

# Provincial Discussion Table News



## Provincial Discussion Table (PDT) Questions and Answers

### What is a Provincial Discussion Table (PDT)?

#### **A voluntary process:**

- Participation is not legislated as in the Health Care sector. The PDT process has all the advantages of a central bargaining process while maintaining local control. This same model is used in the Education sector.

#### **A framework agreement that addresses central/systemic issues such as, but not limited to:**

- The inconsistencies in the provincial funding formula and deficits in a mandated agency
- Province wide issues with workload overload
- The province's compensation restraint policy (otherwise known as the public sector compensation freeze.)

#### **A process that maintains local bargaining autonomy:**

- Local bargaining tables would negotiate all non-PDT items including any issue specific to the local. When/if the PDT reaches an agreement, it is referred back to the local tables.
- The PDT agreement is not binding on the locals unless it is accepted and ratified by the local parties. Parties at the local table must agree on whether to incorporate the PDT agreement into the items agreed at the local table.
- If agreed, the tentative agreement (both the PDT and local issues) is then presented to the local membership for ratification.

### What is the role of the locals in this PDT process?

The process is built on the input of all locals. The bargaining council will be in regular contact with all participating locals to develop their positions for the PDT table. The provincial outcomes/agreement (if any will be subject to review by the participating locals and will be incorporated into individual collective agreements only through the normal contract ratification process of the locals.

### What are the advantages of a PDT model for members and the sector as a whole?

#### **Opt out provision**

Locals will have the PDT agreement before they are asked to opt in or become parties to the agreement.

#### **Opportunity to engage directly with the ministry as funder.**

- At last we have a process that can tackle issues on a provincial basis. We are able to enter into discussions with employers and the ministry to reach a provincial agreement that would not be possible table-to-table.

## advantages of a PDT model continued

### Addressing inequities and standardize the sector across the province.

- We have the chance to tackle inequities on a provincial basis such as a labour force strategy, funding formula, workload and health and safety.

### Maximizing the potential for sector stability

- If we proceed with table-by-table bargaining, the sector faces the potential of mass labour unrest.

### What if a PDT agreement cannot be reached?

Bargaining will revert to the coordinated bargaining model that the CAS sector has participated in historically.

We will have a majority number of both OPSEU and CUPE units bargaining at the same time should a PDT agreement not be reached.

### How will language variations in OPSEU collective agreements be dealt with?

While one of the goals of a central process is to standardize the sector, we recognize that locals with superior benefits should not have those reduced. One of the principles discussed at the table is that locals need to be able to maintain superior benefits where applicable.

The goal is to protect superior provisions in collective agreements, while improving conditions in many collective agreements.

Making the provincial outcomes subject to the ratification process of the participating locals will also protect superior language.

### Can we be forced into a strike by participating in the PDT process?

**No.** Members in locals determine when and if they are going to strike to achieve bargaining goals in each and every round of collective bargaining.

Nothing changes – a strike vote can only occur with a vote of that bargaining units membership. The membership retains complete control.

### What should locals do if they don't have a contract open or an expiry date in 2011?

In the event that a PDT agreement is negotiated and your local wishes to incorporate it into your collective agreement, the local would service notice to their employer that they wish to enter into mid-term discussion regarding their collective agreement and the inclusion of the agreement reached at the PDT.

### Who is at the PDT bargaining table?

OPSEU, CUPE, Simcoe ea, CEP(tbd), Employer Representatives including OACAS, Ministry of Child and Youth Services, Ministry of Labour and Ministry of Government Services.

Each bargaining agent and the agencies have representatives at the table. The OPSEU PDT Bargaining team includes two staff resource positions and three positions filled by the bargaining council representatives. The bargaining council is represented by Rick Pybus – Chair, Brenda Malott and Johanne Wyss-Huskinson.

## S O L I D A R I T Y

**The CAS sector is amidst a sea of change. Representatives from across the sector have made bargaining a key objective consistently over time. Members from the CAS sector continue to demand better terms and working conditions – this is an exciting time for the sector and the children and families in our communities.**

**Continue advocating for change and demanding support for the child welfare sector and the PDT process – together we are stronger.**