



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 19, 2016

Rainy River District School Board is deeply disappointed as OSSTF abandons chance for labour peace

After just one day, Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation (OSSTF) walked away from the bargaining table on the afternoon of April 12, 2016. This was the 12th attempt by the Rainy River District School Board to reach a fair, local negotiated settlement with OSSTF District 5B. OSSTF District 5B remains as one of only three secondary federations in 31 public school boards, across the province, without a local agreement.

Says Dianne McCormack, Board Chair, "We are deeply disappointed as a Board in the actions of the OSSTF leadership in this negotiation process. While they talk about respect for classroom teachers, something we agree with without question, they actually demonstrate a profound disrespect for the bargaining process. When OSSTF abandons the bargaining table, they also destroy the chance for a local settlement that serves our incredible, committed secondary teachers, and our secondary students. This choice by OSSTF leadership is not in the best interests of those students, nor OSSTF members. We urge OSSTF District 5B to return to the table to work with us on a fair, negotiated settlement."

She emphasizes, "Let me be clear about this process – there is absolutely zero reason for OSSTF District 5B to escalate their job action to get us back to the table. The Board remains willing to meet. All that is needed is a willingness, on their part, to meet, to negotiate in good faith, to come together with mutual respect and understanding and agree on a local deal that is fair to teachers, to students and to the Board, something we have always done here in the Rainy River District."

"There are no local issues that are insurmountable," says Chair McCormack. "The legislation requires most negotiated items to be dealt with at the provincial table, which was done. What remains now, are local issues that, while important, should not have resulted in prolonged job action that directly affects our secondary students, especially when almost every other secondary school student and teacher in the province is enjoying a truly normal school year. If parents, students, taxpayers and our teachers are wondering why that is the case, we want to be very clear about our position: we want a deal, and OSSTF Local needs to be at the table for that to happen.

The Rainy River board has negotiated with OSSTF on local issues a total of 12 days from April 30, 2015 to April 12, 2016. 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. The Board is serious about negotiating a deal as soon as possible, and wants OSSTF to return to the table. The Board will meet anytime, anywhere, for as long as it takes to reach a fair settlement.

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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."*

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