

BFT Opening Statement

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Janet.Eastman

BFT's opening statement.

BFT's Healthcare Trust Fund (HTF) presentation at the September 29 Legislative Hearing and the October 13 school board meeting have been misconstrued as being disingenuous. However, those presentations were based on information and data we received from school board and district personnel. Therefore, I want to once again emphasize that BFT never intended to mislead BPS employees or the public.

Unfortunately, misunderstanding has occurred and has led to an atmosphere of acrimony and mistrust regarding negotiations. To reestablish trust, BFT requests that all future bargaining sessions be reduced to writing and certified by the signatures of the two chief negotiators, with copies provided to all team members. To accomplish this, a computer, projector, printer and copier will need to be available at each session.

Believing that the Interest Based Bargaining model is valuable, and to help ensure that we continue with this process, BFT also feels it would be prudent and beneficial for the teams to submit a grant proposal for funding a comprehensive IBB team training by the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service. This training should include the superintendent and all school board members. Finally, to assist us in focusing on the issues, we ask that an impartial facilitator lead all future bargaining sessions.

BFT believes we can move forward and put aside our personal feelings regarding the recent events only if BFT is treated as an equal partner. Our issues and ideas must be brought to the board in a clear and concise manner and seriously considered in the spirit of collaboration. We must receive timely and complete information, so informed decisions can be made in good faith, and the district must commit itself to being completely transparent during all bargaining sessions, informational meetings and other communications with BFT.

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