

# PROVINCIAL COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

## History and Significant Events

**Local  
1949**

Teacher collective bargaining has achieved many benefits and advancements for Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation members over time. Its storied history and positive impacts on public education and the teaching profession can be traced back over 65 years through various structures, several complex processes and many agreements.

**Area  
1968**

Teachers in Saskatchewan have had the legislated right to bargain collectively since 1949. Initially, collective bargaining occurred at the local level with teachers negotiating salary with their employing school boards. Over time, the scope of bargaining widened to include other items of mutual concern to employers and teachers. This early structure created significant disparity among the 125 different teacher collective agreements.

**Bi-Level  
1973**

Following a comprehensive review, in 1968 the Government of Saskatchewan enacted legislation intended to create more equity among teachers by shifting from local to area bargaining. This structure was short-lived because the committees and processes were cumbersome, and an unprecedented number of strikes were taking place.

By 1973, a new policy direction at the Federation, coupled with a new provincial government, created the conditions for the bi-level structure still in place today. When it began, bi-level collective bargaining introduced teacher representation and influence at both the provincial and local levels, and established formal processes for the settlement of disputes.

## Achieving Professional Equity

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Provincial collective bargaining efforts initially focused on achieving salary parity for all teachers in Saskatchewan. This was realized with the first provincial agreement in 1973 and further reinforced by the protection of classification introduced in the 1974 provincial agreement. Equal compensation for equal qualifications unified and raised the status of the teaching profession which, in turn, helped to strengthen the collective bargaining influence of teachers in future negotiations.

By the mid-1970s, recognition had grown that the provincial government and school trustees had a responsibility to see that teachers were fairly compensated in relation to other professions.

This resulted in a series of provincial agreements from the mid-1970s to early 1980s that significantly increased average compensation for Saskatchewan teachers, bringing them in line with other professions and teachers in the rest of the country.

The 1974-1975 provincial agreement also saw extensive improvements to the Saskatchewan Teachers' Superannuation Plan including cost-of-living adjustments, reciprocal agreements, progress on the benefit formula and survivor allowances, and elimination of gender differences. Equitable sick leave provisions were established through provincial negotiations in 1976 and, in time, became portable between jurisdictions.

## Focusing on Pension and Benefits

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In 1983, wage guidelines for public sector bargaining were put in place by the federal government. It was at this time that provincial collective bargaining priorities began to shift to improving pension and benefits for teachers in light of these wage constraints. Salaries did continue to grow until the recession of the early 1990s, but not at the same rate as the previous decade.

With the government closing membership of the Saskatchewan Teachers' Superannuation Plan, the Teachers' Annuity Plan was created in 1980 and, subsequently, a series of retirement eligibility factors were successfully bargained at the provincial level during the ensuing decade. The Teachers' Dental Plan was created in 1986 and was fully funded by the provincial government with teachers not required to pay premiums. Improvements to the dental plan have been further negotiated since that time.

The *1987-1989 Provincial Collective Bargaining Agreement* was reached following a relatively contentious round of negotiations. The Federation rallied over 8,000 teachers in the province to advocate for a fair and reasonable settlement at the bargaining table given that two years and 23 meetings with the Government-Trustee Bargaining Committee had failed to result in an offer.

Teachers applied for conciliation in 1990 and a sanctions vote was conducted shortly afterward. Mediation provided an effective means to reach an agreement that year – one that included a memorandum of agreement giving the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation responsibility and control of the Teachers' Annuity Plan, now known as the Saskatchewan Teachers' Retirement Plan.

Supplemental unemployment benefits, known as employer-administered SUB plans, were provincially negotiated in 1993. These plans, designed by boards of education in accordance with federal unemployment insurance legislation and regulations, topped up unemployment insurance benefits for teachers on maternity leave for teaching days lost during the eligible period.

In 1995, the Federation filed a provincial grievance after receiving complaints from over 100 teachers across the province in relation to the denial of SUB Plan benefits. The issues arose out of how school boards determined an individual medically unfit for duty as a teacher and the use of medical experts in arbitrations, judicial reviews and appeals. The successful grievances of those practices by the Federation resulted in a more equitable application of those benefits, originally for a six-week period, and subsequently expanded over time through provincial negotiations.

