

New Bedford Teachers Agree to New Labor Contract

The New Bedford School Committee has approved the agreement that Mayor Jon Mitchell and New Bedford Public Schools Interim Superintendent Michael R. Shea reached with the leaders of the New Bedford Educators Association on a labor contract for New Bedford teachers.



The three-year contract includes groundbreaking changes that will support the school department's efforts to improve academic quality, increase the graduation rate, and close achievement gaps.

"This agreement represents a major leap forward for the New Bedford Public Schools. New Bedford teachers have really stepped up and put students first," Mayor Mitchell said.

He added, "The contract provides teachers with the support they need. It gives schools the flexibility they need. And most importantly, it will put us on a path toward a higher-performing and more engaging learning environment for our children."

Interim School Superintendent Michael R. Shea said, "This contract is part of a broad effort to put New Bedford schools on a path that educators on every level can support, from rank and file teachers, to principals, to administrators, to state level overseers."

Highlights of the 3-year contract include:

- A new teacher evaluation system: The teacher's union agreed to the Massachusetts Department of Education model language on educator evaluations. Going forward, a significant portion of teacher evaluations will be based on student test data, with a combination of a teacher's classroom data as well as whole-school data being considered.
- Increased management flexibility for administrators: School leaders will now be able to select the right teacher for every classroom, replacing a system solely based on seniority. Teachers can no longer "bump" another teacher with professional status. The decision now rests with the Superintendent, and the principal of the receiving school has the right to weigh in on the decision, which may be based in part on student performance.
- New Performance-based Pay for Advanced Placement (AP) Teachers: An anticipated expansion of the AP program at New Bedford High School will be supported by a new system of monetary awards to teachers through a grant account based on test scores in math, science and English and other subjects. This is designed to help close achievement gaps and increase the competitiveness of students applying for college.
- Compensation Increases: 0% raise in year one, 1.5% raise for most teachers in year two, and a 1.75% raise for most teachers in year three. The contract will be in effect through June 30, 2014.