

CONCERN FOR BROOKLYN FRIENDS SCHOOL (BFS) DOCUMENTS

1. Introduction: Letter from NYQM clerk 8/29/20
2. Minute from Brooklyn Monthly Meeting requesting Quarterly Meeting consideration (10/4/20)
3. Letter to BFS community from Head of School announcing petition to decertify the BFS Colleagues Union (8/14/20)
4. Minute from BFS Care Relationship Committee 9/6/20
5. Proposal to resolve the current conflict at Brooklyn Friends School by three former BFS Board Members (8/30), an update (9/26), and related correspondence
6. Minute in support of the Former Clerks' Proposal from the BFS Care Relationship Committee
7. Minute from Morningside Monthly Meeting
8. Minute from 15th Street Monthly Meeting
9. Announcement of strike by BFS Colleagues Union, October 1, 2020
10. Essay, Bayard Rustin, "The Blacks and Unions"
11. Press

Updates are available at this "4BFS" website: <https://4bfscolleagues.cargo.site/>

1)

Letter from NYQM Clerk, Nancy Britton 8/29/20

The Brooklyn Friends School announced on August 21 that it filed a petition with the National Labor Relations Board to decertify the school's union. Referring to a new June ruling that broadened a religious exemption to NLRB jurisdiction, the school relied on Friends' practice as a basis for the filing.

The wider NYQM was unaware of the filing until after the letter announcing it was released to the BFS community.

Many Friends have raised objections to using the practice of Friends in defense of this measure. New York City's Friends schools are separately incorporated private schools. Historically Friends are supportive of worker protections and many Friends organizations are unionized. The NYQM is in ongoing communication with the relevant committees to discern a way forward.

We are holding the staff and faculty and the administration in the Light as they work towards a fair resolution for everyone.

In Friendship,
Nancy Britton, clerk
August 29, 2020

2)

Minute from Brooklyn Monthly Meeting requesting Quarterly Meeting consideration (10/4/20)

All of the business relationships of Friends should be carried on in a spirit of love and service. If we keep before us the faith that there is an indwelling Spirit in every person we encounter, then personal dealings and relations of management and labor become integral to our religious lives and allow us to witness to our testimonies.

Faith and Practice, The Book of Discipline of New York Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, 2018 Edition, Fruits of the Spirit (Work), p. 35.

Our Quaker faith and testimonies honor work and encourage us to approach it with integrity, diligence, and concern. Managing a Quaker institution while engaging with a union representing its workforce is consistent with our values.

Two recent resignations of Quaker-appointed members of the Brooklyn Friends School Board of Trustees have heightened recurring concerns that the Quaker values and process at the heart of our faith are not appropriately being reflected by the engagement between the Brooklyn Friends School administration and the Board of Trustees at this time. This has arisen at a time of much concern about the school's reaction to union representation at Brooklyn Friends School. We ask the New York Quarterly Meeting to take up this issue and find way forward to address our concerns.

Parents of children of color at Brooklyn Friends School have identified a longstanding experience of a failure of Brooklyn Friends School to listen and respond to the need for equity. Children of color have presented these issues for a number of years and they have not been attended to by the school or the Trustees. We ask the New York Quarterly Meeting to take up this issue and to focus on the systemic racism and inequality that must be recognized and addressed to speak to the concerns of the Brooklyn Friends School community of parents, workers, faculty, alum and students.

3)

Letter to BFS community from Head of School announcing petition to decertify the BFS Union, and an accompanying email (8/14/20)

https://www.nycquakers.org/2020/10/06/2020_08_21-bfs-message-from-head-of-school

Updated FAQs

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1K6w7GyXFJoh87t6nPGci9eSg3tGBiaeqj5htekBGNAo/edit>

4)

*A Minute from the BFS Care Relationship Committee
September 6, 2020*

The BFS Care Relationship Committee is aware of Brooklyn Friends School's Unit Clarification petition to the National Labor Relations Board under a recent change in labor law, and which seeks to clarify whether BFS colleagues continue to qualify for union representation by UAW Local 2110.

