

Willowbrook teacher walkout averted

A threat by some 200 teachers at the Willowbrook Developmental Center to walk off their jobs in dispute over new work schedules was averted yesterday in federal court.

Justice John R. Bartels, hearing arguments between attorneys for parents of residents and the state on improving conditions at the center, took up the role of mediator in the unrelated labor dispute.

Kenneth Grabie, attorney for the teachers, who belong to the Civil Service Employees Association, told the court that Willowbrook Director Dr. Levester Cannon had been uncommunicative with the teachers on the issue and had failed to enter into any "meaningful" dialogue on the subject.

At issue is an increase of working hours to 40 a week, and the way in

which certain professional meetings will be scheduled.

Grabie asked the judge to sign a restraining order against the new work schedules, but he refused. Instead, the judge directed Deputy Mental Hygiene commission Barbara Blum to represent the state at a meeting between teachers and Willowbrook administrators in the next day or two. No time was set for the session.