



NEWS RELEASE

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STUDENT NEEDS AT FOREFRONT OF TEACHERS' CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS

SASKATOON – Contract negotiations for teachers' next provincial collective agreement began in Saskatoon this week. Over the last two days, the Teachers' Bargaining Committee presented proposals to the Government-Trustee Bargaining Committee.

"We look forward to meaningful, productive talks and a quick resolution that benefits students, teachers and the future of Saskatchewan," said Samantha Becotte, STF President.

The proposals were created with the input of teachers across the province and were approved unanimously at the STF's Annual Meeting of Council in April. Class size and complexity is a key proposal put forward by teachers.

"We fully recognize that government's 2023-24 budget is not only forcing even deeper cuts in schools but also will make it extremely difficult to reach an agreement that fully recognizes the crisis in classrooms. However, we are hopeful these negotiations will be entered into with a commitment to do what's best for students."

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Other proposals include violence-free classrooms, teacher professional autonomy, truth and reconciliation, conditions of employment for substitute teachers, and teachers' salaries.

"Like everyone else, teachers are feeling the pressures of rising costs. Since 2016, teachers have lost almost eight percent of their purchasing power. This is effectively a loss of income," said Becotte.

"Recruiting and retaining well-educated professionals requires they are paid a salary that reflects their education and experience. Right now, Saskatchewan teachers are the lowest paid in western Canada."

In the previous round of negotiations, class size and complexity along with salary were the two most important issues teachers wanted to address. As a result of negotiations, the government created a class size and composition committee. Despite the committee's work beginning in November 2019, government still has not released recommendations or made any commitments.

"The situation in schools has only grown more dire since 2019. There are more students, greater student needs and fewer supports and professionals. As a result of the 2023-24 provincial budget, even more cuts are coming to classrooms this fall," said Becotte. "Teachers are burnt out. Their concern for their students is fueling their resolve to address this issue through this round of bargaining."

Negotiations will take place throughout the summer. The next meeting is planned for June 28 and 29 in Saskatoon.

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