

Alton School District, Alton Education Association come to tentative pact to avoid strike

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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ALTON - The **Alton School District** and the **Alton Education Association** (AEA) have come to a tentative agreement to avoid a strike.

The Alton School Board negotiation team reviewed the proposal by the Alton Education Association Friday morning and were agreement to send the proposal to the AEA members for a vote, Chris Norman, the financial director and head negotiator for Alton School District, said.

The proposal will come for a vote before the AEA likely next Thursday afternoon, Ric Stephenson, the Illinois Education Association (IEA) Regional Director, said.

“The school board negotiation team reviewed our counter proposal and will be taking it to the school board meeting on Nov. 17,” Stephenson said. “It will be taken to the Alton

Education Association for a membership vote next week. We brought the board's negotiation team in to meet with us frequently during mediation."

Stephenson said it will take a large facility to house the vote of the AEA next week, because there will be anywhere between 500 to 700 members likely voting. He speculated the vote would likely occur in the 4 p.m. range on Thursday, Nov. 12. The other meetings have been held recently at Alton High School gym because of the size of the AEA membership

"We will be recommending this contract to the membership at the meeting," Stephenson said. "We feel this final package is the best we could get and I think they will approve it. Neither side preferred to have students not inside the classroom because of a strike."

Norman agreed that he didn't think anyone on either side wanted to see a strike.

"We are not going to share details of the agreement until the Alton Education has a chance to share it with their members," he said. "The official action vote was not taken but proposal was discussed this morning and the board gave it the go ahead tentatively."

Health insurance benefits and salary structure were both issues in regard to the impasse, but obviously some concessions have been made within that framework, Stephenson said.