



SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Susan K. McCready- Chairperson
Lauren M. Conoscenti, Ph.D. – Vice Chairperson
Paul D. Murphy
Shannon I. Scully
Tracey E. Spruce, Esq.

Claudia L. Bach, Ed.D
Interim Superintendent

Contact: Nicole L. Kieser
Director of Communications
nicole.kieser@andoverma.us

June 25, 2021

For Immediate Release

APS Instructional Assistants Fail to Reach Agreement with Andover School Committee *Competitive, Good Faith Offers Not Accepted by Union Leadership; Mediation Continues in July*

Andover, Mass. — The Andover School Committee is disappointed to announce they have been unable to reach agreement on a successor collective bargaining agreement (CBA) with leadership of the Andover Education Association (AEA) Assistants Organization and their Massachusetts Teacher Association (MTA) representative. The current CBA with Andover Public Schools instructional assistants (IAs) expired in August 2020, and without a ratified agreement the district is unable to provide additional cost of living (COLA) increases to IAs for the 2020-21 school year. The Committee and AEA/MTA have been engaged in contract negotiations since March of 2020, including three recent sessions with the assistance of a state mediator.

IA leadership rejected multiple offers that provided salary increases in excess of settlements agreed to by other Andover school and town unions including teachers, administrators, occupational and physical therapists, secretaries, licensed practical nurses, custodians, and food services (SEIU 888), town firefighters (Local 1658), facilities and public works (AFSCME 1704), police patrol (NEPBA Local 9), police superior (NEPBA Local 99), and Independent employees.

Prior to mediation, the IAs were presented with a financial package that increased starting pay by 12% and raised pay for the most experienced IAs by 6.2% over the three-year contract term. Based on feedback during mediation, proposals were updated to invest more heavily in tenured, rather than new, IA staff, with three-year cost of living (COLA) increases ranging from 6.5% to 8.7% on each step in addition to regular, annual step increases averaging more than 6% per year. For specific pay proposal information, see supporting information below.

Because the union and school committee will not have a ratified contract in place by the end of the fiscal year (June 30), there is no ability for the district to provide planned COLA pay increases retroactively for work during the 2020-21 school year. As required by Massachusetts municipal finance law, the money set aside to fund the salary increases offered by the School Committee must now revert back to the town, unless the money can be directed toward other school district expenses before June 30. At today's School Committee meeting, the Committee voted to place the money intended for instructional assistant pay increases into the Town of Andover Unfunded Liability Offset (ULO) account. This fund subsidizes the cost of post-employment benefits, including health insurance for instructional assistant retirees.

"It is disappointing that the instructional assistants weren't able to come to an agreement with the School Committee," said Susan McCready, chairperson of the Andover School Committee. "I am confident the subcommittee bargained in good faith and know we offered an aggressive proposal. In the absence of an agreement with the IAs, I believe the School Committee did the responsible thing by contributing the money back to the Town of Andover's ULO account."

"We presented salary offers that were responsible, fair, and allowed the Andover IAs to maintain their position as some of the highest paid assistants among Andover's demographically similar districts and those districts with which we compete geographically for educator talent," said Shannon Scully, school committee member on the negotiation sub-committee. "We were also pleased to demonstrate how Andover IAs do, in fact, earn a living wage, which we know has been a point of concern with their union membership."

"Instructional Assistants are highly valued members of the Andover educator team, and we appreciate the beneficial relationships they cultivate with students," said Lauren Conoscenti, school committee member on the negotiation sub-committee. "We are troubled by the inability to reach a collaborative agreement that would have provided additional pay increases for all their hard work this past school year but look forward to continued discussions over the summer."

The Committee and Union next meet with the state mediator on July 19, 2021 to continue work toward a successor agreement.

###

Additional information and details:

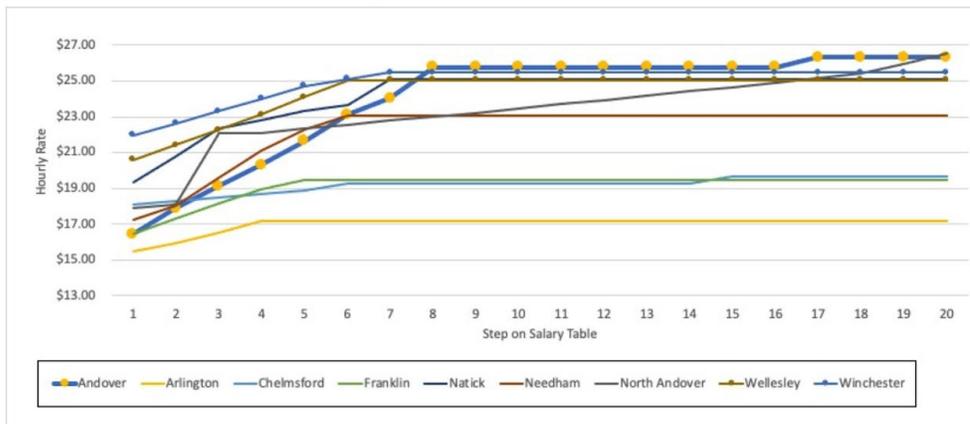
- The Andover Assistants' Organization is the representative of all instructional assistants employed by the Andover Public Schools. The current [Collective Bargaining Agreement](#) for Andover Assistants Organization expired on August 31, 2020.
- For a description of the Instructional Assistant role, please see the IA job description in appendix B of the Collective Bargaining Agreement. Minimum qualifications to be an IA include: Two years of college or equivalent two years' experience working with children, ability to understand student curriculum and to implement multiple teacher-directed activities, and knowledge of use of computers, including the application of classroom and adaptive technologies.
- As outlined in Article IV of the Collective Bargaining Agreement, IAs work 7 hours per day for either 182 or 184 days per year, which is 1,274 or 1,288 hours per year. Based on statistics from the [MIT Living Wage Calculator](#), IAs are provided a living wage with salary rates annualized to 2,080 hours of full-year employment, even excluding consideration of non-financial benefits such as health insurance.
- IAs who work more than 20 hours per week (98% of the IA unit) are eligible for health insurance benefits while employed by Andover Public Schools. IAs are also eligible for retirement after 10 years in Andover, earning both a pension and health insurance as post-employment benefits from the Andover Contributory Retirement System.

