



MARBLEHEAD SCHOOL COMMITTEE

November 18, 2024

Good Evening Marblehead Families.

Negotiations with the Marblehead Education Association are done for the night, but we believe today's face-to-face sessions resulted in notable progress toward a final agreement.

We are committed to getting your children and their teachers back in the classroom, and we will keep working with the MEA to reach an agreement that provides our teachers and other school department personnel with wage increases and benefit enhancements that reflect their value to our community and are consistent with the Town's financial constraints.

This has been our goal from the outset.

Today, we met face-to-face with a small subgroup and began to work through some issues facilitated by the mediator.

We urge you to stay informed. You can find information about negotiations here: https://www.marbleheadschoools.org/Negotiations_Updates. On that page, you will also find information about what the Committee has offered the various bargaining units, including teachers and paraprofessionals.

We believe what we are offering is fair and affordable. Teachers are being offered an 18% increase (including step increases). Paraprofessionals, custodians, maintenance personnel, bus drivers and tutors are being offered increases ranging from 48% and 69%. We have also offered an improved parental leave plan. As much as we would like to make our teachers the highest paid on the North Shore, it would not be feasible or responsible. The union's proposal would create a \$7 million hole in the Town's budget, and would necessitate a property tax override that would add more than \$900 to the average tax bill if passed or result in the loss of 75 staff members, including teachers if it fails.

We know you are hearing various accusations about our lack of urgency. Nothing could be further from the truth. We are here tonight, we'll be here tomorrow and we have been here every day. In fact, we urged the union to begin negotiations in March - months before their contract expired. It has been difficult to hear the baseless accusations during the various rallies and press conferences being held by the MEA.

We hope we have turned a corner with our face-to-face meetings. We will continue to keep you informed as we continue to work toward a contract.

Best regards,

Jennifer Schaeffner - Committee Chair

Sarah Fox - Committee Member

Thatcher Kezer - Town Administrator

Marblehead School Committee – Bargaining Subcommittee