



Backgrounder

The Alberta Teachers' Association

Teachers say no to minister, yes to local collective bargaining

Historically, collective agreements for teachers in Alberta have been bargained locally between individual school boards and the Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA) through its bargaining units. However, in November 2007, the provincial ATA and the government reached an agreement to settle an unfunded liability in the teachers' pension plan. That agreement established a process for settling all collective agreements in the province through to the end of the 2011/12 school year. Teacher salary rates for the last four years of the agreement were based on the increases in the *Alberta Average Weekly Earnings Index*. Teachers have been working without a collective agreement in place since September 2012.

Discussions about a new provincial framework were first initiated in the fall of 2010 by the Government of Alberta, under then minister of education Dave Hancock, to address declining government revenue and to develop a strategy for transforming Alberta's education system. Those initial discussions were concluded in January 2011, when then premier Ed Stelmach announced his resignation. Discussions resumed under the subsequent minister of education, Thomas Lukaszuk, in the fall of 2011. Those negotiations ended when an agreement was not concluded before the 2012 provincial budget.

The most recent round of discussions began in July 2012, under Minister of Education Jeff Johnson. These discussions ended on November 30, 2012, with the government's rejection of the ATA's proposal. On December 7, Johnson responded with his own proposal, which was unacceptable to teachers. In the weeks since, the Association has worked with government representatives to address government's outstanding concerns.

On February 20, 2013, Johnson presented an offer to ATA President Carol Henderson. On February 25, 2013, the offer was presented to the members of Provincial Executive Council (PEC). PEC comprises teachers and school-based and central office administrators from across the province who are elected by the membership of the Association and who serve as the collective voice of the teaching profession in Alberta.

PEC unanimously rejected the offer.