

Teacher contract negotiations slow

The negotiating is slow in three area school districts trying to reach teacher-district contracts before the resumption of school.

"Progress in negotiation is slow," said a representative for the teachers' union in the Avondale School District. "Things are moving slowly," said the representative for the negotiating Troy teachers' union. "But no one wants a strike."

Talks have reached the critical stage," said a representative for the Southfield teachers' union. The Southfield Education Association (SEA) left the bargaining table after a week of intensive bargaining. A strike is a definite possibility, said SEA President Larry Chunovich. Both the Birmingham and Walled Lake districts have settled. The Farmington, Bloomfield Hills and Rochester districts are in the second year of multi-year contracts.

G. THOMAS BULL, representing the Troy School District, said he is optimistic about settling before classes begin Sept. 3. Most issues relate to economics, he said.

The Troy Education Association (TEA) representative, Sid Dickstein, said he is hopeful, rather than optimistic.

"Not all issues remaining are teacher demands," he said. The alternatives he listed for teachers are:

- settle as quickly as possible
- resume work and negotiate during the school year
- withhold services

"No one wants a strike because of what has happened in other districts," he said.

SOUTHFIELD TEACHERS have been without a contract since June 30. Before intensive negotiations broke down, agreement had been reached on virtually every issue but salary. Normal bargaining resumed and is

expected to stretch at least through Labor Day.

When the SEA left intensive negotiations, it talked with legal council. The SEA said the legal council believes the Southfield school board was acting unfairly.

SEA president Chunovich estimated the remaining issues represent about 10 percent of the contract. "However, they are major in nature."

Dr. John English, superintendent of schools, estimated the talks are progressing about one week ahead of the last contract, settled two years ago. Board members have indicated a willingness to settle as soon as possible, maintaining they are seeking a "reasonable" settlement.

THE AVONDALE Education Association (AEA) has called in a mediator from the Michigan Employment Relations Commission to help bring a settlement before school begins Sept. 2.

Asst. Supt. Robert Jenkins said economic issues—a salary schedule and length of a contract—remain as the key points of negotiation.

He said he is optimistic that the school year will begin on time.

James Matteson, AEA representative, said that although progress is slow, "We're doing everything in our power to prevent a strike."

Avondale never has had a teachers' strike.

WHEN BIRMINGHAM settled its contract in March, the contract called for a 2.3 per cent salary increase plus 5 per cent pension fund payment for the first year. The second year calls for a 7 per cent salary increase, plus an average increment increase of 1.65 per cent for the first year, and an average increment increase of 1.5 per cent for the second year.

Bloomfield Hills teachers salaries have not yet been determined. The 1974-75 pay level must be compared with all other Oakland County districts having a settled contract as of Oct. 1, 1973. According to the contract signed last year, no ranking shall be made until at least 16 county districts have settled and not before Oct. 1, no matter how many have settled.

Teachers in the Bloomfield Hills district will receive their 1974-75 salary until the comparison is made and agreed upon. When the determination of raises is made, each teacher will receive salary adjustments backdated to the beginning of the 1973-74 school year.

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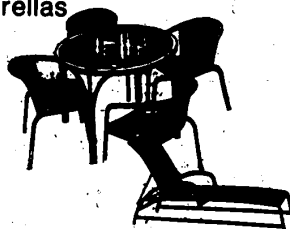
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