



## MEMORANDUM

TO: Members, Stamford Board of Finance

Cc: Members, Stamford Board of Education,  
Dr. Tamu Lucero, Ryan Fealey, Christopher Soules

FROM: Thomas Mooney

RE: Summary of Tentative Agreement Reached in Initial Contract Negotiations with  
UPSEU, Local 424 – Unit 133, Parent Facilitators

DATE: January 25, 2022

On December 15, 2022, the Board Negotiations Committee (Jackie Heftman, Andy George, Josh Esses, Tamu Lucero, Chris Soules, and legal counsel) reached a tentative agreement on a initial collective bargaining agreement with UPSEU, Local 424 – Unit 133, Parent Facilitators. This new contract will be effective upon ratification, approval and execution by the parties (with salary increases retroactive to July 1, 2022) for a term ending June 30, 2025. In accordance with **Section C6-20-7(c)** of the City Charter, the Board of Education presents this tentative agreement to the Board of Finance and requests “an advisory opinion to the Board of Education of the total cost and potential long-term burden of the proposed agreements.” The Board hereby provides the following summary concerning the terms of the tentative agreement.

### I. INTRODUCTION

Family and Community Engagement Facilitators (known as Parent Facilitators) serve an important function in supporting families new to the Stamford Public Schools, for many of which English is not spoken in the home. Some seventy-five different languages are spoken by families with children enrolled in the Stamford Public Schools, and Parent Facilitators serve as an important bridge between parents and the teachers and administrators who teach their children. Parent Facilitators are all bilingual and fluent in Spanish. The job description for this position is set forth in the Appendix to this Memorandum.

The position of Parent Facilitator originated as a part-time position some years ago, and in recent years Parent Facilitators have played an increasing important role in promoting parent engagement in the education of their children, a key to student success. The Board of Education made the positions full-time starting with the 2021-2022 school year, with a salary of \$30,000 for a work year of 186 days, which tracked the school year.

On March 8, 2022, the United Public Service Employees Union (UPSEU) filed a petition with the State Board of Labor Relations to be recognized as the exclusive representative of Parent Facilitators for purposes of collective bargaining. To assure free employee choice in this matter, the Board insisted that the State Board of Labor Relations conduct a secret ballot election concerning the petition, and that election was held on April 20, 2022. The vote was 19-0 in favor of the union, and UPSEU was thus designated as the exclusive bargaining representative for Parent Facilitators employed by the Board of Education.

Over the summer, the parties had informal conversation, largely around the presentation of proposed contract terms by the Union. The Union then presented a proposed collective bargaining agreement, which was modeled in part on the recently-negotiated agreement between the Board of Education and the Paraeducators of Stamford Association, (which UPSEU also represents) and which included a number of additional provisions. After deliberation and review, the Board of Education responded to that proposed collective bargaining agreement at the first formal negotiation session on October 6, 2022.

The negotiation of an initial collective bargaining agreement is complicated and time-consuming, and the parties met regularly throughout the fall. The parties concluded negotiations on December 15, 2022 with tentative agreement on an initial collective bargaining agreement.

Given that this is the first collective bargaining agreement between the Board and UPSEU, Local 424 – Unit 133, Parent Facilitators, this contract summary cannot follow the usual format of highlighting the changes from the prior agreement. Rather, this summary will describe the key financial terms of the tentative agreement and briefly summarize the language provisions.

## II. SALARY:

The salary for Parent Facilitators in 2021-2022 was \$30,000 for 186 days of work at 6.5 hours daily, for an hourly rate of \$24.81. In negotiations, the Board sought salary information as to comparable positions, but limited information was available because of the uniqueness of the position. The Board did learn that Bilingual Parent Coordinators in Norwalk are paid in 2022-2023 a minimum of \$26.98 and a maximum of \$32.21. More telling, the Administration reported to the Board Committee that there has been significant turnover in the Parent Facilitator positions: of the some twenty Parent Facilitator positions in Stamford, thirteen Parent Facilitators left Board employment since 2018 (with four leaving since the positions were made full-time on July 1, 2021). The Board Committee determined that significant changes were appropriate to attract and retain individuals for Parent Facilitator positions.

Given the growing importance of these positions and the need for their liaison work with parents outside of the school year, the tentative agreement provides for a work year of 196 days (10 additional days) and establishes new salary rates for Parent Facilitators as follows:

July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023	\$26.00/hour
July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024	\$27.00/hour
July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025	\$28.50/hour

There are no steps.

In addition, the tentative agreement includes a longevity provision to recognize the long service of some Parent Facilitators, as follows:

Longevity:     \$2,000, effective July 1 after five (5) years of service.  
                  \$4,000, effective July 1 after ten (10) years of service.

Given the small size of this bargaining unit, these salary changes do not impose significant new costs on the Board. The financial impact of these salary provisions is described in the attached report from Director of Finance Ryan Fealey.

### III. PENSION:

The Union proposed that Parent Facilitators participate in a defined benefit pension plan. Through negotiations, the parties agreed that Parent Facilitators will participate in a defined contribution pension plan with the same terms as the defined contribution plan implemented for newly-employed paraeducators that was recently negotiated with the Paraeducators of Stamford Association, namely:

Parent Facilitators participating in the defined contribution plan shall contribute four percent (4%) and the Board shall contribute six percent (6%) of wages to the Parent Facilitator's retirement benefit account.

