# Unions representing over 10,000 employees at Ottawa-Carleton District School Board complete local strike votes

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OTTAWA, ON – Six bargaining units from District 25 of the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation (OSSTF), the Ottawa Carleton Elementary Teachers' Federation (OCETFO/FEEO), and the Ottawa Carleton Elementary Occasional Teachers' Association (OCEOTA), have completed local strike votes and all have received overwhelming support from the teachers and education workers they represent.

OCETFO/FEEO, representing 3200 elementary contract teachers, voted 98% in favour of a local strike. OCEOTA, with over 2100 elementary supply teachers members, voted 96% in favour of local strike action.

The largest OSSTF worker unit, educational assistants and early childhood educators voted 95% in favour; custodial, maintenance and skilled trades staff voted 90.2% in favour; psychologists, social workers, and speech language pathologists voted 88% in favour; and instructor assistants, EarlyON facilitators and child care staff voted 82% in favour. Secondary teachers voted 95% in favour and occasional teachers voted 96 % in favour. All of these workers are represented by the Ontario Secondary School Teachers Federation, District 25, Ottawa-Carleton.

"The message is clear. Years of underfunding – to the tune of $6.5 billion since 2018 -- have eroded working conditions for our members, and learning conditions for students. Teachers and education workers are doing their best to meet student needs, but they are stretched beyond capacity, often without adequate time and tools to perform their jobs well. We urgently need increased funding so students get access to the supports and resources they need and deserve," says Stephanie Kirkey, District 25 President.

"The significance of the strong strike mandate can't be lost on the Ministry of Education," notes OCEOTA President Jamieson Dyer. "Even with a Supervisor, the OCDSB could not arrive at a balanced budget last year. This is an underfunding problem, not an overspending problem. We still have employees struggling to meet the needs of their overcrowded classrooms, and still too many portables."

“We remain committed to reaching fair negotiated agreements, but our members have made it clear that they expect real improvements and genuine respect, so we can best support students and champion the future of publicly funded education here in Ottawa-Carleton,” says OCETFO/FEEO President Brian LeSage. “Teachers are not by their nature a combative group, but they have an acute sense of what is fair and what is right. What they see every day in their classes is not right or fair to anyone. Educators provincially in Ontario and now locally right here in Ottawa are standing up to say-enough is enough. This local vote shows the OCDSB we are serious about pushing for positive changes to make classrooms better for all.”

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