

Teacher/Occasional Teacher Central Bargaining Table Update June 28-29, 2023

OSSTF/FEESO met with representatives from the government and the Ontario Public School Boards Association (OPSBA) on June 28 and 29 at the Teacher/Occasional Teacher central bargaining table.

Once again, OSSTF/FEESO tried to engage in productive conversations on bargaining issues related to staff recruitment and retention, learning conditions for students, and working conditions for staff.

Despite the Minister of Education's public assertions that he would like to see deals reached before the start of the school year, the appetite to engage on these issues from the government side was limited. With the school year drawing to a close, we would have hoped that the government would have engaged in more significant discussions at the bargaining table.

Among the issues we are attempting to address are the consequences of the government's recently announced intention to allow students to leave high school after grade 10 to pursue an apprenticeship in skilled trades. There are currently other successful pathway programs for students to pursue apprenticeships while completing all secondary school course requirements in Ontario and in other jurisdictions. Initial indications are that the Ford government's new plan involves students leaving high school to pursue full-time employment, a plan that disregards undisputed evidence that students who complete a full secondary education have better overall outcomes regardless of their pathway beyond high school.

Earlier this week, People for Education released a report, called [*Risky Business: Choosing between school and apprenticeships may have unintended consequences*](#). The report highlighted the many existing skills and apprenticeship programs students can access, including the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program (OYAP), Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM), cooperative education, and dual-credit programs. Overall, the report echoes many of the concerns that OSSTF/FEESO has raised with the government.

Bill 124 Appeal

The hearings related to Ontario Government's appeal of a lower court ruling that Bill 124 was unconstitutional were held last week on June 20-22. A summary of the hearing was issued in D/BU Memo #190, which is available in [myOSSTF](#).

Staffing Cuts in School Boards

OSSTF/FEESO continues to monitor the increasing number of reports of staffing cuts in many school boards for the next school year, which demonstrates the real underfunding of public education in the province. As previously reported, real funding is down by approximately \$1200 **per student** since the Ford government took office, meaning that school boards are not receiving the necessary funding to maintain important programs and supports for students, including those who have special needs, into the next school year.

Future Bargaining Dates

OSSTF/FEESO has confirmed three additional central bargaining dates with the government:

July 5 – Teacher/Occasional Teacher

July 7 – Education Worker

August 17 – Education Worker

You can find general bargaining information on the [Bargaining 101 page](#) on the OSSTF/FEESO Update webpage as well as an [article on logging into myOSSTF](#) and ensuring 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.