

MBTA: You *can* be a hero to Boston Families

Since the T is funded by state taxpayers it needs to be responsive to the needs of the citizens of Massachusetts, especially those with the least money and the youngest. Government is supposed to help and support those most vulnerable and not make things worse for them.

The planned cost increases for BPS students taking the MBTA would have a big impact on the BPS budget and the educational outcomes of those students. Increased fare costs from the MBTA would take away funds from BPS who are already facing a budget shortfall. BPS Schools have already had cuts for two years now. If the fares go up students will lose more librarians, teachers, and support staff.

I think the T needs to go in the opposite direction and keep MBTA passes for students low. In addition I think that the MBTA should offer lower cost t-passes for their families through the Boston Public Schools. This could have the benefit of having parents able to take their children to school which could help cut down on transportation costs for BPS. This would also make it easier for parents to have affordable access to better employment opportunities. When families in Boston have improved employment opportunities there is less poverty and that in turn helps educational outcomes. Instead of being on the side of harming educational outcomes it would be great if the MBTA had a goal to improve them.

To address the financial difficulties of the MBTA, I would offer the following suggestions:

- Have priorities be repairs and new vehicles. Ridership could increase in certain areas where there is overcrowding.
- New bus routes and T stops in poorer communities would help with the employment opportunities for residents in poverty and those investments would be worthwhile.
- Cuts can take place with overtime, cutting upper management positions, and not expanding the MBTA at this point.
- For communities that were expecting extensions to rails perhaps they could pay their way one stop at a time.
- Reduce the Night Time T. The Night Time T could be partially funded by colleges if they found it useful for student recruitment.
- Don't privatize positions that are not high salary. There are not enough middle class residents of Boston as it is. Please cut money from the employees that are making more than a middle class income instead.
- The state needs to increase funding for the T. Perhaps state departments that benefit from Public transportation could partner with the MBTA on shared goals and have overlap funds. One example would be Health and Human Services since both groups share the goal of cleaner air. Another example would be the Labor and Workforce Development as they share the goal of improved access to good employment opportunities.
- I am curious how much it costs to operate the signage that lets people know when their trains are coming. Although I totally love this new technology I would happily give it up for a year or two if it helped keep fares from being raised or made it possible for the MBTA to afford repairs or have more trains and buses during peak times. I think that other people would be willing to make trade offs like that if one loss was clearly tied to another gain.

Thanks for listening.

Lisa Jeanne Graf

(A Fenway resident with a 7 year old daughter in the Boston Public Schools)