

*To the Brookline Tab February 28, 2019*

*Please accept the following letter for publication:*

The Brookline Educators Union would like to address a few points made by School Committee member Michael Glover in a recent story about contract negotiations. [“Brookline School Committee and educators union clash on representation,” February 28, 2019]

The BEU representatives working directly with the School Committee will be typical in number and will not change from session to session, contrary to what Glover inferred. The silent representatives may change, but they have no active role when the BEU and School Committee team are negotiating. We believe our representative structure will be both serious and productive – if only the School Committee would give it a chance.

We find it troubling that an elected official would say he feels “intimidated” speaking in front of the educators he sets policy for. Furthermore, it is unfortunate that Glover characterizes BEU members as being there to “oppose the administration.” Educators are skilled collaborators, and we approach these negotiations as opportunities to problem solve together with the administration.

The BEU will be candid about its concerns, and expects the same from the School Committee. The BEU respects the fundamental differences between honest dialogue, which educators seek, and the alleged “grandstanding” Glover worries about.

Having silent representatives will expedite bargaining, as members will be able to consult with one another in the caucuses that routinely occur throughout the bargaining process.

Involving more members in bargaining – a trend occurring across the country -- is meant to elicit transparency and engagement, and is not intended to intimidate anyone.

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