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The Lincoln-Sudbury School Committee today announced that it has voted unanimously to ratify a new contract with the Lincoln-Sudbury Teachers' Association (LSTA) that successfully addresses the competing imperatives of maintaining curricular depth and breadth and high academic standards at the high school, retaining faculty and staff, and limiting growth in the school district's operating budget over the next three years.

The key features of the new contract include:

- Modest wage increases representing, on a cash basis, cost of living adjustments (COLA) equivalent to 0%, 1.15% and 1.35% respectively, over the three years beginning with the 2012-13 school year;
- Changes to health insurance programs resulting in cost avoidance of approximately \$650,000 for the first two years of the contract; and
- Changes to the district's Educational Development and Evaluation (ED&E) program that increase financial support for professional development initiatives while managing the long-term impact of professional development on compensation.

"We are pleased that the new contract successfully addresses each of the goals set out by the School Committee at the outset of negotiations, and that the financial terms of the contract enable the District to advocate for the restoration of faculty and staff lost over the last five years, even within our current fiscal constraints," said Nancy Marshall, chair of the Lincoln-Sudbury School Committee. "Our faculty and staff have demonstrated their continued commitment to the core values and mission of LSRHS, keeping curriculum, instruction and student connectedness intact during the period we were without a contract. The LSTA's agreement to the modest financial terms of this contract demonstrates its selfless approach in ensuring that our students receive the best possible education. The School Committee is very grateful for the dedication of our faculty and staff and encourages the communities of Sudbury and Lincoln to demonstrate their gratitude through appropriate financial support of the high school, particularly given the substantial increases in enrollment projected over the next four years."

Contract Details

As with virtually all public school districts, compensation growth for faculty and staff at Lincoln-Sudbury High School occurs through three distinct mechanisms: (1) increases that occur automatically on the basis of seniority (also known as "steps") until a requisite level of seniority is obtained, at which point no further "step" increases are awarded, (2) increases that occur upon the achievement of specified numbers of graduate credits or earning of graduate degrees (also known as "lane" increases) and (3) COLA adjustments. In negotiating the financial terms of the contract, the School Committee sought to balance the cash constraints being faced by the district with the need to retain faculty and staff by offering a compensation package that is competitive with Lincoln-Sudbury's peer districts, such as Concord-Carlisle, Dover-Sherborn, Wayland and Wellesley. The new contract provides for the following:

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- a one-year freeze in COLA for all faculty and staff for 2012-13, with those individuals who are “on steps” receiving the prescribed step and lane increases during the year;
- a 2% COLA for all faculty and staff at the beginning of 2013-14, with “step” increases being delayed until mid-year, resulting in an effective COLA of approximately 1.15% for 2013-2014; and
- step and lane increases taking effect at the beginning of 2014-15, with faculty and staff who are “off step” receiving \$500 in COLA at the beginning of the year and all faculty and staff receiving a 2% COLA mid-year, resulting in an effective COLA of approximately 1.35% for 2014-15.

In the new contract, one of the mechanisms historically used to accelerate the pace at which lane changes occur, known as “L-S Credits”, has been eliminated. To support faculty and staff in their efforts to grow professionally, funding for Educational Development and Evaluation, or ED&E, programs will double from \$40,000 to \$80,000 annually. These changes were designed to encourage professional development while slowing the rate of compensation growth.

Last year, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts required municipalities to make changes to employee health insurance programs in an effort to reduce health insurance costs. The School Committee and Teacher’s Association agreed to continue LSRHS’s membership in the Minuteman Nashoba Health Group, with incentives for participation in less expensive plans and for opting out of participation in the health insurance program, and increases in employee contribution rates for indemnity plans. Minuteman Nashoba recently published its rates for next year, with rates decreasing approximately 1% from this year. This change in health insurance has resulted in approximately \$650,000 in cost avoidance for the first two years of the contract.

“Notwithstanding the differences between the School Committee and the Teachers’ Association during the lengthy negotiation process, we were able to overcome those differences due to our shared commitment to Lincoln-Sudbury’s core values,” said Ms. Marshall. “We remain focused on attracting and retaining faculty who provide innovative teaching and a dynamic curriculum, programs that prepare students for the challenges of the 21st century, and a school climate and culture of trust, connectedness, and accountability for students and adults. The School Committee looks forward to continuing to work collaboratively with the faculty and staff.”

A copy of the new contract will be available on the School Committee section of the LSRHS website, www.lsrhs.net.

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