

Coeur d'Alene School Board OKs agreement

The Coeur d'Alene School District and its teachers have agreed to the terms of a new contract following a meeting with a federal mediator.

The school board voted Thursday to ratify the agreement. The Coeur d'Alene Education Association, the union representing 565 teachers, voted for it Monday. Teachers – and by extension all 1,250 district employees – will receive a 0.5 percent salary increase. The district had proposed no change in base pay, while the teachers' latest offer was for a 0.9 percent raise.

The district also will fund regular pay hikes for steps and lanes, which recognize experience and advanced education.

The school district will reduce its share of the premium for family health coverage to 68 percent, down 1 percentage point. Previously the district had proposed lowering it to 67 percent. Employees now will pay 32 percent of their coverage.

The agreement calls for no change in co-insurance and co-pay amounts.

The district's health insurance plan is increasing 7.5 percent this year, or about \$500,000.

If the district's fund balance this year exceeds \$6.81 million, the excess will be distributed among teachers in a one-time bonus by December's payroll, both sides agreed.

Negotiations stalled in late August, and both sides met with the mediator last week.

District employees received a 2.5 percent raise last year – the first change in base pay in about six years.

Although the union negotiates only for the teachers, the district extends base pay and insurance changes to all employees, including administrators and classified employees such as secretaries, bus drivers and custodians.

Scott Maben/SR