



Belmont Public Schools Contract Negotiations

Community Update 10.10.25

WHERE WE ARE TODAY

The School Committee (SC) approaches negotiations with a shared commitment to our students - ensuring every child leaves Belmont Public Schools with a strong and enriching education. Since October 2024, the SC and the Belmont Education Association (BEA) have spent more than 75 hours in 25 bargaining sessions. We've reached tentative agreements on many issues brought forth by the BEA.

But two major issues remain unresolved: compensation and instructional time.

① COMPENSATION

In the current fiscal year, funding for Belmont Public Schools represents approximately 75% of the Town's total operating budget. Compensation for BEA members accounts for about 67% of total school spending, underscoring how deeply staffing costs shape the district's financial sustainability.

Our goal is a contract that values educators, includes competitive salary and benefits for educators, and sustains strong schools while staying within recurring, predictable revenues. While funds such as Chapter 70 aid and "free cash" support the budget, their year-to-year volatility makes them unsuitable for ongoing salary obligations.

The SC has proposed significant salary increases for all educators. The SC and the BEA are nearly \$1.2 million apart for FY26 alone in salary proposals.

SC Proposal:

- Competitive FY26 raises, with targeted increases at the entry and mid-levels where Belmont is less competitive.
- Keeping top-scale salaries among the highest in our comparator districts.
- Fair compensation with sustainability—preserving programs, maintaining staffing levels, and protecting student outcomes.

BEA proposal:

- Double-digit increases (including COLA and adjustments) in the first year.
- Continued high growth.
- Increases of this size are beyond what Belmont's budget can sustain without deep cuts to programs and staff.

Sample Salary Increases Proposed by SC

Unit	Step* in FY25	FY25 Salary	FY28 Salary	% Change
A (Educator)	Top Step, Masters degree	\$112,000	\$120,024	7.2%
A (Educator)	Step 8, Masters degree	\$81,695	\$94,276^	15.4%
B (Curriculum Director)	Average salary	\$124,577	\$135,354	8.6%
C (Admin Assistant)	Top Step	\$61,225	\$68,177	11.4%
D (Classroom Aide)	Top Step	\$35,116	\$42,070	19.8%

* "Step" increases are annual salary increases, based on years of employment, that add to the base salary prior to any additional cost of living adjustments (COLA). They are a common feature in teachers' union contracts. Belmont educators have 14 scheduled "step" increases in their contract.

^ Assumes advancement from Step 8 to Step 11 over 3 years



With our proposed increases, Belmont salaries - annual and hourly rates - would continue to be among the highest, even compared to other districts with a longer work year.

Sample FY26 Salaries with the BSC proposed increases for Masters Top Step

	District**	Masters Top Step Annual Salary	Average^ Instructional Hours per Day - ES	Average^ Instructional Hours per Day - MS/HS	Hourly Rate Top Step - ES	Hourly Rate Top Step - MS/HS	# Work Days
Highest	Belmont*	\$114,800	5.93	6.23	\$90.61	\$90.61	181
Second Highest	Lexington	\$114,793	6.50	6.67	\$89.13	\$87.13	184
Third Highest	Needham	\$112,694	6.42	6.48	\$87.97	\$84.94	183
Lowest	Arlington	\$106,494	6.20	6.43	\$87.38	\$86.21	183
	Hopkinton	\$104,435	6.42	6.50	\$83.92	\$86.73	183
	Sharon	\$105,015	6.25	6.54	\$82.43	\$82.43	182
	Westborough	\$102,080	6.25	6.48	\$82.19	\$82.19	184
	Newburyport	\$100,403	6.50	6.48	\$77.95	\$77.95	184

*This salary is based on the last SC proposed salary for Unit A, which includes a 2.5% increase in FY26.

** Comparator districts include nearby PreK-12 districts similar to Belmont in size, student demographics, academic performance, and overall community profile, and are also identified as comparison districts by MA DESE's RADAR system.

^ Average Instructional Hours per Day calculated by dividing the total number of school hours in a typical school week by 5.



