

## Memorandum

To: School Committee  
From: Collective Bargaining Team  
Date: July 25, 2023  
Subject: Collective Bargaining Update

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The School Committee asked to start the bargaining process with the Newton Teachers Association (NTA) early in the school year with the goal of finalizing a contract prior to the expiration of the current contract on August 31, 2023. The School Committee's Collective Bargaining Team has been engaged in bargaining with the NTA for about 10 months, and has had 16 collective bargaining sessions.

Many good ideas have been shared between the NTA, school administrators and School Committee members. We have made progress on the following areas, which are called "tentative agreements" around which NTA, administrators and School Committee agree that the items improve the profession, serve Newton's children well, and are financially sustainable:

- paying teachers who substitute teach for other absent teachers (vs. canceling classes)
- enhancing parental leave benefits
- increasing tuition reimbursement for staff pursuing additional education and recertification
- providing a scale and mechanism for substitute coverage and substitute pay advancement
- providing avenues for paraprofessional pay advancement
- enhancing retirement notice incentives
- clarifying work hours and work from home policies
- piloting expanded elementary preparatory time while studying how we can make further improvements to the elementary school day
- expanding the use of sick days for care of a family member or dear friend
- adding Juneteenth for all units as a holiday

For example, the first of these bullets relates to a proposal under which NPS teachers are able to provide substitute coverage in the middle and high schools during class blocks in which they are unscheduled. This will reduce the number of cancelled classes at the high school level. All of these tentative agreements help our staff. We are proud of moving toward these agreements with our union colleagues and partners.

However, as you know, challenging budgets have required us to cut valued positions and programs in each of the last two years. When the School Committee's budget grows at a rate of more than 3.5% per year, we are forced to seek additional sources of funding such as the recent operating override, which voters rejected, or to make cuts in staff, programs and services. One of the School Committee's guiding principles in these contract negotiations, therefore, is to make

sure that the rate of growth of the salaries and benefits specified in the contracts does not exceed 3.5% each year.

We have been unable to come to agreement with the NTA on the rate of future pay increases. Despite many proposals and counter-proposals, we are very far apart in both how teachers are compensated when they advance on the salary table (step), and what they receive as a cost of living adjustment (COLA) on top of that. As you may recall from past updates about half of the NTA’s Unit A members receive both step increases and COLA increases each year.

The students of Newton are our first priority. Our role is to ensure a sustainable budget for the future that can support the growth in compensation provided in collective bargaining agreements. There is always a tension between the amount of staff we can retain and the increases for all staff within our budget. One of our highest priorities is to maintain our educators and preserve existing staffing levels and programs. Doing so results in improved class sizes, more electives and arts programs, and more support to the average classroom and building; we also desire strong compensation for all of our staff.

As a result of the wide disparity between what the School Committee can offer in terms of salary increases and the NTA’s COLA demands, the School Committee has reached the conclusion that the parties are at impasse, and sought the assistance of a state mediator to assist the parties in reaching agreement. The state may involve a mediator at this time or may ask the parties to have additional bargaining sessions before providing a mediator. Mediation is not an adversarial process. To the contrary, the state mediator works with both parties to try to find a pathway to agreement. In most cases, mediation is successful in helping school districts and unions reach an agreement. If mediation is unsuccessful, there are additional processes defined by the state that are intended to help the parties reach a resolution.

**Financial Compensation Details**

NPS is one of the highest-paying school districts in our state, as shown in the data collected by the state Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Our teachers’ salaries (Unit A) are in the top third when compared to other nearby and comparable public school districts. Our paraprofessionals’ salaries (Unit C), especially our employees at the top step, are paid far higher than all of our nearby and comparable districts. Other districts are trying to reach Newton's salary schedules. An updated set of charts showing these comparisons to other districts’ salaries are attached.

The following summaries describe the impact of the School Committee’s current salary proposals for two sample NTA employees, taking into account both step increases for years of experience and the proposed COLA (Cost of Living) increases:

Example 1 – Classroom Teacher (Unit A) on Step 5 with a Master’s Degree

Current Salary	Proposed Increase in December 2023	Proposed Increase in December 2024	Proposed Increase in November 2025
\$72,556	\$76,243	\$81,383	\$85,857
	5.1% annual increase	6.7% annual increase	5.5% annual increase

	\$3,687 increase	\$5,140 increase	\$4,474 increase
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The cumulative increase in salary over the three-year period is \$13,301.

Example 2 – Teaching Assistant (Unit C) at Step 3 working 32.3 hours/week

Unit C employees are paid on an hourly basis, not an annual salary. Unit C employees receive health care and other benefits available to NTA members.