In the spirit of care, we embrace the entire BFS community, the staff, teachers, Board of Trustees, parents, and alumnae/i. In particular, we hold in the Light those that serve our communities who, in this challenging moment, must find pathways to bridge our faith community and the BFS school community.

Holding the concerns of our two communities in the Light, we seek to find the best way to serve both of these communities while upholding the BFS Essential Principles. The way forward requires worship and discernment, patience, and love. How can we come together with love to carry the spirit forward?

We are actively preparing a meeting with a concern for BFS, on September 2 at 7 pm to allow the members of our two Brooklyn communities to speak, be heard, and to listen to others. We hope members of the BFS board, the BFS Union, and BMM membership with a history of service to the school will feel particularly encouraged to attend. Gathering this meeting in advance of Brooklyn Monthly Meeting's next meeting for business on Sunday, September 6, will allow us to make a more meaningful report on this matter.

Our care relationship committee is comprised of BMM members, current and former BFS Trustees, Teachers, and Parents – each with our perspective and biases. As we prepare for the coming meeting and anticipate broad participation, we ask our community to consider: how can each of us help make this called meeting safe and loving for all those involved?

Signed,
Elizabeth Blake
Jonathan Edmonds
Brendon Glynn
Marna Herrity
Eamon Howley, clerk
Benjamin Warnke
Leslie McCarthy
Edward Oliver
Gustav Peebles
Richard White

5)

A Proposal to resolve the current conflict at Brooklyn Friends School by three former BFS Board Members. This proposal has been endorsed by the BFS Care Relationship Committee.
August 30, 2020

In the firm conviction that the current conflict must be resolved through care and consideration from all sides and stakeholders, we offer a proposal that we believe harmonizes with Quaker process, Quaker values, and the urgent need to hear all voices. We have arrived at this proposal through discernment together in the hope that it can provide way forward. We believe that these recommendations require that all sides both give and gain, in mutual commitment to BFS's vibrant, enduring future. In making this proposal, we hope that it offers a pathway to strengthening the school's Quaker mission and identity.

Indeed, we hope that Brooklyn Friends could serve as a model for Quaker schools nationwide. Our proposal addresses our understanding that the Quaker spirit of the school's union negotiations have broken down over the past year. To repair and strengthen that spirit, we propose that each constituency thoughtfully reconsider its current demands in order to find unity.

We ask the Leadership (Trustees and administration) to commit to the following:

- To recognize the right of BFS teachers and staff to form a union to engage in collective bargaining and all standard union practices, and to rescind their Petition to the National Labor Relations Board.

We ask the UAW Representative and Colleaguesto commit to the following:

- To work affirmatively and proactively to ensure that parents, students, and community members who mobilized in support of the BFS union move forward with care for, and commitment to, the wellbeing of Brooklyn Friends School, mindful of the importance of turning away from past conflicts in order to restore respectful relationships among all parties.

We ask the Leadership (Trustees and administration), and the UAW Representative and Colleagues, to commit to the following:

- To craft a joint statement, expressing specific commitments in moving forward to overcome this crisis and work together in a spirit of care for the BFS community;
- To establish a schedule of joint labor-management meetings, run using Quaker process, with a spirit of openness and transparent communication in order to deepen shared interests and to resolve disputes and challenges.

We believe that responsible employers can and should find paths to achieving shared goals and centering their values while elevating the voices of employees, both through union representation (should the employees choose to be unionized) and through ongoing clear, open communication. To that end, we ask both Leadership, and UAW Representative and Colleagues, to commit to an ongoing joint process to affirm a commitment to working to achieve shared interests, open communication, and an inclusive, positive relationship between them.

Having consulted with Friends familiar with both Quaker process and labor-management relations, we believe that there are several potentially fruitful options for moving beyond this painful situation, agreeing to an initial collective bargaining agreement, and establishing productive and fair relationships between management and staff at BFS. We ask that both school Leadership, and the UAW Representative and Colleagues, will make a commitment to one or more of the following approaches:

1. Mediation in order to achieve a first contract. There are many exceptional mediators available who can work collaboratively to help complete this initial negotiating process.
2. Joint training in interest-based bargaining in order to move from taking fixed positions, which can be adversarial and detrimental to collaboration, to identifying and supporting shared interests.
3. Consideration of a labor-management partnership. This approach requires mutual work and joint committees throughout the organization, to make sure that issues are identified early, communication is deep and frequent, and all stakeholders are participating in solving problems when and where they emerge. There are thoughtful and expert facilitators and consultants available who could guide this process.

