

Boston Teacher's Union
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Boston, Massachusetts 02125
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Data Collection: Bill Harju, Interviewer

Data Source: Ed Doherty, President

A. Demographics

Number of Schools: 130

Elementary 77

K-8: 8

Middle 20

High School 22

Other 3 Special Education Schools

Current enrollment by level: 63,300

Elementary 31,800

Middle/Junior High: 13,800

High School: 17,700

Current enrollment by race/ethnicity

Caucasian: 15%

Hispanic: 27%

Black/African American: 49%

Asian: 9%

Current enrollment-Language 9300 Students (15%)

Average Class Size by level:

(These are contractual maximums, so that average would be somewhat lower.)

Primary: K-2: 25, 3: 28

Upper: 45: 28

Middle 30

High School: 33

Private School enrollments in area/trends:

25% of school age children living in Boston do not attend BPS (21000) 15400 to private and parochial schools - mostly Catholic; 3000 go to suburban schools, 1800 to charter schools, 800 to private special education schools.

Total number of employees by classification: (7841)

Certified: 4670 Teachers, 475 auxiliary certified.

Classified:

Paraprofessionals: 1054 represented by BTU

Secretarial/clerical: 380

Custodians/safety/technical: 715

Management/supervisory: 547

School District Budget

Total expenditures \$575,327,267

Expenditures per student: \$6497

B. Significant Background Information:

. Union Structure/Roles

Officers (Names, longevity)

Ed Doherty, President (18)

Executive Vice President, Tom Gosnell (18)

Secretary/Treasurer, Ed Welch (18)

Executive Body

BTU has a 19 member executive board, composed of the officers, 4 elected staff members, 12 members elected at large. The Board meets monthly, and serves to recommend policy to the membership, and is permitted to adopt emergency policies between membership meetings

Representative Body

BTU does not have a representative body per se. Rather, there are monthly membership meetings during which policies are set. Building representatives are paid \$500 per year, provided that they attend 75% of these meetings. Accordingly, while monthly attendance averages about 300 persons, about 200 of the attendees are building representatives.

Committees-Union:

1. Budget Committee (Executive Board)
2. Grievance Committee
3. COPE committee
4. Special Education Committee
5. Professional Development Committee
6. Various faculty senates for citywide groups i.e., nurses, counselors, etc.

Committees-Joint:

1. Joint Steering Committee A joint committee co-chaired by the Superintendent and the Union President, with six additional members appointed by each co chair. The purpose of the committee is to oversee all educational initiatives in the collective bargaining agreement.
2. Career in Teaching Panel - A 14 member (7 & 7) joint committee that oversees the career in teaching program.
3. Mentor Teacher Committee - A joint committee with four representatives from each side, to oversee the mentor teacher program which pays veteran teachers to provide certain mentor services to new teachers. The veteran teacher receives 10% of salary as a stipend, and is expected to put in 4.5 to 5.5 hours per week working with the new teacher.

Permanent Union Staff (Names, positions, tenure)

1. Elementary Field Representative,* Carol Pacheco (5 yrs)
2. Secondary Field Representative,* Richard Stutman (18r years)
3. Paraprofessional/Substitute Teacher Representative,* Virginia Fitzgerald (16 years)
4. Political Director,* Patricia Armstrong (17 years, part time until one year ago. years)

* Elected position

Term limits

BTU has no Term Limits

Union Partnerships

No formal partnerships.

Principal means of communication with members:

Boston Union Teacher Tabloid style newspaper printed monthly, carries news of union activities, both traditional and instructional/reform issues.

Bimonthly bulletin to building representatives.

Periodic mailings to the full membership.

Website: www.btu.org

Membership Engagement

Field representatives visit schools regularly.

Occasional surveys - most recently, a survey of all unit members participating in school based Management. The results of the survey are being used in the development of bargaining proposals.

Significant recent budget developments (cutbacks, infusions) if any:

Gradual increase in the district budget through state reform efforts - not seen as major.

In order to understand this district, what is it necessary to know/understand?

In 1989, Boston moved from an elected school committee to an appointed school committee, appointed by the Mayor of Boston, thus the school committee responds to the desires of the Mayor, who remains in the background in labor relations situations.