② INSTRUCTIONAL TIME



With our students at the center of this conversation, we are negotiating the amount of time students are engaged in instruction. The School Committee is committed to ensuring that the contract provides adequate learning time for all students, while giving educators enough time for planning, preparation, and development.

In prior negotiations, the BEA agreed to smaller raises and shorter work days instead of the larger raises. With both shorter school days and early dismissal every Wednesday, **Belmont students now have significantly less instructional time than students in any of our comparison districts** – even though Belmont educators remain among the highest paid.

Less instructional time adds up: Belmont lower elementary school students are in class the equivalent of 11.7 fewer days per year than the comparison district average; middle school students, 7.8 fewer days; and high school students, 10.5 fewer days. Our students deserve more instructional time. We need to work together to restore instructional time so our students have the same learning opportunities and can thrive as their peers in comparable districts.

Looking Ahead

At the heart of all this are our students. Many have already experienced years of disruption through COVID and need stability and consistency. We owe it to them to keep learning steady and focused while we resolve these differences.

Belmont has excellent schools because of the dedication of our educators, the curiosity of our students, and the partnership with families and the community.

We agree that educators deserve fair pay, students deserve strong programs, and Belmont faces real funding challenges. Where we differ is how to balance those priorities in a way that protects the long-term health of our schools.

Ultimately, all that we do is grounded in Belmont's shared Vision of a Graduate, a vision that calls us to keep students at the center, work collaboratively, and build a sustainable future for learning in Belmont.

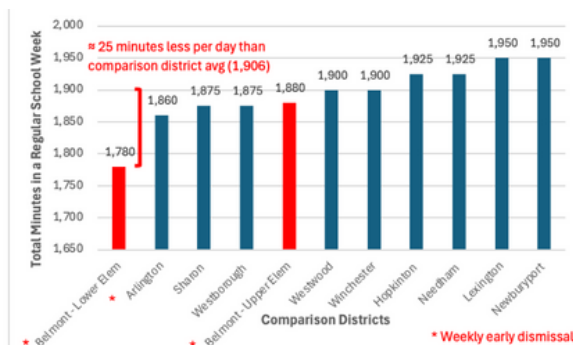
We'll continue to update the community as this work progresses. For more information, visit the Negotiations: Collective Bargaining Portal on the Belmont Public Schools website by scanning the QR code.

With appreciation,
The Belmont School Committee

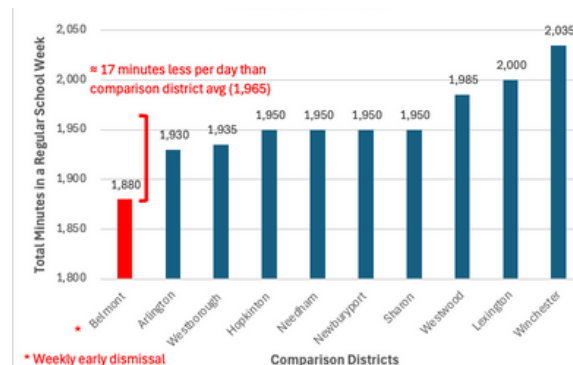


Students in Belmont receive significantly less instructional time than students in comparable districts.

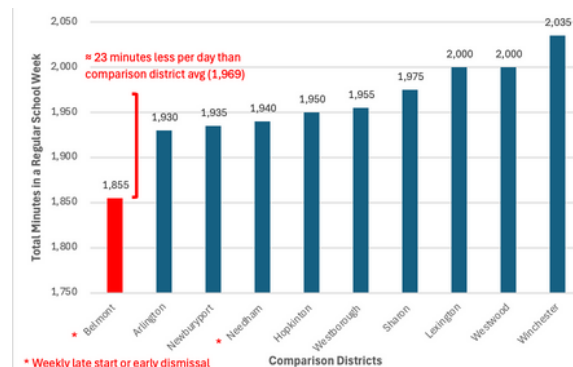
Elementary School



Middle School



High School



Note: Data collected from district websites for the most recent school year available. Calculations account for weekly early dismissals (in Belmont, Arlington, and Needham). Calculations do not account for intermittent early release days, which are common across districts.