We have consulted with Rebecca Givan, a faculty member in Labor Studies at Rutgers University with deep roots in the Brooklyn Quaker community, on these proposals. She would be willing to work on establishing a new working process that centers Quaker process and prioritizes moving forward with care and concern for the well being of our community. Paul Clark, Director of the School of Labor and Employment Relations at Penn State and a long time member of State College Friends Meeting, would also be willing to provide support in this process. There are also individuals within the broader Quaker community with expertise in conflict resolution and use of Quaker process who could be resources.

We offer to participate in all meetings between the two sides of this dispute as elder or clerk in the hope and expectation of the observation of Quaker process, adherence to Quaker principles and the loving resolution of this conflict. In so doing, we believe we can simultaneously protect the rights of BFS's workers to have a collective voice governed and guaranteed by the NLRB, while also greatly lessening the need to turn to the NLRB, just as Friends Seminary's history would attest.

We respectfully and tenderly offer this proposal for your discernment, in the spirit of the deep love we all share for our school, along with our faith in one another and the Light that connects us all. As a first step, we ask for separate meetings between ourselves and BFS Leadership, and also between ourselves and UAW Representative and BFS Colleagues, to identify concerns as well as possible strategies to begin the essential work of healing. We send this letter out to the broader community as well – Quakers, current and former families and students, and all who know and love Brooklyn Friends School – so that all can participate by laying down the existing conflict, and holding this process in the Light.

Nancy Black, Brooklyn Meeting Member, former clerk of the BFS Board of Trustees
Alice Pope, Brooklyn Meeting Member, former clerk of the BFS Board of Trustees
Benjamin Warnke, Brooklyn Meeting Member, former clerk of the BFS Board of Trustees
REVISED 9-22-20

An update from the three former members of the Brooklyn Friends School Board of Trustees
September 16, 2020
Dear Friends,

An Update on our work to help resolve the current conflict over the BFS Colleagues Union
As part of an ongoing effort to help facilitate the resolution of the impasse at Brooklyn Friends School, we have held two recent meetings, the first with three BFS Union members and a representative from UAW Local 2110, the second with four BFS Trustees. We found both meetings constructive. We heard in both meetings a common, deep love for our school and for the Quaker faith and testimonies that imbue and support it. We also heard frustration, hurt, anger; a desire for open communication and concern about obstacles preventing this; the ebbing away of trust.

Quaker belief is optimistic at its core, and we remain persuaded that the BFS Trustees and the BFS Union can find a way forward to resolve this conflict. We are encouraged by the BFS Union's support for the release of the following statement communicating the sense of our meeting with them.

"The three former BFS board clerks met with several BFS Union members and a representative from UAW Local 2110 in a constructive meeting focused on seeking solutions to the conflict within the school. The union representatives were open to the specific proposal made by the clerks and open, more generally, to considering collective bargaining approaches that would be consistent with both the Quaker process and the democratic rights of the membership. We believe that a positive, collaborative relationship between the administration and the union is possible."

We are also encouraged by the BFS Trustees willingness to continue their discussions with us. We have offered to share with them the important information we have learned from our conversations with Paul Clark and Rebecca Givan, two professors of labor studies and employment relations with deep Quaker roots; and we expect that the Trustees will meet with us again in the next few days.

