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ETFO COLLECTIVE
BARGAINING 2023



ETFO CENTRAL BARGAINING BULLETIN

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Strong Central Strike Vote Mandate from Teacher and Occasional Teacher Members

On Wednesday, October 18, ETFO announced that its 80,000 teacher and occasional teacher members had voted 95% in favour of strike action, if necessary, to support their key central bargaining priorities. President Karen Brown advised media outlets that:

“this strong central strike mandate sends a clear message to the government. Our members have been working for over a year without a contract, and their patience has run out. We need the government to stop stalling and start negotiating seriously on our members’ key priorities, like providing more supports for students with special needs, acknowledging the staffing crisis in education, putting a fair compensation offer on the table, and addressing violence in schools.”

It is important to note that this strike mandate does not necessarily mean teacher and occasional teacher members will be engaging in any form of job action (e.g., work-to-rule, etc.) at this time. ETFO’s preference is to reach a fair agreement that supports our members’ priorities without having to resort to strike action.

However, ETFO does expect the government’s bargaining team to make good faith efforts to meet our members’ needs by engaging in meaningful negotiations in a timely manner. If your Provincial Executive does not see evidence of a consistent change in attitude from the OPSBA/government team, it is possible that additional pressure – beyond taking a strike vote and filing for conciliation – may need to be applied to move bargaining along in the right direction. As always, members would be apprised well in advance if job action needs to occur in order to support their central bargaining priorities.

ETFO Education Worker Central Agreement Has Been Ratified

On October 23, after a six-day online ratification vote, ETFO’s 3,500 education worker members voted 80 per cent in favour of accepting the 2022-2026 Education Worker Central Agreement reached with the Council of Trustees’ Associations (CTA) and the government.

The term of this four-year central agreement for education worker members is from September 1, 2022, to August 31, 2026. This agreement addresses many of our education worker members’ key priorities, including salary increases, maintaining funding for current benefit levels, paid professional learning, job security, and a Supports for Students Fund that protects special education roles. In addition, the agreement includes a mechanism to ensure education worker members receive a Bill 124 financial remedy.

ETFO refused to accept any contract strips to this agreement, which means that the concessions around sick leave and benefits being demanded by the government were ultimately withdrawn and are not part of the central terms accepted by education worker members.

Education worker central agreement terms negotiated during the 2023 round can be found on ETFO's Collective Bargaining website (etfocb.ca) at: <https://etfocb.ca/bargaining-101/central-agreements/>

Bargaining Update: Teacher/Occasional Teacher Central Table

With a 95 per cent strike mandate from our teacher and occasional teacher members in hand, ETFO returned to the central bargaining table on October 20 with the expectation that the Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA)/government bargaining team would be prepared to engage in meaningful discussions on key issues identified by our members.

It was encouraging to note that, for the first time during this round of teacher/occasional teacher central bargaining, and with the assistance of the Ministry of Labour-appointed Conciliation Officer, we were able to engage in sustained, two-way dialogue on several of our members' key priorities (i.e., occasional teacher hiring based on seniority/experience and qualifications, parameters regarding the creation and updating of IEPs, the supports required when integrating students with special needs into regular classrooms, restrictions on hybrid instruction, protecting teacher professional judgement language in our collective agreements).

ETFO has additional central bargaining dates scheduled for October 27, November 6, 14, 16 and 30. Central bargaining dates are posted on etfocb.ca.