

OSSTF has requested a conciliator in contract talks

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Director of Education David Euale.

But considering the contracts expired in August, Bischof said he believes the board should have demonstrated a greater willingness to sit with their employees to reach a suitable agreement.

"We are over six months beyond the expiry of the collective agreement. If it took this long to even get to the table to negotiate, that doesn't

make the prospect of coming to an agreement look very good," he said.

The Ministry of Education said in a statement that the Province "remains focused on achieving a negotiated settlement and keeping the details of the discussions at the central bargaining table."

Bischof said he did not want to negotiate through the media and could not discuss specific issues, but according to the transcript of

Elliott's speech, teachers want improvements in working conditions and compensation. "And we're not talking about improvements that we pay for ourselves through efficiencies and job losses, but real improvements that reflect a tangible appreciation on the part of the government and the school boards for the value and the significance of the work we do."

The union has asked for a con-

ciator to help resolve the dispute, a move that is mandatory before a strike is called. But according to Bischof, it does not necessarily mean one will happen. A minimum of five days' notice must be provided to the board before any action is taken.

"We understand this information about potential withdrawal of services will cause anxiety for our students, parents and staff," said Euale.

"We value our secondary teachers as dedicated, caring professionals committed to student success and we are confident our excellent relationship with our teachers will be a foundation for successful talks."

If teachers do decide to strike the striking members would receive 75 per cent of their pay, paid for by a 3- to 5-per cent levy on the paycheques of non-striking teachers, said Bischof.

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