In Friendship,
Nancy Black
Alice Pope
Benjamin Warnke

Related correspondence:

Letter from Former Board Members to the Head of School and Board of Trustees,
September 23, 2020

<https://www.nycquakers.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Letter-to-Board-and-Head-from-Former-Clerks-9-23-20.pdf>

Letter from labor scholars Rebecca Givan and Paul Clark to the Head of School and Board of Trustees, September 23, 2020

https://www.nycquakers.org/2020/10/05/2020_23_9-clark-givan-to-bfs/

Memorandum on Partnership Model of Union Management proposed by Rebecca Givan and Paul Clark

<https://www.nycquakers.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Adversarial-vs-Partnership-Labor-Management-Relationships.docx.pdf>

Letter from Former Board Members to the Board of Trustees regarding the proposal from the Colleagues Union UAW, September 24, 2020

<https://www.nycquakers.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Letter-to-BFS-Board-and-Head-from-Colleagues-Union-UAW-9-24.docx.pdf>

Letter from Former Board Members to the Head of School and Board of Trustees,
September 28, 2020

<https://www.nycquakers.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Letter-to-Board-and-Head-from-former-clerks-9-28.pdf>

6)

Minute from the BFS Care Relationship Committee

September 22nd, 2020

The Brooklyn Friends School Care Relationship Committee of Brooklyn Monthly Meeting desires to voice its strong support for the Proposal to resolve the current conflict at Brooklyn Friends School offered by three former clerks of the Board of Trustees. We sincerely hope that the spirit of the proposal will be taken to heart.

At the Meeting with a Concern for BFS on September 2nd and in subsequent letters we have received our committee has heard a deep love and care for the BFS Community. Alongside the love and care we have heard pain, confusion and distress. We believe that the proposal holds great promise and hope for healing and finding a way forward. To that end we hope that all involved parties will seek to de-escalate and give time and energy to deeply consider the wisdom of the proposal.

Our spirits are lifted to know that the former clerks have met to discuss the proposal with union representatives and also a subcommittee of the Board of Trustees.

With tenderness, we hold in the Light all concerned.

7)

Minute from Morningside Monthly Meeting

September 6, 2020

Friends are concerned to support the healing and conflict transformation that Brooklyn Friends so clearly needs at this time. We endorse the proposal brought forward by Alice Pope, Nancy Black and Benjamin Warnke, all former BFS Trustees with long and deep roots in the Quaker traditions of the school.

8)

Minute from 15th Street Meeting

October 4, 2020

Friends hear an update on the situation at Brooklyn Friends School through an email from Alice Pope to the clerk of NYQM. Friends express a deep sense of care and love for all people involved with the School and hold everyone in the light. While we are not privy to the details of the negotiation, we want to reaffirm the two deeply held Quaker values of respect for the individual, and the respect for individuals to bargain collectively. Friends note that Quaker decision making process and values are not in conflict with collective bargaining and that attempts to represent our values should be comprehensive. We are united in prayer that whatever the outcome it fully respects the equality of all members of the BFS community. One Friend stands aside.

9)

Announcement of strike by BFS Colleagues Union, October 1, 2020

<https://www.bfsunion.org/>

Dear BFS Families,

Our strike begins Monday, October 5, and will continue until the Board of Trustees and Head of School cease their efforts to decertify our union. We do not make this decision lightly, and it only comes after exhausting all other options since August 14. In striking, we are making a principled sacrifice. To protect our right to unionize, we will give up our financial security. We will also step away from BFS students, who are so important to our lives.

We work with your children every day and are committed to their wellbeing and education. We work hard to give them the very best experience in school. We unionized to collectively bargain with our employer and to be treated equitably and with dignity. We feel it is fundamentally important to maintain this right for our own sake and for the sake of your children as well. You can read from various BFS workers why they are striking [here](#).

The Board of Trustees and Head of School's attempt to decertify our union has affected us all, colleagues and families alike. Your families and the broader Quaker community have had to endure and hope for a resolution as the school's leadership has rejected every possible opportunity at [compromise](#).

We recognize the impact this process has on families. Our colleagues provide guidance and mentorship, love and support, and a safe place for your children. The school leadership's actions have put all of us, colleagues and families, in a position where our relationships and principles are being tested. You have worked to send your children to a school that values the importance of rights and justice, which is also why many of us decided to work here in the first place. In striking, we are honoring those principles despite the practical cost, and we invite you to do the same.

