

Elementary Teachers Set Critical Deadline for Contract Negotiations

For Immediate Release

TORONTO, ON – January 8, 2009. The time has come for Ontario school boards to constructively respond to elementary public school teachers' concerns or face strong and committed labour action.

Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO) President David Clegg today demanded that local school boards table their full submissions to ETFO negotiators by the end of January so that "meaningful discussions" can begin.

"If the boards take the same position as their provincial counterparts and include strips to the existing rights of elementary teachers, the Federation will have no option but to initiate strike votes, which will be the precursor to job actions," said Clegg.

Clegg noted that since four-year collective agreements for all Ontario elementary public school teachers expired on August 31, 2008, there has been little progress in finalizing new contracts.

"Local school boards have not been fully engaged at the bargaining tables," said Clegg. "They have been stalling because they have been waiting for a provincial agreement. Now that a provincial agreement is off the table, we will not accept any more foot dragging by the boards. Meaningful and constructive contract negotiations must take place at the local level.

"Today, we are putting the boards on notice," Clegg said. "We will no longer accept their excuses that they cannot provide better learning conditions for elementary students and fairer working conditions for their teachers."

The Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario represents 73,000 elementary public school teachers and education workers across the province and is the largest teacher federation in Canada.

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Contact:

David Clegg
President, ETFO
416-962-3836 (Office); 416-948-1592 (Cell)

Larry Skory
ETFO Communications
416-962-3836 (Office); 416-948-0195 (Cell)

