

## OSSTF/FEESO Central Bargaining Update June 15, 2023

### Upcoming Central Bargaining Dates

Central bargaining will continue through the summer, and OSSTF/FEESO has confirmed the following central bargaining dates for June, July, and August:

June 28-29  
July 5, July 7  
August 17

As we have shared previously, the pace of bargaining as well as the unwillingness of the government and School Board Employer Associations to engage in genuine discussions on issues that are critical to ensuring quality education for Ontario students is concerning. Ontario students deserve to have their education delivered by qualified teachers and education workers in clean, healthy, and safe schools. The government's actions call into question their commitment to the bargaining process and their belief in the value and importance of a strong, fully funded public education system. OSSTF/FEESO remains committed to honest and fair negotiations and will continue to defend Ontario's public education system, the teachers and education workers that make it great, and the interests of the students they serve.

### Ontario Government Appeals Ruling that Bill 124 was Unconstitutional

In December 2022, the Ontario Superior Court of Justice ruled that Bill 124 violated the Canadian *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. The Ford government quickly appealed this decision, and the Ontario Court of Appeal will hear the appeal over three consecutive days beginning on June 20.

When the Ford government passed Bill 124 to limit public sector wage increases to one per cent annually, they claimed the law was necessary due to a "looming financial crisis" that Ontario was facing. The Ontario Superior Court of Justice rejected this argument, finding that the economic reality did not justify the government's decision to artificially suppress the wages of workers in the broader public sector, noting that over the same period, the Ford government handed out billions of dollars worth of corporate subsidies and tax cuts for the wealthy.

We now know that the Ford government passed Bill 124 fully aware it would cause a staffing crisis in health care, and we are now seeing similar staffing concerns take root in public education. Schools across the province are struggling to find qualified teachers and education workers. The government's decision to pursue this appeal, despite the negative impacts that Bill 124 has had on Ontario's hospitals and schools, is unfortunate. As one of the trade unions that successfully

challenged Bill 124, OSSTF/FEESO will fight to uphold the Court's ruling. We hope to have a decision by fall 2023. We will keep Members informed of any updates or developments regarding Bill 124 and any potential remedies.

### **Take Action & Get Involved!**

OSSTF/FEESO Provincial Executive, Staff, Local Leaders, and Members have stood shoulder to shoulder with our labour allies calling for fairer wages in this province that better reflect the rising cost of living. These actions will continue throughout the rest of the year and into 2024 as workers rise up against the Ford government's big business agenda.

A leader in this fight is the Ontario Federation of Labour (OFL), who launched the Enough is Enough campaign, and saw a huge turnout for their [June 3<sup>rd</sup> Day of Action](#). OSSTF/FEESO is proud to have supported this campaign from its inception and it was truly meaningful to see the combined efforts take shape across the province on June 3<sup>rd</sup>.

The campaign will continue! We encourage everyone to [stay connected with the OFL](#) and OSSTF/FEESO will continue to share opportunities for getting involved in activism and labour actions.

### **Stay Informed!**

OSSTF/FEESO will continue to provide regular updates, and we encourage all Members to remain vocal in their communities and on social media regarding the failures of this government to properly invest in public education. All Members will receive a mailout later this month with a "Don't Shortchange Public Education" handout containing key messaging for friends, family, and social media.

You can also find general bargaining information on the [Bargaining 101 page](#) on the OSSTF/FEESO Update webpage as well as an [article on logging into myOSSTF](#) to ensure your contact details are up to date.

**The Bargaining Bulletins are now available on the *myOSSTF* section of the OSSTF/FEESO website. Please check *myOSSTF* for updates.**