

Alton teachers vote down latest contract offer

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer
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GODFREY – The Alton Education Association voted against the most recent contract offer from the Alton School District with 68 percent voting it down.

The latest offer was brought to the table after Wednesday night negotiations and would offer certified personnel in the Alton Education Association's membership \$400 added to each cell plus step movement for both the 2017-18 and 2018-19 school years. A step is an incremental increase in salary based on previous qualifying professional experience. For non-certified personnel, an additional 40 cents an hour per cell with no step movement was offered for both the 2017-18 and 2018-19 school years. The

proposed increase would work retroactively from the first day of the 2017-18 school year.

That offer was not released to the public or to teachers until 3:15 p.m. in an effort to prevent media interference between voting. Voting took place at 3:45 p.m. Thursday in the Alton High School Gymnasium.

Teachers in the district have been working without a contract since Aug. 2017. Negotiations for a new contract began in Nov. 2017. The first offer put forth by the district was voted down overwhelmingly, and teachers staged an informational picket with approximately 200 people prior to the Tuesday night meeting of the Alton Board of Education earlier this week.

The next phase before a possible strike would be a posting process, which is a notice in writing to the Illinois Educational Labor Relations Board that either the school board or union will initiate a public posting process. This will begin a 28-day strike calendar. Within seven days of that posting with the Illinois Labor Relations Board, each party must submit its most recent offer with a cost summary to the board, the mediator and the other party.

If those negotiations remain unsettled for seven days after submission, the Illinois Educational Labor Relations Board posts the offers on its website and notifies the media. Teachers may not strike until at least 14 days after the posting by the Illinois Educational Labor Relations Board.

In previous interviews with Riverbender.com, Professional Negotiating Chair of the Alton Education Association Jason Chapman said the earliest teachers would strike would be mid to late April. He said crisis teams and financial well-being of teachers must be taken into consideration.

Chapman said the posting process would begin, however, following the most recent vote Thursday afternoon, which completed after 4:30 p.m.