

## **Open Letter from Leaders of Parent Organizations in Newton to Mayor Fuller**

January 19, 2024

**We are united in concern and frustration.** As leaders of Newton's parent organizations, we have come together to express grave concern for the well-being and learning of our students. The repeated budget cuts and failed contract negotiation between our leaders and our educators are hurting our students, splintering our community, and resurfacing the trauma of school closure for many of us. The current strike hurts everyone and must end immediately. The long-term success of our school district is at risk.

**Our trust in Mayor Fuller is broken.** We believe that Mayor Fuller has failed to present an adequate budget allocation for the Newton Public Schools ("NPS") for many years, leading to budget cuts that have hurt our kids, our teachers, and our communities. We worry that she is out of touch with the reality of our public schools. Our trust in her has eroded every time she's chosen *not* to prioritize our children.

**Student needs are higher than ever and not being addressed.** Budget cuts prevent NPS from meeting the academic support needs of students and from providing the increased mental health and social emotional support today's students require. Students are still recovering from lost learning due to the pandemic. We see alarming trends in social, emotional, and behavioral challenges in our schools. Staff positions have been cut drastically, and for years teachers have tried to fill these gaps by overstretching. But despite their efforts, the lack of resources continues to negatively impact the academic and social/emotional learning of students.

**We have a new superintendent who is working hard to forge a new norm of transparency and communication** and who is working on a long term strategic plan for our schools. But right now her hands—and those of the School Committee—are tied by chronic underfunding from the Mayor. The Mayor has failed to demonstrate the leadership necessary to protect our schools and our children; she is the **only one** with power now to quickly access and allocate funds at her discretion. And we call on the City Council to swiftly approve an increased allocation.

**We demand urgent and meaningful action from Mayor Fuller—NOW.** In times of crisis like this, we expect our city's leader to step up.

- We ask Mayor Fuller to immediately release additional funds from free cash and the overlay surplus to give room for both parties to bargain in good faith and find fair agreement, while also ensuring adequate funding for the school system as a whole. Although the Mayor has released some free cash already, it is not enough.
- We ask for the Mayor to lift her arbitrary 3.5% cap on yearly NPS budget increases, and provide full funding for the superintendent's proposed FY25 budget which may require increases beyond 6.5%. The goals our superintendent has laid out cannot be reached without full funding.
- We call upon the City of Newton's Retirement Board to revise the Mayor's pension liability plan while still satisfying the mandated timeline of 2040. Extending the timeline would increase the yearly pool of resources available to all city and school functions.

**All of Newton's voters should worry.** This is bigger than just the parents and students of the Newton Public Schools. If the Mayor continues to ignore our students, all residents of Newton will be affected. Disagreement that leads to a strike tarnishes our city and school system's reputations. Starving NPS of vital resources year over year set the stage for this. If our schools are allowed to decline and our community loses trust in city leadership, we all suffer.

**We call on the Mayor to fully fund the Newton Public Schools and for all parties to bargain in good faith to end this strike immediately.**

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	Co-Secretary
PTO Council	Suzanne Johnston	Co-Secretary
Newton SEPAC	Annette Nedeljkovic	Chair
Newton SEPAC	Eliza Spaulding	Secretary
Newton SEPAC	Jenny Klein-Sosa	At-Large
Newton SEPAC	Claudia Svoboda	At-Large
Newton SEPAC	Julie Swersey	At-Large
Newton SEPAC	Doreen Rachal	At-Large
ELPAC	Angie Kim	Chair
FORJ	Amelia Oliver	Treasurer
FORJ	Pria Sarma	Board Member
PTO Equity Spending Committee	Helen Makadia	Equity Representative
NECP PTO	Yael Mito	Co-President
Angier Elementary PTO	Brigid Tobin	Co-President
Angier Elementary PTO	Miriam Blankenship	Co-President
Angier Elementary PTO	Katherine Biotti	Co-President
Bowen PTO	Carol Aboud-Moore	Co-Chair
Bowen PTO	Uzma Saghir	Co-Chair
Burr PTO	Angie Kim	Co-President
Burr PTO	Amir Moghimi	Co-President
Burr PTO	Jyoti Shah	Co-president
Burr PTO	Julie Swersey	Secretary
Burr PTO	Shannon Derick	DEI Chair
Burr PTO	Mariko Wong	Education Chair
Burr PTO	Kayla Noblecilla	Events Co- Chair
Cabot PTO	Rebekah Gewirtz	Co-President
Cabot PTO	Corrie Pappas	Recording Secretary
Cabot PTO	Rakesh Das	Treasurer
Cabot PTO	Jenny Katz	Executive Committee
Cabot PTO	Agnes Pietrzyk	Executive Committee

