



Sudbury Public Schools

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November 22, 2021

Dear Community Members,

The Sudbury School Committee values its relationship with all employees of the Sudbury Public Schools, and we appreciate and value their contributions to the District and to the lives of all students.

The Sudbury Public Schools employs 275 teachers and other educators, 145 educational support personnel, and 14 custodians all of whom are represented by the Sudbury Education Association (SEA) in three separate unions. Over the last eight months, the School Committee has been engaged in negotiations with the SEA in a good faith effort to reach new contracts with each of these three unions. Although negotiations are ongoing, the School Committee wants to assure you that all employees remain employed and are being paid under the terms of the most recent agreement.

Sudbury Public Schools' employees are not working without a contract. Each of the union contracts state an agreement will remain in effect until a successor agreement is reached. For example, the existing teachers' contract reads, *"In the event that a new agreement is not reached by the date of expiration, the terms and conditions of employment shall remain in full force and effect."* This includes increases in salaries as a result of annual step increases and advancement in lanes for having earned graduate credits. These "steps and lanes" occur in addition to any cost-of-living increases (COLA), for example the teachers' contract has up to 16 steps. The cost of teachers advancing on the steps and lanes in the 2021-2022 budget year was approximately \$455,000. These salary increases were effective July 1, 2021.

The Committee also values the community we serve, and the responsibility bestowed on us. We believe it is important that the community has accurate information regarding our negotiation objectives. The Committee's contract decisions must be made within the context of actual and projected financial parameters provided by the Town. Here are some key components that drive our decision making.

- Students: We hold the best interests of students in the forefront of our minds in every decision that we make. The impact on students informs every decision we make.

- District Financial Data: The Town provides a three-year projection of funding based on the anticipated growth in the Town's operating budget each year, which serves as the foundation for our budget development. Each year we present the budget for approval at Town Meeting. We cannot spend more than the Town Meeting appropriates to the District. Each year approximately 86% of our budget goes to employee compensation and benefits and most is for employees represented by the Sudbury Education Association.
- Labor Market Data: The Committee examines the contracts from our peer school districts to assure that we pay fair and competitive wages. This allows SPS to attract and retain high quality educators.
- Sustainability: The Committee works diligently to approve budgets that meet the needs of our students and provide market competitive compensation for our employees without asking our taxpayers for an operating override. An operating override would be a permanent increase to property taxes.

We remain committed to working with the Sudbury Education Association to achieve fair, fiscally responsible, and sustainable contracts. Our goal is to negotiate successor contracts that serve the best interests of our students and families, maintain market competitive compensation for our employees, and represent sound fiscal management for our taxpayer community.

The School Committee will continue to update the community throughout this process.

With regards,

Sudbury School Committee

Silvia Nerssessian, Chair

Meredith Gerson, Vice-Chair

Mandy Sim

Tyler Steffey

Sarah Troiano