

Bargaining Bulletin

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On May 10th, in discussions with representatives from the Ministry of Education and with the Ontario Public School Boards Association, the Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association, Association des conseils scolaires des écoles publiques de l'Ontario and Association franco-ontarienne des conseils scolaires catholiques, OSSTF/FEESO tabled a proposal on behalf of its support staff members. While the proposal was comprehensive in its scope, cost savings measures designed to address financial concerns previously expressed by the government were highlighted.

The proposal included 0% wage increases in each of the next 2 years with the exception of a lump sum inflation adjustment payment for those members earning lower incomes. The proposal also called for a simple cost of living adjustment in years 3 and 4 of a four year deal. This proposal would have created an equitable and manageable 2 year wage freeze as the government indicated it is seeking.

Also included in the proposal was a plan to encourage the retirement of more senior members to be replaced by new members. This would not only save money through reduced salaries, but would also create much needed employment opportunities in Ontario.

Further, OSSTF/FEESO's proposal to create employee run benefits plans would have not only allowed school boards to remove unfunded liabilities from their books but would have also provided the opportunity for ongoing efficiencies and cost savings.

Each of these proposals would have resulted in significant and real financial savings. None of these proposals would have had a negative impact on front line services delivered to students. Despite the offer made by OSSTF/FEESO to forego salary increases, as well as proposals to find efficiencies through other cost cutting measures, the government rejected the proposal immediately. OSSTF/FEESO is disappointed that its efforts to avoid needless conflict in education have been rejected. Further, OSSTF/FEESO finds the government's insistence in implementing painful cuts to the already low incomes of support staff workers extremely troubling.



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