

news



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N O V A S C O T I A T E A C H E R S U N I O N

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Community College strike vote called

Community College faculty and professional support staff will take a strike vote on September 22. A conciliation report was filed on June 23 advising the Minister of Labour that the Nova Scotia Teachers Union and the College had been unable to reach a tentative agreement. Discussions over the summer have also failed to result in an agreement.

“Unfortunately, the College still has not received a financial commitment from the Department of Education for a 2009 salary increase and improvements to the medical plan,” says NSTU president Alexis Allen. “Without the necessary funding from the province we have been unable to resolve the outstanding issues of salary and benefits.”

Negotiations opened June 5, 2008. In April, after 10 months of negotiations, the NSTU filed for conciliation. Despite efforts by the Union and the College to resolve important issues of equity there has been no appropriate response from the Department of Education says Allen.

“At heart, the over-riding issue is one of fairness,” she continues. “Teachers are fully prepared to support their colleagues in the community college system.”

Allen notes that the Department of Education is unwilling to provide the same salary increases and improvements to medical benefits that it agreed to provide to public school teachers.

“We find it beyond comprehension that any government would choose to single out one group of employees after reaching agreements with virtually every other bargaining unit in the public service, including other community college employees,” says Allen. “These professional educators, many of whom have brought extensive qualifications and industry experience to the College, deserve to be treated fairly and be awarded comparable wage increases.”

On Friday, September 4, the NSTU provincial executive voted unanimously to conduct an electronic province-wide vote in favour of strike action.

On Saturday, September 12 representatives from campuses across the province will meet to be briefed on the failed contract negotiations.

The Community College employees have been without a contract since August 31, 2008.

The Nova Scotia Teachers Union represents 10,900 public school teachers and two bargaining units in the Community College system, faculty and professional support staff. Organized in 1895, its programs are directed towards improving the quality of public education in Nova Scotia.