BFS families can support us by:

- Joining us on the picket line to positively convey our demands and honor our shared principles. We will be picketing daily at all three BFS locations on Monday through Friday, from 6:30 to 9:30 am.
- Honoring our strike by not sending your children to school in person or remote.
- Having a conversation with your children about our decision to strike. (We'll share resources for talking with younger children about strikes on our website shortly.)
- Donating to our strike fund
<https://www.gofundme.com/f/bfs-union-strike-fund>

In Solidarity,
The BFS Union

An open letter from the three former clerks to Crissy Cáceres, Head of School; the BFS Board; the Colleagues Union/UAW; and the entire Brooklyn Friends School community

A call for reconciliation

October 8, 2020 We are happy that way has opened for withdrawal of the petition to decertify the Colleagues Union/UAW. This permits healing and restoration of relationships to begin, and will safeguard the continued success of BFS as a Quaker school. We thank Crissy Cáceres for her integrity, compassion, and commitment to the school's well-being. We thank the Board for their support of the Head and their ongoing conscientious discernment about these important issues. It is rare these days to see willingness to change position, especially under fire – you are serving as valuable models for our students, and for the world. We thank the Colleagues Union/UAW for steadfast pursuit of the right to unionize, and for communicating their willingness to engage in the process of building a new, more collaborative relationship in school decision-making. We thank school administrators for faithfully continuing to serve, in difficult circumstances. We thank students and families, BFS alumni and friends, and the Quaker community in Brooklyn and beyond for your heartfelt support of the values that have guided the school we all love. And now the hard work begins. If we are worthy of those Quaker values, now we must all demonstrate those beliefs through our actions. Conflict resolution must begin immediately in order to repair relationships and

restore faith. Everyone has a role to play. The school's survival depends on our commitment now. We ask the Head, the Board, and the Colleagues Union/UAW, to actively seek renewal and repair of damaged relationships and to commit to the remaining elements of our proposal: · To craft a joint statement, expressing specific commitments in moving forward to overcome this crisis and work together in a spirit of care for the BFS community; · To establish a schedule of joint labor-management meetings, run using Quaker process, with a spirit of openness and transparent communication in order to deepen shared interests and to resolve disputes and challenges. Soon you will have a letter from our labor relations experts, Rebecca Givan and Paul Clark, suggesting concrete steps that can be taken by the Head, the Board, and the Colleagues Union/UAW, to learn about and consider ways of creating a collaborative partnership relationship that can form the basis of decision-making characterized by open communication, respectful engagement, and trust. We further ask the Colleagues Union/UAW to put aside the language of win/lose and the mindset of us/them, and we request that they commit to this element of our proposal: · To work affirmatively and proactively to ensure that parents, students, and community members who mobilized in support of the BFS union move forward with care for, and commitment to, the well-being of Brooklyn Friends School, mindful of the importance of turning away from past conflicts in order to restore respectful relationships among all parties. To BFS alumni and friends, students and families: We thank you for your loyalty to our school, and we ask you to commit your energies to re-establishing good relationships throughout the entire community. We ask the Quaker community to refrain from any personal attacks of the Head and Board, and to carefully and lovingly attend to their need for support as they lead the school through this period of restoring faith and confidence. Friends, this can be a transformative moment for Brooklyn Friends School – if we can live into the values we cherish, the values that have supported the school's essential character for generations. A school is a living, breathing thing. It must be properly nurtured so that it can grow in ways that reflect our deep love for our community. Recovering from conflict is difficult, but sacred work. If we all commit ourselves fully to the process of reconciliation, drawing upon the fundamental spirit that has always lifted up our school, we will have been worthy stewards for this generation, and we will earn the gratitude of future generations. In faith, love, and optimism, Nancy Black Alice Pope Benjamin Warnke

Dear BFS Community, We would like to welcome you to a Zoom forum on Wednesday, October 21, from 7:00 to 8:30pm that will give us all the opportunity to connect and discuss the recent situation with the Union as well as share our goals for continuing to come together as a community now and into the future. We look forward to:

- Sharing why the Board of Trustees and BFS Leadership made the decision to file the petition

- Going into further detail on what ultimately led to us reaching unity on withdrawing the petition
- Creating clarity and awareness within our community so we have a common and truthful understanding as we move forward to build a better BFS

Please see below a letter from the Board of Trustees to our community which offers more perspective, context, and important information to serve as a reference before our forum.

