



October 6, 2008

004-2008/9

Provincial Responsibility for Negotiations Update

At the September 26, 2008 meeting of Provincial Council, all Teacher and Occasional Teacher Bargaining Units were placed in Provincial Responsibility for Negotiations. Provincial Responsibility for Negotiations (PRN) provides direct assistance from Provincial Office to local bargaining units. As part of PRN, every Teacher/Occasional Teacher bargaining unit is assigned a provincial Negotiator and a Provincial Executive member who will work with the local negotiation team. This step has been implemented to indicate an escalated level of intensity and to increase pressure on the employers to make progress at the bargaining tables. All support staff units were placed in PRN at the June 6 Provincial Council meeting.

You are likely hearing references to Provincial Discussion Tables. Currently, the federations representing teachers working in the Catholic and Francophone school boards have agreed to provincial framework agreements to assist in local bargaining. OSSTF/FEESO negotiated a similar provincial funding framework agreement for our support staff. OSSTF/FEESO agreed to meet with the government and the school boards to create this funding framework to support local bargaining once OSSTF/FEESO was confident that it would have a positive impact on the achievement of local priorities identified by bargaining units. OSSTF/FEESO agreed to attend the Provincial Discussion Table meetings after the Provincial Executive consulted with the local leadership, the ad hoc advisory work groups and the provincial Collective Bargaining Committee, and after receiving the endorsement of the members of the affected bargaining units through a membership vote.

OSSTF/FEESO successfully used the Support Staff Provincial Discussion Table to achieve access to additional funding, job security and protection of local bargaining that may not have been achieved otherwise. With the provincial framework agreement in place for support staff, OSSTF/FEESO expects school boards to actively negotiate local collective agreements and deal with local priorities.

At this point in time, OSSTF/FEESO does not feel that the same criteria for attending a Provincial Discussion Table exist for Teacher/Occasional Teacher Bargaining Units. We should be clear that OSSTF/FEESO does not oppose the Provincial Discussion Table process for teachers/occasional teachers; however, before we consider this, we have to be certain a provincial framework agreement would create a more positive local negotiating environment.

School boards have been informed by the government that a funding deadline of November 30, 2008 has been set. Clearly, that deadline is between the government and school boards. OSSTF/FEESO has no plans to change its bargaining strategy or demands due to a supposed funding deadline. We feel that your bargaining teams' positions are fair and reasonable and our demands are there to support our individual teachers and occasional teachers in their daily work. Unless and until we return to a Provincial Discussion Table for teachers, OSSTF/FEESO will follow the traditional Labour Relations Act process for negotiations. OSSTF/FEESO expects to have free collective bargaining for its members and your local bargaining team will be counting on your support.



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