



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

Union Contract, Now! Mayor Menino: No More Stalling! We Demand Our Economic Justice!

Don't Be Fooled by Lies and Rumors

In times of war, the first casualty is the truth! The school bus drivers and our families are indeed in a labor war for our contract, our wages and benefits and our justice. Lies and rumors are designed to weaken us, to disorient us and to divide us. Whether the rumors are spread by the company, or the Mayor, or even by some of our own who should know better, the objective effect is the same. The only beneficiary is our enemy.

School bus drivers will not be treated like second class citizens!

The police got their 14.5% and \$41/hour details, and firefighters won their 15% the day before the DNC. The teachers voted to strike, and won a 3 year deal with increases they describe as economic justice. The school custodians got a 4% 2 year retro check and 14% wage + differential increases going forward, with a first ever 100% paid family dental and eye insurance plan (3% per year for 6 years). Boston water and sewer workers won 14-22% step wage increases and better benefits, with no concessions. Middle managers, clericals, parks department and others won deals that the labor movement is proud of in these difficult economic times.

The Mayor – who claimed to the TV cameras on Labor Day to be a friend of the workers - sees it differently for the lowest paid workers in the city, like the school bus drivers and monitors - along with school cafeteria and warehouse workers. The majority of us are from Boston's immigrant Haitian, Cape Verdean, Latin@, and Black communities, and poor white neighborhoods.

Fact: It's About the Money

After over a year, we are still fighting to get the company to give us their *real* "final offer". On August 30th, the Mayor had his bus company, First Student, issue the Union's negotiating committee a "final offer". The company stated that, in fact, there was more money for wages and benefits to come, but that the city had not yet given them the authorization to modify the "final offer". (It is not uncommon for there to be 4, 5 or more "final offers"). The August 30th phony "final offer" was viewed as an insult by the Union's committee and was unanimously rejected. Any leadership that would give serious consideration to a "final offer" that the company admits is not really a "final offer" is foolish!



June 7, 2004 at 26 Court St.

photo: Mass AFL-CIO www.massaflio.org

Contract Mobilizers' Yard Meetings

10:00 AM

Readville – Monday 9/20

Charlestown – Tues 9/21

Freeport – Wed 9/22

Washington – Thurs 9/23

Their August 30th phony "final offer" stands well below every other union. For last year – when rent, gas, oil, food, healthcare, etc. skyrocketed in price – only 2% (\$.36/hour = a 40 hour/week worker would get a small retro check for about \$550 before taxes.) They are demanding a long 5 year deal, with this year at 2.5%, then 2.5%, 3%, 3%, amounting to a miserly 13% spread. The only benefit changes, amounting to ½%, are: 1) 50% paid premium for the company's bottom-shelf family Cigna dental plan. 2) our families can participate in the eye insurance. 3) 401(k) plan members can all divide up an extra \$10K a year (about \$20 for your retirement). It's an insult to our 800 members who've been providing professional service for over 30 years. First Student – which profited \$380 million last year, and knows firsthand our Union's determination to get our economic justice – and the City, which has reported record reserves, can well afford a better "final offer".



Driver Solidarity Beats Back Most Cutbacks No Concessions, No way!

The drivers recent solidarity actions – like the huge demonstration in June at the School Department, the march on the Schrafft Center, packing the negotiations sessions, and the 5,000 strong march lead by our Union during the Democratic Convention which surrounded 26 Court Street and City Hall with chants of “Contract Justice Now” – have forced First Student and the City to back off several of their onerous language/money concession demands.

On August 30th, they withdrew their demands for Global Positioning System spy devices, paying only “approved” exception time, attacks on standby and citywide rights & pay, and taking away our rights to bid on ELC’s. This is a great achievement. A few concession demands remain, however, such as language making it easier to fire you for license problems beyond your control. We will tolerate no backward movement!

Fact: There Have Been No Negotiations Since the August 30th Phony “Final Offer”

After the August 30th offer, the company, under order from the city, and our International Union called in a **Federal Mediator** on September 3rd. To date, there has been no real mediation. Mediator Martin openly admits that he believes that he is being used as “political cover” for the Mayor. **We don’t need a sham federal (read Bush government) mediation process. We need the Mayor to stop blocking a new final offer.** First Student has told our International that they have suggested and support additional wages and benefits, but the city is blocking the process. State Senator Tom Birmingham has joined the Union in trying to restart the real process of negotiations.

Turner, Arroyo, Yancey / Parents Join Our Fight For Justice

Our 3 great City Councilors have opened up a critical front in our battle. The parents see that their struggle for bus transportation and to defend desegregation is one with the school bus drivers’ and monitors’ struggle for contract justice.

Join parents, students, civil rights groups, educators, the new coalition “**Work 4 Quality Schools**” and political leaders from our communities to demand:

**“Defend Desegregation and
School Choice”
“Equal, Quality Education For All”**

**Wednesday, Sept. 22nd
5:30 PM**

English High School

**Tell the Boston School Committee:
Improve Quality at All Schools, Now!
No Change to the Student Assignment Plan.**

Our longtime friends **City Councilors Chuck Turner, Felix Arroyo and Charles Yancey** have issued a letter supporting our economic justice, and demanding that Mayor Menino settle our contract now.

Thousands of letters are flooding the city, and the Mayor’s phone lines are abuzz with calls from parents.

As yesterday’s letter to the parents states, **“We can’t let political forces in the city use the drivers’ and monitor’s just struggle as a political pawn to benefit those who want to take away bus transportation from the parents and dismantle desegregation.”**

What Must We Do To Finish This Struggle For Economic Justice For Our Families? ORGANIZE! ORGANIZE!

*First and foremost, **we must remain United** and further organize our strength – in the yards, in the Labor movement, with our political allies, with the parents and the communities we serve.

GET INVOLVED TODAY!

*Distribute copies of the letter the City Councilors, and help flood the city with the truth. Call the Union office today to get more flyers.

*Work with our **Allies in Labor** – the Mass AFL-CIO, the Greater Boston Labor Council, and Boston Unions United for Fair Contracts – who are all stepping forward in True Solidarity on our behalf. Help distribute copies of their letter, which reads in part: **“The drivers and monitors and their union have joined with all of the other city unions in Boston...to work in solidarity to achieve justice for all. On Labor Day, the Mayor claimed that he had settled with all the city workers. With much fanfare the press covered the settlements for police, fire, teachers, clericals, custodians and others. The bus drivers and monitors are not invisible. They deserve justice, too!”**

*Join with our Allies in the Community who have stood by our side in true demonstrations of Solidarity – from the “Work 4 Quality Schools” coalition, the New England Human Rights Organization for Haiti, the Boston ANSWER (Act Now to Stop War & End Racism), Teen Empowerment, F.I.S.T., and other youth and student organizations who have helped our struggle in recent months.

Many forces are working hard both publicly and behind the scenes to clear the Mayor imposed logjam. The fire fighters, custodians, teachers, water & sewer workers, police – all had to overcome this hurdle.

If we stay United, with Solidarity from Labor and the Community, We Will Win!