## Addressing Working Conditions

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Concerns around classroom complexity and the reduction of supports prompted teachers to seek contract language around managing class size and class composition in the 2017-2019 round of negotiations. The binding decision of the arbitration board did not rule on the jurisdiction issue but declined to award the proposal of the Teachers' Bargaining Committee. In the 2019-2023 asking package, teachers once again sought to negotiate contract language to alleviate classroom complexity through the management of class size and class composition. The government was public about its refusal to negotiate class size and composition into

the agreement and attempted to strike a provincial committee on class size and composition to circumvent negotiations. The Federation refused to participate on this committee as it undermined negotiations. The challenges of negotiating during a global pandemic that closed schools across the province resulted in a new four-year agreement being ratified that did not address the issue of class complexity but saw the creation of a new committee upon which the Federation advocates strongly for working conditions that support the success of teachers and students.

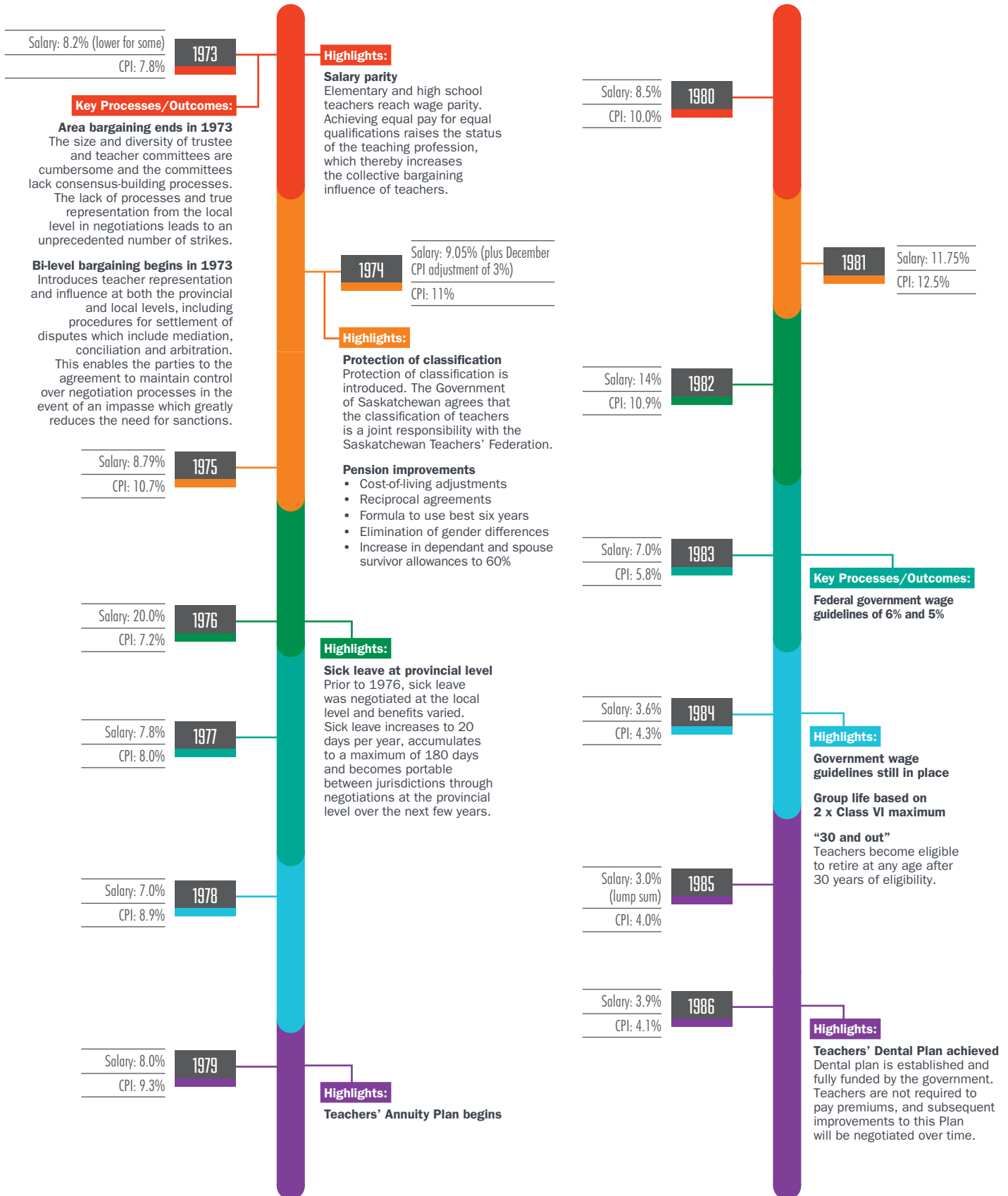
## Changing and Challenging Times

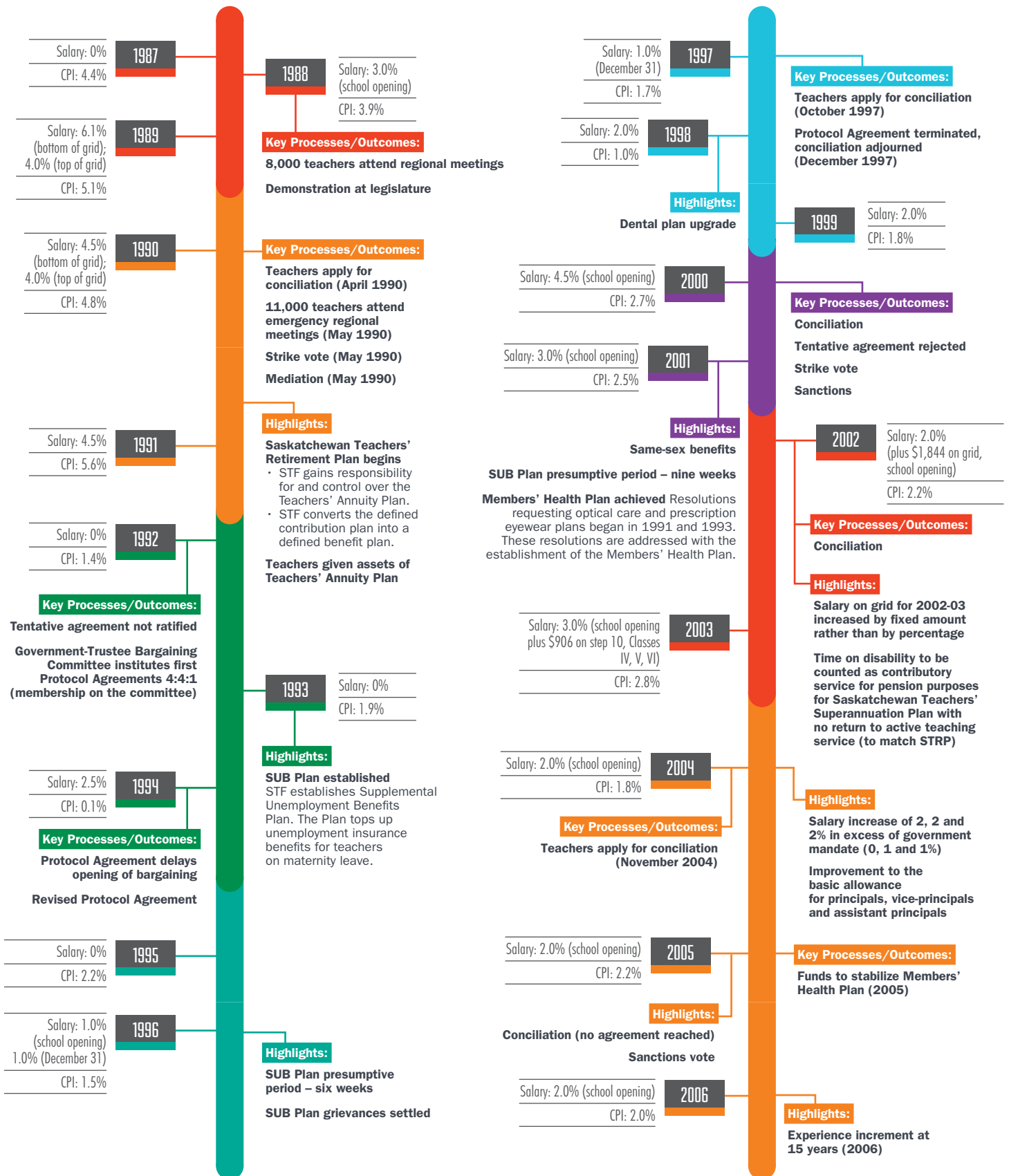
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The negotiations for the *2019-2023 Provincial Collective Bargaining Agreement* were complex. The Teachers' Bargaining Committee committed to a transparent bargaining model where teachers would be informed of the outcome of each bargaining session. This resulted in both parties tabling their proposals very early in the process. The teacher asking package had only three main proposals: Class Size and Composition, Compensation and Supports for Substitute Teachers. The government refused to negotiate class size and composition and supports for substitute teachers. Negotiations reached an impasse and the parties moved to conciliation, which was also unsuccessful.

Teachers strongly supported the Teachers' Bargaining Committee in applying sanctions. Just as teachers were starting to implement a restricted services sanction action, a worldwide pandemic was declared and schools were closed indefinitely. Sanctions were suspended and the parties eventually reached a tentative agreement that was strongly ratified with 0 percent, 2 percent, 2 percent and 2 percent increases in compensation over a four-year agreement. Education Regulations were changed to compel boards of education to share with the Federation the contact information for all substitute teachers on their lists on the first day of each month.

