

Contract Negotiations 2023-24

Unit A Employees

Given the complexity of contract negotiations and the information shared through various channels, the School Committee would like to share data on current salaries and benefits, as well as proposals currently under discussion.

Yearly Salary Increase Components



- **Steps** - Unit A members receive a percentage increase each year they are employed in the district. NPS has 14 steps (14 years) for Unit A. **Average step increase = 4.2%.**
- **Lanes** - Teachers are paid based upon level of education (Bachelors, Masters, and Doctorate) “Lane changes” are awarded when higher levels of education or approved coursework are completed. **Average lane change = 5.5%**
- **COLA** - this is the annual cost-of-living increase applied to the entire salary.

Employees receive step and lane increases, in addition to agreed upon COLA. In FY23, 49% of Unit A employees received a step increase and 8% received an increase due to lane change.

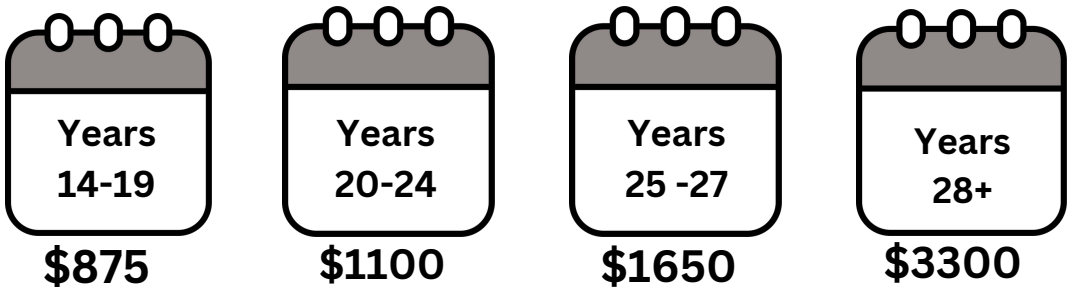
Current School Committee COLA Proposal for Units A,B,E (December 18, 2023)

FY24	FY25	FY26
2.25/2.75%*	2.25/2.75%*	2.75/3.25%*

**In FY24 and FY25, the proposed COLA is 2.25% for “stepping” employees and 2.75% for those on the top step. In FY26, the proposed COLA is 2.75% for “stepping” employees and 3.25% for those on the top step.*

Longevity Payments

Beyond the top step (Step 14), Unit A members receive a lump sum “longevity payment” every year.



41% of Unit A employees receive longevity payment every year.

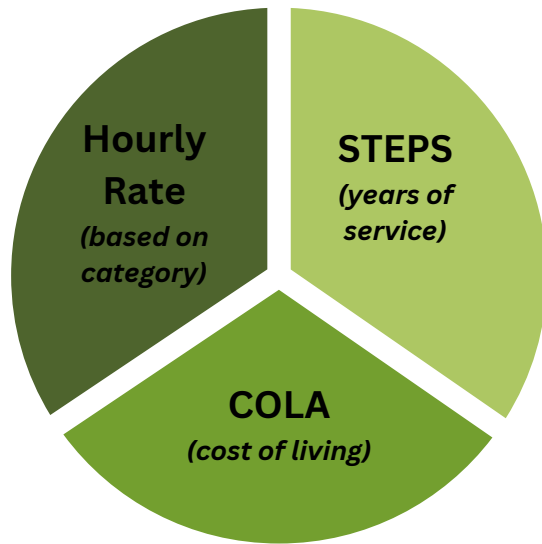
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Unit C Employees

There are two categories of Unit C members, or Educational Support Professionals (ESPs):

- **Category 1 ESPs** are primarily teaching assistants including building assistants, classroom assistants, kindergarten teaching assistants, and special education teaching assistants
- **Category 2 positions** require more extensive or specialized training and include Behavior Therapists, Medical Assistants, and SEL Assistants.

Yearly Salary Increase Components



- **Hourly Rate** - Unit C employees are considered hourly employees by law and are paid based on an hourly rate as well as hours worked per week.
- **Steps** - Unit C members receive a percentage increase each year they are employed in the district. NPS has 12 steps for Category 1 and 9 steps for Category 2. **Average step increase = 6.2%.**
- **COLA** - this is the annual cost-of-living increase applied to the entire salary.

