Wal-Mart goes local

Giant retailer announces initiative to focus on locally grown produce

By Christopher Webber
ASSOCIATED PRESS

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Los Angeles teachers returned to work Wednesday after contentious negotiations ended with a new contract and a commitment by the union and the district to work together to get more state money for schools in part by pushing to overhaul California's property tax system.

Teachers greeted students with smiles, hugs and high-fives after voting the night before to authorize a strike if necessary to secure a contract that includes a 6 percent pay hike for educators and getting their produce to market.

Given that Wal-Mart is the world's largest grocer, with one store in every 200 feet, its push to overhaul its food supply is intended to put more locally grown food in Wal-Mart stores in the United States, invest in training and infrastructure for small and medium-size farmers, particularly in emerging markets, and begin to measure the efficiency of large suppliers in growing and getting their produce to market.

"We want to be a part of the solution," said Jack Sinclair, Walmart Executive Vice President for U.S. Grocery. "Aid a bell pepper grown by a local farmer.

While the plan for a contract that includes a 6 percent pay hike for educators also had cast ballots and Friday evening but most teach

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