

Unit C (Paraprofessionals) Negotiations Update– Quick Summary



The Brookline School Committee

- Understands the important role our paraprofessional educators play in the lives of our students and in our classrooms
- Places priority on retaining paraprofessionals for an entire school year to minimize disruption for vulnerable students and their families
- Is committed to increase paraprofessional wages and make them more competitive with other districts in order to improve recruitment and retention
- Believes we should pay paraprofessionals who work in specialized programs at a higher rate because of the additional skills and training required for these positions

The School Committee's last proposal makes us competitive with Newton and others:

- Classroom Paras starting annualized pay increases 28% by September 2018
- Special Program Paras starting annualized pay increases 36% by September 2018
- Brookline maintains the highest Town healthcare contribution to employee health insurance among neighboring districts (83%)
- Paraprofessionals will be paid for more hours: a time management system would allow the district to pay them for their actual hours worked (Full Time = 7 hrs) rather than the current 6.33 hours

Current Status of Negotiations



- The BEU and the School Committee agreed on the Teachers Contract in September; School Committee voted to approve in October; BEU has not held a vote for teachers to ratify the contract
- For the Paraprofessionals Unit, the state-appointed Mediator declared an impasse because she could not bring the two sides to resolution
- The Department of Labor Relations has initiated the Fact-Finding Process, which is the next step after Mediation. Scheduling this process is difficult, with resolution unlikely until Spring 2017
- As of November 2016, the School Committee and BEU continue to work with the Mediator toward a contract for Unit B Administrators

School Committee 11/9 Proposal



Classroom Paraprofessionals	Now *	2018 **	Increase
Starting Annualized Pay (Step 1)	\$18,508	\$23,647	28%
Annualized Pay at Highest Step ***	\$24,932	\$30,415	28%

Specialized Program Paraprofessionals	Now *	2018 **	Increase
Starting Annualized Pay (Step 1)	\$18,508	\$25,248	36%
Annualized Pay at Highest Step ***	\$24,932	\$32,070	31%

Notes

* Current annualized full-time pay calculated using 6.33 hours and 189 days (183 if no prior experience)

** 2018 annualized full-time pay calculated using 7 hours and 189 days (183 for Step 1) because paras will be paid for actual hours worked rather than the contracted 6.33 hours per day. All paras hired with one year of experience are contracted for 189 days.

*** Highest step is now the 8th step. Under the BSC's 11/9 proposal, the highest step would become Step 9

School Committee 11/9 Proposal



Classroom Paraprofessionals	Now *	2018 **	Increase
Annualized Pay for Para hired in 2016 and still working in 2018 ***	\$18,508	\$25,719	39%

Specialized Program Paraprofessionals	Now	2018	Increase
Annualized Pay for Specialized Program Para hired in 2016 and still working in 2018	\$18,508	\$27,333	48%

Notes

* Current annualized full-time pay calculated using 6.33 hours and 183 days

** 2018 annualized full-time pay calculated using Step 3 at 7 hours and 189 days because paras will be paid for actual hours worked rather than the contracted 6.33 hours per day. All paras hired with one year of experience are contracted for 189 days.

Some of the Details



- Paraprofessionals are currently paid 6.33 hours per day which doesn't allow them to be paid if they arrive early to work or need to stay late. The School Committee has proposed to rectify this by instituting a time management system that would make sure paraprofessionals get paid for the hours they work, based on a full-time 7 hour day.
- The School Committee is maintaining the Town of Brookline's very high 83% employer contribution to employee health insurance. In other communities (e.g. Newton), they have reduced the employer contribution to fund pay increases for teachers and paraprofessionals
- The School Committee's proposal also:
 - Eliminates the lowest step of the pay scale which increases pay for new hires
 - Adds a new top step to increase pay of those paras who have worked for 9 years
- The School Committee aims to close the pay gap with other districts, but it will not be possible to do that in just one contract cycle.

Some Background Information You May Not Know



- The salary scale for paraprofessionals is organized by “Steps”. Each step corresponds to one year of employment
- Paraprofessionals in Brookline (and every other district) are hourly employees
- In Brookline a full-time classroom para is paid for a 6.33 hour work day. If in their first year of work (some come with prior experience) they are paid for 183 days. With prior experience, or after one year in Brookline, they are paid for 189 days per year
- There are 17 different salary schedules for paraprofessionals in Brookline, some with top salaries of \$55K-\$85K. General wage increases typically apply across all these schedules. The School Committee is focused on resolving lagging wages for the nearly 300 Classroom Paraprofessionals who are on Salary Schedule 2.

What about Turnover?



- Our turnover for Classroom Paraprofessionals is consistent with other districts
- Our turnover for Paraprofessionals in Specialized Programs is higher than other districts because, unlike them, we do not pay a higher rate for our paras who are in the most demanding jobs
- The School Committee has proposed creating another salary schedule for the approximately 90 classroom paraprofessionals who work in our specialized programs like RISE or the ALC to get them on par with neighboring districts such as Newton, Lexington, and Needham that pay specialized paraprofessionals more
- Last spring, the School Committee proposed raising the hourly rate of our Specialized Program Paraprofessionals from \$16.04/hour to \$21/hour in the first year of work and then increasing to \$25/hour.
- The BEU rejected a separate schedule recognizing Specialized Program Paraprofessionals, insisting that the dollars be spread across all 300 classroom paraprofessionals. The School Committee wants to improve salary imbalances for both classroom and specialized program paras

BENCHMARKS: Brookline Becoming Competitive with Other Districts

	Recent General Wage Increases for Paraprofessionals	Typical Step 1 in September 2017	Town's Contribution to Employee Health Insurance	# of Salary Steps	Differentiated Pay Schedules?
Brookline (School Committee Proposal)	FY16: 2.0% increase FY17: 2.0% increase FY18: 2.0% increase	Classroom Paras: \$17.37/hr Specialized Paras: \$19.10/hr (School Committee proposal to start at \$21/hr rejected by BEU)	83%	9 annual steps	Yes
Newton	FY16: 2.0% increase FY17: 2.0% increase FY18: 2.0% increase	Classroom Paras: \$17.59/hr Specialized Paras: \$21.56/hr	70%	14 annual steps broken into half steps	Yes
Lexington	FY16 – FY18 ranges from 2.0% to 2.95% depending on step	Classroom Paras: \$20.10/hr Specialized Paras: \$23.08/hr	82%	6 annual steps	Yes
Needham	FY17: 1% plus 1.5 additional paid vacation days	Classroom Paras: \$16.83/hr Specialized Paras: \$21.62/hr	Between 50% and 76.5%	7 annual steps	Yes

Where we hope we go from here



- The School Committee is committed to bringing negotiations to a satisfactory resolution for all parties so we can come together as a community and focus on the very important school issues we are facing – including educational equity and achievement, reducing overcrowding, the 9th school, the BHS renovation, and more.
- We will continue to bring forward thoughtful proposals that support our great educators and allow us to live within our taxpayer-funded budgets
- We urge the BEU to have its teachers ratify their contract to help teachers, families, and staff have a sense of closure and progress
- We commit that we will continue to work with the BEU to find common ground and a resolution for the unresolved contracts