CPI: Canadian Annualized Consumer Price Index





Salary: 5.0% (school opening)  
CPI: 2.2%

2007

**Highlights:**

Salary increase of 5, 4 and 3.5% (government mandate 12% over three years)

Salary: 4.0% (school opening)  
CPI: 2.3%

2008

Increase in government contributions to STRP (matching teachers)

Members' Health Plan funding of \$11M in 2007 plus percentage increases in 2008 and 2009

SUB Plan presumptive period 12 weeks

Salary: 3.5% (school opening)  
CPI: 0.3%

2009

Salary: 2.26 to 4.04% (school opening)  
CPI: 1.8%

2010

**Key Processes/Outcomes:**

Teachers apply for conciliation (November 26, 2010)

**Highlights:**

Preamble included

Salary increase varies from 6.82 to 10.89% over three years. Consists of market adjustment in addition to 1.5, 2 and 2% government mandate

Western Canadian average of B.C., Alta. and Man., Class IV minimum and maximum salaries, plus a market adjustment were utilized

Administrative allowances increased 1.5, 3 and 3%; elimination of the assistant principal designation; those in existing roles are grandfathered

Out-of-scope personnel increased from one to three for the first 50 teachers employed

LOU re: renewed commitment to Access to Benefits for Teachers Employed in First Nations Schools

Salary: 2.41 to 5.44% (school opening)  
CPI: 2.9%

2011

**Key Processes/Outcomes:**

Conciliation (no agreement reached) (January 13 to March 13, 2011)

Sanctions vote (April 13, 2011) Withdrawal of professional service (3 days – May 5, 25, 26, 2011)

Withdrawal of voluntary service (2 days – May 30 to May 31, 2011)

Special mediation as per *The Human Resources, Labour and Employment Act* (June 1 to July 4, 2011)

Collective agreement signed October 4, 2011

**Highlights:**

Step 15 collapsed to Step 11 and made a full increment; all increments realigned to equal 4.47% each

Supplemental Employment Benefits increased to 17 weeks with no medical evidence required

**Highlights:**

MOA re: joint committee to review, affirm and renew recommendations from the *Good Practices and Dispute Resolution* report, 2002

Adult orthodontics at 50%; \$2,000 lifetime maximum

Joint communiqué re: joint committee to advise on development of resources to support compliance with *The Local Authority Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*

2012

Salary: 2.0% (school opening)  
CPI: 1.5%

Salary: 1.85% (school opening)  
CPI: 0.9%

2013

**Key Processes/Outcomes:**

Tentative agreement reached September 25, 2013 (not ratified)

**Key Processes/Outcomes:**

Tentative agreement reached May 15, 2014 (not ratified)

Teachers apply for conciliation June 18, 2014; conciliation approved August 5, 2014

Conciliation begins October 16, 2014

2014

Salary: 1.9% (school opening)  
CPI: 1.9%

**Highlights:**

Related experience considered transferrable

TSP members with less than 20 days of contributory service may access their funds

Letter of Continuance extends commitment of Joint Communiqué – Access to Information and Protection of Privacy

Time in which a grievance may be filed shortened to nine months

Recognition of service – established 90-day window for retroactive salary

The value of optional group life insurance for teachers older than 65 years is to equal 10% of benefit in Article 6.2

Letter of Understanding establishes Task Force on Teacher Time

Letter of Commitment – Government to pay any professional fees levied by the new teacher regulatory body for the first two years

Letter of Referral refers issues of consistent application of contracts of employment and designation of leaves for parenting purposes to Good Practices and Dispute Resolution Implementation Committee

Right to notice and representation at discipline-related meetings

Notice or payment in lieu in the case of a demotion or removal of additional duties

