

Medford Public Schools

489 Winthrop Street, Medford, Massachusetts 02155

Dr. Marice Edouard-Vincent, Superintendent of Schools



Statement Regarding Medford Public Schools Collective Bargaining Negotiations with the Medford Teachers Association

The Medford Public Schools is and will always be deeply indebted to the teachers, educators and staff who have guided our students through so many disruptions the last several years. Our teachers turn school buildings into school communities and collectively represent why Medford is a caring community dedicated to its children.

As the new school year gets underway, many employees of the Medford Public Schools (MPS) are working under expired employment agreements. As a result, many hard working support staff, including paraprofessionals, are having pay increases necessarily delayed due to the uncertain financial implications of the district's ongoing negotiations with the Medford Teachers Association (MTA).

After 17 bargaining sessions over the last 10 months, and the increasing antagonism exhibited by the MTA's bargaining team, it is clear that a new perspective is necessary to resolve the current contractual stalemate.

At the request of the superintendent, the Medford School Committee has unanimously voted to declare an impasse in the contract negotiations with the MTA and request that the Massachusetts Department of Labor Relations assign a neutral mediator to help the parties reach an amicable resolution.

Despite ground rules intended to preserve confidentiality, the MTA has made misleading public statements about the negotiations on social media and public meetings of the Medford School Committee and attempted to disrupt the district's welcome-back reception and convocation on August 30th.

At this time MPS has withdrawn all pending contract proposals, including all proposals related to elementary teacher prep time in an attempt to narrow the scope of the negotiations in the hope that Medford teachers could receive a competitive and sustainable wage increase to start the new school year. MPS has made seven separate compensation proposals since March, with a current proposal of a 7.25% base compensation over three years, with additional grant-funded non-base compensation resulting in each teacher receiving an approximate 9.2% pay increase during the life of the proposed three-year contract.

The district's compensation proposal is higher than the increase that the [MTA president's own financial analysis indicated the district's operating budget could afford](#). It is higher than any of the wage increases negotiated in the three [previous teachers' contracts in Medford](#). And it is higher than virtually all of the [three-year increases recently settled across 23 area school districts](#).

For seven months the MTA's original wage proposal of 6% per year and 18% over three years has been the measuring stick by which the union has explicitly assessed all proposals. This proposed increase has been referenced at every bargaining session, with the union stating that its most recent 10% base pay increase should be viewed favorably because it is less than their original 18% proposal.

In light of the district and city's operating budget capacity, these proposed increases would make it impossible for MPS to provide the level and quality of service Medford students deserve and Medford families expect. It would inevitably lead to a reduction in positions that provide direct service to students, including mental health counselors, social workers, adjustment counselors, behavioral specialists and school nurses. It would also make it impossible to address pay equity issues with several other bargaining units.

MPS regrets that it has become necessary to seek this external intervention, but the committee and the administration have too much respect for rank and file teachers, each of whom deserve a competitive and sustainable wage increase through a resolution to this situation. On behalf of the vast majority of teachers who are focused on their work educating Medford's students, the Medford Public Schools will seek support from a state mediator in the hope that a successor agreement that includes a responsible wage increase can be reached in the near future. It is our sincere hope that the MTA's leadership and representatives will join in this good faith effort.

Total three-year compensation increases						
Medford 2012-2015	Medford 2015-2018	Medford 2018-2021	MTA' s Initial Proposal	MTA's Current Proposal	Nearby MA cities/towns	MPS Current Proposal FY 22 - 24
6.62%	6.5%	6.5%	18%	10%	7%	7.25% (base) 9.2% (total)