



Teachers refuse to reopen contract with District 95

By Phil Collins | Daily Herald Staff

Published: 3/14/2009 12:01 AM

The Lake Zurich Education Association has denied a request to reopen negotiations of its collective bargaining agreement with Lake Zurich Unit District 95. The school board had asked the union to reopen the contract in light of an economic climate that has District 95 facing severe budget cuts.

The board is trying to cut \$4 million from next year's budget to make up for an anticipated decrease in revenue due to the drop of the consumer price index from 4.1 percent to 0.1 percent. The CPI determines the increase in the property tax levy the district can request.

The contract can only be reopened for negotiation if there is joint agreement between the district and teachers to do so. The pact expires after the 2011-12 school year.

School board officials have said the contract, now in its second year, was negotiated in good faith and both parties were happy with it at the time.

However, due to the district's financial circumstances, officials are exploring every possibility to make their budget work.

Sandie Edwards, president of the Lake Zurich Education Association, said teachers have pulled their weight for the district, often buying their own supplies.

She said the union has also presented the board with suggestions to reduce the number of administrators at Lake Zurich High School from 16 to 10. She added some teachers are feeling the crunch of the economic crisis on a personal level, with a spouse losing a job.

"What used to be a supplemental income is now the only income for that family," Edwards said.

Board President Kathy Brown said that at a time when the school board has asked the community for help, they would have liked to sit down with teachers to discuss options to amend the contract.

Candice Glickin, an English teacher at Lake Zurich High School, said teachers have sacrificed a lot with recommended increases in class sizes and releases of teachers.

"The children are losing out that way already," she said.