Employees receive step increases, in addition to agreed upon COLA. Approximately 75% of Unit C employees are eligible to receive step increases the following year. Unit C members are paid an annual \$600 License differential if they hold a special education teaching license or are certified Registered Behavior Technician, Board Certified Assistant Behavior Analyst, or Board Certified Behavior Analyst.

Current School Committee COLA Proposal for Unit C (December 18, 2023)

FY24	FY25	FY26
2.5/2%*	2.5/2%*	3/3%*

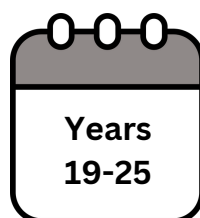
**In FY24 and FY25, the proposed COLA is 2.5% for “stepping” employees and 2% for top step employees. In FY26, the proposed COLA is 3% for “stepping” and top step employees. There is also a proposal to eliminate bottom steps in future years, which will result in higher entry-level salaries.*

Longevity Payments

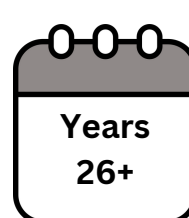
Beyond the top step (Step 9 or 12), Unit C members receive a lump sum “longevity payment” every year.



\$550



\$675



\$850

20% of Unit C employees receive longevity payment every year.

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Benefits

Retirement Benefits



Upon retirement, NTA members are eligible for the following payments:

- A pension (percentage of salary in perpetuity based upon years of service)
- A lump sum “transition” payment of \$3,000 (Units A and B)
- A maximum of \$2,500 for unused sick days
- An additional payment of \$500 is provided if the employee informs the district of planned retirement four months in advance.

Healthcare Coverage Benefits

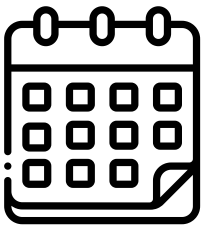


Many cities and towns have transitioned to the less expensive, state operated, Group Insurance Commission (GIC) healthcare coverage program. If Newton entered the GIC, it would realize more than \$20 million in savings over 5 years.

Newton has not joined the GIC. Instead, NPS employees have access to healthcare coverage through Blue Cross Blue Shield. Most employees choose the HMO plan, but a PPO plan is offered.

Currently, based on their date of hire, NPS employees contribute between 20%-25% of the cost for HMO plans and between 30%-35% of the cost for PPO plans.

Work Year Benefits



Unit A Teaching staff work 185 days* in the 10-month work year. Employees receive days off for federal holidays, district religious observances, and the three school vacation weeks. All NTA members are allotted 6 personal days and 15 sick days.

**For Unit A, Students are present for 180 days. 3 days are considered “conference days” dedicated to professional development/non-student facing days. 2 days are currently paid but not utilized for either professional development or non-student facing work.*

Unit C members work 185 days. Work hours correspond to the school day at each grade level. Paid hours also include before or after the school day and monthly time for meetings and professional development.

Additional Benefits



- Parental Leave - All employees are eligible for paid parental leave of 40 school days (8 weeks). The first 10 days are paid by the district. The remaining 30 days are paid using personal sick days and then days from a Sick Leave Bank.
- If an employee’s parental leave occurs either during the late spring or summer, the employee may opt to return to work at the start of the school year and be paid for unused leave days in the form of a one-time stipend.
- Children of NTA employees may attend NPS schools at no charge on a space available basis.
- Unit C staff who are asked to cover for teachers during the school day are paid a daily stipend of \$46 per day.

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Unit A Salary Comparison

Salary Comparison Between Districts

The **MOST ACCURATE WAY** to compare teacher salaries across districts is to look at and compare the salaries from each district's negotiated contract at each specific step and lane. Below you can see a snapshot of teacher salaries in Newton compared to districts published by the NTA. The chart shows projected FY26 NPS salaries compared to districts published by the NTA. The analysis is updated using the most recent NPS proposals, the NTA-selected districts and the NTA's methodology. NPS is the median of these NTA-selected districts:

