

Special Bulletin

November 25, 2016

To all OSSTF/FEESO members

Update on contract extension and Bill 115 remedy discussions

As outlined in the Special Bulletin of Monday, November 21, OSSTF/FEESO representatives met again with representatives of the provincial government on November 23 and 24 to discuss a possible extension to the current central collective agreements for teachers/occasional teachers and support staff employed by district school boards, as well as a remedy pursuant to our successful Bill 115 Charter challenge.

Although we were assured that the school boards' associations would not play a significant role in these discussions and would not prevent a deal, it is now clear that the government had no intention of either limiting the boards' involvement, or even discouraging the impediments the boards placed in the path to an agreement.

Given the opportunity to initiate a collaborative approach to problem-solving, the school boards instead insisted that no mid-term amendments could be made to collective agreements by mutual consent. And given the offer of funding for hundreds of additional support staff to assist and support our most vulnerable students, the school boards refused to guarantee that that funding would be used to provide additional staff.

The inability of the government and the school boards' associations to come to an agreement with OSSTF/FEESO reflects significant problems inherent in the School Boards' Collective Bargaining Act, which gives the school boards veto power and the ability to undermine any opportunity to achieve peace and stability in the education sector.

Their approach to these discussions is reminiscent of the last round of negotiations, throughout which the government, intent on catering to the agenda of the school boards, consistently reneged on commitments that had already been made and impeded discussions with misinformation and premeditated duplicity. Under these circumstances, it is simply not possible to come to an agreement on either a contract extension or a Charter challenge remedy.

OSSTF/FEESO will once again turn our focus to our usual preparations for the next round of central and local bargaining, and will continue to prepare for a return to the courts for a ruling on the Bill 115 Charter challenge remedy.

Please frequently check the *myOSSTF* section of the OSSTF/FEESO website for updated information.