



News Release

The Alberta Teachers' Association

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Teachers Worried about Red Deer Catholic Moving towards Lockout

Recent actions to sidestep the third-party independent mediator in Red Deer Catholic (RDCRS) teacher negotiations are a troubling sign of things to come. RDCRS board negotiators have taken the unusual step of asking the mediator to remove herself from bargaining even though two dates for mediation were already scheduled.

By asking the mediator to write out, the board has kicked off a two-week cooling off period that lapses on March 12, and opens the door to the board locking out teachers.

“Our desire has always been to reach an agreement without a disruption to schools. Fifty-eight of 61 school divisions have a deal, so we know an agreement is very much achievable if we just use those other settlements as a guide. We strongly believe the mediator will be helpful in getting the parties to a settlement.”

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

While teacher representatives have agreed to bargain on the scheduled mediation dates, they are worried that the board, absent the mediator, is planning to waste time and thwart a settlement. Bargaining will be held on March 7, but teachers have only agreed to continue meeting on March 8 if it is clear that the board is prepared to make meaningful progress on the first day.

“If the board intends to get down to the business of bargaining, we can get a deal done *this week*. That is what we want. However, if it looks like the board is wasting our time, playing games and ignoring the trend set across the rest of the province, there is no point continuing.”

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

Red Deer Catholic teachers are looking for a settlement that reflects the agreements reached in other jurisdictions, which includes improvements on issues related to substitute teachers and school administrators. The solutions being proposed are low cost and reasonable.

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.