

March 10, 2023

Dear WPS Families:

In January, we wrote to you about the status of our contract negotiations with our teachers. **Today, we are pleased to tell you that the Westwood School Committee and the Westwood Teachers Association (WTA) have both ratified an agreement for the 2022-2025 fiscal years.**

For the duration of this process, the School Committee's goal has been to achieve a fair and respectful resolution for the WTA that the District could afford. As you may recall, at our February 9th meeting, Superintendent Parks presented a proposed budget that accounted for the latest offer made to the WTA and also required certain cuts to services, particularly in the area of literacy and math specialists. At that budget presentation (as at all previous ones), we reiterated that the budget was based on a number of assumptions, including the amount of Chapter 70 funds (state aid for schools) that Westwood would receive for FY'24.

In late February, when Governor Healey released her proposed FY'24 state budget, we learned that Westwood's estimated allocation for Chapter 70 funds is significantly higher than we anticipated. The increase is a step toward the state's commitment to fund the 2019 Student Opportunity Act, an historic piece of education reform legislation. Upon receiving this information, we immediately met with our Town partners to discuss how this unexpected increase in state aid could support our desire to both maintain high-quality services for students and compensate our teachers.

As a result, and in collaboration with our Town partners, last night, the School Committee voted on a FY'24 budget that:

- Restored the staff cuts proposed at our February meeting
- Enabled the District to provide the salary increases for teachers contained in ratified contract agreement
- Supported increased hourly wages for our paraprofessionals
- Addressed some of our financial challenges related to inflationary pressures and increased special education costs

The Westwood School Committee values the long-standing respectful relationship it has had with the WTA leadership. Over the last several months, we have worked hard to balance preserving educational resources for students, demonstrating respect for teachers, and making responsible financial decisions. The Westwood School Committee appreciates the support of the WTA, the District Administration, and our District families as we have worked to successfully meet all of these responsibilities.

Sincerely,

Westwood School Committee

Charles Donahue, Chair  
Anthony Mullin  
Dori Parmelee  
Amanda Phillips  
Maya Plotkin