

News Release

TALKS FAIL: CATHOLIC TEACHERS MOVE TOWARD STRIKE ACTION

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TORONTO – The Ontario English Catholic Teachers’ Association has taken a stand against the provincial government’s efforts to further erode the classroom experience for students and teachers, by placing itself in a legal strike position by mid-August.

Despite its best efforts to reach an agreement with the employer team (the government of Ontario and the Ontario Catholic School Trustees’ Association), OECTA was unwilling to accept attacks on its collective agreement that would adversely affect student learning conditions and the working environment of Ontario’s Catholic teachers.

“The government’s aim is to make profound cuts to our collective agreements that would have a negative impact on students, their families, and our hard working teachers, who are already stretched to the limit,” said Ann Hawkins, OECTA president. “Our members are standing up for what’s right for the education system, principles the employer does not seem to be taking seriously.”

The government and trustees are intent on eroding teachers’ working conditions despite the negative impact it will have in the classroom, and for families across Ontario.

In April, OECTA members voted overwhelmingly in favour of a strike mandate, with 94.2%. Following that vote, OECTA continued to bargain with the assistance of a mediator appointed by the Ministry of Labour. On June 24, OECTA filed for conciliation, hoping this process would provide the impetus for meaningful negotiations to continue.

Union representatives have requested a “no board” report, issued when conciliation is unsuccessful and the parties are unable to negotiate a collective agreement. OECTA will be in a legal strike position 17 days after the “no board” report is issued, likely by mid-August.

“We are extremely disappointed,” said Hawkins. “The Liberal government has repeatedly stated its commitment to the bargaining process, yet remains more interested in appeasing the elected trustees than addressing the needs of teachers and their students.”

OECTA represents the 50,000 professional women and men who teach all grades in publicly funded English Catholic schools in Ontario.

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