

Winthrop Public Schools Collective Bargaining Settlement Proposal

**A background of the School Committee's settlement proposals
sent on April 14th, 2026.**



Updated: April 14, 2026

Where Negotiations Currently Stand (April 2026)



The Winthrop School Committee has met consistently with the Winthrop Teachers' Association (WTA) since May 2025, working toward an agreement that supports staff while maintaining long-term financial sustainability for the district.

On **March 4, 2026**, the WTA presented a comprehensive counterproposal to the Committee. In response, the School Committee presented its own counterproposal on **March 18, 2026**.

In developing its proposal, the School Committee took into consideration key priorities raised by the WTA, including paid parental leave, ESP compensation and wage growth for veteran teachers. The proposal outlined three compensation options for teachers and ESPs, designed to increase educator take-home pay while aligning with the district's financial outlook. In addition, the School Committee presented an overview of the district's budget and the factors informing its proposals, providing context for its decision-making.

At the next bargaining session on **March 25, 2026**, the WTA provided additional counterproposals along with a proposed settlement agreement, continuing the ongoing exchange between both parties. The School Committee requested to meet with the WTA during a special session to present this final counterproposal on **April 8th, 2026**, but the invitation was declined.

On **April 14, 2026**, the School Committee presented the WTA with its proposed settlement agreement. This proposal prioritizes competitive total compensation, including both salary and benefits, while preserving staffing, programs and services for students.

The School Committee has determined that it is unable to offer any further increases without seeking reductions to staffing, programs, and/or services to offset increased costs.

The Committee has requested that its April 14th proposed settlement be brought forward to the WTA's membership for consideration.

Our Strategy and Context



The School Committee's priority in these negotiations is to reach an agreement that:

- Provides competitive increases for our staff
- Recognizes and rewards our most experienced educators
- Ensures the long-term financial stability of the district
- Maintains current staffing levels, programs and student services

The Committee's proposal aligns with cost-of-living adjustment trends and benefit structures across the Commonwealth and in peer districts.

This approach reflects a balanced investment in our educators through total compensation (both salary and benefits) while remaining grounded in the district's financial reality.

The School Committee believes this proposal helps avoid challenges seen in neighboring districts, where unsustainable agreements have led to staff reductions and program cuts.

Evaluating Proposals



How the School Committee Evaluates Proposals

Each proposal is carefully reviewed based on:

- Impact on staffing levels, programs and student services
- Total financial impact over time
- Sustainability within the district's budget
- Alignment with peer districts and market norms

While many proposals are well-intentioned, not all can be implemented without:

- Reducing staff
- Cutting programs
- Creating long-term financial instability

While the Committee aims to provide as much as possible, any agreement must remain sustainable for the district, staff and students over the long term.

District-Wide Trends & Financial Constraints Across the Commonwealth

A look at regional trends shaping
contract negotiations.



Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA) Trends



Our proposal aligns with regional trends

District	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28
Winthrop	2.50%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	3.00%**	3.00%**	3.00%**
Beverly*	—	—	—	5.13%*	5.13%*	5.13%*	—
Gloucester*	—	—	—	3.95%*	3.95%*	3.95%*	3.95%
Wakefield	2.50%	2.50%	3.00%	3.50%	4.00%	3.50%	—
Swampscott	1.75%	3.00%	3.00%	3.00%	3.00%	3.00%	3.00%
Saugus	—	0.00%	0.00%	1.00%	1.00%	5.00%	5.00%
Newburyport	2.25%	3.00%	2.00%	2.00%	3.00%	3.00%	3.00%
Mashpee	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	2.25%	—	—
Marblehead	1.00%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	2.50%	2.50%
Lynnfield	2.50%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	3.00%	3.00%
Hudson	—	3.00%	2.50%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%
Abington	—	2.50%	3.00%	3.00%	2.75%	3.00%	3.00%

2% - 3%

- Most teacher contracts fall within this range
- Peer districts largely follow this structure
- Higher increases would require:
 - Additional revenue
 - OR
 - Future budget adjustments*

*Averages shown reflect the annualized average of their recent settlements (15.4% over 3 years and 15.8% over 4 years, respectively).; actual increases vary by year and educator.

** School Committee Proposed Wage Increase

*Salaries & benefits make up 74% of Winthrop's budget. Additional increases would mean future cuts elsewhere.

NOTE: These figures show base salary increases. Total budget impacts are typically much higher once district-specific grid restructurings are factored in.