Labor-management relationship

The parties engaged CMI (A Roger Fisher "Getting to Yes" spin-off corporation) to assist with bargaining in the late 1980's, with a contract settled under CMI's tutelage, and was the first that could be deemed a reform contract. The experience with CMI created a new labor management relationship that lasted fairly well for ten years, with some bumps in the road. Currently, however, the parties are involved in a fairly traditional battle over a successor agreement, around the issues of transfer, seniority, excess pools, etc. use of planning and development time, extended hours for professional development without discussing compensation, greater operational control by administrators.

Measured outcomes - test scores, college acceptance rates (1997-98 & 1998-99)

The state has adopted a statewide testing program entitled the "Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS)." Starting in 2003, students will be required to pass a comprehensive test in English and math in order to receive a diploma. There have been a couple of practice runs and the results in urban areas have been poor. About half of the students in the state and 70% in the city of Boston would not get a diploma. On a more positive note, Boston Public Schools figures show that approximately 65% of graduating seniors go on to further education, either at a university or community college.

Current Superintendency:

Name: Dr. Tom Payzant

Background

Payzant has been a superintendent in several districts around the country, including Eugene, Oregon, Oklahoma City, OK; and San Diego, CA. Prior to his appointment in Boston, Payzant served as an Assistant Secretary of Education in the Clinton Administration.

Tenure: 5 years

Management team:

Payzant has a leadership team of 10-12 in the central administration, including budget, human resources, chief operating officer, 3 deputies for academics, and a director of educational initiatives.

Other employee unions (Name, approximate unit membership, relationship to teachers)

Custodians Union: Boston Custodians Association (Independent)

Administrators:

Boston Association of School Administrators and Supervisors represents everyone between teachers union and principals - Principals are prohibited from organizing. BASIS is affiliated with the AFL-CIO.

Secretaries Represented by the Secretaries Guild which is affiliated with SEIU

Security Officers - Independent Union

Status of contract:

Expiration of current agreement: August 31,2000

Agency fee: yes

Binding arbitration: yes

Strikes:

The most recent multi-day strike was in 1975, and lasted for 6 school days. Since 1975, there have been 2 or 3 one-day work stoppages.

Unfair labor practices: None

Significant litigation: None

Approximate number of grievances per year:

Average 50 to 100 grievances, though with the addition of class size grievances, which go directly to the district office, the number would approach 300. 8 to 10 grievances on average reach arbitration.

Union role in community:

Political endorsements:

BTU endorses candidates for political office across the board, city, state and national

Community engagement

Boston Compact - A coalition of business, government, community, parent, university and labor representatives that meets annually, and periodically adopts priorities for the schools. The main players in the compact appoint a working group that meets on a more regular basis in an effort to implement the established priorities.

C. Education Reform

Union posture:

Pro/anti reform

The BTU is supportive of appropriate reform issues, and has a comprehensive reform agenda, though not always in synch with the issues district leadership would characterize as reform

Membership attitudes

BTU members have been positive about reforms supported by the union, in professional development and teacher quality areas, however less supportive about testing. Also, members would advocate reforms such as lower class size, improved student discipline and adequate supplies and textbooks for each classroom.

Financial commitment:

BTU supports an AFT ER&D program in the area of discipline. Also, through Northeastern University the Union provides a comprehensive training program for paraprofessionals that leads toward a college degree.

Reform elements in contract:

1. Preamble - establishes joint commitment to a collaborative relationship.
2. Article II - Developing and Maintaining Effective Working Relationships - Establishes joint problem solving procedures.
3. Article III School Based Management and Shared Decisionmaking
3. Article IV - School Assessment - Establishes procedures for dealing with low performing schools.
4. Article VI - Professional Development - Establishes a mentor program, a Center for Leadership Development, career ladder program and other professional development concepts.

Organization/structure for reform:

Central coordinating structure:

See the Steering Committee under "Joint Committees" above.

District office structure:

The District employs a Deputy Superintendent for Teaching and Learning.

Union structure:

No separate union structure except for programs under staff development - see below.

Responsibility (within union - leaders? Staff?)

Organization around standards

Development of standards:

The State has been developing curriculum frameworks that are being implemented at the district level. Committees have been established that included teachers and administrators, with the union providing names of teachers to serve on the committees. The committees than aligned the

statewide frameworks with the district curriculum, creating grade level standards that were placed in the schools about 2-3 years ago.

