

Public Testimony for the Boston PILOT Program

Lisa Jeanne Graf, June, 2021

Some Suggestions for PILOT Community Benefits.

Improving the educational outcomes of BPS students through community benefits:

1. Facility use of non-profit buildings by BPS students.
2. Therapy is sometimes provided for BPS students by nonprofit partners. The caregiver's insurance is billed for this service, and then caregivers are responsible for the cost of the co-pay. To make therapy more accessible the nonprofit could cover the expense of the caregiver's copays. A benefit to non-profits would be that they might get more business because more caregivers would choose therapy for their child.
3. Non-profits could offer good paying jobs to the caregivers of BPS students.
4. Each fine arts institution could partner with BPS to offer free passes for families once a year who go to BPS. A bonus is that students who do not like crowds could go on quiet days and really enjoy the arts. Free days at Museums are not ideal for all families (especially families that are neurodiverse) since they tend to be very crowded which can be overwhelming.
5. Whenever possible help families improve their housing, and health. All nonprofits should have goals for directly helping the families in the Boston Public Schools.
6. Ask BPS staff, families, and students what community benefits they would like to see. A list of possible community benefits could be created through meetings that include community members and non-profit staff. One speaker at a city council meeting about the PILOT program suggested creating a database where needs are posted, and non-profits could then choose from that list when providing community benefits. This is a great idea.
7. Hospitals could provide space for preschool care in a partnership with the Boston Public Schools. BPS could provide the teachers and classroom materials. This could be a benefit for hospital staff with children, as well as for Boston residents with children.
8. The BPS initiative Build BPS needs swing space when buildings require repairs or construction. Community benefits could include offering swing space, trading a building with BPS or offering a building for a school.

Housing for College Students:

- Colleges can collect data on the landlords that they partner with to provide student housing, to learn if their rents are fair, and if they keep up their properties well. If the landlords do not have fair rents and have poor management of their properties, then a college could sever that relationship. Colleges have influence to improve housing costs and quality for students, and city residents.
- Universities could organize students as a group so that they could request certain rents for different sized apartments. This could possibly bring down housing costs

throughout the city if they worked together with community activists. If all colleges did this as a group, it would be even more impactful.

- Colleges could build more dorms to free up more housing for residents who are not students.

Employment for Boston Residents:

Have all jobs offered be for a minimum of \$15.00 an hour.

- Have hiring priorities for BPS families, individuals experiencing homelessness, and members of marginalized groups.
- Support and work with unions employed by non-profits.

Employee Benefits for Boston Residents:

- For Colleges, change work benefits that allow auditing underfilled classes, to instead be for credit. This would not cost the institutions more money, or time, but it would help build up the careers of Boston residents which would have a great value.
- Some non-profits have partial tuition reimbursement as a staff benefit. It is given after a class has taken place, not before the class starts. This helps staff that are already financially strong, not those who need the help the most financially. Reimbursement directly from the institution to the school where classes are being taken would be much more useful for low-income staff.
- Some non-profits have pipeline programs for staff to get trained for a new career. These programs are already in place and could allow Boston residents to have access to open seats.

Supporting Artists:

- Non-profits could exclusively purchase art by local artists for displayed artwork.

A question - are non-profits doing harm in a neighborhood?

- If so, then their community contributions should be higher to compensate for this.