

## Government Pay-outs to Education Unions

To: Presidents and All Members

From: Harvey Bischof, President

### For Information

As some of you will be aware from stories in the media over the last several days, the Ontario government has provided payment in the amount of \$2000 to each member of the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association whose grid movement was delayed in the 2014-15 school year.

While it is expected that OECTA would pursue its members' interests in a matter such as this, the government's explanation for this settlement is deeply troubling.

First, the government claims the pay-out, totaling \$31 million, was provided as a settlement arising from one local grievance decision regarding the continued grid delay following the expiry of OECTA's 2012 to 2014 contract.

The background to this is important. In the 2014-2017 round of negotiations, government negotiators insisted that OSSTF/FEESO abandon payment for grid movement in the 2014-15 school year and withdraw all related grievances in order to reach settlement. Our colleagues in the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario were told the same thing. Yet, somehow, in a round of bargaining in which the government insisted on identical financial outcomes, OECTA's grid-delay grievances were explicitly allowed to live on. This differential treatment set up a circumstance wherein OECTA members were in a position to receive payment not unlike that OSSTF/FEESO members received as a result of a charter challenge over the imposition of contract terms arising from the Putting Students First Act. In other words, although OECTA voluntarily agreed to terms that were subsequently imposed on our members, and OSSTF/FEESO participated in a successful court challenge of the unconstitutional violation of our bargaining rights resulting in some recompense for our members' losses, OECTA members ended up essentially no worse off than our members.

Second, while the government claims that the payment to OECTA arose out of an arbitral decision, they are in talks with all education sector unions that did not participate in the court challenge, and did not have arbitral decisions in their favour, in order to provide payment to their members.

The government's explanation quite simply doesn't square with the facts.

For this reason, in coordination with ETFO, OSSTF/FEESO will pursue any available legal avenues to secure justice for our members. Updates will be forthcoming with further developments in this matter.

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