



USWA Local 8751 - District 4

Boston School Bus Drivers Union

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CONTRACT UPDATE March 29, 2004

Unity + Rank & File Activism + Solidarity with Labor & the Community = Victory!

BTU Contract Offer:
STRUGGLE BRINGS

\$12 MILLION + to the TABLE.
13% overall economics over 3 years!

On April 14th, The Boston Teachers Union (BTU) membership will vote on their tentative agreement. This offer, which represents a reported 12 million additional dollars to the table, will boost the pact to **13% over three years**. While we cannot speak to the many important specifics of the offer (fairness in distribution of wages and benefits to members, terms and working conditions, union policy issues), **it is clear that the rank and file pressure has resulted in significant concessions by the City bosses**. This offer is a direct result of the struggle of rank and file teachers.



Just days before their planned strike, the City bosses caved. The strike was just the most recent escalation of a long, coordinated and determined struggle. BTU members took their battle to the streets with regular Friday rush hour picketing, and over three thousand members mobilized to the union protest rally at the Mayor's State of the City on January 13. Like members of 8751, the BTU is a member of the **Boston Unity Coalition**, a coalition of over 18 unions fighting in unity for over 32 contracts. The BTU also worked hard to build bridges to the community. This is how it is done! At the Monday, March 22 meeting of the Boston Unity Coalition, BTU President Richard Stutman, pledged his 100% support for a just contracts for us and the other 18 unions.

Drivers: Keep Up & Turn Up the rank and file pressure!

The rank & file and leadership of Local 8751 have been working hard to put together a winning formula for a successful contract. Of course,



Local 8751
**General Stewards'
Council Meeting**
Monday
April 5, 2004
6:00 – 8:00 PM
25 Colgate Road
Union office, 3rd floor

rank and file fight back on the yard level remains the key. For example, the militant, growing and developing **Stewards' Task Force** has filed over **250 grievances** relating to the attacks we face from the company on all fronts – docking, payroll, seniority, flat rates, unjust discipline, facilities, etc.

The **solidarity** we build with the **parents**, as in our **common fight against the racist "neighborhood schools" attack** on desegregation, is indispensable. Our friends and enemies alike recognize the vital contribution we made to the tide-turning Roxbury meeting at 12th Baptist Church last month. We are an integral part of the community coalition with Chuck Turner and the parents fighting this battle. The Coalition meets regularly. Call the office if you would like to attend.

Recently, we have combined our forces with the other 18 unions fighting for just contracts – custodians, monitors, teachers, clerical workers, Water and Sewer Commission, public works, librarians, firefighters and many others. Standing "all for one and one for all." The Greater Boston Labor Council (GBLC) and the Massachusetts AFL-CIO are key members of this Coalition. Recently, the National AFL-CIO, at its meeting in Bal Harbor, Florida, pledged its support to our Coalition. This past week, our union leaders, in concert with Mass. AFL-CIO, led the protest against union-busting Bush at his obscene \$2000 a plate fundraising dinner. In fact, Mass. AFL-CIO President Bob (over)

Haynes and USWA 8751 Readville Chief Steward Steve Kirschbaum did the negotiations with the authorities at the anti Bush protest. The unions have a broad and many faceted campaign plotted out to win just contracts for all, including a variety of local protests building up toward major pressure focused on the upcoming Democratic National Convention in July.

All of these fronts of our struggle have combined to begin to make First Student finally start the process of resolving some long standing vital operational issues:

1. **Grievance back log** – The **250 plus grievances** that have been filed speak to the calculated anti-union campaign of First Student. Flat rates, unjust discipline, seniority rights, spying, illegal tailing, docking, etc. Over the past two weeks, and as a direct result of the clear message that you the members and stewards have sent that 8751 is united and willing to fight for our justice, **we have begun the process of resolving this massive back log.** Currently there are over 75 grievances settled and a number well on the way to settlement. If you have any question regarding your particular case, contact your steward. The Union's newly established database is available at the office. Those grievances not settled will now move expeditiously through the Expedited Arbitration process.

2. **Status unknown** – This is the term that has been used to refer to those **dozens of drivers terminated or threatened with termination.** This includes many of our sisters and brothers who are fighting serious illness. As we reported earlier, we were outraged at the company's callous disregard in many of these cases. Within this category are also workers who are not currently working and were on leave from the prior company, and whose status is not known. In meetings held in the past two weeks, **over half of the workers have been returned to the active list and the remaining will go through a follow up process.** A List of those follow up workers will be posted in the yards. If you have any information regarding these sisters and brothers, please contact Vice President Mendes, Grievance Committee Chairman Bynoe or Readville Chief Steward Kirschbaum.

3. **Expedited Arbitration and Proceedings** – After 9 months of delays the company has agreed to the establishment of the panel. They will abide by the long standing procedures for E.A. Also an order of scheduling priority has been decided.

4. **Standing Committees** – Racial Issues, Safety, Facilities, 401 K, Route Review, Child Care, General Issues and Occupational Health and Safety **will NOW start to meet.** These Committees are vital to the resolution of everyday problems facing the drivers. It will mark a significant advance for the Local. If you would like to participate in one of these committees, please contact the Union.

5. **Facilities** –

a. New Washington Street Yard – The Company has agreed to meet with the union to assure that needed renovations are made prior to July 2004 start up.

b. Immediately institute a process of correcting long standing and new problems at all Yards.

**Rally to Support
Machinists Union Lodge 100
(Boston Water and Sewer Commission
workers without a contract)
Tuesday, March 30
4:30 – 6:00 PM
Melnea Cass Blvd and Harrison Ave.**

The Company's first economic offer was passed across the table on March 9, 2204. Their next proposal is due March 31, 2004. The first offer was an **insult.** The money was 1%, 1%, 1.5%, 1.5%, and 2%. And **NO benefit increases** and plenty of hidden and not so hidden **cutbacks** for a 5 year contract. Firstly, as directed by the members **we are seeking a 3 year agreement.** Like the Teachers Union, we know that **in bad economic times it would be foolish to lock ourselves in. We want our monies in three years and front loaded!**

The Company's proposal contains **many cuts, including seeking to weaken our Union Shop.** It continues a discriminatory probation clause that has drivers paying Union dues after 30 days but prevents representation until 60-days; it steps backward on licensing and accident/incident level, leaves of absence, seniority, bidding, grievance and arbitration, discipline, Union Activities, and more.

Most revealing is an absolutely outrageous proposal to create a non-Union, 24 hour a week scab, slave force (ineligible for benefits) to do our work!!

As you can see there are many miles yet to go before we win our economic justice and union respect. Now is the time for us to take our battle to the next level. We are stronger and more connected to our allies in the labor movement and the community. The Company and their backers in the city are vulnerable.

This is your contract – Join the fight today!



A Local 8751 contingent, organized by President Gillis & Vice President Mendes, helped to lead a march of more than 100,000 unionists and anti-war protestors in New York City on March 20th, calling for the government to spend "Money for Jobs, Health Care and Education, Not for War and Occupation." Millions more marched in cities throughout the world. (AP photo)