



HOPKINTON SCHOOL DISTRICT School Administrative Unit 66

204 MAPLE STREET • CONTOOCOOK, NH 03229
TEL: (603) 746-5186 FAX: (603) 746-5714

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HOPKINTON EDUCATION ASSOCIATION (HEA) HOPKINTON EDUCATION SUPPORT STAFF (HESS) CONTRACTS

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)

****Updated September 29, 2009****

1. Why is there a special school district meeting?

The town approved the opportunity for a special school district meeting in March. State law requires that negotiations in good faith continue with public sector associations. The school board and both associations (Hopkinton Educational Support Staff and Hopkinton Education Association) agreed on contract proposals. The contracts will only be implemented if ratified by a vote of the town.

2. Are the rules for a special school district meeting any different than a school district meeting?

The rules are the same. The decision will be made by a majority vote.

**** This response is a change to a previous version of the Frequently Asked Questions. The Department of Revenue Administration and District Counsel have approved the change.**

3. How long are the contracts?

HESS: One year, 2009-2010 (Negotiations will begin in November.)

HEA: Two years, 2009-2010, 2010-2011

4. What were some principles that guided the HEA negotiation process?

1. Time, tools, and training: The goal was to increase teachers' time, tools, and training through the negotiation process.

2. To understand the current level of the Hopkinton contract and reflect that understanding in the negotiation process.

Attracting and retaining an excellent teaching staff is of value to the Hopkinton community. That being said, in these difficult economic times, slowing the growth of the salary schedule is understandable. This contract, by not having a percent increase over two years, slows the growth of the salary schedule.

Steven M. Chamberlin
Superintendent

schamberlin@hopkintonschools.org

Michelle R. Clark
Business Administrator

mclark@hopkintonschools.org

Dr. Valerie S. Aubry
Director of Student Services

vaubry@hopkintonschools.org

Matthew P. Stone
Director of Technology

mstone@hopkintonschools.org

5. What are the costs of the contracts to the taxpayers?

HESS: For the 2009-2010 school year. (There is no cost to the taxpayer.)

HEA: For the 2009-2010 school year: \$11,412
For the 2010-2011 school year: \$133,128

Increases in the HEA contract broken out for the 2009-2010 school year: (Benefits only, no monetary increase)

- Increase in life insurance to 1.5 times salary: \$6,469 (prorated for 8 months)
- Change in dental (orthodontic) coverage: \$2,028 (prorated for 8 months)
- Change in teacher substituting for teachers rate (based on 08-09 numbers): \$2,052
- 403b administrative fee: \$864

Increases in the HEA contract broken out for the 2010-2011 school year:

- Increase in life insurance to 1.5 times salary: \$3,356 (full year).
- Change in Dental coverage: \$1,014 (full year)
- Attendance Bonus: \$14,338 ** See FAQ # 9
- Cost of step salary and first time longevity recipients: \$80,089
- One time cost of living adjustment (\$500) for those who do not receive step or longevity for the first time: \$34,332

6. What would be the impact of the increases on the tax rate?

09-10: Using the 2009 MS 1 values, an estimated \$.02

10-11: Using the 2009 MS 1 values, an estimated \$.21

7. Why the increase in life insurance?

The previous rate, \$25,000 per teacher, was no longer in the competitive range. The 1.5 times a teacher's salary is more in line with current levels.

8. Can you explain the increase in dental coverage?

Increasing individual coverage by \$500 for orthodontics for the entire District staff (140 employees) for \$3000 over two years was a good value.

9. I noticed the attendance bonus, what is that?

A teacher, for exemplary attendance, can earn an attendance bonus. The hope is to decrease the number of substitutes needed and increase teacher time in the classroom. Increasing attendance by certified teaching staff enhances student learning. Teachers earn a bonus based on \$112.5/half day. The maximum bonus a teacher could receive is \$562.50. This approach should reduce costs in the substitute area of the budget.

10. Can you explain the increases in the second year of the contract?

As earlier stated, there is no percent increase for two years. Increases in salary for 2010-2011 occur in three ways:

1. Teachers who are eligible for step increases would receive a step increase. (This is important to retain less experienced teachers, a good value for the District.)
2. Teachers who are eligible for the longevity stipend for the first time.
3. Teachers not eligible for number 1 or number 2 would receive a one-time \$500 cost of living adjustment.

11. As earlier stated, time was a focus of negotiations. What increases in time are included in the contracts?

HESS: Support staff will now be required to attend professional development. These activities will help our support staff meet the ever-changing needs of our students.

HEA: In 2009-2010: All teachers will be required to complete an additional day of professional development. This represents a value of approximately \$36,000 (the cost of one day for the certified staff).

In 2010-2011: Teachers will have a 186 (187 for new teachers) day contract (increased from 184 in 2008-2009). Teachers will be required to complete a day in the summer connected to their evaluation plan. Elementary school teachers will complete a day preparing their classrooms for the arrival of students. The middle school additional day will be connected to parent/teacher conferences. The additional day at the high school will allow for collaboration/planning/assessment between semesters. New teachers will now have a full day of orientation.

12. An innovative approach to utilizing course reimbursement funds is stated in the contract. Can you explain the laptop option?

As earlier stated, providing the tools teachers need is important. Each teacher is currently eligible to participate in a college/university course reimbursement program. Some teachers do not participate in the course reimbursement program. A second option has been added for the 2010-2011 school year. After course requests have been fulfilled, the remaining funds can be used to purchase a laptop for a teacher. Teachers must connect the use of the laptop to enhancing student learning in their personalized teacher evaluation plan. For three years the laptop is the property of the Hopkinton School District. After three years the laptop becomes property of the teacher.

13. What about health insurance, is there any change in health insurance in the new contracts?

The focus of negotiations was on time and salary. The slow growth of the salary schedule caused the health insurance benefit to remain unchanged. All aspects of the contract will be “on the table” in the next round of negotiations. (Note: District costs for health care increased less than one percent from FY 2009 to FY 2010.)

14. Are there significant changes in the HEA contract not related to cost items?

Yes, a few of the changes are listed below:

- a. The timeline for notification and acceptance of early retirement has changed.
- b. The timeline for the settlement of early retirement costs has been changed.
- c. The timeline for distributing teacher evaluations has changed.
- d. The number of years of service post sabbatical has changed from two to three.
- e. The District support of child rearing leave has been codified.
- f. Bereavement leave has been categorized separately from sick leave.
- g. The school calendar approval timeline has been changed. The District calendar needs to be approved by the last school board meeting in December.
- h. A lead teacher category for summer curriculum has been eliminated.

15. Can you explain the Evergreen Clause and how it pertains to these contract negotiations?

An Evergreen Clause requires public employers to honor existing provisions of an expired contract until a new contract is in place. The Evergreen Clause is attached to contracts agreed upon after July 15, 2008. These two contracts, approved after July 1, 2008, would fall under the Evergreen Clause. Going forward, teachers would receive step increases in the absence of town-approved contracts.