Bargaining Bulletin

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A message from your Provincial Executive

Opening the door to stripping workers' rights

On January 2, 2013, the Minister of Education announced that she had used her powers under Bill 115 to impose contracts on OSSTF/FEESO members who currently do not have contracts for the period of September 1, 2012 to August 31, 2014.

By taking away OSSTF/FEESO members' right to strike and imposing contracts, the Minister and her government have proven their lack of respect for the rights of education workers, democratically elected school boards of trustees, and the citizens of Ontario. By using the Bill 115 legislation, the government has officially taken away the ability of our members and school boards, our employers, to engage in a free collective bargaining process that has been successful for many years.

The Minister's announcement means:

- you are not in a legal strike position and therefore strike action cannot continue
- you must fulfill all imposed contractual obligations as well as obligations under the *Education Act*

Closing the door on good will, respect and trust

Good will, trust and respect are the foundation of a strong education system. OSSTF/FEESO members and leaders have repeatedly told the Minister and her government that they cannot legislate or impose goodwill. Good will is earned and can only be achieved through collaborative, respectful working relationships. That message has been ignored. The Minister of Education and her government have damaged the good will, broken the trust and undermined the respect.

While we are resuming our imposed contractual obligations, and all of our duties in accordance with the *Education Act*, it has always been the position of OSSTF/FEESO that the performance of extra-curricular activities is voluntary.

However, phase two of OSSTF/FEESO's Strategic Action Plan shared with members on December 3, made it clear that if the Minister through Bill 115 orders that the contractual or *Education Act* requirements be fulfilled (i.e, legal strike is ended), voluntary or extracurricular activities **WILL NOT** resume.

Future actions

The Provincial Executive met on Thursday, January 3 and will meet again on January 8 and January 9. There will also be a meeting of all local Bargaining Unit Presidents on January 9 to discuss recent developments and future actions.

In the meantime, legal counsel is reviewing the regulations used to impose the collective agreement as well as other documents released by the government. We will keep you informed about their analysis and any decisions about future actions that the Provincial Executive reaches in consultation with local leaders.

Kenneth Coran, President