

# Teachers sign new two-year contract

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Sun Reporter

Just seven months after signing their last contract with the Renfrew County Roman Catholic Separate School Board (RCRCSSB), the approximately 300 teachers in the system have another collective agreement.

A new two year deal, effective from September 1, 1986 to August 31, 1988, was signed at the October 20 regular meeting of the board.

A salary increase of 3.69 per cent for the first year was arrived at based on the rise in the national consumer price index (CPI) from June 1985 to June 1986. The hike for the second year of the contract will equal the rise in the CPI from June 1986 to June of 1987, plus 25 per cent.

The same percentage increases will apply to allowances for principals, vice-principals, co-ordinators, diagnosticians and administrative assistants.

Salary range for teachers runs from \$16,767 to \$47,060.

Dave Marcus, superintendent of business for the board, says that the average teachers salary at the board is at about \$39,000.

"Most of our teachers have high qualifications and a great deal of experience, and so are in the higher salary ranges," he said.

The new contract will increase the differential between classroom teachers and principals. The minimum principal's allowance

will be increased from \$2,495 to a flat \$3,000 for 1986-1987, and will be increased by the same percentage as other allowances in 1987-1988, plus \$200. Principals' allowances are tied to the size of the school they administer. The maximum allowance for the principal of the board's largest school is \$11,237.

For the first time, there is a provision in the agreement for the appointment of heads of organizational units in the board's secondary schools. The 1986-1987 allowance for these positions has been set at \$2,000 per annum for those qualified under Ministry of Education regulations, and \$1,500 per annum for those not so qualified. These allowances will be increased by the same percentage as the grid salaries effective September 1, 1987.

"Prior to full funding, the board was unable to afford to recognize the positions of department heads," said Mike Laverty of Renfrew, who headed the teachers' negotiating team.

The teachers approved the contract last week through a ratification vote which came out 88 per cent in favour of acceptance.

Leo Buckley, chairman of the board's negotiating committee, expressed satisfaction with the successful end to the negotiations.

"The process leading to the signing of the last contract led to a better appreciation on both sides of the time involved," he

said. "A two-year contract was agreed upon because both sides found negotiations debilitating and time-consuming. With full funding bringing about completion of the system, there are many other things to be done. We can now explore many of our options in the co-operative atmosphere of a committee, rather than at the negotiating table."

Although the increases of just over 3.5 per cent appear modest compared to those in many contracts, Mr. Buckley feels that they are not out of line with other recent teacher settlements. He pointed out that a Toronto board recently awarded increases of about 2.5 per cent per year.

Board chairman Joe Trimm said that he was gratified at the successful end of the negotiations.

"I think it's fantastic," he said. "But people on both sides worked hard, and when you approach an issue with co-operation, understanding, and faith, you usually get good results."

Mr. Laverty had some reservations on behalf of the teachers.

"Nobody's turning cart-wheels," he said. "But you have to look at the contract as a whole."

"We polled the teachers on their wishes, and got little response. From this we drew the conclusion that the teachers felt they have a good basic contract."

"The new contract protects their earning power over the two years. It's not

a great contract, but it's fair. But you have to look at the gains in other areas, such as in the minimum principal's allowance and the recognition of department heads. The 88 per cent ratification vote suggests strongly that teachers are satisfied."

One outstanding issue in contract negotiations remained unresolved. The board wished to modify the retirement gratuity formula to limit its liability, and teachers wanted to retain the formula in its present form. These discussions can be re-opened at any time if both sides agree to them.

A new article has been added to the agreement wherein the teachers and the board pledge to work for the Roman Catholic goals of education and commit themselves to promote Roman Catholic principles, philosophy and practices in the board's schools.

There was agreement to form a committee representing the board and teachers under the chairmanship of the director of education, Frank Turner, or his designate, to prepare a recommended model of organizational units for the board's secondary schools. This model is to be completed by February 28, 1988.

There are no changes in working conditions in this agreement. Increments and upgradings will cost the board another 1.5 per cent in 1986-1987, and slightly less in 1987-1988.