Question 2.