



COMMUNITY ALERT

*Providing Our Constituents with Information Regarding Negotiations
between the New Hope-Solebury Board of Directors and the
New Hope-Solebury Education Association (Teachers' Union)*

December 1, 2017

Dear New Hope-Solebury Community Members,

Over the last year, the Board of Directors (“the Board”) and the leadership of the New Hope-Solebury Education Association (“the Union”) have worked together to negotiate a contract. The Union’s contract expired on June 30, 2017, and because no new contract is in place, our teachers are in a period of status quo. Status quo means that our teachers are working under the terms and conditions of their expired contract.

Since the beginning of this school year, Union leadership has enacted “Work to Rule,” meaning that most of our teachers only work during their contractual hours. Our teachers’ contractual days consist of 7.5 hours, inclusive of a 30-minute duty free lunch as well as at least 45-minutes of duty free preparation time. It must be noted, however, that many of our teachers are granted additional preparation time beyond what is contractually required.

Our Board respects and values our staff; additionally, we acknowledge that their time, talents, and efforts have been driving forces behind our students’ successes. Excellent School Performance Profile Scores, outstanding national rankings, and various state-wide accolades are the result of all stakeholders, including our teachers, working together on behalf of our students.

While we hold our teachers in high regard, we also strongly desire a contract that is fiscally responsible to ensure that our District can continue to provide the high-quality education, services, and extra-curricular activities that our students deserve and that our community expects. Frankly, we desire a contract that is both educationally and fiscally prudent.

We are sharing information to give you a comprehensive, objective update on negotiations. To be clear, we had hoped to have a new contract in place prior to the expiration of the last one. Given that Union leadership and other Union members have made public comments about negotiations at School Board meetings and in other venues, we believe we must provide this objective community alert to our taxpaying public.

In closing, please know that we support our teachers. We want them to have a contract that is fair and reasonable to all.

Sincerely,
New Hope-Solebury Board of School Directors

Contract Negotiations – Timeline of Events

<p>December 2016 January 2017</p>	<p>Informal negotiations continued with a focus on language for the new contract.</p>
<p>February 2017</p>	<p>The Board and Union leadership tentatively agreed to most language items. Items in dispute included the number of instructional periods (teaching 6 of 8 periods instead of 5 of 8 periods) assigned to teachers at the HS and MS, the Union’s desire to extend FMLA after teachers use their sick time instead of running both concurrently, and paying teachers their full salary if they miss work due to an injury incurred while working with a student with disabilities (the District currently allows the use of sick time to ensure the salaries are made whole).</p> <p>Union leadership presented the Board with their first financial offer (see the charts and graphic representations following this timeline).</p>
<p>March 2017</p>	<p>The Board provided a counteroffer to the Union leadership (see the charts and graphic representations following this timeline).</p> <p>Union leadership requested financial information from the District. The District shared the information again, as it was previously shared prior to the start of negotiations.</p>
<p>May 2017</p>	<p>The Board presented another proposal to Union leadership (see charts and graphic representations following this timeline).</p> <p>The Union leadership responded by reducing their original proposal by 1/10 of 1% (see charts and graphic representations following this timeline).</p>
<p>June, 2017 July 2017</p>	<p>The Union leadership alerted the District that they intended to enact “Work to Rule.”</p>
<p>August 2017 September 2017</p>	<p>Union leadership wrote a letter to the Board and requested a meeting to discuss negotiations without labor counsel in attendance. The Board agreed to meet but only with labor counsel present. No meeting dates were given by the Union leadership.</p> <p>“Work to Rule” began throughout the District.</p> <p>Union leadership provided an offer of 1.5% plus step movement, which would create large increases for teachers moving through the salary schedule.</p>
<p>October 2017</p>	<p>Union leadership and our Superintendent, Business Administrator, and Supervisor of Personnel met to discuss the District’s budget.</p> <p>Union leadership and Union members made comments at the Board meeting regarding negotiations and urged the Board to settle the contract before the Board changed. The first mutually agreeable date for negotiation was November 29, 2017.</p>
<p>November 2017</p>	<p>The Union leadership cancelled the only negotiations session scheduled for the month. The Board decided to provide the public with information about negotiations.</p>

