

**Open Letter to Mayor Fuller and the Newton Teachers Association**  
**January 29, 2024**

Budgets are values. This has never been more obvious than the last 10 days. Budgets are also not endless—especially for a municipality that has to balance it.

There are many financial demands on this city. As parent organization leaders, we are keenly aware of competing needs, and we have figured out a way to stretch our own dollars and labor to fill the gaps that the city has failed to fill for years. Our PTOs collectively raise over \$1 million annually to: fund the creative arts and sciences program at all elementary and middle schools; reimburse teachers for school supplies so they spend less from their own pockets; pay for school printers and other required school technology; show our love and appreciation for our educators in the form of lunches and snacks and more; host science fairs and world culture festivals; run talent shows and school picnics; and much more. Collectively, our parent organizers give over 25,000 hours annually to improving the Newton public schools.

We put our money and our time where our mouths are, so we stand together to say: **enough posturing**. We ask you both to come to a compromise now. This has gone on for far too long, is keeping our students out of school, and is dividing our city.

We believe our schools need more money. We believe the allocation to NPS is insufficient and has been insufficient for many years. We believe parent organizations—like teachers—have also been filling the gap. And in practicing our “both/and can be true” thinking—that our Superintendent has taught us all—we also believe that not everything the NTA demands is possible.

We call on Mayor Fuller to create a level of transparency and trust within our community and publicly state what she has offered to settle this contract. We deserve a complete public accounting of what we started with in Overlay Surplus, Free Cash, and other funds; what has been pledged to the schools to resolve this contract and end the strike; and what has been pledged to make progress on the Superintendent’s Entry Plan, which we also support. The specific amounts pledged for these priorities should be stated clearly so that the parties and the public know what is possible and not possible.

And we call on the NTA to offer a proposal that falls within these budgetary realities. It is time for the NTA to come to this negotiation with the understanding and awareness that not everything is possible and we must live within certain budgetary constraints.

We ask **all parties** to compromise now. There can be no further delay.

**Our students belong in school now. And we will never stop fighting for a school budget that reflects our values.**

Respectfully,

<b>Organization</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>
PTO Council	Lucy Ewins	Co-President
PTO Council	Elsa Janairo	Co-President
PTO Council	Susan St. Pierre	Secretary
PTO Council	Suzanne Johnston	Secretary
PTO Council	Barbara Mauger	Elementary Schools Representative
Newton SEPAC	Annette Nedeljkovic	Chair
Newton SEPAC	Jenny Klein-Sosa	At-Large
Newton SEPAC	Julie Swersey	At-Large
Newton SEPAC	Claudia Svoboda	At-Large
FORJ	Amelia Oliver	Treasurer
FORJ	Pria Sarma	Board member
PTO Equity Spending Committee	Helen Makadia	Equity Representative
Burr PTO	Jyoti Shah	Co-President
Burr PTO	Shannon Derick	DEI Chair
Burr PTO	Amir Moghimi	Co-President
Burr PTO	Grace Huang	Communications Chair
Burr PTO	Mariko Wong	Education Chair
Burr PTO	Julie Swersey	Secretary
Cabot PTO	Rebekah Gewirtz	Co-President
Cabot PTO	Anahita Dua	Co-President
Countryside PTO	Chelsea Boughan	Co-President
Countryside PTO	Melissa Monokroussos	Co-President
Countryside PTO	Adam Lipson	Co-President
Horace Mann PTO	Elisabeth Zimmer	Co-President
Horace Mann PTO	Sarah Porter	Co-President
Lincoln Eliot PTO	Theresa Proia	Co-President
Mason-Rice PTO	Wendy Sheu	Co-President
Mason-Rice PTO	Molly Stearns	Co-President
Mason-Rice PTO	Ena El-Hadidy	Co-Vice-President
Mason-Rice PTO	Tseh-Hwan Yong	Co-Director of Communications

Mason-Rice PTO	Celia Ivanov	Director of Engagement
Peirce PTO	Jaime Mason	Co-President
Peirce PTO	Jordana Bluestein	Co-President
Peirce PTO	Prachi Samudra	Co-Treasurer
Peirce PTO	Abby Blake	Co-Vice President
Williams PTO	Abigail Glovsky	Co-President
Williams PTO	Rosemary white	Co-President
Zervas PTO	Augusta Maher	Co-President
Zervas PTO	Jacob Eidsmoe	Co-President
Bigelow PTO	Eugene Rhee	President
Bigelow PTO	Alex Rolfe	Vice President
Brown PTO	Janelle Phillips	Co-President
FA Day PTO	Tramy Lao	Co-President
FA Day PTO	Cedar Pruitt	Co-President
Oak Hill PTO	Crista Martinez Padua	President
Oak Hill PTO	Katherine Seder Karon	
Oak Hill PTO	Erika Guerra Downey	Exec Comm
Oak Hill PTO	Michelle Spitzkoff	Exec Comm
NNHS PTSO	Jacqueline Freeman	Co-President
NSHS PTSO	Will Adams	Co-President
NSHS PTSO	Maggie Schmidt	Co-President