



Roadmap to Bargaining



Collective Bargaining 2012
Control Your Future

1 Your agreement: key to your working life

Your collective agreement sets key conditions of your employment — salary, benefits, working conditions, health and safety, pregnancy leaves, job security and more. Current agreements for most ETFO members will expire on August 31, 2012.

The process to reach a new collective agreement is underway, and you play a vital role in that process.

3 Driving to an agreement

Your union bargaining team is made up of members of your local plus provincial ETFO staff. In addition to local negotiations, there may also be provincial-level talks involving the ETFO provincial office and the Ministry of Education. However, to be legally binding, any provisions tentatively agreed to during provincial talks must then be bargained into each local agreement.

Once a tentative local agreement is reached, members of the local take part in a secret-ballot vote. An agreement is ratified if a majority of those voting accepts it.

While negotiations always result in a new agreement eventually, roadblocks during bargaining sometimes arise. If bargaining reaches an impasse, either side can request assistance from the Ministry of Labour. If no settlement can be reached with the Ministry's assistance, either side may ask the Minister of Labour for a "no-board report." A no-board report starts the clock ticking towards the date when the union can legally call a strike, or the employer can impose a lock-out.

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2 The next step: preliminary submission

In October, provincial bargaining goals were approved based on input from ETFO locals (see controlyourfuture.ca). In addition, each ETFO local develops its own goals — you may already have filled out a survey or provided other input to help your local executive in this work.

Together, these local and provincial goals form the basis of your local's preliminary submission. Once approved by a vote among local members, the preliminary submission becomes the initial set of bargaining proposals the local gives the school board. The school board will also propose changes to the collective agreement during bargaining; typically, its proposals try to reduce the rights protecting your working conditions.

By law, bargaining happens at the local level. Each ETFO local gives its school board notice of intent to begin negotiations. During this round of bargaining, notice will be given by June 2012. After notice, the two sides meet to discuss amendments to the agreement. Throughout negotiations, you will be given information about bargaining and will have the opportunity to provide feedback.

4 You're in control

ETFO bargains for settlements, not strikes; in practice very few strike votes result in job action. However, you may be asked to participate in a secret-ballot strike vote. By law, strike votes can occur no earlier than 30 days before the agreement expires and any time thereafter. A strike in any ETFO local can be called if a majority of those casting ballots votes in favour. During any job action or lockout, bargaining typically continues until a tentative settlement is reached.

Though the negotiating process can take time, collective agreements over the years have made a real difference in the working lives of educators. That difference was achieved because of ETFO members' commitment to fair and meaningful bargaining. During the upcoming round of negotiations, continue that commitment — and control your future.

Visit ETFO's bargaining website for the latest CB information, short videos, and explanations of the issues.

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