



THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF BROOKLINE OFFICE OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE

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Understanding Collective Bargaining in the Public Schools of Brookline

Collective bargaining is the process through which the School Committee and employee bargaining units negotiate agreements governing wages, hours, working conditions, and other terms of employment. This overview is intended to help community members understand some of the terminology and structures referenced during collective bargaining. It is provided for informational purposes and does not describe or characterize the bargaining positions of either party.

Who Represents PSB Employees?

Brookline Educators Union (BEU) represents employees in three bargaining units:

- **Unit A** includes classroom teachers and other professional educators and staff.
- **Unit B** includes certain school and district administrative and leadership positions.
- **Paraprofessional Unit** includes paraprofessionals and other classifications covered by that collective bargaining agreement.

American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) is a national union representing public-service employees across a wide range of occupations. Within the Public Schools of Brookline, AFSCME represents employees in three bargaining units:

- **Educational Secretaries**
- **Building Service Employees**
- **Food Service Employees**

Who Bargains for Whom?

The Brookline School Committee is the employer for collective bargaining purposes and negotiates successor collective bargaining agreements with the unions representing employees in each of PSB's six bargaining units. The School Committee has designated a Negotiations Subcommittee to conduct bargaining on its behalf.

Each union designates representatives to bargain on behalf of employees in the applicable bargaining unit.

During negotiations, each party may communicate publicly about its proposals or perspective. Once an agreement is reached and ratified by the parties, the resulting collective bargaining agreement establishes the contractual terms agreed to by the parties.

Understanding Salary Schedule Terminology

COLA: A cost-of-living adjustment, or COLA, is a negotiated percentage increase to a salary schedule or applicable wage rates. When a COLA takes effect, the salaries or wage rates on the applicable schedule increase by the negotiated percentage. A COLA is separate from other increases an eligible employee may receive under the applicable collective bargaining agreement.

Steps: Salary schedules for PSB bargaining units include steps that provide different rates of compensation based on criteria established in the applicable collective bargaining agreement, such as recognized experience or tenure. An eligible employee may advance to a higher step, resulting in an increase in base salary or hourly rate, separate from a COLA.

Lanes: The Unit A salary schedule also has different lanes based on an educator's level of education and additional academic credits. Educators who meet the contract requirements for additional education may move to a new lane. Each lane has its own salary amount that typically increases an educator's base salary.

Longevity Pay: Some PSB collective bargaining agreements provide additional compensation to eligible employees based on years of service. Longevity pay is separate from step or lane movement and is governed by the terms of the applicable collective bargaining agreement.

Additional compensation: Collective bargaining agreements may also provide additional compensation for particular responsibilities, assignments, working conditions, or other criteria. Depending on the bargaining unit, this may include stipends, differentials, bonuses, allowances, or other payments. The type and amount of additional compensation are governed by the applicable collective bargaining agreement. Examples may include coaching, advising extracurricular activities, or taking on other designated roles.

Understanding Steps and Lanes: A Unit A Salary Example

The chart below, prepared by Brookline's Expenditure and Revenues Study Committee, demonstrates how steps and lanes can impact teacher salaries using FY25 and FY26 figures.

For example, an educator at Step 1 with a Bachelor's Degree in FY25 who was eligible to advance to Step 2 in FY26 would see a base salary increase of 8.0%. This reflects both the negotiated 2.75% COLA increase to the salary schedule and movement from Step 1 to Step 2.

If that same educator also qualified to move from the Bachelor's lane to the Master's lane in FY26, their base salary would increase approximately 19.9%. This reflects the combined effect of the COLA increase, step movement, and lane movement.

EFFECTIVE SALARY INCREASES WITH IMPACT OF STEPS - FY25 TO FY26 EXAMPLES					
	FY25 (Steps 1, 4,6,10,14)	FY26 (1 step higher than FY25 step: e.g. Step 2 in FY26 if Step 1 in FY25)	\$ Increase FY25 to FY26	% Increase FY25toFY26	Inflation FY 25 to FY26
Step 1/2, Bachelor's	\$ 60,514	\$ 65,358	\$ 4,844	8.0%	3.2%
Step 4/5, Bachelor's	\$ 69,786	\$ 74,885	\$ 5,099	7.3%	3.2%
Step 1/2, Master's	\$ 67,437	\$ 72,569	\$ 5,132	7.6%	3.2%
Step 6/7, Master's	\$ 83,388	\$ 88,957	\$ 5,569	6.7%	3.2%
Step 10/11, Master's	\$ 96,150	\$ 102,066	\$ 5,916	6.2%	3.2%
Step 14/15, Master's	\$ 109,504	\$ 115,638	\$ 6,134	5.6%	3.2%
Step 1/2, Doctorate	\$ 75,277	\$ 80,848	\$ 5,571	7.4%	3.2%
Step 6/7, Doctorate	\$ 92,306	\$ 98,347	\$ 6,041	6.5%	3.2%
Step 10/11, Doctorate	\$ 105,934	\$ 112,350	\$ 6,416	6.1%	3.2%
Step 14/15, Doctorate	\$ 119,558	\$ 125,886	\$ 6,328	5.3%	3.2%

INFLATION: beginning of FY25 to FY26 (7/24 to 7/25) Boston,Cambridge, Newton-MA-NH: 3.24% (335.963 to 346.856)

Additional Resources

Brookline Educators Union: <https://brookline.massteacher.org/2022/01/09/steps-and-increases-on-the-base-they-are-not-the-same-and-both-are-necessary/>

Brookline News: <https://brookline.news/with-override-passed-can-brookline-tackle-tough-questions-about-teacher-pay/>

Brookline Expenditure and Revenues Study Committee Final Report: <https://brookline.news/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/ERSC-Final-Report-FINAL-031326-1.pdf>

Brookline School Committee Collective Bargaining: <https://www.psbma.org/district/school-committee/collective-bargaining>

PSB Employment Documents (including current contracts): https://www.psbma.org/human-resources/employment-documents?utm_source=chatgpt.com