

Aug. 23, 2018

**Stanwood-Camano teachers vote to strike**

***Strike will start Tuesday, September 4 unless a tentative agreement is reached before then***

Stanwood-Camano educators overwhelmingly authorized their bargaining team Thursday to call a strike if a tentative agreement is not reached by the expiration of their contract on Aug. 31. The first day of the strike would be Sept. 4.

The strike authorization comes after months of bargaining where Stanwood-Camano educators have called for competitive pay raises.

“In spite of incredible community support at the last board meeting, the district refuses to acknowledge that the new money is intended for salaries,” said Rita Peterson, lead bargainer for Stanwood-Camano Education Association.

“We are very disappointed that Superintendent Jean Shumate continues to fail to prioritize competitive salaries,” Stanwood-Camano Education Association President Nyda Goldstein said. “Nearby school districts have figured out ways to use the new state funds to provide competitive wages that will attract and retain quality teachers.”

Stanwood-Camano, like other districts, is receiving a net increase of millions of dollars in coming years because of the Supreme Court’s McCleary decision, which ordered the state to increase K-12 funding. For Stanwood-Camano this amounts to more than \$9 million dollars most of which is for an educator salary correction.

Stanwood-Camano district administrators have no excuse for not negotiating the significant pay raises we need, Goldstein said. Educators in some 30 school districts across Washington already have negotiated double-digit percentage pay raises this summer. Without higher pay, Stanwood-Camano will lose good teachers to nearby districts that have negotiated substantial pay raises for their teachers.

“Our teachers simply want a fair and equitable settlement that remains competitive with area schools,” Goldstein said.

Goldstein said SCEA remains hopeful that both sides will reach a tentative agreement in time for the start of school. Classes in Stanwood-Camano are scheduled to start Sept. 4.

The Stanwood-Camano School District has some 4,425 students, and the Stanwood-Camano Education Association represents more than 270 certificated teachers.