

**ELEMENTARY TEACHERS' FEDERATION OF ONTARIO
TORONTO OCCASIONAL TEACHER LOCAL
PROVINCIAL TAKEOVER
BULLETIN #1**

June 23, 2008

LET'S CLOSE THE GAP

On Friday, June 6th, 2008, presidents from each ETFO local in Ontario travelled to 480 University Avenue to attend a specially convened meeting and be witness to a major press conference. At that event, President David Clegg publicly announced that in this round of bargaining ETFO's leadership and membership would commit themselves to closing the historical gap in working conditions between the elementary and secondary panels.

Following the media briefing, and with cameras recording the event, local presidents, on behalf of their memberships, formally entered into a signed agreement with the ETFO provincial office known as provincial takeover. This is only the second time in ETFO's history that all locals have entered into takeover on the same date.

For any members who were not a part of ETFO's membership on June 2, 2004, when the other province-wide takeover occurred, it is important to understand what the agreement between the local and province entails. Upon signing, each local has immediate access to provincial resources that include financial support along with enhanced staff assistance. The central body assumes the responsibility for negotiations until a collective agreement is reached for the local. In essence, additional support from start to finish is the hallmark of provincial takeover.

As you are aware, all of ETFO's locals have served notice to their boards that they wish to begin the process of bargaining new collective agreements, since present ones expire on August 31, 2008. But what is different about this round of bargaining is the scope of what ETFO must achieve in order to eradicate the discrimination that exists between the working conditions of elementary teachers and secondary teachers.

Let us be clear, no one begrudges any other union better working conditions. However, ETFO members must finally be allowed to share in those entitlements as well. To achieve the goals we seek in collective bargaining will require funds that the current government has not yet offered.

But bargaining is not only about provincial goals, it is also about enhancing local rights and entitlements. These issues are ones that members commented upon and advocated for during the drafting and subsequent ratification of the local preliminary submissions.

Beginning this month, ETFO negotiating teams are headed to bargaining tables across Ontario to arrange dates so that we can begin to negotiate for the changes that we know are needed and long overdue.

Our major goals of full credit for occasional teaching assignments, smaller class size, increased time for preparation, assessment and reporting and other key issues will soon become the focus of editorials, opinion columns, letters to the editor and newscasts. To stay on top of the issues, ETFO will continue to produce bulletins such as this one, brochures that will be distributed by stewards, as well as new video clips and electronic messaging available on our website at www.etfo.ca.

Please take the time to visit the website often, but most importantly make sure that you get all the information that is available to you. One of the ways you can stay informed is to sign up for the ETFO electronic newsletter and have it sent to your e-mail address, where you can catch up on the information when you get a chance. The sign up box for the electronic newsletter is beside the pencil crayons on the right side of the home page at www.etfo.ca. The electronic venues for information are particularly helpful to occasional teacher members since they can access these sources from home.

It can't be stated often enough - please do not be swayed by, or listen to, unsubstantiated rumours. The only vehicle for reliable information comes from ETFO. Should you have any questions about negotiations or CLOSE THE GAP, call the local office and speak with one of the released officers.

As of June 17th, using conservative assumptions, ETFO members have already completed over 110 hours more assigned duties than their secondary colleagues. How many of your fellow elementary teachers know that fact? Occasional teacher members who work in both panels understand how large the gap in working conditions is between elementary and secondary teachers.

If we are going to be successful, then every member of ETFO should recognize that disparity. We must ensure that in every staff room, every school and every public elementary education work site in Ontario, we are speaking about the inequality that the gap represents and the absolute necessity of eliminating it.

ETFO will be relying upon the Local's Leadership to educate the members and if all else fails to prepare the members for the possibility of any job action that might be necessary during the course of negotiations. ETFO will be doing its utmost to achieve a negotiated settlement, one that meets the needs and aspirations of its dedicated, hard-working membership.

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