THE MEDIA GETS IT WRONG AGAIN - AND AGAIN

ETFO Has Been Actively Trying to Get All Parties to Return to Table

Yesterday, Education Minister Liz Sandals made statements in the media that teacher and occasional teacher central bargaining was in "limbo" because she alleged that ETFO had "disappeared" from negotiations. Rather than attempting to confirm the truth of those statements with ETFO, certain segments of the media prefer to 'tweet first, ask questions later'.

In a quick response to the Minister's statements, ETFO issued the following media release. ETFO also posted this release on ETFO's main website (www.etfocb.ca) and Collective Bargaining website (www.etfocb.ca), and circulated it widely on social media:

(For Immediate Release - October 20, 2015)
Toronto, ON - It appears that Ontario's education minister is ill-informed regarding efforts by the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO) to get the government and the Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA) back to the negotiating table.

"It would seem that the minister's staff has not been briefing her on developments that have occurred since Thanksgiving," said ETFO President Sam Hammond. "If she had been briefed, she would have known that ETFO has reached out on numerous occasions and has been actively trying to get all parties to return to the table but has received no response. We have heard nothing from either OPSBA or the government."

In late night bargaining on October 9th, the government and OPSBA submitted a number of proposals. ETFO provided feedback, requested changes and indicated it was willing to resume negotiations the following day if they were prepared to revise their proposal. Neither the government nor OPSBA have provided any response to this and subsequent efforts to resume bargaining.

ETFO has proposed a number of constructive solutions at the bargaining table, including an offer to refer one issue to binding arbitration. The question needs to be put to the Minister: 'If you really are concerned about concluding bargaining as soon as possible, why have you and OPSBA refused ETFO's offer of binding arbitration on that issue?'

"ETFO has asked to continue bargaining to deal with a number of items where progress has seemed likely. We continue to await a response," added Hammond.
ETFO Has Accepted No Government Funds For the Cost of Bargaining

Today, allegations were made by a right-wing lobby group called the Canadian Taxpayers Federation that ETFO may have asked for or accepted government money to pay for central bargaining costs.

That unsubstantiated claim was quickly and emphatically denied by ETFO:

*(For Immediate Release - October 21, 2015)*

Toronto, ON - The Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO) has neither requested nor accepted government funds, and will pay for all its own expenses associated with bargaining at the central table and in local bargaining.

"I want to emphasize that we have not accepted any funds from the government to cover any of ETFO's costs incurred in participating in the bargaining process," said ETFO President Sam Hammond. "Any monetary items discussed at the ETFO central table would be part of a negotiated agreement designed to improve our members' working conditions and, ultimately, student learning conditions."

"The claim by the Canadian Taxpayers Federation that we would do otherwise is spurious and completely irresponsible. The Canadian Taxpayers Federation has failed to properly investigate this matter and, yet, is spreading false rumours in the media," said Hammond.

**Stay Informed About Bargaining**

Members have contacted ETFO to express disappointment that the media's coverage of bargaining issues and events appear to be inaccurate, misleading or incomplete. We need to remember that the media should never be members' primary source of information about bargaining.

ETFO cannot control the accuracy of media reporting - but we do try to respond to misleading information as quickly as we can. ETFO also provides members with a variety of ways to stay up-to-date with the most current bargaining-related news, issues and events, including through:

- ETFO’s Bargaining Bulletins;
- ETFO’s CB eNewsletter;
- ETFO’s CB website (www.etfocb.ca);
- ETFO’s official social media outlets on Facebook and Twitter.

Always question what you read in newspapers, see on television, hear on the radio or notice online - and remember that the best sources for accurate bargaining information originate from ETFO provincial and your ETFO local.