

Letter to the Editor:

The Boston Teachers Union shares with Rev. Ray Hammond and Horace Small (“A proven route to education” (7/23)) a commitment to improving our schools and offering the best education to all our children. Our teachers, guidance counselors, librarians, nurses, psychologists and paraprofessionals want lower class sizes, stronger professional development, and improved resources for all of our children.

We disagree that this journey begins and ends with a conversion to pilot school. It’s that simple. Education professionals do not accept forfeiting hard-won due process and collective bargaining rights as the price of passage to improved schools.

It’s possible to have both. That’s why our members recently have voted overwhelmingly against conversions to pilot schools. Our members want the city and state to budget these improvements without undermining our ability to operate professionally in our classrooms and without taking away any of our collective bargaining rights.

The Boston Teachers Union created pilot schools 15 years ago. Two years ago we created Discovery Schools. Both Pilots and Discoverys offer parents an exciting measure of choice, and both have a bright future. With fifteen years’ experience behind us, in many cases Discovery schools now make more sense. In some schools, our members have voted down Pilots, opting to file for Discovery status instead.

It is unfortunate the authors have hinted at race-based reasons for our members’ rejection of pilot status. Our working membership is very diversified, committed to an equal and a quality education for all students, and we are adamant in protecting the rights of all.

Finally, fairness should dictate that the Globe note that co-author Rev. Ray Hammond chairs the Board of Directors of the Boston Foundation. The Boston Foundation wishes to take away collective bargaining rights from Boston’s educators. The Boston Foundation subsidized the Center for Collaborative Education’s (CCE) referenced report praising pilot schools. Both the CCE and Boston Foundation support Pilot Schools to the exclusion of other equally good reforms.

Teachers, parents and young people alike appreciate the growing public school options in Boston. Let’s work together to continue to improve and properly fund those options.

Richard Stutman
President
Boston Teachers Union