



**CONFIDENTIAL ATTORNEY-CLIENT COMMUNICATION
MEMORANDUM**

TO: Members, Stamford Board of Finance

Cc: Members, Stamford Board of Education, Dr. Tamu Lucero,
Amy Beldotti, Dr. Michael Fernandes, Dr. Lori Rhodes, Ryan Fealey

FROM: Thomas Mooney

RE: Summary of Tentative Agreement Reached with the Stamford Education
Association

DATE: November 11, 2024

On November 8, 2024, the Stamford Education Association (SEA) and the Board Negotiations Committee reached a tentative agreement on a new three-year collective bargaining agreement. In accordance with **Section C6-20-7(c)** of the City Charter, the Board of Education now presents this tentative agreement to the Board of Finance and requests “an advisory opinion to the Board of Education of the total cost and potential long-term burden of the proposed agreements.” The Board hereby provides the following summary concerning the terms of the tentative agreement.

In accordance with the Teacher Negotiations Act, the Board of Education commenced negotiations with the SEA on August 29, 2024. The Board of Education was represented in these negotiations by Jackie Heftman, Andy George, Versha Munshi-South, Michael Hyman, Michael Larobina, Dr. Tamu Lucero, Dr. Michael Fernandes, Dr. Lori Rhodes, Ryan Fealey, and me. After several negotiation sessions, the parties participated in a mediation session on October 23, and the Board thanks Richard Freedman and Geoff Alswanger for attending that session. That mediation was unsuccessful, but the Board Committee reached the following tentative agreement with the SEA on November 8, moments before the Arbitration Panel convened in accordance with the Teacher Negotiation Act would have assumed jurisdiction.

The terms of the tentative agreement on a new three-year contract are as follows:

I. Salary:

2025-2026:

- Drop Step One
- Drop Step 6
- Step movement
- Increase on steps below max: 0.75%
- Increase on maximum steps: 3.50%

Projected cost: 4.69%

2026-2027:

- Step movement
- Increase on steps below max: 0.75%
- Increase on maximum steps: 3.50%

Projected cost: 4.97%

2027-2028:

- Step movement
- Increase on steps below max: 0.75%
- Increase on maximum steps: 3.50%
- Insert a step between Steps 15 and 16 to break the bubble

Projected cost: 4.33%

Three-year projected cost: 13.99%

These projected costs include the projected cost of advancing teachers not yet at the maximum salaries one step in each year (“step cost”), and thus with teacher turnover, these projections are a maximum, and the actual costs will certainly be less. The projected cost of step movement alone in each year is as follows:

2025-2026	2.24%
2023-2024	2.26%
2024-2025	1.82%
TOTAL	6.32%

Significantly, the projected cost of moving teacher through the steps on the salary schedule does not build any new costs into the salary base. Thus, the new dollars added

to the salary schedule over the three-year contract term exclusive of step costs is approximately 7.67%, or slightly more than 2.5% each year.

The Board Committee strongly supports this settlement, which is comparable to those reached in other teacher negotiations this year. The current settlement average for teacher negotiations in Connecticut this year (including 41 settlements) is a projected cost increase of 13.42% (non-compounded) over three years. The settlement reached here is less than 0.2% higher than the average each year, but it permits the Board to achieve a priority goal of standardizing the schedules for high school teachers and increasing opportunities for students, as described below.

The Tentative Agreement also includes modest increases in other compensation provisions as follows:

- Stipends increase by 1.5% each year
- The summer school hourly rate increases by 3%, 2%, 2% in each year respectively
- The summer school head teacher stipend increases from \$2,500 to \$3,000

II. Insurance:

The Board provides insurance to teachers (and other Board employees) through the State Partnership Plan, and there are therefore no plan design changes in this contract settlement. However, the settlement does provide that employee premium cost sharing will increase from 20% to 21% by the third year of the contract (increases of 0.5% in 2025-2026 and of 0.25% in 2026-2027 and 2027-2028).

III. Language:

- Changes in the high schools and related changes in teaching loads.

While not directly the concern of the Board of Finance, it is important to note that the Board achieved a key change in working conditions for high school teachers and the related contract provisions. The schedules will be standardized for all three high school in Stamford, and most high school teachers will now teach three blocks each day in an eight-period day. As a result of these changes, most high school teachers will be teaching approximately sixty minutes longer each week than is currently the case.

The move to this hybrid four-by-four schedule is a change of great significance that will provide students significantly improved opportunities to take courses. It also resolves a high-profile dispute between the Board of Education and the Stamford Education Association that has persisted for almost a year. Last December, the Administration first proposed a new schedule for the high schools that would have high school teachers teaching three blocks per day in an eight-period day. That proposal resulted in separate midterm negotiations that included unfair labor practice proceedings and ended with the deferral of further negotiations over that proposal to these negotiations. The Tentative

Agreement finally resolved the issue of the high school schedules and related teaching loads as proposed by the Board.

- Flexibility in hiring and placing new teachers on the salary schedule

The Stamford Public Schools have been burdened in hiring teachers by restrictive contract language that limits the ability of the Superintendent to place teachers on the salary schedule. As a result, it has been difficult to fill vacancies in special education and other shortage areas. The Tentative Agreement gives the Superintendent or her designee new flexibility in placing teachers on the salary schedule by eliminating restrictions in salary schedule placement and permitting the Superintendent or her designee to consider the “needs of the school district, including shortage areas” in placing newly-hired teachers on the salary schedule.

- Other Changes.

To achieve these goals, the Board made concessions to the SEA that are included in the Tentative Agreement. Those concessions include (1) permitting teachers to take up to two weeks of sick leave when a baby is born, and (2) increasing self-directed time for elementary teachers from 200 to 225 minutes per week (an average of 45 minutes per week). Both changes conform to contract provisions in many other Connecticut school districts. The Tentative Agreement also includes minor changes that benefit the Board of Education, including an express requirement that salary be paid by direct deposit and that provides greater flexibility in sending salary agreements to teachers for the coming year.

On behalf of the Board of Education, I thank the Board of Finance for its consideration of this Tentative Agreement. Please let the Board know if any other information would be helpful in your consideration of this matter. Thank you.