This new defined contribution pension plan will be implemented starting July 1, 2023.

### IV. INSURANCE:

Before they unionized, Parent Facilitators participated in the State Partnership Plan for health insurance on the same basis as paraeducators. These negotiations did not change that practice, and the terms of the tentative agreement as to insurance mirrors the provision in the collective bargaining agreement the Board has with paraeducators.

## V. LANGUAGE PROVISIONS;

Given that UPSEU represents paraeducators, its initial contract proposal was largely based on the current collective bargaining agreement with the Paraeducators of Stamford Association (POSA), but included many new provisions (*e.g.*, paid holidays) not included in that contract. Through negotiations, the Board rejected the various proposals for new benefits not provided to paraeducators, and the language provisions of the new contract largely track the POSA contract.

That said, the parties recognized during the negotiations that the job of a Parent Facilitator is materially different from that of a paraeducator. The tentative agreement provides therefore that Parent Facilitators will continue to make home visits and participate in evening events (with a concomitant adjustment to their work schedule). Conversely, the tentative agreement does not include various union proposals about employee rights to transfer to vacancies.

In conclusion, the Board of Education Negotiations Committee respectfully requests a favorable advisory ruling on this tentative agreement. When the Board of Education revised the positions to be full-time, it unilaterally established an annual salary of \$30,000. In hindsight, with the benefit of information received through the negotiation process, and in light of the significant turnover in these positions as described above, the Board of Education Negotiations Committee believes that the enhancements to the working conditions for Parent Facilitators as reflected in the tentative agreement are appropriate and in the best interest of the Stamford Public Schools.

Thank you for considering this matter, and we look forward to discussing this tentative agreement with the Board of Finance on February 9, 2022.

## **APPENDIX**

### **JOB DESCRIPTION**

#### **General Statement:**

Under the general direction of the Director of Family and Community Engagement and building principal, the Family and Community Engagement Liaison fosters effective family, community, and school partnerships that support student achievement and school improvement. The Family and Community Engagement Facilitator strengthens collaborative and trusting relationships that is focused on learning by engaging with the school/program leadership team, school staff, families, community partners, and parent groups. This position is also responsible for coordinating family and community engagement efforts with Central Office and the schools.

#### **Major Responsibilities:**

- Cultivates a welcoming and respectful environment within the school community for all families and our community partners
- Collaborates with school or program leadership and School and Family Resources Facilitator (SFRF) in developing, implementing and evaluating the impact of family engagement strategies for the school or program.
- Works in collaboration with school staff to provide support and resources needed to develop full, equal, and equitable partnership among families, educators and community partners
- Collaborates with school staff in developing effective on-going communication with families and community.
- Serves as a school liaison for concerns raised by families and/or community members;
- Helps families navigate the educational system, including special education, English Learner and technology
- Attends regular meetings with SFRF and school administrator
- Assists with organizing volunteering opportunities for families and community members
- Assists with family and community engagement events/activities school based and district wide
- Performs other related duties as assigned by the School and Family Resource Facilitator and or school administrator

#### **Knowledge and Skills:**

- Effective, active listening skills as well as excellent written and oral communication skills
- Ability to work effectively with students, parents, and staff
- Organizational and problem solving skills
- Excellent interpersonal, communication, and collaboration skills with students, staff, and families
- Knowledge of and/or demonstrate the ability to learn and implement Operating Systems (i.e. Windows); Office suites (i.e. Microsoft Office, Google Docs); Presentation Software (i.e. PowerPoint, Keynote); Spreadsheets (i.e. Excel, Google Spreadsheets); Communication and Collaboration tools (i.e. Remind, Zoom, Skype); Student Information Systems (i.e. Naviance, PowerSchool); or any other technology deemed relevant for this position

#### **Qualifications:**

- Associate's degree in education, social work, sociology, psychology or a related field (preferred) or High school diploma with any such combination of education, experience, and training.
- Experience in working directly with students and families.
- A working knowledge of community resources.
- Proven ability to work effectively as part of an interdisciplinary team.
- Appropriate communication skills – both oral and written.
- Must possess the ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships with students, parents, and school staff.
- Ability to work effectively with culturally, socially and economically diverse student/family populations

- Ability to work nights and weekends
- Bilingual preferred

**Working Conditions:**

Environment:

- The work environment characteristics described here are representative of those that must be met by an employee to successfully perform the essential functions of this job. This will include office/classroom settings.

**Physical Demands:**

The physical demands described here are representative of those that must be met by an employee to perform the essential functions of this job successfully. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions.

- While performing the duties of this job, the employee is regularly required to sit for extended periods of time to view & operate computer equipment, and to stand for extended periods of time to assist families and/or staff.
- The employee is frequently required to reach with hands and arms.
- The employee must occasionally lift and/or move up to 20 pounds.
- Specific vision abilities required by this job include vision, distance vision, and the ability to adjust focus.