



MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release: Tuesday, October 31, 2023

ETFO joins OSSTF/FEESO arbitration process for Bill 124 wage remedy

TORONTO, ON — The Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation (OSSTF/FEESO) is proud to announce that 3,500 education workers represented by the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO) are joining with OSSTF/FEESO in their fight to reclaim wages unjustly lost under the Ford government's disastrous and unconstitutional Bill 124.

"Today, we celebrate labour solidarity in the face of the Ford government's continued attacks on our members and all workers who provide the vital public services that Ontarians rely on every single day," said OSSTF/FEESO President Karen Littlewood. "Our solidarity is our strength, and I am encouraged to have ETFO's education worker members join us as we stand up to Doug Ford and his government's heavy-handed attempts to undermine public education in Ontario."

Added ETFO President Karen Brown, "With the strength and solidarity of our members behind us, ETFO is prepared to work alongside OSSTF/FEESO to challenge Bill 124 during the binding arbitration process. Since its unconstitutional inception, ETFO has denounced Bill 124 and challenged the Ford government's interference and overreach. We're confident that by joining OSSTF/FEESO, ETFO members will benefit from a strong, united front that will result in a fair and just remedy."

In September, OSSTF/FEESO's Membership voted to approve a proposal guaranteeing that Members will receive a financial remedy for wages lost under Bill 124, which unfairly capped public sector wage increases to one per cent a year, causing severe staffing shortages and unnecessary disruptions to student learning.

Earlier this month, ETFO's 3,500 education worker members ratified a four-year deal with the provincial government that included a similar agreement to ensure those members submit the Bill 124 wage remedy to binding arbitration.

The decision to bring ETFO members into the voluntary binding interest arbitration process, negotiated between OSSTF/FEESO and the Crown, will mean that the two unions will present a united front during the Bill 124 arbitration dates on January 15 and 16, 2024. Both groups will present evidence and arguments in support of a fair and just remedy for Members who had their wages unconstitutionally suppressed by the Ford government.

"It's been nearly four years since the Ford government's ill-fated decision to pass Bill 124, and the consequences of this devastating legislation have been felt by every education worker, student, and parent in Ontario," concluded OSSTF/FEESO President Karen Littlewood. "Severe staffing shortages caused by Bill 124 have undermined student learning conditions and placed

-more-

significant burdens on staff who work in public education. The ripple effects of this bill extend beyond the classroom, affecting all our public services, our economy, and most importantly students in Ontario. It's well past time to right this grievous wrong and restore justice to our dedicated members.”

Noted ETFO President Karen Brown, “Earlier this year, instead of ending its attack on workers and moving to remedy, the Ford government doubled down on violating workers’ rights by moving forward with an appeal. This move, done in the midst of negotiations with ETFO and other education unions, undermined collective bargaining and wasted taxpayers’ money. Not another public dollar should be spent on their ill-advised attempt to violate workers’ rights. The premier and education minister must refrain from overreach, support all education workers and public education, and focus on reaching fair agreements in good faith.”

[OSSTF/FEESO](#), founded in 1919, has over 60,000 members across Ontario. They include public high school teachers, occasional teachers, educational assistants, continuing education teachers and instructors, early childhood educators, psychologists, secretaries, speech-language pathologists, social workers, plant support personnel, university support staff, and many others in education.

[ETFO](#) represents approximately 83,000 members, including public elementary teachers, occasional teachers, designated early childhood educators, education support personnel, and professional support personnel. Details about ETFO collective bargaining and [bargaining dates](#) are available at [etfocb.ca](#).

Contact: Caitlin Reid
Media and Communications Advisor
Ontario Secondary School Teachers’ Federation
Caitlin.Reid@osstf.ca
416-576-8346

Carla Pereira
Media Relations
Elementary Teachers’ Federation of Ontario
cpereira@etfo.org
416-962-3836