Initial Proposals from Both Parties			
	Information from Expired Contract	Union Leadership Proposal to the Board	Board's Counter Proposal to Union Leadership
Salaries		Add 2% to each cell of the salary matrix – automatic 2% raises per year for all teachers	Keep the same salary matrix from the expired contract – no automatic raises for all teachers
Step Movement		All teachers move one step per year – additional raises of up to 7% for all teachers except those at the highest salaries	Move 1 step over four years – additional raises for all teachers except for those at the highest salaries
Medical Benefits – Premium Share	Approximately 12%	Remain at 12% for the life of the contract	Increase 1% per year of the contract; allow teachers to “buy up” to top tier plan instead of providing it at no additional cost to the teachers
Total Cost of 4 Year Contract		\$7.1m	\$1.1m
Minimum/Maximum Salaries	\$48,455 - \$113,009 during the last year of the contract	\$52,449 - \$122,324 during the last year of the contract	\$48,455 - \$117,009 during the last year of the contract
Minimum/Maximum Salary Increases (\$)		\$8,585 - \$27,440 over four years	\$2,014 - \$4,029 over four years
Minimum/Maximum Salary Increases (%)		8.20% - 40.1% over four years	3% - 6.9% over four years

The Union leadership rejected the Board's counterproposal. The Board enhanced their offer as follows:

- ❖ Keep the same salary matrix from the expired contract – no automatic raises for all teachers.
- ❖ Move 2 steps over four years and provide an additional \$1,000 per year for teacher at the top salaries to ensure all teachers get raises.
- ❖ Increase premium share by 1% per year; allow teachers to “buy up” to top-tier plan instead of providing it at no additional cost to the teachers

This offer was worth \$2.1m, meaning the Board added \$1m to their initial offer. The Union leadership responded by reducing their salary request by 1/10 of 1% and increasing their health care premium share by 0.25% per year, meaning the total cost of their proposal decreased by \$200,000. The Board rejected the Union leadership's offer.

Current Proposals from Both Parties			
	Information from the Expired Contract	Union Proposal to the Board	Board's Proposal to Union Leadership
Salaries		Add 1.5% to each cell of the salary matrix – automatic 1.5% raises per year for all teachers	Keep the same salary matrix from the expired contract – no automatic raises for teachers
Step Movement		All teachers move one step per year – additional raises of up to 7% for all teachers except those at the highest salaries	Move 1/2 step each year for a total of 2 steps; give \$1,000 per year to teachers at the highest salary levels –all teachers get raises each year
Medical Benefits – Premium Share	Approximately 12%	Increase 0.5% per year	Increase 1% per year of the contract; allow teachers to “buy up” to top tier plan instead of providing it for free
Total Cost of 4 Year Contract		\$6.2m	\$2.1m
Minimum/Maximum Salaries	\$48,455 - \$113,009 during the last year of the contract	\$51,428 - \$119,944 during the last year of the contract	\$48,455 - \$117,009 during the last year of the contract
Minimum/Maximum Salary Increases (\$)		\$6,391 - \$25,059 over four years	\$4,000 - \$8,057 over four years
Minimum/Maximum Salary Increases (%)		6.1% - 37.4% over four years	3.5% - 13.7% over for years

