

Alton teacher discussions continue tonight

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer
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ALTON – No updates on a possible Alton teachers' strike are available Tuesday morning, following a Monday night negotiation session.

After more than three hours of negotiations Monday night, both the Alton School District and the Alton Education Association decided to meet in closed session with their negotiator Tuesday night during a closed session of the April meeting of the Alton Board of Education. Following the conclusion of these negotiations, teachers will have a

chance to vote on an updated contract from the district next week possibly. As of now, the earliest date for a possible strike would be April 25, following the public posting on the Illinois Educational Labor Board of the most recent offers.

According to that posting, the district originally offered \$100 increases per salary cell and \$1,196 in step for certified personnel and a \$0.35 an hour raise for non-certified personnel in a two-year contract. After that offer was overwhelmingly voted down by association members, the \$100 increase was raised to \$400 and the non-certified personnel would receive a \$0.40 an hour raise.



That offer was defeated by 68 percent of the membership of the Alton Education Association when it was brought to a vote in March.

Alton Education Association Professional Negotiator Jason Chapman said the district has been given as much as \$1.5 million in unplanned revenue from Illinois's evidence-based funding model. Because of that, he believes the district is more than capable of providing teachers with as much as an \$800 increase per salary cell for certified personnel while retaining the \$0.40 an hour for non-certified personnel.

To bring attention to their cause and inform the public, teachers in the Alton School District have been hosting informational pickets before and after school. There was one Monday previous to the negotiations at West Elementary School at 3:30 p.m.

When asked how a possible strike would affect students graduating as well as leaving school for the summer, Chapman described that as “the \$100 question.”

