



# News Release

The Alberta Teachers' Association

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## **Red Deer Catholic Teachers Overwhelmingly Support Taking Strike Vote**

Red Deer Catholic teachers are sending a strong and clear message to school board bargainers to return to negotiations and to move off their contract-stripping proposal. Two votes, each supported by over 99 per cent of teachers, were held at an in-person meeting attended by about three-quarters of members. The first vote rejected the board's latest offer, and the second authorized the Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA) to hold a strike vote.

**"Teachers are clearly upset with their employer right now. They are incensed that the board's only proposal in bargaining so far would strip away longstanding provisions from the collective agreement, and they are demanding to be treated with respect."**

*—Sara Lambert, president of Red Deer Catholic Local No 80*

Only 5 of 61 school boards in the province have not settled for the current term of bargaining, which extends back to September 2020. Lambert says teachers are looking for improvements on issues related to substitute teachers and school administrators. The solutions being proposed are low cost and consistent with provisions that exist in most teacher agreements elsewhere.

**"The board wants to strip out professional development provisions and remove up to 20 members from the agreement. They have made negotiations adversarial and antagonizing when a deal could easily be reached. This is about fairness and respect, and right now it looks like the board has neither to offer to its teachers."**

*—Sara Lambert, president of Red Deer Catholic Local No 80*

Teacher negotiators have told the board that it needs to return to bargaining with an intent to listen and to move toward a settlement, or they will ask the mediator to initiate the two-week cooling-off period. After those two weeks lapse, the ATA would be in a position to hold a vote of members to go on strike.

Collective bargaining for teachers in Alberta is a two-phase process where matters of significant cost and broad impact are negotiated at a central table, followed by local negotiations between individual school divisions and ATA bargaining units on other more locally specific matters.

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The Alberta Teachers' Association is the professional association of teachers in Alberta and acts as the bargaining agent for all teachers employed in public, separate and francophone school divisions. The Red Deer Catholic School Division employs approximately 700 contracted and substitute teachers in Catholic schools in Red Deer, Blackfalds, Sylvan Lake, Rocky Mountain House, Innisfail and Olds.

For more information or to arrange an interview, contact Sara Lambert at 403-392-3328.