

Dist. 15, teachers not close to deal

By Andrew Schroedter and Chad Brooks

Daily Herald Staff Writers

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Palatine Township Elementary District 15 and its teachers union met this week to discuss a new labor pact, but the two sides don't appear to be close to signing a deal.

If a new contract isn't ratified by Aug. 6, the Illinois Educational Labor Relations Board might force the two sides to sit down with a mediator.

Superintendent Robert McKanna said it was fair to say the district and its teachers remained at a stalemate after Wednesday's hours-long bargaining session.

"There is still some complex stuff that needs to be resolved," McKanna said.

Another meeting had not been scheduled as of Thursday, though both sides said that could happen soon.

Lisa Nuss, chief negotiator for the Classroom Teachers' Council, said the union on Wednesday presented the district with five different contract proposals to review.

Asked to comment, the district said the proposals contained no new information.

"The proposals that were submitted were the same ones that were submitted three months ago," McKanna said. "There was nothing new of any substance presented, whatsoever."

Nevertheless, the union and the 772 teachers it represents are still awaiting a written response from the district, Nuss said.

Both Nuss and McKanna said that could come today.

While this week's negotiations took place without a federal mediator, it wasn't because the Illinois Educational Labor Relations Board had ruled against the district's request for one, as the union had indicated earlier this week.

Officials with the labor board said Wednesday no ruling has been made on the district's request to involve a mediator.

Last week, District 15 said the union rebuffed its attempt to work with a mediator and the district submitted a formal request asking the Illinois Educational Labor Relations Board to exercise its authority to force the two sides into federal mediation.

Helen Higgins Kelly, general counsel for the Illinois Educational Labor Relations Board, said if the two sides have not reached an agreement by Aug. 6 — 15 days before the start of school — the labor board can invoke mediation, even if both sides, as is the case here, are not requesting it.