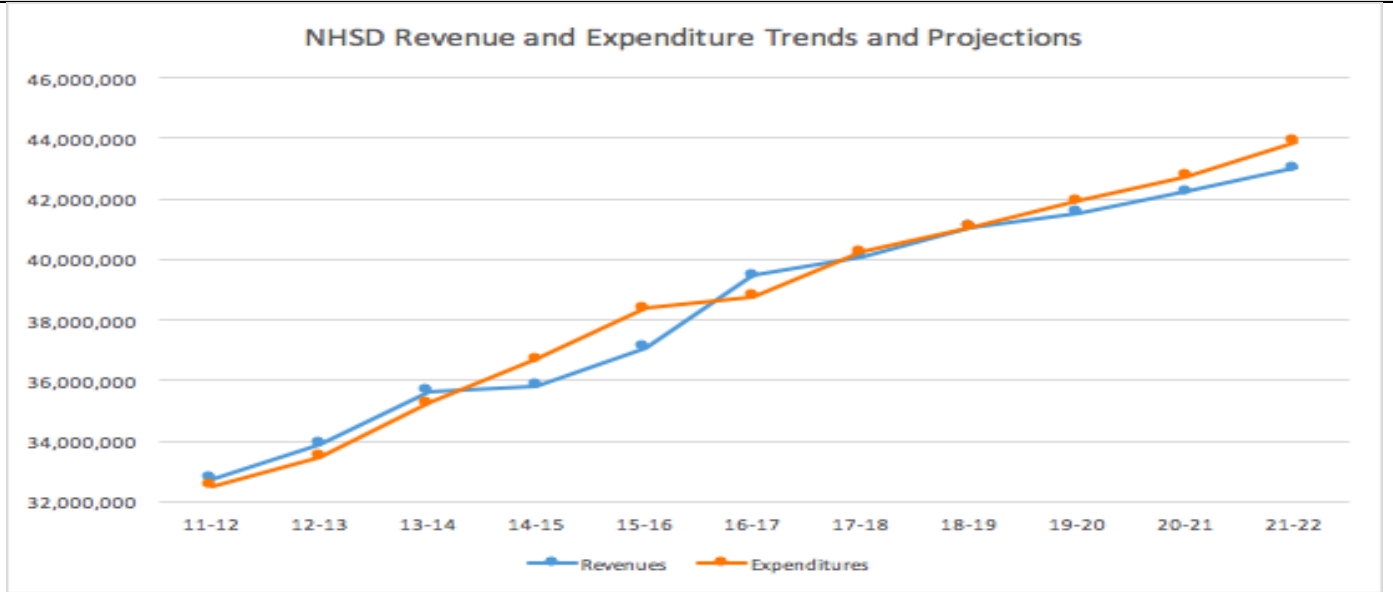
The following pages contain graphic representations of the impact of the current proposals on revenues (the money we bring in), expenditures (the money we spend), and our fund balance (comparable to a savings account).

These graphic representations show the disparity between the Board and the Union leadership and how the proposals impact our District financially. It is important to remember that we, as a Board, are committed to a contract that does not jeopardize programs and staff, increase class sizes, or negatively impact our students' experiences in New Hope-Solebury.

Contract Negotiations – Comparing the Current Proposals

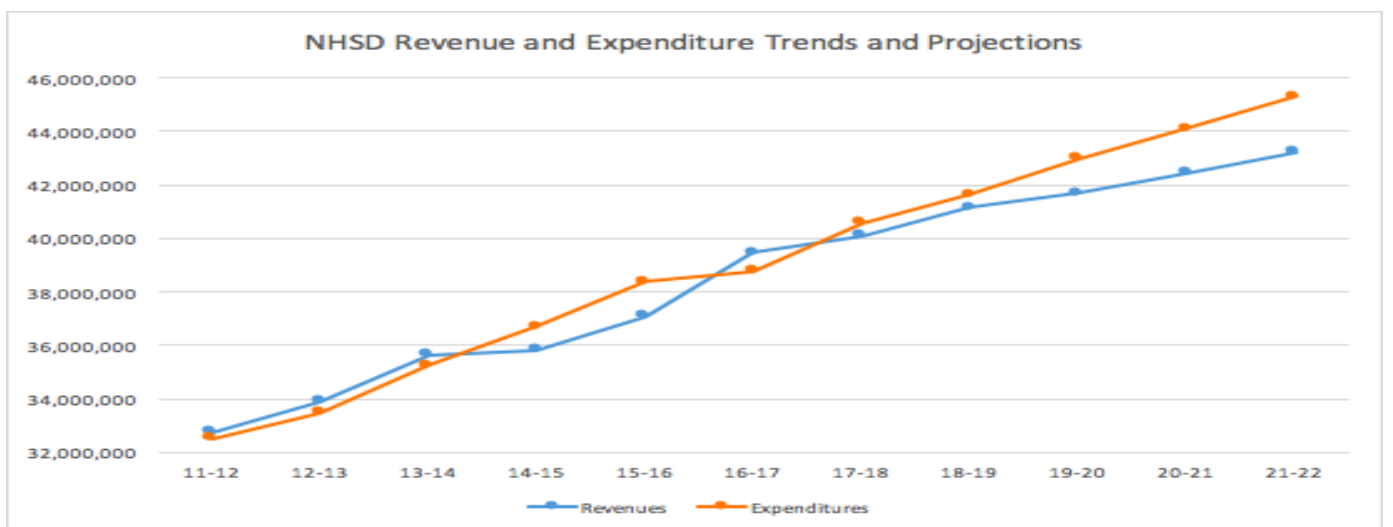
The graphic representations below are built upon the assumptions of a 2.4% tax increase for SY 2018-2019 and 2.0% each year thereafter. Further, salary increases of 3% per year for all employees are included.

