

Strike votes

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tee on benefits, but workers want to be assured that the district will pay for rate increases in their benefits.

"We're less than \$5,000 apart," Dubois said. "... That's less than 1 percent for the entire bargaining unit."

District Superintendent Rudy Carino said he would not comment on the specifics of the district's offer while negotiations continued.

Carino said he was "a little bit

surprised," at the vote. "We're still in negotiations."

At the same time, he said, "What I was surprised about was that they leaped into that — because the conclusion is that if you take a strike vote, you are looking to strike."

Despite the union's walkout last week, "We're still willing to sit down and talk to come to some agreement," he said.

But he conceded that "the situation is very tense."