

## Dist. 15, union will keep talking

**By Chad Brooks**  
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Teachers in Palatine Township Elementary District 15 said they plan to continue negotiations and have not set a date to walk out of the classroom, but they are still moving forward with a strike vote.

The district and union met for several hours Monday night, and while no contract agreements were made, the two sides did agree to continue bargaining at a session scheduled for Tuesday.

"We did not have any tentative agreements come out of last night's session," said Lisa Nuss, chief negotiator for the Classroom Teachers' Council, the union that represents the 772 District 15 teachers and certified staff, on Tuesday. "But we have another bargaining session scheduled."

Superintendent Robert McKanna said the session went fairly well.

"We made some progress, but progress by the teachers' definition is signing tentative agreements and we did not have any of those," McKanna said.

Despite the decision to continue negotiations, Nuss said a general membership meeting is still scheduled for Monday during which the union will vote on whether to file the proper paperwork with the Illinois Educational Labor Relations Board giving it the option to strike.

That, however, does not mean the union can strike immediately following the vote.

If the union gives the go-ahead on Monday, a 10-day notice to strike will be filed, which gives the union the option of striking anytime after those 10 days have expired.

Nuss, however, has said no strike date has been set and that they plan on continuing negotiations.

"We are glad we are moving on, but we would have hoped we would have had some tentative agreements by this point in mediation," Nuss said.

McKanna said he believes it is still too premature to begin talking about a strike.

"Mediation has to fall about before that would happen, and we are not there yet," McKanna said.

During next Tuesday's bargaining session, Nuss said the union is expecting the major issue of salary to be negotiated.

"We are anticipating a salary proposal from the board of education at that time," Nuss said.

Under the last contract, the teachers were given a 3.75 percent base-pay increase for the 2005-06 school year, compared to the 3.5 percent they were given the year before that.

In addition to the base-pay increase, Kevin Nohelty, District 15's assistant superintendent for business and administration, said many teachers also received a "step" or "lane" increase, which rewards teachers for each year of service and how much education they have.

When those increases were taken into account, Nohelty said, the average salary for teachers during the 2005-2006 academic year increased 7.13 percent.

Teachers were also required to work an additional school day this year, making District 15's school calendar the longest in the state.

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

For updates on negotiations, parents and residents can visit both the district's Web site at [www.district15.org](http://www.district15.org) and the teachers union Web site at [www.ctteachers.com](http://www.ctteachers.com)

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