Current Salary	Proposed Increase in September 2023	Proposed Increase in September 2024	Proposed Increase in September 2025
\$28,510	\$30,665	\$33,020	\$35,593
	7.6% annual increase	7.7% annual increase	7.8% annual increase
	\$2,155 increase	\$2,355 increase	\$2,573 increase

The cumulative increase in salary over the three-year period is \$7,083.

### Threatened Work Stoppages

The NTA’s own public communications describe how it is already planning work stoppages and actions for the fall. In particular, the NTA has asked teachers to engage in silent meetings once school resumes, which we believe constitutes an illegal work stoppage because collaboration is essential to those meetings. In addition, teachers’ refusal to participate in paid summer professional development, for which many teachers had previously registered, is having a detrimental impact on the district’s ability to launch its new reading curriculum. The School Committee is working with our new superintendent and her leadership team to do everything possible to ensure a smooth opening of school in September. Our children have had too many disruptions in their schooling in recent years, and we aim to open the year with all the services, support, joy and academic seriousness students need and deserve.

Depending on the dynamics and actions regarding work stoppage actions, the school year may need to be extended for students in order to meet the DESE requirement for 180 school days and 900 (elementary)/990 (secondary) hours of instruction for our students. Families should plan that their children may have to attend school, depending on work stoppage impacts and potential snow days, up to June 30, 2024.

In addition, work stoppages and strikes are illegal in Massachusetts public schools, and the School Committee is required by law to file with the appropriate state commission regarding these actions. School Committees have a statutory obligation to seek to prevent these illegal actions.

More changes may come as we learn about how work stoppage actions may occur. We will be in touch frequently to update you on how this may impact you and your children. The Committee will work with Superintendent Nolin and her team to contend with changes to student schedules, busing, coverage, food services and school closures which may all require adjustments depending on the outcomes and tenor of mediation and any work stoppages by the NTA.

The School Committee remains committed to settling a fair and sustainable contract for our educators and we hope that the involvement of state mediators will assist in that goal.

## FY23 Salary Comparison by District

RANK	FY23 Bachelors Bottom Step		FY23 Bachelors Top Step		FY23 Masters Bottom Step		FY23 Masters Top Step	
	No.	School	Salary	School	Salary	School	Salary	School
1	Cambridge	\$61,040	Concord/ Carlisle	\$99,413	Carlisle (K-8)	\$65,364	Concord/ Carlisle	\$116,312
2	Carlisle (K-8)	\$59,158	Concord (K-8)	\$99,413	Cambridge	\$65,340	Concord (K-8)	\$116,312
3	Dedham	\$57,936	Lincoln/ Sudbury	\$99,370	Brookline	\$64,032	Lincoln/ Sudbury	\$111,539
4	Weston*	\$57,707	Cambridge	\$99,023	Dedham	\$64,032	Weston*	\$109,380
5	Brookline	\$57,458	Wellesley	\$98,394	Concord/ Carlisle	\$63,493	Lincoln (k-8)	\$109,308
6	Watertown	\$56,949	Brookline	\$98,326	Concord (K-8)	\$63,493	Wellesley	\$108,478
7	<b>Newton (7)</b>	<b>\$56,940</b>	<b>Newton (7)</b>	<b>\$96,356</b>	Winchester	\$62,877	Sudbury (K-8)	\$107,408
8	Waltham	\$55,229	Belmont	\$96,074	<b>Newton (7)</b>	<b>\$61,899</b>	Brookline	\$106,859
9	Winchester	\$54,752	Sudbury (K-8)	\$95,132	Weston*	\$61,134	<b>Newton (10)</b>	<b>\$106,655</b>
10	Needham	\$54,270	Watertown	\$93,976	Watertown	\$61,004	Belmont	\$106,603
11	Belmont	\$54,268	Lincoln (k-8)	\$93,848	Waltham	\$60,379	Wayland	\$104,553
12	Concord/ Carlisle	\$54,265	Westwood	\$92,858	Wellesley	\$58,877	Cambridge	\$104,542
13	Concord (K-8)	\$54,265	Dedham	\$91,795	Needham	\$58,339	Lexington	\$103,744
14	Westwood	\$54,030	Wayland	\$91,789	Belmont	\$58,267	Westwood	\$102,911
15	Arlington	\$54,010	Lexington	\$91,975	Lincoln/ Sudbury	\$58,210	Needham	\$102,222
16	Lincoln/ Sudbury	\$53,897	Carlisle (K-8)	\$91,069	Westwood	\$57,697	Watertown	\$100,669
17	Sudbury (K-8)	\$53,834	Bedford	\$90,449	Arlington	\$57,620	Carlisle (K-8)	\$100,625
18	Wellesley	\$53,404	Waltham	\$88,470	Sudbury (K-8)	\$57,612	Bedford (BA+50/M)	\$100,384
19	Lexington	\$53,043	Weston*	\$85,774	Natick	\$57,140	Dedham	\$100,369
20	Wayland	\$52,825	Framingham	\$85,703	Lexington	\$56,314	Winchester	\$95,904
21	Framingham	\$52,048	Natick	\$84,868	Framingham	\$56,176	Arlington	\$95,150
22	Natick	\$51,947	Arlington	\$83,950	Bedford (BA+50/M)	\$55,955	Waltham	\$94,153
23	Bedford	\$51,721	Needham	\$80,951	Wayland	\$54,873	Framingham	\$93,397
24	Lincoln (K-8)	\$49,320	Winchester	\$79,882	Lincoln (K-8)	\$54,195	Natick	\$93,357

