

NPS/NTU Tentative Contract Agreement Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

April 27, 2017

COMPENSATION

1. What is my salary increase?

Each NTU member will receive a raise and step movement each year of the contract (as long as they get effective or highly effective on their annual evaluation). Please review the attached salary guides.

2. If the contract says we are getting a 2.8% raise, why is my raise not 2.8%?

The percentage increases announced for each year are the total increased amount that the district will spend on salaries. Given the structure of the salary guides, each individual's raise may end up being more than or less than the announced percentage. NTU and NPS worked hard to ensure the distribution was fair and equitable.

3. Will I be getting retro payment? How much is my retro payment?

Most current NTU members will be receiving two retro checks by July 15, one for the 2015-16 school year and one for the 2016-17 school year. In general, your retro check would be the difference between your current salary and what the new salary guides show. Retro payment is based on a lot of factors, such as whether you were rated Effective or Highly Effective, so please review the salary guides and the contract language. Specific retro questions can be sent to contract@newarkteachersunion.com.

4. Does this contract change longevity payments?

For active employees, longevity will continue as it always has.

- If you currently receive longevity, it will continue.
- If you hit a longevity milestone during the 2015-16 or 2016-17 school year, it will be applied retroactively and continue.
- If you reach a longevity milestone in the future, it will be paid at the appropriate time.

Employees hired after May 15, 2017 shall not be entitled to longevity.

5. Are there any changes for Speech Therapists/Audiologists?

Yes. Speech Therapists and Audiologists will move to the Child Study Team salary guide starting in September 2017.

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6. Are there any changes in compensation of Per Diem Teacher Aides?

Yes. Per Diem Teacher Aides will see a total increase of \$1.00 per hour over the next two years.

Current	\$14.00 per hour
2017-18 (Starting September 2017)	\$14.50 per hour
2018-19 (Starting September 2018)	\$15.00 per hour

7. Are there any changes to coaching and other extra-curricular pay?

Yes. All coaching and extracurricular activities rates will go up by 2% starting September 2017.

8. Are there any changes to the after-school and summer pay?

No. The after school/summer rates will remain as they currently are.

Teacher	\$37 per hour
Coordinator	\$38 per hour
Child Study Team	\$38 per hour
Clerk	\$24 per hour
Permanent Teacher Aide	\$20 per hour

9. Will I continue to receive a bonus if I am on the Universal Guide?

Yes, as long as funding continues to remain available. The district will still provide staff on the Universal Salary Guide with \$5,000 bonus money if they receive a Highly Effective on their annual evaluation. In the event that this program will end because of lack of funding, the district will notify staff by the start of that school year that the payment will not be available.

However, there will no longer be additional bonuses for working in low-performing schools or hard-to-staff subject areas.

10. Will I still get additional compensation if I teach a sixth period in high school?

Yes, but with modifications from the current structure. While there will continue to be an additional payment for working a sixth period, this contract caps the compensation at \$6,000 for the year (prorated for time worked). In addition, high school teachers who are asked to work a sixth period must sign an agreement to work the sixth period before taking on the additional workload. It is the intention of the Newark Teachers Union and Newark Public Schools that this provision only be used in unavoidable circumstances.

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11. What happens with the current non-pensionable stipend payments related to some guides (e.g., the Traditional teacher scales)?

These stipends that were added in the 2012 contract will be phased out. However, these stipend payments have already been paid for the 2015-16 school year and for half of the 2016-17 school year. The district will pay the second stipend payment for this school year in June 2017. Moving forward, the stipends will be eliminated, with all base compensation being on guide and pensionable.

12. On the Universal Salary Guide, why does it show a “17a” step, a “7+8” step, and a “Step 18”?

In order to provide fair and equitable raises to all NTU members, under the universal guide, a temporary step was added in the 2015-16, 2016-17, and 2018-19 school years. In the 2018-19 school year, this temporary step vanishes. In addition, we also compressed steps 7-8 to allow staff to move up the salary guide more quickly in that last year. As a result, the final guide still has 18 steps, but may look a little unusual. In future contracts, these steps will be renumbered.

