

Province reaches tentative deal with public elementary teachers

By Tim Whitnell

METROLAND WEST MEDIA GROUP

Ontario's public elementary teachers agreed Monday to a tentative contract at the central bargaining table with the provincial government and the public school boards' association. The Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO) has told its members to suspend work-to-rule action in light of a tentative agreement that has been reached with the Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA) and the government. ETFO members have been without a contract since Aug. 31, 2014.

ETFO represents 78,000 elementary public school teachers, occasional teachers and education professionals including about 2,900 in the Halton public board.

"This round of bargaining has been exceptionally lengthy and difficult but in the end we achieved a tentative agreement that ETFO believes is fair and meets the needs of our members," ETFO President Sam Hammond said in a press release.

An ETFO all-member vote on the tentative agreement among teachers and occasional teachers will be conducted, with the results of

that vote expected in mid-November.

"ETFO is a democratic organization and ultimately it is the membership that will determine whether this tentative agreement is acceptable," said Hammond.

ETFO officials said they will review the agreement with local leaders and members before making further comments.

ETFO's bargaining team will continue central table negotiations on behalf of its designated early childhood educators, education support personnel and professional support personnel. Ontario's public elementary teachers and occasional teachers had withdrawn from all voluntary extracurricular activities last week.

Many public school boards weren't producing student progress report cards, but ETFO's Halton chapter president said last Friday her members would be filling out marks and levels and submitting them to the board. However, the board issued a letter to parents saying ETFO wasn't producing report cards.

In light of the tentative deal with the province, ETFO Halton chapter President Marg Macfarlane said, "We are waiting for direction from ETFO Provincial about what is expected now," in terms of report cards.

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