

## **NOVEMBER 19 STATEMENT FROM THE NEGOTIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE**

Last June, the School Committee successfully negotiated a three-year (2020-2023) contract with the Paraprofessional Unit of the Brookline Educators Union (BEU). Between August and October, the School Committee and the BEU met six times to successfully negotiate a COVID memorandum for the current school year. Since April, we have also been meeting with the BEU to negotiate three-year contracts for teachers and administrators.

After ten bargaining sessions, the parties remain far apart on compensation. Last night, the BEU rejected the School Committee's last best offer. The School Committee will therefore be requesting the assistance of a state mediator to help the parties reach agreement. In past contract negotiations (most recently in 2016), state mediators have worked successfully to facilitate agreements between the School Committee and the BEU.

The School Committee's last best offer includes a **6% across-the-board increase over three years**. It is important to note that these raises are in addition to the contractual "steps" which provide **automatic annual pay increases (ranging from 2.4% to 5.1%) for most teachers** based on years of experience. 63% of our teachers currently receive these "step" increases, which raise the salaries of these teachers by an average of 3.7% each year even before the across-the-board increase that is currently under negotiation. Teachers who have already reached the top of the pay scale do not receive step increases, but instead receive "longevity pay" ranging from \$964 to \$2305 a year. In addition to the across-the-board increase, the School Committee is offering a 10% increase to longevity pay, along with a 5% increase to extra compensation such as stipends for afterschool sports, clubs, and other student enrichment activities.

For context, it is also important to note that as of 2019-2020, the most recent school year with a settled contract, **Brookline's teacher compensation is the highest among our suburban peer districts**. The chart below shows salaries for teachers at various levels of experience and educational attainment, compared across nine suburban districts including Newton, Lexington, and Wellesley. Brookline's salaries are at or near the top in every category, and Brookline's health insurance contribution is the highest in this group of districts.

In light of all of these facts, our goal is to maintain highly competitive salaries for our educators while acknowledging the fiscal reality that the Town of Brookline faces. Throughout this process, the School Committee has been negotiating with the best interest of our students uppermost in mind, and we hope that with the help of a mediator, we will be able to reach agreement soon.

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