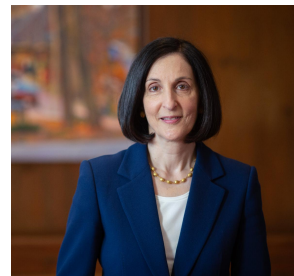


Tuesday, Jan. 16 2024

## Mayor's Newton Update

The Newton School Committee shared important information for parents & caregivers, students and residents a few minutes ago on a potential strike by the Newton Teachers Association:



### **MESSAGE FROM THE NEWTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

*Today, the Newton School Committee filed a petition for a strike investigation with the Commonwealth Employment Relations Board (CERB). The petition includes evidence that the Newton Teachers Association (NTA) intends to hold a strike vote on January 18, 2024. The outcome and impact of that vote is not known. Teacher strikes are illegal in Massachusetts and would violate our contract. It is our statutory obligation to file a CERB petition if we become aware that an illegal strike action may occur. We also believe it is our responsibility to inform the NPS community if we believe this is a possibility.*

***The School Committee does not waver in our commitment to settle a competitive contract that recognizes the dedication of our educators and supports our students.*** Since October 2022, the Newton School Committee has bargained in good faith with the NTA. We believe a strike would do nothing to further negotiations, and would only harm our students.

*If the NTA strike occurs, school will be canceled, all buildings will be closed, and all school-related events and activities will be postponed. We empathize with our families who will need to scramble for childcare or take time off work, and with our students who will miss classes, athletic events, fine arts performances, extracurricular activities, and school-sponsored social events.*

*We hope the NTA does not engage in an illegal strike. "Inducing, encouraging or condoning" any such illegal activity is a violation of the CERB's Order on September 26, 2023, directing NTA leadership to cease and desist from such activities. We understand this is not a message anyone in our community wants to hear. We remain committed to meeting with the NTA and coming to an agreement. We will share additional information as soon as it is available.*

*Sincerely,  
Newton School Committee*

*Should the community wish to review the School Committee's most recent offer to the NTA, including the all NTA staff salary tables that show the expected increase over the next three years, you may view it at this link:*

[January 2024 Offer to NTA](#)

*For a helpful primer on school staff compensation, please review [this document](#).*

\*\*\*\*\*

### What's Happening Right Now?

Let me fill you in on what's happening.

Strikes by teachers' unions are illegal in Massachusetts.

Massachusetts state law states, "No public employee or employee organization shall engage in a strike, and no public employee or employee organization shall induce, encourage or condone any strike, work stoppage, slowdown or withholding of services by such public employees."

When a public employer, such as the Newton Public Schools, believes they have sufficient evidence to show that a strike is about to occur, the employer can file a "strike petition" with the Massachusetts Department of Labor Relations (DLR) to request that the Commonwealth Employment Relations Board (CERB) conduct an investigation into the union's unlawful strike activity.

The Newton Public Schools have information that the Newton Teachers Association is asking its members for a vote this Thursday, Jan. 18, to strike beginning the following day, Friday, Jan. 19.

Lawyers representing the Newton Public Schools filed today with the DLR.

We expect in a number of days, the CERB will conduct its investigation and render a decision about whether the union has engaged in illegal strike activity.

If the CERB determines that the NTA is engaged in a strike or a strike is about to occur, the CERB will order the union, including its employees and officers, to cease any strike activity.

If the NTA fails to comply with the CERB's order, the CERB can seek an injunction in Massachusetts Superior Court to stop the union from striking.

If the union fails to comply with the Superior Court's order, the Court could find the union in contempt and impose fines on the NTA.

### The Impact of an Illegal Strike

A strike interrupting another school year will be terrible for Newton's students and parents/caregivers and will not help us settle the contract.

This negotiation should remain between the adults, between the Newton School Committee and the Newton Teachers Association, at the bargaining table.

Negotiations with the mediator appointed by the State should continue, rather than the NTA striking and locking out students from their classrooms.

