

# News Release

## OECTA TO HOLD PROVINCE-WIDE WALKOUT MARCH 5

February 27, 2020

TORONTO – The Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association (OECTA) has announced that it is planning a one-day, province-wide walkout on Thursday, March 5. Teachers in publicly funded Catholic district school boards across Ontario will not be reporting to work or performing any of their teaching duties.

Last week, after the mediator called the bargaining parties back to the table, the Association suspended its planned rotating strikes as a sign of good faith and as a further demonstration of OECTA's commitment to resolve these difficult negotiations. "Instead of coming to the table with a plan to reach an agreement, the government continued to insist on its deep, permanent cuts," says OECTA President Liz Stuart. "All the while, the Minister of Education has continued his attempts to mislead the public, by making baseless accusations against Catholic teachers and our Association, and by peddling the inaccurate claim that enhancements to our benefits plan is the sticking point in bargaining," adds Stuart.

Evidence from OECTA's bad-faith bargaining complaint before the Ontario Labour Relations Board (OLRB) has also confirmed that, despite the government's attempt to conceal the results of their public consultation, education stakeholders and the public unequivocally reject any plan to increase class sizes. It was OECTA's decision to pursue a bad-faith bargaining complaint against the Crown that was the key to finally unlocking the door and making the full education consultation documents available to members of the public, media, and opposition political parties, who can now apply to obtain a copy of the documents under the *Tribunal Adjudicative Records Act*.

"Our Association remains committed to the goal of reaching a fair agreement at the bargaining table. However, we cannot tolerate the Ford government's penchant for misinformation and mistruth, nor its efforts to dismantle publicly funded education," says Stuart.

OECTA members began administrative job action on January 13; this action will remain in effect until and after March 5. Catholic teachers also engaged in full withdrawals of service on January 21, February 4, and February 21, which saw 200,000 teachers and education workers across Ontario participate in a walkout.

"Catholic teachers understand the long-term consequences of this government's regressive agenda, and we continue to demonstrate our willingness to stand up and make our voices heard. Parents and the public know that we are the last line of defence against the Ford government's reckless education cuts," adds Stuart.

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