



NEWS RELEASE

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Canadian Teachers Support Saskatchewan Teachers' Bargaining

SASKATOON – In several Canadian provinces, articles to address class size, complexity, classroom violence and/or supports for students are included in collective bargaining agreements for teachers. While Saskatchewan teachers have been clear that they will not accept a new agreement unless it addresses these items, the Government of Saskatchewan continues to refuse to bargain on these issues. Today, teacher representatives from several provinces joined the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation to share how the inclusion of these bargaining items in their collective agreements has improved conditions for students and their learning conditions.

“The critical issues that our students and teachers are facing in classrooms have played out in other provinces, only with different results,” says Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation President Samantha Becotte. “The Government of Saskatchewan needs to wake up and start working on the solutions to address class size and complexity that our students desperately need. We know that governments work with other Ministers of Education. We encourage our Minister to reach out to his counterparts across Canada and see what solutions they have found with their respective teacher organizations. I share a heartfelt thank you with our colleagues from B.C., Ontario and New Brunswick for joining us today and sharing their experiences. Saskatchewan teachers are not alone.”

“Like the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation, the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario sees bargaining as an opportunity to address important issues in education that affect teachers' working conditions and students' learning conditions. During our last bargaining round, ETFO pushed to get additional staffing and resources for its members, and we pushed further to ensure that the policies

designed to make schools safe places to teach and learn actually do what they're supposed to do. If this can happen in Ontario, then it can certainly happen in Saskatchewan. Positive changes for students, teachers and schools can happen at the bargaining table when the parties work together to affect positive change," says ETFO President Karen Brown.

"When we are able to negotiate class-size limits and caseload ratios for specialist teachers like school counsellors, or guaranteed support levels for children with diagnosed learning challenges, we are better able to do our jobs," says British Columbia Teachers' Federation President Clint Johnston. "When teachers have manageable workloads, our students benefit. It means we have time to connect more with each student, meet them at their level, and ensure they get the education we all want for them. Putting workload language into a collective agreement also protects teachers and students from poorly thought-out government policy changes and damaging cuts. We learned that lesson when the B.C. government unconstitutionally stripped B.C.'s collective agreement of class-size and composition language. Classes got bigger, teachers were laid off, and students paid the price."

"One contributing factor to ensuring positive learning environments in New Brunswick is that successive governments have valued class limits to address classroom complexity. Maximum class-size limits create a minimum standard to meet students' needs. Given the unprecedented population growth in rural and urban communities, this has ensured predictability for students, parents and teachers alike," says Past President of the New Brunswick Teachers' Association and Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF/FCE) Vice-President Connie Keating.

ETFO's agreement includes the addition of specialist positions, a Support for Students Fund and initiatives to address classroom violence. BCTF's provincial and local agreements include class-size limits (supported by a decision of the Supreme Court of Canada), staffing ratios and class composition items such as extra prep time for students with additional needs. The NBTF agreement includes class-size limits for all grades and combined grades, a clause guaranteeing special consideration for class sizes where classes include students with additional needs and the establishment of a Teachers' Working Conditions Fund.

The Government of Saskatchewan has refused to provide their bargaining committee with the authority to bargain on classroom size, complexity or violence. Including these items within the collective

agreement keeps the government accountable for their commitments, which is beneficial for students, teachers and families. Until the government provides their committee with a mandate to engage on these critical matters, Saskatchewan teachers have no choice but to continue job sanctions.

Through Tell Them Tuesday, tens of thousands of Saskatchewan people are calling on the Government of Saskatchewan and local MLAs to get the government's bargaining committee back to the table with teachers. Join them by signing up today at www.tellthemtuesday.com.

– 30 –