

## NEWS RELEASE

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### Teachers Agree to Binding Arbitration for New Provincial Collective Agreement

SASKATOON – The Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation has agreed to participate in binding arbitration for the issues of wages and class complexity-accountability framework. The decision was made following extensive consultation with members that took place this week. As a result, the current provincewide work-to-rule sanction will cease at 4 p.m. today and there will be no further sanctions.

“Our consultation with members indicates that teachers see binding arbitration as the best path to an agreement that will take steps to address class complexity and also provide students, families and teachers with stability for the rest of this school year and into the fall,” says STF President Samantha Becotte. “Securing a written commitment from the Government-Trustee Bargaining Committee that class complexity-accountability framework would be part of the joint submission for arbitration meant the Teachers' Bargaining Committee was able to bring the proposal to members.”

Based on numerous member consultations throughout the week, approximately three-quarters of members believe binding arbitration is the best path forward. This was consistent throughout all consultations.

When the TBC declared a bargaining impasse on June 5, the Government-Trustee Bargaining Committee offered binding arbitration on the issues of wages and the accountability framework, a proposal that was rejected by the TBC because it did not include class complexity. That proposal was revised to include class complexity-accountability framework and wages, which aligned with teachers' position. The TBC

has confirmation from the GTBC that the agreed-upon language for the joint submission would request binding arbitration for “wages and class complexity-accountability framework.” In March, the TBC had proposed binding arbitration on class size and complexity only, but that offer was rejected by the GTBC.

The decision to participate in binding arbitration means STF members will not vote on a collective agreement. The arbitrator’s award (decision) on the two issues under arbitration is legally binding and it will be incorporated into the final provincial collective bargaining agreement along with all other matters agreed to during negotiations.

The next step in the process is the appointment of a mutually agreed arbitrator. The availability of an arbitrator will determine how soon a hearing can be held. A hearing typically takes place over a few days and allows each side to present arguments, rationale and documentation to support their position. The resulting award of the arbitrator may take several months and is delivered in the form of a written report.

“Throughout collective bargaining teachers have remained firm that there must be a commitment by government to respond to class complexity. Including class complexity-accountability framework in binding arbitration allows us to make our case to a neutral third party and provides an opportunity for progress in addressing the needs of Saskatchewan students,” Becotte says.

“The overwhelming support of parents and caregivers, students, community groups and businesses has encouraged and sustained teachers during a challenging year. Together we have been able to position public education at the centre of community and political conversation. Teachers will continue the fight for publicly funded education and long-term, sustainable solutions that address the needs of students and schools.”

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