

CATHOLIC ELEMENTARY TEACHERS VOTE FOR STRIKE MANDATE

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Teachers won't be returning to the picket lines just yet, but it is on the table.

Halton's permanent Catholic Elementary teachers voted 94.1 per cent in favour of a strike mandate during their Strike Vote Rally on Jan. 28. The decision doesn't mean teachers will immediately be moving to a strike position, but the vote is one step in the local bargaining process that could result in job action.

Tara Hambly, the president of the Halton Elementary unit of the Ontario English Catholic Teachers Association (OECTA), said they do not believe a full strike is imminent.

"There is a wide range of actions that can be taken from administrative actions right to the full withdrawal of services. We do

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- Tara Hambly

not foresee a full withdrawal of services," said Hambly.

Back in March 2020, a central agreement was reached between the province and OECTA. From that point, negotiations between individual boards and teacher bargaining units have continued.

Teacher representatives have been uncharacteristically vocal about the

Halton Catholic District School Board's (HCDSB) reopening plan since schools reopened last September. A letter from an OECTA representative to trustees back in October called the board 'duplicious' for its handling of the pandemic return to school.

"This year has been very challenging and frustrating for everyone, we

know parents want predictability and stability in the schools for their children, teachers want the same thing, we want predictability and stability in our staffing assignments," said Hambly.

The HCDSB released a statement saying they are hopeful an agreement will soon be achieved.

"We value all of our staff as dedicated, caring professionals, and we respect labour laws that affirm the legal rights of our unionized employee groups to engage in job actions. We are committed to the success of the local bargaining process and we are hopeful that a new agreement will soon be reached with our OECTA Elementary Association.



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By Cory Soal
R.H.A.D.

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