Implementation

Curriculum coaches or coordinators were selected at each school site, primarily in the area of language arts and math. These coaches, normally those who have been qualified as "lead teacher" through the career in teaching program, received intensive training in the implementation of the standards, and then were assigned to train teachers at the site level.

Role of union:

Recommend names of teachers to serve on the various curriculum committees.

Training/Staff Development

See above.

Professional Development

Program description & operation:

There is a Union professional development committee that had been somewhat defunct, but is now being reestablished to pull together a variety of programs including the Union's ER&D program, the Career in Teaching Panel, the Center for Leadership Development, the Mentor Program, and other professional development programs. The goal of the committee is to develop recommendations for bargaining around the issue of Professional Development.

The contract provides a specified amount of time for professional development. The district required that each site select a research based reading/literacy program. The contractually designated time was then used to bring in the personnel familiar with each adopted program to train the site staff in the program's implementation. Funds were provided by the district for this purpose. For the most part, these programs have been successful, though there have been some issues at sites around attempts to require time beyond the contractual provisions.

There is a contract provision relating to the creation of a "Center for Leadership Development (CLD)" in Boston. The CLD was originally envisioned as a structure to provide a focused coordinated staff development program in the district. With the exception of a program for first and second year teachers, the center has not met that expectation, but rather has produced an annual catalog that teachers can use to identify courses and workshops that may be of interest.

Relationship to union:

The Union has a major interest in the District's professional development program, and is utilizing its' own Professional Development Committee to discuss the various parts of the district's staff development program, and to attempt to develop a comprehensive proposal for the bargaining table.

Low performing Schools

Program description

The Collective Bargaining Agreement contains provisions related to low performing schools. The program involves a team of six individuals, three appointed by the Superintendent and three by the Union President. Schools are identified by the Superintendent as low performing, based on test scores, dropout rates and other indicators. An intervention team is selected composed of six

individuals jointly appointed. The team visits the school, interviews teachers, administrators, parents, students and administers questionnaires or surveys. After the data collection is complete, the team meets to compare notes, discuss the situation, and writes a report with recommendations. The team does have the authority to recommend removing from the school some or all of the staff. To date, about 17 intervention teams have been appointed. Rarely have the teams recommended staffing changes. Recommendations typically include restructuring a program or a school, curriculum changes, recommendations regarding the physical conditions of the building. Fourteen of these teams were implemented under a previous superintendent, and controversy arose around the fact that intervention recommendations were frequently not accepted. The current superintendent has not, until the current school year, triggered the appointment of teams. This year, three teams were appointed, and one has completed its report as of this writing. It is too early to tell whether the recommendations will be implemented. Recommendations dealt with moving in the direction of four different academies - i.e.; smaller communities of learning - with an administrator in charge of each.

Relationship to union:

It's a joint program, which was negotiated into the agreement and is implemented with full union participation.

Implementation issues:

The intervention team program itself was implemented very effectively. The problem that occurred was getting the recommendations approved, and the failure to implement the recommendations created frustration among team members. Accordingly, if the current teams make recommendations that are not implemented, it could well result in the death of the program.

Personnel - Transfers

So far, none of the seventeen teams appointed have recommended transfers of personnel.

Evaluation of program (formal, informal):

No formal evaluation. Failure to implement many of the earlier recommendations of the first fourteen teams created a great deal of frustration among those who participated. It is assumed that the same result with the three teams appointed during the current school year will result in a renegotiation or elimination of the program.

Incentives for school improvement - measures to raise student achievement or teacher quality:

School Improvement Awards. The contract provides for an annual allotment of \$500,000 for school improvement awards. Recipients of the annual awards are jointly selected by the union and the district, based upon mutually agreed upon data and indicators. Awards are based on comparison with the school's own data, not in comparison with other schools. The award is \$25 per student to a maximum of \$25,000 which can be used for any purpose, as determined by the school site council. Payments to individuals are prohibited. Approximately 1/3 of the schools in the district receives an annual award.

Peer review:

Program description:

No peer review program. There is a paragraph in the contract that talks about a peer review program, but it has not been implemented. There has been significant discussion at the table in previous negotiations regarding peer assistance for teachers having difficulty, but the district took

it off the table at the last minute. In the current negotiations, the union is interested in further discussion about a consulting teacher program, and peer assistance, but is not interested in having unit members actually evaluating other unit members.

