

Vote information for OPS locals and members



January 14, 2009

Questions and answers about the upcoming contract vote by OPSEU members in the Ontario Public Service

1. How will the vote be conducted?

The law says the vote must be by secret ballot and that those entitled to vote must have “ample opportunity.” The law requires the time and place for voting to be “reasonably convenient.”

2. Who can vote?

By law, all employees in the bargaining unit(s) represented by OPSEU are eligible to vote. That includes all OPSEU members and OPSEU non-members, including part-time, casual, temporary, seasonal employees with recall rights and other non-classified employees. It includes those who have not signed union cards. Members on Long Term Income Protection (LTIP), Worker’s Compensation, maternity and other leaves are also entitled to vote.

3. When is the vote?

Voting will take place on Jan. 27, 28 and 29.

4. Where will I vote?

Each Area Coordinating Group (ACG) is responsible for organizing the vote locations. Locals will be grouped together in one central location, as much as possible. The vote will be

scheduled to accommodate shift work. The OPSEU Regional Offices will be responsible for making the necessary vote location arrangements.

5. When will I know when and where to vote?

Voting takes place on Jan. 27, 28 and 29. The Regional Offices will inform the Locals on the locations and times of the voting on those dates. The Locals are then responsible for giving reasonable notification of the date, time and location of the vote meetings. Notices should be posted in all worksites seven days prior to the vote. OPSEU Head Office will prepare a standard notice form to use to advertise the vote.

6. Have the bargaining units changed?

No. The bargaining unit remain the same as they did in the previous round of bargaining - two “category” agreements (Corrections and Unified) and one Central agreement.

7. What issues are negotiated at the bargaining unit tables?

Wages, hours of work, overtime, on-call, standby, shift schedules and training and other

(Continued on page 2)

issues agreed to by the union and the employer may be negotiated at the two bargaining unit tables (Unified bargaining unit and Corrections bargaining unit).

8. What issues are negotiated at the Central table?

Generally, the law requires that issues that cover all employees in the OPS are negotiated at the central table: this includes job security, the grievance procedure, insured benefits and pensions. In this round, the parties have agreed that the employer's sick-leave proposals can be negotiated at the Corrections table.

9. What will the ballots say?

Each ballot will offer a clear choice. For Central and Unified, the ballots will read:

Yes, I approve the tentative settlement.

No, I reject the tentative settlement and authorize the bargaining team to call a strike if necessary.

For Corrections, the ballot will read:

Yes, I accept the employer's offer received

December 24, 2008.

No, I reject the employer's offer and authorize the bargaining team to call a strike if necessary.

10. What are the bargaining teams recommending?

The Central Team recommends that all members (Unified and Corrections) vote YES to the Central tentative agreement, which covers all OPS members.

The Unified Team recommends that all members in the Unified bargaining unit vote YES to the tentative agreement.

The Corrections Team recommends that all members in the Corrections bargaining unit vote NO to the employer's offer.

11. Is it possible to vote YES on Central issues, and vote NO on Bargaining Unit issues, or vice versa?

Yes. Any combination of acceptance and rejection votes is possible in the three categories of Central, Unified Bargaining Unit or Corrections Bargaining Unit.

This OPS vote is unique in that the union is asking members to vote YES to the Central and Unified tentative agreements and NO to the Corrections employer offer.

12. What happens if I vote YES to Central, and YES to either Unified or Corrections?

If you vote YES to the Central agreement, or the Unified agreement, or the Corrections employer offer, that means you accept the offer and agree to ratify it as your new collective agreement.

13. What happens if I vote NO to Central, or Unified, or Corrections?

If you vote NO, you authorize your bargaining teams to return to bargaining and, if it becomes necessary, call a strike to obtain a better offer.

14. How can I get information about the final offer?

Table Talk, Central and Unified Edition, detailed notes on the tentative agreements and the full text of the actual agreements are all available on the

(Continued on page 3)

OPSEU website. *Table Talk, Corrections Edition*, along with the employer's offer to Corrections is also available on the OPSEU website.

15. As a Region 5 member, I work in Toronto but live outside the Region. Can I vote closer to where I live?

Every member will have the opportunity to vote within the Region they work or the Region their local belongs to. Members are expected to vote within their local/region. Region 5 members can vote in any one of three locations set up over a three-day period in the Region 5 Area.

16. What if my current work location is in a different Region than my home work location and local?

You may vote at the voting location closest to the area you are currently assigned.

17. I will be on vacation at the time of the vote. Can I vote now?

No. Under OPSEU policy, there are no advance polls. Proxy voting is not permitted.

18. I work in a remote location where it will not be possible attend a balloting location, or for me to attend one elsewhere. How will I vote?

Every effort will be made to ensure that you and your co-workers in remote locations can vote. Details of these arrangements will be worked out by your OPSEU Regional Office. If it is determined that it is impossible for you to attend

a balloting location, you will be sent a mail-in ballot. For more information, contact your local or regional office.

19. I have a disability that will prevent me from attending a balloting location. How will I vote?

Every effort will be made to make all balloting locations accessible to persons with disabilities. Those employees who cannot be accommodated at the balloting location are to inform their Local, who will in turn let OPSEU know.

20. What do I need for identification in order to vote?

Any proper identification is acceptable, e.g. union card, work-issued identification, driver's licence, etc.

21. What happens if I am not on the voter's list?

If your name is not on the voter's list, you will still be allowed to vote providing you have a piece of identification (a current pay stub is also preferred). Your vote will then be segregated in a manner that does not allow anyone to know how you voted. OPSEU staff will then attempt to verify you as a member of the bargaining unit prior to the vote count.

22. How are votes tabulated?

Votes are province-wide. The vote on issues for each bargaining unit and on central issues will be counted up across the province. A majority of more than 50 per cent is needed to either accept or reject the contract.

(Continued on page 4)

23. On count day, will anyone from my Local be present?

Yes. On counting day, all Local Presidents (or their designees) are entitled to attend the counting sessions as scrutineers.

24. When will be vote results be released?

All votes will be counted in each Regional Office on the day following the completion of the vote/information meetings. The results from across the province will be tabulated at OPSEU Head Office. They will be communicated first to the Bargaining Teams, then to the Regional Offices and then to Local Presidents, who will ensure that the results are communicated to their members.



Ontario Public Service Employees Union 100 Lesmill Road, Toronto, Ontario M3B 3P8

www.opseu.org