

PRESS RELEASE

Region 14 Board of Education and Teacher's Union Reach Agreement on Contract During Binding Arbitration Process

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During the middle of the binding arbitration process, the Region 14 School District Board of Education and Nonnewaug Teachers Association (the union representing all Region 14 teachers) reached a contract for its approximately 174 teachers. The agreement, which is part of a binding arbitration award, was issued by the arbitrators on February 6, 2019 and was filed with the School District and the members Towns today.

The negotiations between the Board of Education and the teacher union began in the fall. Despite our efforts, the parties were not able to reach an agreement during the negotiation process or during mediation, and the binding arbitration process was imposed upon the parties by the State at the end of December, 2018.

The three-year contract that is part of the award issued by the arbitrators takes effect on July 1, 2019. While the agreement is not perfect, the total salary increases over the term of the contract is 8.6%, which is consistent with the statewide average for three-year teacher contract settlements this year. There are no increases in the extra duty stipend amounts paid to teacher. Consistent with the other District bargaining units, the contract calls for a significant reduction by Region 14 of its payment of the teachers' health insurance deductibles in year three of the contract, which was a major priority for the Board and which will help offset the salary increases .

While the contract is not perfect, the overall "bottom line" financial result from any decision by arbitrators (when looking at salaries, insurance and stipends) following a fully contested hearing process would likely have not been any more favorable to the District (in light of the settlements reached by other school district statewide in general and by similar school districts in particular), and the resolution reached by the parties will save the Board from further costs of the arbitration process. The contract was created taking into account the request for salary increase by the teacher's union, the current settlements involving other similar teachers groups, and budget challenges facing Region 14 taxpayers.

As noted by Janet Morgan, who is the Chairperson of the Board of Education. "The Board of Education's negotiation team entered the teacher negotiations looking to respect all parties involved - the teachers, students and communities. The Board of Education's team expressed concern for the current economy, upcoming debt with the renovation project and the student population to the teachers during the process. The Board of Education's team worked diligently to come to a mutual agreement that would

continue to allow the District to grow and the students receive the finest education we can deliver. The team spent countless hours reviewing budget constraints, thinking outside the box and looking for new ways to keep the students and education at the forefront of the discussions. When they failed to meet a fair middle ground for all, the entire process was moved to arbitration. But the team continued to work to a solution. Although the final result is not perfect, and while neither party achieved all of its initial goals, we are relieved that we finally have a contract."