



**USW Local 8751 - District 4**  
***Boston School Bus Drivers' Union***  
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October 22, 2007

**Solidarity With the Struggle of the San Francisco School Bus Drivers  
Stop First Student Union Busting Now!  
Safety For the Children! Justice For the Union Drivers!**

Dear sisters and brothers of the United Transportation Union Local 1741,

On behalf of the 900 Boston school bus drivers and over 300 bus monitors from our sister Steelworkers Local, we send you our pledge of solidarity in your struggle against our common enemy, First Student, Inc., the giant, multi-national, union-busting monopoly seeking to dominate school and interstate bus transportation in the U.S.. First Student and their parent, the Aberdeen, Scotland based First Group, have earned a world-wide reputation for union busting practices based on their corporate greed and relentless drive for profits.

In July 2003, First Student took over the Boston school bus management contract. They came in with the intent of busting our Union, and disrespecting our decade's long record of safe, on time service to the students of Boston. They wanted to have us file applications as new workers, in an obvious effort to weed out our militant Union leadership. Our members, as one voice, said, "No!" Our struggle was able to overturn this first round of attacks by First Student. We have, however, been fighting First Student attacks ever since. Our Union membership, in alliance with labor and the communities we serve, powerfully put First Student bosses on notice that their standard union-busting game plan used all over Britain will not stand in Boston. We are confident that our sisters and brothers in San Francisco will firmly let them know that, if it didn't play in Boston, it won't play in San Francisco.

First Student came to Boston by underbidding the then largest private school bus operator in the country, Laidlaw, by a whopping \$10 million. This transcontinental raid resulted in Boston in massive safety and maintenance violations – including what OSHA termed willful and serious safety violations that resulted in the carbon monoxide poisoning death of our mechanic UAW brother Hector Rivas on March 9, 2006, caused by First Student's refusal of the mechanic's demand to add a \$70 exhaust modification to the maintenance vehicles. First Student's daily tactic has been to attack the wages, benefits and rights of the workers, which our Union has met and pushed back with numerous direct actions and pickets. Following the green light by the federal government and 11 states attorneys general allowing the monopoly purchase of Laidlaw by First Student on Oct. 1, 2007, First Student was able to extort a new, reportedly much more profitable five year management contract from the City of Boston.

For years, we have been honored to call the San Francisco school bus drivers our Union brothers and sisters, forming a bi-coastal anchor of unionism that has set the standard for wages

***Unity! Unidá!***



***Inité! Unidá!***

and benefits in the industry. We have known of your reputation for strong, militant unionism, whether for effectively representing your members, or for standing in solidarity with workers throughout the world. Be assured that we will do all in our power to be with you in this fight for justice against First Student. Whether sharing critical logistical intelligence, giving concrete solidarity, or making ourselves available to be out there with you, we look forward to hearing from you.

In Solidarity,

Frantz Mendes  
President, USW Local 8751

Steve Gillis  
Vice-President, USW Local 8751

Stevan Kirschbaum  
Grievance Committee Chair

PS: To learn more about our struggles with First Student, including the Justice for Hector Rivas Committee please see our websites at:  
[www.bostonschoolbusunion.org](http://www.bostonschoolbusunion.org)  
[www.iacboston.org/hector\\_rivas/hector\\_rivas.html](http://www.iacboston.org/hector_rivas/hector_rivas.html)  
Enclosed, please find some "Justice for Hector Rivas" stickers your committee can wear to your meetings with the First Student bosses.