WORK CONDITIONS

13. Is the district changing the school year?

Yes. The school year will be SHORTENED with no reduction in salary! The district will be reducing the school year from 191 teacher days and 185 student days to 188 teacher days and 182 student days, respectively beginning in the 2017-18 school year.

14. Is the district continuing the extended school day?

Yes. Renew/Turnaround schools will continue to operate with Election to Work Agreements allowing flexibility to some provisions of the collective bargaining agreement, as has been implemented since 2012. Staff who elect to work at those schools will continue to receive annual stipends.

15. Are there any changes in the Head Start schools?

Our Head Start grant requires certain conditions, including extended school day. Staff working in those programs, as agreed to in 2016, will be required to work extended day.

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16. How will the new provision around early dismissals for professional development look like?

The district will be dismissing students at 1pm one day per month in order to provide more professional development sessions throughout the school year. (This provision will remain as long as implementation is seen by the district as effective.)

17. Are there changes to the number of prep periods?

This collective bargaining agreement has raised the minimum number of prep periods in the elementary school from three to four prep periods in a five day week.

18. Will we continue to use peer validators in the evaluation process?

No. Due to budgetary constraints and evidence of effective implementation of the evaluation system over the past five years, the role of the peer validators has been removed. However, other key structures remain to ensure that the evaluation process is fair and effectively implemented, including the Peer Oversight Committee and the School Improvement Panels.

19. How many sick and personal days will I have under this new contract?

12 sick days and 5 personal days. Personal days have more flexibility around when they can be taken than sick days.

In addition, for the first time, staff will be able to take 1/2 personal days, as long as they are approved at least two days in advance by their principal.

20. Can we still roll over personal days?

Yes. If unused, three of your five personal days will roll over to sick days at the end of each school year.

21. Are there changes in the maternity leave policy?

Yes, but only to clarify contractual language. At present, the contract has conflicting language. The changes in the contract are to bring it in line with district policy and the law.

22. Are there changes to the bereavement leave policy?

Yes. Under our new collective bargaining agreement, there is more flexibility around when bereavement days can be used. These days can now be used around the death or around the funeral of a family member as defined in the contract. (Note: You still must take your five days consecutively and provide travel itinerary when appropriate.)

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23. What is this per diem pool for direct services?

The district spends a significant amount of money each year to bring in outside agencies to provide direct services for special needs' students. This per diem pool will consist of experienced professional staff (such as retired Child Study Team members) who can provide counseling and therapy services. These per diems will be dues-paying NTU members and will allow the district to reduce the overall cost of services and also increase our ability to provide quality services. These positions are not intended to replace full-time Child Study Team members.

24. Are there any changes for Licensed Practical Nurses (LPN)?

Yes. Licensed Practical Nurses' work calendar will be reduced from 12 months to 11 months. They will also receive 5 pairs of scrubs each year.

25. Are there changes to the tuition reimbursement policy?

Yes. Tuition reimbursement has been expanded to include professional and certification programs that may fall outside of the traditional "college/university" structure. Credit and approval for programs outside the regularly sponsored university schedule/program may be approved on an individual basis by the District.

In addition, pass/fail courses are now included in tuition reimbursement as well. If the employee receives a passing grade the class shall be fully reimbursed (100%). The employee will not receive any reimbursement for a failing grade.

26. Are there changes to the Professional Improvement Fund (PIF)?

Yes. NTU members will now be able to draw upon PIF funds multiple times each year, until funds are exhausted. The maximum reimbursement per employee annually has been increased from \$400 to \$500 per teacher.