NOTES: The number in parentheses next to Newton shows Newton's rank number in the previous year (2021-22)

\*Weston does not have settled contracts for 2022-23. An average COLA of 2.6% over 2021-22 was used in this analysis

RANK	FY23 Masters +30 Bottom Step		FY23 Masters +30 Top Step		FY23 Masters +45 Bottom Step		FY23 Masters +45 Top Step	
	No.	School	Salary	School	Salary	School	Salary	School
1	Carlisle (K-8)	\$73,453	Concord/ Carlisle	\$122,278	Carlisle (K-8)	\$73,453	Concord/ Carlisle	\$125,257
2	Cambridge	\$71,758	Concord (K-8)	\$122,278	Cambridge	\$73,111	Concord (K-8)	\$125,257
3	Winchester	\$68,421	Lincoln/ Sudbury	\$119,550	Winchester	\$71,959	Lincoln/ Sudbury	\$123,119
4	Brookline	\$67,792	Carlisle (K-8)	\$117,601	Brookline	\$69,613	Weston*	\$119,248
5	Dedham	\$67,089	Wellesley	\$116,850	<b>Newton (7)</b>	<b>\$68,404</b>	Carlisle (K-8)	\$117,601
6	Concord/ Carlisle	\$66,746	Weston*	\$116,624	Concord/ Carlisle	\$68,375	Wellesley	\$116,850
7	Concord (K-8)	\$66,746	Wayland	\$115,026	Concord (K-8)	\$68,375	Brookline	\$116,555
8	<b>Newton (7)</b>	<b>\$66,514</b>	Brookline	\$114,727	Dedham	\$67,089	Lincoln (k-8)	\$115,719
9	Watertown	\$64,719	Sudbury (K-8)	\$113,552	Weston*	\$66,154	<b>Newton (10)</b>	<b>\$115,473</b>
10	Weston*	\$64,586	<b>Newton (10)</b>	<b>\$112,944</b>	Watertown	\$66,013	Lexington	\$115,121
11	Waltham	\$63,501	Cambridge	\$112,325	Needham	\$65,116	Wayland	\$115,026
12	Wellesley	\$63,422	Belmont	\$111,895	Waltham	\$65,113	Belmont	\$114,968
13	Natick	\$62,856	Lincoln (k-8)	\$111,304	Natick	\$64,427	Cambridge	\$113,741
14	Needham	\$62,841	Lexington	\$110,390	Lincoln/ Sudbury	\$63,608	Sudbury (K-8)	\$113,552
15	Lincoln/ Sudbury	\$61,756	Westwood	\$108,084	Westwood	\$63,469	Westwood	\$111,257
16	Westwood	\$61,631	Needham	\$107,824	Wellesley	\$63,422	Needham	\$110,759
17	Belmont	\$61,462	Dedham	\$107,232	Belmont	\$63,257	Watertown	\$108,935
18	Sudbury (K-8)	\$60,923	Watertown	\$106,798	Framingham	\$61,949	Dedham	\$107,232
19	Wayland	\$60,373	Winchester	\$105,430	Lexington	\$61,297	Winchester	\$105,891
20	Framingham	\$60,022	Bedford	\$102,877	Sudbury (K-8)	\$60,923	Natick	\$105,257
21	Lexington	\$59,627	Natick	\$102,691	Wayland	\$60,373	Bedford (MA+50)	\$104,357
22	Arlington	\$59,440	Arlington	\$98,390	Arlington	\$59,440	Framingham	\$99,766
23	Lincoln (K-8)	\$58,601	Waltham	\$97,276	Bedford (MA+50)	\$59,220	Waltham	\$98,888
24	Bedford	\$57,865	Framingham	\$97,231	Lincoln (K-8)	\$58,601	Arlington	\$98,390

