

COVENTRY

Teacher contract extended one year

Union, district agree to hold line on salaries for this year

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COVENTRY — After working over the summer to reach an agreement, members of the Coventry Teachers' Alliance (CTA) and the Coventry School District have decided to extend the teachers' contract for another year, with no pay increases with the exception of step increases, which are mandated by law.

"We're building a lot of trust and we're able to focus on what's really important and that's the kids," said Coventry School Superintendent Craig Levis. We're honoring the step increases but no raises," he confirmed.

Levis said there could be other additions to the budget that cannot be accounted for right now, that can add a couple hundred thousand, such as healthcare costs, but he called such possible increases "fluid."

"The union doesn't have to do this and we call it good faith on their part and it allows us to focus on student performance

and concentrate of the strategic plan," he said.

Coventry School Committee Chairwoman Kathy Patenude is very pleased the CTA was in agreement and credited Levis with working so well with so many relationships.

"It gives our new administrators, especially the Superintendent, another year to get to know the contract and this way, he can really see what parts of it are worth fighting for and what is worth letting go," she said.

Kelly Erinakes, president of the Coventry Teachers' Alliance, said the teachers look forward to creating a long-range plan for the schools, now that all administrators are in place and will have the additional time to get their bearings.

Among other issues addressed at this week's meeting were as follows:

- Committee Chairwoman Norma Smith announced that

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during the third week of October, an actor portraying Gen. Nathaniel Greene will be visiting the schools to share some of the history of the battles he fought in along side George Washington.

"The events for the year are coming to an end but we hope to continue to host educational programs in the schools," she said.

- School Superintendent Craig Levis said an updated policy has been created to stop smoking on the premises and at school events.

Levis explained the intent of the policy tobacco-free school with consequences written within the document. He worked with Committee members James Pierson and Dr. Ann Dickson and the district's attorney.

During the discussion among the committee members, it became clear that some of the language will be reviewed again, to ensure the message of 'no smoking' is made more aware to the public and can possibly be printed on tickets for the many sports activities.

- Levis and Coventry Police Chief Colonel John MacDonald have been working closely with community policing and ensuring the students are safe

- As part of his report, the Superintendent explained the district is still closing out the year's budget.

"We need to get to the point where we need to come to you on a regular basis and being extremely transparent and if any line items change, then we let people know," he said. "We met with our principals and I want to make sure they're involved and make sure we have everything in line and as we go forward, we'll meet with each principal."

He wants to make sure all monies are allocated properly.