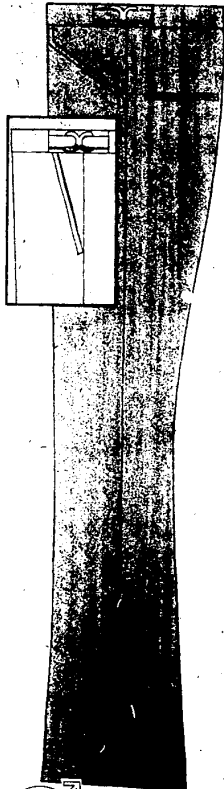


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## Birmingham schools, teachers bargain

By BARBARA UNDERWOOD

By the time Birmingham School District teachers settle a new contract they will have worked their way through 108 goals. Some of the goals will be realized and others probably will not, but that is the way the bargaining process starts.

The first meeting in the 1977 contract negotiations for 600 teachers is scheduled for Thursday, May 12. Settlement may be months away, but the process has begun.

The present two-year contract expires June 30. Traditionally, the teachers' union—Birmingham Education Association—BEA—makes the first move by notifying the director of personnel and labor relations (Joseph Griffin) that the BEA team is prepared to begin.

"We are prepared to present the board with a package and to start negotiations," BEA co-executive director Gerald Haymond said Monday. The first item of business at each session is to establish the date for the next session, he added.

Haymond said it is difficult for teachers on the BEA bargaining team to meet regularly until school is out in June, and he noted that Griffin is negotiating with three other groups of school employees at present.

"I DON'T foresee a quick settlement, but in no way am I predicting that we won't be settled by the time school opens in September," he added. "But I don't foresee settlement before that."

Major issues in this year's contract talks will be salary, health and dental insurance and class size, said Maryann Ligato, BEA president.

"The biggest problem will be class size," she continued. "Forty per cent of the classes in the district have 29 or more students, and most of those have more than 30."

The union is considering a new two-

year agreement since the "time and effort put into negotiations makes a two-year proposal realistic," Ms. Ligato said.

"With a one-year contract, you just get it settled and you have to start all over. But more than two years is unpredictable."

**BOARD PROCEDURE** before going to the bargaining table includes setting up a committee encompassing the interests of elementary and secondary teachers, coaches, special education staff, media specialists and others.

The 27-member committee began meeting last October. A survey was taken of the membership of the BEA to learn of their "needs, wants, desires and concerns," Haymond said.

From those, the 108 bargaining goals were developed. These have been categorized into major or minor and long-range or short-range goals.

Haymond said he based his prediction that a settlement would not be arrived on quickly on three things:

"It has been four years since we truly negotiated, and that means we will be taking a long hard look at most of the agreement. We will need to clarify language and update because of mandated programs. We will be dealing with many, many more issues."

The Michigan Education Association-National Education Association (MEA-NEA) would like to bargain regionally by focusing on goals common to all districts within a region that are negotiating, Haymond said he did not know whether this would prolong the local bargaining procedure.

"The central office situation in Birmingham may not be conducive to being able to agree to our demands in a big hurry."

The union bargaining team includes Barbara Huebner, chairwoman; Ms. Ligato; Polle Blakeley, John Hackett, Jerry Sheets, Haymond and Sandruck.

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