2015

Salary: 1.9% (school opening)  
CPI: 1.1%

**Key Processes/Outcomes:**

Conciliation Board Report received February 12, 2015

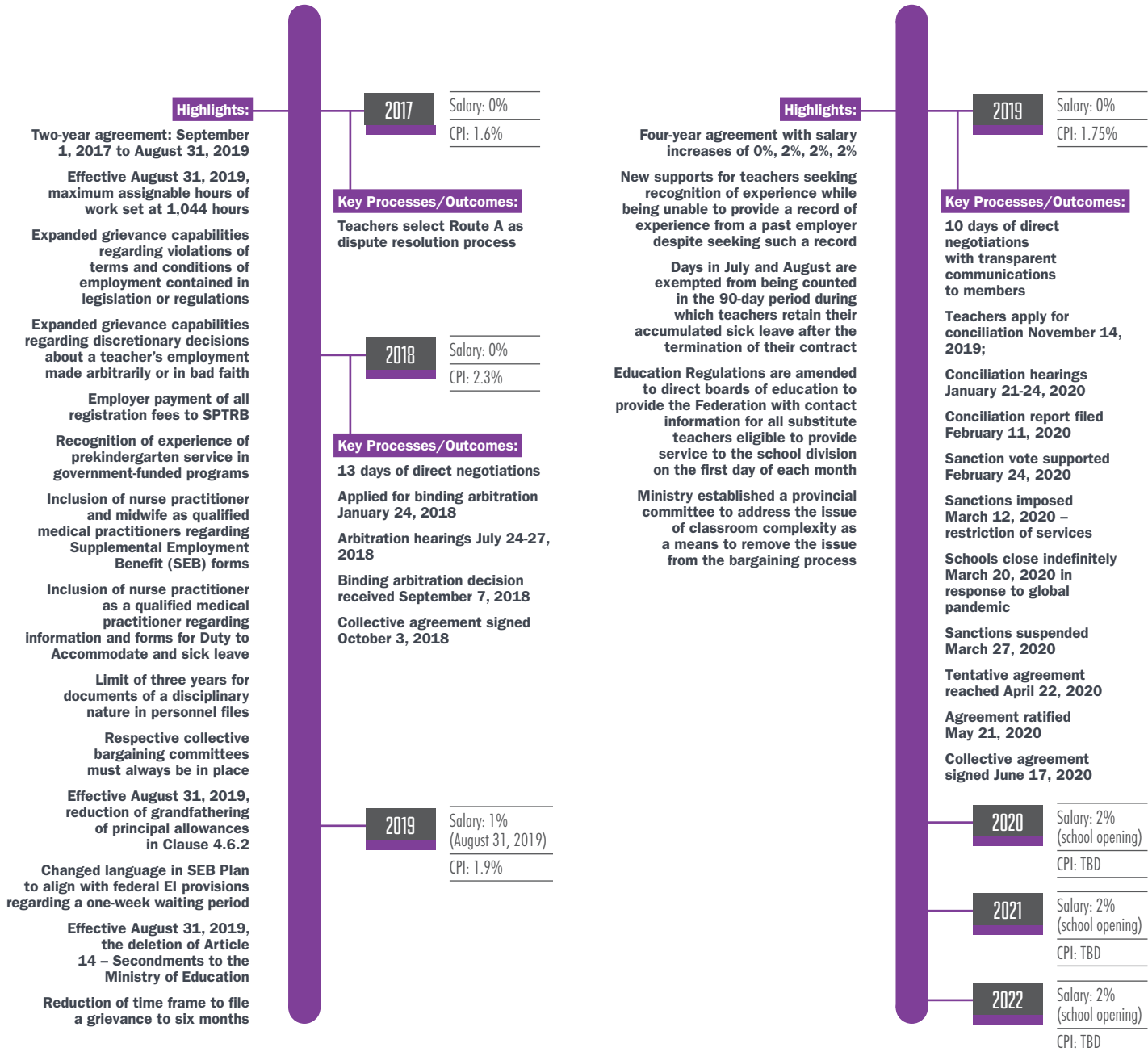
Collective agreement signed February 12, 2015; Terms of Settlement established by conciliator; accepted by the parties; no ratification process

2016

Salary: 1.9% (school opening)  
CPI: 1.4%

**Highlights:**

Government contributions to STRP increase by 0.25% (July 1, 2016)



**This document is for summary purposes only. Please refer to the Provincial Collective Bargaining Agreement for full wording.**



Questions about teacher collective bargaining?  
Contact STF Bargaining Support by email at [bargaining@stf.sk.ca](mailto:bargaining@stf.sk.ca).

Discussions about teacher collective bargaining?  
Use the TeacherTalk private members' forum in MySTF on [www.stf.sk.ca](http://www.stf.sk.ca).



SASKATCHEWAN  
TEACHERS'  
FEDERATION

**Head Office**

2317 Arlington Avenue, Saskatoon SK S7J 2H8

**T:** 306-373-1660 or 1-800-667-7762 **F:** 306-374-1122 **E:** [stf@stf.sk.ca](mailto:stf@stf.sk.ca)

**Arbos Centre for Learning**

2311 Arlington Avenue, Saskatoon SK

**Regina (by appointment only)**

Suite 375-3303 Hillsdale Street, Regina SK S4S 6W9

[www.stf.sk.ca](http://www.stf.sk.ca) [f](#) [t](#) [v](#) [i](#) [n](#) @SaskTeachersFed