

## **Update on status of negotiations with Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation**

**March 14, 2015**

Bargaining between the province and unions representing public servants, including teachers and school support staff, has been underway since the fall of 2014. Contracts have expired and are currently being bargained, as outlined in the *School Boards Collective Bargaining Act, 2014*.

Central bargaining has been taking place between the province, unions and the Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA), which represents public school boards at the provincial table. The Peel District School Board has been actively negotiating on local issues with the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation (OSSTF).

On February 25, 2015, OSSTF-Peel (representing secondary teachers) filed for local conciliation with the Ministry of Labour for both secondary teachers and secondary occasional teachers. There are six other boards in the province in the same situation, including:

- Durham District School Board
- Halton District School Board
- Lakehead District School Board
- Ottawa-Carleton District School Board
- Rainbow District School Board
- Waterloo Region District School Board

At this point, we do not know why Peel was chosen as one of the boards OSSTF has gone into conciliation with—we believe our local bargaining had been progressing well.

Under the *Labour Relations Act*, any party involved in bargaining can apply for conciliation through the Ministry of Labour. In our case, OSSTF-Peel has asked the Ministry of Labour to assign a conciliator.

During collective bargaining, parties must use the government's conciliation services before they can engage in a strike or lock-out. During conciliation, discussions may continue with the assistance of the ministry-appointed conciliator until an agreement is reached or the parties are at impasse.

It's important to note that although conciliation is a normal part of the collective bargaining process, it is also a step towards possible strike action. Strike action may include withdrawal from specific activities, such as staff meetings or after-school activities, but may be as broad as a full walkout. A minimum five days' notice must be provided to boards before any action is taken.

**In a statement on Saturday, March 14, the president of OSSTF Ontario announced that OSSTF is considering a full withdrawal of services in the seven districts--including Peel--by the end of April 2015.**

We understand this information about potential withdrawal of services will cause anxiety for our students, parents and staff. As a board, we remain committed to reaching fair, negotiated agreements and avoiding any disruption to student learning. We value our secondary teachers as dedicated, caring professionals committed to student success.

We want to assure you that should there be any job action, we will immediately communicate with our parents and students.