

# Holiday Likely For Students If Strike OK'd

By **BOB RIEL**

*CALL Staff Writer*

Area students may get an unscheduled vacation next week if teachers and other school employees decide to honor picket lines that are expected to be set up Monday morning by members of the state's largest union.

The Rhode Island chapter of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), which includes school lunch workers, has called a strike for Monday, unless an 11th hour contract agreement is reached with the state today or tomorrow.

As of last night, teachers and other employees at area schools hadn't decided whether to honor the picket lines, as requested by Edward J. McElroy Jr., president of the Rhode Island Teachers Association and the state AFL-CIO.

Richard A. DiPardo, president of the Woonsocket Teachers Guild (WTG), said members of his union are meeting tomorrow at 7 p.m. in the high school auditorium to discuss the situation.

"We'll sit down and discuss it and see what happens," DiPardo said.

Secretarial and custodial workers in city schools are scheduled to meet this morning at 10 in Bernon Heights Elementary School for the

same purpose.

Employees at other area schools were also expected to meet this weekend to discuss their options if the state employees' strike materializes.

Superintendents who were interviewed yesterday afternoon said they are hopeful schools will be open Monday, but said they have made contingency plans in case employees refuse to cross picket lines.

Woonsocket Supt. Timothy P. Connors said all students were given letters yesterday for their parents. The letters warned parents that school may be disrupted if state employees' proceed with plans for a strike.

Parents were asked to prepare bag lunches for their children, Connors said, because hot lunches won't be served unless the AFSCME calls off the strike. Mrs. Constance Pickering, union steward, said yesterday that school cafeteria workers in the city will definitely set up picket lines Monday morning.

Parents were also asked to plan

See **STRIKE** — Page 6

# Strike

---

Continued from Page 1

for the possibility that school may be cancelled or closed early, Connors said. He asked them to keep abreast of the situation by listening to area radio stations.

"I'm hopeful that we'll be able to run schools in a normal fashion," Connors said.

North Smithfield Supt. Paul F. Joyce and Burrillville Supt. Lawrence E. Cornell said they also have asked parents to prepare bag lunches and make contingency plans in case schools have to close early.

"We're planning to have school," Cornell said, "but I've asked the principals to notify all students" of the situation.

Cornell said he did not know how Burrillville teachers would respond to picket lines. "The teachers have

to make their own decisions on whether or not to cross the lines," he said.

Joyce asked parents to keep abreast of developments over the weekend and make contingency plans in case schools have to close early.

Joyce said he does not know whether teachers in his community plan to honor the picket lines.

Cumberland Supt. Robert McGinnis and Lincoln Supt. Rosemarie Kavanaugh were unavailable for comment.

The strike call was issued Thursday by Richard DeOrsey, AFSCME executive director, after contract talks between the union and state officials broke down. DeOrsey, who represents 11,000 state employees, vowed to shut down state government and most Rhode Island schools.