

Alton Education Association members vote 251-202 in favor of two-year pact with district

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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ALTON - The Alton Education Association voted 251 in favor and 202 against a two-year agreement with the Alton School District on Thursday.

Alton Education Association President Brenda Powers said although the contract was approved, it was obvious a lot of those voting against were upset with the contract. She also said she believes it will be even more difficult in two years to get a contract approved if changes are not made.

“Basically, I believe the membership feels the district let them down,” Powers said. “I think the members were very upset with the contract. I know a lot of the members were concerned about striking this time of year and what that would be like for the students and wanted to take care of the kids in their classes. I know that played a part of those voting in favor.”

Powers said the Alton School District is behind many of the other districts in terms of pay, with Bethalto, Highland, Edwardsville and others far ahead of them.

“Alton is one of the biggest cities around our region and the employees are paid the lowest amount,” Powers said. “We can’t keep doing that. If there were a lot of jobs, I think there would be a mass exodus from the district, but there aren’t a lot of jobs right now. It takes a lot of money to become a teacher paying for your education, then in this district a school teacher makes \$35,000 to start, then it takes 20 years to get up to \$56,000. The math just doesn’t add up.”

Ric Stephenson, Illinois Education Regional Director, said he was “relieved” a settlement was reached, but he said he knows Powers and many of the other members of the Alton Education Association are upset with the contract. One positive in the contract was neither certified or non-certified staff had to contribute to their single health coverage. He reserved additional comments for Powers on the contract.

A vote by the Alton School District Board will be taken at the Tuesday, Nov. 17, meeting to ratify the contract.