

## Questions and Answers from January 19<sup>th</sup> General Meeting

Below you will find a summary of questions and comments asked by fellow members at the January 19<sup>th</sup> General Meeting with David Clegg. Please note that any wording in brackets and italics is a provision of context from David Clegg's presentation at the meeting in order to assist in the understanding of the questions and responses.

### 1.) Contradiction regarding government endorsement of ETFO's financial proposal

David Clegg remarked that ETFO did not suggest that the minister endorsed the proposed framework, rather that the Minister would accept it if OPSBA did.

*[Please note: ETFO made a proposal to OPSBA that was within the financial parameters set by the government. ETFO is not asking for more than Secondary teachers or Catholic teachers received in their framework. ETFO simply asked that the dollars be redistributed to address growing teacher workload.]*

"It's all about the semantics." The contradiction was based on the semantics of speech.

There continues to be a disagreement of how much a replacement teacher costs (ETFO says \$53, 000 and the government believes it is \$93, 000 (including benefits).

### 2.) How can we turn down the 12% pay raise? It makes teachers look greedy to the public.

David Clegg answered by saying "Why didn't they ask for the same strips from Secondary teachers?" There is a lack of respect and ETFO is not prepared to sacrifice the Collective Agreement. "No longer is it just a gap in funding, but now it is also a gap in respect."

*[Please note: Along with a 12% salary increase, OPSBA included collective agreement strips in their proposal to ETFO that were not presented to OSSTF, OECTA, or AEFO. Specifically, the strips included:*

- *Allowing principals to decide what teachers do during part of their "self-directed" preparation time*
- *Increasing the amount of time during which teachers are required to supervise students*
- *Reducing teachers' rights to have their missed preparation time paid back*
- *Ensuring that decisions about professional development rest not with teachers themselves, but with their employers*
- *Mandating attendance at staff meetings*

*And more recently:*

- *Mandatory after school professional development held at the discretion of the principal]*

**3.) I'm being stopped in the community with a lot of bargaining questions? Can we have more communication of ETFO's perspective in the media?**

David Clegg responded with saying that we have been proactive to members by posting instant messages on the website (there was 67, 000 hits on the media release day). The media likes to only focus on the 2 S's: strike and salary because they sell papers. When prompted, teachers can respond with "Are you aware that we are willing to take less salary and we were the only union willing to take less to better education?." *[By reducing class size and enhancing preparation time]*

**4.) What happens if we reach the February 13<sup>th</sup> deadline without a settlement?**

David Clegg let the members know that we only want to apply the minimum amount of pressure needed for as long as possible to get a deal. There is not a desire to adversely affect teachers and students. The decision of strike votes will depend on the negotiations with local boards. What you do now will have an impact on your teaching career. When we stand together we have remarkable results.

**5.) Why can't we escalate our media campaign?**

David Clegg says that "there is earned media and paid media." We are getting plenty of coverage with earned media, however the earned media does not always accurately convey the issues. Paid media are advertisements taken out by the organization. For example, ETFO took out a daily ad in every paper across the province in December. That one ad cost \$350,000 for just one day. We do not have infinite resources, therefore future advertising needs to be timed and strategic. Currently our number one priority is for **members** to understand the issues. Hopefully members have become knowledgeable enough to discuss bargaining issues with parents and the public.

**6.) How is a proposed strike vote different from the walkout of 1997?**

David Clegg replied: The walkout in 1997 was pre-ETFO and was a political protest and NOT part of the collective bargaining process. We have learned a great deal since the walkout of 1997 and have learned to use a more strategic approach using just the right amount of leverage to get an agreement. We can't lose sight of the fact that workload issues are not declining, initiatives are getting worse and we need to bargain solutions.

**7.) If we settle for less salary in the end, then aren't we second-class citizens compared to secondary?**

David Clegg told the members that: the public needs to understand that it is not about money, rather disrespect is the issue.

*[Please note: ETFOs proposal was to take a reduction in salary in order to reduce class size and enhance preparation time; all within the financial parameters established by the government. Class size reductions and enhancement in preparation time are provided through additional teachers, thereby protecting thousands of teachers from possible layoffs across the province. ETFOs proposal was met with the aforementioned strips.]*