



USWA Local 8751 - District 4

Boston School Bus Drivers Union

25 Colgate Rd. • Roslindale, MA 02131

Telephone (617) 524-7073 Fax (617) 524-1691

www.BostonSchoolBusUnion.org

USWA Local 8751 Union Membership Meeting Thursday October 28th, 2004

Boston Teachers Union

(in the rear of the Bayside Expo, off of Day Boulevard)

6:00 PM – 7:00 PM - Regular Membership Meeting

7:00 PM - Contract Vote

All Out For the Contract Vote!

The Union's leadership has made every effort to inform the drivers of First Student's most recent "final contract offer." We have published bulletins listing every detail of the company's offer, and of the Union's counter-proposal and outstanding issues. (These bulletins are posted at www.bostsonschoobusunion.org and on the Union's board in the yards.) Well attended yard meetings have taken place in every yard. We've had the company produce a copy of its offer for every driver, and stewards have passed them out in the yards. We have mailed the bulletins and notices to all the drivers on leaves of absence, to involve all members of the Local 8751 family.

While the City, First Student and a few who parrot their lies in the yards have tried to rush the job, create a "railroad" atmosphere and instill fear, confusion and division among the members, we have taken two entire weeks to discuss all aspects of the negotiations process and the company's final offer with the drivers. The membership must realize that this is a 5 year offer. Any wage and benefit improvements, any working condition or fairness issue, must be resolved now. After the contract is ratified, it will be too late. You deserve the respect of being allowed an informed, democratic decision, with all the facts at your disposal.

The following are answers to you're your most often asked questions:

Will there be a report of the Company's "final offer" at the meeting?

Answer: Yes. Copies of the bulletin with the company's "final offer" and the Union's last counterproposal will be available to all.

Will there be a vote?

Answer: Yes. There will be a vote to either:

- 1) **accept the company's offer**, or
- 2) **reject the company's offer**, and send the parties back to the negotiating table.
- 3) **Action to be taken.** Any action that the Union takes will be the result of a vote of the membership.

Discussion on the contract vote will begin promptly at 7:00 PM. Members will have a right to speak their opinions about accepting or rejecting the company's most recent "final offer". Each member will

have one vote. Respect, Solidarity and the democratic process will prevail. All divisiveness, panic and provocation will be left at the door.

Did the company ever threaten to take away retro pay or other wages and benefits if we vote to reject the company's "final offer"?

Answer: No. The Superintendent's threatening letter is illegal, because it constitutes interference by the government in private collective bargaining, and because it misrepresents the company's position at the negotiations. The company put retroactivity on the table months ago, and never once has it said it might take it away, or take back wages and benefits already offered, should the Union members vote on Thursday to reject its offer. In fact, the company's Regional Vice President told the Local's leadership on October 13th that the company didn't write the letter and did not pay for its production or mailing. He confirmed that **the position of the Superintendent, threatening retroactive pay and other increases, was never the position of First Student at the bargaining table.**

What has the Union done about this illegal interference in our negotiations?

Answer: The Union and its legal team have filed an Unfair Labor Practice with the National Labor Relations Board. We have also met with Boston City Councilors and leaders of the Massachusetts Labor Movement who are outraged that Mayor Menino's government is fronting for a profitable corporation and engaging in union busting. The government has illegally used taxpayer resources and funds to threaten our members, acting unlawfully as an agent of First Student, a private company in private sector collective bargaining with the Steelworkers. As well, the Superintendent's letter misrepresents the company's wage offer, distorts the 401K offer, and lies about the members' legal status as private employees, comparing the company's "final offer" with "virtually every other City or School Department union." Of course, the letter does not explain that the employees of First Student have no City pension plan, are being offered a dental plan sub-standard to City workers, make substantially less per year than public sector workers, etc.

Does First Student/City of Boston have the money and ability to make a better offer?

Answer: First Student's parent, FirstGroup, has reported increased overall profits in 2004 of £161.3m (\$297,256,501.32 USD - conversion calculation 10/25/2004) (see www.firstgroup.com). **"Operating profit," brags Chief Executive Officer Moir Lockheed in the 2004 online financial report, "increased to £63.5m or \$109.2m (2003: £61.3m or \$95.1m), an increase in US dollars of 14.8%."** First Student has offered its workers in Boston an insulting 2% wage increase (\$.33 for van drivers and \$.36 per hour for bus drivers) for roughly the same calendar period. The company's management contract with the City of Boston places certain caps on the company's "pass through" costs to the city, but the law cannot and does not stop a private company from spending more for our union members' valuable labor. In fact, **First Student spends its own money for going over its unrealistically low bid caps every day. With city reserves the largest in Boston's history, Menino can certainly bring more to the table for economic justice for our members.**

The Contract Is In Your Hands. Let Your Voice Be Heard.

We believe, and will assure, that you, **the members, are the highest governing body in this Union. You** – not Ted Leclerc, Rich Jacobs, Tom Menino, Tom Payzant, or even Steelworkers rep Joe Carlson – **will have to live with this 5 year contract.** The real question remains: Is there more water in the well? Can we get more money, benefits, and respect? We believe the answer is yes. If the Union had accepted the first, second, third, fourth, fifth, or sixth "final offers", we'd be voting on substantially less wages and benefits + major concessions. Now's the time to let the company know that 800 members support the Union's last counterproposal for modest increases - to beat back inflation and survive for the next 4 years - and to address the outstanding issues. **There's only one way to find out if there is more – Return to the Table for one more try. Your Unity in Action and Solidarity with Labor and the Community – all your demonstrations, picketlines, and yard struggles - have brought us this far. We are confident your power can take us to victory.**