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By JESSICA CRAWFORD • Daily Leader USD No. 480 and the LNEA have finally come to an agreement. Teacher's voted on the tentative agreement Wednesday afternoon to ultimately approve the proposed contract for the next two years. Although many are glad to see negotiations come to an end, there is still doubt that adding three days to the 2011-12 school year will do students much justice. LNEA's lead negotiator Brent Goodwin explained to teachers exactly what they were voting on Wednesday afternoon. "F

or the 2011-12 school year, if ratified, we will work an additional three days," Goodwin said. "But, they are going to pay you your per day raise, based upon the salary schedule, this year. So, we couldn't complain in that regard.

"We are not 100 percent convinced that going the extra days is in the best interest of students," he continued. "We provided the board with some research and they weren't very receptive to that research we provided. Just because you go more time does not equate to better student performance.

"This year you will be getting \$200 added to the pay," he explained. "\$200 to the base on the index scale equates to at the base salary, that is one day's pay. Then you multiply the \$200 times your multiplier of the place you are going to be on the salary schedule. That will give you your per day raise. Everybody will get paid, next year, three extra days at your per day rate. On top of that, as a raise, they will give you your steps in increments plus \$100 added to the index.

"As far as the health insurance goes, they agreed to add \$500,000 to the insurance pool," he continued. "Between the two years, a negotiation reopener will be the health insurance. So, if our insurance premiums continue to rise, we open negotiations to try to take care of the increase. But, salaries will not be opened up for next year."

With 177 teachers in favor of the contract proposal and 61 teachers opposed, the required 51 percent approval was reached.

"I am glad that it did pass," Goodwin said. "But we still don't know that the extra days are in the best interest of the students. It was fair and reasonable."

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