

After months, teachers get a contract to vote on

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After negotiators reached a tentative agreement over the weekend, teachers for a Palatine-based elementary school district will vote next week on a new three-year contract, officials said Monday.

The agreement Sunday came five months after Community Consolidated School District 15 called in a federal mediator.

Lisa Nuss, executive director for the Classroom Teachers' Council teachers union and chief negotiator, said both sides met for three 10-hour sessions over the weekend before reaching an agreement about 10:30 p.m.

Nuss declined to disclose details of the contract until the union votes Monday on ratifying the agreement. The union represents 800 teachers, who said they were prepared to strike.

Salary, health insurance and retirement benefits were major items left on the bargaining table. In September, both sides reached tentative agreements in several key areas, including disability and liability insurance, leaves of absence and tuition reimbursement, officials said.

The district, the third-largest elementary school district in Illinois, serves 13,000 children in kindergarten through 8th grade in all or parts of Arlington Heights, Hoffman Estates, Inverness, Palatine, Rolling Meadows, Schaumburg and South Barrington.

The contract also will have to be ratified by the Board of Education.

The district's contract with members of the Classroom Teachers' Council expired Aug. 31.

Bargaining came to a halt in May when district officials requested assistance from a federal mediator--a move viewed as premature. It surprised the union, which had believed that progress was being made, Nuss said.

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