

NEWS RELEASE

For Information Contact:

Courtney Forseth, MA
Managing Director, Public Relations and Communications
306-221-4209
stfcommunications@stf.sk.ca

June 19, 2023

Northern Lights School Division Undermining Collective Bargaining

SASKATOON – Northern Lights School Division is attempting to undermine the bargaining process with their teachers. Northern Area Teachers' Association and NLSD recently reached an impasse at the bargaining table while trying to reach an agreement on local benefits and working conditions. NLSD Director of Education Jason Young then circumvented the negotiating team by communicating the terms of a memorandum of understanding, which was not negotiated at the bargaining table, directly to all NLSD teachers. This amounts to interference in good faith collective bargaining and constitutes unfair labour practice and an abuse of power on his part.

In response, the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation has taken the rare step of placing the division "in dispute". The STF has not placed a division in dispute since 2002 and has only done so 14 times since 1961.

"We've tried to resolve this dispute through many conversations directly with Northern Lights School Division Director of Education Jason Young without success," STF President Samantha Becotte said. "It's unfortunate we've had to take such a drastic step; however, Mr. Young's lack of respect for proper process and fair collective bargaining has caused this dispute to drag on needlessly for many months and left us with no other choice."

Mr. Young has refused multiple requests to rescind his letter and acknowledge it was out of process, as the bargaining table is the appropriate place for negotiations to occur. If the division continues with this course of action, the STF will have no choice but to pursue legal remedies.

“Northern Area teachers care deeply about the students and families in our schools, the communities where we live and work, our colleagues and local association,” said Northern Area Teachers’ Association President Debbie Banman. “It is extremely disheartening that Director of Education Jason Young is not willing to work with us to negotiate agreeable solutions to support the teachers in our schools. We call on the division to retract Mr. Young’s June 12 letter, acknowledge that it was improper bargaining practice, return to the table and follow due process going forward.”

“It is disappointing for our members to receive an email from their employer directing them to accept terms dictated by the employer,” said the Northern Area Teachers’ Association’s local implementation and negotiation committee (LINC). “It represents an unfair bargaining tactic and shows a disregard for the volunteer members of our committee, our local association and the right to collective bargaining that we have as employees.”

Accepting a teaching contract with a school division in dispute subjects those teachers to complaints under the Federation’s Code of Collective Interests. The Saskatchewan Teachers’ Federation and Northern Area Teachers’ Association are ready and willing to work with the Northern Lights School Division to resolve these issues quickly and fairly.

– 30 –