School based management/decisionmaking related to school improvement

Program structure:

The Boston contract contains an extensive set of provisions beginning with a philosophical commitment to site based management, shared decisionmaking, and involvement of all parties, parents, administrators, and teachers. The contract then establishes provisions regarding the composition of School Site Councils (SSC) to include parents in numbers equal to professional educators (including the principal), and students at the high school level. There are provisions to assure diversity, to provide for rotation of membership and to provide for alternate members.

The SSC is to operate on a consensus basis, but the agreement provides a vote when consensus is not possible, and provides that the Principal must vote with the majority for a decision to be made. If the principal vetoes a decision, an appeal process is provided with the superintendent as the ultimate arbiter. The contract also mandates bylaws at each site with certain required provisions, quorum requirements, notice requirements for meetings and elections, etc.

Shared decisionmaking does exist in all 125 schools, but with mixed results. Some take it much more seriously than others do. Principals still "control" in many places. The biggest problem has been the lack of time that teachers have to participate to the degree contemplated by the negotiators. It is particularly difficult to get teachers involved in decisions that may negatively affect their colleagues as in needing to eliminate a position at a site.

There has been an extensive union review of the implementation of school based management, including a survey. Results have indicated that only about a third of the schools felt that school-based management was working. As a result, the union has under discussion modifications to the program in the current negotiations.

Role of site teams:

The scope of authority for the SSC is broad, and includes: "...all matters that relate to the operation of the school," and specifically includes: 1) Annual education plan; 2) design and scheduling of the instructional program; 3) curriculum, 4) budgeting and fundraising; 5) space utilization, 6) hiring of new staff and in-transfer of staff from other schools in the district; 7) staff assignments; 8) selection and guidance of mentor teachers; 9) use of outside professionals; 10) reasonable dress codes for staff.

Site budgets: See above.

Contract/rule waivers:

There is a fairly stringent provision in the contract that provides for school sites to wave provisions of the agreement and of district policy with approval of the principal, and a two-thirds vote of the staff.

Other major reform efforts (Description, scope, relationship to union)

Career in Teaching Program: The Contract contains provisions establishing a Career in Teaching Program, through which a member can apply to become designated as a lead teacher. Teachers apply to a joint committee that screens, interviews, and selects lead teachers. A teacher designated as a lead teacher becomes eligible to apply for certain paid positions which require lead teacher status and which

pay a 10% salary differential. Once a teacher is designated as a lead teacher, they maintain the status for 5 years, and can reapply.

Annenberg Challenge Grant: A \$10 million grant contingent on an additional \$10 million each from the government and the business community. The grant is for the purpose of school improvement, and has primarily been used for professional development, providing coaches for schools (i.e.; literacy coaches from the various programs), whole school change, and other similar programs. An executive board that includes the Union President, the Superintendent, business leaders and higher education representation, administers the grant.

Pilot Schools: The Boston contract contains a provision for the establishment of Pilot Schools within the school district. Pilot schools are defined as "in house" charter schools. Once a school achieves pilot status, and there are currently eleven such schools in the district, the school is essentially free from the union contract and the district bureaucracy with the exception that teachers are BTU bargaining unit members and they are guaranteed the contractual salary and benefits package. Teachers volunteer to teach in charter schools, and are guaranteed the right to leave the school at the conclusion of a given school year. Schools become pilot schools in response to a "request for proposal" that may be issued by a joint district-union committee. Proposals are then reviewed by the committee, and approved jointly by the union and the district.

Two examples of current pilot schools involve a middle school that has teams of teachers stay with groups of 100 students throughout their middle school career - 6th through 8th grades; and a new performing arts high school. A problem with adding new pilot schools has been the availability of sites to house these schools. The district is in the planning process for the addition of five new schools within the district, and it is anticipated that there will be some discussion between the parties relative to providing pilot status to at least some of these schools.

Attachments

1. Collective Bargaining Agreement, 1997-2000 (Includes BTU Bylaws)
2. BTU Budget, 1999-2000
3. Union Teacher, April, 2000
4. Boston Compact 2000
5. Boston Public Schools at a Glance, 1999-2000
6. School Improvement Awards, 1998-99
7. A Guide to Boston Pilot Schools
8. Intervention Report: South Boston High School