



## Brookline Educators Union

115 Greenough Street, Brookline, MA 02445

(Basement level at Greenough/Tappan door)

Tel: 617-277-0251 Email: beu-mta@hotmail.com

Web: brookline.massteacher.org, Twitter: Brookline BEU@BeuBrookline

Facebook: Brookline Educators Union, BEU Brookline

*Affiliated with the Massachusetts Teachers Association and the National Education Association*

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June 12, 2019

### VIA EMAIL

Julie Schreiner-Oldham, School Committee Chair  
Public Schools of Brookline  
Office of the School Committee  
Town Hall, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor, 333 Washington St.  
Brookline, MA 02445

Dear Chair Schreiner-Oldham:

We are in receipt of your letter dated May 20, 2019, offering a suggested resolution to the School Committee's concerns surrounding the structure of our bargaining team. We are also in receipt of your letter dated June 10, 2019, with a proposal to make progress over the summer and into next school year. With this letter, the BEU will address the contents of both those letters.

### **Before June 30**

- We are interested in working on one-year, wages only contracts for all three bargaining units for the 2019-2020 school year. To that end, we ask for your initial proposals. We can then respond in writing or by setting up a date to negotiate that will maximize our team's attendance.
- If we are able to come to an agreement (and we think it need not be limited to happening before June 30), we would like to work on the joint statement you describe. However, any date we would use in this joint statement would not be a date we would come to an agreement, but a goal by which we would complete our negotiations.
- We agree to work on setting thirty meeting dates beginning in September.

### **Between July 1 and August 30**

- Provided we are successful in agreeing to a one-year agreement, we will provide the School Committee with one list of important negotiations issues that may be addressed over the summer. We believe all issues are appropriate for the negotiations table; however, we'd welcome the opportunity for the Superintendent and BEU leadership to start addressing any of these issues over the summer.

### **Starting September 1**

- We propose that we develop ground rules for negotiations at the first of the thirty meetings scheduled above. Below we outline ideas for addressing the issue of silent representatives that we expect would be part of those ground rules.
- We think the distinction between issues to address in negotiations and issues to be addressed by the Superintendent and BEU leadership should be part of the negotiations process.

- We are, of course, ready to launch good-faith negotiations. We hope that the thirty meetings would be sufficient to complete the negotiations for all three bargaining units by an agreed-upon target date. We think setting a deadline, however, is inappropriate.

### **Addressing the issue of silent representatives**

As you know, the BEU feels it is important to maintain our rights to have representatives of our choosing at negotiations. The selection of a union's negotiating team is an internal union matter that cannot justify an employer's refusal to bargain and we have voted to maintain our composition. As we have previously said, let us clearly explain how we expect our Negotiations Team to be composed and why.

- Our Negotiations Team will be comprised of a designated team of Core Speaking Representatives and Silent Bargaining Representatives. The composition of the Union's Bargaining Team was voted on by the BEU Representative Council in September 2018. The Council specifically voted to include silent bargaining representatives on our Negotiations Team.
- The Core Speaking Representatives will speak during negotiations. They will be comprised of a cross representational group of members from each of the units and will not exceed 16 in number. The Core Speaking team will be charged with relaying the concerns of the Silent Bargaining Representatives to the School Committee team after caucus.
- The Silent Bargaining Representatives will not speak during negotiations. They will sit silently and respectfully with the Core Speaking Representatives. Their identity will not be made known to the Employer until they are in the room. The Silent Bargaining Representatives will provide feedback and information to the Core Speaking Representatives during caucus that will inform the Core Speaking Representatives' discussion with the Employer when the parties return from caucus to substantive bargaining. The Silent Bargaining Representatives will also report back to their colleagues (in the various buildings they work) concerning the progress of negotiations and facilitate a more real-time discussion about contract negotiations, with increased opportunity for 1:1 dialogue between our members and the representatives who choose to attend and negotiate their terms and conditions of employment so that more members can be reached and their concerns can be brought back to the Negotiations Team to inform future negotiations.
- The function and value of the Silent Bargaining Representatives of the BEU's Negotiations Team is multi-fold: they provide substantive feedback to the Core Speaking Representatives during negotiation; they ensure a wider breadth of members are reached for feedback on negotiations to ensure their concerns are represented; and they also work to support the BEU's broader objective and purpose of exposing more of its members to the bargaining process and identifying new and emerging leaders who may have fresh ideas or concerns that should be addressed in bargaining over terms and conditions of employment. Such widespread exposure not only assists the Union in its ability to survive, thrive and engage its members in a post-Janus era, it also ensures a degree of transparency, accountability and democracy that supports the Union's efforts to represent the varied interests, requests and concerns of the total sum of its membership base who, in Brookline, is quite active.

### **Moving Forward**

Given this, and our desire to negotiate important issues facing our members, our students and the district - while reserving our rights to propose additional ground rules - we are prepared to agree to the following ground rules for the three bargaining unit negotiations in September. We hope that these conditions, working from your May 20 letter, are acceptable to you and the School Committee:

1. The number of Silent Bargaining Representatives on the Negotiations Team shall be limited to a total of 30, unless a larger number is mutually agreed upon.
2. If more than the agreed upon number of members wish to be Silent Bargaining Representatives, we will set up a room in the building with a closed-circuit TV feed.
3. The parties' caucuses will be limited to 30 minutes, unless mutually agreed to otherwise.
4. These terms shall continue for the remainder of the three bargaining unit's negotiations unless mutually agreed to otherwise.

If these terms are acceptable, we will withdraw our current charges at the Department of Labor Relations, and let us commence on all of the above as soon as possible.

Sincerely,



Jessica Wender-Shubow  
Brookline Educators Union President

cc: BEU Executive Board  
BEU Core Speaking Representatives