

Palatine teachers approve new pact

Carpentersville talks hit stumbling block

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Teachers in a Palatine-based elementary school district approved a new contract Monday that calls for base salary increases of just over 2 percent a year for each of the next three years, union officials said.

Meanwhile, negotiations in a Carpentersville-based district hit a snag.

The Palatine contract was accepted by a vote of two-thirds of the teachers, said Lisa Nuss, executive director of the Classroom Teachers Council.

The Community Consolidated School District 15 board approved the deal by a 4-3 vote Friday, with dissenters questioning the wisdom of increasing teachers' salaries faster than the rate of inflation.

Records from the State Board of Education indicate the district has operated in the red since 2000.

Board member Tim Millar voted against the contract, saying it doesn't improve the district's financial position because the average salary increase for many teachers will be higher than 2 percent a year.

On Monday, Millar said he believes the total increase for most teachers will be closer to 14 percent over the life of the contract.

In a news release, the union said other districts were seeing base salary increases of 3 percent, but the union accepted less and made other concessions to help District 15.

The district, the third-largest elementary district in Illinois, operates 20 schools and serves 13,000 pupils in kindergarten through 8th grade in Palatine, Arlington Heights, Hoffman Estates, Inverness, Rolling Meadows, Schaumburg and South Barrington.

The contract with more than 770 members of the teachers union expired Aug. 31.

Meanwhile, officials in Carpentersville-based Community Unit School District 300 withdrew from the bargaining table last week, according to Kolleen Hanetho, president of the teachers union.

The district has offered a 17.4 percent salary increase over four years, an offer the union likes, Hanetho said.

The biggest sticking point is early retirement, a privilege long enjoyed by many teachers in Illinois public schools.

A statement released by District 300 says it faces "a society increasingly intolerant" of government employees receiving higher pay and better retirement guarantees than the taxpayers who pay their salaries.

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