- The Town of Andover’s Unfunded Liability (ULO) account is used to subsidize the cost of post-employment benefits for Andover retirees. In town-settled collective bargaining agreements that offer COLAs above 1% (for example, firefighters, AFSCME, independents), employees voluntarily contribute 1% of their pay to the ULO account to offset retiree benefits. School contracts do not include a similar ULO provision. Today’s vote of the School Committee provides the school department’s first direct contribution to the town ULO account.
- **Instructional Assistants Comparative Salary Data released to AEA:**

Data show Andover instructional assistants are paid comparably to our demographically comparable districts and are among the most highly paid of our geographically comparable districts.

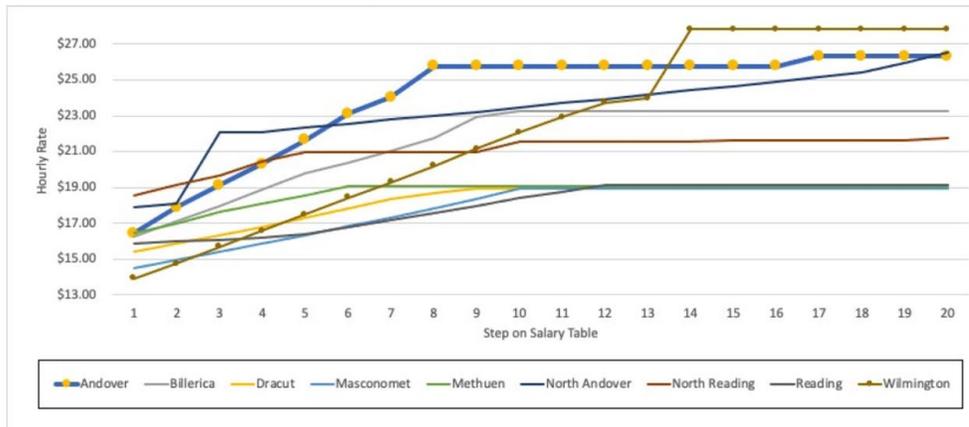
Demographically Similar Districts

Districts with which Andover compares based on community & demographic metrics
Hourly Rates for 2019/20 School Year



Talent-Competitive Districts

Districts with which Andover competes for IA talent based on reasonable geography
Hourly Rates for 2019/20 School Year



- Demographically Similar Districts:** Arlington, Chelmsford, Franklin, Holliston, Natick, Needham, North Andover, Wellesley, Westwood, Winchester (*considering % low-income, race, % special education students, ELL students, etc.*)
- Talent Competitive Districts/Reasonable Geographic Reach to Andover:** Amesbury, Billerica, Dracut, Haverhill, Lawrence, Lowell, Masconomet, Methuen, North Andover, North Reading, Reading, Tewksbury, Wilmington
- The school operating budget for contract year 1 (2020/21 school year) was set by Town Meeting on September 12, 2020, and the budget for contract year 2 (2021/22 school year) was set by Town Meeting on June 5, 2021.
- For the 2020- 21 school year, the School Committee has successfully negotiated contracts with APS Administrators, Custodians, Food Service Employees, Occupational and Physical Therapists, Licensed Practical Nurses and Secretaries. The School Committee has ratified a tentative agreement with the district’s largest union, AEA Unit A, with the union’s ratification vote pending next week.
- More information and an overview of negotiations can be found on the APS website: [All In for APS Students](#)

-- continues on next page--

SCHOOL COMMITTEE PROPOSAL PRIOR TO MEDIATION

Yr1: 1% COLA, add new step 9 at 1% higher than step 8, increase longevity (step 17) to \$750 (from \$650) annually, provide \$300 to each member of the unit who was employed for at least 91 days during the work year
 Yr2: 1% COLA, eliminate step 1, add new step 10 1% higher than step 9, renumber steps (Yr 1 step 2 becomes Yr 2 step 1, etc.)
 Yr3: 1% COLA, add new step 10 1% higher than step 9

