

IPS teachers walk out of board meeting



January 20, 2009 by [agammill](#)

Indianapolis Public Schools teachers walked out of tonight's school board meeting to protest their lack of a contract.

Teachers packed the board room with signs like "Show me the money" and "We only want what's fair." As teachers left and gathered in the hall outside the board room, the school board went on with its business without interruption.

Adrienne Reiswerg a teacher at the Key Learning Community, said the district must find money for teachers.

"IPS has money for everything but teachers," she said. "We never expected to get rich on this job, but we never expected to get poor."

Union members have grown increasingly frustrated at the district's unwillingness to negotiate, said Al Wolting, president of the Indianapolis Education Association. The district's agreement with teachers expired in 2007.

"We've been struggling for two years without a contract," Wolting said. "We've been doing all the things we're supposed to be doing, and we don't feel like we're getting recognition."

The district budgeted a 1 percent salary increase for all employees, including teachers, but the teachers union wants to bargain for a higher percentage.

Superintendent Eugene White said he values the teachers' work and will do his best to get them more pay, but he added that the district's precarious budget makes more of a raise unlikely. But White also said he was unwilling to add new language on working conditions to the contract.

"We have some wonderful teachers in this school district," he said. "We're going to do everything we can to compensate them."

The contract negotiations come as the state's largest district considers deep cuts, including laying off up to 400 teachers and 80 administrators at the end of the school year. White has called for \$25 million in budget cuts.

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