



SCHOOL COMMITTEE

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The School Committee has reviewed the Fact Finder’s report of February 18, 2022. While the report is non-binding, the Committee is pleased the Fact Finder advised adopting the majority of the Committee’s proposals, including enabling the Superintendent to hire new IAs at a place on the salary scale that reflects their experience.

The Committee agrees with the Fact Finder’s recommendation that IA wages should be increased to maintain Andover’s competitiveness to attract and retain top talent, and has long shared this goal with the Union. This is reflected in the Committee’s wage proposals, which would pay most IAs, including all those below the top steps of the salary table, more than what they would be paid under the Union’s proposal during the first two years of the contract.

The Committee focused on making significant improvements in starting and early-career wages in direct response to Union and community feedback around a “living wage.” [Living wage metrics](#) identified by the Union were used to craft Committee proposals that reflected this priority, raising rates on the lower end of the pay scale (24.5% to 36.3% over the three-year contract term) while offering more modest increases (6.7% to 17.8%) to the district’s longest serving IAs at the top of the scale. More information can be found in the IA Bargaining [Frequently Asked Questions](#) document where FAQs [#5](#), [#6](#) and [#7](#) describe the proposed hourly wage increases and FAQ [#18](#) describes how the Committee’s proposals exceed the living wage target .

If adopted, the Union’s wage table largely would not meet the “living wage” target for newly hired employees until the third year of the contract, and most IAs would earn less during the first two years of the contract than what the Committee offered. The Union and Fact Finder’s view that this is an acceptable tradeoff for year-three increases is not one the Committee shares.

Further, the Committee closely examined wages and total compensation packages offered across many communities to determine fair and competitive proposals. When considering hourly rates in 10 demographically similar and 16 geographically close communities, the Committee’s proposals bring Andover IAs’ position near the top of the scale at every step. Wage comparison information can be found in FAQs [#10](#) and [#11](#) and additional information on total compensation is in FAQ [#13](#).

The Committee understands that every individual constituent group will advocate for budget spending that aligns with their highest priorities, including higher pay for the important role of IAs. However, the Committee does not agree that Andover taxpayers should be asked to prioritize higher wages that exceed those in almost all other Massachusetts communities given a number of other costly long-term needs the Andover community looks to address in parallel, including new school building projects. The Committee’s proposals reflect an appropriate balance between fair and competitive pay increases for this essential group of employees and the District’s ability to make progress on other, equally important initiatives.

This has been a challenging and lengthy process and we look forward to further negotiations with the union.