We look forward to connecting with all of you Wednesday. The link will be shared next week. Enjoy your weekend.

Crissy and the BFS Board of Trustees

=====

Dear BFS Community,

We are pleased that children and colleagues are back at school. We have all seen the joy on the faces of students and teachers as they engage in the sacred purpose of BFS – teaching and learning. We thank colleagues for their dedication to and care for their students, and we thank families for their patience during the recent unsettled times. In service to students, families, and colleagues, we are committed to sustaining stability even as we resolve complex issues that are essential to the immediate and long-term health of BFS.

We recognize the need across our community for healing and reconciliation, and we are developing specific steps to nurture that process. We will share our plans as they take shape, but know that we will commit whatever time and resources are necessary to keep our Mission at the center of BFS.

We know that powerful emotions have swirled in our community, but we insist that ad hominem attacks on Crissy Cáceres or any other members of the BFS community cease. We ask that the few who have engaged in such disrespectful, hurtful, and dehumanizing behavior put that aside. In this moment, all of us must strive to evince respect, kindness, and civility in our relations with each member of our school. Restoring strained connections and unity must be our brightest guiding light, and we need to see the Light in each other. Each of us can take these steps towards healing.

We are writing now in anticipation of our Forum on Wednesday, October 21, and in order to help establish a context for our discussions. We also want to address directly, questions that have arisen in the BFS community.

Communications

We know that questions remain about our communications, decisions related to the petition, and the rapid unfolding of events between October 2 and 7 when we agreed to withdraw the petition to avert a Colleague strike. We wish to address those matters, not to resurrect past grievances or to disparage the Colleagues' choice to organize as a union, which we have

accepted, but to create clarity and awareness within our community so we have a common and truthful understanding as we move forward to build a better BFS. In an Appendix that follows this letter, and because many of you have asked, we also offer our shared guiding vision for BFS and a description of Board practices. We have heard your voices about our communications and understand that, to date, we may have erred in being overly cautious in not taking a more personal approach to speaking with you. In trying to be reflective and thoughtful in our written responses to your concerns, we have perhaps fallen short in connecting to your hearts and minds, which we regret, and we intend to change course.

Filing the Unit Clarification Petition

We want to be clear about our decision to file the Unit Clarification Petition when we did. Earlier this summer, the UAW filed an Unfair Labor Practice charge against the School with the NLRB. The charge made a false allegation against the School based on factual assertions that were entirely untrue. As a matter of fact, we refuted the misrepresentations in the charge, and as a matter of law, and integrity, we questioned the UAW's presence and influence at BFS. We were disturbed that the UAW would lie in such a way. We believe that we should affiliate with organizations that abide by Quaker testimonies. Because the filing of a false charge showed a lack of integrity on the part of the UAW, we made the difficult decision to pursue the UC Petition after lengthy discernment.

Strike Vote

In a Quaker school, we also question the integrity of the union threatening a strike based on a vote in which 70 colleagues out of 190 in the bargaining unit either chose not to vote for or voted against authorizing the strike. We believe that we need to find a way to hear those voices and those of parents and friends with different points of view if we truly seek unity through Quaker Business practice, which does not rely on ballots, and we are committed to finding that way. We ask you to join us in this search.

Negotiations Between BFS and the UAW from October 2-7, 2020

On Friday, October 2, BFS counsel reached out to counsel for the UAW to explore a possible agreement that would include withdrawal of the petition and cancelling the strike. Crissy, her leadership team, and the Board were on 24/7 calls for the next five days so that we could make sure we were in collaboration and had unity on our direction. The Board held four lengthy meetings during this time. Over the weekend and into Monday, the School and the UAW exchanged multiple proposals that involved BFS withdrawing the petition, the Union ending the strike, and the School and the UAW clarifying their working relationship. The proposals included introducing mediation and/or arbitration and allowing leadership and colleagues to have open communications. The urgency of these negotiations prompted us to close school Monday and Tuesday, and then Wednesday. As it became clear to BFS that the agreement being considered likely would not be legally enforceable, we pivoted on Tuesday and offered to agree to a two-year Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) between BFS and the Colleagues' Union. (Negotiations in good faith had been occurring since the Fall of 2019.) Under our proposal, we would withdraw the petition, the strike would not occur, and we would recognize the union as the Colleague's legal bargaining representative. We would also resolve all