HOURLY RATES		Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	INCREASE OVER CONTRACT TERM	
STEP	2019/20	2020/21*	2021/22	2022/23	STEP	% INCREASE
1	\$ 16.45	\$ 16.61	\$ 18.24	\$ 18.42	1	12.0%
2	\$ 17.88	\$ 18.06	\$ 19.52	\$ 19.72	2	10.3%
3	\$ 19.14	\$ 19.33	\$ 20.72	\$ 20.92	3	9.3%
4	\$ 20.31	\$ 20.51	\$ 22.09	\$ 22.31	4	9.8%
5	\$ 21.65	\$ 21.87	\$ 23.57	\$ 23.81	5	10.0%
6	\$ 23.11	\$ 23.34	\$ 24.52	\$ 24.77	6	7.2%
7	\$ 24.03	\$ 24.28	\$ 26.30	\$ 26.56	7	10.5%
8	\$ 25.78	\$ 26.04	\$ 26.56	\$ 26.83	8	4.1%
9	(N/A)	\$ 26.30	\$ 26.83	\$ 27.10	9	5.1%
10	(N/A)	(N/A)	(N/A)	\$ 27.37	top step	6.2%
17	\$ 26.31	\$ 26.88	\$ 27.41	\$ 27.95	17 (+ longevity)	6.2%

SCHOOL COMMITTEE PROPOSAL FROM MEDIATION

Yr1: 1% COLA, add new step 9 1% higher than step 8, increase longevity (step 17) to \$750 (from \$650) annually, provide \$300 to each member of the unit who was employed for at least 91 days during the work year
 Yr2: add \$1 to each step
 Yr3: 1.5% COLA

HOURLY RATES		Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	INCREASE OVER CONTRACT TERM	
STEP	2019/20	2020/21*	2021/22	2022/23	STEP	% INCREASE
1	\$ 16.45	\$ 16.61	\$ 17.61	\$ 17.88	1	8.7%
2	\$ 17.88	\$ 18.06	\$ 19.06	\$ 19.34	2	8.2%
3	\$ 19.14	\$ 19.33	\$ 20.33	\$ 20.64	3	7.8%
4	\$ 20.31	\$ 20.51	\$ 21.51	\$ 21.84	4	7.5%
5	\$ 21.65	\$ 21.87	\$ 22.87	\$ 23.21	5	7.2%
6	\$ 23.11	\$ 23.34	\$ 24.34	\$ 24.71	6	6.9%
7	\$ 24.03	\$ 24.27	\$ 25.27	\$ 25.65	7	6.7%
8	\$ 25.78	\$ 26.04	\$ 27.04	\$ 27.44	8	6.5%
9	(N/A)	\$ 26.30	\$ 27.30	\$ 27.71	top step	7.5%
17	\$ 26.31	\$ 26.88	\$ 27.88	\$ 28.29	17 (+ longevity)	7.5%

FOR COMPARISON ONLY: TABLE OFFERING COLA EQUIVALENCE TO UNIT A TENTATIVE AGREEMENT

Yr1: 1% COLA, add new step 9 1% higher than step 8, increase longevity (step 17) to \$750 (from \$650) annually, provide one-time money to each member of the unit who was employed for at least 91 days during the work year
 Yr2: 2% COLA
 Yr3: 1.5% COLA, add new step 10 2% higher than step 9 in year 2

HOURLY RATES		Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	INCREASE OVER CONTRACT TERM	
STEP	2019/20	2020/21*	2021/22	2022/23	STEP	% INCREASE
1	\$ 16.45	\$ 16.61	\$ 16.95	\$ 17.20	1	4.6%
2	\$ 17.88	\$ 18.06	\$ 18.42	\$ 18.70	2	4.6%
3	\$ 19.14	\$ 19.33	\$ 19.72	\$ 20.01	3	4.6%
4	\$ 20.31	\$ 20.51	\$ 20.92	\$ 21.24	4	4.6%
5	\$ 21.65	\$ 21.87	\$ 22.30	\$ 22.64	5	4.6%
6	\$ 23.11	\$ 23.34	\$ 23.81	\$ 24.17	6	4.6%
7	\$ 24.03	\$ 24.27	\$ 24.76	\$ 25.13	7	4.6%
8	\$ 25.78	\$ 26.04	\$ 26.56	\$ 26.96	8	4.6%
9	(N/A)	\$ 26.30	\$ 26.82	\$ 27.23	9	5.6%
10	(N/A)	(N/A)	(N/A)	\$ 27.36	top step	6.1%
17	\$ 26.31	\$ 26.88	\$ 27.40	\$ 27.94	17 (+ longevity)	6.2%

- NOTES:** (1) Hourly Rates do not include the additional, proposed \$300 one-time payment in year 1.
 (2) The Increase Over Contract Term chart does not include regular, annual step increases averaging more than 6% per year.
 (For example an IA on step 1 during the 2019/20 school year that travels to step 4 during the contract term would have increased pay 35.6% in the top chart, 32.7% in the middle chart, or 29.1% in the bottom chart.)