NOTES: The number in parentheses next to Newton shows Newton's rank number in the previous year (2021-22)

\*Weston does not have settled contracts for 2022-23. An average COLA of 2.6% over 2021-22 was used in this analysis

## FY23 Salary Comparison by District

RANK	FY23 Masters +60 Bottom Step		FY23 Masters +60 Top Step		FY23 Highest Salary Top Step		FY23 Lane Spread - Highest to Lowest Lane / Step		
	No.	School	Salary	School	Salary	School	Salary	School	\$ Spread Highest Lane/Step to Lowest Lane/Step
1	Carlisle (K-8)	\$75,658	Concord/ Carlisle	\$128,243	Concord/ Carlisle	\$131,450	Concord/ Carlisle	\$77,185	8
2	Winchester	\$75,496	Concord (K-8)	\$128,243	Concord (K-8)	\$131,450	Concord (K-8)	\$77,185	8
3	Cambridge	\$74,177	Lincoln/ Sudbury	\$126,793	Wayland	\$127,784	Wayland	\$74,959	7
4	<b>Newton (4)</b>	<b>\$70,769</b>	Carlisle (K-8)	\$125,974	Lincoln/ Sudbury	\$126,793	Lincoln/ Sudbury	\$72,896	6
5	Dedham	\$70,141	Wellesley	\$125,026	Carlisle (K-8)	\$125,974	Wellesley	\$71,622	4
6	Concord/ Carlisle	\$70,003	Wayland	\$122,167	Wellesley	\$125,026	Westwood	\$69,472	8
7	Concord (K-8)	\$70,003	Weston*	\$121,879	Westwood	\$123,502	Lexington	\$68,672	7
8	Brookline	\$69,613	<b>Newton (8)</b>	<b>\$120,172</b>	Brookline	\$122,102	Carlisle (K-8)	\$66,817	4
9	Wellesley	\$67,856	Sudbury (K-8)	\$118,943	Weston*	\$121,879	Lincoln (k-8)	\$66,399	5
10	Weston*	\$67,716	Brookline	\$116,555	Lexington	\$121,715	Sudbury (K-8)	\$65,109	4
11	Watertown (CAGS/MA+60)	\$67,333	Lincoln (k-8)	\$115,719	<b>Newton (11)</b>	<b>\$120,172</b>	Brookline	\$64,644	5
12	Waltham (CAGS, EdS, CAES, 3Ms)	\$66,758	Lexington	\$115,121	Sudbury (K-8)	\$118,943	Weston*	\$64,171	7
13	Westwood	\$66,219	Belmont	\$114,968	Belmont	\$118,046	Belmont	\$63,778	7
14	Needham	\$66,076	Cambridge	\$114,813	Dedham	\$117,510	<b>Newton (14)</b>	<b>\$63,233</b>	<b>5</b>
15	Natick	\$65,998	Westwood	\$114,129	Cambridge	\$116,857	Natick	\$61,272	8
16	Lincoln/ Sudbury	\$65,515	Dedham	\$114,073	Lincoln (k-8)	\$115,719	Needham	\$60,257	8
17	Wayland	\$64,121	Winchester	\$113,496	Watertown	\$115,001	Dedham	\$59,574	5
18	Framingham	\$63,866	Needham	\$112,644	Needham	\$114,527	Winchester	\$58,744	7
19	Sudbury (K-8)	\$63,829	Watertown (CAGS/MA+60)	\$111,109	Winchester	\$113,496	Watertown	\$58,052	6
20	Belmont	\$63,257	Natick	\$107,826	Natick	\$113,219	Cambridge	\$55,817	7
21	Arlington	\$62,450	Bedford	\$104,357	Framingham	\$105,918	Bedford	\$54,111	6
22	Lexington	\$61,297	Framingham	\$102,833	Bedford	\$105,832	Framingham	\$53,870	7
23	Bedford	\$59,220	Arlington	\$102,310	Arlington	\$102,310	Arlington	\$48,300	6
24	Lincoln (k-8)	\$58,601	Waltham (CAGS, EdS, CAES, 3Ms)	\$100,533	Waltham	\$102,210	Waltham	\$46,981	7

NOTES: The number in parantheses next to Newton shows Newton's rank number in the previous year (2021-22)

\*Weston does not have settled contracts for 2022-23. An average COLA of 2.6% over 2021-22 was used in this analysis