



## A Vision for Boston: Questions for the 2009 Mayoral Candidates

### DAY 3: THE NEXT TEACHERS' CONTRACT

*What will your priorities be for the next teachers' contract and how will you achieve successful implementation given the tight fiscal position the City will face over the next few years?*



#### **Michael F. Flaherty Jr.**

While the BPS has enjoyed a few isolated victories over the last 16 years, we still have a status quo consisting of a frightening dropout crisis, stagnant graduation rates, abysmal test scores and depressing rates of success in college. Negotiating the next teachers' contract serves as an opportunity to begin bold reforms that are necessary to transform our public school district and turn around our chronically underperforming schools, which currently plague the BPS.

As Mayor, I will fight for greater flexibilities that give individual schools greater autonomies over hiring, firing, budgeting, programming and scheduling. As a vocal proponent of performance management, I'll advocate for a merit pay program with proven success for teachers in designated schools and performance contracts that stipulate criteria where performance can be tangibly measured and quantified. However, performance contracts mean nothing unless we track our progress, which will require stronger monitoring systems than we currently employ.

I will also use contract negotiations as an opportunity to review the legality of provisions that require union approval for inclusive programming for special education students. Under no circumstances should politics be put ahead of our ability to provide quality education to students who need the most support.

#### **Thomas M. Menino**

Our approach to every teachers' contract is to advocate for reforms that put students first. Our priorities in these contracts include:

- *Appropriate Compensation*

To attract the best and brightest, we offer our teachers the state's most competitive compensation package; however, it is time to adopt alternative compensation models that reward teachers for improvements in student achievement. We can attract significant funding through Secretary Duncan's "Race to the Top" initiative, but we won't be considered if we don't explore merit pay.

- *Teacher Support*

We're fortunate to have extremely dedicated teachers – veterans and new teachers, alike. We must provide them with the training, materials and support they need to succeed. The teachers' contract should be designed to protect and promote the best teachers, and increase opportunities for teacher leadership.

- *Innovative School Models*

We will keep advancing innovations that improve student learning and attract families to City schools. Our 24 pilot schools have earned national praise by advancing creative approaches that meet the needs of families. We must be particularly bold in our approach to transforming low-performing schools, giving them the flexibility to assemble a top-notch staff, extend learning time, and put resources where they are needed most.