

# Protecting YOUR RIGHTS & Defending WORKING CONDITIONS

Your collective agreement is a contract negotiated on your behalf; it is the legal document describing your workplace rights, entitlements, and protections. Every ETFO collective agreement has two parts, **part A (central)** and **part B (local)**. It is important to be familiar with your entire agreement.

## PART A

The **central agreement** is negotiated by ETFO provincial. It outlines specific rights for you and all ETFO members.

Due to the union's structure and representation of different groups of workers in public elementary schools, there are two central collective agreements. One applies to teachers and occasional teachers and the other applies to education workers (designated early childhood educators, education support personnel, professional support personnel) in ETFO.

## PART B

The **local agreement** contains details, rights, and procedures that are specific to your board. It is negotiated by your local with support from ETFO provincial.

Once an entitlement is negotiated into your collective agreement, it can be improved upon and strengthened in subsequent central or local bargaining rounds. In between rounds of bargaining, when the collective agreement is in effect, the language or the rights and entitlements in the contract are intact. During bargaining, entitlements are sometimes threatened if the government seeks to claw back rights and benefits or change working conditions.

For almost 30 years, ETFO has fought for – and won – many improvements to working conditions for members through assertive collective bargaining and proactive political lobbying. These successes include 200 minutes of preparation time in 2004. ETFO's fierce advocacy also resulted in Primary class size caps in the 2004 round of bargaining, reductions in class size averages in grades 4 to 8 during the 2008 round, and a staffing model for the new Full-Day Kindergarten program that included designated early childhood educators (DECEs) in 2009. As a result, we welcomed DECEs as members in 2010.

The enshrining of teacher professional judgement through the 2015 Teacher/Occasional Teacher Central Agreement continues to be a critical win for teacher members and the profession. In the last round of bargaining in 2022, we also preserved sick leave, negotiated funding for 401 new specialist teaching positions, and increased wages.

These are important wins, but there has been a significant decrease in education funding in real dollars since the Ford government came to power in 2018.

**Educators and students across the province have been feeling the impact of these cuts for years. This is why we must continue to organize, mobilize and be prepared to fight back!**



# Your Role in Defending the Collective Agreement

Every collective agreement outlines roles and responsibilities for workers and the employer. The language in your collective agreement is legally binding upon your employer, your union, and you as a union member. This is why we say every member has a role in upholding the collective agreement.

When issues or concerns arise, it is essential that you immediately inform your school steward or your ETFO local if you have questions or concerns about how your collective agreement is being implemented at your workplace or by the school board.

Speaking with your steward or a representative from your local to draw attention to workplace issues and inconsistencies is a concrete way that you can help enforce the collective agreement and help your local prepare for the next round of bargaining.

Your collective agreement is an essential tool.

## READ IT, MAINTAIN IT, AND TAKE ACTION TO DEFEND IT.

If you don't have a copy of your agreement, contact your ETFO local today. Contact information can be found at [etfo.ca/locals](http://etfo.ca/locals).

# Know Your Rights!

## Access Support From Your Union

Professional Relations Services (PRS) staff working in the provincial office are available to provide confidential advice, support, information, and intervention for members who are experiencing professional difficulties. The PRS staff team operates on a daily on-call schedule Monday to Friday.

Support is available for a wide range of issues, including performance appraisal, conflict resolution, duty to report, harassment and discrimination, and allegations and complaints from your professional college.

To help members stay up to date on professional changes and to know their rights, a series of PRS Matters bulletins are available on the ETFO website at [etfo.ca/prsmatters](http://etfo.ca/prsmatters).

These bulletins address a variety of important legal and professional issues impacting teachers and other education workers.

Topics include:

- duty to report and obligations under the *Child and Family Services Act*
- performance appraisals and evaluations
- professional judgement
- using social media
- maternity and parental leaves



If you need professional advice or support, call the provincial office at 416-962-3836 or toll-free at 1-888-838-3836.

