

Peel teachers and school board agree to arbitration

After three days of mediation, the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation (OSSTF/FEESO) bargaining units representing secondary teachers and occasional secondary teachers in District 19 Peel and the Peel District School Board will implement the interim award of an arbitration panel.

While the panel's award was a partial award and does not address all local issues, many issues were settled that will now be included as local terms in both bargaining units' collective agreements. However, this award does not comprise a complete collective agreement and the parties could find themselves at impasse at a future date, depending on the disposition of central table issues.

"I am happy to report on behalf of the OSSTF/FEESO bargaining team that we were able to reach consensus with the Peel District School Board on many of the items in our local contracts," commented District 19 President Mike Bettiol. "It was unfortunate that it took seven months, a full work withdrawal and the threat of arbitration to accomplish this much with the employer. We hope that this spirit of cooperation continues so that we can complete the agreement with the Board in the coming months as we move on to arbitration."

Cindy Dubu , OSSTF/FEESO vice-president and chair of the bargaining team commended the bargaining team members for their efforts and dedication in addressing their members' issues and commented that "OSSTF/FEESO has always believed that it was possible to reach a local negotiated deal despite the Peel Board's refusal to negotiate. We saw more bargaining and movement in these three days of mediation than during all of our previous bargaining dates and achieved results."

"From the beginning, we have said that we respect our secondary teachers as dedicated professionals, who are committed to student success," commented Board Chair Janet McDougald. "We were focused on reaching a fair, negotiated settlement, and are pleased that we resolved our local bargaining issues. At this point, we now must be hopeful that the central table will reach an agreement and the school year can start for Peel students without disruption."