



# The Provincial

A news bulletin for OPSEU Members at Provincial and Demonstration Schools

Issue 1 June 2002

## OPSEU acting to ensure new pay rate reflected in Records of Employment for summer break

OPSEU is acting to ensure all OPS employees receive retroactive pay promptly. Further, we're pressing the employer to ensure that all Records of Employment (ROE) for seasonal staff reflect the higher rate of pay for the period of Jan 1, 2002 to the date of layoff.

All contracts from now on should reflect the new rate of pay, as should the record of employment. If there are any problems with this, contact your steward or your local President at once.

The matter of retroactivity is the subject of a policy grievance.

The contract and ROE issues will be raised by your team at the next meeting of the Ministry Employee Relations Committee (MERC) on June 25. This is a matter of particular interest to the many seasonal employees at Provincial and Demonstration Schools who face layoff in the summer and rely on the employer to give an accurate ROE to the Federal Government for Employment Insurance.

### The strike and our students

OPSEU's policy is to obey the law and provide essential services as legally required during strikes.

OPSEU was surprised that the government closed the schools during the 2002 strike. (In 1996, the schools remained open.)

In the midst of the 2002 strike, legal action by parents and a Labour Board application by the government opened the question of "essential services."

Never before, in three rounds of bargaining, has the government asked that Provincial Schools be covered under essential services.

Suddenly, under intense political pressure, the government asked to have another round of Essential Services negotiations. However the Labour Board did not find any positions within the Provincial Schools to be "essential" under the criteria in the Crown Employees Collective Bargaining Act. The strike ended before the Board could make a definitive ruling.

Chris Kenopic, Executive of the Ontario Association for the Deaf, wrote to OPSEU President Leah Casselman regarding our members participation in the recent strike. Following is President Casselman's response:

"After seven years of destruction and 23,000 layoffs, our members went on strike to rebuild public services, including services for deaf and special needs children in the Provincial Schools. We had hoped to convince the government to work with us to improve these services. We simply underestimated the extent to which the Conservatives just did not care about public services.

Our members in the Provincial Schools care deeply about these children. They had no idea the government would choose to close the schools this time around – they were left open in the 1996 strike.

The strike didn't have to happen at all. It certainly didn't have to last eight weeks. The government could have ended it anytime, by simply calling off their attack (on our members) Why it took eight weeks only Mr. Eves and his colleagues can tell you."

### Budget update

Ontario's June 17 budget announced \$10 million in funding to upgrade Provincial Schools. Let's hope this represents the reinvestments we have been calling for and not simply sprucing up the schools for a quick sale.

Your OPSEU representatives:

Alicia Czkiarda MERC Chair, Local 104

Jim Stevens, Local 456

Joanne Goure, Local 223

Bob Belontz, Local 219

Réjean Genesse, Local 478

Authorized for distribution:

Leah Casselman, President

This bulletin is being sent to keep you informed about events at Provincial and Demonstration schools affecting members across the province. For more information, contact your steward or a team member, or visit OPSEU's web site at <http://www.opseu.org/campaign/provincialindex.htm>