



# Brookline Educators Union

The BEU Negotiating Team has developed a bargaining platform to be submitted for approval of the union membership. The platform will provide the guiding principles for bargaining proposals that the team will then develop. The platform synthesizes contributions of hundreds of Brookline educators and members of the greater Brookline community. In the coming days, building teams will be asking you for feedback.

## **TEACH THE WHOLE CHILD**

We are committed to teaching the whole child in order that all students become good citizens, engage in critical thinking, tap into their talents, and develop a lifelong love of learning. Children deserve personalized and sustained attention from knowledgeable and caring educators who have time to work with them effectively and to tailor their teaching and learning to each student's passions, interests, and educational needs. Students deserve child-centered classrooms that support curiosity, critical thinking that challenges assumptions and honors rigorous scholarship, authentic inquiry-based learning, and social-emotional growth that respects difference.

The most important factors in providing quality education to students are those that prioritize non-standardized, individualized learning: proper staffing levels, small class sizes, and respect for the professional judgment of the educators who work most directly with the students. Smaller workloads secured by proper staffing will enable the rapid response time the school community deserves when urgent needs arise. Reasonable student-educator ratios allow time for adults and children to build the trust essential to taking academic and creative risks necessary for authentic learning.

Understaffing, the pulling of teachers and paraprofessionals from the classroom, mandates without designated time, over-reliance on standardized testing, inordinate data collection, restrictive rubrics, rigid scheduling, excessive initiatives, and a narrow idea of success are siphoning away time and focus from teaching and learning, resulting in students losing out on meaningful instruction, knowledge, and deeper understanding.

Educators deserve time built into their schedule to prepare rich curriculum for their students. They need time to engage in educator-determined collaboration that honors the expertise and diversity of our faculty. Educators need time and staffing to establish safe and organized learning spaces. Ample time within a reasonable workday allows educators to develop relevant curriculum, establish a variety of informative assessment methods, and communicate with staff and caregivers. Proper staffing ratios allow educators sufficient time during the school day to think and reflect, to help one another on their own terms, to listen to children, and to give meaningful feedback to their students.

*Students are best served by:*

- *educators with smaller caseloads and student-educator ratios.*
- *more educator control over their school day.*

- *safe and responsive classrooms.*
- *fewer curricular and instructional mandates.*
- *less focus on testing.*

## **EQUITY AND RESPECT**

Brookline should demand a just school system that promotes racial, gender, and class equity for students and staff alike. Students have the greatest educational opportunities when schools ensure equitable working conditions for all educators. Students stand to lose if their teacher, paraprofessional or related service provider is unfairly saddled with unexpected new assignments. Fair schedules uphold the dignity of adults and youth alike by giving employees flexibility in responding to challenges that inevitably arise. Top-down bureaucratic control that disregards the human impact of scheduling decisions is detrimental to students and educators. Students should be able to depend on their educators having reasonable and equitable daily and weekly schedules. Educators and students should not be expected to absorb the stresses of understaffing.

We recognize, furthermore, that teaching is a professional endeavor, and that educator autonomy and academic freedom promote creative growth and student achievement. Educators should be supported in exercising discretion in determining, within established guidelines, the organization, pedagogy, curriculum, student assessment and presentation of a course of study.

*Students are best served by:*

- *equitable, realistic work assignments and autonomous time for staff.*
- *respect for staff expertise that reflects varied backgrounds, perspectives, and teaching philosophies.*
- *equitable and robust resources and staffing across the District.*
- *staff that is organized into a strong union that protects the dignity of the work done by educators.*

## **COMPENSATION**

Brookline students directly benefit from highly qualified and dedicated educators. A competitive salary ensures that Brookline will attract and retain the best educational professionals. Especially among our paraprofessionals, wage increases are critically needed to encourage our current members to stay in the district and to attract new paraprofessionals. Pay must be, at the very least, a livable wage.

One job with a reasonable workday should be enough to live a quality life!

*Students are best served by staff:*

- *that have equitable compensation and benefits based on the principle of equal pay for comparable work.*
- *whose good will is neither taken for granted, nor exploited.*
- *who have compensation packages that respect their professionalism and the dignity of their work.*
- *whose pay is fair, competitive, consistent and dependable.*

## **SYSTEMS AND OPERATIONS**

Systems and operations within our district should be designed and implemented first and foremost to serve the needs of the students and educators. Administrators should limit paperwork wherever possible and ensure that educators are trusted as the experts best able to make decisions about their craft. Collaboration rooted in mutual respect depends on clarity and transparency in the assignment and processing of administrative tasks. All educators should have access to information well in advance, enabling them to understand, plan for, and assess combined work expectations. Educators' feedback and input should be solicited and valued. Educators' concerns should be acknowledged and answered with timely, respectful communication and transparent follow through from the Central Administration.

*Brookline schools are best served by:*

- *written, clear, consistent procedures negotiated and agreed to with the union well in advance of implementation of all paperwork tasks, taking existing workload into consideration.*
- *clearly communicated opportunity to apply for, and be considered for, open positions.*
- *more opportunity and mechanisms to attract substitutes (day-to-day and long-term) and address other staffing shortfalls in school buildings.*
- *written communication protocols that respect educators' insight and expertise.*
- *limits to the introduction of new operational procedures and requirements without training and pay.*

BEU educators are confident that agreements on these issues will enhance and protect what our schools do best, and improve the education we deliver.