

EDUCATION

Contract talks on agenda for support staff

BY JENNIFER BROWN
STAFF WRITER

Caretakers and secretaries employed by York Region school boards say they're not about to threaten strike action, despite comments made by their union leader.

Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) leader Sid Ryan warned last week that education workers could shut down schools across Ontario, unless the government puts more money back into the education system.

"We haven't gone into negotiations yet and we've told our employer we wish to sit down face to face and have meaningful discussions," said John Gromwell, president of CUPE local 1196, the union representing custodial workers at the public school board. "We have not conducted a strike vote or even talked to members about that."

The same message was echoed by Gail Hodgson, president of Local 1734, which represents public board clerical staff.

It is expected both groups will start negotiations with the board in mid-November. Their contracts expire Dec. 31.

Meanwhile, public high school teachers in York Region will return to contract talks with the school board tomorrow, as they make another attempt to get a deal.

However, all is silent between the board and the elementary teachers' union. Both sides are waiting to be called back to the negotiation table by a mediator assigned to the talks.

Secondary and elementary teachers in York Region are in legal strike positions.

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