



OUR SCHOOLS OUR FUTURE

ETFO COLLECTIVE
BARGAINING 2022



ETFO CENTRAL BARGAINING BULLETIN

September 15, 2023 | Bulletin Number 9: Teacher/Occasional Teacher Edition

Teacher/Occasional Teacher Central Bargaining: A One-Year Anniversary Recap

[NOTE: For Education Worker Central Table updates, check Bulletin Number 9: Education Worker Edition]

ETFO, the government and the Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA) have been meeting since August 2022 in an attempt to reach an agreement at the ETFO Teacher/Occasional Teacher (T/OT) Central Table. We have met **18 times** to discuss key issues for our teacher and occasional teacher members (e.g., compensation, benefits, violence in schools, class size, support for special education students, fair and transparent hiring practices that would help with the teacher recruitment and retention crisis, hybrid instruction, etc.). Unfortunately, due to the unwillingness of the OPSBA/government team to engage in meaningful bargaining, very little progress has been achieved.

For example, in a period of rapidly expanding inflation that is eroding the earning power of your salaries, and at a time when teachers and occasional teachers are working harder than ever to support their students, the government has refused to improve on its **disappointing salary offer of a 1.25% increase each year over four years**. The government's offer to our teacher and occasional teacher members is less than what was offered to, and accepted by, CUPE in November 2022.

In addition, the OPSBA/government team is demanding cuts to teacher and long-term occasional teacher **sick leave entitlements** and **professional judgement language**. On **benefits**, the government refuses to discuss a proposal by ETFO that would stabilize benefits funding. The level of funding ETFO is asking for is equivalent to what other teacher unions already receive from the government for their benefits. ETFO is not asking for more funding – just enough to sustain our plan. Instead, the government is proposing a level of funding that, if accepted by ETFO, would result in cuts to benefit levels.

ETFO and OPSBA/Government Proposals Chart

On pages 2-4 of this *Central Bargaining Bulletin*, you will find a chart of items ETFO has proposed at the T/OT Central Table. You will also find the responses received from the OPSBA/government team. You will notice that there has been no substantial progress since we last shared these charts with you during ETFO's Steward-Plus-One meetings in May and June.

When reviewing the chart, the most common response from the OPSBA/government team has been "no response; no proposal tabled" – which means, essentially, no answer. Their second most common approach has been to propose a collective agreement strip (i.e., removing or reducing one of your entitlements).

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TEACHER/OCCASIONAL TEACHER CENTRAL BARGAINING: ETFO AND OPSBA/GOVERNMENT PROPOSALS

Issue	ETFO Position	OPSBA/Gov't Position	Comments
Term of the Agreement	Like any other condition in the collective agreement, term should be negotiated between the parties	The government created a regulation mandating a 4-year term for collective agreements	Government ignored input from ETFO, AEFO, OECTA, OSSTF to bargain this issue and, instead, imposed a 4-year term
Salary	Increase of COLA (inflation) + 1% for each year of the agreement	1.25% per year for each year of the agreement	Government's offer is less than what was offered to, and accepted by, CUPE in November 2022
Daily Occasional Teacher Rate	Increase to a minimum daily OT rate of \$275/day as a base for grid connection Then apply increase of COLA (inflation) + 1% to daily OT rate in each year of the agreement	No increase to minimum daily OT rate 1.25% in each year of a 4-year agreement applied to current daily OT rate	Teacher recruitment and retention is a significant issue that needs to be addressed; ETFO's proposal results in a meaningful raise to daily OT rate, making teaching a more attractive professional option OPSBA/government's proposal does not address teaching recruitment/retention concerns
Benefits	Funding increased to maintain benefits at current level for eligible members (teachers, LTO teachers)	STRIP: No increase in funding	If accepted, government's offer would result in erosion of funding for members' benefits and cuts to benefit levels due to inflation
Kindergarten Class Size	Kindergarten class size cap reduced to 27 in 2023-24 and 26 in 2024-25; DECE assigned to <u>all</u> Kindergarten classrooms regardless of class size Class size limits maintained throughout the school year	No response; no proposal tabled	Current Kindergarten class size cap is 29; currently, DECE partner only assigned for classes with more than 15 students After its reporting date in September, a board can increase Kindergarten class sizes beyond the cap
Primary Class Size	Maintain primary class size cap (90% of classes to have 20 or fewer pupils, with no class exceeding 23 pupils) Class size limits maintained throughout the school year	No response; no proposal tabled	After its reporting date in September, a board can increase class sizes beyond the Primary cap