Staffing and Program Reductions in Neighboring and Peer Districts



Regional Cuts: The Reality of Deficits

**Note: This list is not exhaustive.*

Boston Public Schools

- Projecting **300–400** staff layoffs
- Reductions driven by ongoing budget constraints

Brookline Public Schools

- Projecting **200+ educator layoffs**
- Contingent on override outcome

Lexington Public Schools

- Eliminating ~65 staff positions
- 160 early-career educators issued non-renewals
- Cuts impacting programs and increasing class sizes

Whitman-Hanson Regional

- Enacted 23 immediate mid-year staff layoffs
- Driven by an unexpected \$1.4 million budget gap.

Cohasset Public Schools

- Facing a \$1 million budget shortfall for FY27.
- Proposing the elimination of 12+ staff positions, increasing class sizes and cutting programming.

Lynn Public Schools

- Facing a \$7M budget shortfall
- Proposing the elimination of 53 school positions.

Chelsea Public Schools

- Conducting layoffs to address budget deficits
- Significant community response and public hearings

Beverly Public Schools

- Projecting a \$3.9M structural deficit (FY27) driven largely by rising labor costs
- Seeking additional \$ to preserve positions amid potential cuts to services & staffing

Marblehead Public Schools

- Facing a \$7.7M town-wide deficit
- Elimination of 22 staff positions

Middleboro Public Schools

- Facing a \$2.2 million budget shortfall driven heavily by special education costs.
- Considering the elimination of ~30 staff positions

Salem Public Schools

- \$4.7M budget shortfall due to rising salary, benefits & operational costs
- Proposing elimination of ~32 positions

The School Committee's goal is to reach an agreement that avoids the difficult outcomes many districts are currently facing. A sustainable contract that the Town can afford is the only way we can guarantee true job security.

Understanding the District's Financial Constraints

All compensation proposals must be evaluated within the district's long-term budget outlook.

The following slides provide an overview of Winthrop Public Schools' projected financial picture.



Annual Incremental Cost of SC Counter Proposals

This table shows the total annual cost of the School Committee's counter proposals, combining all units and proposal areas into one overall fiscal impact.

Proposal Estimated Cost	Staff #	2025 -2026	2026-2027	2027-2028
Teacher Wages	197	\$ 470,000	\$ 880,000	\$ 850,000
ESP Wages	72	\$ 67,000	\$ 136,000	\$ 148,000
Secretary Wages	11	\$ 16,200	\$ 18,000	\$ 18,700
Nurse Wages	2**	\$ 14,508	\$ 8,000	\$ 4,080
Paid Parental Leave		\$ -	\$ 184,000	\$ 184,000
Other *			\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000
Total		\$567,708	\$1,276,000	\$1,254,780

Total Impact: \$3.1M over 3 years

***Additional proposals with fiscal impact include:**

Leave Equity (All Units), Family Sick Leave (Nurses), Preschool Preference, Stipend Cleanup (Teachers), Out-of-District Payment, & Sub Differential (ESP)

** 3 nurses are on the teacher scale, so the FI is included in teacher wages

Winthrop Public Schools Budget Outlook (FY25–FY28)

Even with the override and stabilization funds, the district’s projected surplus declines rapidly and becomes a \$208k deficit by FY28.

Revenue	SFY 25	SFY 26	SFY 27	SFY 28
Budget Allocation from Town*	\$ 36,141,805	\$ 40,150,842	\$ 41,355,367	\$ 42,596,028
Stabilization	\$ -	\$ 1,450,000	\$ 1,450,000	\$ 1,450,000
Grants/Revenue	\$ 3,880,303	\$ 2,777,099	\$ 2,777,099	\$ 2,777,099
Total Revenue	\$ 40,022,108	\$ 44,377,941	\$ 45,582,466	\$ 46,823,127
Expenses				
Staff Salary (ongoing cost)	\$ 22,005,648	\$ 22,901,128	\$ 23,359,151	\$ 23,826,334
CBA Increase	\$ -	\$ 668,677	\$ 1,289,968	\$ 1,207,778
Staff Insurance (GIC)	\$ 3,739,453	\$ 4,497,998	\$ 4,947,798	\$ 5,442,578
Other expenses	\$ 12,154,404	\$ 13,681,716	\$ 15,049,888	\$ 16,554,876
Total Expenses	\$ 37,899,505	\$ 41,749,519	\$ 44,646,804	\$ 47,031,566

Projected School Budget Outlook

- FY26 Surplus: \$2.6M
- FY27 Surplus: \$935K
- **FY28 Projected Deficit: \$208k**

Major Cost Drivers

Employee health insurance costs increased \$760,000 (20%) between FY25 and FY26.

District expenses are growing approximately 14% increase between SFY 25 and SFY26.

This budget projection assumes ongoing expense cost growth of 10%.

*The town allocation for FY26, FY27, FY28 are estimates. Exact amounts will not be known until the town finalizes its budget each year.