**Board, teacher negotiations stretch into mid October.**

While evening turned into night Monday, District 20 board members discussed teacher salaries and benefits behind closed doors.

Once the board reconvened after 1 hours, members approved the Gothenburg Education Association's proposal but inserted into contract language a striking timeline requirement regarding prorated payroll.

Neither superintendent Mike Teahon or GEA chief negotiator Mary Meisinger would comment on the action or what it means.

"Until the GEA ratifies the agreement, I can't comment," Teahon said after the board meeting.

What chief GEA negotiator Mary Meisinger would say is that 2009-10 negotiations have taken longer than any deliberations in which she's been involved.

Meisinger has served on GEA's negotiation team for the past 15 years and has taught in the district 21 years.

After taking action on the proposal, board president Scott France asked board member and negotiator Lisa Geiken to work with Teahon on setting up a payment schedule as soon as possible.

What administrators and non-certified staff will receive was decided in August.

Administrators got salary and benefit increase of 4.99% and non teachers 5.8% for the 2009-10 school year.

Because a settlement has not been reached, Teahon said Tuesday that teachers were being paid what was decided in the 2008-09 contract.

When a new agreement is reached, he said they would decide when to implement it and when it would begin.

A blast of wintry weather last weekend showed there are a few bugs in a new heating and air conditioning system at Dudley Elementary, according to maintenance director Jay Holmes.

However Siemens Building Technologies Inc. of Kearney, the company that installed the system, is working on the system, Holmes said.

Boilers are also being inspected as they usually are this time of year, he said.

During his superintendent's report, Teahon told the board he was involved in writing a Race to the Top grant application which is a competitive federal stimulus grant between states.

"If granted, it's for school reform in Nebraska," he said, noting that District 20's reputation was one of the reasons he was asked to help with the grant.

On Tuesday (yesterday), Teahon said he would do a presentation on the school's use of technology the past nine years for Educational Service Unit 9.

Because of lower revenue projections for the state, Gov. David Heineman has called for a special session of the Legislature to deal with the shortfall.

Teahon said he wouldn't be surprised if cutting state aid was a discussion item.

District 20 is supposed to receive $3,155,410 in state aid—a nearly 9% increase over last year.

Teahon said the district is also monitoring the closing of the Tenneco Automotive Monroe shock-absorber manufacturing plant in Cozad.

Workers will be let go beginning in December and throughout 2010.

Fifty employees are from Gothenburg.

In other business, the board:

- heard that Class D district basketball and B-5 district speech will be hosted by Gothenburg Public Schools.
- learned that detentions this year have dropped from 121 in 2008 to 78 in 2009. Saturday School attendance is up 32 students over last year because students who miss required access time with teachers from 7:45-8:15 a.m. each morning are assigned to go.

High school principal Randy Evans said access time is working, not only for students who are assigned to meet with teachers, but for about 30% of the student body who meet with teachers voluntarily.

Teahon said coaches like access time because athletes who miss class because of events have a chance to meet with teachers and make up work.

Access time was started at the beginning of the school year.

- were informed that Teacher Academy, for new teachers and teachers new to the district, is a success after three monthly meetings.

“It’s a way for teachers to work together for kids,” Teahon said about the program presented by teachers, administrators and others throughout the school year.

ebarrett@gothenburgtimes.com 308-537-3636