

# Collective Bargaining

## IN THE SASKATCHEWAN EDUCATION SECTOR



*Collective bargaining is the negotiation between an employer or group of employers and a group of employees to reach an agreement on working conditions. Representatives of employers and employees negotiate, administer and enforce an agreement.*

### WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL BOARDS (EMPLOYER)?

In provincial (teacher) bargaining, boards are represented by the Government-Trustee Bargaining Committee (GTBC) comprised of nine individuals, five members appointed by the provincial government and four members appointed by the SSBA.

At the local level bargaining with teachers and support staff, boards are typically represented by a bargaining committee consisting of school division staff.

**Employers who are not at the table during bargaining still play a crucial role in maintaining integrity of the process and supporting successful negotiations. Here is what you can do:**

- **Understand the Issues:** be clear on the employer position(s) heading in to bargaining, support the negotiating team with data, expertise, and help identifying issues and items that need clarification.
- **Maintain Operational Stability:** business as usual, legal/process compliance, uphold the current agreement until a new one is in place, and document issues and grievances.
- **Contingency Planning:** prepare for contingencies (consistent employer approach is important), understand your rights as employer, and the employee rights to engage in union activity.
- **Manage Employee Relations and Communications:** stay in tune about morale and concerns, maintain relationships and professionalism (avoid "us vs. them"), do not negotiate directly with employees or attempt to undermine what is happening at the table, plan on how you will handle inquiries about the bargaining process and share updates.

### WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE SSBA?

- Appoint four Trustee representatives to the GTBC as per the Education Act
- Represent and seek input/direction from our members regarding employer/board priorities and interests for the bargaining process – *Bargaining Planning Meeting(s), Bargaining Advisory Committee.*
- Support contingency planning – update and share the *Contingency Planning for Job Action* document and liaise with the GTBC regarding interpretation and implementation of consistent contingency employer actions.
- Help maintain integrity of the bargaining process by focusing on the process, supporting our membership through communications, engagement and interpretation of key milestones and updates that will come from the GTBC.
- Ensure clarity and support for the separate roles and responsibilities of the SSBA and its membership from that of the GTBC.