outstanding issues concerning the makeup of the bargaining unit. We were hopeful and enthusiastic about the prospect of BFS and the Union moving forward with stability and predictability in their relationship and without any outstanding adversarial issues on the table. The UAW initially responded favorably to our proposal, and we had high hopes for resolving the dispute in a mutually-agreeable manner as we continued discussions. Unfortunately, late Wednesday afternoon, the UAW abruptly withdrew from the negotiations, asserted the parties were too far apart on fundamental issues, reverted to its insistence on a one-year CBA, and signaled its intent to move forward with its plans to strike on Thursday. Nonetheless, in an effort to prevent the breakdown in negotiations and move forward with trust and stability, we offered to make significant further concessions in order to bring the UAW back to the negotiating table. The UAW refused. We were saddened and shocked, because we made legitimately good faith efforts to reach an agreement, end the tumult, and rejoin colleagues and students. We reject the UAW's statement that the CBA proposals under consideration contained "poison pills." We were seeking an agreement that would serve our entire community. But, we did have clarity on two points. First, what we thought were good faith negotiations were not. Second, we had to halt the weaponization of children, our students, in a hurtful process in which we recognize and apologize for our complicity. We had to return care for children and colleagues to the center of our community, so Crissy and the Board decided to withdraw the petition to avert the strike and open school.

Next Steps

We will continue to negotiate in good faith to reach a CBA that will serve each member of our community. We will insist on integrity and compromise in the negotiations. We will seek to have all voices respected and heard. We will pursue a way for open communications to occur between colleagues and leadership. We will ensure that our students, colleagues, families, and Mission are at the center of our caring Quaker community. We will ensure that we remain trustworthy, responsible stewards of BFS now and for the future. And we will seek to repair the fractured relationship with the larger Quaker community, including Brooklyn Monthly Meeting, so that they can support our shared aspirations for BFS in a fair and balanced way. In closing, we want to share the words of Robert Lawrence Smith, the long-time School Head of Sidwell Friends and the author of "A Quaker Book of Wisdom." He wrote the book for his family, especially his grandchildren, and he stated: "One of the paradoxes of running a Quaker school is that the expression of individual conviction lies at the heart of Quakerism, and yet the good of the school cannot be sacrificed to any one individual's convictions, no matter how strongly held." We will strive to govern for the good of BFS, and, as we think of our current students and colleagues, we will also think of their children and grandchildren and the school that will best serve them. We hope you will join us in reaching for unity about the present and future BFS and nurturing the Light of each person in our community.

In Peace,

Crissy Cáceres, Head of School and the Brooklyn Friends School Board of Trustees

Appendix

Our Shared Vision for the Future of Brooklyn Friends School and Board of Trustee Practices

We want to speak to the strategic vision that guides Crissy and the Board in our work together. Allow us to begin with the Head of School Search that led us to joyous unity in November 2017 in inviting Crissy Cáceres to lead us. In the Opportunity Statement (provide link), which was created from surveys, listening sessions, and individual conversations across all of our school constituencies – students, colleagues, school leadership, alumnae/i, parents, and friends of the school - we identified the opportunities and challenges for BFS as well as the leadership qualities we sought in our next Head of School. These ideas mirrored those that emerged in our Strategic Planning process that was similarly inclusive and iterative.

To summarize briefly, the opportunities and challenges included but were not limited to:

- Enhancements to the educational program through strategic resource allocation.
- Collaborative decision-making between colleagues and school leaders around program, mission, and community culture.
- Addressing the community fissures around equity, belonging, and inclusion.
- Strengthening marketing, advancement, stewardship, and fund-raising to ensure the long-term sustainability of BFS and provide the resources for strategic objectives and current operations, especially the support of colleagues.
- Improving communications and responsiveness to enhance community. • Attract and retain the best colleagues through intentional policies and practices.
- Deepening the expression of our Mission.