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Issue	ETFO Position	OPSBA/Gov't Position	Comments
Junior/Intermediate Class Size	Limits on Grade 3/4 splits, with 90% of J/I classes to have 24 or fewer pupils, with no class exceeding 27 pupils; class size limits maintained throughout the school year	No response; no proposal tabled	Current J/I class size average is 24.5; after its reporting date in September, a board can disregard J/I class size average
Teacher Professional Judgment	Maintain current language in collective agreement for teacher professional judgement around diagnostic assessment	STRIP: Remove language from collective agreement that supports teacher professional judgment around diagnostic assessment	Professional judgement is one of the most important tools that teachers have in determining which assessment methods will best support the unique learning needs of each student
Occasional Teacher Hiring Process	Hiring for LTO and permanent positions to occur based on a member's experience/seniority and qualifications	Status quo (i.e., no changes)	ETFO's proposal ensures there is a clear, transparent, equitable path to access LTO and permanent teaching positions for occasional teachers
Sick Leave	Status quo (i.e., no changes)	STRIP: Application process to access 120 Short-Term Leave Disability Plan (STLDP) days at 90% of salary (access is currently automatic upon exhaustion of sick leave days); absences of less than 5 days no longer qualify for STLDP days and would be paid at 0% of salary	ETFO members are suffering injury, illness and mental stress due to issues like workload and school-based violence; the issues causing them to take sick leave must be addressed; a punitive approach that blames members and reduces sick leave access is unacceptable
Remote Instruction	Remote instruction to be used in exceptional emergency situations only, and only be provided by school boards/school authorities	No proposal tabled	ETFO believes 'exceptional emergency situations' do not include snow days, temporary school closures, etc.
Hybrid Instruction	Teachers/OTs shall not be required to provide hybrid instruction	Unrestricted use of hybrid	ETFO position: having to teach in person and online simultaneously is an inappropriate, unsustainable teaching/learning model
Supports for Students Fund (SSF)	Funding to support 870 teaching positions for special education, ELL, Indigenous student supports, Early Years, mental health and well-being initiatives for students Positions distributed based on boards' average daily enrolment	Maintain funding for SSF positions negotiated in 2019 only (i.e., 434.4 teachers); no additional positions	There are almost 3,000 elementary public schools; maintaining pre-pandemic support levels will not address student needs

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Issue	ETFO Position	OPSBA/Gov't Position	Comments
IEPs	IEP creation tied to IPRC process and/or teacher's assessment of student's needs Release time to write IEPs	No response; no proposal tabled	ETFO position: ensure any IEPs created are genuinely required to address student needs
Inclusion of Students With Special Needs in General Classroom Programs	Clear procedures/release time to support how students are integrated into general classrooms Alternatives available when integration of a student into a general classroom does not support the student's needs	No proposal tabled	ETFO position: ensuring student success in integration process requires funding, clear procedures and collaboration; when all avenues are tried and students cannot be successful in general classroom, alternative school settings must be available
Health and Safety: Violence in Schools	Release time to complete paperwork related to violent incidents Paid full day of health and safety training for all ETFO members Create common provincial risk assessment, violence reporting and debriefing tool for violent incidents	No response; no proposal tabled	School boards use different online reporting tools, making the collective of province-wide data about violent incidents extremely difficult; common online tools would allow incidents to be measured accurately and addressed effectively
Health and Safety	Maintain Provincial Working Group on Health and Safety (PWGHS)	Renew Letter of Agreement #10 on PWGHS	

Why is ETFO Holding a Central Strike Vote for Teacher and Occasional Teacher Members?

As you know, ETFO has arranged in-person meetings across the province to provide a bargaining update and hold central strike votes.

As members can determine from this chart, the rate of bargaining process at the T/OT Central Table over the last year has been exceedingly slow. The OPSBA/government team is dragging its feet, feeling no pressing need to meaningfully negotiate your key issues, improve on its inferior benefits proposal or withdraw demands for cuts to sick leave and professional judgement.

ETFO has two options at this point:

1. Accept that there will continue to be no progress on key issues for many more months, as well as no movement from the OPSBA/government team to withdraw demands for cuts to sick leave, benefits and professional judgement; OR
2. Demonstrate that our teacher and occasional teacher members will not accept sub-standard proposals or demands for cuts, and apply pressure on the government start bargaining seriously.

ETFO has chosen to protect our members' interests by taking central strike votes, and also by applying for conciliation for both central tables (i.e., Teacher/Occasional Teacher and Education Worker) on August 29, 2023.

Central strike vote meetings are happening across the province from September 18 until October 17. Please see the strike vote calendar at etfocb.ca/calendar for details about your local strike vote meeting.

In addition, ETFO has bargaining scheduled on **September 19, 21 and 22, as well as on October 6, 20 and 27**. The Ministry of Labour has appointed a conciliation officer who will attend bargaining dates and assist us to improve the pace of bargaining at the T/OT Central Table.

Communications About Central Bargaining

ETFO often sends *CB eNewsletter* alerts to members immediately after bargaining sessions. To receive these alerts, please ensure the Federation your most recent email address on file by contacting ETFO's Member Records Department at memberrecords@etfo.org.