Masters (step 1.0)	FY26(est)	Masters (top step)	FY26(est)	Masters (step 7.0)	FY26(est)	Highest Salary	FY26(est)
Brookline	69,178	Concord-Carlisle	125,560	Brookline	88,956	Concord-Carlisle	141,903
Concord-Carlisle	68,542	Lincoln-Sudbury	118,946	Concord-Carlisle	86,726	Wayland	140,698
NPS-SC Proposal	67,826	Wellesley	117,675	NPS-SC Proposal	86,473	Wellesley	135,626
Lexington	64,262	Lexington	117,617	Lexington	83,234	Lincoln-Sudbury	135,213
Wellesley	63,869	Weston	116,317	Wellesley	81,593	Lexington	134,678
Belmont	62,746	NPS-SC Proposal	116,274	Belmont	80,737	Weston	134,677
Lincoln-Sudbury	62,076	Brookline	115,639	Wayland	80,648	Brookline	132,132
Wayland	61,422	Wayland	115,119	Lincoln-Sudbury	78,546	NPS-SC Proposal	131,010
Weston	60,747	Belmont	114,800	Weston	77,306	Belmont	127,123

School year 2022-23

A LESS effective measure in comparing salaries across districts is the average teacher salaries published by DESE. It is less effective because every district will have a different number of teachers at different steps and lanes.

Districts with a higher percentage of newer employees will tend to have a lower “average salary” while districts with a higher percentage of teachers at the top (or highest) step (more years of service) will tend to have a higher “average salary.”

For additional comparative towns and cities, please visit the [Negotiations page of the School Committee website](#).

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Unit C Salary Comparison

Salary Comparison Between Districts

The **MOST ACCURATE WAY** to compare Unit C compensation across districts is to look at and compare each district's negotiated contract at each specific hourly rate and step.

Below is a snapshot of Unit C hourly rates in Newton compared to hourly rates in surrounding districts.

City/Town	Category 1 Bottom Step	Category 1 Top Step	Category 2 Bottom Step	Category 2 Top Step
Newton	\$21.83	\$41.40	\$27.58	\$45.16
Lexington	\$23.67	\$31.06	\$26.98	\$35.40
Wellesley	\$23.44	\$27.42	\$28.70	\$34.88
Needham	\$17.56	\$23.72	\$27.28	\$34.73
Framingham	\$20.82	\$28.45	\$25.81	\$33.60
Natick	\$21.75	\$27.99	\$28.72	\$33.58
Brookline	\$24.36	\$29.69	\$25.36	\$30.69
Belmont	\$22.43	\$29.97	\$22.43	\$29.97
Winchester	\$25.00	\$29.42	\$25.00	\$29.42
Andover	\$19.26	\$28.60	\$19.26	\$28.60
Arlington	\$17.31	\$20.91	\$24.15	\$27.60
Wayland	\$19.71	\$27.10	\$19.71	\$27.10
Bedford	\$15.57	\$20.41	\$21.57	\$23.79
Weston	\$25.36	\$31.28	\$25.36	\$31.28

Hourly Rate 2022-23

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Fiscal Reality and Cost Drivers

Fiscal Reality

The current allocation to the Newton Public Schools from the City of Newton increases 3.5% each year. The operational override failed last spring, which means there is no planned increase, beyond the 3.5%, to the district allocation in the coming fiscal years. Below is a summary of the cost of the proposals under discussion:

Proposals	FY24 Cost Increase	3 Year Total Cost Increase	Cumulative Growth Rate of Salaries and Benefits
District Proposal	\$4 million	\$21 million	3.5%
NTA Proposal	\$12 million	\$57 million	6.0%

To meet the current NTA Proposal, the district's annual budget for salaries and benefits would need to increase an average of 6% each year over the life of the contract.

NTA Proposal Cost Drivers

The following provides a breakdown of the current proposals put forth by the NTA that bear significant cost. To raise COLA, given the current financial restrictions, the cost of these proposals will need to be reduced.

Description	Cost
Increase Longevity Payments: Equalize longevity across all units, begin longevity payments after 11 years of service and increase payment amounts at all levels.	\$402,000
Maintain same contribution level to BCBS PPO plan (services 4% of employees)	\$409,000
Maintain co-pays at \$5-\$10 for retail and urgent care visits and deductibles at \$250/\$500	\$487,000
Move step increases one month earlier for each year of contract	\$600,000
Remove step from paraprofessional contract (accelerates payment/raises to staff earlier)	\$440,000
Revise work hours for paraprofessionals to make it equal across levels in district (regardless of different length of school days)	\$1,270,000
Increase paid parental leave days from 40 days to 60 days	\$382,000
TOTAL COST	\$3,990,000