

## Boston Public Schools Reaches Tentative Agreement with Boston Teachers Union on New Contract

Boston Public Schools recently reached a tentative agreement with the Boston Teachers Union (BTU) for a renewed contract. The proposed contract is retroactive to September 1, 2024 and extends through August 31, 2027. Since the term of the contract covers the school budget planning process for School Year 2027-2028, its impact will extend beyond its expiration date. Given the size of the BTU, the City's largest union representing nearly 10,000 employees, the changes will have significant cost implications on current and future budgets. While not all the cost details are available yet, this research update will provide insight into the key provisions of the proposed contract.

**Cost** – The School Department is calculating the final estimated cost of the contract and is expected to make that calculation public by mid-April. The detailed cost calculation takes time in part because some schools already follow some of what is in the proposed contract. The cost of the contract is not included in the \$1.58B FY26 school budget the School Committee approved on March 26. Instead, all of the costs for FY25 and most of the FY26 costs will be covered by funds in the City's reserve for collective bargaining, which is included in Mayor Michelle Wu's proposed FY26 budget. Once the City Council makes a supplemental appropriation from the reserve, the School Department's FY26 budget will grow by more than the current 3.4% projected increase.

**Pay Increases** – Teachers' pay is expected to rise between 9% and 11.5% over three years. Teachers will receive a retroactive 2.5% increase in pay for 2024-2025, a 2% increase in 2025-2026, and a 2% increase in 2026-2027. Teachers will receive additional increases to their base pay each year and enhanced career awards over the course of the 3-year contract. The contract also provides for large pay raises for classroom paraprofessionals, who are expected to see increases of 23% to 31% over the length of the contract. This approach is in line with Mayor Wu's goal of increasing pay for the lowest paid City workers and would increase some paraprofessionals' pay by over \$5,700 in the first year of the contract alone. The increases for paraprofessionals are frontloaded in the contract to provide the largest salary increase in the first year.

School Employee Type	General Wage Increase Over Length of Contract
Teachers	9% - 11.5%
Classroom Paraprofessionals	23% - 31%
Security, Library, Surround Care, Coverage and 1 to 1 Paraprofessionals	15% - 18%
Community Field Coordinators, Health Paraprofessionals and Family Liaisons	11.4% - 12.5%
Sign Language Interpreters	9% - 15%
Applied Behavior Analysis Specialists	Up to 28%
Substitute Teachers	2.5% + 2% (with daily increases) + 2%

**Inclusion** – The district's policy of educating special education and English-learning students in general education classrooms, known as inclusion, has been rolling out over the last two years and in FY26 will apply to grades K0, K1, K2, 1, 2, 7, 8, 9, and 10. The tentative agreement states that, except in certain circumstances, permanent general

education teachers will not be excused for failing to obtain a Moderate Disabilities special education license, a key provision for the BTU. It represents a change for BPS, which won in arbitration concerning the requirement that general education teachers obtain that license. As a result of the contract's various inclusion provisions, the district will need to hire more licensed special education teachers. However, given previously announced school closures, the net FTE impact is expected to be closer to neutral, resulting in a higher concentration of FTEs in fewer schools. The contract does not change the district's rollout of inclusion but provides teachers with more assurances during implementation. The tentative agreement also does not include specific provisions regarding multilingual learners.

**Scheduling Changes for MassCore** – A provision of the proposed contract grants the district more flexibility in high school scheduling for School Year 2025-2026 and School Year 2026-2027 so students can more easily achieve the MassCore graduation requirement. MassCore is a program of study adopted by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education intended to provide consistent high school academic standards across districts. In 2021, the Boston School Committee [adopted MassCore](#) as a graduation requirement, requiring students to complete the required coursework starting with the Class of 2026. The proposed contract allows the district for the next two school years to propose high school scheduling changes to help students meet the necessary course requirements, subject to a vote by school staff.

**Provisions Not Included** – Boston Public Schools unsuccessfully sought additional contract changes, including moving the start of the work year before Labor Day and requiring independent medical assessments for staff on leave for more than 30 days. The district also did not secure all of the additional professional development days it requested.

**Next Steps** – The BTU voted on April 9 to ratify the proposed contract. The School Committee is expected to consider and could possibly vote on the contract at its meeting on April 16. Once the School Committee approves the proposed contract, the City Council and Mayor must approve the agreement before it takes effect.