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## Strike will continue teachers' union predicts

*But parent protest prompts return to bargaining table for Catholic board and its striking teachers*

BY PATRICK CASEY  
STAFF WRITER

Despite the optimistic comments of his provincial union leader, Ihor Baczynski is warning parents not to count on sending their children to Catholic schools Monday.

"If there is no deal, the teachers won't be back on Monday," stressed Baczynski, district president of the Ontario English Catholic Teachers Association, Friday morning.

After a lengthy session with provin-

cial mediator Bruce Janisse on Thursday, the union and the York Region separate school board met throughout the day yesterday trying to reach a deal to end the strike by 2,700 elementary and secondary teachers.

At press time, no agreement had been reached.

After Education Minister Dave Johnson offered to delay forcing teachers to spend more time in the classroom, OECTA president Marshall Jarvis suggested all Catholic teachers strikes in the Greater Toronto Area may be over Monday.

"This is the breakthrough we have been seeking," said Jarvis.

But board vice-chairperson Elizabeth Crowe said Johnson's offer won't solve York Region's problems.

Between growth and the new pupil-teacher ratios, the board can't afford not to make high school teachers instruct an extra class, she said. Keeping the status quo would add \$7 million a year in salaries, she added.

And the union's request for a 6.5-per cent wage hike would cost an additional \$15.5 million over the next two years.

"We need our teachers teaching the extra class in order to reach the average class size of 22 students. We don't have the money to keep it the same," Crowe said.

It's an argument Baczynski isn't buying.

"I still believe this board has more than an ample amount of money to keep the status quo for instructional time plus make other changes in the system,"

Baczynski credited Wednesday's rallies by Catholic parents at the school board in Aurora and his Markham OECTA office for helping to kick-start negotiations.

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