Current Board Proposal to the Union



Key Information: While the proposal has a gap between revenues (the money we bring in) and expenditures (the money we spend), the Board will manage it by finding efficiencies in the budget that do not necessarily impact students, staff, or programming.

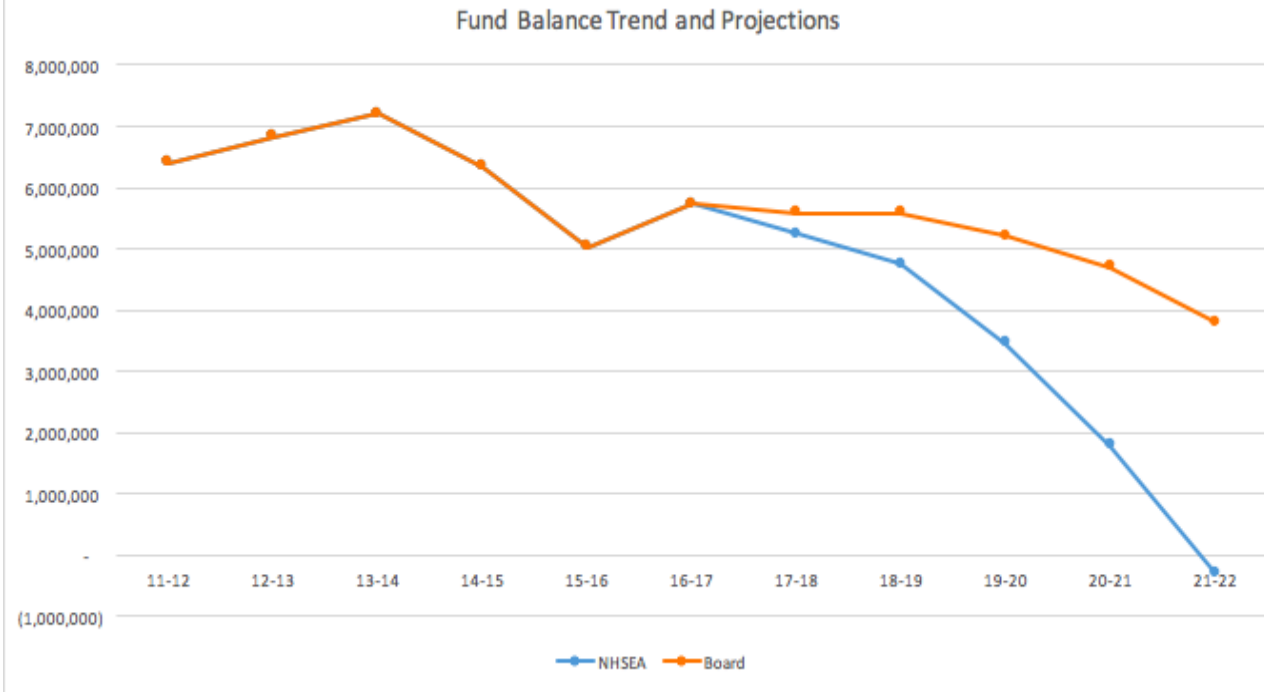
Latest Union Proposal to the Board



Key Information: The Union's proposal creates a growing gap between revenues (the money we bring in) and expenditures (the money we spend). That means we must use fund balance (comparable to a savings account) to balance the budget OR increase class sizes and cut staff and programs.

Fund Balance

Impact of Current Proposals on Fund Balance



Key Information: Our fund balance is comparable to a savings account. When the money is gone, it is gone. A depleted fund balance would mean program and staff cuts, increased class sizes, and the inability to pay for emergency situations, such as additional staffing or services due to students' needs, emergency repairs to facilities, etc.

For additional information and updates on contract negotiations with the Union, please visit our District website at www.nhsd.org.