

**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
MINISTRY EMPLOYEE RELATIONS COMMITTEE (MERC)
October 17, 2023
10:45a.m. – 12:30p.m.**

In Attendance

For the Union	For the Employer	Guests	Regrets
*Daryl O’Grady, Co-Chair, OPSEU Robert Scarfo, OPSEU Drew Finucane, OPSEU Sandra Harper, OPS Negotiator *Chair of the Meeting	Sanaul Haque, EDU Stephany Balogh, EDU Aaron Moffat, EDU Ilyana Browne, EDU Daysi Pena, EDU Juanita Sheridan, TBS	Karm Singh, OPSEU	

STANDING ITEMS	DISCUSSION	ACTION REQUIRED
Confirmation of the Agenda	The parties confirmed the agenda.	
1. Employer Updates a) Seniority, Fixed Term and Seasonal Reports b) TEI c) Training and Development d) Surplus	a) The seasonal and fixed term reports were provided to the union by email on October 16, 2023. The seniority report will be provided after the meeting. b) The ministry is reviewing four (4) TEI requests. c) The ministry held six (6) training and development sessions since the last meeting (% of attendees from the OPSEU bargaining unit if available): Courageous Conversation Circle #1 and Circle #2; Care for the Caregiver; Residential Schools Tour and Truth and	

STANDING ITEMS	DISCUSSION	ACTION REQUIRED
	<p>Reconciliation Commission presentation; Employee and Family Assistance Program webinar – Bulling in the Workplace (19%), Resume Writing (29%).</p> <p>d) No surplus notice alerts have been provided in the ministry since the last MERC meeting.</p>	
2. Seasonal Benefits and Pay	<p>The parties agreed that this year there was an improvement with the reinstatement of benefits for returning seasonal employees. OPSEU raised concern that Manulife advised direct billing for health benefits would not be available to employees on September 1, 2023. A joint memo was sent to staff which confirmed that benefits were effective September 1, 2023 but direct billing would not be available until September 11, 2023. OPSEU asked for additional information about when benefits terminate with respect to the pay period.</p>	The Employer will follow up and respond to OPSEU with information about when benefits terminate with respect to the pay period.
3. CCQALB BERC Update	<p>The BERC met on October 10, 2023. The parties discussed ergonomics in the workplace. A draft memorandum of agreement with respect to CWW and telework was reviewed and discussed. The memorandum will be tabled with MERC for signature.</p>	

STANDING ITEMS	DISCUSSION	ACTION REQUIRED
4. PDSB BERC Update	The BERC met in person on September 28, 2023. The parties discussed seasonal benefits, fleet vehicles, vacancies and staffing, and the importance of promoting PDSB. The next meeting will be via Zoom on February 27, 2024.	
5. Further updates on employees returning to the workplace / office	The parties agreed on the importance of work life balance and noted that there are opportunities available for employees such as CWW and AWAs that are considered on a case-by-case basis.	The parties agreed to rename this standing item "Work life Balance".
6. Ministry Anti-Racism Action Plan	OPSEU asked for an update on the Ministry Anti-Racism Action Plan.	The Employer will follow up and report back.
BUSINESS ARISING ITEMS	DISCUSSION	ACTION REQUIRED
1. MERC Terms of Reference	The Employer confirmed that it is reviewing the changes proposed by OPSEU.	
NEW ITEMS	DISCUSSION	ACTION REQUIRED
1. Recruitment and retention in the workplace	The parties recognized the need to attract and retain qualified staff. The parties discussed current challenges to recruitment and retention.	

For the Union: Original signed by Daryl O'Grady
Date: October 30, 2023

For the Employer: Original signed by Sanaul Haque
Date: December 4, 2023