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HARTFORD SCHOOL BOARD APPROVES NEW THREE-YEAR TEACHER CONTRACT

(HARTFORD, January 14, 2005) – The Hartford Board of Education tonight approved a new contract with the Hartford Federation of Teachers, which will provide salary increases of 1.99 percent, 2.02 percent, and 2.99 percent over the three-year contract period. These increases include raises for teachers at the highest step of the pay scale and step movement for all others.

HFT members voted to ratify the contract on January 12. In approving the contract, teachers agreed to bring their health insurance benefits in line with other city unions, which means that costly non-core benefits, such as payment for Lasik eye surgery, will be eliminated. The union also agreed that members would pay a larger share of their health insurance costs. Currently, they pay 8 percent of the health insurance premium. This will increase by 1 point per year to 11 percent in the third year.

Commenting on the agreement, School Superintendent Robert Henry said, “I want to congratulate the teachers and the Board for reaching this agreement. Both sides worked hard and in good faith to negotiate a fair, equitable and fiscally prudent settlement, given the city’s severe financial situation.”

HFT President Cathy Carpino agreed. “A lot of people worked very hard to help reach this agreement. While it’s not everything we hoped for, we believe that this agreement is fair to both sides considering the city’s financial circumstances. This is a contract that will allow the Board and the HFT to move forward and focus on educating the students in the Hartford Public School System.”

Hartford Mayor Eddie A. Perez said, “We are very pleased that the Hartford Federation of Teachers and the Board of Education reached a reasonable agreement. By signing this important contract it shows that the City of Hartford is putting children first.”

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