

Parents rally for end to teacher strike

By Janet Paulson
Of the Emerald

About 250 parents, teachers and students rallied outside the Hilton Hotel in Eugene Monday as negotiating teams reconvened to discuss contract negotiations. Bargaining teams representing the school district and the teachers union met for the first time in more than a week.

Parents from Edison and McCornack schools organized the rally outside the hotel in an effort to encourage community support in bringing a resolution to the stalled contract negotiations and continuing teachers strike.

McCornack Elementary School parent Jim Bellomo told the crowd that the rally represented a bipartisan effort to reopen the schools.

"We're gonna stay here until they come out. If they don't have a decision, we're gonna send them back," he said.

Many people at the rally wore white armbands, which Bellomo said signified peace and a desire to negotiate. But by the time the negotiating teams assembled, the crowd had dwindled to about 25 people.

Steve Goldschmidt, chief negotiator for the school district, said he was optimistic going into Monday's talks. The school district met for what Superintendent Margaret Nichols called "25 hours of intensive" talks over the weekend. Goldschmidt said the district had a proposal that would make "a substantial difference as far as insurance."

"The school board will try everything it knows.... We have a major proposal in the area of insurance. We are making a proposal that we think is responsive to the EEA's concerns," he said.

Goldschmidt would not comment on details of the insurance proposal until the offer was

presented to the teachers union.

The union's bargaining team met Monday to prepare for the session.

Eugene Education Association President Ray Gross said he hoped the school district had come prepared to bargain. "They haven't done it up to this point," he said.

"The school district could come in with some actual proposals or stall by making final offers and ask us to sell it to our members," Gross said.

Bellomo and McCornack parent Ed Reiman gave a three-minute presentation to the bargaining teams as the negotiating session began, informing the teams of "possibilities and probabilities" resulting from continuation of the current deadlock.

"Things could get really ugly," Reiman said. "Our pitch is to get a settlement, not to take sides."

Earlier in the day, Nichols told reporters schools would reopen next week, maybe Wednesday, if the strike doesn't end by then.

She said the district still needs just under 100 teachers for the 633 teaching spots which would need to be filled to reopen schools. Substitute teachers account for 90 of the spots filled, and 450 additional applications have been paper screened by the district as of Monday. Nichols said the district continues to receive 15 to 20 applications each day and feels "confident we'll have an adequate replacement staff." District officials continue to interview applicants in preparation for possible reopening during the strike.

Nichols also speculated schools might have to remain open for three extra days after the currently scheduled June 16 closing, but no longer.

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Because the ASUO gives the Athletic Department its money in one lump sum, and because the money is not under the control of ASUO comptrollers, the agreement outlines ticket prices for students, the amount of student seats reserved at Autzen Stadium, and states no student fees can be used for construction of a dome at Autzen.

If Ballot Measure 9 passes, explained Mooney, the 43 percent increase will be negotiated into the contract rather than the 5.5 percent increase.

John Thoma, ASUO finance coordinator, recommended a 4 percent increase. The request

was for 7 percent.

"We (the ASUO Executive) realize the Athletic Department needs money," he said. "We tried to draw a line between what is fair to the Athletic Department and what is fair to the students."

Baldwin said the increase was not a question of what the committee wanted to do but of what it could afford to allocate. The committee did not have the money to give the full 7 percent increase, he said.

Howard suggested the committee split the difference between the request and the

recomendation by passing 5.5 percent increase, although she would support the 7 percent increase, she said.

"It's important enough to me. I would be willing to pay the money," she said. "But I can't ask students to do the same."

Howard's motion passed unanimously 5-0.

Voelz said it was too early to know how this would affect the Athletic Department, and stressed this year's committee process was more fair than in past years, although the product was not what the Athletic Department wanted.

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suicides for this age group were reported in Oregon in 1985.

No more than fifteen suicides for people under 24 occurred in Lane County last year, with only a couple of those committed by teen-agers, according to Frank Ratti, deputy medical examiner.

For each completed suicide, experts estimate there are about 100 attempts.

The national trend is highest in early spring, although no explanation of this is widely accepted.

Pardes recommended that the media steer away from specifics of suicide cases and instead of depersonalized facts.

According to Managing Editor Doug Bates, the Register-Guard reports all suicides occurring within its circulation area.

However, the editors try to avoid over-emphasizing elements of teen-age suicides, and exclude such as descriptions as the rigging for a carbon monoxide suicide, he said.

Mark Nowicki, a family counselor with Eugene's Looking Glass counseling clinic for youth and their families, said he

hasn't seen evidence that suggests a suicidal teenager's values may be egged on by media reports.

"I'm not convinced that it spurs more suicide attempts, because I'm not sure too many teen-agers read the newspapers," Nowicki said.

Looking Glass responds immediately to reports of suicidal symptoms in teen-agers and works with those who have attempted the act, Nowicki said.

"I think if (suicide) is reported intelligently and not hysterically, that's a plus. If it's reported in a way that doesn't glorify the act and sort of make media heroes of people around the (victim), that probably helps," he said.

Nowicki suggested that media that regularly print or broadcast information on suicides also should be responsible for including stories on how and where troubled teen-agers can get help.

"We get a lot of calls from people who are attempters," he said, adding many of the youth are dealing with depression, hysteria and anxiety.

Looking Glass counsels about a dozen teens every year who have attempted suicide but are alive due to intervention, he said.

The number of a 24-hour crisis hotline for teens at Looking Glass Youth & Family Services is 484-4296.

The crisis hotline at White Bird Clinic is 687-4000.

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