

Dist. 15 contract talks go slowly

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As negotiations continue over a new contract, teachers in Palatine Township Elementary District 15 filed paperwork Wednesday giving them the option of going on strike.

But as the union moves forward with a possible work stoppage, the two sides have agreed to continue negotiating.

Lisa Nuss, chief negotiator for the Classroom Teachers Council, the union that represents the nearly 800 District 15 teachers and certified staff, said while Tuesday night's negotiations did not produce a new deal, both sides did agree to more bargaining sessions on Tuesday and again Sept. 28.

"They did give us some proposals and we gave them some proposals back," Nuss said on Tuesday's negotiations, without giving specifics.

Nuss said the union on Wednesday filed the necessary paperwork with Illinois Educational Labor Relations Board, which gives the teachers the option of going on strike after a minimum of 10 days.

"I want to reiterate that this does not mean a strike is imminent and that we have not set a strike date," Nuss said.

The teachers have been working without a contract since the previous one expired Aug. 31.

On Wednesday, the district released details of the offer it presented to teachers Tuesday, which includes a 9.5 percent salary increase to be spread out over the next three years, as well as additional increases related to retirement incentives, extracurricular stipends and tuition reimbursement. The offer is up from the district's previous proposal of 9.25 percent.

At the same time, the district said the union is asking for a 23 percent increase over the same time as well as a proposal to add a fourth- and fifth-year salary increase of an additional 13 percent, resulting in a five-year contract with a 36 percent increase.

Despite the district's decision to make its offer public, Nuss said the teachers did not have any comment on the district's proposal and that they will not discuss the details of the bargaining sessions in the public and media.

Knowing a strike is now possible, District 15 is exploring the availability of alternative child care with local community organizations to make such information available in advance of

any strike.

District 15 serves nearly 13,000 children from Arlington Heights, Hoffman Estates, Inverness, Palatine, Rolling Meadows, Schaumburg and South Barrington.

For updates and specifics on the negotiations, parents and residents can visit both the district's Web site at www.ccsd15.net and the teacher's union Web site at www.ctteachers.com.

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