27. Are there changes to the discretionary funds policy?

Yes. Use of the discretionary funds has been expanded for purchases of paper and ink/toner, allowing you more flexibility in how you spend your discretionary dollars. In addition, items can be now shipped to the teacher's home or their school site if they are ordered online.

28. Are there changes to the donor days policy?

Yes. While NTU members currently have access to "donor days," we will be streamlining the process for accessing sick days from a "sick day bank."

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29. Are there any changes to the Framework for Effective Teaching (evaluation tool)?

Not specifically as a result of this contract, as the evaluation framework is not a negotiated item. The Peer Oversight Committee and the District Evaluation Advisory Committee review the Evaluation Framework regularly and make recommendations.

BENEFITS

30. What changes are there to my health benefits?

Teachers' health care plans will remain with our current provider, Aetna. Those members who have Aetna Direct 10, 15, and 15/25 plans will be moved to the 20/20 plan (i.e., \$20 co-pay for both general and specialty doctors). This means that you will have access to your same network of providers, but at a lower monthly contribution, saving NTU members money in each paycheck. Co-pays per visit and out-of-pocket maximums will increase, but for many members the overall cost you pay for medical expenses may decrease.

31. Do we still have prescription, dental, and vision benefits?

Yes. Prescription, dental, and vision will continue to be the same or better. We have agreed to dissolve the Supplemental Fringe Benefits Fund as it currently exists, but the NTU will still maintain the right to make recommendations to any changes in our supplemental fringe benefits. The Superintendent will retain the final decision.

32. What changes are there to my prescription benefits?

This contract will save money for the vast majority of NTU members on co-pays for prescription benefits. Currently, all members pay \$5 for generic and \$5 for brand prescription benefits. The new proposal will charge a \$0 co-pay for generic drugs and a \$20 co-pay for brand name. Over three-quarters of NTU members currently utilize generic drugs, which means the vast majority of members will see a decrease in their cost for prescription every time they go to the pharmacy. In addition, you already have the option to enroll in mail-order prescriptions that can save you even more money!

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33. What is in place to offset any cost increases I may see because of the changes to my benefits?

Beginning last year, mail-order prescriptions became available through Benecard. This offers members the ability to secure significant savings in terms of their prescription costs.

In addition, this contract expands members' ability to put money in a Flexible Spending Account (FSA) as well as add a Dependent Care FSA. During Open Enrollment in the fall, you will be able to set aside up to \$2,500 in pre-tax dollars in an FSA account that you can draw down for eligible medical expenses, such as costs associated with doctor/dental visits, prescriptions, eyeglasses and other relevant medical expenses. In addition, during Open Enrollment, you will now be able to set aside up to \$2,500 in pre-tax dollars for a Dependent Care account for eligible childcare expenses.

34. Are there any changes to the Health Benefits Waiver?

Yes. The district will no longer offer compensation for staff who elect to waive their health benefits. For those who wish to restore their benefits, a special open enrollment period will be provided. There will be one last payment in June for staff who currently waive their benefits. If your spouse's benefits fall under the New Jersey State Health Plan, check to see if their employer offers waiver compensation.

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GENERAL

35. What about any item not covered in the Memorandum of Agreement?

Any item not specifically spelled out in the Memorandum of Agreement remains the same as the previous contract.

36. What do all the other changes in the Memorandum of Agreement mean?

While developing this agreement, the NTU and NPS discovered outdated or contradictory language and worked to update as much of this as possible to create a up-to-date, cleaner, and accurate contract.

37. What if I have more questions about the contract settlement?

We have set up a contract hotline at contract@newarkteachersunion.com.

There will be a general membership meeting on **Wednesday, May 3, 2017** at Newark Symphony Hall with a formal contract presentation and Q+A.

On Thursday May 4, Monday May 8, and Tuesday May 9, the NTU Building (1019 Broad Street) will be available for walk-in questions from 9:30 AM to 5 PM. On May 8th from 3-5pm, we will have representatives from NPS and AETNA to answer benefits-related questions.