Cabot PTO	Anna Claeys	Executive Committee
Countryside PTO	Chelsea Boughan	Co-President
Countryside PTO	Melissa Monokroussos	Co-President
Countryside PTO	Adam Lipson	Co-President
Countryside PTO	Erin Geraghty Kapoor	Co-Clerk
Countryside PTO	Steven Lee	Treasurer
Frankin PTO	Kelsey Sprowell	Co-President
Frankin PTO	Graham Voysey	Co-President
Franklin PTO	Yael Mito	Fundraising Co-Chair and SEPAC Liaison
Franklin PTO	Allison Player	CAS Co-chair
Horace Mann PTO	Elisabeth Zimmer	Co-President
Horace Mann PTO	Sarah Porter	Co-President
Horace Mann PTO	Vanessa Salas	Treasurer
Lincoln Eliot PTO	Theresa Proia	President
Lincoln Eliot PTO	Rodrigo Canales	Secretary
Lincoln Eliot PTO	Julie Loh	Treasurer
Mason-Rice PTO	Molly Stearns	Co-President
Mason-Rice PTO	Wendy Sheu	Co-President
Mason-Rice PTO	Ena El-Hadidy	Co-Vice-President
Mason-Rice PTO	Jackie Lee Donabed	Co-Vice-President
Mason-Rice PTO	Colette Hanna	Director of Outreach
Mason-Rice PTO	Patrick Moriarty	Co-Treasurer
Mason-Rice PTO	Jennifer Pai	Director of Fundraising
Mason-Rice PTO	Emily D'Amour	Secretary
Mason-Rice PTO	Celia Ivanov	Director of Engagement
Mason-Rice PTO	Natalie Wong	Communications Co-Chair
Mason-Rice PTO	Tseh-Hwan Yong	Communications Co-Chair
Memorial-Spaulding PTO	DayAna Davidou	Co-President
Memorial-Spaulding PTO	Margaret Stefater-Richards	Co-President
Memorial-Spaulding PTO	Kristen Pontoriero	Treasurer
Memorial-Spaulding PTO	Marie Lundbak Eriksen	ELL Chair
Memorial-Spaulding PTO	Kimberley Mak	Secretary
Memorial-Spaulding PTO	Lama Mulki	Co-Treasurer

Memorial-Spaulding PTO	Ana Riella	Fundraising Co-Chair
Memorial-Spaulding PTO	Alison Kanarek	Fundraising Co-Chair
Memorial-Spaulding PTO	Ling Yang	Fundraising Co-Chair
Memorial-Spaulding	Renata Matrosov	Marketing Chair
Memorial-Spaulding	Jessica Poltarak	Ex-Officio
Peirce Elementary PTO	Jordana Bluestein	Co-President
Peirce Elementary PTO	Jaime Mason	Co-President
Peirce Elementary PTO	Abby Blake	Co-Vice President
Peirce Elementary PTO	Erica Chamberlain	Co-Vice President
Underwood PTO	Margaret Silva	Co-President
Underwood PTO	Renata Ballesteros	Co-President
Underwood PTO	Amy Davis	VP Fundraising, Former Co-President
Underwood PTO	Maggie Elitt	Communications Co-Chair
Underwood PTO	Nicole Peterson	DE&I Chair
Ward PTO	Rashi Khanna	Co-President
Ward PTO	Bryan Saltzburg	Co-President
Williams PTO	Rosemary White	Co-President
Williams PTO	Abigail Glovsky	Co-President
Williams PTO	Michael Lujan	Treasurer
Williams PTO	Ashley Remis	Co-Secretary and Communications Director
Williams PTO	Megan Mack	Co-Secretary and Communications Director
Williams PTO	Leanne Dunne	Advisory Board
Williams PTO	Jim Strickland	Advisory Board
Williams PTO	Derek Tashjian	Advisory Board
Williams PTO	Alison Callahan	Advisory Board
Williams PTO	Sarah Cheslock	Advisory Board
Zervas PTO	Jacob Eidsmoe	Co-President
Zervas PTO	Augusta Maher	Co-President
Zervas PTO	Kristin Jonash	Vice President
Zervas PTO	Brandy Blakely	Vice President
Zervas PTO	Monica Richardson	Vice President
Zervas PTO	Delia Cheung Hom	Vice President
Zervas PTO	Shruti Bansal	Treasurer

Bigelow PTO	Eugene Rhee	President
Bigelow PTO	Alex Rolfe	Vice President
Bigelow PTO	Aparna Rolfe	Secretary
Brown PTO	Janelle Phillips	Co-President
Brown PTO	Vida Kianzad	Co-President
FA Day PTO	Cedar Pruitt	Co-President
FA Day PTO	Tramy Lao	Co-President
Oak Hill PTO	Crista Martinez Padua	President
Oak Hill PTO	Katherine Seder Karon	Treasurer
Oak Hill PTO	Erika Guerra Downey	Executive Committee
Oak Hill PTO	Michelle Spitzkoff	Executive Committee
Oak Hill PTO	Jenna Stein	Executive Committee
Newton North HS PTSO	Natalia Espinal	Co-President
Newton North HS PTSO	Jacqueline Freeman	Co-President
Newton North HS PTSO	Karen Ghiron	Vice President
Newton South HS PTSO	Will Adams	Co-President
Newton South HS PTSO	Maggie Schmidt	Co-President