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---The Daily Herald---05/07/2019

U-46 board approves 4-year teachers' contract with 3.85% average raises

By: Madhu Krishnamurthy



The Elgin Area School District U-46 school board Monday night approved a new four-year teachers' contract.

The Elgin Area School District U-46 school board Monday night unanimously approved a four-year teachers' contract granting a 3.85% increase on average over its duration -- amounting to roughly \$30.5 million total.

It took nine months and 50 negotiation sessions to reach an agreement, which runs from 2018 through August of 2022, said Suzanne Johnson, U-46 deputy superintendent of instruction.

Average yearly increases -- including step and lane for years of experience and education -- are 4.95% in 2018-19, 3.80% in 2019-20, 3.66% in 2020-21, and 2.99% in 2021-22.

Employees' share of health insurance premium costs will increase gradually from 12% in 2019-20 to 15% in 2020-21 effective Jan. 1 of each year.

Teachers will receive back pay for this school year's salary increase retroactive to the start of classes in August.

Substantial changes in the contract include more opportunities for teachers to earn professional credits and a greater emphasis on improving teacher safety and student discipline.

Officials outlined how district administration aims to support teachers better in situations of student discipline and identify students with social-emotional needs.

The district also aims to provide standardized threat assessment tools for schools to address students who pose a threat to themselves or others, evaluate those threat assessments, create student-specific safety plans, and involve parents and guardians where necessary, Johnson said.

The contract includes changes to policies affecting student exclusions from class, the creation of a safety council which will meet quarterly to work on issues, and a tactical assessment team to provide greater support to teachers in threatening situations.

Other significant changes are increasing the number of required parent-teacher conferences to five hours across all sites, providing more time for teacher collaboration, and adequate training on using new technologies.

The Elgin Teachers Association's Representative Assembly last week voted 1,764 to 336 to accept the contract. The district's more than 2,500 teachers had been working without a contract since the previous one-year extension expired last Aug. 10.

Former school board member Jeanette Ward asked newly seated school board members Eva Porter and Kathleen Thommes to recuse themselves from voting on the contract since they weren't part of the negotiations process.

Porter and Thommes felt otherwise and said they support the hard work of the negotiating team to reach this agreement.

Ward also objected to "significant" yearly raises, even if teachers perform unsatisfactorily, and health insurance premium costs not being in line with the private sector where employees' share is 25 percent. The contract also includes lump sum payments after retirement up to \$10,000, she added.

School board President Sue Kerr said the salary increases make U-46 more "competitive in attracting teachers" and this contract begins to address the issues of safety and disruptions in the classroom.

"This is a positive step that will allow teachers to focus on their primary job, which is educating kids," she said.

SPORTS

---The Daily Herald---05/07/2019

Girls soccer: South Elgin edges Glenbard South

By: Bobby Narang

Katrina Barthelt wasn't invited to the party, but she made a big impression.

The South Elgin freshman forward scored 2 goals to lead the Storm to a 3-2 win over host Glenbard South on Monday in Upstate Eight Conference girls soccer play.

The Raiders honored their seniors with various celebrations, but Barthelt managed to be the main attraction. She raised her season total to 26 goals.

"Everyone worked so good together," Barthelt said. "We were pressing the ball and the players, not letting them get their second touch in and winning the ball. Our coach really motivated us with a great talk.

Barthelt scored the first goal with just under 10 minutes into the match. After the Raiders (10-6, 3-3-1) tied the game late in the opening half on a penalty kick by Sam Schutte, Barthelt added her second goal with 36 minutes left in regulation.

Barthelt admitted she didn't expect to be such a major contributor so early in high school.

"I was thinking there are a lot of strong and big girls on varsity and I was scared," she said. "But now the team has helped me and I got it."

South Elgin coach Laura Szwaja said Barthelt is rounding into a more complete player late in her freshman season.

"She's feeling the pressure but plays aggressively with her mind and body," she said. "We're working on staying calm mentally. But she's loving it. She's a quiet player but then will come at you. She's got a good defensive line behind her."

"I think this is the third senior night we've been a part of, so we're used to it by now. I told them before the game that this is the hard part of the season, especially because people know what we have coming with a talented freshman."

With the win the Storm (11-3-3, 6-0-2) stayed in contention for the conference crown. It is tied in first place with West Aurora. The two teams hook up for the conference title on Wednesday at West Aurora.

"They had to stay mentally strong knowing that conference was on the line on Wednesday," Szwaja said. "They had to get a win today and focus on Wednesday on Wednesday."

Glenbard South junior forward Erin Haslett added a late goal to cut the deficit to 3-2.

"That's a really talented team, and (Barthelt) is probably the most talented player we've faced all season," Glenbard South coach Kevin Berner said. "She's so good and fun to watch. She's a special talent. Our focus is on the playoffs and we're excited to be the (regional) hosts. We have a talented team and hopefully they walk off the field feeling confident because we were carried by our seniors."