

School Committee Proposal: A Responsible and Competitive Teacher Compensation Plan

April 2025

Balancing Fair Teacher Pay with Responsible Budgeting

The Haverhill School Committee has proposed a comprehensive teacher compensation package that offers competitive, fair pay for educators while maintaining fiscal responsibility for taxpayers. The plan is designed to help Haverhill recruit and retain high-quality teachers, stay competitive with surrounding districts, and ensure long-term financial sustainability for the school system.

The Committee has carefully reviewed over 60 proposals submitted by the Haverhill Education Association (HEA). While it is not financially feasible to implement every proposal, the Committee has made a sincere effort to prioritize and include those most important to educators. The offer reflects a commitment to thoughtful compromise and ongoing collaboration. The School Committee remains open to dialogue to ensure available resources are directed where they matter most.

Competitive Salaries, Targeted Adjustments

Teacher salaries in Haverhill have steadily increased and are now competitive with—often exceeding—regional averages. For instance, a teacher with a Master’s degree and five years of experience currently earns about 6.6% more than their peers in surrounding districts.

Where Haverhill lags slightly—such as at the entry-level or in select mid-career steps—the proposal includes **targeted market adjustments** to raise those salaries to align with local medians.

Built-In Salary Growth: Three Key Components

The School Committee’s proposal supports strong, consistent salary growth:

1. Cost-of-Living Adjustments (COLA)

- The proposal includes a **6% COLA spread over three years** (approximately 2% per year) to help teachers keep pace with inflation.
- These COLA increases are **in addition to** the targeted market adjustment and step and lane increases—not a substitute.

2. Step Increases for Experience

- Teachers receive a step increase for each additional year of service during their first 14 years, averaging a **3.08% raise or \$2,311 per year, in addition to COLA**.

3. Lane (or Column) Increases for Advanced Education

- Teachers can increase their salaries by earning additional degrees or graduate credits (e.g., Master’s, +15, or +30 credits).
- In the past two years, **359 teachers advanced lanes**, earning an average raise of **\$2,438**.
- These lane changes reward professional growth and typically increase district salary costs by just **0.6% annually**.

Together, these three mechanisms allow many teachers—particularly those in the first 14 years of their careers—to see annual salary increases ranging from **5% to 8%**, depending on educational advancement.

Supporting Teachers and Families

In response to the HEA's advocacy for enhanced family benefits, the School Committee has proposed increasing **paid parental leave from 6 or 8 weeks (depending on the type of birth) to 12 weeks** for the birthing parent. This leave would be drawn from a teacher's accrued sick leave balance, doubling the current benefit and supporting educators during important family transitions.

Fiscal Responsibility in Uncertain Times

The School Committee's proposal is grounded in realistic projections of available funding over the next several years. However, it is important to acknowledge the **uncertain national fiscal climate** and the **changing landscape of federal education funding**. The Committee remains committed to prudent budgeting practices that ensure long-term stability for Haverhill Public Schools.

Looking Ahead

The most recent bargaining session concluded with both parties confirming future meeting dates. The **next negotiation session is scheduled for May 13, 2025, at 5:00 PM.**

The School Committee remains committed to reaching a fair and sustainable agreement that values our educators, supports student success, and honors the trust placed in us by the Haverhill community.