

Provincial Bargaining UPDATE

Matters referred to the Ontario Labour Relations Board

In Provincial Bargaining Update – Issue 9, the Association indicated that the following five matters had been referred to the OLRB:

All matters relating to sick leave (the employer insists on excluding attendance management programs);

1. Seniority as the basis for all teacher transfers;
2. Teacher working conditions and workload as they relate to Individual Education Plans (IEPs);
3. All matters relating to health and safety issues; and
4. All matters relating to staffing provisions.

The Association since met with representatives of the Government of Ontario (the Crown), the Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association (OCSTA), and the chair of the Ontario Labour Relations Board (OLRB) on January 9 and January 19.

At the January 9 meeting, the chair of the OLRB acted as a conciliator and the three parties were able to reach agreement on the scope of central bargaining, with the exception of the following two items:

1. Seniority as the basis for all teacher transfers; and
2. Changes in employment status as a result of fluctuations in student enrolment (commonly known as teacher assignments and surplus teacher provisions).

These two matters were put before the OLRB on Monday, January 19. Arguments from both sides have since concluded and the Association is now waiting on a decision from the chair of the OLRB as to whether these items shall be included in the scope of central bargaining.

New Provincial Bargaining dates set

The following dates have been scheduled for Provincial Bargaining:

- February 10 and 11, 2015
- February 27 and 28, 2015
- March 9, 10 and 11, 2015

The Association has informed the Crown and OCSTA that we expect to exchange comprehensive proposals on February 10. We will provide a summary of the employer's proposal once received.

In the meantime, we will continue to keep you, the member, informed through regular and timely updates. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact your local bargaining unit president. Unit contact information can be found at <http://bit.ly/1ARrgSH>.

What can we expect in the education sector?

In addition to what is happening with other public-sector agreements, the Association has a few clues as to the direction that the government is heading with the education sector. For instance, the government has repeatedly stated that there is “no new money.” Furthermore, page five of the “Education Funding Consultation Guide,” states that “the government is looking for new approaches to continue to deliver key priorities within

current fiscal realities. Consultations are an important tool as the Province follows the path to a balanced budget by 2017-18. This means that permanent savings need to be found. For the Ministry of Education, this is a significant planning challenge as it represents a potential reduction of 1 to 2% in total revenue creating an impact of \$250-\$500 million.” The government’s approach to negotiations is clearly part of its austerity plan.

As the Ontario Labour Relations Board (OLRB) will not render its decision on the five items in dispute referred by your provincial bargaining team until sometime mid-winter, it is unlikely that we will receive the employer’s proposal until late winter or early spring. If the government and the employer continue to pursue concessions as they have with other public-sector agreements, the Association will need an overwhelming strike vote to try to change this direction.

In the meantime, we will continue to keep you, the member, informed through regular and timely updates. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact your local bargaining unit president. Unit contact information can be found at <http://bit.ly/1ARrgSH>.