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Minneapolis teachers and support professionals reach tentative agreements on 18th day of strike

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Striking Minneapolis educators. Photo: Brad Sigal

Minneapolis, MN – Early on Friday, March 25, the striking Minneapolis teachers and education support professionals reached tentative agreements that will be voted on by union members. They have been on strike since Tuesday, March 8.

Over the almost three-week strike, the educators made major progress on several of their key demands. A big issue of the strike was improving the conditions of education support professionals (ESPs) who are largely oppressed nationality workers and make poverty wages. Details of the final agreement have not yet been announced but in the previous “last, best and final offer” from the school district they had already moved the district up by thousands of dollars a year for the ESPs to around \$33,000 a year. The educators were holding the line for ESPs to reach a

minimum of a \$35,000 a year wage for ESPs at the bottom of the scale. While \$35,000 a year is still far too low according to the union, it would represent a life changing increase for the ESPs at the bottom.

At the same time, the teachers had set 3% per year as a bottom line on across-the-board raises, with additional raises in the form of step increases. As of Monday, March 24, the school district was offering the teachers a package that would include 5% and 7% over a two-year contract with step increases factored in.

The educators also had demands for smaller class sizes with caps on maximum size, as well as increased mental health supports for students.

More details on the tentative agreement are expected in coming days with a vote by the members soon to follow. If the vote passes it will end the strike.

In the last week of the strike, community, student, parent and labor support actions had ticked up to a higher level of intensity. Notably, a group of Minneapolis students began an occupation of the Davis Center, where Minneapolis Public Schools office is located, and they were still present on Friday morning as the tentative agreement was announced. The occupation included a community meal served by the students in the building on Thursday night.

Community support activity for the educators' strike was high throughout and included many actions, protests, support events and marches in support of the educators. Support for the educators 'strike and their demands stayed high among community members and parents the whole way through.

The educators maintained strong picket lines throughout and over 95% of educators honored the strike for all 18 days. The educators appear stronger than ever before and ready to continue fighting for educators and students going forward.

Source: [FightBack! News](#)

