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SPORTS, 1B



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LOCAL, 3A

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> CLASSIFIED, SECTION F ★ FEBRUARY 10, 2018

Talks aim to avert strike



JEAN PIERI / PIONEER PRESS

Central High School students board buses after school Friday. The St. Paul Federation of Teachers plans to strike Tuesday if a labor deal is not reached with the district this weekend.

St. Paul district, teachers to negotiate through weekend in effort to head off walkout

By Josh Verges
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Negotiators plan to meet through the weekend in hopes of preventing the first St. Paul Federation of Teachers strike since 1946.

Monday will be the last day of school in the near future unless the two sides can come together on a number of issues affecting learning conditions in the district. Friday was the ninth day of mediation, and teacher pay has yet to be discussed.

The teachers union sees its biennial contract negotiation as an opportunity to create “the schools St. Paul students deserve.” The district says the issues the union is interested in should be debated in public, not teacher contract talks.

Although the district has approved class size limits and agreed to hire more staff as part of past negotiations, this year the administration and school board have taken a harder line as they try to rein in spending amid declining enrollment.

Mediated negotiations are private, but both sides have publicized the following issues as key to a new two-year deal:

CLASS SIZE

The district said class size ranges implemented in 2014 cost them \$32 million on additional teachers and has hurt overall enrollment by lowering capacity at popular

TEACHER STRIKE, 4A

Special elections or sneak previews?

Two seats in state Legislature decided in Monday voting

By Christopher Magan
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Political junkies have their eyes on the first battles of what’s shaping up to be the electoral war of 2018.

Voters will decide two special elections Monday for seats in the Minnesota Legislature after the unexpected resignations of lawmakers late last year amid allegations of sexual misconduct.

Voters in Senate District 54 — which covers Hastings, Cottage Grove and South St. Paul — will pick someone to replace DFLer Dan Schoen. In southern Minnesota they’ll pick a successor for Republican Rep. Tony Cornish, who represented parts of Blue Earth, Le Sueur, Waseca and Watonwan counties.

SPECIAL ELECTIONS, 3A

N.E. Minn. race just got hotter

DFLer Nolan decides not to seek re-election

By Dave Orrick
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U.S. Rep. Rick Nolan, a Democrat from northeast Minnesota, announced Friday he won’t seek re-election.

Nolan, who has served off and on in Congress since 1975, said his decision was based on a desire to spend time with his family and “pass the baton to the next generation.” It also means the 74-year-old won’t have to try to fight off a primary challenge and a Republican opponent in a part of the state that went heavily for President Donald Trump.

Make no mistake: Nolan’s decision — which surprised many political observers — is a game-changer not just for his district, but potentially for the landscape of Minnesota.

NOLAN’S SEAT, 3A

Trump praises aide who was accused of abuse

Questions continue over White House’s response to allegations

By Jonathan Lemire and Jill Colvin
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump on Friday defended former aide Rob Porter, wishing him well in his future endeavors without any mention of the two ex-wives who have accused Porter of physical and emotional abuse.

Trump’s comments set off a firestorm at a time of national conversation about the mistreatment of women. And they came amid rampant White House finger-pointing about who knew what, and when, about the severity of the spousal abuse allegations.

Trump said Porter, who resigned when the abuse allegations became public this week, had “worked hard” at the White House and wished him well.

“It’s a, obviously, tough time for him. He did a very good job when he was in the White House. And we hope he has a wonderful career,” Trump said in his first comments on the allegations against the onetime

TRUMP AIDE RESIGNS, 8A

United in Pyeongchang



DAVID J. PHILLIP / ASSOCIATED PRESS

North Korea’s Jong Su Hyon, left, and South Korea’s Park Jong-ah carry the torch during the opening ceremony of the 2018 Winter Olympics on Friday in Pyeongchang, South Korea. Related story on Page 8A, plus more coverage in Sports, Section B, including a profile of Marissa Brandt of Vadnais Heights, a member of the unified North Korea/South Korea women’s hockey team.

Budget battle is over, but an immigration fight looms

Dreamers left out of spending agreement

By Alan Fram
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Republican leaders, top Democrats and President Donald Trump are all claiming big wins in the \$400 billion budget agreement signed into law

Friday. But the push to pass the massive legislation underscored enduring divisions within both parties, and those rifts are likely to make the next fight over immigration even more challenging.

In Washington’s latest display of governance by brinkmanship, the

bipartisan accord bolstering military and domestic programs and deepening federal deficits crossed the finish line just before dawn — but not before the government shut down overnight.

Passage left nerves frayed and Democrats with little leverage to force congressional action on their most high-profile priority: preventing deportation of hun-

dreds of thousands of the young immigrants who arrived in the U.S. as children and remain here without permanent legal protection.

Lawmakers rushed to limit the disruption and impact over the lapse in government funding, voting in the middle of the night to

BUDGET BILL, 8A

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