

NEWS RELEASE

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Northern Lights School Division No Longer In Dispute

SASKATOON – The in-dispute designation placed on Northern Lights School Division on June 19 has been lifted effective July 24. Discussions and negotiations between the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation and NLSD Director of Education Jason Young resulted in a satisfactory resolution.

“We are pleased we have been able to come to an agreement and resolve this issue,” said STF President Samantha Becotte. “Placing a division in dispute is rare and only used in the most serious cases. Unfortunately, it can be a necessary step in order to protect the bargaining process. Leaving this unchallenged would have created a grave precedent for future negotiations at both the local and provincial level.”

In June, the STF Executive voted unanimously to place NLSD in dispute in response to the actions of Director of Education Jason Young. After reaching an impasse with local bargaining, Mr. Young communicated the terms of a memorandum of understanding, which was not negotiated at the bargaining table, directly to all NLSD teachers. This action circumvented the negotiating team and collective bargaining processes.

In order to lift the in-dispute designation, Mr. Young provided a letter to the STF that assured he was not intending to subvert the collective bargaining process. His letter is being shared with Northern Area Teachers' Association members, along with a letter of response from the STF noting that his previous letter to all NLSD teachers was indeed an unfair labour practice.

"We are relieved this has been resolved without further escalation," said NATA President Debbie Banman. "We look forward to returning to the bargaining table to reach a fair agreement for our local members that will include priority articles from both parties."

"Taking actions like this is always a last resort; our preference is to address these issues without taking these drastic steps," added Becotte. "However, the STF has a duty to protect members' rights and to ensure teachers are respected and treated fairly by their employer."

Now that the issue has been resolved, there are no restrictions on members applying for or accepting a position with the division. This was the first time since 2002 and 15th time since 1961 that the STF has placed a division in dispute.

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