

The ISSUE

On July 14 CAAT-Support bargaining unit members will vote on whether to give their bargaining team a mandate to call a strike if contract negotiations have broken down or have failed to progress

What's happening on July 14?

On July 14 CAAT-Support bargaining unit members will vote on whether to give their bargaining team a mandate to call a strike if, in the view of the bargaining team, contract negotiations have broken down or have failed to progress.

How many members are eligible to vote?

We represent more than 8,000 college support staff workers at 24 colleges across Ontario.

What do support staff workers do?

We represent members employed in many occupations inside Ontario's colleges. Some examples include: technologists, clerical and administrative support staff, custodians, food services personnel, child care workers and many others.

Where & when will your members be voting? When will we know the results?

Members will be voting at their college workplaces throughout the day on July 14. We hope to have results available by late Thursday evening or Friday morning.

Will you be releasing college-by-college results?

No.

If a majority of votes favour a strike mandate, will there be a strike?

No. The July 14 strike vote does not mean a walkout by college support workers. A majority vote in favour of a strike mandate would authorize a walkout only when the OPSEU bargaining team determines a contract settlement cannot be reached at the negotiation table.

Why has the bargaining team called for a strike vote?

Negotiations for a new collective agreement with the colleges began on June 7 with the exchange of proposals. It seems very clear to us that the negotiating team for the colleges is

not prepared to bargain with the same level of seriousness as the union bargaining team.

By calling for a strike vote we are issuing a wake-up call to management to get serious about contract negotiations.

How are negotiations going?

The two sides have met on five occasions since negotiations began with the exchange of proposals on June 7. Twelve more days of bargaining are scheduled between now and Aug. 31. We remain concerned that management is not taking bargaining as seriously as our side.

Do you think a strike can be avoided?

Contracts are never settled on the picket line. They're settled at the negotiation table. We are not working toward a strike. We're working toward a contract settlement that respects the issues which our members have identified as most important to them.

When does the contract expire? Will your members walkout then?

Our contract with the colleges expires at midnight on Aug. 31. We would be in a legal position to walkout at that time, if the bargaining team feels little or no progress is being made at the negotiating table.

Alternatively, we could continue negotiations through the Aug. 31 deadline in hopes of reaching an agreement. That is our objective.

What are the most important issues facing your members?

- Wages & benefits
- Working conditions
- The introduction of a two-tier benefit package for new employees

These are tough times for a lot of people. Why would you even consider going on strike?

Yes these are tough times. But we need to defend good jobs. Good jobs build strong communities. If we don't protect our good jobs now, then what will be the quality of jobs, and wages and benefits, for future generations?

Where can I find more details?

On the OPSEU website. Please visit: www.opseu.org/caat/caat_sup/bargaining2011/index.htm or call: 1-800-268-7376 extension 8777