



## PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 25, 2016

### **Rainy River District School Board is deeply disappointed at OSSTF's needless disruption of student learning** ***OSSTF decision to stage weekly one-day strikes results in cancelling instructional programs for students in Grades 9-12***

Provincial representatives from the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation (OSSTF), representing secondary teachers and secondary occasional teachers in the Rainy River District School Board, provided notice on April 25, 2016, of strike action in the form of weekly full withdrawal of services one-day per week, commencing April 27, 2016.

All high schools will be closed to students on Wednesday, April 27, 2016 as the School Board will not be able to provide a safe environment for our students due to inadequate supervision while teachers are absent.

Dianne McCormack, Board Chair, expressed that, "We are deeply disappointed as a Board in the actions of the OSSTF leadership. There is no legitimate reason to disrupt student learning. We have been very clear that there is no need to escalate their withdrawal of services. We have urged them back to the table, remaining willing to meet anytime for as long as it takes. In going ahead with this strike action, OSSTF is irresponsibly disrupting the school year for Rainy River District secondary students as a political tactic. There is no need for bargaining or negotiation pressure that would result in our secondary schools to be on strike – none. As I previously stated, there are no local issues that are insurmountable."

"This action is unfair not only to our secondary students as they try to complete a successful school year, but also to our committed secondary teachers. I cannot imagine that our secondary teachers want their jobs to be used as a political pressure tactic – particularly when we are clearly committed to a fair, negotiated settlement," she said.

"I don't wish to debate the notion that we were not 'serious' about these talks," said Chair McCormack. "The Board has spent over 150 hours trying to negotiate a settlement, and has offered solutions from mediation to arbitration to resolve the contract issues. We've completed negotiations, reaching agreements with four of our unions. I'd say that means we're serious, and that we're making progress."

"We ask OSSTF to do what is best for students and families, as well as their local members, and lift this strike action," she said. "The current strike order will put our secondary students out of school at a critical time – and without purpose. We don't need to be pressured to negotiate or to be serious. We're already there."

The Rainy River District School Board values its secondary teachers and the work that they do with students. The Board remains willing to negotiate, and sincerely regrets this disruption for students and their families.

The School Board values its partnership with parents, and will provide any new information and updates as they arise. There is also a dedicated section accessible from the front of the School Board's website at [www.rrdsb.com](http://www.rrdsb.com), for ongoing updates. Parents/guardians and students are thanked for their patience and understanding during this challenging time.

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Mission: *"Together, we empower all students to believe in themselves, to achieve, and to dream."*

Vision: *"The Rainy River District School Board is an innovative community, nurturing hearts and minds, to build a foundation for tomorrow, today."*