



## Mounds View, teachers OK new contract

By **NORMAN DRAPER**, Star Tribune

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Mounds View teachers and the district school board have reached a contract agreement that is more modest than previous contracts.

The agreement, ratified last week by the board, will bump up teacher pay and benefit costs 7.1 percent over the two years of the contract, which covers the current and 2010-11 school years. The prior two-year contract represented a 9.7 percent increase.

Those figures represent a 1 percent across-the-board pay hike for each of the two years of the contract, as well as costs due to raises that teachers get for years of experience and racking up college credits.

The new contract requires teachers to pay higher premiums for their health insurance plan. According to district figures, a teacher with family coverage under the district's traditional co-pay plan will now pay an additional \$457 a year, for a total teacher contribution of \$2,268 a year.

Both sides said the settlement represents an understanding that economic times are tough and the district couldn't afford to hand out big raises.

"I think the main thing is our teachers were very cognizant of the economic downturn happening at the time," said Barb Kettering, president of the Mounds View Education Association teachers union. "We as teachers have an interest in the financial health of our school district."

School board chairman Jon Tynjala termed the settlement "modest in comparison to a lot of past settlements."

"It's realistic and reflects where we are economically," he said.

Mounds View is a north suburban school district with about 10,000 students.

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