\*\*\*\*\*

Superintendent Anna Nolin shared a short time ago operational information should a strike occur:

### ***A Message from Newton Public Schools on NTA Strike Operations***

*As school administrators, our role is to ensure the safety and care of our students. In the event of a strike, we will be without staff to safely operate our schools. **Should a strike occur, our staff are welcome to return to the classroom at any time so that school operations can resume and the disruption can stop.***

*The School Committee continues to work to avoid what would be a significant disruption to the lives of our students and families. **Mediation meetings were proposed every day last week and this week, but the NTA did not agree to attend.** While the School Committee continues to do everything possible to avoid a strike, it is our responsibility as school leaders to share with you the operations and logistics if one does occur so that you can plan.*

***If there is a strike in the Newton Public Schools, it will impact all aspects of Newton Public School operations.** Please review the following information for details on cancellations and closures, as well as access to transportation and meals.*

### ***Information and Updates for Families***

*Should a strike occur, administrators and School Committee members will be engaged in intensive sessions to settle the contract and end the strike. **Each day by 7:30 pm, we will communicate with families if school will be in session the next day.** As working parents ourselves, we understand how difficult this uncertainty will be for you.*

***Updates will be posted here:***

[\*Newton Public Schools Homepage\*](#)

[\*School Committee Webpage\*](#)

[\*School Committee Negotiations Webpage\*](#)

### ***Closures and Cancellations***

*If a strike occurs, school will be canceled, all buildings will be closed, and all school-related events and activities will be postponed until the strike ends. As with any emergency school closure, the day(s) will be made up at the end of the school year.*

***Please see below:***

- *School is closed. Treat this just like a snow day. School is not in session. This includes our specialized programs (Central and Community*

### *Connections)*

- *There is no before school or after school care. The early morning care program is closed. After school care programs that operate in school buildings are closed.*
- *All Newton Public School preschools are closed, including NECP, Newton South Preschool, and Newton North Plowshares.*
- *No regular yellow bus transportation*
- *No van transportation*
- *No METCO transportation*
- *No athletic competitions (home and away) or practices. No intramurals or club sports.*
- *No fine arts events, performances, or practices (plays, band, orchestra, performances, clubs, music lessons.)*
- *No weekend, daytime or overnight trips for scheduled competitions or events*
- *No school-related events or activities (school dance, socials, forums)*
- *No Newton Community Education programs*

### **Access to School Buildings**

- *If there is a strike, all buildings will be closed. You will not be able to access anything in the school (snow gear, musical instruments, water bottles, etc.)*
- ***If your student has medication or health supplies in the building that you must access, please email your school principal and they will connect you to our city health services director.***

### **Food Service**

*Newton Public Schools will offer Grab and Go meals, similar to what we did during COVID. The meal will include three days of breakfast and lunch. Please note the dates and locations of pick ups below:*

### **Dates (strike may not occur, but planning is in place)**

- *Friday January 19, 2024 (3 day breakfast and lunch)*
- *Monday, January 22, 2024 (3 day breakfast and lunch)*
- *Thursday January 25, 2024 (4 day breakfast and lunch)*

### **Location and time**

- *Newton North (457 Walnut Dr.) - Tiger Drive 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.*
- *Newton South (140 Brandeis Rd.) - Wheeler entrance 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.*
- *METCO Headquarters (for Boston Families) - 11 Roxbury Street, Boston, MA 10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.*

**Operations to Continue**

- *Outside groups who have rented school buildings will be able to hold events and activities.*
- *Events and activities that take place on school field space operated by Newton Parks and Recreation and other organizations will continue. All school-based athletics and events are canceled.*
- *Private School Transportation to private schools in Newton will continue.*
- *Transportation for students placed in out-of-district schools will continue.*

\*\*\*\*\*

Let me close by saying the Newton Public Schools are the bedrock of our community. In Newton, we deeply value education and our students are our priority. All of us know Newton’s teachers are outstanding.

Using both the operating budget and one time funds, I have provided the funding needed to settle a competitive and sustainable contract with our teachers and to allow Superintendent Nolin to move forward with important educational initiatives.

An illegal strike interrupting another school year will be terrible for Newton’s students and parents/caregivers. The School Committee and I continue to work to avoid what would be a significant disruption to the lives of our students and families. Mediation meetings were proposed every day last week and this week, but the NTA did not agree to attend. **Should a strike occur, our staff are welcome to return to the classroom at any time so that school operations can resume and the disruption can stop.**

I will provide regular updates in the coming days so everyone knows what is happening.

**My goal is to keep our youngsters in the classroom and settle a sustainable contract that pays our teachers competitively.**

Mayor Ruthanne Fuller

P.S. Be careful this afternoon and tonight. We expect freezing rain and falling temperatures making icy, slippery conditions on roads and walkways likely. Shovel soon as the snow will become blocks of ice.



Mayor Ruthanne Fuller | 1000 Commonwealth Avenue, Newton, MA 02459

[Unsubscribe jmulvey@newtonma.gov](#)

[Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)

Sent by [rfuller@newtonma.gov](mailto:rfuller@newtonma.gov) powered by



Try email marketing for free today!