The leadership qualities included, but were not limited to:

- A commitment to spirituality and Quaker education.
 - An inspirational, motivating leader who will build community around a shared, compelling vision.
 - Experience and skill in working with equity and inclusion.
 - Exceptional listening and communication skills, including the ability to be clear, direct, authentic, and open to the ideas of others.
 - Excellent administrative and managerial skills, including the ability to hire equitably, mentor and evaluate effectively, and enforce standards of accountability.
 - An individual of compassion, kindness, sensitivity, gratitude, patience, empathy, humility, decisiveness, and high integrity.

We deeply respect how Quaker practice informed the uplifting of these ideas about leadership and our community, and we feel a responsibility as Trustees to honor our shared vision. By nurturing the Mission, planning strategically, acting as fiduciaries, and hiring and supporting the Head of School, we seek to establish the conditions for this vision of leadership and community to come alive. We adhere to Quaker Meeting for Business practice in making decisions and look to the unity of our vision for guidance. We sit deeply with difficult decisions and ensure that we are fully informed. The diversity of our Board brings multiple perspectives, probing questions, and unvarnished honesty to our deliberations. We know that you are as invested as we are in the present and future of BFS. We ask that you consider the uniqueness of where we sit and believe that we serve, not out of any self-interest, but for students, colleagues, and parents now and 153 years from now. We remain steadfast in moving the school forward by enlivening the aspirations expressed by the community, and we will always seek to do this together. We are also steadfast in our support of Crissy and her leadership in moving us forward. She is the same person we hired with the attributes we sought and the ability to create a community centered on care and our shared vision.

Recent events show how fragile and fleeting the unity we had just a short time ago can be, but we remain dedicated to restoring unity and following the shared vision we have for a better BFS.

10)

Bayard Rustin, *The Blacks and the Unions*, *Harpers Magazine*, 1971

<https://www.nycquakers.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Rustin-The-Blacks-and-the-Unions.pdf>

11)

Press

Friends Journal

<https://www.friendsjournal.org/news-brooklyn-friends-school-seeks-to-dissolve-its-employees-union-citing-quaker-values/>

New York Times

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/03/nyregion/brooklyn-friends-quaker-union.html>

Gothamist

<https://champ.gothamist.com/champ/gothamist/news/teachers-brooklyn-friends-school-pre-pare-strike-monday>

<https://gothamist.com/news/brooklyn-private-school-vies-bust-union-they-claim-conflicts-quaker-values>

New York Magazine Intelligencer

<https://nymag.com/intelligencer/article/brooklyn-friends-school-union-quaker-values.html>

Brooklyn Paper

<https://www.brooklynpaper.com/brooklyn-friends-school-strike-union-bust/>

<https://www.brooklynpaper.com/brooklyn-friends-school-protest/>

New York One

<https://www.ny1.com/nyc/all-boroughs/news/2020/09/17/quaker-school-teachers-may-strike-over--union-busting-->

<https://www.ny1.com/nyc/all-boroughs/news/2020/09/04/brooklyn-friends-school-urged-to-end-union-busting-tactics>

https://www.ny1.com/share/nyc/all-boroughs/education/2020/08/19/quaker-school-busts-union-trump-policy?cid=share_clip

The American Prospect (Steven Greenhouse)

<https://prospect.org/labor/anti-union-progressives/>

In These Times

<https://inthesetimes.com/article/a-pricey-private-school-says-quaker-values-justify-aggressive-campaign-to-destroy-its-union>

News 12 Brooklyn (TV)

<http://brooklyn.news12.com/state-of-our-schools-rally-held-against-brooklyn-friends-school-42593421>

Blog: Martin Kelly, senior editor *Friends Journal*

<https://www.quakerranter.org/union-busting-and-quakerism-collide-at-brooklyn-friends/>

New York Beacon

<https://newyorkbeacon.com/protesters-rally-against-brooklyn-friends-school-union-busting/>