

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

When can we vote?

The Ontario Labour Relations Board (OLRB) will order and conduct a vote within 5 working days from the date of application.

Where do we vote?

The OLRB notifies the employer and the union of the voting locations and of the time of day the vote will be held. The employer must post the OLRB notices at all work locations where affected employees can readily access the notices. OLRB votes are held at workplaces during working hours.

We have a negotiated collective agreement. What happens when we join OSSTF/FEESO?

Your terms and conditions of employment in your collective agreement continue until OSSTF/FEESO negotiates improvement. Affiliation with OSSTF/FEESO will strengthen your bargaining power and better place you to defend and/or improve your current working terms and conditions. *(OLRA section 16 and 86)*

What about our independence when we join OSSTF/FEESO?

Local autonomy is the hallmark of OSSTF/FEESO. Our members retain their local decision-making power, set their negotiating priorities, elect their executive, determine their own budget and benefit from all of the services, support and resources we provide to achieve locally determined goals.

If I previously signed another union card, can I sign an OSSTF/FEESO card?

Yes. If you want to vote on joining with OSSTF/FEESO, fill out and sign the OSSTF/FEESO card and return it in the envelope provided or contact Colombe Beauregard to pick it up.

Vote Count

How is the result of the vote determined?

If 50% plus 1 of those who cast their ballot vote in favour of becoming members of OSSTF/FEESO, we immediately begin working on your behalf, protecting your employment terms and conditions and assist you in negotiating the improvements you want.

If 50% plus 1 of those who cast their ballot vote against joining OSSTF/FEESO, the OLRB dismisses the application and the group and unions are barred from re-applying for certification for one year! This is not the most favourable position to be in when attempting to negotiate with an employer.

DUES: 1.3% of gross wages/salary

PLEASE NOTE: *You will not begin to pay dues until you vote to accept your first OSSTF/FEESO collective agreement.*

SERVICES AND SUPPORT:

As a member of OSSTF/FEESO, you and your executive will have access to greater financial resources, training opportunities, specialized expertise and support, even though you will not begin paying dues until you vote to accept your first OSSTF/FEESO collective agreement.

For more information contact:
Colombe Beauregard, Organizer
Protective Services Department
E-mail: beaurec@osstf.on.ca

Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation TEL 416.751.8300
Fédération des enseignantes-enseignants TEL 1.800.267.7867
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UNIVERSITY SUPPORT STAFF



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HOW TO JOIN OSSTF/FEESO

In order for OSSTF/FEESO to file an application with the Ontario Labour Relations Board (OLRB) to become your bargaining agent, we have to file proof that a significant number of support staff want to vote on joining OSSTF/FEESO. The “proof” used is signed membership cards.

1 - Sign Membership Cards:

A signed card indicates your desire to secure bargaining rights through OSSTF/FEESO and protect your future working relationship. By law, your decision to join the union is strictly confidential.

The employer is never told who signed a card nor do they ever know how you voted individually.

2 - Apply For Certification:

When at least 40% of your co-workers agree to join OSSTF/FEESO by signing cards, an application is sent to the OLRB requesting certification.

Employer Response: Your employer has 2 days to respond to the application and must submit a current list of all affected employees proposed in the bargaining unit.

3 - Secret Ballot Vote:

The OLRB will order and conduct a secret ballot vote within 5 working days from the date of application by OSSTF/FEESO.

Where to vote: The vote is conducted at specific workplaces and during work hours. Notification of the time and place of the vote is to be communicated to all affected employees.

Get Certified as an OSSTF/FEESO Bargaining Unit:

To be certified as OSSTF/FEESO members in your workplace, you need a majority of eligible voters (50% plus 1) **to choose** that option at the voting polls.

CONGRATULATIONS!

You are now a member of OSSTF/FEESO, one of the largest all-inclusive educational unions in Ontario.

NOW WE START WORKING ON YOUR BEHALF

Set Your Local Constitution and Bylaws:

With the assistance of an OSSTF/FEESO representative, your bargaining unit will establish a local constitution and set of bylaws that will govern your bargaining unit. Your local constitution and bylaws will be adopted by vote at a general meeting of your membership.

Elect Your Local Executive Officers and Committees:

Once a draft constitution and bylaws have been adopted at an inaugural meeting, the members will also elect a new executive committee, including a president, treasurer and chief negotiator to work on your behalf.

Give Notice to Bargain to Your Employer:

OSSTF/FEESO, as your new bargaining agent, will notify your employer that we wish to meet and negotiate a new collective agreement. A professional negotiator from OSSTF/FEESO and your collective bargaining committee will meet with the employer to negotiate your first OSSTF/FEESO contract. The employer is legally bound to bargain with your union in good faith.

PLEASE NOTE: Under OLRA Section 86—Working conditions may not be altered.

STRONGER TOGETHER

You can take the first step toward achieving your goals right now. Complete and sign the enclosed OSSTF/FEESO membership card and return it in the envelope provided. Indicate the date you signed it and place your signature on the appropriate line. The witness can be anyone over the age of 18 including a co-worker or family member.

SO WHAT CAN YOU EXPECT FROM THE EMPLOYER NOW THAT A CAMPAIGN HAS BEGUN TO CERTIFY OSSTF/FEESO AS YOUR UNION?

The following guideline is provided to give you an idea of what the Employer can and can't do during the campaign.

The following points are summarized from Sections 70, 72 and 76 of the *Ontario Labour Relations Act*.(OLRA)

The Employer can:

- Tell you what they think about the union as long as the employer doesn't use threats or undue influence;
- Make a pitch for the board and say how good your working conditions are;
- Resolve problems that have irritated people for years before a vote is held.

The Employer can't:

- Ask you directly whether you have signed a card or are thinking of voting for the union;
- Ask about union sponsored meetings or activities;
- Call you into an office to talk about the union, unless you ask for the meeting;
- Discipline you as a union supporter for doing something employees who don't support the union also do;
- Visit or call you at home to talk about the union;
- Promise wage increases or other benefits if employees don't join the union or say you might lose benefits if you join the union;
- Tell you they may lay off people if the employees vote in favour of certification;
- Help or encourage any employees who are organizing against the union.

OLRA Section 76—Intimidation and coercion

This Section applies to persons, trade union or employer organization.

If you are approached by anyone that you believe has violated any of these conditions, please contact the OSSTF/FEESO office at 1-800-267-7867 and ask to speak to Colombe Beauregard. Information you provide will be kept confidential.