

Even without union, teachers get raises

Written by MARK JAEGER

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School Board approves 2.8% pay hikes in first deal after collective bargaining

The Northern Ozaukee School Board approved a pay package for its teachers on Monday, offering a dramatic demonstration of how much has changed since the adoption of Act 10 in Wisconsin.

The legislation, spearheaded by Gov. Scott Walker, took away most of the power of collective bargaining groups.

Even that reduced role was eliminated late last year in the Northern Ozaukee district when the Fredonia Education Association failed to gain the support of the majority of teachers in a recertification vote.

That left the board's Personnel Committee to work out a compensation model based largely on what members felt was equitable.

Supt. Blake Peuse said the committee reviewed a host of options before coming up with a formula that sets pay using three components — base salaries, stipends for performance and discretionary supplements.

The pay package backed by the board offers teachers an overall average increase of 2.81% for the 2012-13 school year.

That includes a base pay increase of 1.5% previously agreed on from savings in employees' long-term care benefit and \$45,000 in additional supplements divided among the teaching staff based largely on performance.

According to the district calculations, the package will cost \$11,400.

Peuse said the pay agreement reflects the changed reality of teacher compensation.

"Considering the district did not offer raises in the last couple of years, we felt it was important that we look at adjusting the base pay," he said.

"The model we have followed makes sense now, but it doesn't have to be the one we follow for eternity. We would like to assure the staff that we value highly effective teachers. Our best-case scenario would be to have a stable of teachers who merit supplemental pay each year."

School Board President Paul Krause said the model demonstrates the board's goal of rewarding performance, and allows the district to tap into savings from reduced benefit costs to cover the cost of raises.

Board member Kendall Thistle asked if the pay agreement could be put off until next month,

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when the district's official enrollment numbers are known.

"We could go another month, but I would like to let staff know how much their efforts are appreciated. That is something I would like to see done sooner rather than later, but it isn't imperative," Peuse said.

The board approved the compensation package, with Thistle casting the lone vote against the plan at this time.

With no union in place, district officials will notify teachers of their new pay rates and their overall pay for the 2012-13 school year.